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Civilian-Based Resistance in the Baltic States

Historical Precedents and Current Capabilities



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About This Report

Recent investment in Baltic national resilience measures has enhanced the ability of civilian populations to navigate a variety of contingencies, including resistance to a notional foreign aggressor. In this report, we examine historical and current approaches to Baltic civilian resistance through an original analytical framework linking civilian resistance activities to the strategic objective of achieving national independence. Informed by theoretical and empirical literature on resistance, the report offers insights on episodes of Baltic armed resistance from 1940 to 1955 and unarmed resistance from 1955 to 1991, as well as more-recent plans and policies to prepare Baltic populations for civil emergencies. Drawing from this analysis, we identify contributions that Baltic civilians could make during an occupation scenario to efforts to impose costs on an adversary, secure external support, deny an occupier's political and economic consolidation, reduce an occupier's capacity for repression, and maintain and expand popular support for resistance.

Human Subject Protections (HSP) protocols were followed in this study and subsequent report, in accordance with the appropriate statutes and U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) regulations governing HSP. The views of the sources rendered anonymous by HSP are solely their own and do not represent the official policy or position of DoD or the U.S. Government. The research reported here was completed in August 2020 and underwent security review with the sponsor and the Defense Office of Prepublication and Security Review before public release.

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Summary

In this report, we examine the contributions that Baltic civilian populations could make to resistance against occupation. An extensive history of resistance to foreign occupation during the 20th century provides the Baltic states with distinct context and insights on the subject.

More recently, national governments in each of the Baltic states have dedicated time and resources to improving civilian resilience measures for civil emergencies. Although these efforts do not focus exclusively on scenarios involving occupation by a foreign aggressor, they serve to strengthen the capacity for civilian-based resistance should that scenario unfold. Our research and analysis was motivated by a recognition that Baltic civilians could make substantive contributions to a broader resistance campaign, as well as a desire to better understand the nature and effectiveness of those contributions.

To consider how current Baltic policies and activities might enhance civilian capacity for resistance, we derived an analytical framework from existing theoretical and empirical literature on civilian contributions to resistance. The framework comprises five proximate objectives that conceptually link the tactics and actions of civilian-based campaigns to the desired resistance outcome: independence from occupation. These objectives, selected because of their likelihood of contributing to independence from occupation, are as follows:

1. imposing direct or indirect costs on an occupying force
2. securing external support
3. denying occupier's political and economic consolidation

4. reducing occupier's capacity for repression
5. maintaining and expanding popular support.

Applying this framework, we first address historic examples of armed and unarmed resistance in the Baltic states from 1940 to 1991, an area of relatively limited analysis and understanding. This analysis serves to check the effectiveness and relevance of each of the objectives in prior Baltic contexts and offer new insights on historic resistance mechanisms that could be relevant in a future case. The historical case studies also provide insights into how external factors, such as geopolitical factors and occupier objectives or strategy, can influence the effectiveness and relevance of each objective. Next, we draw from extensive research, including analysis of publicly available Baltic government documents, local and international media reporting, and field research from a study trip to the Baltic region, to examine current efforts of the Baltic states that might help prepare their civilian populations to resist external threats.

We conclude that, during a scenario in which allied forces assisted the Baltic states in regaining territorial sovereignty, civilian-based resistance could prepare the ground both through direct support to military forces and through contributions to the information and security environment. The findings suggest that civilians in particular can represent a powerful asset in the competition for information and messaging, as well as in spearheading national political continuity and powering civic mobilization. Civilians also would likely be at the helm of economic emergency plans that, if successful, could buffer the impact of occupation on civilian communities and increase the costs of occupation on the aggressor by denying food, energy, and other necessary resources to adversary forces. Throughout the struggle, clear delineation of military and civilian roles would be critical in protecting vulnerable populations, while mechanisms to provide opportunities for civilians to contribute throughout a spectrum of risk would enable civilian participation based on individual risk tolerance.

The recommendations in this report identify tangible areas of support that allies could provide in the current environment to further improve Baltic civilian preparedness for resistance to future notional

external aggression. Several areas stand out as potential priorities because of their centrality across resistance objectives. These priority areas include supporting civilian capacity for information competition, improving the security and resilience of vital infrastructure and supplies, developing civilian capability and a knowledge base for civil defense, incorporating civilian contributions into allied military planning, and conducting and advising exercises that coordinate Baltic civilian entities with local and allied military forces.

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Abbreviations

CCDCOE	North Atlantic Treaty Organization Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence
EU	European Union
GDP	gross domestic product
KASP	<i>Krašto apsaugos savanorių pajėgos</i> (Lithuanian National Defence Volunteer Forces)
KGB	<i>Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopastnosti</i> (Committee for State Security)
LRU	Lithuanian Riflemen's Union
MOND	Ministry of National Defence
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NKVD	<i>Narodnyi Komissariat Vnutrennikh Del</i> (People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs)
SOCEUR	Special Operations Command Europe
SOF	special operations forces
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
UN	United Nations
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
WWI	World War I
WWII	World War II

Introduction

In recent years, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) alliance has taken steps to enhance its role in the defense and deterrence of the Baltic region. This prioritization reflects greater concerns about revisionist Russian behavior, including Russia's 2014 military intervention into Crimea and eastern Ukraine, as well as a recognition of challenges inherent to the geography of the region and local imbalance of ground forces. Although discussion of Baltic defense has predominantly addressed traditional military requirements, some analysts have also identified potential roles for unconventional measures, including internally based resistance.¹

For Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, collective security guarantees provided by Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty—and most significantly by the United States—represent the cornerstone of national security. In light of the region's devastating experience of World War II (WWII) and extended 20th-century Soviet occupation, when Western nations declined to intervene militarily to preserve or reestablish Baltic independence despite dedicated internal resistance efforts, Baltic governments would certainly seek a swift and decisive allied military response to any Russian military aggression on Baltic territory. The conventional imbalance between Russia's military and any one

¹ See, for example, Atlantic Council, "Baltic Porcupine: Harnessing the Fourth Industrial Revolution to Defend the Baltic States," event recap, July 11, 2019; and Stephen J. Flanagan, Jan Osburg, Anika Binnendijk, Marta Kepe, and Andrew Radin, *Deterring Russian Aggression in the Baltic States Through Resilience and Resistance*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, RR-2779-OSD, 2019.

of the Baltic states makes allied military intervention the most effective instrument for defense and deterrence against Russian territorial infringement.

In addition to an emphasis on allied military defense, Baltic states have undertaken extensive efforts in recent years to improve national defenses through both conventional and unconventional means. In pursuing this, Baltic leaders cite Article 3 of the NATO charter, which calls on member states to “maintain and develop their individual and collective capacity to resist armed attack.”² Significant increases in military spending to meet and sometimes exceed NATO’s 2 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) guideline represent part of this effort: In the case of Lithuania, defense expenditure has tripled since 2013.³

Development of individual capacity to resist armed attack has also included Baltic civilian populations. Although Russian occupation of national territory would represent an unlikely and highly undesirable scenario for the Baltic states, a robust civilian role could become critically important should the contingency occur, with lagging national decisionmaking and mobilization timelines possibly delaying NATO’s response.⁴ Thus, as U.S. Army BG Edward B. Atkeson wrote of West Germany in 1976, national civilian-based resistance could represent a “fallback defense capability.”⁵ The general elaborated that, with the recognition that “military deterrence may fail and that military defense may not prove adequate, the [West German] government

² NATO, “Resilience and Article 3,” webpage, last updated March 31, 2020. See also Andrew E. Kramer, “Spooked by Russia, Tiny Estonia Trains a Nation of Insurgents,” *New York Times*, October 31, 2016.

³ Michael E. O’Hanlon and Christopher Skoluba, “A Report from NATO’s Front Lines,” *Order from Chaos* blog, Brookings Institution, June 13, 2019.

⁴ For recent analysis in this area, see Anika Binnendijk and Miranda Priebe, *An Attack Against Them All? Drivers of Decisions to Contribute to NATO Collective Defense*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, RR-2964-OSD, 2019; and Marta Kepe, “Preparing for the NATO Summit: Why Military Mobility Should Be on Top of the Agenda,” *RealClearDefense*, February 26, 2018.

⁵ Edward B. Atkeson, “The Relevance of Civilian Based Defense to US Security Interests, Part II,” *Military Review*, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kan., June 1976.

might wish to prepare the people for continuing resistance under foreign occupation.” Indeed, across the Baltic states, officials have reiterated the mantra that “loss of territory does not equal loss of the war.”⁶ Colonel Riho Ühtegi, commander of the Estonian Defence League, viewed his previous role as the commander of the Estonian Special Operations Force as a “force-multiplier. . . . [D]uring peacetime, able to build national total resistance against whatever enemy.”⁷

RAND discussions across the region during September 2019 suggest that Baltic officials also view national resilience and resistance capabilities as an element of deterrence, albeit less significant than allied collective security commitments.⁸ In his reaction to previous RAND Corporation analysis on Baltic resistance, Latvian Minister of Defence Artis Pabriks stated in 2019 that although allied and national military capabilities remain the country’s primary means of defense and deterrence, “Still, we should all remember that . . . [every one] of us is responsible for national security. If our people are ready to defend Latvia, no aggressor will ever dare to attack our country.”⁹ Certainly, the prospect of a highly contested occupation would increase the assumed resource requirements for Russian defense planners and could plausibly deter decisionmakers seeking a low-cost option to challenge the NATO alliance.

Study Scope and Assumptions

Our study draws conceptually from multiple bodies of literature, including special operations doctrine and theoretical and empirical work on resistance. The analysis particularly benefits from insights developed in the Resistance Operating Concept, a 2019 publication developed by

⁶ Flanagan et al., 2019.

⁷ Molly McKew, “‘They Will Die in Tallinn’: Estonia Girds for War with Russia,” *Politico Magazine*, July 10, 2018.

⁸ RAND interview in Latvia, 2019.

⁹ Ministry of Defence of Latvia, “Pabriks: RAND Corporation Makes Recommendations on How to Promote Defence Readiness,” April 16, 2019.

members of Special Operations Command Europe (SOCEUR), academic contributors from the Swedish Defence University, and practitioners from other countries.¹⁰ A publicly available brief prepared by SOCEUR further defines *resistance*—and its objectives—as a “nation’s organized, whole of society effort . . . to reestablish independence and autonomy within its sovereign territory . . . occupied by a foreign power.”¹¹ These efforts are viewed as distinct from *insurgency*, the “organized use of subversion and violence to seize, nullify, or challenge political control of a region.”¹² This definition of resistance—and its desired outcome—is applied throughout our report.

The scope of the study is limited to the contributions of civilian populations and entities to national resistance. Previous RAND analysis has addressed the full variety of irregular warfare contributions of Baltic states.¹³ While acknowledging the critical role of conventional military defense, as well as unconventional military activities under the umbrella of national defense institutions, our analysis focuses specifically on those civilian contributions outside the scope of national armed forces.

However, we assume that civilian contributions to national resistance in the Baltic states would likely take place in the context of a broader armed campaign to oust the occupying power. Although civilians are distinct from combatants, they may play an important supporting role. In this respect, our study’s concept of resistance is consistent with the *Resistance Operating Concept*, which defines *resistance* as “encompassing the full range of activities from nonviolent to violent.”¹⁴ Our report diverges from other works on “civilian-based defense” and

¹⁰ Monique O’Neill, “SOCEUR and Swedish Defense University Collaborate on Academic Publication, the Resistance Operating Concept (ROC),” Defense Visual Information Distribution Service, December 2, 2019. See also Otto Fiala, *Resistance Operating Concept*, Stockholm, Sweden: Swedish Defence University, 2019a.

¹¹ Otto C. Fiala, “Special Operations Command Europe Resistance Operating Concept,” briefing slides, Special Operations Command Europe, May 2019b.

¹² Fiala, 2019b.

¹³ Flanagan et al., 2019.

¹⁴ Fiala, 2019b.

“civil resistance,” which often exclusively address unarmed methods.¹⁵ Our report does, however, identify potential areas of risk associated with the combination of armed and unarmed methods in order to consider potential ways to mitigate the impact of their convergence.¹⁶

Furthermore, our report addresses potential civilian response to occupation through a large-scale conventional military incursion into the Baltics. Recent examples of Russian interventions in the post-Soviet region, including interventions in Crimea, Ukraine, and South Ossetia, Georgia, have employed “hybrid” or “gray zone” activities, including nonviolent and covert activities, to leverage the latent support of local populations. However, recent RAND analysis suggests that in the Baltic context, a would-be occupier is unlikely to achieve significant results through nonviolent or covert violent tactics alone, and that conventional military incursion represents the greatest Baltic vulnerability.¹⁷ Therefore, we focus our attention on this “worst-case” scenario.

¹⁵ In 1972, for example, one leading theorist of “civilian-based defense” observed that “[m]erely to add civil resistance to existing military defence could raise serious problems, as the dynamics by which the two techniques operate are very different. Civil resistance, if it was not accepted as a complete alternative, would need to be clearly separate from military defence in place, in time, and in organizational structure, and in other ways” (Adam Roberts and Timothy Garton Ash, eds., *Civil Resistance and Power Politics: The Experience of Non-Violent Action from Gandhi to the Present*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009, p. 11).

¹⁶ More-recent empirical research, for example, suggests that large-scale maximalist nonviolent campaigns sometimes succeed in conjunction with violent flanks from inside or outside the movement, though seldom because of them, and that these violent components may hinder success by reducing participation in a campaign, eliciting violent reprisals, and reinforcing the resolve of opposing security forces. See Erica Chenoweth and Kurt Schock, “Do Contemporaneous Armed Challenges Affect the Outcomes of Mass Nonviolent Campaigns?” *Mobilization*, Vol. 20, No. 4, December 1, 2015, pp. 427–451; and Erica Chenoweth and Maria J. Stephan, “Violence Is a Dangerous Route for Protesters,” *Foreign Policy*, December 18, 2019.

¹⁷ A 2017 RAND report on Russian hybrid warfare in the Baltic states concludes:

Given the gains in standard of living and increasing integration of many Russian speakers in the Baltics, Russia will likely have difficulty using nonviolent tactics to destabilize these countries. Russian covert violent action is also unlikely to succeed on its own, given preparations by the security forces of Estonia and Latvia The preparedness and relative competence of these security forces would likely compel Russia to choose between losing the conflict or escalating to conventional war with NATO members. The main vulnerability of the Baltics therefore lies in Russia’s local conventional supe-

Finally, we assume that resistance activities within the Baltic states would take place during a limited time frame. The *Resistance Operating Concept* delineates resistance as pursued over a “relatively short term, measured in months and perhaps as much as a year, while external allied and partner conventional forces prepare to oust the occupier.”¹⁸ Our report’s historical chapters necessarily address longer-term campaigns because of the extended duration of the 20th-century Soviet occupation of the Baltic region.

Research Questions and Approach

We examine two major questions: How might Baltic civilians contribute to success in achieving the desired outcome of national independence during an occupation scenario? And how could current initiatives in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania enhance Baltic civilian capacity to contribute to resistance?

We apply a qualitative approach to respond to these questions. First, we identify and apply an analytical framework through which to consider the efforts of a civilian-based resistance against occupation. Drawing on insights from existing literature on resistance, we identify five proximate objectives that are likely to contribute to the ultimate outcome of successful resistance. In Chapter Two, we link each of these proximate objectives to the desired outcome of independence and identify relevant historical examples to show how the existence or absence of each objective contributed to a successful or failed outcome in each case.

Historic cases of Baltic resistance offer important context for how current Baltic governments and populations might view resistance. These examples are useful in part because they provide continuity in

riority. (Andrew Radin, *Hybrid Warfare in the Baltics: Threats and Potential Responses*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, RR-1577-AF, 2017, p. vii)

¹⁸ The 2019 *Resistance Operating Concept* notes that only if a nation “lacks external allies and partners committed to forcefully assist in the restoration of its national sovereignty in the short-term, will this become a long-term struggle” (Fiala, 2019a, p. 74).

culture, language, and national memory that is of continued relevance today. In Chapters Three and Four, we trace how historical resistance campaigns in the Baltics achieved—or did not achieve—these intermediate objectives across different historical periods and how these objectives in turn contributed to civil resistance outcomes. In Chapter Three, relevant incidents of resistance to German and Soviet occupation, spanning from 1940 to 1955, offer perspectives on a predominantly armed campaign with little external support. Chapter Four provides analysis of the predominantly unarmed resistance from 1955 to Baltic independence in 1991. Our goal in these chapters is to provide insight into the mechanisms of civilian resistance by considering the application of historic actions and tactics and their linkage to strategic outcomes. We also consider which elements of civilian resistance were particularly influenced by exogenous factors, such as adversary strategy, resource availability, or international context.

In Chapter Five, we consider the state of current preparations within the Baltic states for societal resistance and resilience. These conclusions rely on analysis of public Baltic government documents, local and international media reporting, and interviews with officials and experts conducted during field research in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania in September 2019, as well as in Washington, D.C. In Chapter Six, the report concludes with overarching observations derived from the empirical research and theoretical framework and offers recommendations for allies seeking to support the development of Baltic resistance capacity.

Proximate Resistance Objectives for Civilians Under Occupation

Our study draws theoretical insights from existing literature on “civilian resistance,” which gained attention in the mid-20th century as a potential line of defense for countries at the forefront of Cold War power blocs.¹ As one leading theorist, Gene Sharp, described it, civilian defense represents

a policy [in which] the whole population and the society’s institutions become the fighting forces. Their weaponry consists of a vast variety of forms of psychological, economic, social, and political resistance and counterattack. This policy aims to deter attacks and to defend against them by preparations to make a society unrulable by would-be-tyrants and aggressors.²

More recently, a rich and expanding body of analysis has addressed the dynamics of civilian contributions to a variety of conflict types, including foreign occupation, colonial struggles, anti-corruption struggles, and domestic regime change.³

¹ Adam Roberts, ed., *Civilian Resistance as a National Defense: Non-Violent Action Against Aggression*, Harrisburg, Pa.: Stackpole Books, 1968.

² Gene Sharp, *Making Europe Unconquerable: The Potential of Civilian-Based Deterrence and Defense*, Cambridge, Mass.: Ballinger Publishing Co., 1985, p. 2.

³ See, for example, Shaazka Beyerle, *Curtauling Corruption: People Power for Accountability and Justice*, Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2014; and Erica Chenoweth and Maria J. Stephan, *Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2011.

The literature on armed and unarmed resistance suggests that civilians can contribute to a successful resistance outcome by achieving key proximate, or intermediate, objectives. We selected an approach that focused on proximate objectives because they provide a strategic link between the actions or tactics that civilian resistance may pursue and their desired outcome. This chapter highlights five proximate objectives that have been correlated in literature on resistance with successful outcomes. Drawing from the definition of resistance used by SOCEUR, we define a successful outcome for civilians contributing to a resistance movement as a nation's *reestablishment of independence and autonomy within its sovereign territory that has been occupied by a foreign power*.⁴ This outcome incorporates both the ouster of the occupying power and the reassertion of national control by the occupied government.

This chapter provides a rationale for the inclusion of each of the five proximate objectives in the report. Each subsection presents logic linking the proximate objective to a successful outcome and cites historical examples to illustrate how the existence or absence of the objective contributed to a successful or failed outcome.

Each subsection also identifies potential tactics and actions by which these proximate objectives might be pursued. Throughout the course of a campaign, diversifying tactics and actions might be more likely to yield success. Studies of violent resistance suggest that the employment of multiple tactics stretches the defenses of an aggressor, helps groups achieve tactical success, and threatens the position of the opponent more broadly.⁵ Literature on nonviolent action also indicates that diversifying tactics increases the resilience of movements. While some tactics, such as protests, are concentrated in nature, others, such as boycotts, are more dispersed and apply different pressures on their

⁴ A publicly available presentation for a SOCEUR-led seminar on unconventional warfare and resistance specifies that resistance seeks to “reestablish independence and autonomy within . . . [a nation’s] sovereign territory that has been wholly or partially occupied by a foreign power” (Fiala, 2019b).

⁵ Michael C. Horowitz, Evan Perkoski, and Philip B. K. Potter, “Tactical Diversity in Militant Violence,” *International Organization*, Vol. 72, No. 1, Winter 2018.

target.⁶ The use of diversified tactics and continuous shifting between dispersed and concentrated modes of contention is important insofar as it makes repression more difficult for the opponent and increases the ability of movements to survive in the face of repression. In either armed or unarmed conflict, an opponent may become more unbalanced if it is forced to attack resisters on multiple fronts.

Finally, each subsection also discusses how the proximate objectives that a resistance campaign pursues can vary in significance according to the individual circumstances of the occupation, including the objectives, strategies, and tactics pursued by the occupier.⁷ An occupier that seeks to control territory for political or nationalist reasons, for example, might respond differently to some dimensions of a resistance strategy than another occupier that is focused primarily on control of natural resources or territorial occupation as an expedient or temporary condition necessary for a broader military objective. Furthermore, the individual realities of an occupier, including political or resource constraints, could also influence the relative significance of the strategic objectives of the resistance.

The five proximate objectives presented in this chapter are summarized in Table 2.1. Each is linked to potential contributions to a successful outcome, as well as to relevant tactics and actions that civilians might take—or have historically taken—in pursuit of that outcome.

Imposing Direct or Indirect Costs on an Occupying Force

Analysts of military occupations have observed that an occupier must weigh any benefits of an occupation against the sum of its costs.⁸ Such

⁶ Kurt Schock, *Unarmed Insurrections: People Power Movements in Nondemocracies*, Vol. 22, Minneapolis, Minn.: University of Minnesota Press, 2005.

⁷ Ivan Arreguín-Toft, for example, argues that “the interaction of actor strategies during a conflict predicts conflict outcomes better than do competing explanations” (Ivan Arreguín-Toft, “How the Weak Win Wars: A Theory of Asymmetric Conflict,” *International Security*, Vol. 26, No. 1, Summer 2001, p. 95).

⁸ David M. Edelstein, “Occupational Hazards: Why Military Occupations Succeed or Fail,” *International Security*, Vol. 29, No. 1, Summer 2004.

Table 2.1
Proximate Objectives

Proximate Objective	Potential Contribution to Success	Relevant Tactics and Actions
Imposing direct or indirect costs on an occupying force	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make it untenable or undesirable for occupying power to remain. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase personnel and material requirements through sabotage, armed force, or noncooperation. • Elicit international sanctions. • Target domestic political audiences in aggressor state.
Securing external support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase international pressure to withdraw. • Enhance resources for resistance. • Apply direct costs through military intervention or sanctions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage in targeted outreach. • Leverage international institutions and relationships. • Apply communications strategy.
Denying an occupier's political and economic consolidation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preserve legitimacy and function of occupied government. • Deny adversary political or economic support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish government in exile. • Maintain control of resistance to ensure rule of law and legitimacy. • Prevent co-option of economic centers of gravity.
Reducing an occupier's capacity for repression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish backfire to erode occupier legitimacy.^a • Preserve popular will to resist. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relocate vulnerable populations. • Publicize acts of repression. • Clearly delineate noncombatants.
Maintaining and expanding popular support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broaden base and resilience of resistance. • Preserve popular will to resist. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create low-risk opportunities for participation. • Develop and maintain coherent message. • Establish effective communication systems.

^a*Backfire* refers to a dynamic that can occur when acts of violence by an occupying force, if exposed, elicit outrage within critical audiences and prompt them either to impose costs on the occupier or to provide the resistance with other forms of support.

costs include the financial costs of the personnel and equipment that must be deployed, administration that must be established, and human

casualties as a result of resistance to the occupation,⁹ as well as indirect costs, such as reputational costs if an occupation does not go as well as hoped.¹⁰

In an asymmetric conflict between civilians and occupying armed forces, civilians may impose costs on the occupier to alter that balance, seeking to ultimately make it undesirable (or untenable) for the occupier to maintain the occupation. According to this logic, raising the costs of an occupation could cause the occupier to withdraw earlier than it would absent those costs.¹¹

One element of civilian resistance strategy could therefore be to impose sufficient costs to alter the calculations of the occupier, prompt a withdrawal, and achieve the outcome of national independence. Deterring a potential aggressor with the prospect of an expensive and unpopular occupation could also represent one element of a broader strategy: As one U.S. defense analyst has noted, “Any bear can eat a porcupine, but they don’t.”¹²

There have been historical examples of occupiers determining that the benefits of occupation were no longer worth the costs. Faced with devastating losses after a 1999 battle in Grozny and unanticipatedly effective armed resistance throughout Chechnya, Russia pursued a settlement of the conflict and withdrew its forces two years later.¹³ During its decade-long occupation of Afghanistan, the Soviet Union had incurred considerable costs as a result of a robust Afghan insur-

⁹ Edelstein, 2004.

¹⁰ Edelstein, 2004.

¹¹ For this logic applied to armed conflict, see James D. Morrow, *Order Within Anarchy: The Laws of War as an International Institution*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014, p. 76.

¹² Atlantic Council, 2019.

¹³ In 1999, Russian military leaders underestimated the degree of resistance that Chechnyan fighters could mount, suggesting that the city could be taken in two hours with a single parachute regiment, and the rest of Chechnya subjugated in 72 hours (Richard H. Shultz, Jr., and Andrea J. Dew, *Insurgents, Terrorists, and Militias: The Warriors of Contemporary Combat*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2006, p. 105). Russian forces returned to Chechnya three years later.

gency campaign.¹⁴ Although the Soviets were largely able to contain and mitigate these costs, eventually they did alter national decision-making: In 1986, then-General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union Mikhail Gorbachev referred to the conflict as a “bleeding wound.”¹⁵ He later urged a rapid withdrawal, saying, “Otherwise, we’ll disgrace ourselves in every respect.”¹⁶

Within the context of modern Baltic civilian contributions, clearer distinctions between combatants and noncombatants would make nonviolent imposition of costs more relevant. Historically, populations that supply an important resource—such as labor—to an opposing force have sometimes successfully employed economic tactics, such as strikes, boycotts, or labor stoppages, to impose cost. There is some historical evidence to suggest that political and economic costs have played a role in the calculations of external forces. In 1980, for example, Druze day laborers responded to Israeli efforts to impose Israeli citizenship in the Golan Heights with a general strike, damaging industry in northern Israel and ultimately bringing the Israeli government to a negotiating position more favorable to the Druze population.¹⁷ In another example, though not of occupation, Tahitian civilians raised the costs of French nuclear testing near their shores by initiating a large-scale international boycott of French goods that damaged the French

¹⁴ Overall, the Soviet Union spent about \$7.5 billion from 1984 to 1987 alone (Artemy M. Kalinovsky and Sergey Radchenko, “Why Russia No Longer Regrets Its Invasion of Afghanistan,” *Washington Post*, February 15, 2019). Other reports indicate that Soviet deaths exceeded 15,000, with 35,000 wounded (Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia*, New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2000, p. 13; and Barnett R. Rubin, *The Search for Peace in Afghanistan: From Buffer State to Failed State*, New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1995, p. 7).

¹⁵ Office of Soviet Analysis, Central Intelligence Agency, “The Costs of Soviet Involvement in Afghanistan: An Intelligence Assessment,” Washington, D.C., February 1987, p. 11.

¹⁶ Kalinovsky and Radchenko, 2019.

¹⁷ Markus Schlotterbeck, “Golan Druze Resistance to Israeli Forced Citizenship, 1981–1982,” Global Nonviolent Action Database, June 17, 2019.

economy. These actions contributed to a French government decision to limit the testing.¹⁸

Nonviolent resistance groups have also altered occupier cost-benefit analysis by eliciting defections among adversary personnel, degrading their reliability and necessitating additional personnel investments.¹⁹ During France's post-World War I (WWI) occupation of the Ruhr, German citizens were reportedly able to successfully increase French costs of occupation by undermining the loyalty of French soldiers and requiring the French military to call up reserve forces amid doubts about the soldiers' willingness to obey orders.²⁰ High costs of occupation deepened the French budget deficit and increased public opposition to the military occupation.²¹ In 1978, Iranians used mass burials as opportunities both to mourn and to challenge the Shah's grip on his military, chanting such slogans as "Soldiers, you are guiltless. The Shah is the guilty one." Ultimately, the Shah departed Iran amid widespread disobedience within his military, during which soldiers, predominantly conscripts, were refusing orders, deserting ranks,

¹⁸ Hannah Jones, "Tahitians Campaign to Stop French Nuclear Testing, 1995," Global Nonviolent Action Database, March 22, 2011. There was a trade boycott of French products by New Zealand, Australia, and Japan. Jones writes:

Because of their boycott of Beaujolais wine, 44,000 cases of wine valued at \$270,000 were canceled. Tourism also went down 8% in 1995, leading to a loss of \$1 million in profits at French Club Med resorts. French aircraft manufacturer Dassault also lost a contract worth \$370 million because Australia banned them from bidding within their country.

¹⁹ Anika Locke Binnendijk and Ivan Marovic, "Power and Persuasion: Nonviolent Strategies to Influence State Security Forces in Serbia (2000) and Ukraine (2004)," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Vol. 39, No. 3, September 2006; and Sharp, 1985.

²⁰ Maciej Bartkowski, "Countering Hybrid War: Civil Resistance as a National Defence Strategy," openDemocracy, May 12, 2015b. See also Peter Ackerman and Jack DuVall, *A Force More Powerful: A Century of Nonviolent Conflict*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000.

²¹ Bartkowski, 2015b. This concept is central to the theory and practice of nonviolent resistance: The "pillars of support" that an aggressor or a regime relies on—bureaucrats, soldiers, police officers, and other supporters—are more likely to be co-opted by nonviolent methods than by violent means that threaten their security (Robert L. Helvey, *On Strategic Nonviolent Conflict: Thinking About the Fundamentals*, Boston, Mass.: Albert Einstein Institution, 2004).

fraternizing with protestors, and in some cases even handing over their weapons to them.²²

Most existing research on defections has considered internal domestic struggles, such as regime change. During an occupation, security forces may have more social distance from resistance forces than they would during struggles within their own societies, potentially reducing the likelihood that they would disobey repressive orders or defect.²³ One notable counterexample took place during the second Intifada, when a civil resistance movement within the Israeli military included the signature of a June 1988 petition by more than 500 reservists stating refusal to serve in the occupied territories.²⁴

Finally, within both violent and nonviolent campaigns, resistance forces may seek to impose political costs on a government, including by driving “a wedge between the aggressor’s government and its own society.”²⁵ This appears to have been one of the goals of the North Vietnamese government, exemplified when it invited U.S. actress and anti-war activist Jane Fonda for a two-week “fact-finding” visit.²⁶ During the first Palestinian Intifada (1987–1992), organized nonviolent resistance activities in the Occupied Territories polarized the Israeli public and temporarily strengthened progressive groups within Israeli

²² Ervand Abrahamian, “Mass Protests in the Iranian Revolution, 1977–79,” in Adam Roberts and Timothy Garton Ash, eds., *Civil Resistance and Power Politics: The Experience of Non-Violent Action from Gandhi to the Present*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009, p. 175.

²³ See, for example, Aurel Croissant, David Kuehn, and Tanja Eschenauer, “Mass Protests and the Military,” *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 29, No. 3, July 2018.

²⁴ Chenoweth and Stephan, 2011, p. 130. According to the authors, “Refusers argued that the type of military activities authorized and carried out in the occupied territories were immoral, did not promote Israel’s security, and were undermining Israeli democracy and world standing.”

²⁵ Bartkowski, 2015b.

²⁶ During the course of the visit, Fonda toured the local dike system, rumored to have been intentionally bombed by the United States, and made radio broadcasts imploring U.S. pilots to halt bombing (Colby Itkowitz, “How Jane Fonda’s 1972 Trip to North Vietnam Earned Her the Nickname ‘Hanoi Jane,’” *Washington Post*, September 21, 2018).

society.²⁷ However, the inclusion of violent acts, such as stone throwing, undermined Israeli public perceptions of the campaign, and the campaign was unsuccessful in achieving independence.²⁸

The sensitivity of an occupying power to costs imposed by a resistance movement may be influenced by factors beyond the scope of the resistance strategy, including the strategic objectives of the occupying power, the value that it places on the occupation, and the regime type of the occupying power. An opportunistic occupier may be more sensitive to cost, or potential cost, than one pursuing occupation tied to other strategic ambitions—e.g., as an expedient en route to another objective. WWII Germany was largely impervious to the costs created by the efforts of any individual country against German invasion because of its expansive strategic ambition.

The impact of cost on occupier decisionmaking also can be influenced by an occupier's own domestic political constraints. Prior to the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, for example, a resolution by the elected Congress of People's Deputies condemning Soviet participation gave voice to popular dissatisfaction.²⁹ One empirical study of 114 wars of occupation from 1800 to 2005 suggested that democratic occupiers were consistently more likely to withdraw from conflicts at significantly lower casualty levels than their autocratic counterparts.³⁰ Autocracies, though less sensitive to casualties, might not be entirely immune

²⁷ Souad Dajani, "Nonviolent Resistance in the Occupied Territories: A Critical Reevaluation," in Stephen Zunes, Lester R. Kurtz, and Sarah Beth Asher, eds., *Nonviolent Social Movements: A Geographical Perspective*, Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishing, 1999, p. 63.

²⁸ Chenoweth and Stephan, 2019.

²⁹ Kalinovsky and Radchenko, 2019.

³⁰ This difference might be explained by the institutional mechanisms that hold leaders accountable to a diversity of viewpoints in a democracy: Once political consensus around the need for a victorious outcome breaks down, it becomes more difficult for a democratic leader to convince the public of the rationale for continued human cost, particularly as criticism grows from within opposition elites and independent media, who may use existing casualty patterns to approximate future costs (Matthew Wells, "Casualties, Regime Type and the Outcomes of Wars of Occupation," *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, Vol. 33, No. 5, 2016).

to the impact of public opinion.³¹ Over the course of its military operations in Ukraine, the Russian government consistently sought to conceal the number of casualties from domestic and international audiences, including by classifying this information as a “military secret” and punishing individuals and organizations, including the Committee of Soldiers’ Mothers, who sought access to the information.

An occupier’s perception of acceptable risk is also likely to influence the impact of cost on decisionmaking. Prior RAND analysis of the political factors determining a large-scale Russian military intervention suggests that the Russian government is likely to consider the potential existential risks associated with the potential intervention—including the “risk of armed conflict with a superior adversary, specifically the United States”—as well as the perceived international legitimacy of the potential intervention.³² International economic sanctions imposed after Russia’s 2014 intervention in Crimea, for example, were likely considered to be limited and bearable and did not prompt Russia to reverse its actions. However, the threat of direct conflict with NATO, and the U.S. military in particular, appears to serve as a more robust deterrent.

Securing External Support

Civilian populations without the domestic capacity to impose significant direct costs upon an occupier may look to external sources of support. This support—whether material, provision of skills, diplomatic pressure, or, ultimately, external military intervention—provides occupied populations with coercive leverage that they would not otherwise

³¹ An absence of independent media and weak political opposition can reduce political pressure; when the sole opposition deputy in the Russian Duma inquired about Russian paratroopers who likely perished in Ukraine early in the conflict, the Russian Ministry of Defence denied involvement in the conflict and claimed that releasing the information would violate their right to privacy (Harley Balzer, “The Ukraine Invasion and Public Opinion,” *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 16, No. 1, Winter–Spring 2015).

³² Samuel Charap, Elina Treyger, and Edward Geist, *Understanding Russia’s Intervention in Syria*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, RR-3180-AF, 2019, p. 17.

have in their effort to oust the occupying power. One central objective for civilian resisters, therefore, might be to solicit the external support required for success.

Analysis of nonviolent anti-colonial and anti-occupation struggles suggests that civil resistance groups were most likely to achieve their desired outcomes when they were able to “look beyond their domestic struggle and extend their immediate battlefield outside the borders to mobilize external actors, including adversaries’ international allies.”³³ In 1960, for example, Zambian nationalists seeking independence from the United Kingdom were able to obtain the active support of several African leaders, enhancing their negotiation position and bringing them closer to their desired strategic outcome of independence.³⁴ In the case of Lebanese resistance against Syria, civilian efforts to garner external support contributed to a successful resistance outcome and the ouster of occupying forces. Massive protests in Lebanon against Syrian military occupation following the 2005 assassination of former prime minister Rafic Hariri specifically targeted an international audience; protestors flew flags in both English and Arabic to attract international media and diplomatic attention.³⁵ Civilian mobilization prompted the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to issue Resolution 1559, demanding that Syria withdraw all troops, military assets, and the intelligence apparatus from Syrian soil. Following the Syrian withdrawal, the United Nations (UN) Secretary General sent a team to ensure that Syria had fully complied with the resolution.³⁶

Quantitative assessment of violent resistance campaigns indicates that external state support triples their likelihood of success.³⁷ Within the context of violent resistance, foreign material support has helped

³³ Bartkowski, 2015b.

³⁴ Maciej J. Bartkowski, ed., *Recovering Nonviolent History: Civil Resistance in Liberation Struggles*, Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2013, p. 84.

³⁵ Tavaana, “The Cedar Revolution in Lebanon,” webpage, undated.

³⁶ “Syrian Troops Leave Lebanon After 29-Year Occupation” *New York Times*, April 26, 2005.

³⁷ Maria J. Stephan and Erica Chenoweth, “Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict,” *International Security*, Vol. 33, No. 1, Summer 2008, p. 22.

compensate for resistance groups' otherwise weak military capacity relative to an occupying force. For example, the Polisario guerrillas, engaged in an armed struggle for the independence of Western Sahara against Mauritanian and Moroccan occupying forces, received arms and aid from Algeria and Libya in the early 1980s. The influx of assistance helped the rebels defeat Mauritanian troops and reduce Moroccan control to a bare 15 percent of Western Sahara's territory, even though the military tide later turned against the movement. Elsewhere, other forms of outside support, such as foreign sanctuaries and the recruitment of foreign fighters, have increased the capacity of violent nonstate armed groups and reduced the ability of state forces to defeat them. Additional historic examples of the successful application of combat support include Indian support to East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) in its war of secession in 1971, NATO support to the Kosovo Liberation Army in 1998 and 1999, U.S. support to Afghan insurgents in 2001, and NATO support to Libyan insurgents in 2011. Thus, external military combat support by external powers can sometimes allow states to directly influence the outcome of a conflict through limited or unconventional military participation.

Ultimately however, for occupied populations facing an overwhelming and determined adversary, conventional military intervention by an external power may prove the primary determinant of success. The limited success of WWII resistance campaigns provides extensive examples. While French units maintained robust armed resistance against Nazi rule in WWII, they were unable to independently remove German forces and ultimately relied on U.S. and British intervention to regain independence.

In the case of Russian intervention, some types of external support are likely to have more impact than others. Throughout the Russian conflict with Ukraine, for example, external military support to the Ukrainian government increased the potential costs associated with further Russian incursions but did not lead to a withdrawal of Russian military advisers from the Donbass region. The support appears to be intended both to send a (limited) message and to create operational effects: In the words of one former defense official, it "tells the Russians that they can't go to Kyiv and create a vassal state or change the

geography of Europe again. . . . It also keeps a fair amount of Russian forces tied down that would otherwise be doing things directly against U.S. interests.”³⁸

Denying an Occupier’s Political and Economic Consolidation

A resistance movement is distinct from an insurgency in that it seeks to reestablish sovereign control of the legitimate national government rather than opposing an established (and often legitimate) government.³⁹ Preventing an occupier from consolidating political and economic control can contribute to this outcome in several ways. Politically, it enhances the viability of a resistance by asserting the continued legitimacy of the government.⁴⁰ Legitimacy and credibility can be further protected by the continuity of leadership and the protection of the rule of law during the course of resistance, including by providing oversight of resistance networks.⁴¹ Perhaps most significantly, denying an occupier’s political and economic consolidation facilitates a post-occupation national sovereignty by permitting continuity in governance and legal control. During WWII, eight exile governments representing countries and populations across occupied Europe were active in London.⁴² Once the war had ended, some of these legitimate govern-

³⁸ Howard Altman, “\$250 Million Aid Package to Ukraine Will Support US Security Too, Defense Experts Say,” *Military Times*, June 12, 2020.

³⁹ Fiala, 2019b.

⁴⁰ Fiala, 2019a, pp. 20, 21.

⁴¹ According to the *Resistance Operating Concept*, “At the national strategic level, this means retaining national sovereignty and regaining de facto authority over occupied territory” (Fiala, 2019a, p. 93). One factor in determining such legitimacy is ensuring that “all individuals and institutions, public and private, and the state itself are held accountable to the law,” with resistance activities adhering to the rule of law at all times (p. 37).

⁴² Pavol Jakubec, “Together and Alone in Allied London: Czechoslovak, Norwegian and Polish Governments-in-Exile, 1940–1945,” *International History Review*, Vol. 42, No. 3, 2020.

ments, such as the Dutch government, were able to return smoothly to governance.

The preservation of a nation's cultural and political structures can strengthen solidarity across an occupied society. One writer, considering civilian defense options for Western Europe during the Cold War, observed, "Contrary to the traditional military defence a civilian defence campaign does not pertain so much to a territorial defence, but to a defence of social values (i.e. freedom, democracy, peace etc. . . .) and the social structure (the way the society is organized in its entirety)."⁴³ During the course of longer occupations, protection of social and political values becomes more symbolic. During WWII, despite German hopes that Dutch society would assimilate with Nazi rule, most citizens retained loyalty to the Dutch royal family exiled in the United Kingdom, demonstrating allegiance with displays of carnations on national holidays.⁴⁴ Throughout the Cold War, religious worship across Europe provided both important social resistance networks and opportunities to retain spiritual traditions despite Communist prohibitions on religious activity.

Denying political and economic power to an occupier can also contribute to a successful resistance outcome by weakening the position of the external power. The premise of civilian defense is that the physical occupation of a territory does not necessarily imply control over its inhabitants and political or social institutions.⁴⁵ In the ideal, a "trained population and the society's institutions would be prepared to deny the attackers their objectives and to make consolidation of political control impossible."⁴⁶ Such an approach engages the population as a whole in "everyday warfare of a total and targeted noncooperation with the aggressor in all spheres of social, political, economic and cul-

⁴³ Gustaaf Geeraerts, "Two Approaches to Civilian Defence," *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 9, No. 4, October 1978, p. 316.

⁴⁴ Gavin Musynske, *Dutch Citizens Resist Nazi Occupation, 1940–1945*, Global Nonviolent Action Database, 2009.

⁴⁵ Geeraerts, 1978.

⁴⁶ Gene Sharp, *Civilian Based Defense: A Post-Military Weapons System*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990, pp. 2–3.

tural life.”⁴⁷ Noncooperation actions deny the aggressor “the means, services and information necessary to gain control . . . [over] the social institutions and structure of the nation concerned,” erode the legitimacy and efficacy of the occupying power, and make it more difficult for the aggressor to claim control over the occupied territory.⁴⁸ Such opposition thus challenges the sustainability of any occupation while also signaling to domestic and external audiences the illegitimacy of the occupation.

Finally, protection of national economic centers of gravity may protect national industry from exploitation by an occupier. In German-occupied Denmark, for example, Danish civilians conducted strikes, work slowdowns, “go home early” days, boycotts, and industrial sabotage.⁴⁹ Although these actions did not contribute to the ouster of German presence, they did undercut German efforts at economic exploitation of Danish industry. Similarly, economic resistance had played a major role during the 1923 French occupation of the German Ruhr, where control of coal was viewed as a center of gravity by both the Germans and their French occupiers.⁵⁰ In an effort to limit the French extraction of coal, mines began lowering production, hiding stocks within mine shafts, and adulterating some stocks to make them useless to French and Belgian industry, and they ultimately shut down amid widespread strikes.⁵¹

Recent Russian operations have directly sought to undermine local centers of control. During the 2014 Russian military takeover of Crimea, local government administrative and police buildings were among the first targets to be seized by paramilitary forces, with a subsequent “popular” referendum that purported to demonstrate

⁴⁷ Maciej J. Bartkowski, *Nonviolent Civilian Defense to Counter Russian Hybrid Warfare*, Washington, D.C.: Johns Hopkins University Center for Advanced Governmental Studies, March 2015a, p. 11.

⁴⁸ Geeraerts, 1978, p. 317. See also Bartkowski, 2015a.

⁴⁹ Bartkowski, 2015a, p. 12.

⁵⁰ Peter Ackerman and Christopher Kruegler, *Strategic Nonviolent Conflict: The Dynamics of People Power in the Twentieth Century*, Westport, Conn.: Praeger Publishers, 1994.

⁵¹ Ackerman and Kruegler, 1994.

95.5-percent support for Russian control.⁵² This approach targeted two dimensions of political control: the functional instruments of governance and the perceived legitimacy of the governing power. In the case of Crimea, there was limited organized internal resistance against either assault, and an intensive Russian strategic communications campaign sought to both legitimize and downplay the intervention.⁵³

Reducing an Occupier's Capacity for Repression

The protection of civilian populations from violence and repression represents, from a human security perspective, an end unto itself.⁵⁴ Beyond this, reducing an occupier's capacity to engage in repression serves strategic purposes that contribute to the desired outcome of ousting the occupying force. Exposing acts of repression can create new costs associated with repression that could damage the international or domestic position of the occupier. Steps to prevent or mitigate repression broaden and encourage participation and contribute to success. Finally, within the context of a broader resistance effort, the ability of civilians to prevent or mitigate repression against vulnerable populations allows indigenous security elements to focus on other operational tasks.

Acts of violence by an occupying force, if exposed, can elicit outrage within critical audiences and prompt them either to impose costs on the occupier or to provide the resistance with other forms of sup-

⁵² Bartkowski, 2015a; Chris Morris, "Crimea Referendum: Voters 'Back Russia Union,'" BBC News, March 16, 2014.

⁵³ Michael Kofman, Katya Migacheva, Brian Nichiporuk, Andrew Radin, Olesya Tkacheva, and Jenny Oberholtzer, *Lessons from Russia's Operations in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, RR-1498-A, 2017, p. 14.

⁵⁴ For a discussion of the UN human security approach, see United Nations Human Security Unit, *Human Security Handbook: An Integrated Approach for the Realization of the Sustainable Development Goals and the Priority Areas of the International Community and the United Nations System*, New York, January 2016.

port.⁵⁵ This dynamic has been labeled *backfire* or *political jiu-jitsu* by theorists of civil resistance. The backfire dynamic has been identified as critical to the success of East Timor's nonviolent resistance movement for independence against Indonesian occupation. A 1991 massacre during a protest funeral in Dili, the capital of East Timor, was covered by foreign photographers and videographers that the campaign had courted. The incident, called a "watershed" and the most important "single event" for the struggle by observers and historians, prompted significant international pressure on Indonesia, including diplomatic and economic sanctions, cessation of aid programs, and extensive media attention.⁵⁶ Later, when Indonesian troops went on a destructive rampage following an East Timorese referendum vote in favor of independence, media attention and popular outrage led to the deployment of UN troops to restore order: a critical step for East Timorese independence.⁵⁷

For the backfire dynamic to be effective, a resistance campaign may pursue several possible ways to promote outrage:

- exposing information about the repression
- validating the targets of repression
- interpreting the event or situation as unjust
- mobilizing public support and either avoiding or discrediting the opponent's communication channels
- refusing to be intimidated or bribed and exposing intimidation or bribery.⁵⁸

In light of the central role of communication in all of these efforts, it might be particularly important for a resistance campaign to have access to alternative sources of communication. In the context of West-

⁵⁵ Brian Martin, *Justice Ignited: The Dynamics of Backfire*, Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2006. See also Sharp, 1985.

⁵⁶ David Hess and Brian Martin, "Repression, Backfire, and the Theory of Transformative Events," *Mobilization*, Vol. 11, No. 1, June 2006, p. 257.

⁵⁷ Hess and Martin, 2006, p. 257.

⁵⁸ Martin, 2006.

ern Sahara's struggle to oust Moroccan occupying forces, for example, Morocco has maintained strict control over the flow of information into and out of the territory. Sahrawi activists responded by becoming savvy users of alternative media and communications technology, and these communications have reached international audiences quickly. Photos and videos taken of activists imprisoned in Moroccan jails have sparked international outrage, as well as rare criticism from Moroccan domestic media.⁵⁹ However, the efforts have not yet resulted in the ouster of Morocco from the region. As analysts have noted, the resistance movement has thus far failed to adequately consider how even minimal amounts of violence, such as throwing rocks or bottles at police, can be leveraged by occupation authorities as an excuse to escalate repression and can harm the resistance movement by reducing sympathy among potential allies.⁶⁰

This observation underscores a critical point regarding the importance of clarity surrounding the status of noncombatants. Use of armed force within a resistance movement may be used by the occupier as justification for an escalation in force.⁶¹ Notably, the 1977 Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions expands the conventions' scope of application to "armed conflicts in which peoples are fighting against colonial domination and alien occupation and against racist régimes in the exercise of their right of self-determination."⁶² It also requires that combatants "distinguish themselves from the civilian population while

⁵⁹ Stephen Zunes, and Jacob Mundy, *Western Sahara: War, Nationalism, and Conflict Irresolution*, Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2010, p. 165.

⁶⁰ Jacob Mundy and Stephen Zunes, "Western Sahara: Violence as a Last Resort," in Véronique Dudouet, ed., *Civil Resistance and Conflict Transformation: Transitions from Armed to Nonviolent Struggle*, New York: Routledge, 2015.

⁶¹ See Chenoweth and Stephan, 2011; Sharon Erickson Nepstad, *Nonviolent Revolutions: Civil Resistance in the Late 20th Century*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2011; and Jonathan Sutton, Charles R. Butcher, and Isak Svensson, "Explaining Political Jiu-Jitsu: Institution-Building and the Outcomes of Regime Violence Against Unarmed Protests," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 51, No. 5, 2014.

⁶² International Committee of the Red Cross, Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and Relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I), of 8 June 1977, Geneva, Switzerland, May 2010, p. 10.

they are engaged in an attack or in a military operation preparatory to an attack” to better protect the civilian population from the effects of hostilities.⁶³ Thus, for a campaign that includes both armed and unarmed lines of effort but seeks to protect elements of the population from repression—and to maximize the costs of actions that violate the terms of the Geneva Conventions—it is particularly critical to maintain explicit delineation between combatants and noncombatants, such as guerrilla units and those civilian groups that may support underground activities. Furthermore, because a resistance effort that incorporates violent acts may provoke retaliatory violence from the occupier, such acts can have a chilling effect on participation.⁶⁴ Thus, although these acts might represent an important dimension of the broader resistance, they must be weighed against the potential cost to movement participation and popular support.

In some cases, civilians supporting a resistance movement may also undertake steps to protect vulnerable populations or to facilitate their departure from the occupied region. During WWII, individual civilians in occupied European nations sought to hide Jewish populations under threat from Nazi forces. Perhaps most notable in their degree of success, Danish resisters to Nazi occupation coordinated escape routes for the majority of their Jewish population to neighboring Sweden through networks of civilian houses and fishing boats, protecting all but 472 of about 8,000 Danish Jewish civilians.⁶⁵ Although these actions did not contribute to the withdrawal of German forces from Denmark, they served a critical human security purpose and protected a population that would continue to contribute to Danish society following the war.

The relevance of efforts to reduce capacity for repression is highly dependent on the tactics that an occupying power chooses to employ, as well as its vulnerability to backfire dynamics. Levels of repression have varied across previous Russian interventions. In 1999, Russian air and

⁶³ International Committee of the Red Cross, 2010, p. 33.

⁶⁴ Chenoweth and Stephan, 2011.

⁶⁵ Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, “Symposium: Moral Moments: Making the Decision to Combat Injustice,” October 7, 2003.

artillery bombardments demolished Grozny, the capital of Chechnya, with “massive” civilian casualties reported: As of 2005, human rights organizations estimated a total of 75,000 civilian casualties during the two Chechen wars.⁶⁶ Fewer civilians were killed in Russia’s intervention in Ukraine’s Donbass region—2,800 during the first five years of the conflict—but extensive damage to regional infrastructure, particularly hospitals and clinics, constrained the availability of basic services, such as health care, and precipitated one of the “worst humanitarian crises in the world.”⁶⁷ A study group from the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom identified pervasive Russian harassment of religious minorities in Luhansk and Donetsk, instances of jailing of religious activists and scholars, and extensive persecution of the Tartar community in Crimea.⁶⁸ Were Russia to seek to invade a Baltic state, the protection of Baltic civilian populations would represent a major objective for civilian contributions to the resistance.

Maintaining and Expanding Popular Support

The ability of a resistance campaign to mobilize and coordinate popular support can also contribute to its desired outcome. Qualitative and quantitative analysis of nonviolent civil resistance movements suggests that active participation by a broad-based national coalition involving diverse groups and communities is correlated with the achievement of successful resistance outcomes.⁶⁹ Other research indicates that a coor-

⁶⁶ “Russia: Chechen Official Puts War Death Toll at 160,000,” RadioFreeEurope, August 16, 2005.

⁶⁷ Cynthia Buckley, Ralph Clem, Jarod Fox, and Erik Herron, “The War in Ukraine Is More Devastating Than You Know,” *Washington Post*, April 9, 2018.

⁶⁸ Clifford D. May and Thomas J. Reese, “Another Missed Opportunity: Russia Evades Designation for Religious Repression,” Atlantic Council, January 31, 2018.

⁶⁹ Chenoweth and Stephan, 2011.

minated society driven by common and coherent objectives is likely to put up more-effective resistance than a society that is more atomized.⁷⁰

Even in a campaign that includes armed elements, popular participation has been cited as a crucial component of the resistance, undertaking lower-risk methods to hinder an adversary's effort to consolidate power or providing support for other elements of the resistance.⁷¹ Within the context of guerrilla warfare, the support of the population was seen as critical by both Mao Tse-tung and Che Guevara: Mao argued that in the absence of the support of the people, the guerrilla is a fish out of water; "it cannot survive."⁷² Guevara stated that "the guerrilla fighter needs full help from the people. . . . This is an indispensable condition."⁷³ Twentieth-century U.S. Army doctrine similarly emphasized the role of the population in achieving success.⁷⁴ Within the context of insurgency as well, failure to gain popular support can be determinative: In Iraq's Anbar province, brutal tactics and objectives alienated local populations from Al Qaeda and ultimately led to an "insurgency against the insurgents."⁷⁵ In Afghanistan, some U.S. military officials lamented the degree to which the Taliban outper-

⁷⁰ Isak Svensson and Mathilda Lindgren, "Community and Consent: Unarmed Insurrections in Non-Democracies," *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 17, No. 1, May 2010.

⁷¹ As a whole, a resistance campaign can consist of different organizational layers, such as an underground component, guerrilla units, auxiliary support, and an overt political arm (Fiala, 2019a).

⁷² Mao Tse-tung, *On Guerrilla Warfare*, New York: Preager, 1961, p. 93; cited in Kyle W. Fonay, "On Guerrilla Warfare: Two Takes: Mao vs. Guevara," *Small Wars Journal*, August 18, 2013.

⁷³ Che Guevara, *Guerrilla Warfare*, 3rd. ed., ed. Brian Loveman, Wilmington, Del.: Scholarly Resources Inc., [1960] 1997, p. 52; cited in Fonay, 2013.

⁷⁴ The 1955 U.S. Army Field Manual states, "The basic factor affecting the birth, survival, and ultimate success of guerrilla movements is the support of an adequate portion of the civilian population in an area of operations" (U.S. Army, Field Manual 31-21, *Guerrilla Warfare*, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, March 23, 1955, p. 10; cited in Christopher M. Ford, "Speak No Evil: Targeting a Population's Neutrality to Defeat an Insurgency," *Parameters*, Vol. 35, No. 2, Summer 2005, p. 52).

⁷⁵ Donald Stoker, "Six Reasons Insurgencies Lose: A Contrarian View," *Small Wars Journal*, July 4, 2009, p. 10.

formed coalition forces in the competition for public perceptions of the conflict.⁷⁶ This effort allowed the Taliban to achieve critical objectives in southern and eastern Afghanistan: isolating the international coalition, marginalizing local Afghan administration in support of the coalition, and establishing a parallel administration to pursue Sharia justice and collect taxes.⁷⁷

Civilian-based efforts to maintain and expand popular support can take various forms. One challenge facing resistance movements is that their actions represent a “public good.” If their actions succeed in overthrowing the occupier, the occupied population will benefit regardless of whether they participated.⁷⁸ In the early stages, it might make more sense for an individual to let others resist—to “free-ride” on their activities—than to take part. One challenge for a resistance movement, therefore, is to rally enough supporters to join the resistance, provide resources, and help start a cascade that draws in more locals to join the resistance.⁷⁹ In light of this challenge, one major consideration is the ability for a wide variety of individuals to contribute without undertaking significant personal costs.⁸⁰ Campaigns that offer low-risk opportunities for resistance tend to achieve greater and more demographically diverse participation rates than those that require the acceptance of significant risk. Not all civilians need to engage in high-risk activities that could lead to casualties, such as stopping tanks in

⁷⁶ One Army general with Afghanistan experience notably stated, “The Taliban and al-Qaida absolutely leave us holding our jockstraps in the information operations realm,” (“Insurgents in Afghanistan Have Mastered Media Manipulation,” *Armed Forces Journal*, April 1, 2008).

⁷⁷ Gilles Dorransoro, *The Taliban's Winning Strategy in Afghanistan*, Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2009.

⁷⁸ Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971.

⁷⁹ See, for example, Paul Collier, *Economic Causes of Civil Conflict and Their Implications for Policy*, Oxford: Oxford University Department of Economics, April 2006, p. 3.

⁸⁰ For a discussion of individual considerations surrounding the costs of participation in challenging illegitimate regimes, see Joshua A. Tucker, “Enough! Electoral Fraud, Collective Action Problems, and Post-Communist Colored Revolutions,” *Perspectives on Politics*, Vol. 5, No. 3, September 2007.

the streets, as in Hungary's 1956 or Prague's 1968 popular resistance efforts. Other activities, such as boycotts, "go slow" initiatives, strikes, or other forms of noncooperation with an occupier, could offer important avenues of participation for risk-averse participants.

Another major factor in gaining popular support is the ability of resistance organizers to communicate effectively about the objectives and actions of resistance. The *Resistance Operating Concept* identifies the need for a "guiding narrative" that will resonate with a population to unify government and societal functions and integrate efforts across sectors.⁸¹ Furthermore, effective communication during a campaign can promote "collective empowerment," which can encourage individuals to join or maintain resistance activities, even in the face of potential risk.⁸²

Turkish anti-government protests in 1996 incorporated both low-risk activities and unifying themes to maximize participation. Following repression against anti-corruption protests, Turkish lawyers conducted a broad publicity campaign to establish what civil resistance scholars have called a *unifying proposition*, bringing together a cause, urgency for action, and need for widespread participation.⁸³ Their efforts to establish unity yielded a broad-based coalition of support in which, according to one organizer, "For the first time, groups that had never joined forces before in Turkey found themselves participating side by side. From the business community to the slum dwellers."⁸⁴ Furthermore, to build solidarity and demonstrate widespread resistance, organizers chose activities that would be easy and low-risk: After receiving instructions on printed materials, citizens in cities across Turkey began

⁸¹ Fiala, 2019a, p. 190.

⁸² Brian Martin and Wendy Varney, "Nonviolence and Communication," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 40, No. 2, March 2003, p. 220.

⁸³ Shaazka Beyerle and Arwa Hassan, "Popular Resistance Against Corruption in Turkey and Egypt," in Maria J. Stephan, ed., *Civilian Jihad: Nonviolent Struggle, Democratization, and Governance in the Middle East*, New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009, p. 267.

⁸⁴ Ezel Akay, *A Call to End Corruption: One Minute of Darkness for Constant Light*, ed. Liam Mahony, Minneapolis, Minn.: New Tactics Project, Center for Victims of Torture, 2003; cited in Beyerle and Hassan, 2009, p. 267.

to turn off their lights at 9:00 p.m. for one minute until, “after two weeks, approximately 30 million people, 60 percent of the population, were participating throughout the country.”⁸⁵

As a practical matter, the ability of resistance leaders to establish well-functioning public communications capabilities is critical. Turkish campaign leaders of 1996 relied on faxes and printouts. Fifteen years later, organizers in Egypt and Tunisia employed online social media tools to spread unifying messages, videos, and photographs that spurred national movements.⁸⁶ However, even as new media tools can provide an expansive platform for action, they can also be either denied by an adversary or co-opted by actors with goals or tactics that diverge from that of the primary campaign. Thus, the mode of communication, as well as the content, represents a critical dimension of a campaign’s effort to maintain and expand public support.

The prominence of this objective may vary according to the phase and intensity of the conflict. Some dimensions of armed resistance, for example, might require an element of secrecy to succeed, precluding broader civilian participation.⁸⁷ As noted earlier, in phases of conflict in which the adversary employs highly repressive tactics, the costs of participation can dissuade popular participation in many types of activities. However, although active participation may be suppressed, the literature suggests that resistance movements able to establish popular support are more likely to achieve their desired resistance outcomes than those that are not.

⁸⁵ Beyerle and Hassan, 2009, p. 268.

⁸⁶ Rebecca Rosen, “So, Was Facebook Responsible for the Arab Spring After All?” *The Atlantic*, September 3, 2011.

⁸⁷ During the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, for example, the mujahideen kept their base camps separate from private life and did not seek to mobilize the broader Afghan population (Shultz and Dew, 2006, p. 179).

Conclusion

The objectives discussed in this chapter represent five potential areas of focus for a civilian-based movement seeking to apply pressure to an occupying aggressor. As discussed throughout the chapter, the nature and priority of a campaign's interim goals are likely to evolve during the course of contention and might be dependent on the objectives, strategies, and tactics pursued by the occupier. For example, if an adversary engages in extensive repression, shielding civilian populations from this repression might be at the forefront of a resistance campaign's strategy. If questions exist about the timing or extent of international support, a campaign might prioritize targeted efforts to reach out to the public and decisionmakers. In the following two chapters, we explore two historic periods of resistance in the Baltic states, one predominantly armed and one predominantly unarmed, to consider the degree to which resistance forces were successful in achieving the five proximate objectives, the circumstances that assisted or confounded their efforts, and the overall impact of each of the proximate objectives on the strategic outcome of the resistance.

Armed Resistance in the Baltic States (1940–1955)

Within the Baltic states, civilian contributions to historic resistance efforts against outside occupiers have had varying success in achieving all five of the objectives outlined in the previous chapter. Given the extended time horizons over which Baltic resistance has taken place, its history may be viewed not only through accounts of subversive activities and sabotage but also through longer-term strategies to achieve independence through various armed and unarmed resistance approaches, as well as efforts to maintain hope for freedom, the upholding of local moral standards, and continued support for Baltic independence abroad.

In this chapter, which is based on secondary research, we review armed resistance efforts in the Baltic states against Soviet and Nazi rule during WWII, as well as resistance in the Baltic states during the early years of the Soviet occupation following the end of WWII.¹ This chapter does not provide a comprehensive analysis of the Baltic states' history of the time, nor does it represent a perfect model for modern Baltic civilian contributions to resistance, given the dominance of violent guerrilla strategy. Nevertheless, the chapter's historic examples provide insights on the relevance and effectiveness of each of the five strategic elements during this historic period, as well as the ways in

¹ This chapter is not intended to provide a comprehensive analysis of the resistance movements in the Baltic states. Rather, it is a selection of examples illustrating each of the objectives and is based on a review of secondary literature. This chapter also is not intended to compare and contrast the different resistance histories in each of the Baltic states and therefore sometimes generalizes the resistance approaches used. It is, therefore, situated within the availability and limitations of currently available research on resistance in the Baltic states.

which factors exogenous to the resistance—including occupier goals, strategies, and tactics—influenced the relative success or failure of the Baltic resistance efforts.

Historical Overview

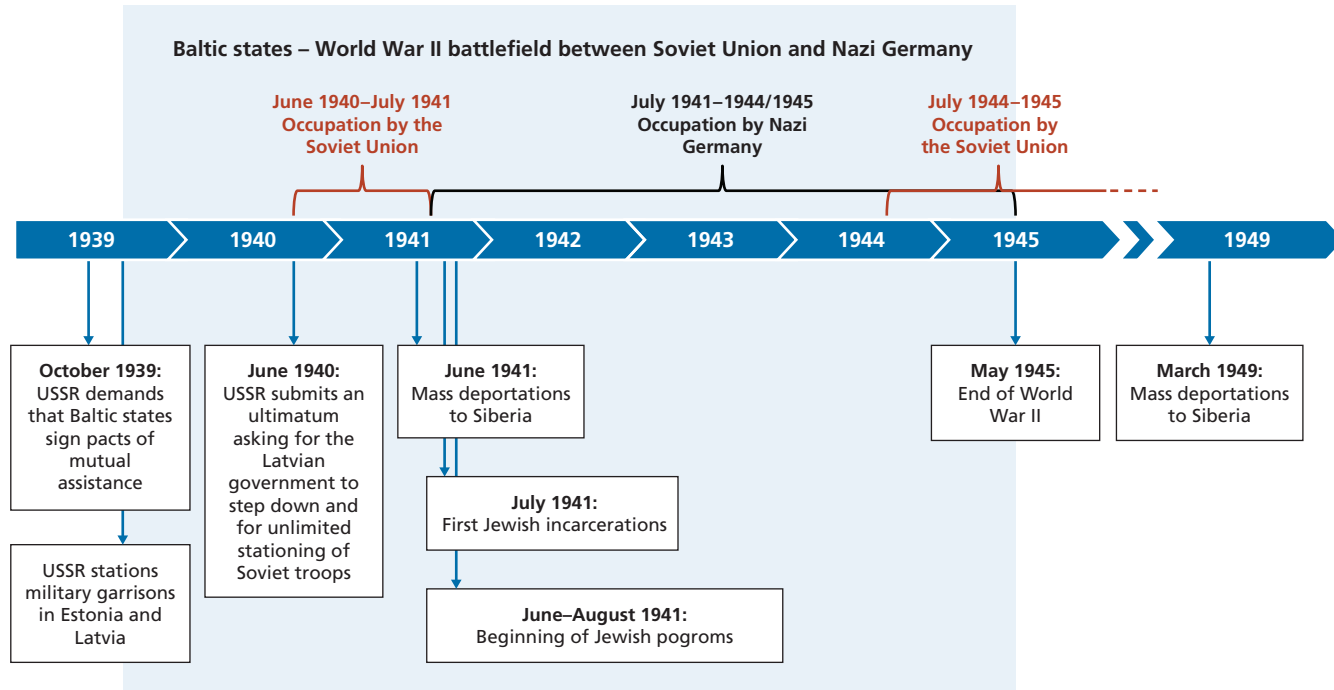
In 1939, the governments of the three Baltic states sought to remain neutral in the deepening European crisis but ultimately were forced to sign mutual assistance pacts with the Soviet Union, leading to their political capitulation in 1940. Across the Baltic populations, however, a decentralized spirit of resistance persisted.² During the first Soviet occupation in WWII (see Figure 3.1 for a high-level illustrative timeline of WWII in the Baltic states), nonviolent resistance dominated amid hope that the occupation would be temporary. Among the most notable resistance activities during this period are the organization of a second election list for the *Saeima* (parliament) elections in Latvia to counterbalance a Soviet-engineered election list; the tearing down of Soviet banners and flags; the dissemination of informative materials; the destruction of Soviet leader Josef Stalin's pictures; the use of national symbols, such as the flag and national songs; and the boycotting of Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) Supreme Council elections and emigration. Violent activities, such as the attempts on the life of General Aleksandr Loktionov, the Soviet commander of the region, were initially rare.³ Some armed groups were started by youth at schools and universities and proliferated to the regions. These groups were motivated by regaining independence and sovereignty, but they lacked experience and coordination and therefore often were caught by the Soviet Union's People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs (NKVD).⁴

² Karlis Kangers, "Divas okupācijas: pretosanas ["Two Occupations: Resistance]," *Diena*, August 21, 1999.

³ Kangers, 1999.

⁴ The NKVD (*Narodnyi Komissariat Vnutrennikh Del*) was the law enforcement agency of the Communist party.

Figure 3.1
World War II Timeline in the Baltic States



Soviet mass deportations of Baltic residents to Siberia in the summer of 1941 fueled interest in resistance.⁵ During the first Soviet occupation and the subsequent German occupation, Baltic populations gained experience in both armed and unarmed resistance. Examples of unarmed resistance included disseminating leaflets calling for independence after the German abolition of national independence day celebrations, publishing the first underground paper in Latvia, carrying out information campaigns to promote independence, and providing the West with intelligence materials.⁶ Resistance during the German occupation also included helping Jewish and Roma populations hide and escape Nazi persecution.

With the second Soviet occupation beginning in 1944–1945, armed resistance expanded, inspired by the experience of repression and mass deportation during the first Soviet occupation. Resistance movements in all three states attracted former members of the armed forces or national voluntary organizations, as well as civilians with no prior military experience, who formed networks of “Forest Brothers” in all three countries. The organizational structure of the armed resistance movements varied not only among the three countries but also among individual regions. Organizational structure was subject to changes over time, with larger units of 100 people operating at the beginning of the partisan movement and units of five to ten people—and even lone Forest Brothers—fighting later in the movement.⁷ Operating from a network of centralized groups allowed resisters to employ guerrilla tac-

⁵ On June 14, 1941, about 43,000 people were deported from the Baltic states: about 17,500 from Lithuania, 15,424 from Latvia, and 10,000 from Estonia (Peeter Kaasik, “The June Deportation, 1941,” webpage, *Estonica*, last updated October 1, 2012a; Jānis Riekstiņš, “1941.gada 14.junija deportācija Latvija [June 14, 1941, Deportation in Latvia],” State Archives of Latvia, undated; and Rokas M. Tracevskis, “70th Anniversary of Deportation and Uprising of 1941,” *Baltic Times*, June 29, 2011).

⁶ Uldis Neiburgs, *Resistance Movement in Latvia During Nazi German Occupation (1941–1945): Research Problems and Achievements*, Social Memory of Latvia and Identity Working Papers, Vol. 5, 2011.

⁷ Heinrihs Strods, “Nacionālie partizāni un padomju partizāni Baltijā 1941–1956. Gada: kopejais un atšķirīgais [National Partisans and Soviet Partisans in the Baltics in 1941–1956: Differences and Similarities],” Riga, Latvia: University of Latvia Institute for the History of Latvia, Symposium of the Commission of the Historians of Latvia, Vol. 17, 2005.

tics ranging from pranks to military actions against local collaborators, the NKVD, and the Red Army.⁸

According to some historians, the post-WWII anti-Soviet armed resistance was larger in Lithuania (compared with Estonia and Latvia), where the movement was more centralized and had a greater base of popular support. Of the three countries, Lithuania had the most organized approach to armed resistance. Resistance organizations consolidated around two main bodies, the National Council (with a religious Catholic inclination) and the Supreme Committee of Lithuania, that merged into the Supreme Committee for National Liberation in 1943.⁹ In Estonia, large-scale and stable networks of resistance groups were not permanent; generally, groups of five to ten people operated independently. In general, the Forest Brothers in the Baltic states adhered to four methods of warfare:

1. acts of diversion by individuals or small groups
2. acts by partisan units, commanded by a unit commander, using battle tactics and armaments, mainly with the aim to destroy the adversary
3. acts by large units requiring military organization and supply
4. network-based activities.¹⁰

Although additional mass deportations in 1949 brought new life to the resistance movements, Soviet military and manpower superiority took its toll, with many resistance fighters arrested, tortured, or killed and minimal external support from the West. Gradually, the collectivization of farming and mass deportations of civilians eliminated resisters' much-needed farm-based support networks. Resistance continued until the Hungarian uprising in 1956, with some separate groups or

⁸ Olavi Punga, "Estonia's Forest Brothers in 1941: Goals, Capabilities, and Outcomes," *Combating Terrorism Exchange*, Vol. 3, No. 3, August 2013.

⁹ Grazina Miniotaite, *Nonviolent Resistance in Lithuania: A Story of Peaceful Liberation*, Washington, D.C.: Albert Einstein Institution, 2002.

¹⁰ Strods, 2005.

individual fighters remaining active after that.¹¹ NKVD search and round-up operations had dispersed or destroyed many units, although the death of Stalin in 1953 prompted a reduction in repression against the Baltic populations.¹²

Illustrative Examples of Resistance Activities

The following subsections discuss examples of resistance activities for each of the objectives: (1) imposing direct or indirect costs on an occupying force, (2) securing external support, (3) denying an occupier's political and economic consolidation, (4) reducing an occupier's capacity for repression, and (5) maintaining and expanding popular support. Each subsection also addresses how resistance activities in each area contributed to the overall outcome of the resistance movement.

Imposing Direct or Indirect Costs on an Occupying Force

Relevant examples from the Baltic states indicate a history of engagement in guerrilla military attacks on occupying personnel and efforts to impose costs on the occupying force by damaging adversary communication lines. In the period following WWII, Baltic resistance forces sought to impose some direct costs on Soviet forces through attacks by the Forest Brothers against Soviet troops and bureaucrats. Combat units of armed resistance would set up ambushes on roads targeting Soviet government and military vehicles and communication lines, requiring Soviet transport columns to travel with armed escorts and thereby increasing personnel requirements. For example, in the county of Pärnumaa in Estonia, communication lines were cut 22 times within three months in 1946.¹³ In Latvia alone, the national

¹¹ Pearu Kuusk, "The Post-WWII Armed Resistance to Soviet Power in Estonia," webpage, *Estonica*, last modified October 1, 2012.

¹² Daina Bleiere, "Padomju otrreizējā okupācija Latvijā [Second Soviet Occupation in Latvia]," *Nacionālā enciklopēdija*, updated May 18, 2020.

¹³ Mart Laar, *War in the Woods: Estonia's Struggle for Survival, 1944–1956*, Howells House, 1992.

partisans carried out approximately 2,700 attacks of different types, including 40 battles.¹⁴ Estonian Forest Brothers frequently attacked smaller KGB¹⁵ units—particularly targeting search battalions and units carrying out arrests—and carried out reprisals against local Communist functionaries.¹⁶

The Lithuanian Ministry of National Defence (MOND) notes four battles or raids in 1945 as significant resistance battles that led to several hundred deaths and injuries to Soviet troops. The Lithuanian MOND estimates that the Soviet Union might have dedicated 60,000–70,000 regular and irregular soldiers to the fight against resisters in Lithuania alone—a considerable commitment of national resources and manpower.¹⁷

Although these examples suggest that Baltic resistance forces were at times able to impose human and material costs on Soviet forces, such costs failed to achieve the broader objective of ousting Soviet forces and restoring national sovereignty. Baltic guerrilla tactics did successfully increase the troop requirements for Soviet forces. However, both German and Soviet decisionmaking was largely a function of bigger international power considerations: state-level conflicts during WWII and, later, the Cold War. Within the context of broader occupier objectives, the limited costs imposed by the Forest Brothers proved insufficient in altering occupier strategic calculations.

Securing External Support

During the initial period after Soviet occupation, resistance efforts primarily sought to limit the extent of Soviet control until the anticipated intervention of the Western powers. The 1941 Atlantic Charter,

¹⁴ Jānis Hartmanis, “Latviešu nacionālo partizānu cīņa pret padomju okupācijas režīmu 1944.—1956. [Latvian National Partisan Fight Against the Soviet Occupation Regime, 1944–1956],” Sargs.lv, April 12, 2016.

¹⁵ KGB stands for *Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti*, or Committee for State Security.

¹⁶ Einar Himma, *An Evaluation of the Anti-Soviet Guerrilla Warfare Potential in Soviet Estonia*, Carlisle Barracks, Pa.: Army War College, October 15, 1974.

¹⁷ Asta Dūdienė, ed., *After the War: Armed Anti-Soviet Resistance in Lithuania, 1944–1953*, Vilnius, Lithuania: Lithuanian Ministry of National Defence, 2006.

issued by the United States and the United Kingdom, affirmed the right to national self-determination and served as a motivating factor for Baltic populations and resistance campaigns.¹⁸ Published interviews conducted with former Forest Brothers indicate that most participants in Baltic resistance maintained hope that the United States and the United Kingdom would liberate the Baltic states and Eastern Europe from Soviet rule. Because of this hope, resistance movements sought to maintain close contact with their ambassadors in these countries and their Scandinavian neighbors and cooperated with the United States, the United Kingdom, and Swedish intelligence services.

However, it was notoriously difficult for the Baltic states' resistance organizations to secure concrete assistance from the West.¹⁹ In late 1944, as Soviet forces were preparing to occupy the Baltic states for the second time, the Latvian Underground Central Council appealed to the United States and the United Kingdom to apply the principles of the Atlantic Charter to Latvia, while the Supreme Committee for Liberation of Lithuania requested U.S. and British missions to protect the country from existential threat.²⁰ Neither of these appeals was heeded, and at the 1945 Yalta Conference, the Baltic states went unmentioned by U.S. officials who had concluded, according to diplomatic notes, that "the three Baltic States have been re-incorporated into the Soviet Union and that nothing which we can do can alter this."²¹

Outreach by Western intelligence agencies sought primarily to collect information about Soviet activities in the region. Both the United States and the United Kingdom viewed the insurgencies as a means of acquiring intelligence about the Soviet Union, and so did not directly intervene to help Baltic resisters or support Baltic efforts to win decisive battles, instead maintaining contact with sources through

¹⁸ Richard A. Schnorf, "The Baltic States in U.S.-Soviet Relations: The Years of Doubt, 1943–1946," *Lituanus*, Vol. 12, No. 4, Winter 1966.

¹⁹ Laar, 1992.

²⁰ Schnorf, 1966.

²¹ U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers, Conferences at Malta and Yalta, 1945*, Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1955, p. 94; cited in Schnorf, 1966.

intelligence channels until the late 1940s.²² Information seems to have flowed primarily in one direction—from the Baltics to the West—and Baltic resisters received minimal advice or support from Western governments.²³

Baltic resistance movements maintained some regional links among the Baltic states and with neighboring countries. Some of the major communication lines maintained among various resistance groups were between the Baltic states and Sweden, between the Baltic states and Germany, and between Estonia and Finland. Links with other countries also existed. For example, Latvian movements had some political connections with Denmark and Poland.²⁴ In addition to keeping the Western nations informed about events in the Baltics, these networks allowed Baltic diplomats and communities abroad to gather information about their homelands to be able to face the continuous defeats that they were experiencing in the international political arena.

The examples in this subsection also highlight the significance that external political and military support—or its absence—can have for relatively smaller countries with limited resources that are struggling to regain their sovereignty against a larger and more powerful occupier. In this case, an absence of significant external support likely proved determinative in the failure of resistance movements to achieve independence. The decision made by the United States and Britain to deprioritize Baltic independence in light of competing geopolitical con-

²² A special reporting section associated with the U.S. Office of Strategic Services was reportedly established in the U.S. Embassy to Sweden during WWII to engage with Baltic states' diplomats to advance the interests of the U.S. and UK secret services (George Reklaitis, "Cold War Lithuania: National Armed Resistance and Soviet Counterinsurgency," *Carl Beck Papers in Russian & East European Studies*, No. 1806, July 2007).

²³ Uldis Neiburgs, "Pretošanās kustība nacionālsociālistiskās Vācijas okupētajā Latvijā (1941–1945): mazpētīti aspekti un to izpratne mūsdienās, [Resistance Movement in Latvia Under National-Socialist German Occupation (1941–1945): Less-Studied Aspects and Their Perception Nowadays]," *Symposium of the Commission of the Historians of Latvia: History of the Baltic Region of the 1940–1980s*, Vol. 24, Riga, Latvia: Commission of the Historians of Latvia, 2009.

²⁴ Neiburgs, 2011.

siderations extinguished the prospect of external intervention and near-term liberation. Western intelligence engagement, focused largely on collection activities, did not appear to significantly advance resistance efforts. Ultimately, geopolitical factors limited the impact of efforts to solicit external support during the 1940–1955 period. Western powers did not prioritize Baltic independence during WWII and, following the war, were unwilling to militarily challenge the Soviet occupation amid the tenuous geopolitical balance of the Cold War.

Denying an Occupier's Political and Economic Consolidation

At the outset of the German occupation, the Baltic governments each sought to ensure the continuity of the legitimate government through their ambassadors and representatives abroad. These efforts continued throughout the course of the Soviet occupation. From 1948 to 1955, attacks on collective farms sought to undermine Soviet control of Baltic economic centers of gravity, while civil disobedience actions sought to interfere with Soviet-sponsored elections.

In all three Baltic states, surviving government representatives attempted to reinstate national government bodies and called for independence:

- In May 1940, the Latvian Cabinet of Ministers issued emergency powers to its ambassadors to the United Kingdom and the United States to allow them to control Latvian state finances deposited abroad.²⁵
- In 1944, Estonia attempted to reestablish its government that continued in exile until the reinstitution of independence. The National Committee of the Republic of Estonia was created in 1944 and acted as a proxy parliament in the spring and winter of 1944.²⁶ The National Committee was linked to the Estonian diplomatic network in the West and was headed by Juri Uluots,

²⁵ Ultimately, these efforts were unsuccessful (Kangers, 1999).

²⁶ Toomas Hiio, "Attempt to Restore Estonian Independence in 1944," webpage, *Estonica*, last modified September 28, 2012.

the last legal Estonian prime minister.²⁷ After the 1944 German retreat and before the Red Army reached Tallinn, the Estonian parliament issued an announcement affirming Estonian independence and neutrality. However, this government was short-lived, and most members were captured during the Soviet invasion.²⁸

- Lithuanian President Antanas Smetona attempted to form a government in exile beginning in June 1940 but was unable to establish legitimacy with the Lithuanian public and had no legal framework with which to assert power.²⁹ After WWII, Lithuanian exiles in Germany established a Supreme Committee for Lithuanian Liberation and in 1949 published “The Lithuanian Charter,” which outlined the core objectives of resistance: restoration of state independence and preservation of national values.³⁰

Although efforts to preserve political institutions might not have substantially affected resistance outcomes within the Baltic states, they did influence international diplomatic responses to the Soviet occupation. Politically, the United States “never recognized the forcible incorporation of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania into the USSR in 1940 but rather . . . [regarded] their statehood as uninterrupted” and publicly stated this policy throughout the course of the Cold War.³¹ However, as noted earlier, this diplomatic position was not associated with tangible support for independence.

Examples from this period underscore both the potential and the limitations of efforts to preserve political centers of gravity. Although Baltic governments successfully executed plans for governments in exile and were able to secure limited diplomatic national continuity in

²⁷ Mart Laar, *The Forgotten War: Armed Resistance Movement in Estonia in 1944–1956*, Tallinn, Estonia: Grenader, 2005.

²⁸ Hiio, 2012.

²⁹ Fiala, 2019a, Appendix D, Case Study 4.

³⁰ Miniotaite, 2002.

³¹ United States of America, Republic of Estonia, Republic of Latvia, and Republic of Lithuania, Charter of Partnership Among the United States of America and the Republic of Estonia, Republic of Latvia, and Republic of Lithuania, Washington, D.C., January 16, 1998.

the form of a Western nonrecognition policy, these measures were ultimately ineffectual in the face of Soviet persistence and military dominance. Resistance thus transitioned into decades-long, lower-risk forms of opposition as the Soviet occupation became increasingly entrenched in Baltic political and economic structures.

Reducing an Occupier's Capacity for Repression

German and Soviet forces engaged in high levels of repression against both armed and unarmed participants in resistance. Soviet tactics included collective violence against communities supporting armed forces, as well as torture, killing, and public display of captured fighters.³² During the later years of the period under discussion, the armed resistance campaign was largely decimated as the Soviet NKVD forces undertook a violent counterinsurgency campaign against both guerilla forces and their support networks.

Although occupiers incurred limited costs for acts of repression, there were some instances of a backfire dynamic, in which acts of repression ultimately resulted in negative repercussions for the repressor.³³ Soviet mass deportations of people from all three Baltic states in June 1941 significantly contributed to popular support for resistance movements.³⁴ In Estonia alone, hundreds of people took to forests and marshes after the deportations. Some of the best-armed Estonian resistance units initially consisted of deserters from the Soviet Army; these were joined by the Estonians who had fought in the Finno-Russian war in the so-called unit Erna.³⁵ During the German occupation, individuals sought to shelter Jewish populations from incarceration and death.³⁶

³² Fiala, 2019a, Appendix D, Case Study 4.

³³ Brian Martin, *Backfire Manual: Tactics Against Injustice*, Sparsnäs, Sweden: Irene Publishing, 2012.

³⁴ Estonians, for example, call the resistance during the summer of 1941 the “Summer War” (Punga, 2013).

³⁵ Himma, 1974.

³⁶ See, for example, International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, “Uku and Eha Masing, Righteous Among the Nations,” webpage, January 28, 2019; Žanis Lipke Memorial, “Biography,” webpage, undated.

For the remainder of the Soviet rule, former deportees who had been declared “enemies of the people” and deported to Siberia and the Far East of the Soviet Union would serve as a reminder of the brutalities of the regime, as well as former independence.³⁷

Because of the geopolitical dynamics of the post-WWII period, the international community did not impose significant costs against the Soviet Union for acts of repression in the Baltic region. However, resisters were sometimes successful in using the backfire dynamic internationally. One early example took place in Lithuania. There, Russian efforts to repress Catholic churches in Lithuania were stymied after Lithuanian civilians engaged in widespread popular resistance and elicited sympathy from Western nations and condemnation of the repression—led by the United States, where Lithuanian expatriates had formed a commission on Russian atrocities.³⁸

In 1944, as Soviet forces began to occupy the Baltic states for the second time, many civilians concluded that the most effective way to avoid persecution was to leave their homelands. One Baltic analyst has since described the phenomenon of “exile resistance” prior to the second Soviet occupation of the Baltics. With memories of the June 1941 deportations still fresh, some Baltic citizens avoided—or sought to avoid—potential repression by leaving the country.³⁹ For example, approximately 150,000 Latvians fled their homeland in 1945, before the reoccupation of Latvia by the Red Army. In later years, Jewish efforts to emigrate from the USSR can be regarded as a form of self-protection and demonstration of discontent with the existing regime.

Expanding intelligence networks in the region and brutal tactics by the occupying forces, including pervasive torture and executions of resistance members and their supporters, served to suppress popular

³⁷ Algirdas Jakubcionis, *The Unarmed Anti-Soviet Resistance in Lithuania*, Vilnius, Lithuania: Genocide and Resistance Research Centre of Lithuania, 2011.

³⁸ Miniotaite, 2002.

³⁹ Olgerts Eglitis, *Nonviolent Action in the Liberation of Latvia*, Monograph Series No. 5, Boston, Mass.: Albert Einstein Institution, 1993.

participation in the resistance.⁴⁰ A robust underground press sought to expose and ridicule Soviet brutality; publications used humor to reduce collective fear, disseminating subversive texts and caricatures of the Soviet forces and government.⁴¹ This tactic did not result in significant backfire against the Soviet occupiers, although it may have boosted the morale of participants persisting in lower-risk resistance efforts in the face of potential violence by Soviet occupiers.

Ultimately, occupiers during this period maintained a significant capacity for repression, which contributed to the successful suppression of the Baltic resistance effort. Soviet NKVD and German forces pursued highly repressive tactics that went largely unchecked, with few exceptions. Soviet deportations appear to have had an invigorating effect on popular support for resistance, although there is not clear evidence that resistance organizers fully capitalized on this response. Furthermore, a lack of desire by Western policymakers to impose significant costs for episodes of repression, paired with Euro-Atlantic fatigue in the wake of WWII devastation, limited the impact of the international backfire dynamic.

Maintaining and Expanding Popular Support

Within all three Baltic states, armed resistance forces relied heavily on the support of unarmed civilians and sought to maintain or expand the will of the broader population to contribute to efforts to overthrow the Soviet rule should the opportunity arise.⁴² During the armed resistance efforts from 1945 to 1955, Forest Brothers relied on village and

⁴⁰ At the same time, some Baltic individuals chose to join the local military forces of one or the other side, perceiving the Germans as helping the Baltic states end the Soviet occupation or Soviets as helping end the German occupation, and became involved in their respective atrocities and tactics. See, for example, Prit Buttar, *Between Giants: The Battle for the Baltics in World War II*, Oxford, UK: Osprey Publishing, 2013; and Liivoja Rain, "Soviet War Crimes in the Baltic States," in Kevin Jon Heller and Gerry Simpson, eds., *The Hidden Histories of War Crimes Trials*, Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2013.

⁴¹ Dūdienė, 2006.

⁴² Martin Herem, "The Strategy and Activity of the Forest Brothers: 1947–1950," *CTX*, Vol. 3, No. 3, August 2013.

farm networks to provide material support and information flows.⁴³ Although many of these networks were family-based, resisters at times relied on intimidation and coercive force to maintain support. This dynamic was strategically exploited by the Soviets, who intensified paranoia by infiltrating Forest Brothers' ranks and imposing violent collective punishments on those civilian groups supporting the resistance.⁴⁴ A Soviet decision to rapidly pursue land collectivization in the Baltics further reduced the percentage of the population sympathetic to the resistance.⁴⁵ Over time, trust within the ranks of the resistance and between the partisans and their local supporters waned, and by the early 1950s, Soviet counterinsurgency operatives had successfully disrupted the social cohesion that was so central to resistance operations across the Baltic region.⁴⁶

Furthermore, the morale of resistance participants, as well as broader Baltic populations, waned as it became increasingly clear that Western conventional military liberation would not be forthcoming. Underground presses sought to reach out to civilian populations through printed materials to develop national awareness and maintain hope for future independence but were unable to overcome Soviet information dominance.⁴⁷

Popular participation during this period was constrained by several factors. Violent contention between resistance forces and occupying forces created both a requirement for secrecy and significant personal and community risk associated with participation. Efforts by resistance forces to coerce civilians into assisting armed resistance appear to have further diminished popular support and trust. Although resistance forces sought to engage Baltic civilian populations through printed materials, Soviet disinformation tactics were able to dominate the local information space, and fear of severe repressive tactics—including tor-

⁴³ Rodger D. Petersen, *Resistance and Rebellion: Lessons from Eastern Europe*, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

⁴⁴ Reklaitis, 2007.

⁴⁵ Fiala, 2019a, Appendix D, Case Study 4, p. 162.

⁴⁶ Reklaitis, 2007.

⁴⁷ Fiala, 2019a, Appendix D, Case Study 4.

ture or death—suppressed most direct resistance. Ultimately, without the hope of external support, and in light of escalating Soviet repression and collectivization, popular support for resistance efforts dropped precipitously.

Conclusion

Resistance in the Baltic states in the years during and following WWII predominantly took armed form as former military members and other willing civilians sought to impose costs and constrain the Soviet Union’s ability to control Baltic territory and populations with hope for Western military liberation. Ultimately, such resistance was unsuccessful in achieving its desired outcome—that is, the ouster of the occupying forces and restoration of national sovereignty—during this time period. A review of this period of resistance offers several insights. In particular, it underscores the degree to which expansive occupier objectives can limit the impact of costs imposed by a resistance. It also sheds light on the potentially negative impact of failure to secure external support, as well as the extent to which such failure might lie beyond the control of resistance efforts. This period provides positive examples of efforts to ensure continuity of government but demonstrates the constraints of such efforts when the resistance is unable to oust the occupier. Finally, the history of Baltic resistance—and occupier repression—during this time provides sobering examples of the extreme brutality that an occupier may employ and the impact that high levels of violence may have on popular support for (or participation in) resistance.

Table 3.1 summarizes resistance actions relevant to each proximate objective and the degree of success achieved by resistance forces in pursuing that objective. The final column provides the authors’ subjective assessment of the overall impact of the objective on the resistance outcome. In this case, as the resistance outcome was not achieved and occupation persisted, the column addresses the relative significance of that objective in contributing to resistance failure.

Table 3.1
Summary of Select Resistance Examples in the Baltic States, 1940–1955

Objective	Relevant Actions	Degree of Success	Impact on Resistance Outcome
Imposing direct or indirect costs on an occupying force	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imposing direct costs through targeting the opponent's communication lines and military leaders • Engagement in more-traditional military battles 	Moderate. Resistance forces imposed human and financial costs on occupier.	Low. Operational costs appeared to have had minimal impact on the occupier's decisionmaking and were overshadowed by the occupier's larger strategic aspirations.
Securing external support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limiting the extent of Soviet control until the arrival of the expected Western intervention • Ensuring the continuity of the three governments through legal acts and ambassadors abroad, thus also maintaining the official communication lines with Western governments • Maintenance of regional communication to exchange information and for the Baltic diplomats abroad to receive an update of the situation on the ground 	Low. Despite resistance efforts, this objective was not achieved, because of geopolitical priorities of Western powers.	High. Failure to achieve this objective significantly contributed to the adverse outcome: Resistance eventually withered in the absence of meaningful external support or intervention.

Table 3.1—Continued

Objective	Relevant Actions	Degree of Success	Impact on Resistance Outcome
Denying an occupier's political and economic consolidation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attempts to reinstate national governments • Open calls for independence 	Moderate. Plans for governments in exile achieved some diplomatic gains, but the occupier achieved local political and economic control.	Low. Without a successful effort to oust the occupier, continuity of government was less relevant.
Reducing an occupier's capacity for repression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exile resistance—departure of Baltic residents for the West • Use of underground press to expose acts of repression and brutality • Establishment of religious-based networks following persecution 	Moderate. Despite public exposure of repression, there was no major backfire dynamic. Communities that emigrated from the region were spared from repression.	Moderate. High levels of occupier repression contributed to the failure of the resistance efforts to achieve their desired outcome.
Maintaining and expanding popular support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of a farm-based support network to assist the Forest Brothers • Use of existing trust networks for the maintenance and manning of resistance 	Low. Resistance forces were unable to meet this objective because of occupier infiltration and repression, as well as coercive tactics by the resistance forces.	Moderate. Without community support, resistance forces were unable to persist.

Unarmed Resistance in the Baltic States (1955–1991)

In this chapter, we consider a selection of examples of predominantly unarmed resistance in the Baltic states from 1955, when active armed resistance was quelled, to 1991, when all three Baltic countries regained their independence after the fall of the Iron Curtain. As the Soviet regime overtook all areas of governance, law enforcement, and even culture, and amid continuing Soviet persecution of dissenters, resistance transformed into lower-risk forms of contention by individuals and groups who opposed Soviet ideology, policies, and political control. As in the overview of resistance activities from 1940 to 1955, we do not aspire to provide a comprehensive account of resistance or the strategic environment of the time, but rather to present selected examples that illustrate each of the objectives defined in Chapter Two.

Historical Overview

Over the course of the 1950s, resistance in the Baltic states transformed into principally nonviolent forms of protest and opposition to Soviet ideology and policies. Discontent with the occupation persisted throughout the decades of Soviet control and ultimately served as a primary source of popular mobilization in the national awakening movements in the late 1980s.¹ During this period, resistance included lower-

¹ Neiburgs, 2009.

risk activities, such as social noncooperation—declining to join Soviet organizations (e.g., the Communist party) and carrying out symbolic acts, such as booing the Soviet flag; using national flags, symbols, and songs (including the forbidden national anthems); celebrating forbidden holidays (national holidays, independence day, religious holidays); rooting for non-Soviet teams at sporting events; and laying flowers at national monuments.² Civilians either acted individually or formed groups that opposed Soviet ideology, propagated newsletters, or engaged in the so-called intellectual and spiritual resistance.³

Popular interest in Baltic resistance surged again in the 1960s as the deterioration of Soviet-U.S. relations prompted new Western criticism of the Soviet occupation of the Baltic states and as Soviet authorities undertook unpopular steps to consolidate cultural control under the banner of “Soviet patriotism.”⁴ Soviet restrictions on the use and restoration of national symbols and architecture, dismissal of local traditions as “ideological errors,” and dismissal of “foreign aesthetic concepts” caused renewed discontent.⁵ Over time, sporadic resistance activities increased and attracted more and more people. Although the “socialism with a human face” in Czechoslovakia raised hopes among the Baltic states, the 1968 deployment of Soviet troops to Czechoslovakia and the suppression of the resistance showed that the fight had not ended.⁶

Baltic resistance in the 1970s and 1980s was conducted in the wake of a 1969 Soviet decision to create permanent counterintelligence

² Himma, 1974.

³ Occupation Museum Foundation, *The Three Occupations of Latvia, 1940–1991: Soviet and Nazi Take-Overs and Their Consequences*, Riga, Latvia, 2005; terms derived from Gene Sharp, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action*, Part II: *The Methods of Nonviolent Action*, Boston, Mass.: Extending Horizon Books, 1973.

⁴ Jakubcionis, 2011.

⁵ Jakubcionis, 2011.

⁶ The phrase *socialism with a human face* refers to the political program announced in 1968 by the Czechoslovakian leader Alexander Dubček, symbolizing mild economic and political liberalization of Communism, such as alleviating censorship (Jakubcionis, 2011; Anna J. Stoneman, “Socialism with a Human Face: The Leadership and Legacy of the Prague Spring,” *History Teacher*, Vol. 49, No. 1, November 2015).

KGB subunits “to fight against the ideological diversion of the enemy.”⁷ To quell the idea of resistance and national freedom, Soviet units targeted social centers of gravity, including emigration centers; foreign radio stations (e.g., Radio Free Europe, Voice of America); Baltic compatriots abroad; overt resisters, such as the National Fronts during the national awakening period; individual and nationalist groups; anonymous authors of anti-Soviet leaflets and graffiti; and more-mundane targets, such as religious groups, artists, academics, and students.⁸ Although there were groups that formed within the frameworks permitted by the USSR, such as literary clubs, underground groups also existed.⁹ Members of the intelligentsia and artists criticized the lack of freedom for creative work and, in some cases, were forced to emigrate because of their open criticism of communist ideology and the restrictions on culture.¹⁰

In 1985, political change within the Soviet Union, in the form of Gorbachev and his support for “restoring the union republics’ economic, cultural, and political sovereignty,” altered the dynamics of popular resistance.¹¹ During the late 1980s, civilian-based movements began to more assertively challenge Soviet political and economic control within all three Baltic states, ultimately building a robust nonviolent campaign with widespread participation and culminating in reinstitution of independence. Large-scale assemblies of civil-

⁷ Decision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union on July 17, 1967, quoted in Indulis Zalite, *Galvenās nevardarbigās pretošanās formas un slēptais nacionālisms kā iekšējā nepakļaušanās padomju režīmam Latvijā [Main Forms of Nonviolent Resistance and Covert Nationalism as Internal Disobedience to Soviet Regime]*, Vilnius, Lithuania: Satversmes aizsardzības birojs Totalitārisma seku dokumentēšanas centrs, 1997.

⁸ Zalite, 1997.

⁹ See, for example, Museum of the Occupation of Latvia, “Latvijas Okupācijas Vēsture: Padomju Okupācija [History of the Occupation of Latvia: Soviet Occupation],” webpage, undated; and V. Stanley Vardys, “How the Baltic Republics Fare in the Soviet Union,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 44, No. 3, April 1966.

¹⁰ Jakubcionis, 2011.

¹¹ Vytautas Landsbergis, *Atgavē vilti [Recovery in Hope]*, Vilnius, Lithuania: Sajudis Press, 1990, p. 8; cited in Miniotaite, 2002.

ians throughout the period protested environmental pollution; mass migration of Russian immigrants; cultural Russification; suppression of local language, culture, and history; and substandard living conditions.¹² Organized civilian groups played a critical role in supporting the popular struggle and preparing for the reinstitution of independence. In Lithuania, these included the Lithuanian Helsinki Group, which prepared more than 30 documents detailing Soviet and local Communist party violations of human rights from 1976 to 1982, when the group was suppressed. The group reemerged as a force for reform in 1988 during the period of *glasnost* (Russian for *openness*) and *perestroika* (Russian for *restructuring*) under Gorbachev.¹³ The Lithuanian liberation movement *Sąjūdis* (Lithuanian for *co-movement*) organized mass rallies and a “rock-n-roll march,” coordinated boycotts of Communist news outlets, and communicated support for the program of reforms proposed by Gorbachev.¹⁴ In Latvia in 1986, the Helsinki-86 human rights group emerged and began to publicly monitor the status of Latvian economic, cultural, and individual rights. The Estonian MRP-AEG group (Estonian for the *Public Disclosure of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact*), formed by former political prisoners and active in 1987 and 1988, and later the Estonian National Independence Party initiative group, formed in 1988, served to rally popular expressions of discontent within Estonia.¹⁵

The 1989 Baltic Way (or *Baltic Chain*) offers a strong and unique example of the Baltic nonviolent “national awakening” movement. On August 23, 1989, the 50th anniversary of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, which had led to Soviet and Nazi subjugation of the Baltics, two

¹² Eglitis, 1993.

¹³ The Lithuanian Helsinki Group was founded in 1976 in support of the Helsinki Accords and their implementation in the USSR. After repression due to the group’s publications, it reemerged only in 1988. The Helsinki Accords were aimed at monitoring breaches of freedom of conscience, worship, speech, thought, and belief (Saulius Girnius, “The Demise of the Lithuanian Helsinki Group,” *Lituanus*, Vol. 30, No. 2, Summer 1984).

¹⁴ Miniotaite, 2002.

¹⁵ Peeter Kaasik, “Estonian National Independence Party,” webpage, Estonica, last modified October 2, 2012b.

million participants joined hands in a peaceful demonstration across the three countries, aiming to draw attention to the desire for independence.¹⁶ These movements ultimately led to declarations of independence by the Baltic states in spring 1990. In January 1991, the Soviet Union began to reassert authority in the Baltic states—including through deployment of KGB paratroopers and the *Otrjad miļiciji oso-bovo naznačēnija* (Police Special Operations Unit; OMON). When troops occupied the Lithuanian Department of National Defence offices and national press houses in Latvia and Lithuania, their residents mobilized to physically obstruct the troops and demonstrate large-scale opposition to Soviet rule.¹⁷ Violent Soviet repression of these civilians was met with increased participation in resistance within the Baltics, international censure, and domestic political costs within the Soviet government. Ultimately, amid a broader disintegration of the Soviet Union, Moscow recognized Baltic independence in September 1991.

Illustrative Examples of Resistance Activities

The following sections illustrate examples of resistance activities for each of the objectives: (1) imposing direct or indirect costs on an occupying force, (2) securing external support; (3) denying an occupier's political and economic consolidation, (4) reducing an occupier's capacity for repression, and (5) maintaining and expanding popular support.

Imposing Direct or Indirect Costs on an Occupying Force

During much of this period, Baltic states had limited opportunities to increase the costs of the occupation. Soviet control was expansive, and extensive repression against dissent successfully suppressed higher-risk tactics to impose costs, though clandestine groups and individuals did continue anti-Soviet activities throughout the occupation. Some data

¹⁶ Margus Kuul, *Civil Resistance: An Essential Element of a Total Defense Strategy*, thesis, Monterey, Calif.: Naval Postgraduate School, June 2014.

¹⁷ RAND interview, August 2016.

recovered from the Latvian Communist Party archive indicate that in Latvia alone, five to 12 nationalist groups were destroyed every year.¹⁸ In Lithuania, between the 1960s and the late 1980s, there were about 90 clandestine youth organizations, with an estimated membership of about 700.¹⁹

During the final years of the occupation, Baltic resistance campaigns did impose some costs within the Soviet government. The Baltic states' independence movements are credited by some historians with helping dismantle the Soviet Union by inspiring Boris Yeltsin and activist movements in Russia and other Soviet republics. Supporting the Baltic states' independence presented a strategic tool for Yeltsin to challenge Gorbachev's ability to govern and erode his reputation in the West.²⁰ Likewise, Gorbachev's inability to manage the challenge posed by the Baltic campaign for independence diminished his political support within the USSR.²¹

Independence movements by the Baltic states in the late 1980s, including the 1989 accusation by the Supreme Soviet of the Lithuanian Soviet Socialist Republic of forcible occupation of the country, the Baltic Chain, and persistent calls for the restoration of independence, provided powerful signals for other nations in the Soviet Union. The Baltic states came to symbolize "an island of freedom." The national movements of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania actively sought to develop links with similar movements in other parts of the Soviet Union or, where movements did not exist, assist in their development.²² For example, the leader of the *Sąjūdis* movement in Lithuania, Romualdas Ozolas, wrote in 1989 that one of the tasks of the movements was "the struggle for the rebirth of the peoples of the USSR."²³ The Baltic states

¹⁸ Zalite, 1997.

¹⁹ Jakubcionis, 2011.

²⁰ Paavo Palk, "Revelations on the Restoration of Independence," International Centre for Defence and Security, August 19, 2016.

²¹ Palk, 2016.

²² Nils R. Muiznieks, "The Influence of the Baltic Popular Movements on the Process of Soviet Disintegration," *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 47, No. 1, 1995.

²³ Muiznieks, 1995, p. 5.

exported their opposition movements to other Soviet republics through assistance, cooperation, and encouragement. They also printed publications not only in Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian but also in Russian that were distributed across the USSR and that condemned repressions against activists elsewhere, thus helping publicize activities in other regions.

Civilians did not impose easily quantifiable costs on the Soviet regime for much of this period, instead pursuing relatively low-risk activities, such as noncooperation, that sought to erode occupier control over time. Ultimately, however, massive civic mobilization during the late 1980s and early 1990s did impose significant political costs within the Soviet Union by attracting the attention of Russian political allies and exacerbating existing internal fractures within the Soviet government. This applied pressure on the Soviet authorities and, some historians argue, played an integral role in the eventual dissolution of the Soviet Union.

Securing External Support

External support did not appear to play a major role in achieving Baltic independence, although persistent diplomatic campaigns by Baltic émigré communities in the West to solicit support, particularly in the United States, yielded some political dividends, including diplomatic nonrecognition of Soviet control over the Baltic states.²⁴ Representatives from the exile communities of all three countries took an active part in influencing the politics of the West toward the USSR. In addition to forming separate Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian associations the communities collaborated to form the Baltic Appeal to the United Nations, which was aimed at defending the interests of the occupied Baltics, and the Joint Baltic American National Committee, which has operated in Washington, D.C., since 1951 and lobbied U.S. politicians for support for the Baltic states.

Baltic communities abroad organized demonstrations and other activities aimed at bringing attention to the Baltic cause in the United States and elsewhere in the West. They called for the issue to be con-

²⁴ Zalite, 1997.

sidered at the UN, protested specific Western government decisions concerning the region, and organized protests during Soviet leaders' visits to Western countries. Some examples include the Captive Nations Week marches in New York in the 1950s, the demonstrations during the Madrid Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe in 1980, and the burning of the Soviet flag in Washington, D.C., in 1976.²⁵ Some more-unusual approaches included activists setting themselves in concrete blocks in front of the Soviet Embassy in Washington, D.C., in 1987 and even buying shares in an American enterprise interested in a Latvian port in order to be able to attend its shareholder meeting and raise the issue of Baltic freedom to the company.²⁶ Some demonstrations led to immediate changes. Following widespread media coverage of Baltic émigré demonstrations objecting to Australia's acceptance of the Baltic states' *de jure* incorporation into the Soviet Union, the Australian government reversed its decision.²⁷ Lithuanian exile populations in the United States convinced multiple U.S. Senate committees to explicitly address the subject in 1952, 1961, and 1966.²⁸ However, the protests against the United Kingdom allowing the Soviet Union to receive the Baltic governments' gold reserves remittances were unsuccessful.²⁹

Some examples of Baltic states-based efforts to raise awareness and influence the decisionmaking of international bodies also exist. For example, in 1972, an anonymous letter from Estonia reached the

²⁵ Captive Nations Week has been held since 1959. The term *captive nations* originated after WWI, when it referred to the nations captured by the Soviet Union (Joe Carter, "5 Facts About Captive Nations Week," Ethics and Religious Liberty Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention, July 21, 2016).

²⁶ Marianna Auliciema and Kristine Bekere, eds., "Nyet nyet Soviet. Stasti par Latviesu politiskajam demonstracijam trimda [Nyet Nyet Soviet: Stories About Latvian Political Demonstration in Exile]," Latviesi Museum and Research Center, 2018; and Latvian Footprints, "Latvians in America from 1949 to Today," webpage, undated.

²⁷ Auliciema and Bekere, 2018.

²⁸ Miniotaite, 2002.

²⁹ "Britain to Repay Baltic States for Seizure of Gold Deposits," *Washington Post*, January 23, 1992.

West demanding that the Baltic question be discussed at the UN.³⁰ The 1977 publication of the “Statement About the State of the Roman Church and Other Faithful in Lithuania” and the “Statement About the Present Situation in Lithuania” by the Lithuanian Helsinki Group were significant in bringing international attention to the Lithuanian cause and informing international society about the current state of the country.³¹ The Baltic peoples also tried to draw attention to the secret protocols of the 1939 Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, both within the Baltic states and the USSR and internationally.³² Thus in 1979, the Lithuanian Freedom League published “The Address of 45 Balts to the Governments of the USSR, the German Federal Republic, the German Democratic Republic and the Countries Signatory to the Atlantic Charter and the US Secretary General Kurt Waldheim,” demanding that the situation of the Baltic states be discussed at the UN.³³

³⁰ Himma, 1974.

³¹ Jakubcionis, 2011; Živilė Račkauskaitė, “Pasipriešinimas sovietiniam režimui Lietuvoje septintajame–aštuntajame dešimtmetyje [Resistance to the Soviet Regime in Lithuania in the 1970s],” *Genocide and Resistance Magazine*, 1988. See also Karolis Garuckas, Eitanas Finkelšteinas, Ona Lukauskaitė-Poškienė, Viktoras Petkus, and Tomas Venclova, “Dėl dabartinės padėties Lietuvoje. Helsinkio Sustarimu Vykdymui Remti Lietuvos Visuomenine Grupe Pareiskimas. Trisdešimt Penkių Velstybių, 1975 Metų Helsinkio Akto Dalyvių Belgrado Konferencijai [Statement of the Current Situation in Lithuania. Statement to Support the Implementation of the Helsinki Agreements. To the Belgrade Conference of Thirty-Five States Parties to the Helsinki Act of 1975],” *Chronicle of the Catholic Church in Lithuania*, July 17, 1977.

³² The texts of the protocols are available in the Wilson Center Digital Archive; see “Secret Supplementary Protocols of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Non-Aggression Pact, 1939,” History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, September 1939.

³³ Romas Andrijauskas, Stasė Andrijauskienė, Alfonsas Andriukaitis, Edmundas Bartuška, Vytautas Bastys, Vytautas Bogušis, Vladas Bobinas, Romas Vitkevičius, Jonas Volungevičius, Jonas Dambrauskas, Jonas Eišvidas, Rimas Žukauskas, Ivars Žukovskis, Alfredas Zeideks, Juris Ziemeļis, Liutauras Kazakevičius, Leonas Laurinskas, Rimas Mažukna, Mocius, Mart Niklus, Napoleonas Narkūnas, Sigitas Paulavičius, Angelė Paškauskienė, Kęstutis Povilaitis, Jadvyga Petkevičienė, Jonas Petkevičius, Jonas Protusevičius, Sigitas Randis, Endel Ratas, Henrikas Sambore, Julius Sasnauskas, Leonora Sasnauskaitė, Algis Statkevičius, Kęstutis Subačius, Enn Tarto, Antanas Terleckas, Erik Udam, Ints Calitis, Petras Cidzikas, Arvydas Čekanavičius, Vladas Šakalys, Jonas Šerkšnas, Zigmās Širvinskas, Mečislovas Jurevičius, and Virgilijus Jaugelis, “A Statement of Baltic Representatives,” August 23, 1979.

Western support for the Baltic states during the Cold War, however, was limited. In some cases, Western governments actively sought to dissuade the Baltic states from pursuing independence, because of concerns about their relationships with Moscow. In Moscow on October 17, 1989, for example, former Chancellor of West Germany Willy Brandt reportedly told Gorbachev in his capacity as chairman of the Socialist International that “together with Scandinavian comrades we have exercised pressure in the Baltic states in order to pacify them. . . . In case needed, we are ready to say to them that do not play with fire. You should support the (Soviet) federation.”³⁴ Political support that did exist included the U.S. policy of nonrecognition of the illegal incorporation of the Baltic countries into the USSR and continuously expressed support for their self-determination.³⁵ This allowed diplomatic and consular representation of the pre-WWI Baltic governments to continue in the United States, ensuring the continuity of state and diplomatic services.

External engagement remained a priority for Baltic expatriate populations throughout most of this period, despite minimal assistance. Still, geopolitical considerations limited external military support for Baltic independence, making this factor less significant in the near or medium term. However, outreach efforts served a long-term strategic purpose by keeping the issue of Baltic occupation on the international agenda and denying legitimacy to the Soviet Union through a consistent policy of Western nonrecognition.

Denying an Occupier’s Political and Economic Consolidation

Although Baltic civilians were unable to deny Soviet political or economic consolidation, efforts to preserve Baltic culture and language did protect core elements of Baltic identity and eventually contributed to the success of the civilian-based campaign for national independence. As in the previous phase of armed resistance, Baltic govern-

³⁴ Vytautas Magnus University, “Prof. Alpo Russi. About Recognition of Independence of Baltic States,” webpage, January 20, 2020.

³⁵ U.S. Department of State, “Current United States Policy Toward Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia,” memorandum, November 5, 1965.

ments in exile persisted during this period, continuing to communicate the illegitimacy of Soviet rule. However, with the Soviet Union dominating all aspects of politics, governance, and law enforcement, there were limited opportunities to protect political and economic centers of gravity for the majority of this time period. Pursuit of this objective therefore took the form of cultural denial, with Baltic civilians opposing or mitigating the Soviet policies of sovietization, colonization, and Russification.³⁶

During the early part of the time period, some Baltic leaders sought unsuccessfully to constrain Soviet economic access to local raw materials and limit the number of Russian workers relocated to the Baltic states. In Estonia in 1956, the chairman of the Council of Ministers and the chairman of the Presidium of the Estonian Supreme Soviet published an article in a major Soviet newspaper, *Izvestiia*, criticizing Moscow for forcing Estonia to export its raw materials and bypassing Estonia's own industries and criticizing Moscow's policy of labor supply, which favored importing workers from Russia into Estonia.³⁷ Similarly, in 1958 and 1959, a group of Latvian Communist functionaries overtly yet unsuccessfully opposed the flooding of the region with Soviet immigrants and the Russification of public life.³⁸ During this period, the Latvian Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers Eduards Berkļavs opposed the planned development of heavy industry in Latvia and supported a different industrial development scenario that used the manpower already present in the country. He also demanded that Latvian industry satisfy the demand of Latvian consumers before Latvia's products were exported to Russia and called for those in local Communist Party jobs to know the Latvian language. However, these demands backfired. Berkļavs was fired and deported, initiating a purge

³⁶ Heinrihs Strods and Janis Riekstins, eds., *Nevardarbīga pretotanas: Latvijas neatkarības atgūsana dokumentos (1945–1991) I sejums [Nonviolent Resistance, Vol. 1: Nonviolent Resistance Against Soviet Occupation Regime (1945–1985)]*, Riga, Latvia: Latvijas Zinatnu Akademijas Baltijas Strategisko Petikumu Centrs, 2013.

³⁷ Vardys, 1966.

³⁸ Eglitis, 1993.

within the Communist Party in Latvia.³⁹ Overt efforts to constrain Soviet economic domination largely diminished, with sporadic exceptions that included strikes in Baltic ports in the winter of 1970–1971 and civil disobedience in the late 1980s in response to Soviet plans to establish new phosphorus mines in Estonia and import tens of thousands of Russian-speaking people to work there.⁴⁰

Indirect resistance through the preservation of the Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian languages and heritage proved more enduring, providing civilians with a means of protecting national cultural centers of gravity. Throughout the period of Soviet control, Baltic civilians maintained “hidden” forms of resistance that challenged the Soviet capacity to assert cultural domination. This included the keeping and production of national symbols (such as flags, coats of arms, and anthems) that were forbidden in all three Baltic states, maintenance of national and folk traditions (such as continuous calls for the right to celebrate Midsummer Eve, which is widely celebrated in all three Baltic states, and the Day of the Dead [remembrance of the dead]), and creation of art that depicted officially forbidden topics but that could not be censored.⁴¹ Baltic communities in exile similarly maintained their native languages; national traditions, songs, and dances; and hope for the Baltic states’ freedom and shunned Soviet calls for repatriation and, later, attempts to portray life in the Baltic states in an aggressively positive light.⁴²

Religious opposition formed a significant part of cultural resistance, subverting Soviet policies by seeking rights for believers and maintenance of religious traditions. Often, religious resistance was multifaceted and complex, aiming to accomplish objectives that ranged from complete opposition to the Soviet system to attempts to find ways

³⁹ Vardys, 1966.

⁴⁰ Kuul, 2014; Adam Roberts, *Civil Resistance in the East European and Soviet Revolutions*, Boston, Mass.: Albert Einstein Institution, Monograph No. 4, 1991.

⁴¹ SingingRevolution.com, homepage, undated; Zalite, 1997.

⁴² Auliciema and Bekere, 2018.

to coexist with the existing regime.⁴³ In the case of Lithuania, publications about and by the Catholic Church had a significant role in resistance, explicitly arguing against the atheism promoted by Communist authorities and propagating Catholic values.⁴⁴ When the 1980 European conference of the Lutheran World Federation was held in Latvia, the sermons of the visiting priests were highly attended, indicating the enduring significance of religious life even under Soviet rule.⁴⁵

Administratively, Baltic government institutions managed to preserve the obligatory status of their respective native languages and literature in Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian schools. To achieve this, Estonian-based schools' curricula were a year longer than those of Russian-based schools.⁴⁶ Preservation of secondary education in the Baltic states' respective native languages was an exception at a time when Moscow used education as a tool to reduce the differences between nations in the Soviet Union and aimed to reduce the number of years spent in secondary school.⁴⁷ Soviets also failed to replace the Baltics' Latin-based writing with Cyrillic.

Baltic languages, traditions, and pride in national heritage, preserved during this time, played a central role in popular mobilization once civilian organizations took a more active approach to resistance. Mobilization and coalition-building efforts will be discussed in greater detail later, but they are worth mentioning in the context of the strategic value of what might be considered *cultural denial* during longer-

⁴³ Balázs Apor, Péter Apor, and Sándor Horváth, *The Handbook of Courage: Cultural Opposition and Its Heritage in Eastern Europe*, Budapest, Hungary: Research Centre for the Humanities of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, 2018.

⁴⁴ Jakubcionis, 2011; Vello A. Pettai, "Estonia," in Walter R. Iwaskiw, ed., *Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania Country Studies*, Washington, D.C.: Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, 1996. Examples of Lithuanian Catholic publications included *Lietuvos Kataliku Baznycios kronikos* (*Chronicle of the Catholic Church of Lithuania*), *Ausra* (*Dawn*), *Dievas ir Tėvynė* (*God and the Fatherland*), *Tiesos kelias* (*The Way of Truth*), and *Rupintojėlis* (*Cross*).

⁴⁵ Zanda Mankusa, "Over the Iron Curtain: The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia Meets the West," *Journal of Baltic Studies*, Vol. 37, No. 3, August 29, 2008.

⁴⁶ Mart Rannut, "Beyond Linguistic Policy: The Soviet Union Versus Estonia," *Rolig papir*, August 1991.

⁴⁷ Vardys, 1966.

term occupation scenarios. In Estonia, for example, the “Heritage Protection Movement,” which sought to ensure that the history of politics and culture was taught without Soviet ideology, has been credited with helping inspire the independence movement and the so-called Singing Revolution of the late 1980s.⁴⁸

Additionally, during the period of active Baltic resistance beginning in the late 1980s, protection of national centers of governance and media once again became a central focus for civilian participants. The creation of human barriers in response to Soviet “creeping occupation” in all three Baltic states provides a powerful example of the protection of instruments of the state. During this time, residents mobilized to physically obstruct Soviet access to strategically significant objects in the Baltic capitals and other cities, such as government buildings, national press houses and radio and television centers, and some transport infrastructure objects (e.g., bridges) in Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia.⁴⁹ In January 1991, Lithuanians created human barriers around television transition towers and Supreme Council buildings to protect them against Soviet occupation.⁵⁰ Soviet forces were deployed to Estonia following a hardline Soviet coup in August 1991. Although they stormed the Tallinn television tower on August 21, Soviet forces were unable to interrupt radio broadcasts because Estonians had organized a human shield and blocked the doors.⁵¹ After the restoration of independence, this experience inspired the newly independent Baltic countries to make plans to involve civilian populations in preventing the reoccupation of national capitals and key political buildings.⁵²

⁴⁸ StateUniversity.com Education Encyclopedia, “Estonia: History and Background,” webpage, undated.

⁴⁹ Barokadopėdija, “1991: Janvāris [1991: January],” webpage, undated; Amos Chapple, “Lithuanian Independence: Recording the First Crack in the U.S.S.R.,” *RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty*, March 11, 2020; and Einar Värä, “The Road to Independence,” webpage, *Estonica*, last modified September 26, 2012.

⁵⁰ This represented a high-risk action that cost Lithuanian civilians at least two casualties under the wheels of Soviet tanks, and a total of fourteen died (“Occupied But Not Silenced. January 13, 1991: The Night When Soviets Stormed LRT,” *LRT*, January 12, 2020).

⁵¹ Kuul, 2014.

⁵² Bartkowski, 2015a; RAND interviews in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, 2019.

Thus, although Baltic populations were unable to deny Soviet political or economic control during the course of this long period of occupation, the continuity of the Baltic states' diplomatic representation in the United States and the United Kingdom and the continuation of Baltic cultural and religious practices undermined Soviet claims of legitimacy by demonstrating persistent refusal to assimilate. Additionally, these actions preserved national identity and hope for independence and eventually contributed to the campaign for independence by fueling popular will to mobilize, thus preparing the way for the social mobilization that was necessary for the eventual Singing Revolution and the Baltic Way toward freedom.⁵³ Once large-scale direct confrontation began between Baltic populations and Soviet authorities, government buildings and media outlets became tactical focal points, a lesson that has informed current Baltic planning.

Reducing an Occupier's Capacity for Repression

Although civilians did not achieve this proximate objective for much of Soviet rule, the backfire dynamic ultimately contributed to the eventual restoration of independence. Throughout the latter decades of occupation, dilemmas associated with the repression of large-scale nonviolent movements exacerbated Soviet political cleavages and likely contributed to a successful resistance outcome. Soviet willingness to employ brutal repression against nationalist resistance forces—with minimal costs levied by the international community—contributed to Baltic decisions to employ indirect methods that were less likely to incur a violent reprisal for much of the Soviet rule. Dissidents during this period faced forced emigration, beatings, imprisonment in hard labor camps, and persecution of their friends and families.⁵⁴ As Soviet political developments suggested opportunities for more-direct confrontation in the late 1980s, organizers across societal factions explic-

⁵³ Apor, Apor, and Horváth, 2018.

⁵⁴ Eglitis, 1993.

itly agreed on the use of nonviolent methods as the sole viable path to challenge Soviet rule.⁵⁵

Although Soviet forces continued to repress overt dissent in the final years of Soviet control, large-scale civilian actions with strict adherence to nonviolent tactics presented a dilemma, undermining the reliability of Soviet forces in carrying out repressive orders. The commander of the Soviet Baltic war region General Fjodor Kuzmin has reportedly acknowledged that, on a tactical level, Soviet armed forces deployed to the region did not know what to do with almost eight divisions of unarmed people who protected strategic objects without any arms, because the Soviet regime was unprepared for nontraditional forms of warfare.⁵⁶ The dilemma was amplified by messages emanating from the top of Russian political leadership: In January 1991, then-Chairman of the Presidium of the Russian Supreme Soviet of the Russian Soviet Federative Republic Boris Yeltsin met with Soviet troops in Estonia and urged them to disregard any orders to use force against unarmed demonstrators and not to thoughtlessly obey those “who are inclined to solve political problems with the help of military troops”⁵⁷

Soviet acts of repression during this later period of mobilization met with backfire in the Baltic states, internationally, and within the Soviet Union itself. In the Baltic states, Soviet violence against protesters fueled further resistance. Following 13 civilian deaths at the hands of Soviet forces in Lithuania in 1991, for example, independence movements called for demonstrations.⁵⁸ This call was answered by about a third of the Latvian population as some 700,000 Latvian “freedom

⁵⁵ Stephen Zunes, “Estonia’s Singing Revolution (1986–1991),” Washington, D.C.: International Center on Nonviolent Conflict, April 2009.

⁵⁶ Dita Arāja, “Nevardarbīgas pretošanās paraugs [Example of Non-Violent Resistance],” *Diena*, January 13, 2006.

⁵⁷ Hans Mouritzen, ed., *Bordering Russia: Theory and Prospects for Europe’s Baltic Rim*, New York: Routledge, 1998; see also Vladimir Kara-Murza, “Russia and the Baltics: Once Friend, Now Foe,” *Baltic Times*, January 22, 2015.

⁵⁸ Baltic Initiative and Network, “The Museum of the Barricades of 1991, Riga,” webpage, undated.

defenders” flocked to Riga from across the country to set up physical barricades around key government buildings.⁵⁹

Decisions by protestors to heed calls by organizers “to resist provocations of the foreign troops . . . [and] to refrain from any acts of physical resistance so desired by the enemy” played a decisive role in turning world public opinion in favor of Lithuania’s independence.⁶⁰ The violence against civilians made international actors more willing to contribute to the backfire dynamic and impose costs for repression. As Soviet forces were deployed to Vilnius in 1990, foreign governments, including the United States, warned against violence.⁶¹ Immediately after the 1991 crackdown, then-U.S. president George H. W. Bush reportedly warned Gorbachev directly that further Soviet repression in the Baltic states would freeze the progress in U.S.-Soviet relations that both presidents had worked so hard to build. Furthermore, the United States imposed diplomatic sanctions on the Soviet Union and announced plans to station U.S. diplomats in each of the three Baltic republics to monitor events.⁶² The crackdown in Lithuania and Latvia elicited reactions from the governments of Nordic countries, NATO, and the European Parliament denouncing violence and calling for the withdrawal of the troops that had been recently deployed to the Baltic states.⁶³

Finally, reports of Baltic civilian deaths during the 1991 protests backfired within Russia itself. Vocal opposition to the violence by Yeltsin increased the political costs associated with repression.⁶⁴ As forces were deployed to Baltic capitals, Yeltsin publicly cautioned that “[v]iolence against justice and the Baltic nations will cause new and

⁵⁹ Baltic Initiative and Network, undated.

⁶⁰ Miniotaite, 2002, p. 53.

⁶¹ Roberts, 1991.

⁶² Doyle McManus, “Bush, Gorbachev Dealings Reach Impasse over Baltics: Diplomacy: U.S. Plans to File Charges of Rights Abuse in Lithuania, One of Many Issues Bedeviling Relationship,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 23, 1991.

⁶³ Miniotaite, 2002.

⁶⁴ Miniotaite, 2002, p. 51.

serious crises in Russia itself, and will worsen the status of Russians residing in other republics.”⁶⁵

Although Soviet repression had limited most direct resistance throughout much of the period, firm popular commitment to non-violent methods helped create dilemmas for Soviet military forces and political leadership once direct confrontation began. Incidents of Soviet repression in response to mass actions in 1991 incurred costs on the Soviet leadership, including increased mobilization in the Baltics, international censure, and deepening of internal domestic fractures, ultimately playing a contributing role in Baltic independence and restoration of sovereignty.

Maintaining and Expanding Popular Support

Widespread public support represented a significant factor in the ability of the Baltic states to achieve independence. Although organized resistance was limited for the majority of the period from 1955 to 1990, opposition to Soviet cultural and religious domination persisted as a uniting theme, expressed through underground press, art, and literature, that could appeal to a broad swath of the Baltic population. In the 1980s, national heritage and environmental groups expanded participation and offered individuals opportunities to resist at relatively low cost. Ultimately, collaboration between these groups served as a catalyst to mobilize large numbers of civilians to engage in increasingly confrontational nonviolent actions, including writing letters, signing petitions, participating in gatherings, and ultimately joining mass protests in national capitals.

Even prior to the mobilization of the late 1980s, cultural and religious opposition and heritage protection provided means of preserving peaceful opposition and resistance. Cultural opposition took various forms, such as introducing prohibited themes and forms in art, writing about prohibited topics (e.g., Baltic resistance movements during WWII), and publishing prohibited authors or philosophers whose ideas clashed with the officially accepted Marxist and Leninist ideologies. A strong anti-Soviet movement continued that published under-

⁶⁵ Miniotaite, 2002, p. 52; Mauritzen, 1998.

ground newspapers (also known as *samizdat*, or *self-published* in Russian), booklets, poems, and even postcards.⁶⁶ Samizdat publications were not exclusively political—often, they offered fiction, poetry, and discussions of the arts or religious topics. For example, the Lithuanian magazine *Alma Mater* focused on literature, the arts, and philosophy. Similarly, a periodical published from 1972 to 1989 titled *The Chronicle of the Catholic Church of Lithuania* was supported by the Lithuanian Catholic Church and aimed to disclose violations of human rights. The dry and factual language of the publication is considered by some researchers to be the reason why it was successful not only in communicating with locals but also in distributing information about the situation in Lithuania to the West.⁶⁷

As the decades passed, other forms of opposition to the regime that broadened participation included various nonconformist youth or hippie movements, civil rights initiatives, folk movements, illegal rock festivals, and heritage protection groups.⁶⁸ By the mid-1980s, civil society organizations, such as the Estonian Heritage Society—an organization that sought to expose an accurate history of Baltic occupation—had formed the backbone of Baltic “national awakenings.” Later joined by the environmental protection movements, the Heritage Society encouraged people to express their views publicly and take to the streets on such issues as the development of new phosphorous mines by the Soviet Union.⁶⁹ Ultimately, the unified effort resulted in the collection of almost 900,000 signatures demonstrating opposition to changes in the Soviet constitution that made it more difficult for individual republics to change their own laws. This was another low-risk exercise that drew

⁶⁶ Apor, Apor, and Horváth, 2018. See also Dzintra Bungas, “Joint Political Initiatives by Estonians, Latvians, and Lithuanians as Reflected in Samizdat Materials—1969–1987,” *Journal of Baltic Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 3, 1988.

⁶⁷ Ainė Ramonaitė, Valdemaras Klumbys, and Rytė Kukulskytė, *Exploring Vindicated Clandestine Networks: The Functioning of Samizdat in Soviet Lithuania*, Vilnius, Lithuania: Vilnius University, September 2013.

⁶⁸ Apor, Apor, and Horváth, 2018.

⁶⁹ Laar, 1992.

a broad swath of the population into the overall resistance effort.⁷⁰ Tactics that appealed to broad audiences, such as music, also helped increase participation; in September 1988, a massive folk song festival in Tallinn attracted a record 300,000 people, nearly a quarter of all Estonians. Political leaders were present, and the public witnessed the first open calls for restoring the country's independence.⁷¹

Latvian groups promoting independence similarly mobilized public support through various forms. Although resistance initially focused on boycotts of Communist Youth organizations, refusal to vote in Soviet elections, and rejection of the Russian language, it consolidated in the late 1980s as civil society groups organized meetings and actions—including a 1988 funeral march for a popular Latvian dissident—that incorporated the Latvian national anthem and flag for the first time during Soviet occupation.⁷² The Latvian environmental protection movement played a significant role by carrying out an initial mobilization against Soviet environmental and industrial policies.⁷³ Anti-Soviet demonstrations and marches drew popular participation, culminating on January 13, 1991, when 500,000 people gathered to express support for independence and solidarity with neighboring Lithuania. Coordination between the National Independence Movement of Latvia and the Popular Front of Latvia in calling for Latvian independence ensured a common message across the movement.⁷⁴

In Lithuania, concern about environmental damage to the Baltic Sea, a poor food supply, and the dangers of a Soviet nuclear power station provided a rallying cry that led to a 1988 petition with thousands of signatories.⁷⁵ Several months later, publication of the protocols of

⁷⁰ Apor, Apor, and Horváth, 2018.

⁷¹ Zunes, 2009.

⁷² Anthony Phalen and Max Rennebohm, "Latvians Campaign for National Independence, 1989–1991," Global Nonviolent Action Database, 2011.

⁷³ Mikelis I. Berzins, "Analyzing and Understanding the Latvian Environmental Movement," capstone project, Corvallis, Ore.: Oregon State University, 2015.

⁷⁴ Phalen and Rennebohm, 2011.

⁷⁵ Grazina Miniotaite, "Retracing Lithuania's Steps Toward Independence," *Draugas News*, February 15, 2015.

the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact by a new *Sąjūdis* opposition newspaper elicited a rally of more than 250,000 Lithuanians dressed in national costumes.⁷⁶ Coalition building between the environmental movement and the *Sąjūdis* further strengthened the movement, expanding non-violent tactics to include nationwide boycotts and petitions.⁷⁷

Across all three Baltic states, coalition building and mobilization efforts eventually culminated in the August 1989 Baltic Way, during which between one and two million people peacefully joined hands and called for “the peaceful restoration of our statehood.”⁷⁸ By uniting all three Baltic populations around a major action and common objective, organizers were able to significantly expand participation to include civilians that ordinarily might not have been willing to incur personal risk for the sake of protest. This dynamic was further strengthened by the informal networks of exchange created throughout the Soviet period, including religious and cultural organizations, that helped convey the nationalist message and provide alternative channels of communication for Baltic populations.⁷⁹

The cumulative phases of this period underscore the potentially determinative role of popular participation in a resistance effort. Mass actions provided a key catalyst for the liberation of the Baltic states. Coalition building and coordination between various resistance groups across all three Baltic states and application of innovative tactics that anyone could participate in, such as the Baltic Way, helped fully mobilize the Baltic publics. Indirect actions from continuous cultural and religious resistance helped build up networks and organizations that were later used to communicate and mobilize publics.

⁷⁶ Miniotaite, 2015.

⁷⁷ Miniotaite, 2015.

⁷⁸ Roberts, 1991.

⁷⁹ Paula Christie, “The Baltic Chain: A Study of the Organisation Facets of Large-Scale Protest from a Micro-Level Perspective,” *Lithuanian Historical Studies*, Vol. 20, No. 1, 2015, p. 208.

Conclusion

Civilian contributions proved critical to this period of resistance to Soviet rule, beginning with indirect protection of Baltic customs, religion, and languages, and growing over time to include mass direct confrontation with Soviet authorities. A review of the period through the proximate resistance objectives identified in this report yields relevant insights. In particular, by the end of this period civilian resistance forces were able to exploit and exacerbate growing cleavages in Soviet domestic structures through tactics and actions that successfully increased the costs of occupation and repression. The ability of resistance leaders to maintain and expand popular support around their objectives—through coalition building and inclusive tactics—played a central role in increasing these costs. Although Soviet occupiers were able to assert political and economic control for most of the period, Baltic protection of cultural centers of gravity ultimately contributed to popular mobilization efforts. External support played a minimal role in advancing the desired outcome of independence, although the Western policy of nonrecognition throughout the period helped delegitimize the occupation. Table 4.1 summarizes the examples included in this overview.

Table 4.1
Summary of Select Resistance Examples in the Baltic States, 1955–1991

Objective	Relevant Actions	Degree of Success	Impact on Resistance Outcome
Imposing direct or indirect costs on an occupying force	Supporting and encouraging independence and national awakening movements in other areas controlled by the Soviet Union	Low, then high. During the latter part of this period, Baltic civilian resistance forces successfully imposed domestic political costs on the Soviet regime.	High. Some historians argue that Soviet political cleavages, exacerbated by the increasing costs of occupation, played a major role in the dissolution of the USSR.
Securing external support	<p>Actions by Baltic émigré communities in the West to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> consider the issue of the Baltic states' independence at the UN raise and maintain awareness of the Western governments and their populations of the Baltic issue demonstrate against Western government issues regarding the Baltic states <p>Letters addressed by the Baltic states to communities and governments abroad demanding that the Baltic issue be addressed at the UN or describing the situation of the Baltic peoples under Soviet rule</p>	Moderate. Western powers continued to resist active support for Baltic independence.	Moderate. Independence was achieved largely through internal Soviet dynamics rather than because of external support of resistance movements.
Denying an occupier's political and economic consolidation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activities to oppose or mitigate Soviet policies of sovietization, colonization, and Russification Preservation of the Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian languages and education in these languages Preservation of forbidden national symbols and national and religious holidays Peaceful protests Creation of physical barriers and unarmed barricades around critical infrastructure points in 1991 	Low. Political and economic consolidation had already been achieved by Soviet occupiers, but civilians were able to deny Soviet cultural consolidation.	Moderate. Protection of cultural centers of gravity contributed to national awakening and mass mobilization during the final phases of this period that challenged Soviet rule.

Table 4.1—Continued

Objective	Relevant Actions	Degree of Success	Impact on Resistance Outcome
Reducing an occupier's capacity for repression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of nonviolent and peaceful means of opposition and resistance • Further mobilization in response to repression 	Low, then high. Occupiers pursued repressive tactics for much of the period. Later, changes in occupier domestic politics and mass pressure increased the costs of repression.	High. Dilemmas and costs associated with repression reduced the Soviet government's ability and will to retain control over the Baltic region.
Maintaining and expanding popular support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coalition building among Baltic resistance organizations • Employment of tactics accessible to average members of the population • Use of existing organizations and networks for popular mobilization • Cultural opposition in, e.g., art, literature, and philosophy • Religious opposition and demanding religious freedom and rights for believers • Other groups that did not support the official ideology: nonconformist youth movements, civil rights groups, folk movements, illegal rock festivals, and heritage protection groups 	High. Resistance organizers were able to build large-scale coalitions and mobilize Baltic civilian populations.	High. Pressure from mass civic mobilization contributed to a decision to grant independence to the Baltic states.

Current Preparation and Capabilities for Resistance

Today, Baltic civilian populations and their militaries are increasingly prepared to meet emergent challenges with resilience and resistance. Russian military interventions in Georgia and Ukraine have inspired fundamental changes to the Baltic states' defense policies. The 1990s and early 2000s were dominated by establishing new defense systems and participation in international missions under the auspices of NATO or the European Union (EU) or in coalition operations led by the United States. Having joined NATO in 2004, the three countries were focused on implementing the advice of NATO allies to develop small military forces with niche capabilities that could support allied out-of-area operations, while territorial defense and a whole-of-government approach to defense were mostly secondary.

Then, cyberattacks on Estonia in 2007 and Russian campaigns in Georgia in 2008 and Ukraine in 2014 turned the Baltic states' attention to national defense tasks.¹ Today, each of the three countries considers national military defense to be closely intertwined with nonmilitary or civilian capabilities and policies, with a special role for the citizenry and the national consciousness. Each has introduced a whole-of-society approach into high-level strategy and policy documents. This approach is now considered an integral part of national defense and encompasses not only active and passive resistance but also early warning and pro-

¹ Toms Rostoks and Nora Vanaga, *Creating an Effective Deterrent Against Russia in Europe: Military and Non-Military Aspects of Deterrence*, Riga, Latvia: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, November 2018.

tection of the population.² All three countries have been seeking ways of educating their societies about national defense and creating familiarity and links with military service branches via reintroduction or expansion of mandatory service and strengthening of national voluntary forces, as well as through other means. Figure 5.1 illustrates the key building blocks of the comprehensive defense approaches of the three Baltic countries combined.³

In this chapter, we will identify the main lines of Baltic states’ efforts for each of the five objectives described in Chapter Two and review selected examples of relevant current and recent policies, programs, and activities of the Baltic states.

Current State of Play

The Baltic states introduced the concept of civilian-based resistance in national-level documents immediately after the reestablishment of independence in 1991. In anticipation of a potential Soviet invasion in early 1991, Estonian security officials drafted a “Civilian Disobedi-

Figure 5.1
Select Components of the Baltic States’ Approaches to Comprehensive Defense (Combined)

Military defense capabilities	Civilian support for military defense	Public-private cooperation for defense	Psychological defense	Civil protection and defense
Strategic communications	Domestic and internal security	Continuous operation of the state and country	Cybersecurity	Economic resilience

² Estonian Ministry of Defence, *National Defence Strategy: Estonia*, Tallinn, Estonia, 2011.

³ Government of Estonia, *National Security Concept 2017*, Tallinn, Estonia, 2017b; and Latvian Ministry of Defence, *Comprehensive National Defence in Latvia*, Riga, Latvia, 2019a.

ence” plan.⁴ In June 1991, the Latvian Supreme Council decided to set up a Center on Nonviolent Resistance. However, neither country pursued further efforts after the failed August 1991 coup in Moscow.⁵ The Russia-Georgia (2008) and Russia-Ukraine (2014) wars triggered a renewed interest. Realization that the region is vulnerable to both hybrid and conventional military threats has inspired Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania to develop distinctive national approaches to comprehensive security that involve the engagement of the civilian population in building and maintaining resilience, defense and, if necessary, resistance.

Recent Russian aggression in Ukraine has underscored the need to develop robust initial self-defense capabilities. The lack of coordination and the differences in defense planning and development of the Baltics’ armed forces have allowed for variance among the Baltic states regarding the integration of civilian-based resistance as an element of defense against occupation. Likewise, the Russian-Ukrainian conflict and the Baltic states’ own historical experiences have prompted the Baltic states to recognize the importance of societal resilience and psychological defense to threats that go beyond what their national armed forces are able to counter. Although the events in Crimea acted as a catalyst for the Baltic states to improve their unconventional defense capabilities, the countries’ increasing defense budgets (all three countries have reached a 2-percent GDP defense budget, and Lithuania plans to

⁴ The plan advised Estonian civilians to

treat all commands contradicting Estonian law as illegitimate; to carry out strict disobedience to and noncooperation with all Soviet attempts to strengthen control; to refuse to supply vital information to Soviet authorities and when appropriate to remove street names, traffic signs, house numbers, etc.; to not be provoked into imprudent action; to document through writing and film Soviet activities and use all possible channels to preserve and internationally distribute such documentation; to preserve the functioning of Estonia’s political and social organizations, e.g. by creating backup organizations and hiding essential equipment; to implement mass action when appropriate; and to undertake creative communication with potentially hostile forces. (Bartkowski, 2015a)

⁵ Bartkowski, 2015a.

spend 2.5 percent of its GDP in 2030)⁶ have provided the opportunity to do so.

The integration of civilian dimensions into national planning has been somewhat more developed in Lithuania. Lithuania strongly emphasizes the role of civilian resistance (both armed and unarmed resistance) in the defense of the state. This approach was incorporated into Lithuania's initial 1992 National Security Concept and has since remained a part of the approach to the defense of the state.⁷ Lithuania's Law on the Basics of National Security states that "the defence of Lithuania shall be total and unconditional."⁸ This law stipulates that *total defense* includes not only the Lithuanian National Armed Forces and Lithuania's NATO allies but also the use of all of the state's resources and resistance by each and every citizen. Lithuanian laws detail the role of the citizenry in defending the country's freedom and carrying out resistance while also noting the role of the government in providing the necessary training and information.⁹ Furthermore, the Lithuanian MOND has released three civil resistance manuals detailing popular responses to an external attempt at invasion.¹⁰ However, until the more recent events in Ukraine and Georgia, the concepts of *total defense*, *comprehensive security*, and *civilian resistance* were mostly viewed from a psychological and public relations standpoint and were not supported by substantial plans, capabilities, and investments.¹¹

⁶ MOND of Lithuania, "Budget Statement: Appropriations for National Defence 2019," March 30, 2020; and NATO, "Defence Expenditure of NATO Countries (2011–2018)," press release, Brussels, Belgium, March 14, 2019a.

⁷ Miniotaite, 2002.

⁸ Republic of Lithuania, Law on the Basics of National Security, last amended July 23, 2009.

⁹ Republic of Lithuania, 2009.

¹⁰ The most recent version was published in 2016; see MOND of Lithuania, "Ministry of National Defence Issues Third Publication on Civil Resistance," news release, October 27, 2016c.

¹¹ RAND interviews, August 2016.

Estonia has been focused on the defense of national territory since Russia's annexation of Abkhazia and Ossetia in Georgia in 2008.¹² Its National Defence Strategy (2011) explicitly states that national defense planning will include such paramilitary operations as guerrilla activity and resistance movements.¹³ Latvia introduced a comprehensive defense system only in 2019, setting forth public-private partnerships, psychological defense, raising public awareness of statehood, and economic resilience as key components of defense along with conventional military capabilities.¹⁴ The national security system of Latvia is based on civil-military cooperation that is planned and coordinated by state administrative institutions, the public, and the Latvian National Armed Forces. The 2016 State Defence Concept emphasizes the unconditional duty of every citizen to participate in defense and emphasizes the significance of the civil society in the defense of Latvia.¹⁵ Latvia's current security concept notes the importance of boosting national self-awareness, patriotism, and wide participation in ensuring state defense but does not offer specifics.¹⁶

All three countries have supported their strategies by trying to increase societal understanding and awareness of the importance of national defense and preparedness and the role of civil society in ensuring resilience. Some of the interlocutors in the Baltic states noted that

¹² Henrik Praks, *Hybrid or Not: Deterring and Defeating Russia's Ways of Warfare in the Baltics—The Case of Estonia*, Rome, Italy: Research Division, NATO Defense College, No. 124, December 2015.

¹³ Estonian Ministry of Defence, 2011.

¹⁴ Latvian Ministry of Defence, "Latvijā uzsāks visaptverošas valsts aizsardzības sistēmas ieviešanu [Latvia Starts Implementing a Comprehensive Defense System]," July 1, 2019b.

¹⁵ As of the writing of this report, Latvia is considering a new State Defence Concept that, among other things, seeks to further the implementation of its comprehensive defense policy by improving civil-military cooperation, including with nongovernmental organizations and individual members of society. Olevs Nikers, "Inside Latvia's New State Defense Concept: Riga Declares Its Military Ambitions Ahead of NATO Summit," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, Vol. 13, No. 104, May 28, 2016; and "Saeimas Aizsardzības komisija virza apstiprināšanai Valsts aizsardzības koncepciju [Saeima Defence Commission Submits the State Defence Concept for Approval]," *Sargs.lv*, September 9, 2020.

¹⁶ Government of Latvia, *The National Security Concept (Informative Section)*, Riga, Latvia, 2016.

the work and understanding of how to deal with civilians in times of crisis in the Baltic states is still in its early stages. However, both Estonia and Lithuania have already institutionalized an interagency approach to building resilience by creating government-level coordination agencies.

The Baltic states are largely focused on increasing public awareness of the importance of the civil society in supporting the Baltic conventional forces. They are working on educating the public about appropriate crisis response, albeit with the underlying concern that such information campaigns could cause panic and confusion among the population. Among these attempts are Lithuania's civil resistance manuals, noted earlier, which include recommendations on civil defense and advice on how to survive and support resistance in the case of an emergency or war.¹⁷ Relevant publications also exist in Estonian and Latvian. Various courses and education programs on survival and the importance of the defense of the state are also offered (see "Reducing an Occupier's Capacity for Repression" in this chapter).

Although the Baltic states have recognized the importance of trilateral defense cooperation, so far most cooperation has happened at senior political and military levels, in the form of distinct cooperation projects to build defense capabilities (e.g., the Baltic Defence College, the Baltic Air Surveillance Network) or joint participation in exercises. Some areas have attracted more bilateral cooperation. For example, in 2019, Latvia and Estonia, together with Denmark, established Headquarters Multinational Division North to improve NATO's command and control in the region.¹⁸ However, there is no evidence of any substantial current cooperation regarding resistance and resilience efforts.

The Baltic states have introduced changes in procedures and relevant legislation to enable more-rapid reaction to both external attacks and attacks from within, and have begun to apply these changes in

¹⁷ MOND of Lithuania, "Ką turime žinoti apie pasirengimą ekstremaliosioms situacijoms ir karo metui: rimti patarimai linksmi [Prepare to Survive Emergencies and War: A Cheerful Take on Serious Recommendations]," Vilnius, Lithuania, 2015.

¹⁸ Baltic Defence Cooperation Ministerial Committee, "Joint Communiqué of the Baltic Defence Cooperation Ministerial Committee," Tartu, Estonia, June 20, 2019.

national-level exercises. In Estonia in 2015, a nationwide exercise sought to connect military and civilian organizations in a crisis scenario.¹⁹ Latvia carried out a national-level civil defense exercise, STORMEX, in 2016 that involved various national and local government organizations and emergency services.²⁰ Although conventional forces are considered the primary line of defense, the Baltic states' efforts to improve interagency coordination (e.g., between the respective fire and rescue services that are responsible for civil defense situations, police, national voluntary defense organizations, and regular military units) could plausibly help blunt the effects of a conventional or unconventional attack.

Imposing Direct or Indirect Costs on an Occupying Force

Baltic states would be able to impose a variety of military, political, and economic costs upon an occupier. Baltic military forces would represent the primary instrument to inflict military costs, with civilians able to participate in efforts to degrade adversary cyber capabilities by joining the cyber units of the national defense voluntary forces, creating physical hurdles, denying access to local supplies, and supporting military units. Civilians could also theoretically play a role in increasing the costs of occupation by seeking to sow discord among adversary political factions, as was the case during the final years of Soviet occupation, although this approach does not yet appear to have been widely considered.

During an attempted occupation, direct costs would be predominantly imposed by Baltic conventional military forces and volunteer defense organizations operating under the direction of the remaining national authorities. Although these national volunteer defense organizations fall beyond the scope of this report, it is notable that Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania are investing in improving the capa-

¹⁹ Ministry of the Interior of Estonia, "Crisis Management," webpage, last updated September 27, 2017b.

²⁰ Latvian Ministry of Agriculture, "Valsts mēroga civilās aizsardzības mācības 'STORMEX 2016' [Nationwide Civil Protection Training 'STORMEX 2016']," October 21, 2016.

bilities of these organizations through conducting exercises, launching recruitment campaigns, and carrying out conventional military efforts, such as improving armaments and increasing troop numbers.²¹ The Baltic states have sought to engage with interested societal groups through their respective paramilitary or voluntary defense organizations—specifically, the Estonian Defence League, or *Kaitseliit*; the Latvian National Guard, or *Zemessardze*; the Lithuanian National Defence Volunteer Forces, or *Krašto apsaugos savanorių pajėgos* (KASP); and the Lithuanian Riflemen's Union (LRU), or *Lietuvos šaulių sąjunga*, a paramilitary nongovernmental organization (see Table 5.1 for more information on these organizations). In addition to playing a role in internal security during a crisis, these groups could be called on to impose costs on an occupying adversary.

Additional roles for civilians beyond formal military structures are not as well defined. The Lithuanian MOND has published advice on resistance through noncooperation, such as refusal to collaborate with the occupying force and avoidance of its rallies. The publication also includes more-active calls for civilians to engage in cyber-based activities and join armed resistance, thus supporting the constitutional rights of every Lithuanian to resist an occupying force.²² However, Latvian and Estonian sources provide little guidance on this aspect of resistance beyond high-level acknowledgment of the importance of societal participation in resistance activities if necessary. The Latvian National Security Concept does explicitly reference the cost of occupation, emphasizing that the strength of state defense depends on the

²¹ “Ar kampaņu ‘Esi viens no mums!’ bruņotie spēki aicina jauniešus stāties profesionālajā dienestā [With a Campaign ‘Be One of Us!’ The Armed Forces Are Inviting Youth to Joint Professional Service],” Sargs.lv, February 5, 2016. Sargs.lv, February 5, 2016. Estonia, whose defense system relies on mobilization of reservists, carried out its largest-ever mobilization exercise *Siil* in 2018 with the participation of reservists (Republic of Estonia Defence Forces, “Siil Exercise Starts in Estonia,” May 2, 2018).

²² MOND of Lithuania, 2015; MOND of Lithuania, “Ką turime žinoti apie pasipriešinimą: Aktyvių veiksmų gaires [What We Need to Know About Resistance: Guidelines for Active Action],” 2016a.

Table 5.1
Voluntary Defense Organizations of the Baltic States

Country	Estonia	Latvia	Lithuania
Organization	Estonian Defence League	National Guard	KASP
Objective	"[E]nhance, by relying on free will and self-initiative, the readiness of the nation to defend the independence of Estonia and its constitutional order." ^a	"[I]nvolve the citizens of Latvia in the defence of the State territory and society . . . and which participates in the planning and execution of the State defence tasks in accordance with the tasks determined in the Law." ^b	In peacetime, train volunteer servicemen, render host nation support to allied forces. In crisis or war, conduct defense tasks, protect important state or municipal facilities, and provide assistance to the Armed Forces.
Capabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16,000 members • 10,000 in affiliated organizations, e.g., Women's Voluntary Defence Organization, Young Eagles (<i>Noored Kotkad</i>), and Home Daughters (<i>Kodutütred</i>) 	8,280 members	4,800 members
			LRU
			"Strengthen national security of the Republic of Lithuania by bringing together citizens . . . for active contribution to increasing the defensive power of the state, ensuring public security, civic, patriotic and national education of the society, also to educate . . . citizens of the Republic of Lithuania who are prepared to defend the Homeland and help others in misfortune." ^c

SOURCES: Flanagan et al., 2019; Government of Estonia, The Estonian Defence League Act, February 28, 2013; Government of Lithuania, Law on the Organisation of the National Defence System and Military Service, May 5, 1998; and Zemessardze, "Par Zemessardzi [About the National Guard]," webpage, undated.

^a Estonian Defence League, "Estonian Defence League," webpage, last updated April 3, 2020.

^b Government of Latvia, The National Guard of the Republic of Latvia Law, May 6, 2010.

^c Government of Lithuania, Law of the Republic of Lithuania on the Lithuanian Riflemen's Union, July 2, 1997.

right military strategy and the strength of the will of the people, which could impose costs on the adversary.²³

In theory, civilians could contribute directly to armed resistance. Brigadier General Meelis Kiili, former commander of the Estonian Defence League, has argued publicly that “the best deterrent is not only armed soldiers, but armed citizens, too.”²⁴ However, this approach would not come without risk, given the need for clear command-and-control structures and distinction between civilian and military resistance forces. Currently, legal restrictions in all three countries constrain civilian access to arms during peacetime. Recent changes to Lithuanian law have loosened regulations on national volunteer organizations, which would fall within the national military chain of command during a crisis. One 2016 change, for example, permitted members of the LRU to keep personally purchased Category B weapons at home.²⁵ The weapons of KASP personnel are kept in company or battalion storage, but recent legislation changes allow the KASP, in addition to central government authorities, to authorize permits for arms for its members.²⁶

The cyber domain presents a clearer path for civilian imposition of cost. One manual disseminated by the Lithuanian government calls on civilians to “stage cyber-attacks on information systems of the aggressor or invader in case Internet connection is still available amidst the armed conflict,” identifying an important way for civilians to use modern technology to contribute to cost imposition at relatively low personal risk.²⁷ Cyber resilience and defense has been the specific

²³ Government of Latvia, 2016.

²⁴ Kramer, 2016.

²⁵ According to Lithuanian law, Category B weapons consist of semiautomatic or repeating short firearms, single-shot firearms with center-fire percussion, single-shot firearms with rim-fire percussion whose overall length is less than 28 cm, semiautomatic firearms that hold three rounds or fewer, repeating or semiautomatic long firearms not exceeding 60 cm, semiautomatic firearms that are not for military use, and archery weapons (Republic of Lithuania, Law on Control of Weapons and Ammunition, January 14, 2010).

²⁶ RAND interviews, August 2016.

²⁷ MOND of Lithuania, 2015, p. 46.

focus of an annual live-fire cyber defense exercise, Locked Shields, organized by the NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence (CCDCOE), which is based in Tallinn. In 2019, this exercise played out cyberattacks not only against a military but also against a civilian internet service and included relevant industry participants.²⁸ Other exercises cover such aspects as red teaming, state-level preparedness to face cybersecurity threats, training of information technology managers from public and private companies, and training military cyber defense capabilities. Examples include Crossed Swords (also organized by the CCDCOE), Cyber Shield and Amber Mist (hosted by Lithuania),²⁹ and *Kiberdzirnas* (Latvia).³⁰ Although these efforts emphasize defensive measures, roles for civilian contributors could also theoretically be extended to involve offensive cyber operations against an aggressor.

Baltic military forces would likely play a role in guiding and coordinating civilian members of resistance in the case of invasion, thus potentially incorporating civilian resistance groups into some elements of organized unconventional warfare efforts carried out by military personnel. These would require close civil-military coordination to prevent accidental fratricide or compromise of mutual efforts.³¹ Skills acquired by the professional military and the national voluntary forces via training and exercises could also plausibly be shared with civilians. For example, the Latvian exercise Namejs 2018 drilled countering a civil unrest situation in cooperation with the Latvian State Police while

²⁸ NATO CCDCOE, “Locked Shields,” webpage, undated.

²⁹ Lithuania Ministry of Defence, “Cybersecurity and Defence Exercise Underway in Lithuania,” Defense-Aerospace.com, October 9, 2018.

³⁰ CERT.LV, “Valsts iestāžu vadītāji piedalās kiberdrošības mācībās ‘Kiberdzirnas 2016’ [Institution Leaders Participate in Cyber Security Exercise ‘Cyber Mill 2016’],” December 8, 2016.

³¹ Karl Saum, “Chapter 3: Small State UW Doctrine: Feasibility and Application for National Defense,” in Kevin D. Stringer and Glennis F. Napier, eds., *Resistance Views: Essays on Unconventional Warfare and Small State Resistance*, MacDill Air Force Base, Fla.: The JSOU Press, 2018.

also incorporating cyber defense and drones.³² *Abatis*—that is, felling trees to create barriers to impede tanks—was part of NATO exercise Iron Sword in 2017.³³ Relevant special operations forces (SOF) exercises, such as Trojan Footprint and Jackal Stone, have trained the integration of SOF and conventional force elements; the ability to cooperate with external assistance forces; and such techniques as high-action fast-rope insertion and extraction system training, water drop, freefall parachute training, and leader engagement skills.³⁴ Conventional military capability building could therefore help inform civilian resistance activities.

Furthermore, civilian populations, such as municipalities, might be well placed to impose planning costs on the adversary's forces. For example, through denying access to local supplies, such as water, food, and medical supplies, civilian populations could cause the adversary to incur higher sustainment costs and a heavier logistics footprint. Beyond imposing military costs, civilians would certainly play a role in imposing nonmilitary costs upon an aggressor. Although no formal plans appear to exist for this contingency, Baltic civilians could seek to increase the economic costs of occupation through comprehensive international sanctions, boycotts of economic trade with Russia (both the import and export of goods), and calls on the governments and people of allied countries to boycott Russian goods and services. Furthermore, civilians could seek to undermine domestic support for Russian aggression through direct outreach to the Russian public or to elements of the Russian government. One analysis suggests that a civilian-based campaign could "work on strategies to cause disaffection . . . [and] internal dissent among an . . . adversary's allies including business, religious and intellectual establishments as well as military families and the general public at home," with the goal of increasing

³² Taivo Trams, "Tuvojas līdz šim vērienīgākās mācības [The Most Ambitious Exercise to Date Is Coming]," *Sargs.lv*, March 16, 2018.

³³ Kyle Mizokami, "How NATO Uses Trees to Stop Tanks," *Popular Mechanics*, January 10, 2017.

³⁴ John Friber, "Trojan Footprint—UW in the Baltic States," *SOF News*, June 15, 2018; and "Jackal Stone 10 SOF Exercise Concludes in Poland," *ShadowSpear*, October 12, 2010.

“uneasiness and eventually an open opposition of the population to its government’s actions abroad.”³⁵ Although Russian domestic government propaganda would likely complicate this task, civilian efforts might include disseminating information via social media, blogs, and existing informal religious, cultural, educational, and other networks.

Securing External Support

External support remains a central pillar of Baltic resistance strategy. The Baltic states regard collective defense commitments by NATO allies and participation in the EU’s crisis management measures as the critical mechanisms for ensuring and enabling external support for their national defense. Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian membership of NATO, the EU, and other international organizations, as well as their diplomatic networks and sizable diaspora living abroad, would provide these countries with several avenues for seeking external political, military, and humanitarian support. The three main official means of seeking external support are as follows:

- **Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty**, also known as the Washington Treaty, is the most widely cited collective defense framework in the context of the defense of the Baltic states. It establishes the principle of collective defense and provides an avenue for seeking not only military but also nonmilitary assistance. Following the 2016 Warsaw Summit, NATO established a military presence in the region by stationing a battle group in each of the three countries; these groups are geographically well positioned to support the defense of the region. However, invoking Article 5 might be a complex process that would require the agreement of all NATO member states. Achieving such an agreement could be complicated in the case of so-called hybrid or gray zone attacks. Furthermore, Article 5 does not specify the type of assistance that NATO members would provide to the region; rather, it refers to

³⁵ Bartkowski, 2015a.

engaging in “action such as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force.”³⁶

- **Article 42.7 of the Treaty of the European Union** obligates all EU countries to assist another EU member state in the case of an armed aggression, in accordance with Article 51 of the United Nations Charter.³⁷ However, the procedure for the invocation of this article is presently unclear, and it can be speculated that seeking assistance via the EU might be more useful in domestic security crises.³⁸ Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania are also members of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, which encourages cooperation in civil protection and preparedness for nonmilitary disasters.³⁹
- **Bilateral diplomatic and military relations:** The Baltic states have well-developed bilateral relations with the United States and such key allies and contributors to the NATO Enhanced Forward Presence battle groups as the United Kingdom, Germany, and Poland.

All three Baltic states have a well-developed network of embassies throughout the world and large expatriate communities in European countries (including the United Kingdom, Ireland, Germany, Norway, and Finland)⁴⁰ and the United States and Canada that could be leveraged to gain political and practical support, including arranging expedited procurements of equipment.⁴¹ With more than 100 embassies and even more consulates and honorary consuls in the world, the Baltic states’ diplomatic network may be considered first in the line of defense

³⁶ NATO, “Collective Defence—Article 5,” webpage, last updated November 25, 2019c.

³⁷ EUR-Lex, “Glossary of Summaries: Mutual Defence Clause,” webpage, undated.

³⁸ Article 42.7 of the Treaty of the European Union has been invoked only once, when France activated it after terrorist attacks in Paris in 2015 (RAND interview in Lithuania, 2019).

³⁹ European Commission, “EU Civil Protection Mechanism,” webpage, last updated May 4, 2020.

⁴⁰ RAND interviews in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, 2019.

⁴¹ RAND interview in Lithuania, 2019.

to avoid military crisis, because crisis prevention is one of its responsibilities.⁴² These embassies, shown in Figure 5.2, would represent the primary voices of the three countries in the event of an occupation.⁴³ All three Baltic states have invested in developing a network of embassies and increasing their representation in international organizations, which may also serve as platforms for seeking external assistance. For example, in January 2020, Estonia became a nonpermanent member of the UNSC for two years. Moreover, each of the Baltic countries also has an embassy and consulates in Russia, providing an opportunity for a direct dialogue in the event of a crisis.

As was the case under Soviet occupation, Baltic civilians living abroad could also play a significant role. According to various Baltic sources, 370,000 Latvians, between 150,000 and 200,000 Estonians, and 257,000 Lithuanians were living abroad in 2014–2015.⁴⁴ Societal and cultural networks could be harnessed to rapidly raise awareness of a Baltic security crisis among allied publics, media, and governments and to call for assistance. For example, within the U.S. legislative branch of government, the House Baltic Caucus and the Senate Baltic Freedom Caucus, both created in the late 1990s by two prominent American members of Congress of Lithuanian heritage, could represent a central node of information and advocacy.⁴⁵ Moreover, the diaspora could also be a source for financial support to resistance movements and offer rare technical skills. Although the diaspora could also be viewed as a recruitment pool for military units, the dialogue between the Baltic states and their diasporas about their interest and will to serve in the national military forces is underdeveloped. Our research found that

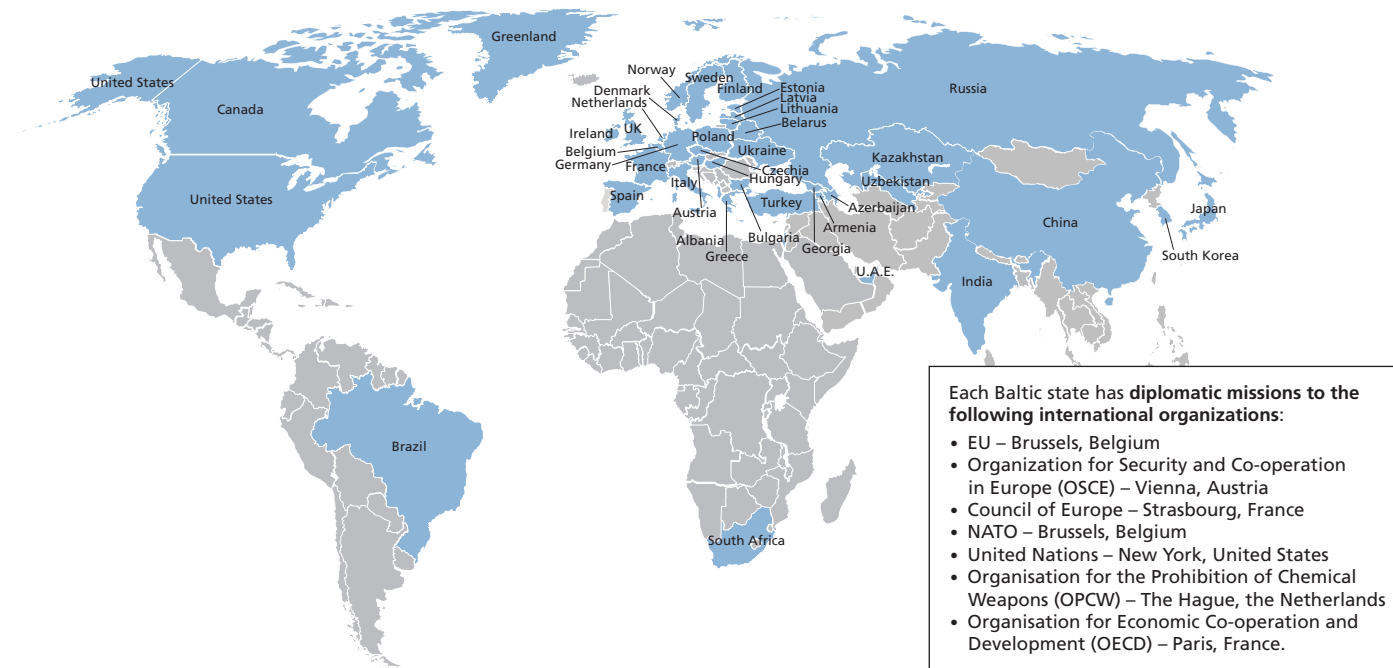
⁴² RAND interview in Estonia, 2019.

⁴³ RAND interview in Lithuania, 2019.

⁴⁴ Kaja Kumer-Haukanõmm and Keiu Telve, *Estonian Human Development Report 2016/2017: Estonia at the Age of Migration—2.1. Estonians in the World*, Tallinn, Estonia: Foundation Estonian Cooperation Assembly, 2017; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia, *Diasporas politika Latvijā* [Latvian Diaspora Policy], March 1, 2017; and Official Statistics Portal, “Lithuanians in the World,” December 12, 2014.

⁴⁵ Joint Baltic American National Committee, Inc., “House and Senate Baltic Caucuses Poised for Historic Expansion in 2019,” April 23, 2019.

Figure 5.2
The Baltic States' Resident Embassies



SOURCES: Websites of the ministries of foreign affairs of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.

NOTE: Countries shaded blue have resident embassies.

only Lithuania has considered the value and roles of the diaspora in a potential crisis scenario.⁴⁶

There is also a clear awareness within Baltic governments of the potential for disinformation campaigns to mute a NATO response. The Lithuanian government, for example, has suggested that citizens witnessing an armed attack should create “video footage of the aggressive actions of enemy forces and use mediums available (e.g., the internet) to transfer it to international media outlets (CNN, BBC, etc.)” if it is possible to do so safely.⁴⁷ Not only could this help document and raise awareness beyond the region; it could also shape the international narrative and counter malign use of information or attempts to conceal acts of violence. Such information-sharing could prove significant in encouraging allied countries to extend political and military support during an escalating crisis. In a recent public opinion poll from the Pew Research Center, more than 60 percent of respondents from the Netherlands, Poland, and the United States were supportive of the use of military force to defend another NATO country in the case of a military conflict with Russia, as were more than 50 percent of respondents from Canada and France (see Figure 5.3).⁴⁸

Raising awareness of the region among allied populations and informing them about the security situation could help increase the willingness of the allied population to support a national contribution of armed forces in response to an intervention in the Baltics.⁴⁹ The three Baltic countries have adopted the approach of accumulating a “defense credit” through cooperation and participation in allied security and defense endeavors, specifically NATO, EU, and coalition operations.⁵⁰ However, current Baltic policies appear to prioritize direct communication with allied governments rather than their populations.

⁴⁶ RAND interview in Lithuania, 2019.

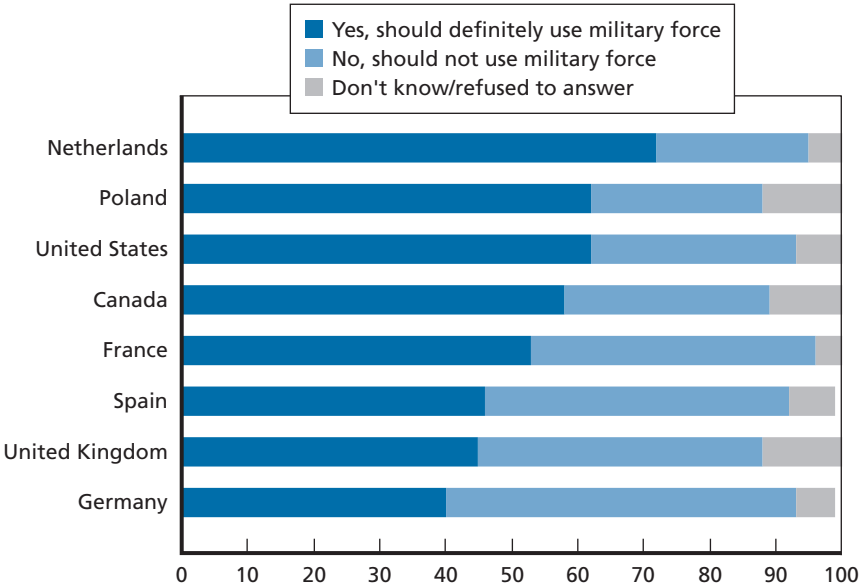
⁴⁷ MOND of Lithuania, 2015.

⁴⁸ Pew Research Center, “Topline Questionnaire,” May 23, 2017.

⁴⁹ Binnendijk and Priebe, 2019.

⁵⁰ Estonian Ministry of Defence, 2011.

Figure 5.3
Support for Use of Military Force to Defend a NATO Ally in a Serious Military Conflict with Russia



NOTE: Researchers posed the following question to respondents: “If Russia got into a serious military conflict with one of its neighboring countries that is our NATO ally, do you think our country should or should not use military force to defend that country?” Because of the rounding methodology used by Pew, not all percentages total 100 percent.

SOURCE: Adapted from Pew Research Center, 2017. The survey question appears on p. 19 of the Topline Questionnaire.

Denying an Occupier’s Political and Economic Consolidation

Our research identified several activities that could potentially help stymie an occupier’s domination of Baltic political and economic centers of gravity. These are (1) exercising the means of ensuring diplomatic and governmental continuity of the state, (2) ensuring the security of the supply of vital services (e.g., food, water, and energy), (3) improving the protection of critical infrastructure, and (4) improving civil-military coordination.

Ensuring Diplomatic and Governmental Continuity of the State

The constitutions of all three Baltic states detail the responsibilities of their governments in peacetime as well as in crisis. All three countries have established procedures and plans for how the government functions in the case of a crisis or an armed attack. Likewise, their constitutions consider the seizure of state power or state institutions by force to be anti-constitutional, unlawful, and invalid.⁵¹ The Speaker of the *Riigikogu* (the Estonian parliament) can temporarily assume the duties of the president, in case he or she is no longer in office, while in a state of emergency the prime minister assumes the role of the head of state of emergency and coordinates defense readiness.⁵² In a time of war, the Latvian president is expected to prepare commands and decrees not only for the National Armed Forces but also for the local councils and residents.⁵³ Lithuania's president may be only temporarily replaced by the speaker of *Seimas* (the Lithuanian parliament). The constitution requires that the president of Lithuania, in case of an armed attack that threatens "the sovereignty of the state of its territorial integrity; immediately makes a decision on defending against an armed aggression and imposes martial law. *Seimas* retains [a] high level of influence through the ability to approve or overrule this request and the ability to announce [a] state of emergency."⁵⁴

In Estonia, the "Government Act" regulates how the government functions, including in the case of a crisis. Estonia has exercised the ability to carry out cabinet meetings outside the country in peacetime: In 2017, it held a government cabinet meeting in Brussels during its presidency of the Council of the EU.⁵⁵ Latvian plans for the continuity of government are based on the constitution, which stipulates that the

⁵¹ Government of Lithuania, The Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania, October 25, 1992.

⁵² Government of Estonia, State of Emergency Act, January 10, 1996.

⁵³ President of Latvia, "Duties, Powers, and Rights of the President of Latvia," webpage, undated.

⁵⁴ Government of Lithuania, 1992.

⁵⁵ RAND interview in Estonia, 2019.

power and ability to represent the government may be transferred to the ambassador to the UN if necessary.⁵⁶

It may be assumed that in the case of a serious military crisis, the diplomatic representation in the aggressor country could be in danger. Likewise, the diplomats of the Baltic countries could be targeted anywhere in the world. It would therefore be important for the Baltic states to strengthen their representation abroad because diplomats might need to move from one country to another, while other diplomatic and government representatives might need to seek refuge abroad at short notice.⁵⁷ In extreme cases, informal diplomatic, cultural, and societal networks and diaspora groups could be instrumental in ensuring the continuity of communication between the countries and their missions, even in cases when conventional communication systems have been compromised.

Ensuring the Security of the Supply of Vital Services

Continuous security of the supply of vital services and infrastructure resilience represents a key part of Baltic efforts to build resilience. The Baltic states view protection of critical services through preventive and mitigating measures. Although high-level security concepts might not detail risks to vital services, resilience building measures are applied to such areas as electronic communications and cybersecurity, resilience and protection of transport systems, and energy security via reducing and diversifying imports and increasing the use of domestic energy resources (e.g., oil shale and renewable energy).

All three countries have laws in place that require the state to have adequate reserves of vital goods and be able to ensure the supply of vital services. These are goods and services that “have a major impact on the functioning of society and the disruption of which directly threatens the life or health of the individual or the functioning of another vital service or service of general interest.”⁵⁸ For example, the Estonian

⁵⁶ RAND interview in Latvia, 2019.

⁵⁷ RAND interview in Lithuania, 2019.

⁵⁸ Ministry of the Interior of Estonia, “Valitsus ootab asutustelt 72-tunnist valmisolekut elutähtsate teenuste katkestusel [The Government Expects to Be Ready for a 72-Hour Break

Emergency Act of 2017 mandates the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications to ensure the continuity of the supply of electricity, natural gas, liquid fuel, phone service, data transmission services, and digital identification and signing and the operability of national roads, among other vital services (see Figure 5.4).⁵⁹ However, the maturity level of plans for how to engage with local economies and ensure economic resilience as a potential first step in both self-defense and denying the adversary an economic advantage is uneven. Latvia, for example, currently does not have an action plan for how to ensure economic resilience by engaging with both private and public actors, and the respective areas of responsibility among relevant organizations and agencies are not clear.⁶⁰

As EU member states, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania are required by EU Council Directive 2009/119/EC to maintain minimum stocks of crude oil or petroleum products equal to at least 90 days of average daily net imports or 61 days of consumption, whichever is higher.⁶¹ According to Eurostat data, as of July 2019, all of the Baltic states were meeting this requirement, with Estonia holding a 75-day supply, Latvia a 92-day supply, and Lithuania a 90-day supply of emergency oil stocks.⁶² Some national laws also set forth a requirement for the location of the oil reserves (i.e., domestic versus foreign location). For example, a Latvian regulation, “Procedures for the Ensuring and Providing of Emergency Stock Services by Merchant for the Establishment of State Petroleum Product Stocks in a Specified Amount,” requires

in Vital Services],” July 20, 2017a.

⁵⁹ Government of Estonia, 2017a.

⁶⁰ Latvian Ministry of Defence, 2019a.

⁶¹ European Commission, “State of the Energy Union 2015,” Commission Staff Working Document, Brussels, Belgium, November 18, 2015. This requirement has also been adopted into the countries’ national legislation: The Lithuanian law, for example, requires that Lithuania establish stocks of petroleum (oil) products for at least 30 days. The stocks should be created by enterprises that produce petroleum products, import them, or deliver them to government institutions (Government of Lithuania, Law on State Stocks of Petroleum Products and Crude Oil, June 25, 2002).

⁶² Eurostat, “Oil Stocks—Emergency Stocks in Days Equivalent—Monthly Data,” webpage, last updated March 9, 2020.

Figure 5.4
Examples of Vital Services in Estonia as Defined by the Emergency Act



SOURCE: Government of Estonia, Emergency Act, July 1, 2017a.

that at least 25 percent of the reserve stocks provided by commercial companies be stored within the country's territory, while the rest should be stored in another EU member state that hosts an oil refinery and can ensure supply in case of an energy crisis.⁶³

The Baltics are actively reducing their reliance on Russian energy supplies by developing energy networks with their Western neighbors and increasing the use of renewable energy.⁶⁴ As part of the Baltic

⁶³ Government of Latvia, "Procedures for the Ensuring and Providing of Emergency Stock Services by Merchant for the Establishment of State Petroleum Product Stocks in a Specified Amount," April 12, 2011.

⁶⁴ The EU requires that all of its member states source at least 20 percent of their total energy outputs from renewables by 2020 (European Commission, *Report from the Com-*

energy market interconnection plan, Estlink, Nordbalt, and LitPol electricity links are being constructed, connecting Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania respectively with Finland, Sweden, and Poland. The Baltic countries aspire to synchronize their electricity networks with the rest of Europe by 2025. Work on linking the Baltic states' gas networks with Finland by the end of 2021 is ongoing.⁶⁵

However, although laws requiring a certain reserve of stocks are in place, open source research suggests that they currently might not be fully implemented. Lithuanian media have reported that some stocks, particularly perishable items (e.g., food and agricultural produce), might not be currently stocked, and their supply in a crisis would depend on preliminary supply agreements with commercial enterprises. Moreover, although the state mobilization plan includes arrangements for ensuring the supply of goods, the fact that numerous suppliers are privately owned might complicate the state's ability to integrate them into the execution of national mobilization plans. Separate contracts with private enterprises would need to be in place, ideally prior to any crisis. Lithuania is currently actively working on establishing such a network of contracts with private enterprises.⁶⁶ Likewise, although an interviewee in Estonia assessed the current state of crisis food supply to be rather good, Estonia is only beginning its work on establishing a system for secure food supply and distribution in case of a crisis, and people living in major cities tend to have smaller food stocks at home.⁶⁷ Similarly, although Latvian legislation sets out the procedures and food norms that government organizations should be able to distribute to

mission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: Renewable Energy Progress Report, Brussels, Belgium, April 9, 2019a).

⁶⁵ European Commission, "Baltic Energy Market Interconnection Plan," webpage, July 31, 2014.

⁶⁶ RAND interviews in Lithuania, September 2019.

⁶⁷ Ivo Juurvee, Ramon Loik, Mari-Ann Ploom, Tõnis Hintsov, Andres Parve, and Eerik Heldna, *Preparing for Crises in Estonia: Improvement Options for Civilian Food and Emergency Goods Supplies*, Tallinn, Estonia: International Centre for Defence and Security, February 2020; and RAND interviews in Estonia, September 2019.

every resident, open source reports indicate that the responsible ministries have not received the necessary funding.⁶⁸

Improving the Protection of Critical Infrastructure

In today's economy, regulating foreign investment in critical infrastructure can represent an important step in protecting economic centers of gravity. During an occupation scenario, ownership of critical infrastructure by an aggressor could facilitate their control and represent a major vulnerability for the occupied population.

It is inherently difficult to vet publicly traded companies that sell their shares to holding companies that might have Russian or Chinese influence.⁶⁹ The three countries' current approaches to vetting foreign investments in vital infrastructure differ. Lithuania has some of the strictest laws on infrastructure investment in Europe. Lithuania benefited from the application of the EU's Third Energy Package and its so-called unbundling requirement, which allowed Lithuania to nationalize its energy terminal and avoid Russian ownership of critical infrastructure.⁷⁰ Thus, key fuel and oil network infrastructure is owned by Lithuania, but gas and oil are still supplied from Russia. This helps avoid dangerous investments in the Lithuanian deep-water port in Klaipėda; however, its electricity networks and the liquid natural gas terminal still expose Lithuania to the vulnerability of Russian energy supply policies. Potential investments are reviewed by a commission comprising experts who represent various civilian and security institutions. Although the commission has only an advisory role, the

⁶⁸ For example, the dietary standard for an adult includes oat flakes, dried mashed potatoes, dried milk or skimmed milk powder, canned meat, canned vegetables, crispbread, jam, fruit puree, chocolate, dried fruit and nuts, instant coffee, tea bags, salt, sugar, and water (Elmārs Bārkans, "Arī Latvijas cilvēkus lūgs sapirkt pārtiku, sērskociņus, zāles un citas vajadzīgas lietas krīzes gadījumam [Latvian Residents Will Also Be Asked to Buy Food, Matches, Medicine and Other Items for Crisis Situations]," *jauns.lv*, March 26, 2019; and Latvian Cabinet of Ministers, Noteikumi par iedzīvotāju nodrošināšanu ar pārtiku valsts apdraudējuma gadījumā [Food Provisions to Population in the Event of Crisis to the State], August 28, 2007).

⁶⁹ RAND interviews in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, September 2019.

⁷⁰ RAND interview in Lithuania, September 2019.

government tends to take the advice on board. For example, it refused Rosneft's bid to supply liquid gas to a state company.⁷¹

Estonia, by contrast, does not have a vetting process for foreign investments in critical infrastructure.⁷² Despite that, gas- and electricity-sector infrastructure belongs to a state-owned company, while the distribution system is owned through a subsidiary of Eesti Gaas, which is owned by a large Estonian investment company. The largest electricity distribution network is owned by a state-owned company.

Latvia has had some foreign direct investment screening laws in place since the 2010s.⁷³ For example, non-EU-based buyers of land have been required to obtain permission from the municipalities to acquire the land.⁷⁴ Although the largest electricity company in the region, Latvenergo, is owned by the Latvian state, Russian-owned companies have a stake in several key enterprises, such as the main gas supplier, Latvijas Gaze.⁷⁵ However, Russian influence in the Latvian energy and transport sectors might be lessening. Gazprom, the Russian energy company, recently sold its stake in Conexus Baltic Grid, a unified natural gas transmission and storage operator, to a buyer unknown as of this writing.⁷⁶ All three countries can also draw on the recently approved EU Foreign Investment Screening Regulation that entered into force in April 2019.⁷⁷

⁷¹ RAND interviews in Lithuania, September 2019.

⁷² RAND interviews in Estonia, September 2019.

⁷³ Jacob Lundqvist, *Screening Foreign Direct Investment in the European Union: Prospects for a "Multispeed" Framework*, Stanford-Vienna European Union Law Working Paper No. 36, 2018.

⁷⁴ Klavins & Slaidins Lawin, "Issues Relating to Foreign Investment," information sheet, Lex Mundi, 2010; and LawyersLatvia.com, "Latvian Legislation on Foreign Investments," last updated August 21, 2015.

⁷⁵ Latvenergo, "Latvenergo AS Increases Its Share Capital," GlobeNewswire, June 20, 2018; and "Latvijas Gaze AS," Reuters, last updated August 20, 2020.

⁷⁶ LETA/TBT Staff, "Government Still to Decide Whether to Use Preemptive Right Regarding Gazprom Shares," *Baltic Times*, December 30, 2019.

⁷⁷ The regulation develops a new EU framework for screening foreign direct investments into the EU and scrutinizes purchases of strategic assets while also providing an avenue for the EU member states to share information and best practices. The full title of the regula-

Physical security and cybersecurity of critical infrastructure have also returned to the forefront of the Baltic states' resilience preparations. Local interviewees consider the energy and cyber sectors to be the most resilient because of their active engagement in regular exercises and proactive development of their own physical- and cybersecurity plans. For example, the participation of the Lithuanian energy sector in a total blackout exercise inspired changes in the sector's security plans.⁷⁸ Regional tabletop exercises held in Lithuania with the participation of municipalities provide a learning experience about the role of these municipalities in the protection of critical infrastructure.

Improving Civil-Military Coordination

Current efforts to address potential external threats in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania emphasize a whole-of-society approach that includes ministries of defense, as well as other government ministries (such as transport, interior, and economy) and municipalities.⁷⁹ To respond to the changing and often complex character of security threats that may span different sectors, each of the Baltic states has nested its military defense in a broader approach to improving civil-military cooperation and increasing the interoperability of civil-military capabilities. For example, Estonian security is based on ensuring the reliability, sustainability, and stability of Estonia's state institutions.⁸⁰ Likewise, the Lithuanian comprehensive security approach recognizes the crucial need for interoperability of military and civilian capabilities to respond to the changing character of threats.⁸¹ Latvia singles out the need to build crisis preparedness in all sectors.⁸² All three countries are also improv-

tion is *Regulation (EU) 2019/452 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 March 2019 Establishing a Framework for the Screening of Foreign Direct Investments into the Union* (European Commission, "EU Foreign Investment Screening Regulation Enters into Force," webpage, April 10, 2019b).

⁷⁸ RAND interview in Lithuania, September 2019.

⁷⁹ RAND interviews in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, September 2019.

⁸⁰ Estonian Ministry of Defence, 2011.

⁸¹ MOND of Lithuania, "Defence Policy," webpage, last updated July 22, 2016b.

⁸² Latvian Ministry of Defence, 2019a.

ing the relationship between local municipalities and communities and the regional units of the national volunteer forces. These relationships and coordination mechanisms—at both the national and regional levels—could play a critical role in ensuring appropriate oversight and coordination during a national crisis.

Reducing an Occupier's Capacity for Repression

A review of open source materials allowed us to identify four main groups of efforts that might help reduce an aggressor's capacity for repression. These are (1) educating the public on how to remain safe and expose repression during a crisis; (2) developing and exercising plans for the evacuation of civilians, especially vulnerable populations; (3) ensuring a clear distinction between civilian and military populations in case of an armed conflict; and (4) eroding occupier control of instruments of repression.

Educating the Public on How to Remain Safe and Expose Repression During a Crisis

The Baltic states seem to be aware of the potential limitations of the governments' and municipalities' speed and capacity to assist every resident and are therefore focused on nurturing individual knowledge and networks that would help ensure the safety of the civilian population. The approach of building knowledge and networks in peacetime could help lessen the burden on public services to provide blanket support to all members of society, as well as build individuals' resilience to sudden disruptions in basic services, such as the food supply.⁸³ Over the past few years, each of the three countries has published informative manuals for the public on how to act in the event of a crisis. The manuals cover emergencies related to extreme weather conditions, cyber incidents that result in the disruption of services, fires, floods, leakage of hazardous chemicals, and radiation accidents, among other crises (see

⁸³ Latvian Ministry of Defence, 2019a; RAND interviews in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, September 2019.

Figure 5.5 for a summary of topics covered in these manuals). Lithuanian manuals published in 2014, 2015, and 2016 may be highlighted as the first substantial attempt at educating civilians on how to keep themselves safe in any crisis, including an armed conflict. Estonia's 2018 manual *Code of Conduct for Crisis Situations*, published in Estonian, Russian, and English, includes concise instructions on what to do in situations involving disruption of water, communication services, heating, power, and energy, as well as in an international armed conflict.⁸⁴ Even more recently, in 2020, Latvia published an informative brochure titled *What to Do in Case of a Crisis*.⁸⁵

Lithuania's field manual for civil defense dedicates most of its recommendations to civilian protection, offering advice on how to survive in and escape from a conflict zone. The manual includes recommendations that could affect the backfire dynamic by exposing those perpetrating violent and repressive measures against civilians.⁸⁶ Disseminating information of acts of repression and aggression beyond the region could impose political costs on the adversary.⁸⁷ Another Lithuanian publication provides advice on survival skills for members of society who would engage in active resistance measures, including a suggestion that Lithuanian civilians seek to explain the reasons for and meaning of resistance directly to the adversary's soldiers, explaining that they resist the commands given to the soldiers.⁸⁸

Each of the three countries has advised that its citizens ensure their own supply of key basic items. Lithuanian and Latvian guidelines

⁸⁴ Ministry of the Interior and the Government of Estonia, *Code of Conduct for Crisis Situations*, 2018.

⁸⁵ Sargs.lv, "Brochure: What to Do in Case of a Crisis," webpage, undated. See also Ministry of Defence of Latvia, "Buklets 'Kā rīkoties krīzes situācijā'" [Booklet 'What to Do in a Crisis Situation'], webpage, undated.

⁸⁶ MOND of Lithuania, 2015.

⁸⁷ MOND of Lithuania, 2015. The manual recommends using "every means available to inform the society of the aggressor state about the criminal offences and aggression its political figures, leaders, chiefs or government are waging . . . choose email, social media or international media outlets for this."

⁸⁸ MOND of Lithuania, 2016a.

Figure 5.5
Key Topics Covered in the Baltic States' Crisis Manuals

Estonia	Latvia	Lithuania
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emergency supplies Evacuation Extreme weather conditions Floods Fires Chemical accidents Radiation accidents Explosion Collapsed buildings Attacks in public places Armed conflict 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evacuation Emergency supplies Chemical and nuclear leakage Storm Floods Fire Disruption of electricity supply Collapsed buildings First aid 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evacuation Chemical threat Radiological threat Biological threat Found suspicious explosives and detonations Hostage situations Mobilization Air alarm Military invasion How to recognize friendly and adversary forces Participation in armed resistance Survival skills
Focus on civil defense, disruption of vital services, armed conflict	Focus on civil defense, basic survival skills	Focus on civil defense, mobilization, peaceful and armed resistance

SOURCES: LETA, "IeM izstrādāti ietekumi, kā iedzīvotājiem rīkoties kara gadījumā [Mol Has Developed Recommendations on What Residents Should Do in Case of War]," TVNET.lv, March 18, 2015; Ministry of the Interior and the Government of Estonia, 2018; Ministry of the Interior of Latvia, *Vai tu zini, ka rīkoties ārkartas gadījumos? [Do You Know What to Do in an Emergency?]*, undated; MOND of Lithuania, 2016a; and Sargs.lv, undated.

suggest that people keep a supply of basic items for the first 72 hours.⁸⁹ Estonia suggests storing necessities for one week of self-sustained living.⁹⁰ However, according to the Lithuanian and Latvian interviewees, people generally feel unprepared and do not have the necessary survival and first-aid skills. To increase the level of preparedness, Estonia, for example, launched a crisis preparedness campaign in March 2019. While explaining that the preparations are preventive and the most-

⁸⁹ MOND of Lithuania, 2016a; Ministry of Defence of Latvia, undated.

⁹⁰ Ministry of the Interior and the Government of Estonia, 2018.

likely crises would be attributable to extreme winter weather conditions, the government of Estonia aims to ensure that every Estonian resident knows how to take care of their own safety and the safety of their family members for at least the first seven days.⁹¹ Estonia's comprehensive security approach could also be supported by a network of Estonian Neighborhood Watch Association members and a network of internal security volunteers comprising community members, such as volunteer assistance police officers, who could help provide local security during a time of crisis.⁹²

Moreover, preparation of civilians for potential resistance in the event of military aggression is focused on providing them with the understanding and skills of nonviolent resistance. Every resident is considered an asset in peaceful resistance, and any type of resistance is considered a way of raising the cost to the aggressor, including through such activities as providing food to or doing laundry for the local military units or publishing anti-occupation messages.⁹³

Developing and Exercising Plans for the Evacuation of Civilians, Especially Vulnerable Populations

All three countries emphasize the survival of civilians as the most important aspect for resilience and resistance building. Efforts are in place to improve individual knowledge of how to ensure one's safety. Some efforts are in place to strengthen local municipalities, which have a significant role in the well-being and survival of vulnerable populations (e.g., the sick or the elderly).⁹⁴ National legislation requires that evacuation plans be in place in all municipalities. However, according to the local interviewees, not all municipalities or critical institutions (e.g., care homes) might have the necessary evacuation plans devel-

⁹¹ Ministry of the Interior of Estonia, "Crisis Management: State Launched Crisis Preparedness Campaign," March 26, 2019.

⁹² Government of Estonia, Assistant Police Officer Act, November 24, 2010.

⁹³ RAND interviews in Lithuania, September 2019.

⁹⁴ For the purposes of our study, *vulnerable population* is understood narrowly and includes people with health issues and disabilities and the elderly.

oped.⁹⁵ Lack of a clear accounting for all vulnerable people might also affect the ability to execute such plans. Here, a strong link between the individuals, their communities, and such organizations as the fire and rescue services or national defense voluntary services could help. Members of these services are part of their communities and therefore are well placed to identify people who might need help in the event of a crisis. The Estonian Rescue Board firefighters carry out regular home safety visits with the aim of advising residents on fire safety and checking the safety of heating systems. These visits allow them to educate all population groups about basic safety requirements and might also allow them to identify households that might need extra help in case of an emergency.⁹⁶

The Baltic states seek to explore regional and EU-level opportunities to improve the resilience of vulnerable groups. For example, Estonia participates in the EU-funded project Building European Communities' Resilience and Social Capital (BuildERS), which is funded by the EU's Horizon 2020 funding stream. Launched in 2019, BuildERS aims to "strengthen societal resilience, including the most vulnerable groups, against natural and man-made hazards" through the application of technologies, the development of trust networks, and community and institutional capabilities.⁹⁷ Latvia has organized a disaster preparedness training exercise for the elderly population, aiming to provide them with the tools and knowledge to be more resilient and giving relevant government services, including firefighters and police, the opportunity to learn how to work with this population group. This was done as part of the EU co-funded project Enhancing Disaster Management Preparedness for the Older Population in the EU (PrePAGE).⁹⁸ Both Estonia and Latvia took part in another EU co-funded project, BaltPrevResilience, from 2014 to 2016 that aimed

⁹⁵ RAND interviews in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, September 2019.

⁹⁶ RAND interviews in Estonia, September 2019.

⁹⁷ VTT, "New Horizon 2020 Project to Build European Communities Resilience and Social Capital," press release, Espoo, Finland, May 28, 2019.

⁹⁸ Red Cross EU Office, "Disaster Preparedness for Older People," webpage, undated.

to improve crisis decision support at the local and national levels and improve community resilience.⁹⁹

National defense voluntary forces and the Lithuanian paramilitary defense organization are also engaged in educating civilians in survival skills. For example, a traditionally women-focused branch of the Estonian Defence League (*Kaitseliit*), the Women's Voluntary Defence Organization (*Naiskodukaitse*), is active in organizing camps and short courses for everyone to attend. The Women's Voluntary Defence Organization has also created a cell phone application with information from Estonia's *Code of Conduct for Crisis Situations*.¹⁰⁰

Although current crisis management plans might be useful in reducing or preventing an occupier's capacity for repression, open source research did not reveal any specific plans in Latvia and Estonia that would link crisis management response and national defense response with this specific aim. Overall, other organizations apart from the defense sector, such as the fire and rescue services, might, for example, be able to reduce the impact of violence by occupying forces while implementing such defined organizational tasks as performing rescue activities to save lives; organizing the detection of chemical, biological, and radiological contamination and decontamination efforts with the Defense Forces; and organizing the evacuation of the population in cooperation with the Police and Border Guard.¹⁰¹

All three Baltic states also aim to stress-test and exercise their crisis management procedures as part of multinational crisis management exercises organized by NATO, the EU, or other formats, as well as nationally and regionally. Tabletop, command post, field, and combined exercises involve testing international and internal consultation, decisionmaking, and coordination procedures and stress-testing the available capability levels against different emergencies.¹⁰² Although

⁹⁹ Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency, "BaltPrevResilience: Baltic Everyday Accidents, Disaster Prevention and Resilience," Microsoft PowerPoint presentation, 2013.

¹⁰⁰ RAND interview in Estonia, September 2019.

¹⁰¹ Estonian Ministry of Defence, 2011.

¹⁰² European Commission, "Estonia: Overview of the National Disaster Management System," webpage, last updated October 8, 2019c; NATO, "Crisis Management Exercise

the Baltic states regularly participate in NATO's crisis management exercises (CMX) and the EU's disaster-response planning simulation exercise (MODEX), they might benefit from a closer integration of such organizations as the fire and rescue service, police, and nongovernmental organizations and municipalities in exercises aimed at developing better coordination in a defense-related crisis.

Ensuring a Clear Distinction Between Civilian and Military Populations in Case of an Armed Conflict

Research that we conducted for this report revealed an awareness within the Baltic states of the need to ensure the application of international laws at all times, including a clear division between the population engaged in armed fighting (including resistance fighters of civilian background) and the nonfighting population.¹⁰³ Civilians are generally encouraged to first make sure that they, their families, and the members of their community are safe and to engage in peaceful resistance. Those who are willing to support the defense of their countries via military means are encouraged to join the national defense voluntary forces during peacetime, although they would also be able to join these forces in a time of crisis. Providing clear, explicit avenues for engaging in armed defense would protect unarmed civilians and allow armed resisters to adhere to international laws, including clear application of the Hague Regulations of 1907, the Geneva Conventions of 1949, and the 1977 Protocol I additional to the Geneva Conventions.¹⁰⁴

On a more tactical level, there is a recognition of the difficulty of ensuring proper identification of friendly forces and fighters during resistance. The Baltic states attempt to solve this issue by drawing a clear line between the fighting population and the civilian population and by ensuring close coordination between the professional and vol-

2019," press release, Brussels, Belgium, last updated May 3, 2019b; and RAND interviews in Lithuania and Estonia, September 2019.

¹⁰³ RAND interviews in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, September 2019.

¹⁰⁴ Waldemar A. Solf, "Protection of Civilians Against the Effects of Hostilities Under Customary International Law and Under Protocol I," *American University International Law Review*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1986.

untary units. For example, Lithuania attempts to solve this by ensuring that the members of the paramilitary organization—the LRU—have uniforms and coordinate with the National Armed Forces units.

Eroding Occupier Control of Instruments of Repression

External analysts have suggested a role for eliciting dissatisfaction and “mass-based defections among the adversary’s troops” as an important tactic for civilians opposing Russian aggression.¹⁰⁵ Certainly, Russia appears to have adopted such psychological techniques during the ongoing conflict in Eastern Ukraine. Ukrainian soldiers fighting against Russian-backed forces in eastern Ukraine frequently receive text messages to their personal devices, many disguised to appear to be coming from fellow soldiers, urging them to desert, falsely warning of imminent danger, or falsely reporting on leadership defections.¹⁰⁶

Currently, there appears to have been minimal attention devoted to the potential for defection or disobedience within occupying forces. Several interviewees from the Baltic states doubted the ability to change the minds of the occupying Russian soldiers. They noted that Russia is “much tougher in imposing their occupation,” and has a history of rather cruel means of imposing control, while the deployed forces could include mercenaries and former criminals recruited from prisons.¹⁰⁷ However, interestingly, Lithuanian manuals do call for society to engage in direct communication with an aggressor’s forces with the purpose of informing them about the aims of the peaceful opposition.¹⁰⁸ One manual appears to include an initial effort to, at the very least, solicit empathy from the occupier’s soldiers, suggesting that Lithuanian civilians “talk to enemy soldiers to [sic] ascertain them you oppose their commanders’ propaganda but do not mean to

¹⁰⁵ Bartkowski, 2015a.

¹⁰⁶ Raphael Satter and Dmytro Vlasov, “Ukraine Soldiers Bombarded by ‘Pinpoint Propaganda’ Texts,” Associated Press, May 11, 2017.

¹⁰⁷ RAND interviews in Estonia and Lithuania, September 2019.

¹⁰⁸ MOND of Lithuania, 2015.

cause any threat to them as individuals.”¹⁰⁹ Furthermore, the manual recommends that civilians spread information about aggression and offenses via social media and other available means of communication, thus potentially eroding morale in an opponent’s population or armed forces.

Maintaining and Expanding Popular Support

All three Baltic states consider their populations’ will to support resilience building measures and engage in resistance as key. Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania emphasize raising their respective populations’ awareness of the defense of their country and increasing trust and pride in their country. Countering disinformation aimed at diminishing the value of their independence and national pride is part of these efforts. Furthermore, as a crisis preparation measure, all three countries are building organizational networks that span military and civilian domains. It may be generalized that the Baltic states have a realistic approach to civilian involvement in a potential armed fight. Appreciating that not all citizens may be physically or otherwise able or willing to take up arms, the Baltic states emphasize building their citizens’ will to provide moral or practical support to those who fight and to ensure the safety and security of the nonfighting population.

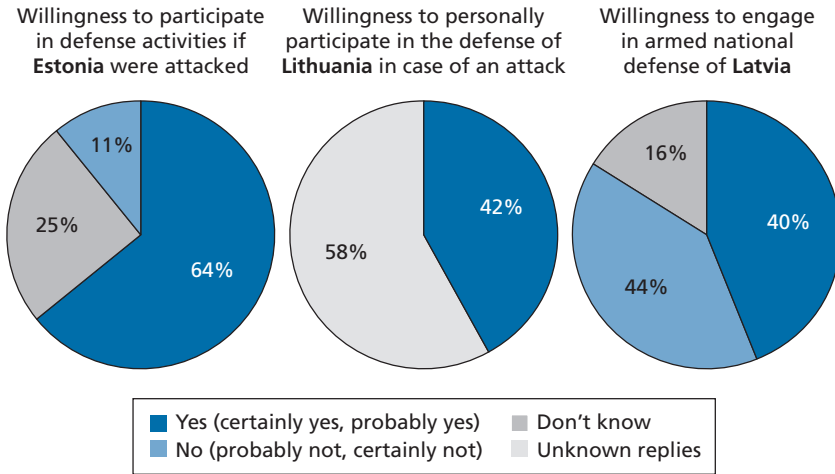
Building Resilience and Will to Fight

Public opinion polls show that, of the three Baltic countries, Lithuania’s residents have the highest willingness to join an armed fight (see Figure 5.6). Although the potential will to engage in passive or peaceful resistance activities may be different, a Lithuanian interviewee noted that society’s motivation to defend the country is increasing and that the government’s “fight for the hearts and minds” of people who are more preoccupied with everyday problems is showing some promise.¹¹⁰ According to one Latvian interviewee, the sentiments of national pride

¹⁰⁹ MOND of Lithuania, 2015, p. 46.

¹¹⁰ RAND interview in Lithuania, September 2019.

Figure 5.6
Public Opinion Poll Results on Willingness to Participate in Armed Defense



SOURCES: Juhan Kivirähk, *Public Opinion and National Defence*, Tallinn, Estonia: Estonian Ministry of Defence, Spring 2018; Latvian Ministry of Defence, *Latvijas iedzīvotāju viedoklis par valsts aizsardzības jautājumiem [Opinion of Latvian Residents About State Defense Issues]*, Latvian public opinion poll, Riga, Latvia, November 2016; and MOND of Lithuania; "Numbers of Citizens Who Have Confidence in the Lithuanian Armed Forces and Are Prepared to Defend the Motherland Are Increasing," January 7, 2019.

and willingness to defend the country are rising in Latvian youth, and young people see the value in defending their country regardless of their ethnicity.¹¹¹ Furthermore, one interviewee noted that in the event of military aggression, Russia would not take its time to identify people by their nationalities, implying that the resilience of the Russian speaking population is equally important.¹¹²

Estonia may be considered to be the Baltic state whose ministry of defense has had the longest and most streamlined civil society engagement, via the Estonian Defence League and its affiliated women's and children's groups. This might be because of the continued conscription policy and the significant role of reservists in national defense. Over

¹¹¹ RAND interview in Latvia, September 2019.

¹¹² RAND interview in Latvia, September 2019.

the past ten years, Estonia has also been organizing a defense awareness course for leaders of all public and private sectors and developing a better understanding of national defense and an informal coordination network among public and private sectors.¹¹³ Lithuania has significantly increased its efforts to educate its society (e.g., by publishing detailed informative materials on how to act in civil and military crises) and create conditions favorable for fighting disinformation. Latvia has only recently started larger-scale efforts, most of which are directed toward youth, thus ensuring that an understanding of national defense and a sense of national pride are instilled in the younger generation.¹¹⁴

Educational efforts in all three Baltic countries include ministry of defense and armed forces visits to schools and community centers with the purpose of speaking about the country's history and resistance fight and publishing books on the history of independence and resistance, highlighting the examples of national resilience and the fight for freedom.¹¹⁵ Estonia, for example, runs optional courses for 16- and 17-year-old high school seniors on "state defense and security,"¹¹⁶ while Latvia is introducing a "National Defence Subject" to grades ten and 11 in secondary schools. The course of 72 hours per year will be mandatory from 2024 onward.¹¹⁷ Lithuania has also added a new elective on national security and defense to the secondary school curriculum.¹¹⁸

In addition to these government-level efforts to educate society about the importance of statehood and to create pride in one's country, more popular culture sources have become available that encourage knowledge of the region's history, battles for independence, and resistance movements. The year 2018 marked the 100th anniversary of the

¹¹³ RAND interview in Estonia, September 2019.

¹¹⁴ RAND interviews in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, September 2019.

¹¹⁵ RAND interviews in Lithuania, September 2019.

¹¹⁶ The course covers topics related to national self-defense and comprehensive defense (RAND interview in Estonia, September 2019).

¹¹⁷ RAND interviews in Estonia and Latvia, September 2019.

¹¹⁸ LETA/TBT Staff, "Lithuania's School Year Extended by 10 Days, National Defense, Sex Education Courses Added," *Baltic Times*, August 27, 2017.

three countries' independence, triggering an increase in history books, articles, documentaries, and history-inspired movies.

Latvia's National Security Law instructs all citizens to take resistance measures against illegal administration institutions in the case of war and states that both individuals and state institutions are responsible for reaching the national security policy objectives, thus placing responsibility for the security of the state not only on government organizations but also on each and every inhabitant of the country.¹¹⁹ However, the defense sector's engagement with the citizenry might be hampered by a lack of unity within the society—e.g., divisions among ethnicities, attitudes toward history, and differences in cultural and political views and regional development.¹²⁰

There has been wide speculation regarding the possible use of Russian-speaking minorities in Estonia and Latvia as a means of breaking up the society. Although analysts agree that levels of loyalty and identification with one's home country are lower and attitudes toward Russia are less negative among Russian speakers than among ethnic Latvians and Estonians, it is also noted that these attitudes do not necessarily translate into willingness to change the status of the countries they reside in.¹²¹ It is noteworthy that there are currently no organized ethnic groups in Estonia and Latvia that advocate for independence or for separatism. To facilitate the integration of the Russian minority, Estonia aims to improve internal societal cohesion by introducing changes to the information space that have resulted in the foundation of a Russian-language public television channel in 2015.¹²²

Countering Disinformation

Countering Russian disinformation about Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian current affairs and history can be viewed as part of the Baltic states' efforts to increase the population's will to fight and pre-

¹¹⁹ Government of Latvia, National Security Law, December 14, 2000.

¹²⁰ Government of Latvia, 2016.

¹²¹ RAND interview in Latvia, September 2019.

¹²² Praks, 2015.

serve statehood. The Baltic states' strategic documents recognize the importance of the information space and its security. For example, the Estonian National Security Concept (2017) states that information and communication technologies may be used to influence people and that such "influence of the reality distorting information has created tension in international relations, caused the radicalization of certain groups and harmed the cohesion of society."¹²³ The Latvian National Security Concept (2016) recognizes that the main external threat to Latvia is Russia's policy of "creating a public opinion that is favorable to the Russian Federation" and that such "informative propaganda disorients the society and decision-making."¹²⁴ The same document also states that this policy is implemented via various instruments that include making Russian-based television stations available abroad.¹²⁵ According to a Lithuanian author, Russia's ideological and political propaganda includes causing uncertainty and doubts about the history of the three countries, their statehood, and their armed forces, as well as discrediting NATO and the EU and encouraging nihilistic views of the three countries, their region, and the world.¹²⁶

Since 2014, the Baltic states' governments and private media companies have made efforts to counter disinformation and increase media literacy. In a 2018 study of media literacy among 35 European countries, Estonia was in fifth place, Latvia was in 17th, and Lithuania was in 19th, and the three Baltic nations scored between 52 and 79 points out of 100 (100 being the best possible score).¹²⁷ Educational approaches to increasing media literacy include carrying out critical thinking pro-

¹²³ Government of Estonia, 2017b, p. 5.

¹²⁴ Government of Latvia, 2016.

¹²⁵ Government of Latvia, 2016.

¹²⁶ Eitvydas Bajarūnas and Vytautas Keršanskas, "Hybrid Threats: Analysis of Content, Challenges Posed and Measures to Overcome," *Lithuanian Annual Strategic Review*, Vol. 16, No. 1, 2017–2018.

¹²⁷ The study, conducted by the Open Society Institute—Sofia, considered such indicators as the freedom of press score by Freedom House, the press freedom index by Reporters Without Borders; reading, scientific, and mathematical literacy scores by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development; the share of the population with university degrees; level of trust in others; and the UN's e-participation index. Marin Lessenski,

grams and educational programs for primary school students on multimedia journalism and ethics.¹²⁸ One Lithuanian interviewee noted that a new generation of reporters who specialize in defense-related issues ensures more-informed reporting on security issues.¹²⁹

Other efforts have included enhancing strategic communications capabilities, increasing societal awareness of malign use of information, and taking measures to prevent dissemination of hate speech and information warfare. For example, Lithuania temporarily banned some Russian television programs and initiated legal actions to revoke broadcasting licenses of stations for spreading false information about historic events or inciting hatred, while Latvia has fined a Russian media channel for disseminating fake or biased broadcasting.¹³⁰ In 2020, Sputnik Estonia, owned by the Russian media organization Russia Today, halted its operations in Estonia following a warning from the Estonian government that the chief executive officer of Russia Today was on the EU's sanctions list for violation of Ukraine's territorial integrity, limiting the organization's ability to employ banking services in Estonia.¹³¹ The so-called Baltic elves, who originally emerged in Lithuania, are a group of around 4,000 volunteers who help identify and verify

Common Sense Wanted: Resilience to "Post-Truth" and Its Predictors in the New Media Literacy Index 2018, Sofia, Bulgaria: Open Society Institute—Sofia, March 2018.

¹²⁸ Viktor Denisenko, "Lithuania: Disinformation Resilience Index," Ukrainian Prism, July 31, 2018.

¹²⁹ RAND interview in Lithuania, September 2019.

¹³⁰ Benas Gerdziunas, "Baltics Battle Russian in Online Disinformation War," Deutsche Welle, October 8, 2017; and Alexandra Wiktorek Sarlo, "Fighting Disinformation in the Baltic States," Foreign Policy Research Institute, July 6, 2017. It should be noted that Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania are all subject to the EU's Directive 2010/13/EU (the Audiovisual Media Services Directive), which allows media outlets to be registered in any EU country (European Parliament and Council of the European Union, Directive 2010/13/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council, *Official Journal of the European Union*, March 10, 2010). This means that broadcasters operating in the Baltic region might not be subject to the Estonian, Latvian, or Lithuanian laws.

¹³¹ "Sputnik Ends Operations in Estonia," ERR News, January 1, 2020.

online disinformation.¹³² Similarly, disinformation is also analyzed and debunked by the Estonian website Propastop, run by volunteers in Estonian, Russian, and English.

The Baltics have also been providing alternative media sources to those based in Russia and broadcast in Russian. Some reports note the comparatively large presence of Russian media in Latvia, specifically as part of the packages offered by cable television providers.¹³³ All three countries have Russian versions of public radio, while major internet-based news services have Russian-language versions. Of the three countries, only Estonia has created a dedicated Russian-language channel that provides an alternative to the Russia-based television channels readily available in the region, while one of Latvia's public television stations shows some segments in Russian. In 2011, Estonia also established the National Centre of Defence and Security Awareness, which is a nongovernmental framework for raising awareness about defense and security in Estonia; the platform specifically notes its aim to inform both Estonian and Russian-speaking youth.¹³⁴ Latvian potential future plans include raising media literacy and developing a regulation that would prevent media outlets registered in other countries from operating within Latvia while being exempt from its national laws.¹³⁵ Lithuania has agreed to sponsor the retransmission of four Polish television channels with the aims of providing the Polish minority with a larger choice of information and preventing the large Russian-speaking minority from seeking Kremlin-sponsored television channels.¹³⁶ Lithuania's government has also named increasing media literacy and critical thinking as one of its priorities.

International efforts to counter disinformation in the Baltic states include the NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence,

¹³² "Lithuanians Are Using Software to Fight Back Against Fake News," *The Economist*, October 24, 2019.

¹³³ Andis Kudors, "Latvia: Disinformation Resilience Index," *Ukrainian Prism*, July 31, 2018.

¹³⁴ National Centre of Defence and Security Awareness, "NCDSA," webpage, undated.

¹³⁵ Government of Latvia, 2016.

¹³⁶ RAND interview in Lithuania, September 2019.

which is based in Riga, Latvia, and researches malign use of information. Riga also hosts the Baltic Centre for Media Excellence, a regional journalism hub.

According to one Latvian interviewee, resilience to propaganda is high in the Baltic countries.¹³⁷ However, the results of the rather fragmentary efforts outlined in this section are difficult to measure. One Lithuanian interviewee claimed that the number of people who have positive nostalgia for Soviet times has decreased since 2014, specifically among youth.¹³⁸ Likewise, a Latvian interviewee noted that the sentiment of pride and willingness to defend the country is rising among the youth in Latvia.¹³⁹

Providing the Population with Institutional Mechanisms for Armed Resistance

Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania are developing institutional mechanisms for their citizens to participate in armed resistance. The main path for civilians to support armed resistance is through participation in the national defense voluntary forces. Estonia and Lithuania specifically are developing preset avenues and networks to support national defense efforts via passive or peaceful resistance, and they use conscription as a means to provide their citizens with basic defense skills.

According to the Estonian constitution, every citizen must have the opportunity to participate in the defense of their country.¹⁴⁰ Estonia is expanding the annual conscription from 3,200 to 4,000 by 2026 and is seeking ways of embracing more women as a valuable source for national defense.¹⁴¹ The Women's Voluntary Defence Organization is a path for women to receive training and education on survival and civil defense skills. The organization has specific tasks, such as assisting the Defence League, educating and advising civilians about evacu-

¹³⁷ RAND interview in Latvia, September 2019.

¹³⁸ RAND interview in Lithuania, September 2019.

¹³⁹ RAND interview in Latvia, September 2019.

¹⁴⁰ RAND interview in Estonia, September 2019.

¹⁴¹ Republic of Estonia Defence Forces, "National Defence Development Plan 2017–2026," webpage, undated.

ation, distributing humanitarian aid, advising local government, and advising citizens. It also can serve as a path for women to gain insight into and become interested in joining the military units of the Defence League. Lithuania has an additional tool; the LRU is a state-supported paramilitary organization with around 11,000 volunteer members. Its roles in a military crisis would be to assist the defense forces, protect critical infrastructure, collect intelligence, maintain public order, and conduct both peaceful and armed resistance in occupied territory.¹⁴²

Efforts are also made to integrate Russian-speaking people; over the past few years, there has been increased interest among Russian-speaking people in Estonia to join the National Defence Voluntary Forces, leading to the creation of a Russian-speaking platoon in the National Guard and a Russian-speaking unit in the women's organization.¹⁴³ All three countries have also sought ways to engage with people who have cyber skills through the countries' voluntary defense organizations.

Building Organizational Networks

Comprehensive defense relies on good civil-military communication and whole-of-society coordination. There is an interest in creating a common understanding among state institutions and citizenry about defense and the ways of counteracting the threats to national security. Municipalities have a central role in ensuring that the individual, societal, and organizational levels of civilian participation come together at a local level. The Baltic states' municipalities, being relatively small, have a symbiotic relationship with national-level security, search-and-rescue, and large energy providers. For example, the Estonian municipalities are quite autonomous, yet they are reliant on state-level security, fire, and search-and-rescue services.

Although there might still be a perception that coordination should be done by a high-level and central body, the Baltic states' governments and defense structures have been increasingly engaging municipalities in exercises and training activities aimed at boost-

¹⁴² LRU, "Apie organizaciją [About the Organization]," webpage, undated.

¹⁴³ RAND interview in Estonia, September 2019.

ing the local governments' understanding of their role in a potential crisis. Often, civil resistance coordination is perceived as an additional burden by the municipalities. However, this perception is often changed through the aforementioned educational and training events that demonstrate how lack of resilience could become a problem for the specific region or sector.¹⁴⁴

Conclusion

Military defense represents only one element of Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian preparations for effective deterrence and defense. Analysis of Baltic civilian preparedness to respond to external aggression suggests that Baltic societies are actively building their capabilities across the five resistance objectives addressed in our report. All three Baltic states have taken significant steps in setting up thorough comprehensive defense systems, with notable successes across the five objectives. However, as noted throughout this chapter, some elements of these defensive systems are still in development. Furthermore, this chapter shows that resilience building can be a means of developing the capabilities, relationships, and networks that might be needed for resistance.

Currently, the Baltic governments appear to have dedicated the most effort and resources to our report's fifth objective, maintaining and expanding popular support. Efforts by the Baltic countries to increase their population's national awareness, understanding of national defense, and crisis preparedness have taken many forms, from public information campaigns to educational programs, while civilian-based resistance is mainly viewed through nonviolent resistance forms and civilians' ability to ensure their own safety. In terms of level of emphasis, the fifth objective is followed by the third objective, denying an occupier's political and economic consolidation. Measures and laws aimed toward increasing societal resilience across a variety of crisis contingencies are helping harden the civilian population against foreign aggression. Similarly, a policy emphasis on preparedness for civil emer-

¹⁴⁴ RAND interviews in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, September 2019.

gencies has strengthened the Baltic ability to protect civilians from repressive actions during a notional attack.

Less emphasis seems to have been devoted to civilian contributions to efforts to increase the cost of occupation. This could be due in large part to extensive investments and efforts dedicated to conventional military defense, which would be responsible for imposing the majority of costs, while civilians are mainly seen as the object in need of protection. It also might stem from the relatively limited willingness of local Baltic populations to engage in armed defense activities (see Figure 5.6) and a view of the civilian population as occupying more of a supporting defense role. Clear differentiation between the population engaged in armed fighting and the rest of the population would allow the fighters to adhere to international laws and discourage random armed groups from operating outside the organized military defense effort, which could undermine the indigenous and allied military efforts. Additional areas of civilian contribution might be explored, including in the areas of offensive cyber operations and psychological influence of adversary forces. Civilians could also deny the occupying force supplies, such as food and water.

Interviews and research confirm that the Baltic states would rely on a conventional military response by allies and partners in a case of occupation. To facilitate a prompt and effective response, Baltic civilians could contribute to national-level communication strategies that would include consistent messaging about the nature of the conflict and exposure of acts of aggression. Strong existing bilateral relationships, alliance ties, and extensive diplomatic representation would further support the effort to ensure external support during a time of crisis.

Table 5.2 summarizes key identified lines of effort in the Baltic states under each of the objectives outlined in Chapter Two.

Table 5.2
Summary of Current Lines of Effort in the Baltic States

Objective	Main Lines of Effort
Imposing direct or indirect costs on an occupying force	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disseminating information on how to resist and refuse to collaborate, carrying out sabotage of the occupying force • Acknowledging, at a high level, the importance of societal participation in resistance • Building cyber resilience and, potentially, offensive capabilities • Conducting resistance and unconventional warfare exercises and training
Securing external support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cementing cooperation within international organizations, especially NATO • Nurturing close relationships with key strategic allies • Maintaining international diplomatic networks
Denying an occupier's political and economic consolidation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercising the means of ensuring diplomatic and governmental continuity of the state • Ensuring the security of the supply of vital services (e.g., food, water, energy) • Improving the protection of critical infrastructure • Improving energy and cybersecurity • Improving civil-military coordination
Reducing an occupier's capacity for repression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising the population's knowledge of what to do in a crisis • Developing and exercising plans for evacuation of civilians • Ensuring a clear distinction between civilian and military populations in the event of an armed conflict
Maintaining and expanding popular support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building resilience and will to fight • Countering disinformation • Providing the population with clear avenues for armed resistance • Building organizational networks

Findings and Recommendations

Analysis of current policies and historic experiences of the Baltic states suggests several areas in which civilians could contribute to national resistance during a military crisis. Civilian actions at the national government, municipality, and individual levels could support and complement military efforts of the United States, other allied forces, and the Baltic states. Such contributions could prove particularly significant in a scenario in which allied forces assist the Baltic states in regaining control over their territories or parts of them. Civilian actions could help prepare the ground for the arrival of allied reinforcements, both through direct support of indigenous military forces and through contributions to the morale and information and security environments for allied forces. Civilian capacity for resistance could thus have implications for defense planning among all potential participants in a conflict, including the adversary.

We examined ways in which Baltic civilians have contributed—or could contribute—to imposing direct or indirect costs on an occupying force, securing external support, denying an occupier's political and economic consolidation, reducing an occupier's capacity for repression, or maintaining and expanding popular support. In our examination of historic examples of Baltic resistance against occupation, we considered the relevance of each proximate objective during the course of resistance and the contributions of each objective to positive or negative resistance outcomes. The examples from Baltic history also revealed the extent to which external factors—including geopolitical dynamics and occupier goals, strategies, and domestic political

realities—have previously influenced the attainability and significance of the proximate objectives. Our analysis of more-recent Baltic policies and activities through the lens of the proximate objectives then identified ways in which Baltic civilians might be able to contribute to resistance efforts in the event of a large-scale conventional military assault and occupation.

Findings

Civilians could represent a powerful asset in the competition for information and messaging. Information would represent a key area of contestation during a Baltic occupation scenario, and clear and consistent messaging would lie at the core of any successful resistance effort. During the Russian conflict in Georgia in 2008 and during subsequent Russian operations in Ukraine, Russia employed active disinformation campaigns to seek to discredit the adversary states and demoralize domestic populations.

Our study identifies ways in which civilian activities could contribute to Baltic domestic and international strategic communication efforts. Historic examples suggest that during the later phases of Baltic resistance against Soviet rule, communication played a critical role in maintaining and expanding broad-based support for the resistance and engaging external audiences. Domestically, civilians could build morale by ensuring communication of accurate information regarding the nature of the occupation, objectives of the resistance campaign, and instructions for civilian action. Abroad, consistent messaging highlighting the illegitimacy of the occupying power, paired with clear reporting disseminated through official government channels (e.g., diplomatic channels, state media organizations), private media, and social media could help build support within allied populations for what could be a long and costly conventional campaign. Baltic émigré communities could help amplify messaging within their countries of residence, combat disinformation released by an aggressor about the nature of the conflict, and enhance allied political and societal support for their countries' involvement in a Baltic military crisis. Furthermore,

as some Baltic governments have observed, civilians could further contribute by documenting and disseminating instances of repression to provoke outrage and provide testimony to domestic and international audiences. Finally, targeted messaging could theoretically encourage fractures within an aggressor's government, media, society, and military forces, although there is skepticism among the Baltic states about the efficacy of these efforts in the Russian case.

Civilians would play a central role in leading national continuity and powering civic mobilization. Our study suggests that one of the most significant roles for Baltic civilians during an occupation scenario would be to protect the core elements of national institutions and society. Such a role would provide clarity regarding the national chain of command during a crisis, a focal point for foreign governments and communities to engage, and a rapid return to functioning governance following the crisis. An active and organized civilian resistance role in protecting and supporting national continuity, particularly one that included Russian minority populations, would also reinforce the illegitimacy of external aggression. Although Baltic resisters were unable to fully deny occupier control of political and economic institutions during the course of Soviet rule, diplomatic continuity reinforced the illegitimacy of the action, and protection of social and cultural centers of gravity ultimately mobilized the public for large-scale civic actions.

Baltic governments have already developed plans delineating roles for national civilian and military institutions during moments of crisis; however, plans at the regional and local levels are currently less defined. As was the case during the final years of Baltic resistance, existing community networks represent a fulcrum for mobilization during a national crisis, and mapping and planning their use could prove particularly important. Clear understanding of and preparedness for their roles in a crisis could help community groups and nongovernmental organizations within the Baltic states more effectively protect their civilian populations, especially vulnerable groups, and achieve higher levels of civic mobilization.

Clear delineation of military and civilian roles and opportunities to contribute throughout a spectrum of risk would harness

popular potential to inflict costs while protecting vulnerable populations. Baltic governments currently emphasize the responsibility of civilians to prioritize their own safety, as well as that of their families and their communities, during a national crisis. Civilian protection would also require clear separation of armed and unarmed resistance functions, with roles provided for those able and willing to contribute within each category. Such distinction could increase the costs of repression by maximizing outrage, as was the case following the deaths of 13 civilians engaged in nonviolent protest in Lithuania in 1991. Low-risk activities, including communication functions, slowdown strikes, and other dispersed acts of unarmed resistance, can increase opportunities for widespread participation and bolster morale among the population. The 1989 Baltic Way was one civilian event that created opportunities for large-scale participation. More-direct unarmed roles, such as offensive cyber operations or some support functions for military actions, could offer opportunities for civilians to impose costs on an aggressor. Finally, at the highest end of the risk spectrum, provision of institutional avenues for military resistance within the national chain of command ensures that those civilians interested in transitioning to armed roles can do so consistently with international law and without endangering civilian populations.

Economic emergency plans could buffer the impact of a crisis on civilian communities and increase costs to the adversary. Economic planning by each Baltic government can help ensure the security of the supply of vital goods and services, such as food, water, and energy, as well as the protection of critical infrastructure during a national emergency. Although economic planning did not represent a significant factor during the extended Soviet occupation, it would likely be more relevant during the course of a shorter struggle, such as that envisaged in the *Resistance Operating Concept*. Establishing strong public-private partnerships with private goods and services suppliers, developing the necessary contractual base, having preplanned distribution points, and including these aspects in relevant crisis management exercises can help reduce the disruption to the availability of goods. In the case of a hostile occupation, these actions could help diminish the humanitarian impact on civilian populations and ensure the retention

of some control over national economic centers of gravity. Ultimately, these actions could also increase the stress on an occupying force's logistics chains by denying it access to material military resources.

Ultimately, allied military and economic intervention remains crucial. Prompt conventional military intervention, likely through the NATO alliance, would represent the most significant factor in imposing military costs upon an external aggressor. The most impactful nonmilitary costs, such as comprehensive sanctions, would similarly require cooperation and sacrifice from international allies and partners to develop and implement. The Baltic experience of Soviet occupation and the current conventional military imbalance in the Baltic region underscore the extent to which a robust allied response would prove determinative in defending or, if necessary, liberating Baltic territory or populations from foreign occupation. Thus, it will remain critical that NATO, the EU, and particularly the United States continue to demonstrate support and strong military commitment to supporting the Baltic states' territorial integrity and sovereignty against external aggression.

Recommendations for Allies and Partners

As the Baltic states continue to develop indigenous civilian capacity for resilience and resistance to aggression, allies and partners could help support these efforts through various targeted actions. Ultimately, the most significant contribution that allied governments could make is to signal clear willingness to engage in rapid military intervention and impose economic costs against an external aggressor. Resilience-building is essentially a national-level effort, in which external assistance can be done only to support national efforts without contradicting them.

Beyond this, we have identified several concrete proposals for how allied and regional partner governments and civic organizations could assist in building Baltic civilian capacity during peacetime in preparation for potential crises. Our recommendations include the following:

- **Support civilian capacity for information competition:** In light of the central role of information competition across the resistance objectives, Baltic civilian capacity in this area could prove an important determinant of success. During peacetime, allies could seek to improve strategic communications training and capability development among Baltic media organizations, nongovernmental organizations, and other interested civilians. During a crisis, allies should support civilian information competition by amplifying relevant fact-based information from the Baltic states and ensuring that target audiences in allied states—as well as the aggressor—have access to such information.
- **Secure vital infrastructure and supplies:** Resilience of Baltic communications, energy, and transportation infrastructure, as well as critical supply chains, would similarly facilitate efforts across resistance objectives. During peacetime, allies could provide material support for redundant and resilient infrastructure, such as satellite communication devices. To reduce Baltic vulnerability to disruptions in critical infrastructure, allies could share best practices in vetting international companies that seek acquisition of critical infrastructure and companies that provide vital services. Allies should also help prepare for potential emergencies by ensuring and exercising relevant regional, EU, and NATO abilities to assist with the supply of vital goods, such as medical supplies and food and by providing assistance in Baltic development of economic resilience plans for crisis situations. Following a foreign incursion, NATO SOF and intelligence units could provide aid even in advance of an allied conventional response.
- **Develop civilian capability and a knowledge base for civil defense:** To improve civilian skills for civil defense and resistance, allies with knowledge or experience in this area could share best practices and “train the trainers.” To improve the protections of civilian populations during a civil emergency, allies should support opportunities to develop, practice, and implement effective evacuation and resettlement plans for vulnerable population groups.

- **Incorporate civilian contributions into allied military planning:** To maximize civilian contributions, allied militaries and governments might consider planning in advance for a variety of avenues by which to incorporate civilian participation before and during allied conventional military operations. This could include such initiatives as the training of a volunteer cyber force or civilian support functions for military operations.
- **Conduct and advise relevant exercises:** Finally, during peacetime, allies could offer advice and support for security exercises and training that coordinate Baltic regional and local municipalities with civic organizations and private enterprises. Incorporation of Baltic unarmed and armed resistance in military exercises and wargames would help familiarize all parties with the potential contributions of civilians and could increase understanding among allied forces in the region of the total defense system and role of nonmilitary actors in defense.

Table 6.1 summarizes and organizes current Baltic lines of effort, carried over from Chapter Five, across the five objectives. Table 6.2 summarizes potential priority areas for allied assistance in preparing for national resistance and resilience.

Table 6.1
Main Lines of Effort in the Baltic States

Objective	Main Lines of Effort
Imposing direct or indirect costs on an occupying force	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disseminating information on how to resist and refuse to collaborate, carrying out sabotage of the occupying force • Acknowledging, at a high level, the importance of societal participation in resistance • Building cyber resilience and, potentially, offensive capabilities • Conducting resistance and unconventional warfare exercises and training
Securing external support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cementing cooperation within international organizations, especially NATO • Nurturing close relationships with key strategic allies • Maintaining international diplomatic networks
Denying an occupier's political and economic consolidation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercising the means of ensuring diplomatic and governmental continuity of the state • Ensuring the security of the supply of vital services (e.g., food, water, energy) • Improving the protection of critical infrastructure • Improving energy and cybersecurity • Improving civil-military coordination
Reducing an occupier's capacity for repression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising the population's knowledge of what to do in a crisis • Developing and exercising plans for evacuation of civilians • Ensuring a clear distinction between civilian and military populations in the event of an armed conflict
Maintaining and expanding popular support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building resilience and will to fight • Countering disinformation • Providing the population with clear avenues for armed resistance • Building organizational networks

Table 6.2
Potential Priority Areas for Allied Assistance

Potential Priority Area for Allied Support	Action
Information and messaging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support Baltic media organizations, nongovernmental organizations, and other interested civilians on strategic communications training and capability development. • Educate allied populations and reporters on the Baltic region, including its defense and security issues. • During a crisis, amplify relevant fact-based information from the Baltic states and ensure that target audiences in allied states—and the aggressor—have access to such information.
Securing vital infrastructure and supplies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide support to the Baltic states to ensure that their communications infrastructure remains functional during a national emergency, including foreign occupation. This also could include material support, such as satellite communication devices (e.g., computers, radios). • Ensure and exercise relevant regional, EU, and NATO ability to assist with the supply of vital goods, such as medical supplies and food. • Provide assistance in the development of Baltic economic resilience plans for crisis situations. • Share best practices and support in vetting international companies that seek acquisition of critical infrastructure and companies that provide vital services.
Developing civilian capability and knowledge base	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share best practices on how to work with various population groups to increase their civil defense skills. • Share best practices on how to develop and implement effective evacuation and resettlement plans for vulnerable population groups.
Incorporating civilian contributions into allied military planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan in advance for a variety of avenues to incorporate civilian participation before and during allied conventional military operations. This could include such initiatives as the training of a volunteer cyber force or civilian support functions for military operations.
Conducting and advising relevant exercises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer advice and support for security exercises and training that coordinate Baltic regional and local municipalities with civic organizations and private enterprises. • Incorporate Baltic unarmed and armed resistance in military exercises and wargames. • Increase understanding of allied forces in the region of the total defense system and the role of nonmilitary actors in defense.

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In the event of an external occupation of Estonia, Latvia, or Lithuania, a conventional military intervention by allies—including the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the European Union, and the United States—would be crucial for the Baltic countries to regain national independence. But Baltic civilians could play a powerful role in their own defense—and, in fact, the Baltic countries’ constitutions and national security strategies highlight the importance of the willingness and preparedness of their civilians to meet external aggression with resilience and resistance. Increasingly, Baltic governments consider national military defense to be closely intertwined with nonmilitary capabilities, and each has introduced a whole-of-society approach into high-level strategy and policy documents.

RAND researchers sought to better understand the nature and effectiveness of contributions that Baltic civilians could make to a resistance campaign during a notional occupation. In this report, using an original analytical framework, the authors examine historic episodes of Baltic armed resistance between 1940 and 1955 and unarmed resistance between 1955 and 1991. Drawing from this analysis, the authors examine more-recent plans and policies to prepare Baltic populations for crises and consider the contributions that Baltic civilians could make during an occupation scenario by imposing costs on an adversary, securing external support, denying an occupier’s political and economic consolidation, reducing an occupier’s capacity for repression, and maintaining or expanding popular support for resistance. Finally, the authors present recommendations for how allies and partners can support the Baltic countries in strengthening civilian capacity for resilience and resistance.

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