

Geopolitics and Military Dynamics



<u>BRAZIL’S PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION: WITHER BRAZILIAN DEMOCRACY?</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>THE GERMAN POLITICAL CRISIS AND ITS IMPACT ON THE UPCOMING EUROPEAN SUMMIT</u>	<u>6</u>
<u>THE STRATEGIC SHIFT: THE ALLIES, THE USMC AND CRISIS MANAGEMENT</u>	<u>8</u>
<u>AIRBUS EXIT FROM UK: BREXIT AND THE FUTURE OF UK AEROSPACE</u>	<u>10</u>
<u>REGIONAL COOPERATION: THE CASE OF NORDEFCO</u>	<u>12</u>
<u>THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE DANISH AIR FORCE CHIEF OF STAFF</u>	<u>15</u>
<u>“HOW DO WE LEARN WHAT WE HAVE NOT DONE BEFORE?”: THE ROLE OF THE RAAF’S AIR WARFARE CENTRE</u>	<u>20</u>
<u>THE SINGAPORE SUMMIT: SHAPING A WAY AHEAD ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA</u>	<u>26</u>
<u>VENEZUELA, RUSSIA AND THE VARIETIES OF HYBRID WAR</u>	<u>27</u>

Brazil's Presidential Election: Wither Brazilian Democracy?

06/20/2018

By Kenneth Maxwell

With the Presidential election in Brazil due this October the country remains profoundly split between uncompromising extremes.

And the political scene remains highly uncertain.

Hovering in the background is the figure of the ex-president of Brazil, Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, better known as Lula.

He is a former two-term president who is now in prison charged with corruption and money laundering.

But if he were, by some implausible miracle, to actually run for President again, some 30% of the population, according to the most recent public opinion polling by DataFolha, would still vote for him.

But Lula's rejection rate is equally formidable, standing, according to the latest DataFolha poll, at 36%. While half the population love him.

Half the population hate him.

Lula undoubtedly remains a hero to many, both within Brazil and internationally, even though he is a leader who presided over a massive corruption scandal, where the state petroleum company, Petrobras, became a piggy bank for an astounding array of national and international corruption scandals, involving many of Brazil's major national and multinational construction companies, and which has permanently blighted the reputation of the Worker's Party he founded (PT).

The dimensions of the Petrobras corruption scandals, and in particular those involving the Brazilian multinational construction company, Odebrecht, have had large national and international consequences, not least in Mexico, where the tentacles of Brazilian corruption are still being covered up by the Mexican government where a presidential contest is also underway.

It is a fact that if Lula was to return to office, he would not be at all friendly to those who he claims targeted him for unjust punishment.

He would not be the "market friendly" to those who he believes have conspired against him.

The other great protagonist of the last 20 years in Brazilian politics, the Brazilian Social Democratic Party (PSDB) is also in tatters.

The putative candidate of the PSDB, is Geraldo Alckmin, the former long term governor of São Paulo. He held the post for the longest period since the redemocratization of Brazil in the mid-1980s. (Alckmin was Sao Paulo's governor between 2001 and 2003, and again between 2004 and 2006, and again between 2011 and 2014, and again between 2015 and 2018.)

He is also a former presidential candidate for the PSDB having been defeated by Lula in 2006.

But he has only 7% support according to the latest opinion surveys while his rejection rate stands at 27%. (He also spent a year sabbatical as a visitor at Harvard.)

The octogenarian, Fernando Henrique Cardoso (FHC), the grand old man of Brazilian politics, and one of the founders of the PSDB, and a former two-term PSDB “Sociologist-President” (for such he was anointed when he was awarded the million dollar John W. Kluge Prize “recognizing an impact on public life” by the Library of Congress in 2015), meanwhile fulminates on the sidelines, seeking plausible (or rather implausible) would-be presidential candidates.

He writes in the *Washington Post* that Brazil risks becoming a Venezuela.

But his PSDB is also mired in potential and actual corruption scandals, which has already severely damaged the reputation of Aécio Neves, the former Governor of Minas Gerais, and current senator from Minas Gerais, who was the PSDB’s candidate in its last unsuccessful presidential campaign against the PT’s Dilma Rousseff.

FHC spent a period as a visiting professor at Brown University after he left office, among many US academic visiting appointments he has held over the years.

The party of “permanent” power within the Brazilian political constellation (it has been a part of every Brazilian government since the mid-1980’s), the party of the Brazilian Democratic Movement (PMDB), recently cosmetically rebranded as the Brazilian Democratic Movement (MDB), has since the impeachment of Dilma Rousseff, actually emerged from the shadows to hold the presidency of Brazil.

But Michel Temer, the current MDB head of state, is the most unpopular President in Brazilian history, with only 2% of popular support.

He is dead fish drowning in very polluted water. But unlike Jesus, neither Lula, nor Alckmin, nor Michel Temer, has much hope of resurrection.

The candidate most closely associated with the deeply unpopular Temer regime, former BankBoston head, and Michel Temer’s former Minister of Finance, Henrique Meirelles, has only 1% of the intended votes.

But those seeking a new saviour think they have found a “Tropical Trump” “in the person of the far-right Rio de Janeiro congressman, former army parachutist and army reservist, Jair Bolsonaro, who without Lula as a candidate, is running ahead in the latest opinion polls.

Jair Bolsonaro has extreme opinions on all matters.

He is an outspoken admirer of the torturers of the military regime.

When he voted for the impeachment of Dilma Rousseff he eulogized one of the most notorious torturers of the military regime. Dilma was of course a victim of torture.

Bolsonaro needless to say is hostile to gays and same sex marriage.

He is also courting the evangelical vote, and he is rapidly becoming the putative darling of the “markets.”

He is in any case already the favourite of the richest Brazilians.

The other candidate with popular support is Marina Silva, an environmentalist, and the inheritor of the mantle of Chico Mendes, the assassinated leader of the Amazon rubber workers. She is a woman with a personal biography to match that of Lula.

Of humble origins she comes from the Amazonian state of Acre. She only learnt to read and write in her late 'teens. She is an evangelical Christian (which is the fastest growing group in Brazil even though Marina is not thought to be sufficiently "overt" in her evangelical faith by many evangelicals, unlike Bolsonaro.)

Marina served as environmental minister in the first Lula government until she fell out with Lula over Dilma Rousseff's policies when Dilma was Lula's minister of mines and energy.

Marina is also a previous presidential candidate.

The other potential candidate with traction is Ciro Gomes, affiliated with the Democratic Labour Party (PDT). Ciro Gomes has previously been associated with six political parties. He is another perennial political figure who has long campaigned at home and abroad. (He has spent time as a visiting researcher at the Harvard Law School).

Ciro Gomes is from the northeastern state of Ceara. He was a former mayor of Fortaleza, a former governor of Ceara, former minister of finance under President Itamar Franco.

Like Michel Temer, Itamar Franco, was a vice-president who inherited the presidency of Brazil after an impeachment.

Under Itamar Franco, he implemented the "Real Plan" which ended Brazil's chronic inflation.

He served as minister of national integration under Lula.

He could well receive the tacit support of Lula in the upcoming presidential elections.

Meanwhile Brazil faces a chronic on-going crisis of public security and the lingering consequences of severe economic recession.

It is also experiencing creeping militarization of public institutions (the minister of defence is now held by a general for the first time since the position was created).

And the national mobilization of truck drivers has demonstrated they can strike and bring the country to a standstill, and force the capitulation of a weak and unpopular government to their demands.

With a totally discredited and weakened president in Brasilia hanging onto office by default, the political class in Brasilia is seen by many Brazilians as ever more isolated and ineffective.

It is a very dangerous cauldron for democracy in a critical election year.

The featured cartoon is from Is this BRAZIL by Political Cartoonist Patrick Chappatte

The German Political Crisis and Its Impact on the Upcoming European Summit

06/22/2018

By Harald Malmgren

Next week the European Union will hold a key summit.

But that summit is being defined by and overshadowed by the political changes throughout key European states.

The crisis in Germany is especially central to the fate of the summit.

In late May and in the early days of June Chancellor Merkel had been preparing for the scheduled annual EU Summit. One of her highest priorities was to find consensus among EU members on the rules for treatment of refugees, especially those fleeing from Syria and its Middle East neighbors. A wave of populism focused on in alleged social and criminal disruptions imposed by Merkel's open borders policy.

Shocking not only Germany, but virtually all capitals of the European Union, Merkel's authority was challenged by a key member of her own political base, Interior Minister Horst Seehofer.

Suddenly, she was at risk of a political clash from within her own political base that might require a vote of confidence. It is not evident how such a vote would go at this moment when many politicians are feeling growing pressures to alter Germany's immigration policies. If "no confidence" would be the result, Merkel faced the possibility that she might be asked to step down, or pressure might build for a new election in which case she would not be chosen as the leader for the CDU into new elections.

Prior to the election Seehofer had been head of the CSU and political leader of Bavaria. After many weeks of negotiations between the SDP and Merkel, a "Grand Coalition's own partnership of the CDU and CSU was agreed. In the subsequent bargaining over who was to be a Minister in the new cabinet, Seehofer pressed to be appointed Interior Minister. Seehofer was well aware that post gave authority over regulation of the nation's borders, including management and enforcement of the nation's borders and immigration laws.

Merkel's personal political power had already taken a hit by a significant drop in seats won by her CDU in the elections. In the aftermath of decline of the CDU and rise of the ultra-nationalist AfD, CDU party members began to discuss the initiation of a process to choose a new party leader who might lead the CDU into the next German election.

Technically the next election was scheduled to be held in 2021. Given already evident rivalries within the CDU and CSU, and quietly growing voter support for different actions on immigration and a harder stance on basic German interests, an election might become necessary before 2021. The consensus appeared to be that Merkel should not lead the party into the next election. However, choosing a successor should be done with care. In effect, Chancellor Merkel now found herself with a limited "use by date", with the exact date not yet agreed.

Formation of the new cabinet posed yet another shock for Merkel. The opposition SDP insisted that they would not join a coalition unless they could have the Ministry of Finance. Merkel's ultimate political backstop, some might say the foundation of all of her political power, had been Wolfgang Schaueble throughout the EU and Euro Area crises for a decade.

At one time in the past, it had been expected that Schaueble would have been made Chancellor, but that path was broken by a CDU party funding scandal and an attempted assassination on him that resulted in lifetime damage to his physical mobility. Ultimately, whenever Merkel needed to collect vote in a Bundestag policy dispute, it was Schaueble who delivered her the necessary votes.

From the perspective of German politicians, Merkel's loss of the Finance Ministry coupled with her loss of Schaueble's political power in the cabinet further weakened her ability to submit Berlin politics to her will.

By late May this year, Seehofer calculated Merkel was politically vulnerable in her own CDU base, and her policies on immigration had become a divisive issue not only in Germany but throughout the EU. The CSU was becoming vulnerable unhappiness of Bavarian voters with Merkel's defiant stance against any changes in policies regarding passage of refugees through Bavaria.

Thus, Seehofer chose to confront Merkel with a list of demands for changes in her immigration policies, including distinguishing treatment of immigrants who were first-time entrants to Germany from migrants who had already entered the EU through a different port of entry. This would require reestablishment of border posts. Agreements with neighboring countries about holding back some classes of immigrants nearby, such as in Turkey or the Balkans, should be reconsidered.

In effect, Seehofer was proposing changes in Schengen EU freedom of movement.

Merkel defiantly refused to yield to Seehofer's demands. In response, Seehofer warned he would proceed in 2 weeks to introduce his own new regulations under the legal authority in his role as Interior Minister.

Merkel found herself in a trap that had been carefully laid. If she fired Seehofer odds were high the coalition would break down and new elections might be called. In that case, she would likely not be chosen to lead the CDU into competition, and effectively she would no longer be Chancellor.

If she yielded, that would demonstrate that her power had dramatically diminished, her influence inside Germany and with the rest of Europe would be seriously impaired. Seehofer is exploiting his anti-refugee stance in Bavaria to help revitalize the CSU, and try to limit voter exits from the CSU to the AfD, a party which is even more aggressively in favor of shutting down immigration.

In the EU's past there have been times of deep divisions, but when such strong divisions occurred it was German political and diplomatic skill, supported by Germany's strong financial position, that prevailed and set the basis for continuation of further EU integration. It was always widely recognized that only Germany had sufficient financial resources to prop up the EU or the Euro area in times of distress.

With German politics now becoming seriously fragmented and in some kind of process of reconfiguration, there is no single leader or handful of strong politicians in Berlin to devise and execute a common German stance on Europe.

It is not yet clear what will happen to the traditional parties, but it is quite possible that there will be a convergence of political will around a more nationalistic stance, seeking what is best for Germany, with less concern for the troubles of Germany's neighbors.

The Strategic Shift: The Allies, the USMC and Crisis Management

06/23/2018

By Robbin Laird

The strategic shift from counter-insurgency to force-on-force conflict is not only or simply preparing for a major conflict with peer competitors; it is about crisis management and escalation dominance.

On the one hand, the military capabilities are being reshaped to operate in such an environment, and there is a clear opportunity to leverage new platforms and systems to shape a military structure more aligned with the new strategic environment.

On the other hand, the civilian side of the equation needs even more significant change to get into the world of crisis management where hybrid war, multi-domain conflict and modern combat tools are used.

While preparing for large-scale conflict is an important metric, and even more important one is to reshape the capabilities of the liberal democracies to understand, prepare for, and learn how to use military tools most appropriate to conflict management.

This means putting the force packages together which can gain an advantage, but also learning how to terminate conflict.

Core allies are working the challenge with significant innovations as can be seen in Australia and in the Nordic region. And the USMC is significantly involved in those innovations as well, working with those allies as well as reshaping capabilities to provide for more flexible force insertion capabilities with escalation capabilities built in.

What was clear from my visit to MAWTS-1 and getting a chance to look at the work of the latest WTI is that the Marines are working ways to enhance the combat capability of the MAGTF but in a way that can reach back to joint assets and shape evolving capabilities.

These capabilities can be looked at either as an extended MAGTF reaching back to Naval and Joint Air Fires or as the MAGTF as the makeover force operating forward in crisis and to operate as the tip of the spear of an air-sea force operating forward.

The Aussies certainly have recognized the innovations which the Marines are engaged in and see these as symmetrical with their own transformation. And the Marines are now regular visitors to Northern Australia.

As the Marines describe MRF-D 2018:

MRF-D is a six month rotation that started as an agreement between former President Barack Obama and former Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard to conduct exercises and train with the Australian Defence Force.

“We’re here to work in a bilateral fashion,” said U.S. Marine Corps Col. James Schnelle, commanding officer of MRF-D. “As we come on deck we’ll be looking to operationalize Marine Rotational Force – Darwin.”

The rotational deployment of U.S. Marines affords a combined training opportunity with Australian allies and improves interoperability between the two forces. This provides the Marines, ADF and other partners the opportunity to develop relationships, learn about each other’s cultures and share military capabilities....

As the Australian Defence Minister underscored about the joint training:

“These Initiatives strengthen the ability of Australia and the US to work together, and with regional partners, in the interests of regional stability and security,

“During major exercises the rotation will include additional equipment and assets such as AH-1W Super Cobra helicopters, UH-1Y Venom helicopters, F/A-18 Hornet aircraft and MC-130 Hercules aircraft.”

The minister said that since 2012, the MRF-D had been increasing in size and complexity, further enhancing the interoperability and capability of Australian and US forces.

“During the six-month training period, the US Marines are expected to participate in 15 training activities alongside the ADF,” Minister Payne said.

“Other regional nations, including Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and many more will also participate in or observe some of these training activities.

Now the Norwegian government has announced a similar agreement to train with the USMC in Norway.

The Norwegian government has decided to welcome continued USMC rotational training and exercises in Norway, with a volume of up to a total of 700 marines, initially for a period of up to five years, says Minister of Defence Frank Bakke-Jensen.

Since January 2017, approximately 330 Marines from the United States Marine Corps (USMC) have been conducting training and exercise activities in Norway. The Marines have used Vaernes in Mid-Norway as the hub for their various training and exercise activities.

The Norwegian government have decided that they are positive to extending this initiative and adding a second location.

The potential increase in volume will be located at Setermoen in Troms. -More predictable rotational USMC training and exercises in Norway will significantly improve opportunities to develop and enhance interoperability between USMC and Norwegian forces, says the Minister of Defence.

In times of crisis and war Norway will rely on U.S. and other allied military reinforcements. This is at the core of Norwegian security policy and is further emphasized by our NATO-membership.

We have a long-standing tradition for inviting allies to train and exercise in Norway. This is underlined in the current long-term plan for the Armed Forces.

The Marine Corps rotational force constitutes an important contribution to NATO's reinforcement plans for the defence of Norway. The initiative has proven that training and conducting exercises together with allies has had a positive impact on the operational capability of our own forces, says Bakke-Jensen.

The United States Marine Corps (USMC) and Norway have a long-standing and successful relationship that we look forward to strengthening. We will continue the dialogue with the U.S. and the USMC, aiming for mutual agreement in the near future on the continuation of the rotational training and exercise activity, says Frank Bakke-Jensen.

FACTS:

This rotational force agreement builds on the framework of the longstanding agreements between the U.S. and Norway on prepositioning and reinforcement, renewed in 2006 in the Memorandum of Understanding Governing Prestockage and Reinforcement of Norway. The renewal of the agreement, approved by the Storting (Parliament), opens for considerable American training and exercises in Norway.

Airbus Exit from UK: Brexit and the Future of UK Aerospace

06/22/2018

By Defense.info

The defense industrial side of Brexit is clearly tied up with the general dynamics of whatever trade and circulation of skills and labor generally agreed to between the UK and the European Union.

But defense is an area where exceptions in regulations are often the rule; but they clearly are affected by the general state of trade, notably the commercial aerospace trade arrangements.

Brexit is occurring at a time of profound change in Europe, triggered perhaps in part by Brexit, but due to a wide range of dynamics which are clearly leading to the politics within nations focused on their future and the kind of European working relationships those nations wish to see.

It is very clear that Brexit provides a major challenge to UK defense and aerospace industry given that the major focus and major capabilities in those sectors rests on their role in global supply chains and programs, many of which are European.

Airbus is a central player in the UK aerospace industry, and in defense as well. Leonardo is many ways a UK-Italian company. MBDA is a Franco-UK company with German and Italian aspects. Thales has a very large UK component which both complements and challenges its French dominant part of the company.

In an article published in The Times on June 22, 2018, it is reported that Airbus is preparing its departure from the UK, given the uncertainty hanging over the Brexit negotiations. And frankly, the uncertainty comes both from the UK and European sides of the equation.

"In the absence of any clarity, we have to assume the worst-case scenario," Tom Williams, the chief operating officer of Airbus, told The Times. "It is the dawning realisation that we now have to get on with it."

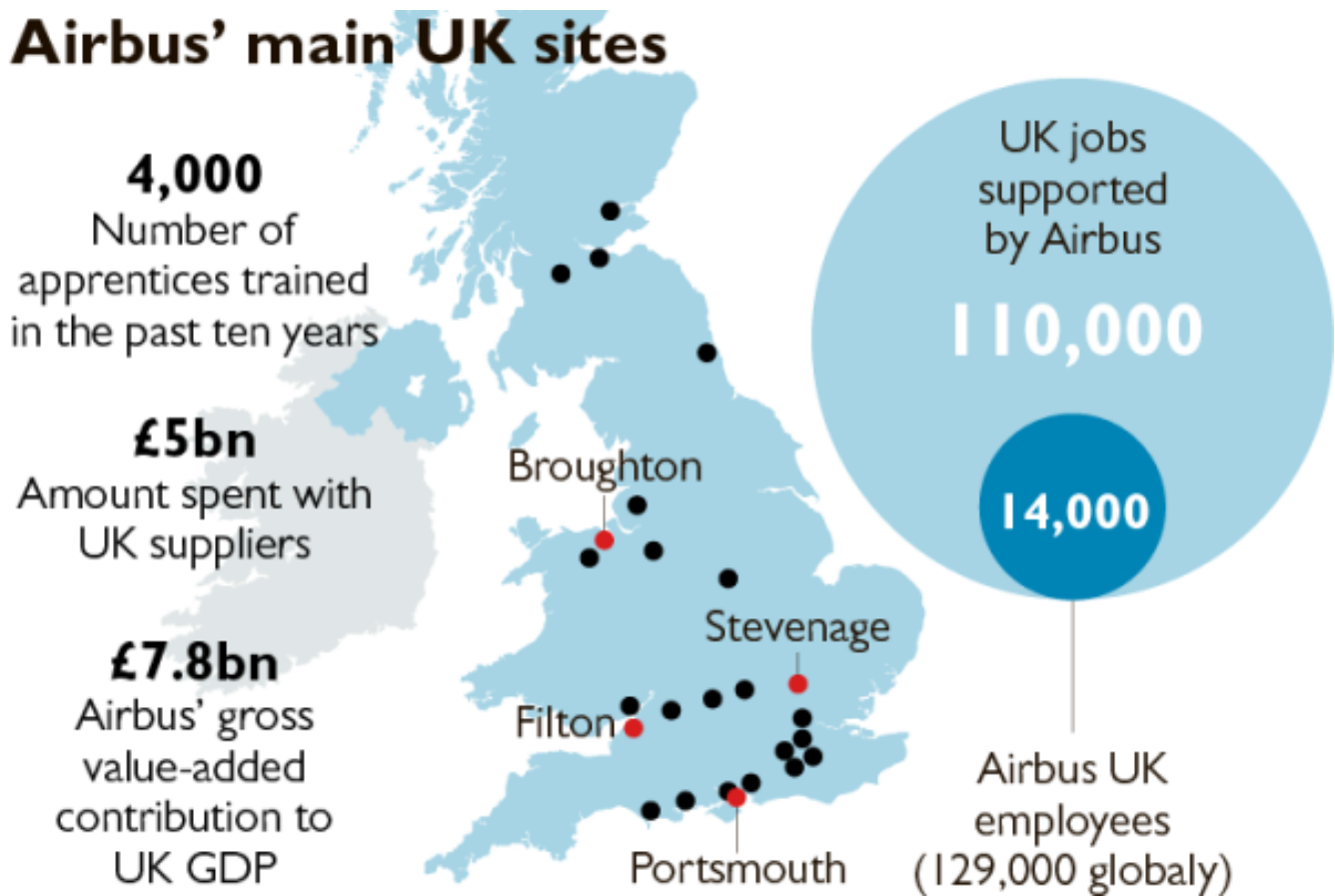
The company, which directly employs 14,000 people and supports a further 110,000 jobs in its supply chain in the UK, has started stockpiling components in the event of a hard Brexit. It would “reconsider its footprint in the country, its investments in the UK and its dependency on the UK” if Britain crashed out of the EU without a deal, according to an internal risk assessment. “This extremely negative outcome for Airbus would be catastrophic,” it states.

It is the most significant intervention on Brexit by a large company since the referendum two years ago. Airbus, which has factories in north Wales, Stevenage, Portsmouth and Bristol, delivered the warnings privately to the prime minister three weeks ago.

Even if Mrs May succeeds in managing an “orderly Brexit”, the manufacturer makes clear that it will “refrain from extending its UK suppliers and partners base” until it sees how the new relationship with the EU will work.

The prime minister’s promised transition phase that ends in December 2020 does not allow enough time to prevent disruption likely to cost the firm billions of pounds in delays, lost orders and angry customers, Airbus says.

Airbus’ main UK sites



A recent note published by the London-based Centre for European Reform written by [Sophia Beech](#) underscores a way to look at the challenge:

The UK should also seek an administrative agreement, similar to Norway’s, with the European Defence Agency (EDA), which oversees EU defence capability development. It would not have full voting or veto rights, but could contribute to EDA projects and attend some committee meetings.

And it should negotiate arrangements with the EU that allow UK organisations to tender for EU projects within the Defence Fund and the next framework programme for research and innovation.

If it wants to protect British firms' participation in European defence co-operation, Britain will also have to conclude an information-sharing agreement with the EU.

If the EU excludes the UK from the Union's defence infrastructure, it would not only lose British expertise and capabilities, but also potentially undermine its own ambitions.

In order to be credible, EU defence structures need the involvement of the UK, one of the few European powers with serious military capacity.

But some in the EU see Britain's decision to leave as an attack on the fundamentals of European co-operation and no longer trust the UK as a strategic partner.

What is more, the UK's threat to launch a competitor to Galileo suggests to EU hardliners that London's commitment to European security co-operation is thinner than Theresa May has repeatedly promised.

The UK, in turn, would not benefit from distancing itself from the EU's defence structures. But there is a lack of tolerance in the UK for the EU's legal and political red lines. Some in Britain also mistrust other EU member-states, as they feel that their defence industries are seeking to benefit from Brexit.

Both sides need to be careful to prevent what should be a positive-sum game from turning into a zero-sum one.

Regional Cooperation: The Case of NORDEFCO

06/22/2018

By Robbin Laird

As Norway looks to its defense transformation and working out ways to work more effectively with its allies in extended defense and deterrence, it faces change in Europe associated with significant dynamics of change in Europe from Brexit to Catalonia.

At the same time, the US is dealing with the Middle East as well as the Koreas as President Trump and his team sort through shaping a way ahead for the US and its allies in dealing with the threats of weapons of mass destruction.

There is much uncertainty in the strategic environment on the allied and on the side of the threat envelope for Norway as well.

In such a context, it is not surprising that the Nordics are working ways to collaborate more effectively in the defense of their region.

One way to do this is the cross-border training they are engaged in with Sweden and Finland.

Here squadrons from Norway, Sweden and Finland work together every week on cross-border training activities.

And the air space being used is very significant as well.

Europe as an operational military airspace training area is not loaded with good training ranges.

The range being used for CBT is very large and is not a cluttered airspace, which allows for great training opportunities for the three nations, and those who fly to Arctic Challenge or other training events.

And the range flies over land so there is an opportunity for multi-domain operational training as well.

But this is being matched as well with policy discussions and policy coordination efforts as well.

As Harald Malmgren described such activities within the boarder European context:

A new “cluster” of European nations with a common security objective has quietly emerged recently in the form of focused military cooperation and coordination among the Nordic nations, Poland, the Baltic States, and the UK.

This cluster is operating in close cooperation with the US military.

The Danes, Norwegians, the Swedes and Finns are cooperating closely together on defense matters.

Enhanced cooperation is a response to fears of Russian incursions, which are not new, but have roots in centuries of Russian interaction with Northern Europe.

It is also a response to the weak defense and security policies of most of the rest of Europe, notably the emasculation of any meaningful German military by the German government.

The Norwegians and Danes notably and reaching back to the UK are adopting the concepts of warfare pursued by the US military in its new focus on conflict in a fully integrated battle space operating in high intensity and at high speed.

At the heart of this integrated approach to building a credible deterrent to Russian “adventurism” and territorial incursions are the 5th generation F35 aircraft capable of coordinating and applying firepower from land, sea an air simultaneously.

Norway, Denmark and the UK are all acquiring the F-35 as part of the evolving collaborative approach.

The pilots in this assemblage of F35s are all trained in the same locations in the UK and the US, and are able to fly each other’s aircraft without adaptation.

It should be noted that Italy’s military wants to find a way to interact with the Northern Europeans as well as the UK and is acquiring F35s for itself to enable participation on short notice.

An evolving institution within which Nordic cooperation is being shaped is NORDEFCO.

In an interview I did with an American colleague who has worked in Denmark the past few years as a Senior Researcher at the Centre for Military Studies at the University of Copenhagen, we discussed NORDEFCO and its emerging role.

Question: How has Nordic cooperation progressed during your time in Denmark?

Gary Schaub Jr.: It has progressed significantly.

Initially, much of the cooperation was very political and often symbolic.

It has become less headline grabbing and more focused on the nuts and bolts of cooperation to shape real military capabilities as well as enhanced crisis management.

This is clearly a work in progress, but the change is significant.

NORDEFCO has been the organized effort to enhance cooperation among Denmark, Norway, Iceland, Finland, and Sweden.

NORDEFCO is now focused on ways to enhance operational military capabilities among the forces. For example, an agreement was reached last year on “Easy

Access” among the air and naval forces of the member states.

The agreement allows relatively free flow of those forces across the territories of the member states as agreed upon.

Clearly, major changes on both the Swedish and Finnish sides have facilitated enhanced cooperation.

For the Swedes, it was a growing recognition of the threat to the Baltic States and Sweden has clearly cooperated more closely with NATO with regard to the Baltic States as well as in the Northern Region.

The Finns changed their legislation so that they can both receive and give assistance in a crisis.

Certainly, cooperation between Sweden and Finland has increased significantly in the past few years.

The NORDEFCO framework encompasses these two states who are not members of NATO with three members of NATO, namely Norway, Denmark and Iceland.

As one Norwegian senior analyst put the question to me during my visit to Norway in April: “How far can we take our cooperation?”

“We now have a mission paper which extends our framework of cooperation through 2020 and we are working a new one which extends the horizon to 2025.”

The members are working on an “easy access agreement” whereby the forces of the member states can cross borders easily to collaborate in exercises or in a crisis.

The NORDEFCO states are not focused simply on their own member exercises but participating in larger ones, which inevitably means NATO. As this analyst put it:

“The Swedes and Finns have a permanently placed officer in the Norwegian Joint command post in Northern Norway which certainly allows them to plan effectively for exercises, including this fall’s Trident Juncture.”

This analyst argued that there is a clear upswing on the level of cooperation and its significance as well.

“I think the discussions among ministers have been taken to an unprecedented level. We also discuss crisis management.

“We have to prepare ourselves for handing a situation without the Swedes and the Finns, because they are not members of NATO.

“But we think that it is more and more likely that they would be fully involved in such a situation.

“I think our western partners realize this, so the American footprint in Norway could also be used to reinforce the Baltic states.

“Having access to Norwegians territory, and perhaps for a door in Sweden and Finland makes a big difference.”

This cooperation is unfolding in the context of the strategic shift to prepare for both crisis management and conflict in a high intensity warfare setting.

Clearly, a key focus is upon rebuilding NATO’s ability to establish sea control to reinforce the Nordic region in times of crisis and to ensure that reinforcements from outside the Nordic region can seamlessly integrate with Nordic forces as well.

Part of the crisis management approach is to focus on civilian support to the military in a crisis, which the Norwegian Total Defense Concept or the Finnish mobilization concept or the Swedish reintroduction of conscription is clearly designed to do as well.

Clearly, timely and effective mobilization is critical to generate appropriate responses to crises and to provide tools to ensure more effective deterrence as well.

The Perspective of the Danish Air Force Chief of Staff

06/21/2018

By Central Blue

The Central Blue sat down with Chief of Air Staff – Defence Command Denmark, Major General Anders Rex, on the sidelines of the March Williams Foundation seminar, to talk about high intensity warfare, adaptation and training, and recruiting and retention.

Major General Rex joined the Danish Air Force in 1994 and has an extensive history flying the F-16 – including as the detachment commander for the Royal Danish Air Force F-16 Libya Force in 2011 – as well as performing staff roles in planning, acquisition and logistics.

Central Blue (CB): *What do you think high intensity warfare is? Is it possible to define? Does it depend on the capability of the adversary?*

Major General Rex (MG Rex): Coming to a seminar like this, you end up with more questions than answers.

If you had asked me before, I may have had an idea what high intensity warfare was, but now I don't.

Actually, I think, what is going to be interesting about the times we live in is how do we know we are in a conflict for instance. We have the Russians using the chemical substances.

And we have cyber attacks continuously. I don't know what conflicts we will have in the future. I don't know what how to define what the threshold is [for high intensity]. For the guy being shot at, that is high intensity.

If we are flying and dropping bombs in Iraq, that's a different intensity than dropping bombs in Syria, because of the perceived threat of the pilot.

(CB): *To follow on from that, are you able to define high intensity warfare from just an air perspective? Is it possible to do that? And from the Danish perspective, are the space and cyber domain built into that domain?*

(MG Rex): I think it will be multi-domain.

Say we are practicing soccer to use an analogy.

We know the rules, number of players each time.

But I think the problem is, our adversaries aren't telling us what players they are bringing, how many, or what game they are playing.

They could be practicing golf for all I know.

That is what I think will be the big challenge.

(CB): *How do you feel your organisation has adapted to preparing for a HIW?*

Do you think that you have to?

Do you war game potential scenarios you could find yourself in?

(MG Rex) We aim to train to the highest standard possible, with the resources we are given of course. We aim to have good equipment, and that is our way of training to high intensity.

In the game we think we are going to play, we want to be the best we can be.

We don't do, yet, big joint exercises in Denmark with a set scenario.

We have not done that yet, and not in the last few years.

It is difficult with the op tempo we have sustained.

We always have our capabilities out somewhere.

So as an example, in two or three weeks we will have our QRA Quick Reaction Alert over five countries: Denmark, three Baltic States and Iceland.

(CB): *In all defence forces you have to work around training requirements and operational tempo. You don't necessarily train for a high-end conflict but you do in a way with operations.*

(MG Rex): Yes, and take for instance our C-130s.

They have so many missions, that they find it very hard to get the time to train.

So, they have to do the training on the fly.

Its low percentage numbers that are dedicated training sorties.

On the F-16, we have better opportunities to train high end.

We have actually not been training for the high event or scenarios for short periods of time because we have been focusing on converting pilots onto the F16.

We still need a lot of pilots on the F-16 before we go to the F-35.

So aside the from the air related debate, the debate we are also missing out on is the personnel-related debate.

(CB): *Are you finding any issues with recruitment? Especially as you say, with your requirement to staff the high-end capabilities you are bringing into service soon?*

(MG Rex): This year we have seen the lowest number of applicants for pilot, I think forever. We are down to 350 applications.

That is not enough, we think, to achieve what we need.

We know that some of the young kids, they don't want the 12 years obligation to serve, there are so many other options.

Right now, we recruit everyone out of a set of standards that are laid out for fighter pilots. But that may limit us, so we are trying to change that.

(CB): *Do you think Air Force personnel of the future will need a different skill set than what they do today?*

(MG Rex): I think we need to recruit all kinds of people, I don't think we can limit ourselves, and put people in boxes and say they must look like this. We need the geeks, we need the straight shooter.

I think we have 9% women in the air force right now. We are the best across all the forces. The Army is low, the Navy is low.

And we don't have a Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) 25% goal; we just have a goal to get more.

We don't have a specific area of focus in the recruitment for more women.

All job categories are open to women except Special Forces.

We have one woman that flies the F-16, we have 2 women that fly search and rescue helicopters and one on the C-130. And that is out of about 300 pilots. So that is not a lot. I don't know whether this is an issue of culture.

(CB): *Danish Defence has conscription, how does that influence your workforce?*

(MG Rex): It helps because it provides a base for recruitment. We have conscription for the men, and for the women it's a volunteer service.

But everyone called up for service are volunteers, because we have an intake of around 4 500 a year and there are more than 4 500 who want to join.

But we keep some of them.

In order to join the officer scheme, you have to leave after the conscription and get a Bachelor degree. Then you can come back.

Most people until about six years ago, we hired for life. It gives protection, a good pension.

But then we changed our whole human resources construct and now we want people to be able to switch in and out of military and civilian employment. In theory, we want people to be able to leave, but we don't encourage that.

At least I don't hear of people encouraging people to go out and have a civilian job for a while and then come back as active duty. The cost of training is so high in a lot of what we do.

(CB): *When you are talking about issues regarding retention and recruitment, it's important to understand what is keeping people in.*

(MG Rex): We are struggling with that, because we are all saying that retention and recruitment are important, and so I asked my staff to analyse this and tell me what the problem is.

Who do we need to retain and who do we need to recruit?

Because if a member is 55 and will retire in five years with a good pension, we don't have to retain him or her because they will stay on regardless.

I don't need to work on keeping the young pilot who still has 11 years of service obligation left; I can wait a few years.

Right?

But maybe air crew chiefs, technicians, the people in control and reporting, we have a hard time keeping them in.

That is an easy question to answer?

No its not.

Because at least in Denmark, we jump right past the analysis phase, right to solving the problem.

So, we are solving problems, solving problems, but we don't know if it's the right problems we are solving.

It's like your car makes a squeaky noise, and you take it to the mechanic, and he changes the engine and everything.

And you get it back, and it no longer makes the squeaky noise, but you don't know why.

(CB): *These problems do take time to work out, and change, especially if there are cultural issues. And people's motivations are complex; it's not just about money.*

There are other reasons that people serve.

(MG Rex): We have a hashtag.

And one that I heard of was #worthfightingfor but apparently the younger generation don't care for it.

They want #makingadifference

They don't necessarily want to fight for something, they just want to make a difference.

(CB): *Do think the missions you currently conducting give that to them?*

How would you weight up the missions that you do?

Do you do a lot of humanitarian work?

(MG Rex): Mostly operations, and its low end of the conflict scale. We have done two tours in Iraq/Syria, in 2014 and 2016. So that is high end.

But the rest is transport – Mali, Iraq, Afghanistan.

It is a funny thing – I'm not sure if it is the same here – going to war is actually good for retention.

People have something to look forward to.

They want to make a difference.

But there is also a tipping point.

If you are away too much, then you leave. We had that problem in the Army. They spent a long time in Afghanistan. They lived for it.

But then they got back to a normal routine, and it was boring, so they left.

(CB): *The Central Blue is a forum to generate discussion about defence policy and air power. Do you have something similar in Denmark?*

(MG Rex): Yes, it's called, (rough translation) Danish Society of Military Science.

It's joint, we don't have anything just for air power. People learn about it if they meet one of the people who are engaged in it.

It is mostly officers – those who are officers by heart. Not only the old ones, but those who are by heart.

We don't have a big debate culture with regard to the armed forces. I think it's because we are so small and people are afraid they will be singled out. There is no formalised process to feed that debate back into the organisation.

But we all notice, and if we see something that is a good idea, or if there is a perception that we have made a mistake, then we can look at how to fix it.

This article was first published by the Williams Foundation on June 17, 2018 and is reprinted with their permission.

It was published in their Central Blue column.

For our interview with Major General Rex during a visit to Copenhagen last Fall, see the following:

<https://defense.info/air-power-dynamics/2018/05/shaping-a-way-ahead-for-northern-tier-defense-the-perspective-of-major-general-anders-rex/>

“How do we learn what we have not done before?”: The Role of the RAAF’s Air Warfare Centre

06/20/2018

By Robbin Laird

During my most visit to Australia in March 2018, I had a chance to discuss the way ahead for the newly established Air Warfare Centre with its dynamic director, Air Commodore Joe “Vinny” Iervasi.

The Air Warfare Centre was launched as part of the Plan Jericho initiative at the time when Air Marshal Geoff Brown was the air chief, and was forged, designed and shape to work 21st century force integration, not simply to train air warriors to fight in a legacy manner.

In part this was done in recognition that the F-35 is not a legacy fighter, but a “flying combat system” which can form the foundation for a kill web approach to warfare, in which the relationship among sensors and shooters changes and with that the need for a new C2 approach and learning new ways of doing things.

As Air Commodore Iervasi puts the challenge: “How do we learn what we have not done before?”

“We can train and get better at legacy approaches, but how do we learn what we have not experienced before and how do we leverage our new platforms to transform and create an integrated force?”

His focus is upon a 2-6 year period ahead and how to prepare the force to execute new concepts of operations leveraging ongoing integration capabilities.

He even projected the notion that the best outcome for the Air Warfare Centre would be to be transformed in a decade into a Joint Warfare Centre.

He sees the RAAF with their new platforms, new thinking and evolving approaches as being in a good position to lead a transition, but one which is about forging a very different force from the legacy force.

One aspect of the difference is that the separate force elements train and prepare for joint exercises, but how do they know what is an evolving joint capability and **how do you train for what you don't know?**

He advocated moving more training time into joint exercises and training rather than the relative high proportion of time spent on service or platform specific training.

The overall challenge facing the Air Warfare Centre is to shape a fifth generation force and how that force might come together in combat situations to prevail.

“The Air Warfare Centre is focused on the blending between bottom up initiative, top down direction, and to foment and facilitate the ideas, the concepts, the wherewithal, the tactics of actually knowing and shaping what an integrated force needs to do in the evolving combat environment we are facing.”

“Because we're trying to integrate a force the way a force has never been integrated before, we're going to have to do so in innovative ways. Innovation is going to be a byproduct of integration.

“It is going to be a byproduct of immersing ourselves in current and emergent technologies and sort out what they actually might mean operationally.

“In other words, it's our drive to integration that's actually going to necessitate an innovative approach.”

Throughout the interview, he was very clear on the importance of breaking out of legacy patterns and thinking and finding ways to train for the future fight with the force you are crafting.

“Our senior leadership, including myself, has never grown up in the combat environment which is now evolving rapidly. We need to unlearn as well as learn to shape an effective way ahead.”

How do you shape a future force structure based on where you need to go, rather than what you have inherited?

From this point of view, how do you leverage the simultaneous acquisition of the F-35 by Australia and its core allies to drive change in new ways rather than simply treating it as nice new toy?

Illustrative of his approach is setting up a working group to meet in Adelaide later this month to work on ways to work leveraging the F-35. Nellis, NAWDC, the RAF Air Warfare Centre as well as the Aussies will meet in Adelaide to discuss ways to think about fifth generation operations.

“Each of our warfare centers inherently has a particular strength.

“How do we leverage those strengths and come up with an approach where we can generate collectively initiatives to test and experiment and drive operational changes in the joint force?”

“How do we actually create an expanded multi-disciplined team and collaboration environment in Australia such that we are open to the opportunities that present themselves?

“Doing things better is the bottom line.

“When I talk about multi-disciplined teams, I am speaking broadly. I am not just focusing on the operators of our airfleets.

“It’s the engineers, scientists, industry, and academia coming together with operators to develop new concepts for emergent domains, specifically cyber and space.

“What we’re attempting to do in our air warfare center is create multi-disciplined teams physically co-located at our major bases Amberley, Williamtown, and Edinburgh, with each service’s main warfighting elements.”

“For example, Williamtown is close to Sydney where we’ve got Forces Command HQ for Army and Fleet Command HQ for Navy. Up in Brisbane, we have HQ 1 Division and HQ of the Amphibious Task Group in proximity to Growler, Super Hornet, Combat Support Group and a large portion of our air mobility fleet.”

“Our core integrators are our air warfare instructors and we see them in the role of driving operational integration initiatives within a 2-6 year time line of implementation.”

In effect, the Air Warfare Centre is generating various vignettes of the evolving operational environment and then testing capabilities, and new ways of using those capabilities, against that projected operational environment.

And by working within a 2-6 year time frame, they can be realistic, drive change and not get excessively metaphysical.

It is not about the world in 2030; it is about driving change for a fifth generation enabled force able to shape a more effective and integrated force in the near to mid-term.

And doing so, with close collaboration with the other services and the allies who are themselves rethinking their approach to combat operations.

Air Commodore Joe ‘Vinny’ Iervasi, AM

Commander Air Warfare Centre

Royal Australian Air Force

Air Commodore Joe Iervasi was born in Sydney. He joined the RAAF in 1985 and completed flying training in 1989. He has been flying the F/A-18 Hornet since 1991.

Air Commodore Iervasi served at No 3 Squadron as a junior pilot before proceeding on exchange to No 5 Squadron RAF flying the Tornado F3. During this tour he deployed on Operation Deny Flight enforcing the no-fly zone over Bosnia-Herzegovina (1995). Upon return to Australia he served as a flight commander at both 77 Squadron and 75 Squadron.

In 2001 Air Commodore Iervasi completed the inaugural Australian Command and Staff College at Weston Creek and was subsequently posted to Capability Systems in Russell Offices. During this period he was responsible for the development and sponsorship of F/A-18, F-111 and Hawk major capital equipment projects, with the most notable being the Hornet Upgrade Project. In 2005 he returned to Williamstown as the Senior Operations Officer at 81 Wing and subsequently assumed command of No 3 Squadron in Dec 2005. He was promoted to Group Captain on 12 Jan 2009 and served as Chief of Staff Air Combat Group.

In 2010 Air Commodore Iervasi completed the Defence and Strategic Studies Course and was appointed as Officer Commanding No 81 Wing (F/A-18) in December of that year. In January 2013 Air Commodore Iervasi was posted as Chief of Staff to the Vice Chief of the Defence Force.

Following this posting Air Commodore Iervasi was promoted to his current rank of Air Commodore and deployed to the Middle East as the Director, US Central Command 609th Combined Air Operations Centre at Al Udeid Air Base in Qatar. He returned to Australia and was appointed Director General Air Command Operations (Headquarters Air Command) and Director General Air (Headquarters Joint Operations Command) where he commanded global air operations including Operation OKRA. In December 2016 AIRCDRE Iervasi was appointed Commander Air Warfare Centre.

Air Commodore Iervasi has over 3000 hours flying fast jets and is an A Category Fighter Pilot. He holds a Bachelor of Science Degree, a Masters of Management in Defence Studies and a Graduate Diploma in Strategic Studies.

He has been awarded the Medal in the Order of Australia (2009), Australian Active Service Medal (Balkans and ICAT Clasp), Afghanistan Medal, Defence Long Service Medal with Third Clasp, and the Australian Defence Medal. He was appointed as a Member in the Order of Australia in 2016.

The Air Warfare Centre

The Air Warfare Centre was built on part by incorporating elements of the former Aerospace Operational Support Group or AOSG which comprised the Development and Test Wing and the Information Warfare Wing, and also had responsibility for the Woomera test range.

In its place the new AWC is structured into directorates, comprising Integrated Mission Support, Capability and Logistics, Test and Evaluation, Information Warfare, Air Force Ranges, and Tactics and Training.

“By working with the other force element groups, Army, Navy and defence industry, the AWC will allow Air Force to generate rapid, cogent and integrated capability solutions that are needed now and into the future,” Air Commander Australia Air Vice-Marshal Gavin Turnbull said at the opening of the Centre.

“It will identify innovative solutions and translate those into capability by driving integrated tactics and advanced warfare across Air Command.”

The establishment of an air warfare centre was heralded by then Chief of Air Force Air Marshal Geoff Brown in his launch of Plan Jericho in February 2015.

The subsequent Plan Jericho ‘Program of Work’ document noted that: “Air Force lacks the systemic ability to generate rapid, cogent and integrated combat capability solutions in response to current and future capability gaps and bottom-up innovation opportunities.”

In response it promises that: “an Air Warfare Centre ... will become the centre of innovation and thinking for integrated operations.”

The Air Warfare Centre (AWC) exists to deliver timely and relevant advice to the warfighter in response to operational and tactical problems facing the products and services delivered by the Air Force. It is deliberately structured to draw on Subject Matter Experts from across all Air Force domains in formulating recommendations and seeking answers to operational and tactical warfighting challenges.

It will actively engage Joint, Allied, Australian Defence Organisation and Industry Stakeholders to deliver the best possible operational solution. Cross-platform, multi-domain integration is at the heart of the AWC intent and culture. Where obvious solutions do not exist, the AWC will harness the broader workforce to deliver innovative alternatives.

It will provide highly specialised military facilities and services including innovative military aviation prototyping and solutions to enhance air warfighting capabilities in every sphere. It is critical to establishing the Royal Australian Air Force as a modern and fully integrated combat force that can deliver air and space power effects in the information age.

Why create an Air Warfare Centre?

The AWC was created at the direction of the Chief of Air Force to address opportunities to improve Air Force’s ability to maximise the operational effectiveness of fifth-generation, networked capabilities through improved integration across Defence and increased knowledge sharing with allied AWCs.

What is the Air Warfare Centre?

The AWC is a Force Element Group (FEG) within Air Command. The AWC was established on 11 January 2016 and will achieve Final Operational Capability in 2020.

AWC is comprised of the following:

Headquarters AWC

Headquarters AWC provides the staff functions that enable AWC operations headed up by Chief of Staff for core functions, and a Director of Capability Assurance, for technical governance, logistics and capability development.

Integrated Mission Support (IMS)

IMS is located at RAAF Edinburgh in South Australia. The IMS mission revolves around the key tenets of 'Integration', 'Innovation' and 'Information'. IMS drives Innovation across both the AWC and more broadly across Air Force through leadership, organisational change and the engagement of a diverse array of subject matter experts to rapidly solve complex Operational problems as part of 'Integrated Project Teams'. The 'Innovation Hub', the 'Jericho Dawn' and the 'Science and Technology' programs focus on engagement with industry to develop and demonstrate innovative solutions to address capability gaps in the force-in-being.

The 'Operations Analysis' and 'Knowledge Management' sections ensure critical decisions across the organisation are underpinned by appropriate research and credible evidence and that the AWC product is available to the 'right people at the right time'. Finally, IMS liaises with and provides information exchange on behalf of the AWC with allied peer organisations through our Liaison Officers.

Information Warfare Directorate (IWD)

IWD is located at RAAF Edinburgh in South Australia and centralises the Air Force's tactical information warfare elements. It provides the wider RAAF with an integrated and tailorable information warfare operational capability drawn from the Intelligence, Electronic Warfare and Information Operations fields. IWD enables the development and management of the RAAF's Information Warfare capabilities.

Test and Evaluation Directorate (TED)

TED is located at RAAF Edinburgh in South Australia and delivers comprehensive, timely and integrated Test & Evaluation through a flight test squadron, aviation medicine and a unique engineering/manufacturing capability.

TED provides support and advice throughout a weapon system life-cycle including preview testing (risk reduction to inform acquisition), developmental, acceptance and operational Test and Evaluation (T&E). It enables the warfighter through the provision of specialist medical advice, research and training and aeronautical information service.

Air Force Ranges Directorate (AFRD)

AFRD is located at RAAF Edinburgh in South Australia and improves the way Air Force conducts Live, Virtual and Constructive simulation with other elements of Defence and our coalition partners, in order to deliver more effective warfighters. AFRD enhances the way Air Force tests war material and trains the warfighter and standardises all range requirements to deliver a more realistic and practical testing environment.

em>Tactics and Training Directorate (TTD)

TTD is located at RAAF Base Williamtown in New South Wales and is tasked with the development of multi-discipline, high-end integrated tactics and training across the Air Force through a combination of training, education and integrated exercises. TTD transforms the way we think about and teach air warfare. It also conducts operational analysis to inform integrated tactics analysis to better enhance warfighter effects.

<https://www.airforce.gov.au/about-us/structure/air-command-headquarters/air-warfare-centre>

Credit Photo: Exercise Diamond Storm, run by the Air Warfare Centre, is one of the practical components of the Air Warfare Instructors Course which graduates students who are experts in Australian Defence Force capabilities and integration across the services, and also have technical mastery of their own roles, capabilities and systems.

June 22, 2017

Australian Department of Defence

The video above shows the USAF with the RAAF working together at RAAF Williamtown in March 2017.

As the 18th Aggressor Squadron out of Eielson Air Force Base, Alaska, closes out its final days in Australia, we highlight the key attribute of this exercise: joint interoperability. Both the pilots and the maintainers capitalized on this unique environment and the exercise to learn a little bit more about a joint partner nation, the Royal Australian Air Force, and even about themselves. This video is part three of a four-part series.

Pilots with the 18th Aggressor Squadron, Eielson Air Force Base, Alaska, are working with Royal Australian Air Force Air Warfare Centre instructors to train and prepare RAAF fighter combat instructors, airspace battle managers, fighter intelligence instructors and fighter combat controllers.

Exercise Diamond Shield 2017, the second of four Diamond Series exercises conducted by the RAAF Air Warfare Centre, is an Australian Defence Force training activity where high-readiness forces deploy quickly to remote locations in Australia in response to a simulated security threat. The exercise will see members of the ADF Navy, Army and Air Force rapidly deploy to counter a fictitious force posing a threat to Australia's national security in the Kimberley region in North Western Australia.

The Singapore Summit: Shaping a Way Ahead on the Korean Peninsula

06/15/2018

By Richard Weitz

Although the results of the summit are still unclear given the vague joint statement and lack of North Korean comments, on the surface it looks like President Trump made major concessions now in order to achieve hoped-for US gains later.

The mere fact that the presidential summit occurred—the first between a sitting U.S. president and a North Korean leader—represents a gain for Kim, who can act as an equal with the president of the United States.

The North Korean leader also did not overtly commit to complete, verifiable, irreversible, and permanent disarmament.

Even the timing of the first step—the DPRK's declaration of its current nuclear assets and activities—is unstated.

As expected, the US does not appear to have pressed North Korea on human rights, cybercrimes, and other bad behavior. These issues may be raised, if not resolved, in later DPRK-US, and eventually multilateral, discussions.

More surprising, rather than declare a relaxation of some US sanctions, Trump announced that he would suspend ROK-US military exercises.

Their cessation would be welcome in Moscow and Beijing but will generate alarm among some US allies since the reason Trump gave for their halt—namely, to save money—could apply to any US foreign military drill.

Yes, military exercises cost money, but they also serve an important deterrence, reassurance, and readiness function.

The extent to which the White House informed allies in advance of this possible suspension also is unclear, though the BBC says that the Chinese apparently knew about the cessation in advance.

Fortunately, as President Trump himself noted, this concession is easy to reverse if North Korea resumes its provocations.

The presumption is that North Korea will continue to freeze its nuclear and long-range missile tests or risk a resumption of these drills, more US sanctions, and perhaps US direct action.

US sanctions relief may occur as Pyongyang takes actually steps towards eliminating these capabilities.

Unfortunately, China and Russia will likely exploit the joint DPRK-US statement and other declarations of intent to justify relaxing sanctions on the DPRK, with little likelihood that they will return any time soon.

The Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson already offered this position before the summit.

That said, Trump's emphasis on how the supposedly growing trust between the US and DPRK governments will ensure verification seems misplaced—with effective means of verification, such as onsite inspection, you don't need trust, which is likely unattainable between these two countries given their lengthy history of conflict.

It is puzzling, however, why many of these concessions—the end of US-South Korean exercises, further North Korean disarmament measures, and other issues raised in Trump's news conference—were not mentioned in the joint statement. It might be a few more days until we know the details of what actually occurred.

This is the pattern followed by previous denuclearization agreements with North Korea. In the past, the signatories would agree to sweeping declarations of intent, but then the deals would collapse at the level of implementation, with both sides accusing the other of bad faith.

One recalls then Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin's remarks about Russian reform efforts: “We wanted to do better, but it turned out as always” (Хотели как лучше, а получилось как всегда).

In all likelihood, the only enduring solution to the North Korean challenge is regime change, reunification, and the transformation of both Koreas into something that looks like a larger version of contemporary South Korea.

Of course, conditions are somewhat different this time than with previous failed efforts at reconciliation—there is a new leader in Pyongyang, the sanctions imposed on North Korea are greater than ever, and the Chinese and Russians are overtly anxious at Trump's cultivated reputation for unpredictability and shooting from the hip.

Venezuela, Russia and the Varieties of Hybrid War

05/29/2018

By Stephen Blank

For Clausewitz war was a chameleon.

And what we now call hybrid war is inherently a protean chameleon-like process encompassing many dimensions of human activity that are or have hitherto not been thought to be connected with war.

Venezuela, both of its own accord and as a Russian proxy embodies that chameleon-like condition even though it is clearly is a failing if not failed state.

Indeed, Venezuela's status as a failed state makes it an inherent challenge if not threat to Latin American and Caribbean security.

Caracas' policies and Russia's use of Venezuela as a proxy for its own interests adds to the security challenges manifest in what we now call hybrid war and not only in Latin America or the Caribbean.

In and of itself Venezuela under the current Maduro regime has endeavored to preserve the policies embraced by Hugo Chavez.

Among such policies are the following:

- **Sponsorship of a Bolivarian Revolution throughout Latin America,**
- **Running guns to the FARC during the Colombian insurgency,**
- **Collaborating with Iran's nuclear program,**
- **Providing a haven for Arab terrorists in Latin America, becoming a transshipment center for drug trafficking throughout the Americas,**
- **Buying billions in Russian arms and distributing them to insurgents across Latin America (including the FARC),**
- **And Supporting Russian efforts to set up intelligence cooperation and organizations for that purpose with like-minded Latin American governments, e.g. Ecuador, relieving sanctions on Cuba etc.**

Furthermore, Chavez importuned Moscow not just for a formal alliance, which it resisted, but also for participation in the Bolivarian Alternative for Latin America and the Caribbean (ALBA).

President Medvedev in 2008 indicated Russia's willingness to discuss participation in this organization since it accords with Russia's ideas about a multipolar world and international division of labor.

This move not only added a seeming legitimacy to Moscow's presence in Latin America it accorded with past policy aiming to be a member of any multilateral association that would welcome it.

Thus Russia expressed to Argentina its interest in becoming an observer at the South American Defense Council that is part of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR).

Russia also wants to participate as an observer in the Latin America Association of Training Centers for Peace Operations (Alcopaz)

In other words, Venezuela was and remains not only a center in support of insurgency and what we now call (whether rightly or not) hybrid war, it also made itself available to Moscow as a willing proxy for the advancement of Russian military and political goals in Latin America.

And this relationship has lasted for over a decade.

More recently Moscow through Igor Sechin's company, Rosneft, has sprung to the relief of Venezuela by buying up its debt in return for equity in PDVSA the national oil company.

This also gives Moscow potential leverage over the CITGO gasoline company network in the U.S. which is 50% owned by PDVSA. Should PDVSA go bankrupt or more likely Venezuela default on its debts, an outcome that seems increasingly inevitable, especially in the light of its falling oil production, Moscow stands to gain the chance to take control of CITGO.

Rosneft need only buy a few bonds to take over PDVSA.

But beyond this possibility we can easily envision another, a more direct military possibility should Venezuela default.

Moscow has used debt for equity schemes in the former Soviet territory to take over not just critical national economic sectors among the successor states but also to compel them to grant it bases in perpetuity or at least for many decades.

A similar process is occurring in Syria where the Russian intervention has allowed Moscow to gain not only privileged niches in Syria's economy, particularly the energy sector, but also a naval base at Tartus and the Khmeimim Air Base.

In Venezuela's case we could well see a situation emerging under conditions of default where Moscow not only seizes control of PDVSA but also uses the leverage it has accrued to extract governmental support for a naval base in Venezuela.

This is hardly as far-fetched as it may seem to some observers.

On February 26, 2014 Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu announced that Russia would establish permanent bases in Cuba, Vietnam, Nicaragua, Singapore, the Seychelles Islands off Africa.

While these might not be naval bases on the order of the formal U.S. appellation of naval bases across the globe, it is clear that these would be used, inter alia, to facilitate Russian power projection and intelligence gathering as well as to sustain Russian political influence in the host country.

We already see the navy moving forward on its plans for bases throughout the Levant and the Eastern Mediterranean and Nicaragua is already very deeply penetrated by Russia.

A naval base there is by no means out of the question.

Similarly an air or naval base in Venezuela in return for financial and political support cannot be summarily excluded from the realm of possibility.

And at the same time Venezuela's ongoing willingness to be Moscow's proxy allows it to be used for purposes going beyond South America.

It is safe to say that Venezuela now depends on Russia for its economic survival and serves Moscow in ways that go beyond Latin America.

In November 2017, Russian propaganda outlets *RT* and *Sputnik* disseminated a barrage of messages on social media related to Venezuela and the ideas of its late leader Hugo Chavez to launch a withering information attack on Spain in the aftermath of the referendum on Catalanian independence.

Since then it has become a matter of public record that Moscow has routed thousands of bots and cyber-attacks on Spain in support of the Catalanian referendum on independence through Venezuela to make it more difficult to trace them and to pretend that they originated in Spanish speaking countries.

This online campaign demonstrated how Russian media access in Latin America enables Moscow to obtain the means by which it can wage information war against Spain and other Luso-Hispanic movements and communities in both the Western and Eastern hemispheres.

Indeed, US officials have recently reiterated charges that Russia is interfering in Mexico's upcoming presidential elections.

None of the actions undertaken by Caracas in its own behalf or on behalf of Russia amounts to a *casus belli* or an example of war, classically understood.

But its direct and proxy actions, taken in their totality, highlight the protean political, economic, informational, and military dimensions of what is now called hybrid war, a phenomenon that "transgresses" conventional lines between war and non-war or peace.

Venezuela's actions and role fully reflect the chameleon-like nature of contemporary war and will continue to do so.

And when the state fails completely as seems ultimately likely not only will we see the real possibility for large-scale internal violence, that violence could conceivably "jump" the state's borders and engulf other Latin American countries in its flames.

As Venezuela suggests today, peacetime, at least for aggressor states, is increasingly nothing more than a cover for preparatory moves in a wartime scenario below the threshold that would lead to large-scale kinetic clashes.

The lessons it offers therefore merit careful and ongoing scrutiny and not only in Latin America.

Stephen Blank is a Senior Fellow of the American Foreign Policy Council