

MILITARY MOBILITY

a new-old question to address



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MILITARY MOBILITY: A NEW-OLD QUESTION TO ADDRESS

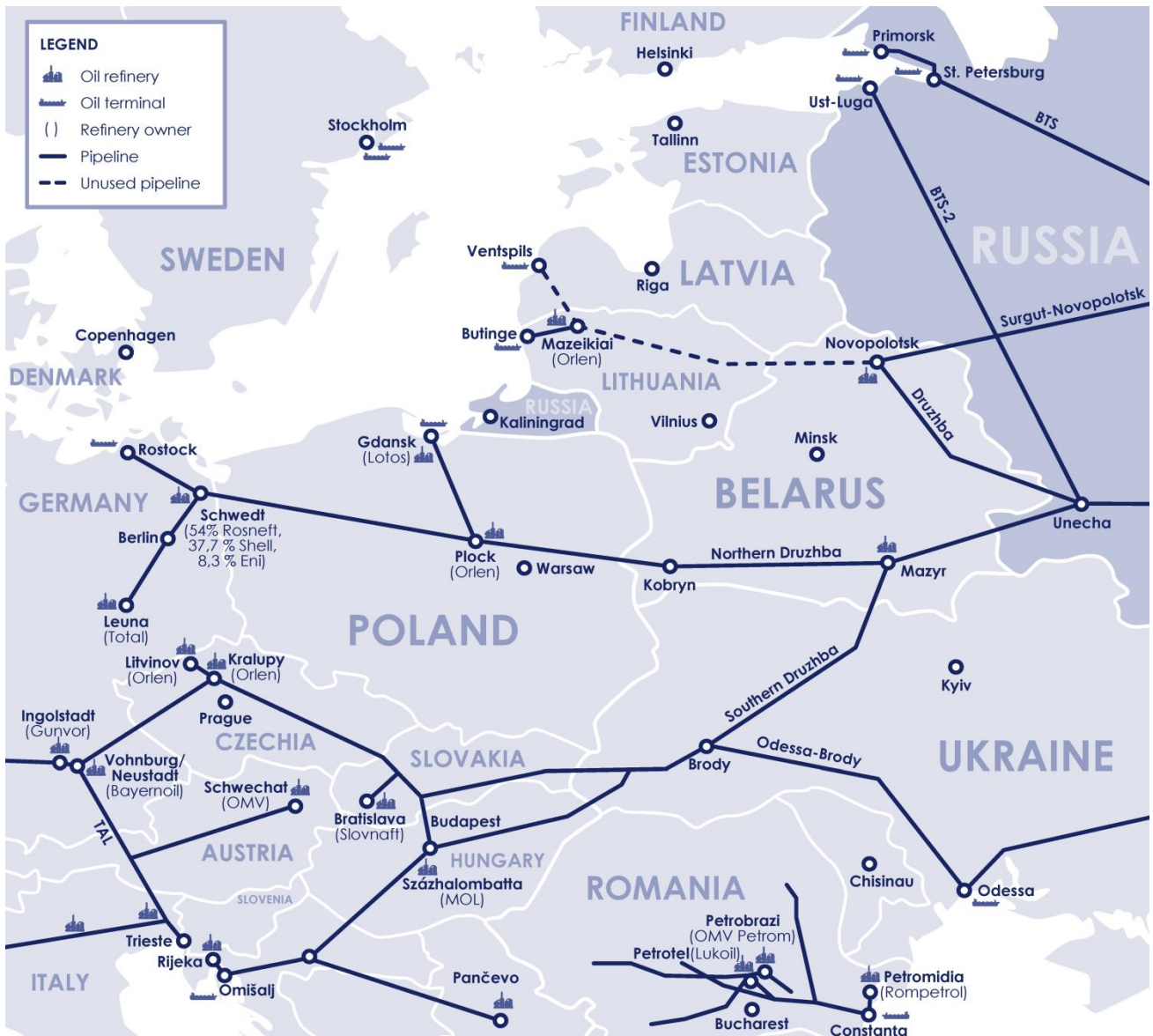
Si vis pacem, para bellum – "If you want peace, prepare for war". The Europeans increasingly come back to that Latin adage, as they observe the growing threats around their borders. And one of the main challenges remains the situation on NATO's Eastern Flank.

To be actually ready for a possible conflict, it may not be enough to have just another military manoeuvres conducted (like DEFENDER 20) or get more temporarily dislocated divisions in the region. Ensuring that the

critical energy and transport infrastructure is well prepared if needed is equally important

Due to NATO's enlargement to the east, significant part of post-Soviet oil transmission system has appeared to be located within the Alliance boundaries. Also the Central European refineries, including those in the east of Germany, are currently supplied via Russian Druzhba pipeline system.

CRUDE OIL PIPELINES IN THE CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE



“WHAT IF?”: CRUDE OIL SUPPLIES DURING THE CONFLICT

Possible conflict on NATO's Eastern Flank would result not only in thousands of soldiers, lots of tanks, trucks and other vehicles deployed in the region. To secure proper and effective fuel supplies to the troops, it will be necessary to use local civilian oil infrastructure i.e.:

- ⚙ refineries;
- ⚙ crude oil and oil product pipelines;
- ⚙ oil transshipment terminals;
- ⚙ crude oil storage tanks;
- ⚙ fuel depots.

Regardless of what will be the type of possible future conflict (hybrid warfare vs. typical military conflict), it shall be assumed that the aggressor will try to sabotage NATO's oil infrastructure functioning.

Even in case of hybrid warfare, Russia may halt oil (and oil products) supplies, causing a more or less severe fuel crisis in the Central Eastern Europe region.

Stoppage of Russian oil supplies would be problematic, but would not automatically result in the closure of

local refineries. Almost all of the processing plants in the region may be provided with non-Russian crude oil from the other sources (even if that would be quite challenging regarding e.g. oil transshipment in the ports). The only exceptions to this are German refineries – Schwedt and Leuna – which, nevertheless, should be considered to supply the troops due to their location behind the possible front line.

German plants Schwedt and Leuna may process c.a. 24 mln tons of crude per year. In case of no oil supplies from the Russia, both of the refineries would rely on oil imports via Rostock (6,8 mln tons per year only due to the low capacity of the oil pipeline) and from Poland (the Polish system shall be expanded until 2023).

It is worth noting that the German refineries are least prepared to the possible halt of Russian oil supplies due to the one main reason – lack of oil transmission pipelines between the transmission system in the east and west of the country.

NATO OIL REFINERIES IN CENTRAL EASTERN EUROPE / BALTIC STATES REGION

	LITHUANIA	POLAND	GERMANY (EASTERN PART, I.E. SCHWEDT + LEUNA)	CZECHIA	SLOVAKIA	HUNGARY
REFINERIES' CAPACITY	10,2 mtpa	16,3 mtpa + 11 mtpa	12 mtpa + 12 mtpa	5,4 mtpa + 3,3 mtpa	6,1 mtpa	8,8 mtpa
SHARE OF RUSSIAN CRUDE IN OIL SUPPLIES	AT LEAST 70% (summed)					
TECHNICAL POSSIBILITY TO FULLY REPLACE RUSSIAN CRUDE	YES	YES	ONLY AFTER THE 2023	YES	YES	YES

RUSSIAN SABOTAGE OPTIONS: OIL TERMINALS AND MORE

It seems natural that under the prolonged conflict the Russians may not only halt exports of their own crude, but also look for the possibilities to disable critical oil infrastructure facilities on the NATO's Eastern Flank.

The Russians may try to sabotage oil transshipment terminals in Gdansk (Poland) and Būtingė (Lithuania). Both are located in close proximity to Kaliningrad Oblast, what makes them exposed to the possible attack involving drones or unmanned underwater vehicles.

Hypothetical damage / destruction of Gdansk oil terminal combined with stoppage of Russian oil supplies via Druzhba pipeline would make Polish refineries fully dependent on rail supplies (after the

depletion of 90-days strategic oil reserves in Poland). If similar threat materializes regarding Lithuanian oil terminals in Būtingė and Klaipėda, the task to provide the NATO troops with fuel will go to the further located refineries in eastern Germany, Czechia, Slovakia and Hungary. However, with time, the strategic reserves will be running low and the fuel crisis on the "civilian" fuel market could emerge.

Moreover, possible sabotage can be aimed also at other critical infrastructure facilities. Possibly the Russians may even try to purposely damage the Schwedt refinery (Germany) which majority shareholder is the Russian public company Rosneft. If needed, the attackers could pretend that the sabotage was actually just a normal accident which, nevertheless, had forced the owners to halt fuel production for a few months.

GDANSK AND BŪTINGĖ OIL TERMINALS LOCATION AND THEIR PROXIMITY TO KALININGRAD



WHAT COULD BE DONE TO INCREASE NATO'S READINESS?

Conduct critical infrastructure analyses.

The proper preparation to the possible conflict requires addressing lots of important questions regarding not only the oil supplies, but also fuel production, their further storage and distribution. It seems crucial to analyze whether the current oil infrastructure is well secured from sabotage attempts and is fully compatible with NATO vehicles. Moreover, it may be necessary to check, if the refineries, depots and other facilities would be sufficient enough in case of prolonged presence of tens of thousands of troops.

Verify the procedures.

It may be necessary to verify the existing procedures and rules to check whether they are well adapted to the realities of a possible conflict, in particular regarding the priority access to the oil/fuel infrastructure. They should include not only the military and civilian vehicles, but also the rescue and medical services.

Look for the alternative supply routes.

NATO shall be prepared for the scenario of sabotage, resulting in shutdown of one or more non-Russian oil supplies corridors. Contingency planning should include not only the options for alternative crude supplies to the refineries in need, but also the options for fuel imports. Moreover, investments into a new transmission pipelines, e.g. connection between oil product pipelines in Czechia and Poland (Sedlnice – Trzebinia between Čepro and PERN systems) may be worth considering.

Adapt the refineries to the possible halt of Russian supplies.

Czech PKN ORLEN's refinery in Litvinov could be additionally adapted to work on non-Russian crude oil only and similar up-grade may be possibly needed regarding Slovak refinery of Slovnaft. Such investments would provide more security in terms of fuel supplies during the conflict.

Treat DEFENDER 20 as a real test.

DEFENDER 20 exercises shall be treated as a real logistics test. That is the one of very few possibilities to gather such relevant and important lessons in terms of NATO's military mobility on its Eastern Flank.