

### Strategic Assessment of NATO Exercise Programme

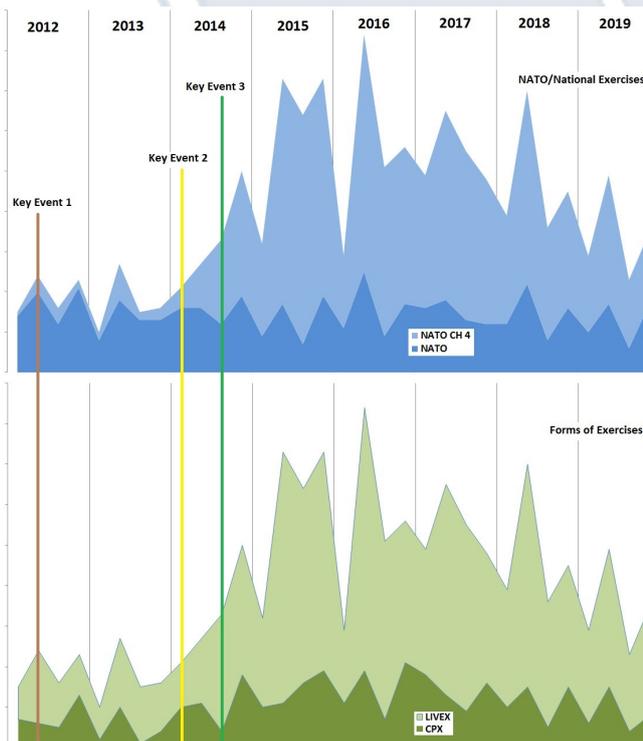
#### Project Overview

At the Wales Summit in September 2014, Allied leaders approved a Readiness Action Plan (RAP) to ensure the Alliance will be ready to respond swiftly and firmly to the new security threat environment. In conjunction with the implementation of the RAP, NATO's Exercise Programme was revised to take into account the preparation of higher readiness forces as well as contributing to assurance measures. In the lead up to the Warsaw Summit 2016, Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (SACT), Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), and the Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff were interested in determining whether the NATO Exercise Programme was meeting Alliance Requirements from a strategic perspective. In this context the JALLC was tasked to analyse how the NATO Exercise Programme is delivering against Alliance Requirements with respect to Readiness, Responsiveness, Interoperability, Assurance, and Deterrence.

The project was conducted in conjunction with the US Joint Staff, Joint Lessons Learned Division (JLLD) and involved the development of the first comprehensive NATO Exercise Programme Database (NEP Db) which incorporates data from all of the exercises listed in the (electronic) Military Training and Exercise Programme (MTEP) from 2006 to 2021. The NEP Db allowed the project team to analyse a large quantity of exercise related data and identify trends or changes to the NATO Exercise Programme. It also allowed the project team to relate Alliance Requirements to exercise content within the context of Readiness, Responsiveness, Interoperability, Assurance, and Deterrence.



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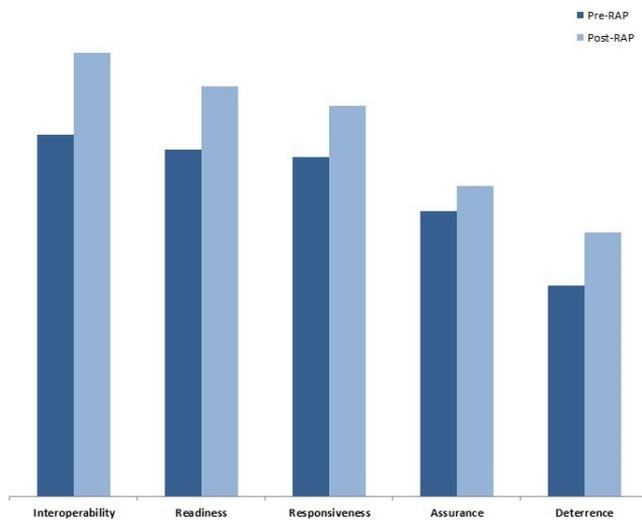


2014 was an important year in shaping the programme; certain initiatives within NATO, events taking place in Crimea, and the implementation of the RAP have influenced its development. In particular, the overall number of exercises increased as national exercises were incorporated in the NATO Exercise Programme (light blue) and the type of exercise being conducted shifted to Live Exercises (LIVEX) (light green).



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## NATO Exercise Programme Delivering Against Alliance Requirements



The changing global security threat environment has resulted in NATO adapting the NATO Exercise Programme to meet Alliance Requirements, in particular in response to events taking place in the last five years on the world stage. As a consequence, there is a perceivable increase in the total number of exercises conducted under the NATO flag, the focus and location of such exercises has shifted and the type of exercise being

conducted has been adapted to meet current needs. As such, the NATO Exercise Programme is delivering against Alliance Requirements.

### Interoperability

Interoperability is one of the key objectives of NATO exercise; In fact, any exercise carried out by two or more Nations should generally contribute to increasing interoperability. Moreover, there are good indicators that NATO is not only *exercising more together* but focussing on *exercising together more*.

### Readiness & Responsiveness

Readiness and Responsiveness are consequences of Nations and Partners exercising together and cannot, therefore, be exercised in their own right. Nonetheless, the project team identified trends in this area such as an increase in NATO's intent to be more ready and responsive was measured in terms of the increase in the number of exercises conducted, the aims and objectives of the exercise programme, as well as an increase in overall exercise participation.

### Assurance & Deterrence

Assurance & Deterrence, are effects of exercising together and, as such, cannot be directly derived from analysis of just the NATO Exercise Programme data. However, in demonstrating the Alliance's credible military capability and strategy (Interoperability and Readiness), NATO also demonstrates the political will to act (Responsiveness). Where this is the case, the Alliance can be said to be Deterring a potential aggressor and Allies may therefore feel more Assured.

In this context, the number of exercises and their location may contribute to NATO's efforts to deter a potential aggressor and therefore also to NATO's efforts to assure its Allies. Likewise, the change in the type of exercises being conducted over the last five years showcases NATO's resolve and commitment as well as its capabilities, not only to the Allies, but, perhaps more importantly, to any potential aggressor. Moreover, increasing participation of the newer NATO Nations in exercises demonstrating their resolve and commitment to the Alliance, may also indicate increased interoperability ensuring readiness Alliance-wide demonstrating Alliance cohesion.

## Project Team

LTC Andreas Tschakert  
DEU A, Project Manager

LTC Tschakert has served in the German Army since 1992. He has served in a variety of posts and has attended the Joint Command and General Staff Course in Portugal before his assignment to the JALLC. He holds a master's degree in military science, security and defence.

## JALLC

LTC Fernando Maçana  
PRT A, Military Analyst

LTC Hendrik Ensink  
NLD N, Military Analyst

Mr Kyle Christensen  
CAN NIC, Analyst

Mr Clovis Autin  
FRA NIC, SORA

Ms Jodie Lazell  
GBR NIC, Editor

Mr Alberto Aspidi  
ITA CIV, Research Assistant

## JLLD

Point of Contact:

Mr Patrick Jackson  
USA, CIV, Product Manager

If you are interested in this or any other JALLC Analysis product, please contact the JALLC.



Phone: +351 21 771 7007/8/9

Fax: +351 21 771 7098

E-mail: [jallc@jallc.nato.int](mailto:jallc@jallc.nato.int)

[www.jallc.nato.int](http://www.jallc.nato.int)

Avenida Tenente Martins – Monsanto  
1500-589 Lisbon  
Portugal