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Deterrence or reassurance? Determining
the appropriate Norwegian response to a
more unpredictable Russia

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Foreword

As an officer in the Norwegian armed forces, I have practiced security policy for several years. My interest in the academic world of security was sparked when I took a course in international relations as a young officer. The interest grew, and almost fifteen years later the result is this master's thesis.

It has been a long, and at times frustrating, road. I have gone from feeling overwhelmed to moments of eureka, sometimes within hours. However, it has been a privilege to be able to spend a significant amount of time studying a topic close to heart. Looking back to the start, there is no doubt that my knowledge about Norwegian security policy has increased a lot, and that the insight is far more mature now than only a year back.

I have to thank my family for tolerating that I disappeared into the “bubble” for long periods at the time. I could not have done this without the support and encouragement from my fantastic wife. I also have to thank Torbjørn Pedersen for giving me honest and constructive feedback throughout the process. Your advice on research design and methodology was particularly appreciated, and you worked hard to keep me on the narrow path.

Ole Marius Tørrisplass

Bodø

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Abstract

The newfound Russian assertiveness on the international arena in recent years has caused problems for Western policy makers, and there is no broad consensus among the Western European countries as to how the assertiveness should be dealt with. This study discusses Norwegian security policy, and asks how Norway should balance the use of deterrence and reassurance in its policy towards a more assertive Russia.

While there is an element of fear and uncertainty in Russian policy, Russia currently shows several signs of having revisionist ambitions in the European theatre. The country has invaded two of its neighbors within the last ten years, and has employed a number of hybrid strategies in an attempt to reduce western cohesion and power.

Reassurance and deterrence are complementary strategies of conflict management, and Norway has traditionally balanced the two carefully. Reassurance aims to reduce Russian fear and uncertainty, and is effective in mitigating the effect of the security dilemma and avoid unwarranted escalation. Deterrence tackles Russian revisionist ambitions, and reduces the incentive for Russia to exploit and pressure Norway.

Recent Russian behavior means that Norway cannot be certain that Russia will not seek to exploit attempts at reassurance. Supported by classical realist theory, the study concludes that Norway must lean towards deterrence in its policy towards a more assertive Russia. Russian use of hybrid strategies also means that Norwegian deterrence must be long term, purposeful, and comprehensive. Norway must establish a deterring posture that includes all sectors and levels of society, and communicate the prospect of capable and credible defense using all Norwegian instruments of power and political tools. Assistance from NATO is critical in that respect and Norway must work to tie the alliance to the defense of the country, as well as to maintain NATO cohesion.

Reassurance still plays an important role in Norwegian strategy, and may, in line with social constructivist theory, move the relationship between Norway and Russia towards a more cooperative stance. However, in the current security climate, reassurance is primarily a tool that enables effective deterrence by mitigating its escalatory effects. Norwegian policy makers must therefore have sober expectations as to what reassurance can actually achieve.

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Abbreviation List

EFP	Enhanced Forward Presence
EU	European Union
IR	International Relations
LTP	Long Term Plan for the Defense sector
MCPN	Marine Corps Prepositioning Program-Norway
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NRF	NATO Response Force
RAP	Readiness Action Plan
TJE	Trident Juncture Exercise
US	United States
USMC	United States Marine Corps
VJTF	Very High Readiness Joint Task Force

1. Introduction

In 2008, Russia invaded Georgia. Six years later, in 2014, Russia annexed Crimea and more or less covertly supported the separatists in the Ukraine. Russia has in other words invaded two of its neighboring countries in the last ten years. Additionally, there are indications that Russia has interfered with elections in a number of Western countries, and Russia has verbally threatened several countries to include North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) members Denmark and Estonia (Keller, 2017). Russia thus actively seeks to regain its position as a great power, and seems willing to go to great length to achieve this.

The newfound Russian assertiveness largely came as a surprise, and the opportunistic Russian behavior did not fit into the liberal world-view and order of the West (Fukuyama, 1992). After years of emphasizing out of area operations and the war on terror, the members of the European Union (EU) and NATO did not fully understand how to address the Russian problem. This led to a fragmented response that lacked direction and strategy, and that mostly emphasized a diplomatic response rather than a display of credible military power (Matlary & Heier, 2016).

Still, the Russian assertiveness has shifted European security thinking back to the European continent, and NATO and the EU have taken some measures to mitigate the threat. The EU and the United States (US) have implemented a number of sanctions against Russia, and NATO's Readiness Action Plan (RAP), which included an enhanced NATO Response Force (NRF) and a Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF), as well as the Enhanced Forward Presence (EFP) in the eastern part of the alliance, intend to deter further Russian aggression. However, some argue that these measures are insufficient to deter Russia and call for a more powerful military response (Ringsmose & Rynning, 2017). Others, to include a number of European countries, have different interests and argue in favor of reestablishing cooperation with Russia. There is thus still much debate over how to handle Russian assertiveness, and Europe has not been able to come up with a unified solution to the problem (Matlary, 2016).

1.1. Research Topic

The focus of this study is Norwegian defense and security policy. Norway shares a border with Russia, but the country is not a part of the traditional Soviet sphere of interests. Norway joined NATO in 1949 in order to deter Soviet aggression, but the country has a long tradition of cooperation and peaceful interaction with the Soviet Union and later Russia. As a member of NATO, Norway is still an integrated partner of the Western security institution. Combined

with differing interests in the High North, this renders the prospect of a conflict with Russia a real possibility for Norway. An important question in that respect, is how Norway should design its security and defense policy to prevent becoming victim of Russian exploitation, pressure, or aggression.

Traditional Norwegian security policy rests on two principles: reassurance and deterrence. Norway aims to deter Russian aggression through its membership in NATO and by maintaining a credible military posture. At the same time, it aims to reassure Russia through a number of confidence building measures, such as self-imposed restrictions (Rottem, 2007). The end of the Cold War changed much of this, and the prospect of having to defend against Russia more or less disappeared from Norwegian security policy and discourse. When Russia annexed Crimea in 2014, and proved far more assertive than before, this changed.

The changing security climate triggered much debate in Norway over what security- and defense policy the country should follow. Two standpoints currently dominate: those who think Norway should follow a line leaning mostly towards reassurance, and those who promote a line more in favor with deterrence. While the debate is often general in nature, it is intensified by recent policies that many interpret as a transition towards a line of predominantly deterrence by the Norwegian government. Two examples of this are the decision to host NATO's Trident Juncture Exercise (TJE) in Norway in 2018, as well as the decision to host a rotational force of US Marine Corps (USMC) troops at Værnes air base.

It is important to note that none of the sides promote one-sided policies of either deterrence or reassurance, and the debate is therefore about where Norwegian policy should fall on a continuum between the two extremes. The goal of this study is to analyze potential consequences of following either of the strategies, and it thus aims to provide an answer to which policy Norway should follow when dealing with Russia.

1.2. Research Question

The study answers the following research question:

How should Norway balance the use of deterrence and reassurance in its policy towards a more assertive Russia?

1.3. Research Structure, Operationalization, and Disposition

The study answers the research question by analyzing the contemporary Norwegian security debate on how Norway should handle a more assertive Russia. The debate acts as a

framework for the discussion, and the study does not aim to analyze implications of the debate itself. Additionally, the study analyzes two cases of recent Norwegian policy: TJE and the USMC rotational force at Værnes. This provides context to the discussion and grounds the analysis in real world examples. Data is used to critically validate the arguments made by each side of the debate, and consequently provide an answer to the research question.

The study consists of three parts. Part I consists of chapters 2 and 3. Chapter 2 describes the research design, while chapter 3 covers the analytical framework used in the analysis. The framework consists of two main theoretical perspectives: classical realism and social constructivism, as well as theories of deterrence and reassurance.

Part II establishes the context for the analysis, and chapter 4 starts with a description of the debate and explains the main arguments of each position. Chapter 5 briefly describes the current relationship between Norway and Russia from a security perspective, as well as specific Russian security concerns and interests. Finally, chapter 6 provides a description of the two cases discussed in the analysis: NATO's TJE and the USMC rotational force at Værnes.

Part III is the main part of the study, and consists of the analysis in chapter 7. The analysis starts with a discussion of the overarching arguments made by each side of the debate. Chapter 7.1 discusses the deterrence side in light of classical realism, while chapter 7.2 discusses reassurance using social constructivist theory. Chapter 7.3 then concludes that deterrence and reassurance are complementary elements of Norwegian conflict management that both have important weaknesses. Reassurance is prone for exploitation, while deterrence may cause unwarranted escalation or fail even if implemented appropriately.

The analysis then discusses each of these weaknesses in depth, and applies the discussion to the current Norwegian security climate. Chapter 7.4 discusses the challenge with the security dilemma, chapter 7.5 the challenge with exploitation, while chapter 7.6 discusses the challenge with effective deterrence. Each discussion is grounded in the debate and analyzes the two cases in respect to how they affect or are affected by the challenges. Chapter 7.7 synthesizes the discussions and concludes that, while there is a potential for unwarranted escalation and an intensified security dilemma, Russian revisionist tendencies mean that Norway should lean towards deterrence in its policy towards a more assertive Russia. Reassurance is still important, but mainly as a way to mitigate the dangers associated with the security dilemma. Norway cannot deter Russia alone, and must work to strengthen NATO

cohesion and tie the alliance to its defense. Since Russia uses hybrid strategies extensively, Norwegian deterrence must also be comprehensive and use all the state's tools to prevent Russian coercive diplomacy and pressure. The chapter also concludes that both TJE and the USMC rotational force fit well into the above findings, and that Norway should continue to implement policies that improve that alliance's ability to defend Norway. Finally, chapter 7.8 provides suggestions for further research.

Chapter 8 provides a summary of the findings and some concluding remarks.

1.4. Purpose and Relevance

Since the end of the Cold War, scholars have written many pages about Norwegian and Russian security. Some of the most notable contributions include: "Norge og Russland. Sikkerhetspolitiske utfordringer i nordområdene" (Norway and Russia. Security policy challenges in the High North) edited by Heier & Kjølberg (2015), "NATO and the North Atlantic. Revitalising collective defence" edited by Olsen (2017), "Geopolitics and security in the Arctic. Regional dynamics in a global world" edited by Tamnes & Offerdal (2014), and "Common or divided security? German and Norwegian perspectives on Euro-Atlantic security" edited by Allers, Masala & Tamnes (2014). This may paint a picture that the topic is exhausted, and that new studies have little to offer in the form of new knowledge. The problem with such a stance, however, is the changing nature of international relations (IR), as well as the complexity of the phenomenon. The security situation in both Crimea, the Ukraine, and the High North has changed very fast the last couple of years, and this makes a study of Norwegian security policy in relation to Russia particularly relevant.

The topic is not necessarily relevant because there is an imminent risk of war between Russia and Norway today or in the near future. One could argue that this is improbable. The consequences of a military conflict could be severe, though. It is therefore critical to take any potential for conflict seriously, and to put sincere efforts into avoiding any unnecessary escalation while still setting the stage to achieve political goals not related to security. In order to make informed and wise decisions, political leaders need a thorough understanding of the situation at hand. Especially if one considers that the foreign policy goals of most western states go beyond purely avoiding conflict and war. The study is relevant in that respect by providing policy makers with some pieces of information that can be useful when attempting to realize a large range of political goals.

The Norwegian debate of whether to follow a line of deterrence or reassurance is ongoing. Additionally, the Norwegian military is going through a major structural reorganization that will affect security for a long time to come and the Norwegian Government has implemented new policies intended at deterring Russia. A commitment to either of the two lines, choosing something in between, or a lack of commitment altogether, can have effects not yet fully understood. This study therefore aims to both aid policy makers in their decision process by increasing the understanding of these effects, as well as set the stage for further research by developing knowledge on a more general level.

1.5. Important Concepts

The topic of this study is Norwegian security policy, and security is therefore a key concept. In the study, security policy is defined as the protection of a state against the use of physical force and violence, coercive strategies, and diplomacy from outside the state's borders (Forsvarsdepartementet, 2015a). The definition used is therefore relatively narrow. State security is of primary concern and involves preserving the state's existence, sovereignty, and integrity. Recent developments, and Russian use of so-called hybrid warfare, increasingly blur the line between states of war and peace. This complicates the picture and makes it increasingly difficult to assess who is in fact responsible for a given attack or incident. The emphasis of this study is threats posed by other states, and it does not take into consideration threats from non-state actors such as terrorist groups, extremists, and activists.

1.6. Literature Review

Scholars have written many pages about Norwegian security and the relationship with Russia over the years. The Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014 rendered some research outdated, and triggered a need to refocus back to traditional security challenges. However, much has been written after 2014 and a good deal of older research is still valid. Scholars like Tamnes, Åtland, Bukkvoll, Heier and Kjølberg have written extensively about Norwegian security and the High North, and Matlary and Coker have contributed to the study of Western strategy. Additionally, Wilhelmsen has published several works on Russian identity, while Bruusgaard has contributed with her research on Russian strategy and hybrid warfare. The following samples some previous research that is particularly relevant to this study.

To start with, Norway has followed a policy based on a combination of reassurance and deterrence towards Russia for years. The influential Norwegian politician and researcher Johan Jørgen Holst wrote extensively about Norwegian security policy, and he first

introduced the two terms in relation to Norwegian policy in the 1960's (Fonn & Elvebakk, 2003). According to Holst (1967), small countries have only limited opportunities to change the international environment, and must primarily follow policies that adjust to the surrounding security environment. Norwegian security relies on a balance of power in Europe, and historically there has been severe consequences whenever states have attempted to gain a dominant position.

Due to its limited size and power, Norway must rely on a number of tools and instruments in its foreign policy. The combination of deterrence and reassurance plays a key role in that respect. Deterrence aims to deny the opponent relevant gain from attacking, or signal the prospect of severe punishment. However, according to Holst (1967), this strategy is prone to misperceptions, miscalculations, and potential failure, and Norway must therefore supplement deterrence with measures of reassurance in order to avoid unnecessary escalation and provocation.

In the article "Interstate relations in the Arctic: An emerging security dilemma?" from 2014, Kristian Åtland explores how the concept of a security dilemma can be applied to an analysis of Arctic interstate relations, as well as possible remedies to any challenges caused by a security dilemma in the region (Åtland, 2014). Åtland (2014) describes the Arctic as a low-tension region with a long tradition of peaceful coexistence. However, the potential for military tension in the region is still present, with all littoral states openly declaring both economic and national security interests in the Arctic. These states may "be willing to go to great lengths to defend their interests, if necessary by the display or use of military force" (Åtland, 2014, p. 146). This fact points to the existence of a security dilemma in the Arctic. Åtland (2014) concludes that the challenges associated with the security dilemma may be mitigated through conventional arms control, implementation of confidence-building measures, strengthening the Arctic governance systems, and finally through settlement of existing delimitation disputes in accordance with the LOSC.

In 2015, the Norwegian Ministry of Defense set up an expert commission on Norwegian security and defense policy that consisted of 13 researchers, politicians, military officers, and public servants. They tasked the commission with analyzing how the Norwegian military can solve its most demanding challenges related to crisis or war, and the results would act as foundation for the new long-term plan for the defense sector (Forsvarsdepartementet, 2015a).

In an attempt to illustrate some of the challenges Norwegian armed forces must be prepared to meet, the report highlighted three hypothetical threat scenarios that are relevant both short term and in the long run. Of these, two are applicable to this study.

The first scenario describes an escalation of a bilateral conflict between Norway and Russia that stems from a conflict of interests in the High North. In the scenario, Russia increases its military activity in the region, demands that Norwegian vessels and airplanes stay away from certain areas, and applies diplomatic pressure on the Norwegian government. The conflict gradually escalates, and Russia carries out covert attacks, such as cyber-attacks and sabotage, on Norwegian infrastructure all over the country (Forsvarsdepartementet, 2015a). Such a scenario involves a serious challenge to Norwegian decision makers since it is difficult to gain a clear understanding of what is actually taking place, and since warning times of a Russian main assault will likely be very short. The invocation of Article 5 will thus be of prime concern, but the diffuse nature of such a situation may make this challenging (Forsvarsdepartementet, 2015a).

The second scenario involves an escalation of a conflict at the European continent, and this specific scenario starts in the Baltics. NATO sends forces to deter Russian aggression in the region, and Norway decides to participate. The crisis is unpredictable, and Norwegian forces must be prepared to take part in combat as well as to remain in the area for a prolonged period of time (Forsvarsdepartementet, 2015a). Additionally, one cannot rule out that such a conflict may spread to the High North.

The report emphasized that Russia will be the most important factor impacting Norwegian defense planning both short-term and in the long run. The asymmetry between the countries will probably increase, and Norway cannot expect prolonged warning times if Russia decides to initiate hostilities. Consequently, Norway must prioritize collective defense, readiness, and presence in the north (Forsvarsdepartementet, 2015a).

Of the more recent contributions, the book “NATO and collective defence in the 21st century”, edited by Karsten Friis (2017) with contributions from a number of subject matter experts, presents an assessment of the results coming out of the 2016 NATO Warsaw Summit. While the book does not specifically analyze the Norwegian position, NATO’s importance to Norwegian security policy makes it highly relevant to this study. In the book, Ringsmose & Rynning (2017) argue that the enhanced NRF and VJTF are incapable of stopping a major military attack from Russia, and that NATO is therefore incapable of doing

deterrence by denial. Such a situation will require a significant follow on force to retake occupied land, and, even if this is not official NATO policy today, NATO deterrence towards Russia is thus primarily based on deterrence by punishment.

Wilhelmsen & Godzimirski (2017) argue that while there is much emphasis on how NATO can effectively deter Russia today, there is not enough discussion about how Russia may perceive NATO's deterrence efforts. They argue that Russia sees the West and NATO as both aggressive and expansionistic, and that the situation today is one of mutual deterrence and suspicion. This overreliance on deterrence from both sides means that the need to communicate benign intentions to the other party is neglected and has led to inadequate lines of communication and crisis-prevention mechanisms.

In the book "Ukraine and beyond: Russia's strategic security challenge to Europe" edited by Janne Haaland Matlary and Tormod Heier (2016), a number of scholars argue that Russia stands out as a more efficient and unitary actor than the EU and NATO. Coker (2016) argues that the West has lost its ability to act strategically, and Matlary (2016) asserts that the European response to Russia has been reactive rather than strategic. Consequently, the Western security architecture seems fragmented and this makes it easier for Russia to bend international rules in pursuit of its interests (Matlary, 2016).

Finally, Svein Rottem's (2007) article "Defence policy in the High North – deterrence and reassurance" provides an analytical framework for how researchers can use realism and constructivism "as tools to illustrate the relationship between deterrence and reassurance" (Rottem, 2007, p. 63). Rottem argues that realism and constructivism are not mutually exclusive, but can be used in combination to explain different aspects and provide a broader and more correct picture of the relationship between Norway and Russia.

When applying realism and constructivism to the dichotomy of deterrence and reassurance, Rottem (2007) identifies four dimensions of Norwegian security policy: *deterrence-realism*, *deterrence-constructivism*, *reassurance-realism*, and *reassurance-constructivism*.

In IR, *deterrence* is often associated with the tradition of *realism*, and an analysis using this perspective may involve looking at how Norway can deter Russia using military force and power. Relative power is a keyword, which for a small state like Norway can be problematic. There is no way for Norway to match the military power of Russia, and Norway therefore relies on help from allies like NATO. Rottem uses the term "small state realism" to describe the situation where smaller states employ a wide range of tools, like economic integration, in

an attempt to deter an opponent. In this view, Norwegian economic integration with Russia in the High North can be seen as a realistic strategy to raise the threshold for Russian aggression (Rottem, 2007).

Deterrence can also be analyzed using *constructivist* perspectives. When a state employs a policy of deterrence against another state, this can be seen both as a product of a power struggle between states, as well as a result of common perceptions and norms of appropriate behavior. States can therefore establish effective deterrence by reinforcing norms and identities where international law and the principle of sovereignty stands strong (Rottem, 2007).

Rottem (2007) claims that there is also a connection between *realism* and *reassurance*. A certain presence of military force in a state's territory signals its interests to the outside world, and reinforces the international norm of sovereignty to surrounding countries. Military presence is thus a way of reassuring the international community that a state is serious about its interests and obligations.

Finally, *Reassurance* is connected to *constructivist* theory by assuming that common identities set the stage for what people, actors and states perceive as appropriate actions and behavior. Identity is not only a subconscious framework for action, but also an active strategy that states can use to shape identities. Smaller states can for example consciously work to establish a common identity based on peaceful intentions and sensible management of its resources, thereby lowering the potential for conflict (Rottem, 2007).

Part I – Design and Analytical Framework

2. Research Design and Methodology

This chapter discusses the research design and methodology chosen to answer the research questions, and identifies potential weaknesses that may affect the validity and reliability of the results.

The research question asks how Norway should balance the use of deterrence and reassurance in its policy towards a more assertive Russia. The question is exploratory and seeks to understand and explore the two concepts of reassurance and deterrence in a Norwegian context. It is thus suitable for a qualitative approach that relies on data in the form of text, and that seeks to gain an in-depth understanding of a small number of variables (Creswell, 2014). While the analysis uses some quantitative data in the form of Russian, NATO, and Norwegian statistics and national data, the study is almost exclusively qualitative.

Even though the study uses theory extensively, the main design is inductive since it did not set out to test any specific theories or hypotheses proposed up front. While the data was not collected to satisfy theories, the analysis used two overarching theoretical perspectives to answer the research question and provide an academic language and concepts: classical realism and social constructivism. This analysis then resulted in new theory and explanations of Norwegian security policy, and theory generation was thus the end-point and goal of the study (Creswell, 2014; Jacobsen, 2015).

Case studies are well suited for in-depth analyses of a small number of units and variables bound in time, activity, and space (Jacobsen, 2015). The study is a cross-sectional case study that looks at the overall case of Norwegian security policy towards Russia, and seeks to provide thick descriptions of reality. The analysis focuses on two examples of recent Norwegian policy, and the study deals with these as individual cases within the larger context of Norwegian security policy. All the cases are important elements of the contemporary Norwegian security discourse, and have at times triggered much of the public debate. The intent behind choosing these specific cases is primarily to act as a framework for the discussion about which strategy Norway should follow when meeting a more assertive Russia and this also involves making conclusions as to the consequences and appropriateness of each policy. By basing the discussion on these specific cases, the analysis is grounded in real world experience rather than being purely abstract.

Since the study analyzes the cases through different theoretical perspectives, it fits within what Andersen (1997) calls a theoretically interpretive case study. This approach uses existing theories and concepts to shed light over the research question and interpret data. Given that the study contrasts and compares deterrence and reassurance in light of two more or less competing perspectives, it is also comparative in nature.

Finally, the study analyzes the contemporary Norwegian security debate and discusses how the main arguments of each position fit into the current Norwegian security climate. The study thus contains an element of discourse analysis. A discourse is a system for delivering a set of statements and practices, and constitutes reality for the person or group expressing a certain opinion (Neumann, 2002). This study uses the debate as an analytical framework to answer the research question, and does not set out to analyze implications of the debate such as power relationships between the two positions. By discussing the validity of each position, it attempts to go beyond the statements made by the two sides and determine how Norway should meet a more assertive Russia. Consequently, both data collected, as well as theories of IR, seek to discuss the arguments made by the debaters, and thereby come closer to the true nature of the Norwegian security situation and recommend an appropriate response to a more assertive Russia.

2.1. Case Selection

The sampling of cases will affect the conclusions of a study to some degree. Additionally, choosing cases for a study of deterrence and reassurance is difficult, since it is usually problematic to conclude whether a given outcome was actually caused by the deterrence or reassurance efforts or not. Situations of failed deterrence are more visible than successful deterrence since they involve open conflict, and the former are thus more often subject to study. The key problem lies in the fact that it is very difficult to prove a causal relationship between the absence of war and deterrence or reassurance (Achen & Snidal, 1989).

Norway has never been involved in a war with Russia, and it is therefore not possible to study any examples of failed deterrence between the two countries. One remaining option is to study particular policies aimed at either deterrence or reassurance, and analyze the potential effects of these. A number of Norwegian policies may be studied, and whether these are policies of reassurance or deterrence may affect the results.

This study looks at two examples of recent Norwegian policies that are subject to controversy. Both are policies aimed at deterring Russia, and this may lead to a somewhat one-sided view.

However, the cases are examples of policies that some consider a deviation from the traditional Norwegian approach, and this makes them particularly relevant for highlighting the tension between deterrence and reassurance. They are also important elements of the ongoing debate, and thus grounds the analysis in real world examples.

2.2. Data, Sampling, and Sources

Data collected consists of official documents, official statements, media coverage, and research reports from Norway, Russia, the US, and other European countries. This means that the data used is a combination of tertiary, secondary, and primary data. Data aims to validate the statements made in the debate, discuss consequences of the two cases, and thus provide a foundation for making a recommendation to which policy Norway should follow to meet a more assertive Russia. Data consists of recent Western and Russian acts and behavior on the international arena, force dispositions, and assessments of both sides' interests, intentions, means, and preferred methods.

Sampling of data and sources was challenging, since thousands of pages about the topic are available from all over the world. The choice of samples was purposeful, and specific samples were chosen based on whether or not they provided added value to the analysis. Sources are primarily Western, which may lead to a one-sided analysis. However, the topic of the study is Norwegian security policy and it is mainly aimed at a Western audience. It is thus not unnatural that the analysis takes on a western perspective.

The topic of Russian ambitions and intentions towards the West is covered in chapter 5, and may be subject to some discussion and controversy. In an attempt to increase reliability, these discussions uses a number of sources from different countries and actors. Norwegian sources include the official annual threat assessment from the Norwegian Intelligence Service, as well as academic reports from the Norwegian Defense Research Establishment, the Norwegian Institute for Defense Studies, and the report from the expert commission on Norwegian security and defense policy. International sources include the Swedish defense research establishment, official documents and research reports from both the US and the EU, as well as official Russian policy documents. Since I do not speak Russian, all Russian policy documents were translations retrieved from authoritative sources, and there is thus a possibility that some of the original content did not come across as intended.

2.1. Researcher Bias

All qualitative research in social sciences is to some degree interpretative and affected by researcher bias (Johannessen, Tufte, & Christoffersen, 2010). This may affect the research process at many stages, such as when selecting theory, cases, sources, and samples, which may color the analysis and results.

My background as an officer in the Royal Norwegian Air Force may have influenced this study both positively and negatively. One can argue that a military background may lead to conclusions that go in favor of deterrence, use of military force, and increased military spending. I have mitigated this by making sure to use several sources of data when possible and let the data speak for itself. Additionally, I have analyzed both sides of the debate extensively thus providing critical analysis of both deterrence and reassurance. My view on the matter also changed considerably throughout the process, and I did not land on the same conclusions that I believed I would when I started the study.

On the other hand, my military background may also improve validity and reliability significantly since I have extensive knowledge of Norwegian military capabilities, operational concepts, and Norwegian military doctrine. This gives me a more realistic and sober understanding of what the use of military force can actually achieve in a conflict with Russia, as well as a greater understanding of the capabilities of the Russian armed forces.

2.2. Validity and Reliability

The internal validity of the study depends on whether the results actually answer the research question asked and if they describe reality accurately. The greatest threat to internal validity in this study was the choice of theory, choice of cases, sampling of sources, researcher bias, and drawing incorrect conclusions.

Classical realism and social constructivism are both authoritative theories of IR, but may lead to a one-sided analysis if one takes the assumptions of either side for granted. This was alleviated by using theory purely as an analytical framework and applying it to the current context of Norwegian security. This added an element of pragmatism and nuance to the analysis.

The use of two overlapping cases also strengthened internal validity. The same goes for critically assessing all data sources and using multiple sources when possible and required. Internal validity was ensured by evaluating all stages of the research process to include any causal relationships identified, as well as by clarifying any bias I as the researcher brought to

the study. Finally, the internal validity of the study was strengthened by comparing the conclusions to the results of other similar studies, such as those identified in chapter 1.6.

External validity involves the ability to generalize the results from the study to other countries and situations. Since this is a case study with relatively few units, this can be problematic.

The study is primarily aimed at the Norwegian context, and it is thus not intended to be applied to other situations. The cross-sectional nature of the study also means that the results are only truly valid at the time of data collection. However, much of the analysis is general and theoretical, and many of the conclusions can thus be generalized both in time and space. The results of the study are therefore relevant to policy makers in other states as well, particularly smaller states engaged in an asymmetrical relationship with a larger neighbor.

A reliable study means that another researcher would get the same results if he or she repeated the study. Just as for validity, researcher bias can affect the results. Additionally, the sampling of data and sources is important, and this was mitigated by using multiple sources. The reference list also plays an important role in ensuring reliability, since this gives other researchers an opportunity to verify the reliability of the study. Finally, reliability was increased by comparing the results to other similar studies.

2.3. Ethical Considerations and Classified Information

The study did not involve any personal or sensitive data, and all data came from publically available sources. There were thus no significant ethical considerations of personal nature. However, the nature of the topic combined with my military background could cause some challenges in regards to classification.

As a military officer, I have access to classified information concerning Russian and Norwegian military capabilities, intentions, and plans. While I did not use any classified information in this study, there is always a danger that classified information ends up in the report if one is not careful. Given that the report is available to the public, this can be problematic.

Additionally, using only unclassified sources can challenge validity and reliability. Most countries withhold information when it comes to matters of state security, and the addition of such information could increase the resolution, validity, and reliability of the study considerably. I mitigated this by using unclassified sources from the Norwegian military intelligence service when possible, as well as sources from military research and intelligence institutions from other countries.

3. Analytical Framework

This section provides an overview of the analytical framework used to answer the research question. As a theoretically interpretive case study, the analysis compares deterrence and reassurance in light of two main theories: classical realism and social constructivism.

Classical realism focuses on uncertainty, power, and military force, and is a suitable starting point for an analysis of deterrence. Social constructivism is a relevant perspective for an analysis of reassurance due to its emphasis on how behavior and interaction may change norms, interests and identities of states. The intent of this section is to define the concepts, offer an overall outline of each perspective, and present the main assumptions they are based on.

3.1. Theories Justifying Deterrence

The concept of deterrence can be seen both as a theory of IR and as a strategy of conflict management. Deterrence as a threat-based strategy aimed at influencing other actors' behavior is an old practice, and can be traced back to ancient times (Morgan, 2012). This chapter covers deterrence theory, rather than strategy, and starts with classical realism. Afterwards, a more detailed discussion of the concept of deterrence follows.

3.1.1. Classical Realism

Political realism has been an authoritative and influential approach to the study of IR for years. While the formal realist tradition appeared as a reaction to the ideas of liberal idealism dominating the period following World War I, its roots go back several centuries through the works of Thucydides, Machiavelli and Hobbes to name a few (Williams, Goldstein, & Shafritz, 2006).

Broadly speaking, realism bases its conclusions on four principal assumptions: states are key units of analysis in an anarchical world, states are unitary actors, national or international security tops the list of issues facing the state, and states are rational or at least purposive (Viotti & Kauppi, 2012). Rationality is a contested concept, and scholars often separate between procedural rationality and instrumental rationality. Procedural rationality assumes a near perfect decision making process, while instrumental rationality assumes that an actor will choose the option that it perceives will best further its interests (Zagare & Kilgour, 2000).

Levels of analysis in the realistic perspective are usually the state and the international system of states (Viotti & Kauppi, 2012). Realism is in many ways a theory of deterrence in itself, since the stability of the system and absence of war is one of the dependent variables.

Independent variables are often different sources of power, primarily in the form of military strength, as well as the ambitions and intentions of states (Morgenthau, 1967).

Many consider Hans Morgenthau (1904-1980) the father of classical realism, and this form of realism is preoccupied with human nature and power struggle in the anarchical world order (Morgenthau, 1967). An anarchic system means that there is no supra-national authority regulating the relationship and managing conflicts between countries. Both international law and institutions restrain the behavior of states under normal conditions, but there are limitations to the effect of this. Additionally, states are sovereign to govern matters within their borders without interference from other states. This means that the current world order is a system of sovereign states without a central authority to enforce rules. While international law and institutions restrict the behavior of states to a certain extent, states are ultimately alone in fending for their own national interests, security and survival (Kissinger, 2014).

A pessimistic and static human nature implies that humans are imperfect, prone to weakness, fear, and mistakes. Conflict is therefore an inescapable part of human nature, and states see the domain of IR as a zero-sum game. It does not mean that humans are ambitious, afraid, and immoral all the time, but it means that conflict and war among states is always a possibility over time (Morgenthau, 1967; Hobbes, 1969).

Classical realism prescribes a clear hierarchy of national interests. Since survival is the most important priority of all states, national security should always throne at the top of the list. This indicates that the extent to which softer interests can be prioritized, depends on a careful analysis of the current security situation. The point is that security is a required enabler for other types of interests, and when facing the raw use of military power and violence, other interests inevitably drop to the background (Nye, 2009).

Power is the primary tool states use to ensure security and survival. One definition of power is the ability to achieve goals, or more specifically the ability to affect others in order to reach these goals. Others define power as the capacity to get someone to do something they would otherwise not have done (Viotti & Kauppi, 2012; Nye, 2009). Since security is the most significant national interest among states, the power to deter and repel threats is critical. According to Morgenthau (1967), "...armed strength as a threat or a potentiality is the most important material factor making for the political power of a nation" (p. 11). Consequently, classical realists see power as a mainly material capability, of which military capability is the most critical factor if states want to ensure security. Military power, in other words, facilitates

political power (Morgenthau, 1967). International law also plays a role in that it defines the limits of permissible action. However, when international rules fail to control revisionist states, power alone can enforce restraint. Power, therefore, is a means to an end, as well as an end in itself (Kissinger, 2014).

Power defined as the ability to influence another state to do something it would otherwise not have done, involves at least two actors. This means that relative power is a much more interesting and important concept than absolute power. Just as important is the fact that the distribution of power can say something about how stable the relationship between states is. Morgenthau (1967) argues that, since states have a natural tendency to aspire for power, they seek to either maintain or overthrow status quo. This dynamic of action and reaction between states leads to the balancing of power, as well as active policies aimed at maintaining the balance. Keeping power entails a policy of maintaining status quo, which means that a state wants to maintain the overall distribution of power in the system. Status quo seeking states may strive to acquire more power, but these are mere adjustments to the current power relations, rather than attempts at reversing roles and positions. Revisionist states, on the other hand, seek to acquire power with the intent of reversing current power relations. A revisionist state seeks to upset status quo, and fundamentally change the distribution of power in the system of states (Morgenthau, 1967).

Balance of power prevents revisionist states from defeating all the others, and consequently ensures that the current world order does not break down. According to Morgenthau (1967), "...the balance of power and policies aiming at its preservation are not only inevitable but are an essential stabilizing factor in a society of sovereign nations..." (p. 161). In this view, a strategy of balancing the power of other states will thus act stabilizing and decrease the probability of revisionist states upsetting status quo. Additionally, a strategy of balancing helps deter against coercive diplomacy and the exploitation of one state over the other (Kissinger, 2014; Morgenthau, 1967).

However, the requirements of policies aimed at states seeking status quo differ substantially from policies aimed at countering revisionist states, and a correct analysis of what type of policy one is facing is critical. The wrong answer to this question can lead to unwarranted escalation if the opponent is actually seeking status quo, or exploitation and gradual loss of power if the opponent has revisionist ambitions (Morgenthau, 1967).

A defending state can counter status quo seeking states, those that seek only adjustments within the overall distribution of power, by policies of give and take, balancing, and compromise, since this will not affect the overall distribution of power. Incorrectly interpreting policies of status quo as revisionist, can have serious consequences though. If state A wrongly interprets the intentions of state B as revisionist and resorts to defensive measures to counter it, state B may in return interpret state A as revisionist and choose to implement its own defensive countermeasures. This security dilemma, where measures taken by one state to increase its security leads to a decrease in the security of another state, can lead to less security, arms races, unjustified escalation, and ultimately war (Morgenthau, 1967; Jervis, 1978).

On the other hand, wrongly interpreting a revisionist policy as status quo can be just as dangerous. Revisionist states should be countered with policies of containment aimed at defending the current balance of power and stopping further aggression. The defending state must create a clear line of demarcation between what is acceptable and what is not, and clearly communicate that crossing the line will involve serious negative consequences, including war (Morgenthau, 1967).

However, if misinterpreting a revisionist policy as seeking status quo, a defending state may wrongly resort to policies of appeasement or reassurance. One-sided measures to reassure a revisionist state may seem compatible with maintaining status quo, since the demands made can appear as isolated and connected to limited objectives. However, the problem with this line of reasoning is that a line of isolated demands may be part of a long-term strategy to upset status quo, where the revisionist state works to reverse the power distribution one step at the time. A revisionist state can thus exploit the permissive policies of the defender, and ultimately achieve its goals without much resistance (Morgenthau, 1967).

3.1.2. Deterrence Theory

During the Cold War, deterrence theory primarily looked at how nuclear weapons could best deter the Soviet Union from initiating an escalation. This resulted in classical deterrence theory, which is usually based on rational choice analyses and game theoretic calculations (Freedman, 2004; Zagare, 2004). After the fall of the Soviet Union, research on deterrence more or less came to a halt, but Russian behavior in both the Ukraine and Syria has emphasized a renewed relevance of the concept as both theory and strategy. However, the nature of the concept, as defined in classical deterrence theory, has changed significantly,

since nuclear deterrence plays a much smaller role than during the Cold War. Additionally, we are no longer seeing the large scale deterrence dynamics between two super power blocs. This underlines the return of conventional deterrence in present-day policies and research (Morgan, 1983, 2012).

One contemporary definition of deterrence commonly used is “the persuasion of one’s opponent that the cost and/or risk of a given course of action he might take outweigh its benefits” (George & Smoke, 1974, p. 11). According to the US Department of Defense (2006), the idea of US deterrence is “[...] to decisively influence the adversary’s decision-making calculus in order to prevent hostile actions against US vital interests” (p. 5). In other words, deterrence is successful if a defender manages to convince a challenger that the cost of attacking outweighs the potential gain of attacking. While concepts such as coercive diplomacy involves compelling an actor to do something, deterrence is about preventing certain behavior. Deterrence, therefore, focuses on actions not yet taken and aims to maintain status quo. This adds a third factor to the adversary’s decision calculus: the perceived cost or benefits of not attacking. If an adversary state cannot live with status quo, it may be willing to accept much higher potential cost of attacking than it will if status quo is a more favorable situation (Mazarr & Goodby, 2011; Beeker, Mills, Grimaila & Haas, 2013).

A state can thus seek to deter another state using three methods: denying benefits, imposing costs, or encouraging adversary restraint. Deterrence by *denying benefits* involves convincing the adversary that it will not be able to achieve its goals or benefits, or that the benefits perceived are of little or no value. A state can deny benefits by using both defensive and offensive capabilities that can include air defense systems, ballistic missile defenses, capable defensive conventional forces, and robustness to sustain military operations over time (Department of Defense, 2006).

Deterrence by *imposing costs* means that the adversary is convinced that any response to an attack will be both severe and likely to occur. If successfully convinced, the attacker perceives the risk of suffering large losses as too high, or cannot accept the cost of a potential counter attack by the defender. He or she will therefore see status quo as the preferable option. Deterrence by imposing costs can involve a large array of the defending states’ tools, and includes both offensive and defensive weapons (DoD, 2006).

Finally, deterrence by *encouraging adversary restraint* involves influencing the adversary’s perception of the cost and benefit of not taking the action that the defender attempts to deter.

The aim is to convince the adversary that restraint and status quo results in an outcome that is acceptable, even if it may not be preferred or desirable. This may be done on two ways. First, the defender can take measures to convince the adversary that there are benefits to continued restraint. An example of such a strategy would be declaring a “no first use of nuclear weapons policy”, since this would act as an incentive for the adversary to show restraint by also refraining from the use of nuclear weapons. Second, the defender can take measures to reduce the cost of restraint as perceived by the adversary. The goal of such a strategy is to prevent the failure of deterrence because the adversary thinks that he or she will lose less by attacking than by showing restraint. An example of such a policy is being careful to not inadvertently escalate a situation by conducting operations that can create uncertainty as to the other parts’ intentions (DoD, 2006).

According to Zagare (2004), successful deterrence depends on adequate capability and credibility. Capable threats are threats that will render the attacker worse off than if it did not attack, and means that deterrence by both denial and imposing cost must focus closely on sufficient capability. Deterrence credibility is also an important factor, and credible threats are those that are believable and rational to carry out. Credibility must work in conjunction with capability to deny benefits or impose costs to be effective, and credibility may not be sufficient by itself for successful deterrence without the prospect of a capable threat. (Zagare & Kilgour, 2000),

3.2. Theories Justifying Reassurance

Reassurance as strategy often has a poor reputation among realists, and they criticize such strategies for being both dangerous and futile (Stein, 1991). Still, states employ policies of reassurance all the time, and reassurance has been an integrated part of Norwegian policy towards Russia for several years (Tamnes & Eriksen, 1999; Holst, 1967). This chapter starts with an overview of social constructivism, and looks at how states apply meaning to the concept of anarchy can affect the nature of the security system. Finally, the chapter provides a definition of reassurance and explains the concept in detail.

3.2.1. Social Constructivism

Social constructivism is a relatively new perspective that has grown to become a mainstream approach to the study of IR. Social constructivism sits in the middle ground of IR theory, and some scholars, like Wendt (1992), argue that social constructivism can bridge the gap between liberals on one side, and realists on the other side. The focal point of social

constructivism is how norms, identity, and institutions affect international politics.

Independent variables are thus states' practices on the international arena and the interaction between states, while dependent variables are the interests and identities of states.

Social constructivist do not necessarily disagree with all realist conclusions, but they base their insights on very different ontological and epistemological assumptions. Where classical realists see the world as primarily material and human nature as more or less static, social constructivists see the social world as made up of intersubjective understandings, subjective knowledge, in addition to material objects. In this view, social facts differ from material facts since their existence rely on language, human consciousness, and collective understandings. Humans therefore establish social facts by applying collective knowledge to physical reality (Adler, 2012).

However, the influence goes both ways, since international practices also organize and constitute the social world of actors. According to Adler (2012):

When states face each other for myriad reasons, their interaction is affected, indeed constituted, not only by the cost-benefit analyses leaders make, the ideas and knowledge people carry in their heads, and the discourse they use to communicate. Rather, what states do in relation to other states – the moves they make, the signals they give, and the language they speak – is constituted by the practices they share (p. 126).

Social constructivists thus see change as an important element of IR, but view it as something more than just changes in the character and distribution of material things. Change involves the emergence of new constitutive rules as well as transformation of social structures and processes, and change is induced by the institutionalization of novel knowledge, practices and discourses (Adler, 2012).

This also means that social constructivists do not limit the importance of power to material sources. Nonmaterial sources of power, such as speech acts, discourses, normative interpretations, ideas, identities, and moral authority are also important elements of IR, since they may affect the construction of identities, norms, and ultimately the actions and practices of states (Adler, 2012).

Identities are “relatively stable, role-specific understandings and expectations about self” (Wendt, 1992, p. 397), and identities are acquired through intersubjective meanings. Identities

are socially constructed, and are relevant only in relation to other actors. In addition, actors may have several identities. A person may identify herself as both a mother and a soldier at the same time, and a state may simultaneously identify itself as sovereign, hegemon, and leader of the free world (Wendt, 1992). This means that the international environment and domestic factors shape and influence the identities of states, and that these are dynamic rather than static (Adler, 2012). Identities also constitute interests, and one must see interests in relation to the social context within which they operate. This means that states may have a number of interests, and they may not always consider security the most important priority (Wendt, 1992).

Rationality and reason are important concepts to social constructivists, but they do not accept the realist notion of procedural or instrumental rationality. Rather, they often use the term communicative rationality, which assumes that humans are sensible and reasonable but at the same time sensitive to historical, social, and normative contexts (Adler, 2012). According to March & Olsen (1998), “[...] agents do not choose between the most efficient alternatives, but follow rules that associate particular identities to particular situations” (p. 951).

An institution is “a relatively stable set or ‘structure’ of identities and interests” (Wendt, 1992, p. 399). While some institutions are codified through formal rules and norms, all institutions are cognitive units that exist only as part of an actor’s understanding of the social world. Institutions are still real, in the sense that individuals who embrace them see them as existing above and over themselves. Institutions are thus functions of collective knowledge and identity, and “institutionalization is a process of internalizing new identities and interests, not something occurring outside them and affecting only behavior; socialization is a cognitive process, not a behavioral one” (Wendt, 1992, p. 399).

These conclusions have important implications for the concept of anarchy, since social constructivists see the notion of self-help as an institution, rather than a constitutive feature of anarchy. Classical realists see human nature as egoistic and self-centered. In this view, anarchy is a permanent and permissive cause for power politics and conflict. Wendt (1992) argues against this and asserts that self-help is not an essential feature of anarchy, but rather one of several structures of identity and interests that may exist under anarchy. Preservation of self and security is still the main concern in the process of identity-formation within states, but how states apply meaning to the concept relies on how they identify cognitively with other actors (Wendt, 1992).

This sets the stage for three main types of security systems. In competitive systems, states identify negatively with each other's security, and this includes the realist view of IR as characterized by power politics and preoccupation with relative gains. Individualistic security systems involve states that are indifferent to the relationship between their own security and the security of other states. While still concerned with security, these states are mainly interested in absolute gains. Both competitive and individualistic systems are self-help forms of anarchy, since states do not identify positively with each other's security. Cooperative security systems, on the other hand, involve states that identify positively with the security of others, and security is thus a shared responsibility. Anarchy is still a central characteristic of the system, but the system is no longer self-help since national interests are similar to international interests, and identity is defined collectively (Wendt, 1992).

The real world does of course not fit perfectly within these categories, but the main point remains that "anarchy and the distribution of power only have meaning for state action in virtue of the understandings and expectations that constitute institutional identities and interests" (Wendt, 1992, p. 401). Self-help is thus one of several institutions that set the stage for one type of anarchy, but this is not the only type that can exist. The question then, is how states can influence a security system towards a more cooperative stance.

Realists often argue that, when in doubt, states should follow policies based on the worst-case scenario. However, since conceptions of self and interests are intersubjective, states often tend to mirror the practices of other states over time. If states consistently acted on a worst-case assumption of the intentions of other states, society would be impossible. What states should rather do, and in reality often do, is to make decisions based on *probabilities* that other states have certain intentions (Wendt, 1992). States can infer the costs and probabilities of making faulty assessments through a process of signaling and interpretation. This process completes a social act that may eventually create intersubjective meaning. Social acts create expectations on both sides about future behavior and through acts and responses, states can increase their knowledge about each other. The mechanism at play is reinforcement, and if repeated long enough reciprocal expectations will create stable concepts of self and other (Wendt, 1992).

Self-help systems thus evolve from interactions where states act in ways that come across as threatening, and this eventually creates expectations that the other state cannot be trusted. Threatening acts force states to mirror the behavior of the other and this will cause competitive or egoistic identities. Such dynamics are prone to security dilemmas and may

push states towards conflict or war. When institutionalized, security dilemmas may be very difficult to change, but what enabled the situation in the first place, was the practices of the states involved. The only way to reduce or eliminate the effect of the security dilemma is therefore to change the intersubjective knowledge through new practices (Wendt, 1992).

Breaking out of competitive security systems involves a certain degree of vulnerability and risk of exploitation, and this makes the process incremental and slow. Identities and interests are relatively stable, so a conscious decision to transform them needs at least two preconditions. First, the state must have reasons to see itself in new terms, which may include new social situations that the state is unable to manage within the current conception of self. Second, the expected cost of transforming roles and identities through sanctions imposed by other states cannot be greater than its rewards. If these conditions are fulfilled, states can engage in conscious practices aimed at transforming their identities and interests (Wendt, 1992).

Since states create and sustain identities and interests through interaction with other actors, states cannot transform a security system unilaterally. The other actor's identities and interests must also change, and the main tool in that respect is practices and acts on the international arena (Wendt, 1992). Since states tend to mirror the practices of other states over time, a reassuring state can thus influence another state's identity and interests by treating it as if the system is cooperative (Wendt, 1992). According to Wendt (1992), "[t]he fastest way to do this is to make unilateral initiatives and self-binding commitments of sufficient significance that another state is faced with 'an offer it cannot refuse'" (p. 421). Consequently, reassurance is a key tool for states that wish to reduce the security dilemma and transform a security system towards a larger degree of cooperation.

3.2.1. Reassurance Theory

In international politics, reassurance means that a state acts in a manner that leaves other states less worried about ones' own intentions. These intentions, however, must be genuinely benign, and reassurance is thus a way to signal such benign intentions to another state (Tang, 2010). Strategies of reassurance assume some sort of ongoing conflict or hostility, and there is no need for reassurance when security systems are truly cooperative. While deterrence assumes that the source of conflict is the adversary's ambitions and search for opportunity, reassurance assumes that the source stems from the adversary's needs, weaknesses, and

insecurities (Stein, 1991). Consequently, reassurance cannot work effectively if the opposing state has truly revisionist or malign ambitions (Tang, 2010).

Reassurance can reduce the chance for miscalculations as well as the likelihood of the threat or use of force, and can complement deterrence by reducing its risks. Deterrence may fail if the measures taken provoke rather than deter the opponent, or because of misinterpretations and misperceptions. Deterrence may also fail if the other state has truly revisionist ambitions and is set to pursue these. Reassurance can compensate for these difficulties through exercise of restraint, providing reliable and valid information, establishing shared norms of competition, communicating willingness to negotiate, and thus create alternatives to the use of force (Stein, 1991). Reassurance is particularly relevant when conflicts are fueled by mistrust and misperception, and may aid in clarifying intentions, minimizing uncertainty and reduce the chance of miscalculations (Stein, 1991).

Insecurity can stem from both external factors such as the anarchic nature of IR, as well as internal factors such as uncertainty over other state's military capabilities, intentions, interests, and resolve. Of these, uncertainty of intentions is the most problematic, since capabilities, interests, and resolve mostly matter if the opponent is actually malign or has revisionist ambitions. In addition to signaling benign intentions from the sender, reassurance can also play an important role in uncovering the opponent's true intentions by gauging how it responds and reacts to the reassuring gestures made (Tang, 2010).

It is also important to differentiate between cooperation and cooperative behavior. Cooperation involves interaction from both actors, while cooperative behavior may be a one-sided activity such as appeasement. One-sided cooperative behavior or reassurance is vulnerable to exploitation from revisionist states, and Chamberlain's failed strategy towards Hitler prior to World War II often serves as an example of the weaknesses of such policies (Tang, 2010).

The credibility of a reassurance attempt is closely tied to the cost and risk involved if the receiving state does not reciprocate the action. The cost of a reassurance attempt is incurred the moment the gesture is forwarded, while the risk will not materialize until the receiving state actually chooses to take advantage of it. Reassurance efforts that carry little potential cost and risk to the sender can easily be interpreted as false reassurance attempts aimed at misleading the receiver. Consequently, since there is always a chance that the opponent will

exploit reassurance policies, costly and risky initiatives are by far the most believable and credible (Tang, 2010).

Finally, reassurance strategies can lean on three overall tools: words, non-military deeds, and military deeds. Reassurance using words is the least credible of these, but can have an effect when used to signal restraint. Non-military deeds are more credible, and involves economic and political actions. The most costly and risky measures are military deeds, and these include taking defensive postures, reducing the number of arms, refraining from membership in alliances, and so on. Military deeds are thus the most credible of the three types (Tang, 2010).

Part II – Background

The fall of the Soviet Union in 1991 marked the end of an era of Cold War between the East and the West. As a result, a number of former Eastern Bloc countries started aligning with Western Europe, and Russia emerged as a potential partner rather than an enemy. Some scholars, like Francis Fukuyama (1992), even claimed that western liberal ideology had won the final victory and remained as the only relevant form of human government. The new situation had obvious implications for European security. With Russia no longer on collision course with the West, NATO needed new reasons to stay relevant. This, combined with the emerging war on terror, led to an increased focus on “out of area” operations at the expense of issues closer to home (Kjølberg, 2015).

The optimism did not last long, and by the turn of the century the relationship was steadily cooling down. Russia was disappointed by a lack of influence, and that the West still viewed them as a part of the western “periphery” rather than integrating them fully into the fold. The NATO bombing campaign over Kosovo in 1999 marked a turning point for Russian thinking (Gessen, 2014), and NATO expansions into the former Soviet Union sphere of influence caused further alienation (Kjølberg, 2015; Bacon, 2014).

On the other hand, the West was disappointed that Russia acted more assertive on the international arena, and that the country showed signs of renewed great-power ambitions. The war with Georgia in 2008 provided the first major warning that Russia was both capable and willing to protect its national interests by force if necessary (Græger, 2009). The spring of 2014 marked the final blow, when Russia annexed Crimea and more or less covertly supported the separatists in the Ukraine. Consequently, the focus of Western security shifted back to the European continent, and Russia once again emerged as a potential threat (Bukkvoll & Åtland, 2015).

Norway sits at the very northern edge of Europe, far from the Ukrainian crisis. The country still shares a border with Russia, in a region that held great strategic significance during the Cold War. Additionally, Norway is a close ally to the US and is an integrated member of NATO. The country has a long tradition of cooperation with Russia, but the Ukrainian crisis has sown doubts about Russian ambitions and trustworthiness (Bukkvoll & Åtland, 2015). Recent discussions about a “race for the Arctic” complicates matters further by highlighting the conflict potential of the High North (Åtland, 2014).

During the Cold War, Norway based its security policy on a balance between two principles: deterrence and reassurance. Summarized, Norway aimed to deter Russia through its membership in NATO, and by pre-storing allied military equipment on Norwegian soil in preparation for military assistance during a crisis. Reassurance was achieved through a number of self-imposed restrictions on allied presence. First, allied military activity on Norwegian territory was limited, and Norway did not allow any permanent foreign military bases on its soil in times of peace. In addition, Norway declared itself as an area free of nuclear weapons (Rottem, 2007).

In the first years after the Cold War, the need to deter Russia more or less disappeared from Norwegian security and defense discourses. Norwegian military forces were preoccupied with fighting wars far from Norwegian soil, and the idea of having to defend against Russian aggression was mainly neglected. Today, after the crisis in Crimea, the Ukraine, and recently Syria, deterrence and defense against Russia is back on the Norwegian agenda (Kjølberg, 2015). As noted, this sparked much debate at different levels and in different sectors over how Norway should meet the Russian assertiveness, and the discussion is still very much alive among scholars, politicians, military professionals, and others.

4. The Debate – Deterrence or Reassurance?

Much of the deterrence-reassurance debate circles around recent Norwegian activities and policies that some interpret as a shift towards more deterrence at the expense of reassurance. Important examples of such activities and policies are Norway's decision to host large military exercises such as the 2018 TJE and the decision to host a rotational force consisting of 300 USMC troops at Værnes.

The following two sections outline the main arguments both in favor of and against strategies of deterrence and reassurance. Even if the disagreement is nuanced, the discussion throughout this paper is at times treated as a dichotomy for the sake of analysis and clarity. Consequently, the arguments presented below are a compilation of arguments selected from different sources, which means that not all those referenced from each side of the debate necessarily agree with all aspects of each other's views. Since the intent of this study is to analyze the relationship between reassurance and deterrence in Norwegian security policy, rather than each debater's individual view, the outline focuses on those arguments that best illustrate the differences between the two positions.

4.1. The Deterrence Side of the Debate

The view that recent Russian behavior justifies a policy in favor of deterrence has many proponents, notably Diesen, Fonn, and Matlary, and some claim that Russia is primarily to blame for the new security situation. Additionally, they see Russia as a mostly rational actor that mainly shares the same worldview as the west. Consequently, Russia understands that NATO is a defensive alliance without offensive ambitions. In general, the new situation dictates a form of Western diplomacy that uses pressure and potential threats, as well as keeping the door open for cooperation (Aftenposten, 2014; Diesen, 2016; Fonn, 2014; Matlary, 2014).

According to some debaters, Russia has a worldview based on geopolitics and the country sees an objective difference between the rights of powerful states and those of less powerful states. In this view, small states close to Russia, including Norway, have a duty to consider Russian interests in their policies. This obviously applies more to countries in Russia's sphere of interest than countries with historical ties to the West. If any country in Russia's sphere of interest shows ambition to align with the West, Russia will see this as a potential threat to its political and social stability. This is further emphasized by the fact that Russia has a tradition of seeing great power politics as a zero-sum game, where the weakness of one side equals strength of the other. Western European countries need to accept that they are playing a geopolitical game against Russia, and that Russia uses military force actively to achieve political results (Matlary, 2014; Diesen, 2016).

Russia is inferior to NATO when it comes to conventional military forces, which means that Russia is unlikely to win a large-scale war in Europe. Russia is also perfectly aware of this fact. Consequently, there are no signs that Russia intends to engage in a military adventure into Western Europe. This leads to a conclusion that the possibility of a large-scale war, with a potential exchange of nuclear weapons, is no longer present. Russia is also aware that NATO will not attempt to attack the country, and Russian worries are based more on fear of marginalization and loss of influence than military aggression (Diesen, 2016).

Compared to the situation during the Cold War, the Russian threshold for openly invading other countries for political reasons is high. Russia is willing, though, to pay a considerable price to maintain and establish respect for Russian views, and to maintain its sphere of influence. The main reason why Russia has increased its military spending the last decade is to strengthen Russian self-esteem and impress the rest of the world. Additionally, this

improved military capability enables Russia to use an active policy of confrontation and pressure towards its surroundings (Diesen, 2016).

Since no Russian interests in Western Europe are large enough to risk a large scale war, Russia must balance its use of force carefully to avoid escalation and the activation of NATO's Article 5. However, the lack of an existential threat to NATO gives Russia an opportunity to use coercive diplomacy as a political tool without necessarily triggering an escalation. Additionally, most NATO countries are risk averse when it comes to conflict with Russia and will go to great lengths to avoid escalation. Russia can further minimize the risk of escalation by keeping NATO and the EU divided and weak, thereby reducing the West's ability to act collectively against Russia. This point is especially relevant when one considers that NATO is an organization based on consensus (Diesen, 2016)

Supporters of deterrence thus see Russian complaints and protests with NATO policies and actions as nothing but a game to divide and weaken the West. Consequently, one cannot rule out a confrontational approach from Russia towards Norway in the High North, or anywhere in Europe for that sake. Russia does not base the use of a confrontational approach on sincere fears of NATO aggression, but rather uses it as a strategy to weaken Western cohesion. Even if Russia does not like Western policies, Russian policy makers understand why NATO responds the way it does to the crisis in the Ukraine, and can draw parallels to what is happening in the Baltics. Consequently, NATO does not need to fear misinterpretations from Russia, and can hold on to current policies of deterrence. The West should try to maintain a good relationship with Russia but cannot allow Russia to affect or dictate the policy of other sovereign countries (Diesen, 2016; Matlary, 2014).

The most effective way to make an adversary bend to your will is through deterrence, since this does not involve the use of direct military force if it succeeds. Deterrence is only effective, though, as long as it creates the necessary fear required to prevent a state from pressuring another state. A strategy of deterrence must, therefore, not only be sufficiently capable, but also be accompanied by credible political will to use force if needed (Matlary, 2014).

Since Russia has proven that it is both willing and capable of using military force to change borders and destabilize other states, the main question is how to deter Russia from employing coercive diplomacy. The lack of unity within NATO and the EU is problematic, and Russia is actively using this to its advantage. The absence of hard consequences, and economic

sanctions that are not working as prescribed, make deterrence less credible. This encourages Russia to continue working actively to divide the members of NATO and the EU, and the use of military force is in that respect primarily a political tool to Russia (Matlary, 2014).

According to this line of argument, NATO needs to maintain sufficient operational military capability to conduct high intensity warfare anywhere within the NATO area, thereby credibly deterring Russia from aggression (Aftenposten, 2014; Fonn, 2014). NATO also needs to respond resolutely, with military force if necessary, if Russia attempts to destabilize any European country, particularly the Baltic countries. Not doing so could set a dangerous precedence, since it may threaten the modern norm of not using military force as a foreign policy tool between countries. The EU and NATO must act proactively by showing strength at their borders now, rather than reactively waiting for a situation to occur, since the whole point of deterrence is to convince an adversary that attacking is a bad idea in the first place (Matlary, 2014).

This side of the debate also means that NATO cannot not base its policies and strategies on Russian interests and opinions. Russian behavior in Crimea and the Ukraine violates international law, and NATO and the EU cannot let Russia dictate the policy of sovereign states, or have any sort of “veto” over who can or cannot join NATO. NATO should cement its cooperation with the Ukraine through the Partnership for Peace program, despite Russian objections. The EU and NATO must generally disregard such objections, since they are nothing but a rhetoric game aimed at dividing the West (Matlary, 2014).

When it comes to Norway specifically, the Norwegian minister of Defense Ine Eriksen Søreide (2017) asserts that allied exercises in Norway are a prerequisite for effective deterrence. By hosting the TJE in 2018, Norway and NATO demonstrate cohesion and capability that sends a deterring signal to potential aggressors. Norwegian deterrence relies on the framework of NATO’s collective defense, and military exercises improve the alliance’s ability to defend its member countries in an Article 5 type situation (Forsvarsdepartementet, 2016c).

Critics claim that larger exercises and exercises closer to the Russian border are proof that Norway is moving away from its traditional balance of deterrence and reassurance in favor of more deterrence. Søreide (2017) dismisses this claim on the basis that allied military forces have exercised in all parts of Norway for many years and that there is in fact an allied training center at Porsangermoen in Finnmark. Allied participation in the exercises is thus not a

change in established practice from the Norwegian side. Additionally, Russia also exercises its military forces in areas close to Norway, so the fact that Norway does the same should not come as a surprise or be reason for worry about Norwegian intentions. Finally, Søreide (2017) asserts that Russia receives notification of all Norwegian exercises in accordance with applicable regulations.

Søreide (2017) uses the same reasoning to support the rotational force of 300 USMC troops at Værnes, and she argues that this is an effective way to increase the capability of both US and Norwegian troops. The arrangement thus aims directly to improve Norwegian deterrence efforts towards Russia, and Søreide (2017) is very clear on the point that it does not constitute a departure from Norwegian self-imposed restrictions on permanent bases on Norwegian soil.

4.2. The Reassurance Side of the Debate

Not everyone agrees with a policy of more deterrence against Russia and these include Heier, Wilhelmsen, and Langemyr. Some are worried that the framing of the conflict between Russia and the West as a conflict of values is overly simplified and potentially dangerous. The idea is attractive to many because it gives the West a moral upper hand and legitimizes a strategy based on deterrence alone. Differences in political systems in itself are not enough to put the West in a conflictual relationship with Russia since all states are sovereign to govern themselves without outside interference. The foreign policy of states does matter, though, and this means that the Russian annexation of Crimea and the military intervention in the Ukraine is a clear violation of international law. However, this neither warrants a view that Russia is acting archaic compared to other contemporary powerful states, nor is it a sign that Russia lives by a significantly different moral standard than the West (Wilhelmsen, 2015)

Western military interventions are often justified using liberal values, and Western double standards is a major argument in official Russian rhetoric. Values are best exemplified through own behavior, and one can question whether the use of offensive security policies are constructive in that respect. The key point here is that the West needs to think more strategically about how its own values affect international interaction and reactions (Wilhelmsen, 2015).

According to the proponents of reassurance, there are signs that tensions are steadily increasing between Russia and the West, and that an arms race based on an exaggerated perception of threat from both sides is already taking place. There is a real danger of political misinterpretation in both the Kremlin and Washington, civil-military fragmentation in

Russian and allied chains of command, military incompetence in the Baltic fleet, and a chance of plain misunderstandings between “us” and “them”. The fact that both Russia and NATO sometimes do not act rationally or sensibly, renders the arguments for a line of deterrence overly simplistic. Russia may in fact see the world and NATO differently than the West, even in a way that perceives NATO as threatening. Maybe Russia, just like the West, sees the protests and rhetoric of the opponent as propaganda. Additionally, Russian authorities and military structures are likely not coherent actors. Decision makers at different locations and different levels may therefore not have unified views of NATO activities and presence. A strategy of one-sided deterrence may work, but it is an overly risky and unwise strategy (Heier, 2016; Wilhelmsen, 2016).

Consequently, the argument that the West should not consider Russian protests because they are nothing but a rhetoric game is problematic. Whether Russia is actually boxed into a corner by NATO or not is irrelevant, since there is a chance that an actor feeling boxed in may act on the perception even if it is faulty. On the other side, NATO is acting on a perception that Russia wants to expand aggressively towards the west, which creates a classic security dilemma. This may increase tensions and the potential for conflict, even if none of the actors had aggressive intentions to start with (Wilhelmsen, 2015).

Some also see several examples of recent Norwegian policies as problematic. According to these, the USMC rotational force at Værnes is not an obvious reaction to Russian activities in Crimea and the Ukraine, and can set the stage for similar incidences in the future. It does not matter that Norway frames the USMC presence as rotational, and thus not permanent, since what is important is how Russia sees the policy. If Russia perceives it as a departure from traditional Norwegian policy, it will also have an escalatory effect. A more appropriate response from Norway would be to work to make the High North a region of low tension rather than confrontation, and to ensure that Norway becomes a voice of reassurance and bridge building rather than deterrence (Langemyr, 2017).

Summarized, this side of the debate sees deterrence as a somewhat single-minded “either-or” perspective that leaves very little room for dialog and mutual understanding. An alternative strategy will be less risky, more balanced, but also demand more advanced statesmanship and diplomacy. Norwegian and allied strategy should communicate a combination of robust presence on the one side, and understanding and caution on the other side (Heier, 2016).

5. Russian Intentions and Ambitions

A study of Norwegian security must have in mind the context within which it operates. This section provides a brief summary of the main characteristics of the security situation between Norway and Russia today, a description of Russian security concerns, as well as an assessment of contemporary Russian ambitions and intentions on the international arena.

Norway is a small state facing a far larger Russia with great power ambitions (Etterretningstjenesten, 2017). Norway is a member of NATO, while Russia is not, and this limits the opportunity for close cooperation in the north. Additionally, Russia is a nuclear state, which further emphasizes the asymmetry between the two countries. In recent years, Russia has demonstrated willingness to use all instruments of the state in pursuit of national interests. The country has strengthened its military ability significantly and Russian forces have improved both reaction times, mobility, and warfighting ability, in both the north and elsewhere. The Ukraine conflict has also triggered much uncertainty over Russian intentions and ambitions in the West (Forsvarsdepartementet, 2015a).

According to the annual threat assessment published by the Norwegian Intelligence Service in 2017, the geopolitical differences between Russia and the West have increased significantly since the Ukraine conflict. Russia is far more confident and militarily capable than before, and is willing to use power as a tool to assert its interests. Despite tougher rhetoric, Russia does not want a military conflict with NATO, but Russia perceives the West as challenging its strategic objectives. One of these objectives involves maintaining and strengthening control over the Russian sphere of influence, which involves countries such as the Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova, and Belarus. The Norwegian Intelligence Service assesses that Russia sees destabilization and political pressure as the primary tool in that respect (Etterretningstjenesten, 2017). To counter the perceived threat posed by NATO, Russia will work to influence the alliance, and ultimately change the alliance's policy (Bruusgaard, 2016a).

The High North is important to Russia for both economic and military strategic reasons, and contributes to maintaining Russia's position as a great power. Large portions of Russian nuclear capabilities are located in the region, and Russia is currently modernizing its capability for strategic nuclear deterrence (Etterretningstjenesten, 2017). The protection of Russian nuclear submarines and their bases in the Barents Sea is critical to Russian security, and this is the main reason why the High North holds such geostrategic importance for

Russia. In the event of a conflict, Russia will try to control the region and deny others access to areas that include the northern part of Norwegian territory. This is normally referred to as the Russian Bastion Defense (Forsvarsdepartementet, 2015a).

The fact that Russia is building new military bases and infrastructure in the Arctic emphasizes the country's interest in the region, and the addition of conventional mobile platforms and long-range precision munitions improves Russian ability to affect and potentially deny Norwegian activity both at sea and in the air. The main purpose of this buildup is to prevent other actors from challenging Russian economic and military-strategic interests (Etterretningstjenesten, 2017; Granholm, Carlsson, & Korkmaz, 2016). However, this does not necessarily mean that Russia has aggressive intentions in the Arctic, and Russia does in fact currently pursue its regional interests in accordance with international law and the UN Law of the Sea Convention (Etterretningstjenesten, 2017).

Russia perceives both the US and NATO as threats, and the relationship between Russia and the West is mainly characterized by distrust (Etterretningstjenesten, 2017; Bruusgaard, 2016a; Granholm et al., 2016). The current Russian National Security Strategy published in 2015, explicitly states that NATO poses as a threat to Russian national security:

The buildup of the military potential of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the endowment of it with global functions pursued in violation of the norms of international law, the galvanization of the bloc countries' military activity, the further expansion of the alliance, and the location of its military infrastructure closer to Russian borders are creating a threat to national security (President of Russia, 2015, para. 15).

The official Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation (President of Russia, 2014) makes the same point, by maintaining that the actions of NATO in the Russian sphere of interest is one of the main external military risks to Russia. A report from the US Defense Intelligence Agency (2017) supports this view, and concludes that the Kremlin believes that the US government is actively working to incite a regime change in Russia.

Several sources assess great power ambitions as a key parameter driving Russian posture on the international arena (Kagan, 2016, 2017; European Parliament, 2017). Russia is not happy with the strong position of the US, and according to Carlsson & Winnerstig (2016), "...the Russian leadership sees a need to reshape the international system, as Russia will not be able to take its rightful place in the current one" (p. 26). The 2015 Russian Military Doctrine also

states that “[t]he existing international security architecture (system) does not ensure equal security for all states” (para. 10). Consequently, maintaining and reestablishing influence and power on the international arena appears to be an important Russian foreign policy priority. There is thus no doubt that Russia is showing signs of having great power ambitions. However, the question of whether Russia merely aims to adjust the power distribution, or completely upset the current European order is debatable.

Frederick Kagan (2016) is of the opinion that Russia is a revisionist state seeking to regain its great power position in international affairs, and that Vladimir Putin wants to change the fundamentals of the current international order. His brother, Robert Kagan (2017), agrees, and claims that Russia is a classic revisionist power that is dissatisfied with the current international power distribution. Following this view, Russia sees the US as an obstacle to reaching its ambitions, and Russia will thus actively work to weaken the US lead Western security order. According to Kagan (2017):

...the best option for [Russia] has always been to hope for or, if possible, engineer a weakening of the U.S.-supported world order from within, either by separating the United States from its allies or by raising doubts about the U.S. commitment and thereby encouraging would-be allies and partners to forgo the strategic protection of the liberal world order and seek accommodation with its challengers (para. 9).

A quick look at defense expenditure from 2015 shows that while NATO spent \$891 billion on defense (North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 2017a) Russia spent \$91 billion (Oxenstierna, 2016). NATO is therefore conventionally superior to Russia. However, the picture is more nuanced than that, since the US contribution is \$641 billion and a large portion of US military capabilities are tied up in other regions. Still, Russia does lean heavily on indirect approaches where it attempts to upset the current power balance through information warfare and influence operations.

In a study of Russian influence, the Center for Strategic and International Studies (Conley, James, Ruslan & Martin, 2016) found indications of a purposeful Russian strategy to break the internal cohesion of the West through economic activity and damaging political engagement. Russia systematically exploits weaknesses in Western rules and institutions, and “Russian influence can weaken European democratic institutions, erode European unity, and discredit the Western model of democratic governance...” (Conley et al. 2016, p. 2). There are thus clear indications that Russia specifically works to weaken the EU, NATO, and

Western democracies led by the US, and that Russia ultimately aims to see the collapse of these institutions and undermine the US position as a global leader. Rather than apply brute force, Russia follows a strategy of targeting the internal cohesion of its opponents through information campaigns aimed at causing confusion and paralysis (Conley et al., 2016).

According to an official European Parliament report (2017), Russia sees the Western world as its main challenger and obstacle for Russian great power ambitions. Russian leadership believes that it faces a hostile world, and that military force is essential to protect Russian security. Additionally, Russian strategy, referred to as strategic deterrence, prescribes the use of all necessary means, including non-military means, in the pursuit of national interests (European Parliament, 2017).

Russian foreign policy thus involves a wide spectrum of tools that include a combination of nuclear weapons, military means, non-military means, information operations, cyber operations, diplomatic pressure, and threats. The use of these tools are not limited to times of war, but will be used in all situations spanning from war, increased tension, to peace. The strategy is therefore continuous, and aims to contain and counter the perceived Western influence on the Russian sphere of interest (Bruusgaard, 2016b; President of Russia, 2015). As a side effect, the Russian distinction between situations of war and peace is blurred (Bruusgaard, 2016b).

Information and influence operations are particularly important in the Russian view of modern war, and Russian military theorists see them as both tactical activities as well as part of a larger strategic toolsets. Official Russian doctrine and military theory prescribe the use of information operations on a permanent basis, and discrediting foreign leaders or influencing the population of opposing states are good examples of how information operations can look. The illegal annexation of the Crimea in 2014, for example, saw extensive use of information warfare aimed at affecting the Ukrainian will to resist and cause confusion as to what was actually taking place (Franke, 2015; NATO, 2014).

Another example is the Russian attempt at influencing the US election process in 2016. An official US intelligence community assessment said this about the matter: “We assess Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered an influence campaign in 2016 aimed at the US presidential election. Russia’s goals were to undermine public faith in the US democratic process, denigrate Secretary Clinton, and harm her electability and potential presidency” (National intelligence council, 2017, p. ii).

In sum, Russia perceives US and NATO policies as threatening, and the relationship between Russia and the West is characterized by distrust. Russia has great power ambitions, and wants to restore its historical position in world politics. Main tools in that respect is the rebuilding and modernization of the Russian military, but Russia is nowhere near matching the military power of NATO today. Just as important, therefore, is the non-military aspect of Russian strategic deterrence, which actively uses non-traditional tools such as information warfare to influence opponents. There are clear indications that Russia has recently used such tools to influence the domestic politics of both the Ukraine and the US, and one can argue that this is part of a grand strategy aimed at reshaping the international system and upset the power distribution of Europe. This conclusion bears striking resemblance to George Kennan's analysis of the Soviet Union as presented in "The long telegram" from 1946, and serves as an illustration of the continuity in Russian thought, strategy, and foreign policy:

It may be expected that component parts of this far-flung apparatus will be utilized in accordance with their individual suitability [...] to undermine general political and strategic potential of major western powers. Efforts will be made in such countries to disrupt national self confidence, to hamstring measures of national defense, to increase social and industrial unrest, to stimulate all forms of disunity (Kennan, 1946, para. 7.a).

Whether this is conclusive evidence that Russia has revisionist ambitions, or merely seeks to adjust the current power arrangement, is contentious. States are rarely entirely and consistently revisionist or status quo seeking, and it may be more fruitful to see Russian ambitions as placed on a continuum between the two poles. What is beyond doubt, is that Russia works actively to improve its standing in the world order, and uses all available means in the process. Russia is preoccupied with power politics and security, and sees the domain of international affairs from a realistic perspective. Consequently, a reasonable conclusion to the question is that Russian foreign policy contains elements of both fear and uncertainty over NATO intentions, as well as revisionist ambitions. However, since Russia works actively to upset the current European power balance, the country currently leans toward the revisionist side of the continuum.

6. Case Description

The following is a description of the two specific cases analyzed in this study. All the cases are examples of recent Norwegian policies explicitly aimed at deterring Russia, and they have been subject to criticism both internally in Norway and from Russia. Critics and supporters disagree as to whether the policies are a deviation from traditional Norwegian policy or not, and how Russia will perceive and react to them.

6.1. Trident Juncture Exercise

TJE is one of the largest and most ambitious NATO exercise in recent years, and NATO describes it as a high visibility exercise that aims to improve interoperability, provide training and experience, test and validate structures, and enable defense reform. In 2015, Portugal hosted the exercise and it included 36 000 troops from more than 30 different countries. TJE is also an important element of NATO's RAP that came in effect after the Wales Summit in 2014. Norway will host the next TJE in the fall of 2018 (NATO, 2016a).

6.1.1. Overarching Intent

At the Warsaw summit in 2016, NATO emphasized the need to adapt to a changing European security environment. As a result, the alliance decided to strengthen its deterrence and defense posture, aimed mainly towards Russia. The RAP is an important tool in that respect, and its approval was a more or less direct response to the new challenges posed by Russia. The RAP intends to demonstrate allied resolve, credibility, and capability through both increased military activity in the short term, as well as changes that aim to improve reaction time and increase decisiveness in the long-run (NATO, 2016c).

Exercises is an important element of the RAP, and TJE 2015 was the largest and most complex NATO exercise in over a decade. The exercise scenario emphasized crisis response, and it was important in testing and certifying the enhanced NRF and the new VJTF (NATO, 2016a, 2016d). NATO's Secretary General, Jens Stoltenberg, made it clear that the underlying motive of the exercise in 2015 was deterrence, and he stated that, "...while our aim is to train and exercise, we are also sending a clear message, to our nations and to any potential adversary. NATO does not seek confrontation, but we stand ready to defend all Allies" (NATO, 2015b).

On a more general level, the goal of NATO exercises is to prepare commands and forces for situations of crisis and war. The obvious takeaway from exercising is increased war fighting capability through hands-on training and experience. Additionally, exercises test the NATO

command structure, which is particularly important given the multi-national nature of NATO. Command structures consist of components such as organizational structure, concepts, doctrines, procedures, systems, and tactics, and regular testing is important in identifying weak areas and deficiencies (NATO, 2016b).

Most, if not all, NATO operations are multi-national, which requires a high level of interoperability at all levels. Different languages, doctrines, equipment, and tactics can hamper combined operations, and multi-national exercises can improve interoperability by providing knowledge and understanding of other armed forces' particularities, strengths and weaknesses (NATO, 2016b).

Finally, exercises can act as benchmarks and help countries initiate and carry out defense reforms. Exercises such as TJE give countries a chance to test reforms implemented nationally, and other countries can observe, compare, and learn from new structures, mechanisms and concepts (NATO, 2016b).

6.1.2. Trident Juncture Exercise 2018

In 2014, Norway offered to host the next TJE. NATO accepted the offer in 2015 and decided that it will take place in the central part of Norway in the fall of 2018 (Forsvarsdepartementet, 2015b). As of spring 2017, NATO and Norwegian authorities have provided no details as to who will participate in the exercise, but they indicate that as many as 50 000 troops may take part. If this number stands, TJE 2018 will be one of the largest NATO-exercise ever to take place on Norwegian soil (Lyngvær, 2016).

According to the Norwegian Minister of Defense, Ine Eriksen Søreide, the scenario of TJE 2018 will focus on “demonstrating deterrence and defense of the northernmost area of the alliance” (Forsvarsdepartementet, 2016b). While there are few details outlining the scenario, it will likely be somewhat similar to the 2015 exercise. In this scenario, NATO assisted a weaker state that was defending against an invasion from a highly adaptive regional adversary. Some of the operations trained were high-intensity war fighting, countering hybrid threats, cyber defense, addressing humanitarian crises, diplomacy, countering a deceptive and controlled media environment, and defense against chemical, biological and radiological weapons (NATO, 2015a).

Norwegian officials link TJ 2018 closely to the overall mission of the Norwegian armed forces, and several government documents reference the exercise specifically. According to the new Long Term Plan for the Defense sector (LTP), passed in 2016, one of the core

missions of the Norwegian armed forces is to ensure credible deterrence and capable defense (Forsvarsdepartementet, 2016c). This will primarily be achieved through the framework of NATO's collective defense, and the Norwegian government thus sees the strengthening of the NATO alliance as a key priority. According to the LTP, exercises such as TJ 2018 aim to validate and exercise the ability to defend the alliance collectively in Article 5 type operations, as well as demonstrating Norwegian intent to carry its share of the alliance's burdens (Forsvarsdepartementet, 2016c, 2017a).

6.2. US Marine Corps Rotation Force at Værnes

The USMC rotation force is another result of the Norwegian Government's ambition to increase allied exercise and training activity in Norway. After an initiative from US authorities, the Norwegian Parliament approved to host a rotation force consisting of 300 USMC troops at Værnes air base in Trøndelag starting in January 2017. The agreement is temporary, and the first rotation will last for 6 months (Forsvaret, 2017a; Forsvarsdepartementet, 2016a). The Government will continuously evaluate the arrangement, and in the summer of 2017 it decided to extend the agreement for one year (Forsvarsdepartementet, 2017b).

According to the Norwegian Secretary of Defense (Søreide, 2016), the USMC troops are not limited to operations in the Værnes area, but may train in all parts of the country. The US is Norway's closest ally, and the agreement will provide a unique opportunity for Norwegian armed forces to train and exercise with US troops under Norwegian environmental conditions. Hands on experience with Norwegian troops, as well as geographic and climatic particularities, will increase both interoperability and war-fighting capability. Both countries can thus benefit from the joint training, and the USMC can specifically strengthen its Arctic expertise (Forsvaret, 2017a). This, according to Søreide (2016), will have a positive effect on Norwegian security.

6.2.1. Marine Corps Prepositioning Program-Norway

Prepositioning of US military materiel in Norway has long traditions, and US equipment, weapons, and ammunition have been stored in Norway since the seventies. The two countries signed a bilateral agreement in 1981, which set the framework for both prepositioning equipment, as well as reinforcing Norway in the event of war. In 2006, Norwegian and US officials revised the agreement, which resulted in a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that chartered a new program named the Marine Corps Prepositioning Program-Norway

(MCPN). The MoU states that the equipment, in addition to being designated for use in war, can be used for a broader range of tasks such as humanitarian assistance, crisis management, and during exercise activity involving US personnel (Utenriksdepartementet, 2006).

Prepositioning of equipment is critical for the USMC's expeditionary capability, and enables the American force to deploy rapidly anywhere in the world. According to USMC Order 3000.17, which specifically discusses the MCPN, "[t]he flexibility inherent in [US] forward deployed and prepositioned forces make Marine Corps expeditionary forces the Nation's force of choice for enhancing stability through presence and engagement while deterring and defeating our adversaries away from our shores" (Department of the Navy, 2013, p. 1-1). Consequently, the prepositioning of equipment is an important element of US security policy, and ensures the ability to project military power despite increasing Russian anti-access and area-denial capabilities. The official US strategic objective of the MCPN is to limit regional conflicts, provide deterrence, win wars, strengthen alliances, and to provide favorable security conditions (Department of the Navy, 2013).

The MCPN is large enough to support a notional Marine Expeditionary Brigade sized Marine Air Ground Task Force. In short, that means that the equipment stored can support up to 16,000 Marines including air, ground, and sea assets for up to 30 days (Department of the Navy, 2009; US Marine Corps, 2016). In 2014, the USMC supplemented the MCPN with major combat systems such as the M1A1 main battle tank, armored breaching vehicles, and amphibious assault vehicles (USMC, 2014). Storage facilities consist of six caves in the Trondheim region of Trøndelag, as well as two storage facilities of which one is located at Værnes air base (USMC, 2016).

Norwegian officials deem the MCPN as particularly important to Norwegian security, and one of the purposes of the bilateral MoU from 2006 was to set the stage for more US training and exercises in Norway. Consequently, the new rotational force at Værnes is a continuation of the intent from the MCPN agreement (Søreide, 2016).

Part III – Analysis

7. Deterrence or Reassurance?

The following chapter analyzes and provides an answer to the research question, which asks how Norway should balance the use of deterrence and reassurance in its policy towards a more assertive Russia. The analysis starts with a general discussion of each position using classical realism and social constructivism, before discussing three specific challenges associated with reassurance and deterrence as strategies of conflict management: the security dilemma, exploitation, and effective deterrence. The chapter also analyzes the two cases in light of these challenges, and finally concludes that in the current security climate Norway should lean towards deterrence to counter Russian revisionist tendencies.

7.1. Classical Realism and Deterrence

The main argument that Norway must base its policy towards Russia on deterrence finds support in the realist tradition. Deterrence is a policy of influencing the decision-making calculus of an adversary with the intent of preventing hostile action against the deterring state (Morgan, 1983). This involves a degree of uncertainty, emphasis on security, and the use of some form of power to prevent aggression. In line with Rottem (2007), realism's focus on power, geographical position, and material capabilities makes it a suitable perspective for an analysis of deterrence as strategy.

Following the classical realist view, the anarchic nature of the international order combined with a selfish human nature means that Norway is ultimately alone in fending for its survival using national instruments of power such as military force. While this may sound exaggerated, it simply means that Norwegian foreign policy should always aim to protect national interests, and that in the current security climate Norwegian policy makers cannot say with certainty that Russia will not use force in pursuit of its goals. War, unless sanctioned by the UN, usually involves the breakdown of both institutions and international law. It also means that deterrence has failed. Survival thus becomes the primary concern, as well as mitigating the effects of the attack and physically denying the enemy from reaching his or her aims (Kissinger, 2014). Consequently, Norway must put security at the top of its hierarchy of interests, and employ policies that ensure sovereignty, survival, and long-term preservation of status quo. The most important national instrument of power in that respect is military capability (Morgenthau, 1967).

Realism supports the argument from the debate that Norway must base its foreign policy on realistic, rational, and long-term assessments of potential threats to national security and state survival. Rather than analyze Russian opinions, rhetoric, and subjective claims, Norway must look for objective truths supported by evidence. According to Morgenthau (1967), what matters is what Russia actually does on the international arena, not what objectives, opinions or interests Russian government officials express on behalf of the state.

This does of course not mean that Norway should indiscriminately aim to deter and arm against all its neighbors, and Morgenthau (1967) prescribes different strategies depending on the opposing state's ambitions. Chapter 5 indicates that Russia currently sees international affairs from a realist perspective, and that Russian policy currently leans towards the revisionist side of the spectrum. When dealing with revisionist states, Morgenthau (1967) recommends policies of containment, balancing power, and deterrence. In this view, which supports the arguments made in the debate, Norway must establish an unambiguous threshold for what it considers unacceptable behavior and communicate clearly the consequences of crossing that threshold. According to Kissinger (1979), power should not be the sole aim of policies, but a balance of power is a precondition for peace and enables the pursuit of other interests. Noble intentions from the Norwegian government therefore have little value if not supported by a certain level of power.

According to Matlary (2016), the Western European style of politics means that the EU and NATO are reluctant to use hard power and military force to check Russian assertiveness. The West uses diplomatic measures extensively, but this has gotten nowhere and has given Russia a chance to create a new *fait accompli* in Crimea and the Ukraine. Coker (2016) also argues that European leaders must meet Russian assertiveness by rebuilding its conventional forces as soon as possible, conducting credible exercises, deploying forces to act as tripwires, as well as by preparing for hybrid warfare. In his view, European leaders must depart from its line of idealism and understand that they live in a dangerous neighborhood that requires active measures to ensure security.

Tensions are of course far lower in the High North than at the continent today, but Russia has many interests in the region and the Kola Peninsula is critical to Russian nuclear deterrence efforts. Russian military activity has also been on the rise in recent years, and there is still an unsettled dispute between Norway and Russia over maritime rights in the Svalbard zone (Etterretningstjenesten, 2017). This means that Norwegian decision makers cannot rule out a

military conflict, coercive diplomacy, or pressure in the region, either through a bi-lateral escalation or as part of greater conflict at the continent (Forsvarsdepartementet, 2015a).

Since policies of balancing power aim to maintain status quo, they are also a strategies of deterrence. If we return to the definition of deterrence, we see that it is about convincing a challenger that the cost of the expected punishment incurred by the defender outweighs the potential gain of attacking (George & Smoke, 1974). Accordingly, this supports the claim from the debate that if Norway can successfully deter Russia through sufficient military preparations, it can render the actual use of military force unnecessary. Classical realism thus prescribes a strategy of balancing power as a means to maintain status quo, and ultimately prescribes a strategy of deterrence to counter Russian revisionist ambitions (Morgenthau, 1967).

The significant power asymmetry between Norway and Russia makes a policy of balancing power problematic. Additionally, the fact that Russia possesses nuclear weapons further exacerbates the asymmetry, and leads to the obvious conclusion that it is impossible for Norway to balance Russian power or defend against major Russian aggression alone (Forsvarsdepartementet, 2015a). Consequently, Norwegian policy makers cannot expect to deter Russia successfully by itself if Russian stakes are sufficiently high. The prospect of help from allies, such as NATO and the US, is therefore an essential part of Norwegian deterrence efforts, which supports the claim from the Norwegian Government that Norwegian deterrence efforts depend on actively tying allied partners to the defense of the country (Søreide, 2017).

In sum, the classical realist perspective supports the arguments made by the deterrence side of the debate, and prescribes a strategy of deterrence to balance and contain a more assertive Russia.

7.2. Social Constructivism and Reassurance

The side of the debate that claims that Norway should face a more assertive Russia through primarily reassurance, argues that values impact international interaction and that states best exemplify their values through own behavior. When designing policies, Norwegian policy makers must therefore be aware of how policies and actions affect the relationship with Russia. While the social constructivist perspective is not necessarily as prescriptive as realism, its focus on identities and norms makes it a relevant vantage point for an analysis of reassurance.

Since reassurance is a strategy of gradually building cooperation and trust between states with the intent of eventually moving a relationship into a more cooperative state (Tang, 2010), it involves changing and evolving ideas, identities, national interests, and social norms.

According to Rottem (2007), social constructivists claim that successful reassurance depends on common identities and shared understandings of the rules of the game, and the intentional use and shaping of identity is thus a relevant strategy in the pursuit of state interests.

Consequently, Norway can use values and identity in international affairs to promote both ideal ideas and interests, as well as to pursue harder interests such as security.

According to Adler (2012), the international domain consists of intersubjective understandings, subjective knowledge, and material objects. This means that the relationship between Norway and Russia is not static and necessarily driven by fear and mistrust. Rather, what shapes the relationship is collective understandings, the use of language, signals, and practices on both the domestic and international arena. Since the relationship between Norway, NATO, and Russia is socially constructed, it is also possible to influence and shape it through careful signaling and own practices. This reasoning supports the claim from the debate that values are best exemplified through own behavior, that offensive security policies may not be the most constructive way to signal benign intentions, and that Norwegian decision makers must understand Russian history, norms, interests and identity in order to make informed and sensible policy decisions.

A Norwegian strategy of reassurance seeks to signal benign intentions towards Russia. Just like for deterrence, the need to reassure starts with a conflictual relationship between two countries. However, while deterrence seeks to contain Russian revisionist ambitions, reassurance aims to address Russian insecurity, fear, and weakness. The question then, is to what degree Russian assertiveness today is a result of revisionist ambitions or a response to perceived Western aggression. There is likely no clear-cut answer to this question, but as noted in chapter 5, Russia did respond negatively to NATO's enlargement following the Cold War. In addition, the NATO build up close to the Russian border may trigger a fear of NATO aggression and what Wilhelmsen & Godzimirski (2017) call a spiral of distrust. In the short term, a Norwegian strategy of reassurance should therefore aim to reduce Russian fears of encirclement, and attempt to institutionalize the idea that neither Norway nor NATO has malign or revisionist intentions.

Wendt (1992) stresses that it is possible to reduce fears and insecurities through conscious policies aimed at transforming identities and interests. However, since states create and sustain identities and interests through interaction with other actors, Norway cannot transform the current security system unilaterally. Russian identities and interests must also change, and Wendt (1992) agrees with the side of the debate arguing in favor of reassurance that the main tool in that respect is Norwegian practices and acts on the international arena. Since states tend to mirror the practices of other states over time, Norway can influence Russian identity and interests by treating it as if the system is cooperative. Norway can thus teach Russia that it is not a threat and that it can be trusted (Wendt, 1992). According to Wendt (1992), “[t]he fastest way to do this is to make unilateral initiatives and self-binding commitments of sufficient significance that another state is faced with ‘an offer it cannot refuse’” (p. 421). Consequently, reassurance is a key tool if Norway and Russia wish to reduce the security dilemma and transform the current security system towards a larger degree of cooperation. In sum, social constructivism supports the reassurance side of the debate and prescribes a strategy of reassurance to reduce tensions and move the relationship between Russia and Norway towards a more cooperative stance.

7.3. Reassurance and Deterrence as Conflict Management

In line with Holst (1967), both deterrence and reassurance are strategies of conflict management aimed at maintaining status quo. Norwegian reassurance aims to mitigate the conflict potential associated with Russian fear, weakness and insecurity, while deterrence aims to tackle Russian revisionist ambitions. However, both strategies have challenges that may cause them to fail or even escalate into a war that neither state intended, and the two sides of the debate generally differ in how they assess the importance and relevance of these challenges.

Reassurance may expose the reassuring state to exploitation and a gradual shift in power if employed against states with revisionist ambitions, while deterrence may cause unwarranted escalation due to the security dilemma (Morgenthau, 1967; Holst, 1967). Deterrence may also prove ineffective and fail even if the expected cost incurred by the defender is significant and seemingly outweighs the potential gain of attacking. Reassurance and deterrence are thus complementary strategies, and can mitigate each other’s weaknesses and challenges if applied correctly. Figure 1 provides a simplified chart outlining how the dynamics of deterrence and

reassurance as strategies of conflict management contribute to maintaining status quo, as well as the challenges involved with each strategy.

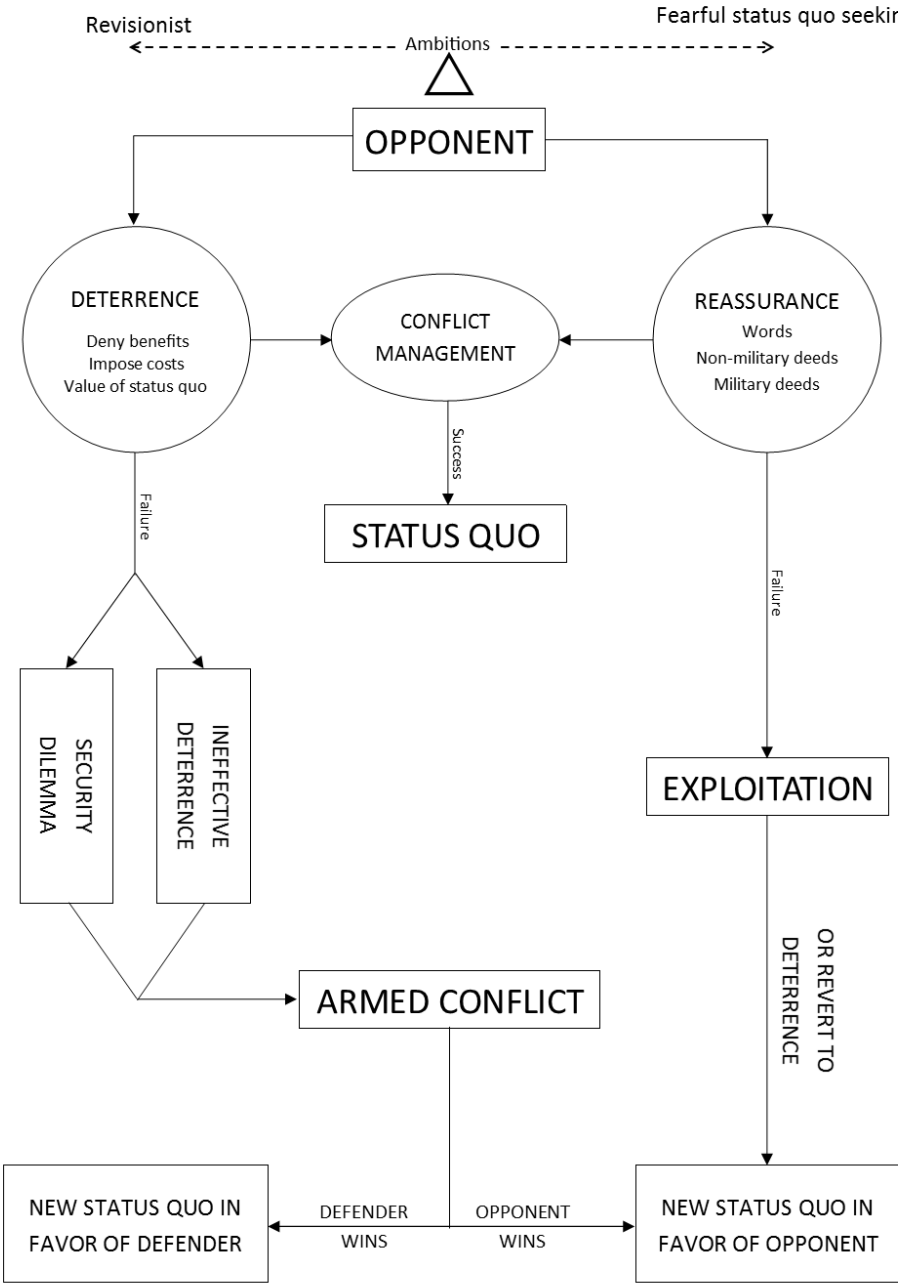


Figure 1. Deterrence and reassurance as conflict management.

Norwegian choice of policy towards a more assertive Russia thus boils down to which strategy is most likely to maintain status quo. The keyword here is risk management and is a matter of balancing the assessment of Russian intentions and ambitions against the potential risk of unwarranted escalation and war due to the security dilemma, exploitation, and ineffective deterrence. The next sections discuss each of the challenges in order, propose ways

to mitigate them, and discuss how the two cases influence Norwegian deterrence and reassurance efforts towards Russia. Finally, the discussion leads to a conclusion as to how Norway should balance the use of deterrence and reassurance in its policy towards a more assertive Russia.

7.4. The Challenge with the Security Dilemma

Arguments from both sides of the debate rest on assumptions about Russian worldview. Those in favor of deterrence often argue that Russia is a mostly purposeful, or even rational, actor that shares western worldviews. Consequently, Russia understands the NATO response following the crisis in the Ukraine and Crimea, and understands that NATO does not have aggressive motives. Because of this, Russia does not fear that the alliance will attack it, and there is little chance that NATO deterrence efforts will lead to unwarranted escalation and an unmanageable security dilemma. Russia will also interpret Norwegian deterrence efforts as defensive, and they are thus unproblematic in regards to the security dilemma and potential escalation.

Those in favor of reassurance oppose this view, and argue that the Russian worldview is distinctly different from the West. This means that there is an element of insecurity and fear in Russian foreign politics, and that Russia may perceive NATO actions and policies as threatening. They further argue that states do not always act rationally or sensibly, and that perceptions matter. Consequently, it does not matter if Russia is actually boxed into a corner or not, as long as Russian leadership perceives Western policies as threatening. Because of the different worldviews, tensions are raising between Russia and the West, the security dilemma is intensifying, and misperceptions and miscalculations may lead to unwarranted escalation and possibly war.

The following discussion argues that Russia does in fact see the world differently than the West, and that the security dilemma is currently prominent with a potential for misperceptions, miscalculations, and escalation of the conflict. However, this conclusion does not automatically warrant a policy of reassurance, but rather that both deterrence and reassurance must be tailored to mitigate the potential for misperceptions, misunderstandings, and a worsening of the security dilemma, while at the same time preventing exploitation.

7.4.1. Misperception, Misunderstanding, and the Security Dilemma

The view of Russia as a purposeful and mostly rational actor is in line with traditional realist assumptions. Realist analysis and theory often assume that states are unified actors that weigh

different alternatives on the international arena rationally, and will choose the alternative that provides the best outcome. These methodological assumptions do not necessarily describe the real world as it is, but enable scholars to explain, analyze, and create models of international politics the (Viotti & Kauppi, 2012).

Quackenbush (2011) challenges the traditional assumption of procedural rationality often used in deterrence theory, and argues that states are instead instrumentally rational in that they will, when presented with two alternatives, choose the alternative that yields the most preferred outcome. This does not imply anything about the way decisions are made, only that the actor will choose according to its subjective preferences.

History is full of examples of wars caused, at least partly, by misperception and miscalculations, and Jervis (2006) argues that significant misperceptions over intentions, resolve and capabilities preceded both World Wars. According to Lebow (2010), there is also evidence that the Cold War was characterized by significant misperception, and that the US and the Soviet Union had differing perceptions over who was in fact practicing deterrence and who was being deterred.

Applied to Russia today, assuming instrumental rationality means that Russian decision-making is affected by both emotions and cognitive limitations. Consequently, even if one accepts that Russia is a rational actor, it is difficult to determine Russian preferences with certainty (Quackenbush, 2011). Emotions and cognitive limitations may cause faulty evaluation of available information, and this may again lead to misperceptions, miscalculations, and uncertainty (Lebow & Stein, 1989).

According to Jervis (2006), cognitive bias often leads government officials to exaggerate the hostility of other states. At the same time, they often assume that other states will understand their motives and intentions. States, therefore, tend to underestimate to what extent own policies may be perceived as threatening, a fact that may intensify the security dilemma when dealing with insecure status quo seeking states. Since deterrence and reassurance are forms of communication, misunderstandings can therefore occur if Russia misperceives messages and signals sent by Norway and NATO, as well as if Norway and NATO assume that Russia receives and interprets the message as they intended.

Additionally, inadequate information may cause uncertainty over capabilities, interests, resolve, and intentions. According to Tang (2010), uncertainty over intentions is the most problematic of these factors, and involves attempting to determine how another actor will

choose to pursue its interests using available capabilities. Thus, even if one assumes that both NATO and Russia perceive all available information perfectly, the lack of complete information may lead to significant uncertainty. Just as the West is uncertain of how far Russia is willing to go in pursuit of its interests, Russia may also be uncertain of how NATO will choose to pursue its interests even if both entities may have an accurate perception of each other's capabilities and interests.

In line with Jervis' reasoning (2006), Russia may choose to engage in war with NATO if it misperceives and underestimates the alliance's resolve and will to fight. This situation resembles the prelude to World War II, where the status quo powers also underestimated Germany's resolve in pursuing its interests. NATO and Norway can mitigate this type of misperception and miscalculation by communicating their deterrence efforts and resolve clearly to Russia. However, misperceptions that lead the two sides to exaggerate hostilities even if differences are in reality bridgeable are more relevant in respect to the security dilemma. This situation can set off a spiral of distrust that may lead to an intensified security dilemma and escalation to war, and requires careful use of confidence measures such as reassurance.

7.4.2. Russian Worldview, Uncertainty, and the Security Dilemma

Even though both IR theory and historical examples support the idea that misperception, miscalculation and uncertainty is normal among states, it does not necessarily follow that the relationship between Russia and the West is characterized by such dynamics today. However, Wilhelmsen & Godzimirski (2017) argue that Russia does in fact see NATO and the West as both aggressive and expansionist, and that Russian decision makers fear that the West actively seeks to topple the current Kremlin regime. NATO expansions to the east, combined with the instigation of "color revolutions", have fueled a fear of encirclement. This has led to a situation of mutual deterrence, with military buildup on both sides of the border. The Russian fear of regime change also finds support in a recent US intelligence report (Defense Intelligence Agency, 2017), which claims that the Kremlin believes that the US is working actively towards a regime change in Russia. The report concludes that Russia sees the US as the primary driver behind the Ukraine crisis as well as the Arab Spring, and that these fit into a pattern of regime change efforts towards Russia. Finally, the Norwegian Intelligence Service assesses that Russian government officials fear that the West is actively working to topple the Russian regime, reduce Russian influence over its neighboring countries, and undermine Russia's standing as a great power (Etterretningstjenesten, 2017).

According to Wilhelmsen & Godzimirski (2017), the current debate in Russia circles around the need to withstand NATO aggression, and surveys show that one third of the Russian population fears that NATO aggression against Russia may become a reality. It is of course unlikely that NATO and the West in reality has expansionist ambitions towards Russia. However, as long as the Russian government and population act on the fear, reality matters far less. The uncertainty over intentions on both sides therefore point to the existence of a security dilemma.

The High North is far from the Ukraine crisis and is less conflictual than the European continent. It is thus relevant to question if the security dilemma dynamics on the continent are relevant for the bilateral relationship between Norway and Russia as well. Åtland (2014) indicates that there is a security dilemma in the Arctic, since several of the littoral states are willing to take measures to defend their economic and security interests in the region. Additionally, since Norway is an integrated member of NATO, Norwegian policies and actions do not exist in isolation from the events at the continent. While the security dilemma is more intense in Eastern Europe than the High North, Norwegian deterrence measures may worsen the already existing security dilemma in the northern region. This means that there is a possibility that Russia will respond to Norwegian deterrence measures by further increasing its military footprint in the north. Norwegian deterrence may therefore cause an increased militarization of the region, with the security implications that involves.

This supports the argument made by the reassurance side of the debate, which claims that Norwegian policy makers should not rule out that the Russian worldview might be distinctly different from the West, and that there is an element of insecurity and fear in Russian foreign politics. When designing policies to meet Russian assertiveness, it is therefore simplistic to follow an assumption that Western deterrence measures will not reinforce Russian fear of encirclement and that they do not have the potential to intensify the security dilemma. While seeing the current relationship as a dichotomy where Russia is the challenger and NATO the defender may in fact be accurate, such a stance runs the risk of implementing policies that increase tensions more than needed. Rather, the social constructivist perspective of communicative rationality seems closer to the current situation, where Russian decision-making is based on practical reasoning while at the same time influenced by the social, historical, and normative context. Consequently, by accepting that background expectations and dispositions affect Russian decision making, Norwegian policy makers can tailor policies

that aim to avoid triggering Russian weakness while at the same time deterring Russian aggression.

According to Jervis (2006), the fact that it is difficult to assess the true intent and resolve of other states, means that Norwegian government officials should design policies that will not have costly consequences if the assumptions about Russia are incorrect. Norway must therefore aim to design policies that avoid triggering a spiral of hostilities while at the same time avoiding exposure to Russian exploitation. It may of course be difficult for Norway to achieve such an ideal ambition in practice, but it emphasizes that deterrence and reassurance are complimentary elements of conflict management rather than a question of either or.

However, the fact that deterrence measures may intensify the security dilemma and lead to an escalation of the conflict between Russian and the West does not mean that Norway should automatically lean towards reassurance when dealing with Russia today. After all, the consequences of underestimating Russian revisionist ambitions may become equally costly, and if the conflict is in fact caused by an irreconcilable conflict of interests and Russian revisionist ambitions, the security dilemma is not the main concern. Reassurance does play an important role in mitigating the negative effects of deterrence, and Norwegian policy makers can only achieve careful balancing of reassurance and deterrence if they understand Russian weakness, fear, and insecurity towards the West. This does not mean that Norway should endorse the Russian position and interests, but an important part of the equation is lost if one by default assumes that there is little or no danger of unwarranted escalation due to misperception and misunderstandings.

7.4.3. Mitigating the Security Dilemma through Reassurance

If deterrence and reassurance play complimentary roles in the management of the conflict with Russia, an important question is how Norway should apply reassurance in the current security environment. Reassurance as a strategy of gradually building cooperation and trust between states with the intent of eventually moving a relationship into a more cooperative state means that reassurance is an important tool for containing or reducing a spiraling security dilemma (Tang, 2010). This is well in line with the social constructivist perspective, and involves changing Russian expectations about future Norwegian and NATO behavior by signaling benign intentions. Through active practices of reassurance, Norway may be able to transform the intersubjective perception of self, identity, and interests, and transform the security system towards a more cooperative position (Wendt, 1992). However, it is important

to have realistic expectations of how fast this will happen and how successful it will be. This is not an argument against reassurance, but rather than expecting a fully cooperative security system any time soon, policy makers should use reassurance as a tool to reduce tensions, reduce the effect of the security dilemma, and only if the situation allows pave the road for more cooperation.

Due to the power asymmetry between Russia and Norway, Russia obviously does not fear unilateral aggression from Norway. Norwegian reassurance measures must therefore aim to reassure Russia that NATO or the US will not use Norway as a staging area for an attack. Russian perceptions of Norway, particularly threat perceptions, are connected to Norway's position as a member of NATO, and Norway must thus balance its reassurance measures carefully against the need to establish and maintain close ties to the alliance. Successfully institutionalizing an individualistic or cooperative security system demands reciprocity from Russia. Given the competitive nature of the current system, there is no quick solution to the problem, and a Norwegian policy of reassurance must therefore have a systematic and long-term perspective.

In addition to mitigating the security dilemma by increasing trust, reassurance plays an important role in gauging and assessing Russian intentions by reading how Russia reacts to Norwegian invitations to cooperate. If Russia reciprocates Norwegian reassurance attempts, Norway may interpret this as an indication that Russia has benign intentions. On the other hand, if Russia takes advantage of the attempts, Norway may see this as an indication of revisionist intentions and ambitions. The picture is of course rarely that clear cut, and both sides may choose to ignore reassurance attempts because they suspect foul play aimed at exploitation. Very fearful and mistrustful states may also require a number of reassurance attempts before reciprocating, which underlines that reassurance is a gradual and potentially time-consuming process (Tang, 2010).

Norway can attempt to reassure Russia with the use of three main tools: words, non-military deeds, and military deeds (Tang, 2010). The key point is how Norway can use these tools to communicate benign intentions and restraint. Such restraint is particularly important when acting under a security dilemma and in situations prone to escalate due to misperceptions and miscalculations (Stein, 1991).

Although words alone carry little weight when signaling resolve, they are more credible when signaling benign intentions. Words that have the potential of incurring symbolic cost and

involve some risk to the reassuring state can be credible, even if deeds are usually far more effective. While words may not move the relationship between Norway and Russia towards more cooperation alone, they play an important role in setting the context and climate for Russia to interpret both Norwegian military and non-military deeds in a favorable way (Tang, 2010).

Reassurance with words can have many forms. One form would be for Norway to refrain from labeling Russia as an enemy or threat, which may act as a first step towards reducing fear and threat perceptions (Tang, 2010). However, there is a clear tension between the need to reassure Russia on one side, and the need to ensure allied assistance in the event of a war. The latter may require framing Russia as a threat in an attempt to convince NATO that it must emphasize the defense of the northern flank. The same goes for ensuring Norwegian domestic support for new deterrence measures.

Another form of reassurance with words is to de-emphasize conflicts of interests, and emphasize that these are caused by misinterpretations that can be resolved through discussions and dialogue (Tang, 2010). Norway can do this by emphasizing that Norway and Russia have a long history of working together and focus on areas of successful cooperation. Norway can also create a narrative that the relationship between the two countries is special and emphasize that the two countries have never been at war with each other. This way Norway can distance itself from the tense situation at the continent, and reassure Russia that it has only benign intentions. However, this may come at some risk if it is implemented in a way that challenges NATO cohesion.

States can also encourage calmness, dialogue, and negotiation in an attempt to reduce tensions and prevent escalation, and this method is particularly relevant when conflicts are heating up (Tang, 2010). This is relevant to Norway, and is an argument in favor of maintaining lines of communication and diplomatic connections despite ongoing sanctions against Russia. The “hotline” with weekly talks between the Norwegian Joint Headquarters at Reitan and the Russian Northern Fleet, is an important reassurance measure in that respect (Forsvarsdepartementet, 2015a).

Reassurance with non-military deeds involve actions in the economic or political domains. One example of this can be the reversal of previous policies aimed at punishing another state (Tang, 2010). For Norway, the lifting or reduction of the sanction regime put in effect following the Crimea crisis could serve as a very powerful signal towards Russia that Norway

has benign intentions. This approach is very risky, however, and it is highly unlikely that Norway will take such steps unilaterally without the rest of Europe. It also sends a dangerous signal to Russia that the negative consequences of its military adventures in Crimea and the Ukraine are temporary.

Reassurance using military deeds is a particularly credible way to signaling benign intentions, but is also potentially more risky if the opponent has truly revisionist ambitions. One method involves taking a defensive military posture, such as redeploying troops from the border or refraining from stationing them there in the first place (Tang, 2010). A good example of such an approach is Norway's self-imposed restrictions on allied presence and activity close to the Russian border during the Cold War (Tamnes & Eriksen, 1999). After the end of the Cold War, the restrictions lost much of their significance, and a reemphasis of the Cold War regime could act reassuring to Russia. Although the act of moving troops away from the border is a more powerful signal, the non-event of not deploying forces to the border can also be effective as long as Norway communicates clearly that this is a deliberate policy.

Another way to use military deeds is to reduce one's overall military capabilities, and particularly offensive capabilities (Tang, 2010). Given the small size of Norway's military, a reduction in forces will not have a significant effect towards Russia. However, the choice of weaponry will, and by mainly investing in defensive weapons Norway can send a signal to Russia that it does not have any aggressive intentions. This is problematic, though, since most modern weapons systems, like the newly purchased F-35 fighter jet and Joint Strike Missile, are equally capable in both offensive and defensive operations (Jervis, 2013).

The most powerful way Norway can reduce the military threat to Russia is to limit NATO activity in Norway. NATO and the US are the only actors able to threaten Russia militarily, and by distancing itself from the alliance, Norway can send a strong reassuring signal.

Although this does not mean bandwagoning with Russia, maintaining a strong line of restrictions on NATO activity and presence will send a signal to Russia that Norway will not act as a staging area for an attack from NATO and thus reduce Russian uncertainty over Norwegian intentions. Given that Norwegian deterrence relies on NATO, this approach is of course problematic.

Summarized, the above conclusions support the reassurance side's claim that deterrence has a potential for causing unwarranted escalation and a more intense security dilemma, and that reassurance plays an important role in mitigating this challenge. However, the problem with

any reassurance attempt is that it requires some risk and potential cost to the sender to be credible. Norway must therefore balance the need to send credible reassuring signals against the need to minimize cost and risk if Russia chooses to exploit the attempt. In the current security environment, where Russian ambitions lean towards revision, Norway should not employ reassurance measures that significantly reduce its deterrence efforts. Norway must therefore carefully weigh potential negative effects, cost, and risk before employing reassurance using military deeds, and should primarily base its reassurance on words and non-military deeds when the situation allows.

7.4.4. The Cases and Reassurance

The explicit intent of TJE and the USMC rotational force is deterrence, and they are thus not intended to reassure Russia (NATO, 2015b; Søreide, 2016). This does not necessarily mean a worsening of the security climate in itself, but it does signal that Norway sees Russia as sufficiently threatening to warrant taking deterring measures.

Since Norway has been a member of NATO for decades, and there have been regular exercises and allied presence on Norwegian soil in the past, one should not over-emphasize the escalatory effect of the TJE and the rotational force. TJE is one of many exercises held in Norway in recent years (Forsvaret, 2017b), and will not likely be interpreted as a significant departure from traditional Norwegian policy. Additionally, TJE takes place in the Trøndelag area, which is located in the middle of Norway far from the Russian border. However, some elements indicate a new direction compared to the previous Cold War line. First, NATO and Norway frame TJE more or less explicitly as a response to recent Russian activity and the scenario is similar to what a confrontation with Russia may look like. Second, the exercise may end up as the largest NATO exercise in Norway since the end of the Cold War. These elements signal, through both words and military deeds, that Norway sees Russia in competitive terms and this will to some degree reinforce intersubjective threat perceptions.

Some critics argue that the USMC rotation force will also affect the security dilemma negatively (Madsen, 2016). This may hold some truth, but the force is deployed far from the Russian border, and combined with its small size it should not appear offensive or aggressive to Russia. The MCPP-N can of course support a much larger force, but this will take time to deploy, and can thus not induce Russian fears of a surprise attack from the West.

Additionally, programs equivalent to the MCPP-N have been in effect in Norway for several decades. The same goes for the self-imposed restrictions on permanent foreign bases in

Norway. The USMC troops are located at Værnes air base, which is a Norwegian base, and the troops will rotate regularly. However, while the force is too small to pose a threat to Russia, it does signal that Norway is willing to take measures that run the risk of being perceived as a departure from traditional Norwegian policy. It does not necessarily matter whether the policy is actually a departure from the traditional line as long as Russia perceives it as such, or perceives that Norway is willing to take the risk of misperception in the name of deterrence.

Norway and NATO are careful to communicate actively the defensive intent of TJE and the USMC rotational force. However, this does not mean that Russian government officials necessarily perceive them as such. Even if the military deeds of hosting US military forces and NATO exercises may not alter Russian perception of status quo significantly, they may strengthen Russian uncertainty over NATO's intent. Particularly if seen in relation to Russian fear of encirclement and the broader context of NATO policies at the continent, such as EFP, increased exercise activity, and the ballistic missile defense system.

TJE and the USMC rotational force thus aid in reinforcing and institutionalizing threat perceptions, the self-help system, and the security dilemma to a certain extent. Although this does not necessarily lead to more competition, the policies do not aid in moving the security system towards a more cooperative state either. They may also reduce the credibility of other measures of reassurance, since NATO openly puts most of its efforts into deterrence.

However, even if both TJE and the rotational force aim to deter, they contain some important elements of reassurance. NATO and Norway communicate activities well in advance and a lot of information about them is available to Russia. The planning processes are relatively transparent, and information about them is available to the public through government websites and the media. Norway is also careful to communicate what it aims to achieve with both policies. In addition, the Norwegian armed force's website provides detailed information about all exercises on Norwegian soil to include TJE (Forsvaret, 2017b), and NATO provides information about TJE in both English and Russian (Nato, 2017b). Such transparency is important because it provides reliable and valid information that clarifies Norwegian intentions, reduces uncertainty, and minimizes the probability of Russian miscalculations and misperceptions. Russian unannounced snap exercises in 2014 and 2015 are examples of the opposite, where unpredictable and surprising behavior fuels fear and insecurity (Hurt, 2016).

Both Russia and NATO may perceive large exercises close to their borders as a cover-up or excuse for a military build-up in preparation for an attack. Transparency reduces this worry, since it gives Russia an opportunity to take measures to follow the situation closely, increase situational awareness, and ultimately make necessary military preparations. By signaling benign intentions through transparency and sharing of information, NATO, Norway, and Russia may formalize the way they communicate military activity and eventually institutionalize new norms of competition. This of course depends on Russian reciprocity, but even if not reciprocated, transparency involves little risk to states that have only defensive ambitions since exercises and the repositioning of personnel and equipment are indeed not cover-ups for aggression.

Norway can obviously choose not to implement the two policies. Since this would involve a non-event, Norway can achieve greatest effect of this by clearly communicating and signaling that it had a choice, but chose to refrain. Such a signal can be powerful, though, since it involves a considerable and potentially costly military deed. By refraining from hosting large-scale NATO exercises and stationing of foreign military personnel on Norwegian soil, Norway can influence mutual threat perceptions by signaling that Norway does not see Russia as an immediate threat. This can reduce Russian fears of encirclement and aggression from NATO, and may transform intersubjective threat perceptions in a positive direction.

Immediate consequences of this is reduced risk of misperception and miscalculations, as well as mitigation of the security dilemma. Over time, both states will increase their knowledge about each other, which may reduce uncertainty over each other's intentions. Ultimately, this may move the security system as a whole towards a more cooperative stance. These signals are, however, powerful since they are potentially very risky and costly if Russia chooses to exploit them. Given the current security climate and Norwegian dependency on NATO for deterrence, the risk and cost associated with Russian exploitation outweighs the risk of unwarranted escalation for these particular measures. Especially since neither the TJE nor the USMC rotational force have a significant impact on the security dilemma.

7.5. The Challenge with Exploitation

The side of the debate in favor of reassurance argues that reassurance will reduce tensions and may move the relationship between Norway and Russia towards a more cooperative stance. Consequently, reassurance is the preferred strategy in dealing with a more assertive Russia. However, there are dangers associated with such a strategy, and the side in favor of deterrence claims that Russia currently understands the world in geopolitical terms and sees the realm of

IR as a zero sum game. The Russian perspective on foreign affairs thus leans toward the realist tradition. In this perspective power matters and Russia therefore sees an objective difference between the rights of powerful states and less powerful states. This means that Russia will likely see reassurance as a sign of weakness that it may exploit to further its interests.

The following section argues in favor of deterrence, and concludes that in the current security climate, where Russian foreign policy is characterized by both fear and revisionist ambitions, Norway must combine its reassurance efforts with credible and capable deterrence. The risk of exploitation means that Norway should not implement reassurance measures that challenge its ability to deter Russia. Consequently, Norway must emphasize deterrence when dealing with a more assertive Russia, while at the same time employing tailored reassurance to reduce tensions and control the security dilemma.

7.5.1. Exploitation and Russian Revisionist Ambitions

According to Morgenthau (1967), strategies aimed at countering revisionist ambitions are fundamentally different from strategies aimed at countering states seeking to maintain status quo. While status quo seeking states can be countered by strategies of give and take, such as reassurance, revisionist states must be countered by containment to defend the existing distribution of power. Holst (1967) writes that, while reassurance plays an important role in reducing tensions and preventing escalation, one-sided reassurance and cooperative behavior runs the risk of successive and more costly demands over time. Morgenthau (1967) supports this notion, and claims that by exploiting reassurance, revisionist states may achieve a piecemeal change in the power distribution. Consequently, revisionist states may reverse the current power distribution without resorting to war before the reassuring state understands what happened.

Chapter 5 concluded that recent Russian behavior indicates that Russia seeks to upset the current European power balance and therefore leans toward the revisionist side of the continuum. According to Coker (2016), contemporary Russia takes advantage of its ability to instill fear in its neighboring countries and employs hybrid strategies to challenge Western cohesion. Matlary & Heier (2016) also claim that Europe is not up to the task of dealing with the Russian challenge, and that its emphasis on safety rather than security makes it easier for Russia to bend international rules. They also believe that the way the West stresses liberal democratic values, human rights, and rule by law, hinders an appropriate response towards

Russian assertiveness. Matlary (2016) also stresses that Russia seeks to return to the norm of a state system with legitimate spheres of influence, and that the lack of Western response to the crisis in the Ukraine and Crimea may enable Russia to achieve a *fait accompli* as time progresses. Coker (2016) agrees, and claims that the Western European countries are incapable of thinking strategically. Mearsheimer (2014) goes even further and argues that Western liberal ideas caused the crisis in the Ukraine, since NATO expansions to the east triggered and reinforced the Russian fear of encirclement in the first place.

The side of the debate in favor of deterrence is thus correct in its assessment that Russia sees the lack of long-term policies aimed at checking its power as weakness and that this may set the stage for more assertiveness and exploitation. They are also correct when they argue that Russia actively attempts to reduce NATO cohesion, and that NATO cannot rule out a confrontational approach from Russia. Consequently, Russia may interpret one-sided reassurance attempts as opportunities for exploitation, and the next section looks at how Russia may in fact exploit such policies.

7.5.2. Conventional Military Power

Russian power and capabilities are central variables in the debate. The side arguing in favor of deterrence claims that Russia is conventionally inferior to the West, and that it is unlikely to win a conventional war with NATO. They therefore infer that Russia will not choose to engage in a war of scale, and that the threshold for invading other countries is high. These arguments are usually made to defend the stance that Western deterrence measures will not lead to unwarranted escalation into a large-scale war, but the variables are equally important when determining Russian future behavior and how Russia may exploit Norwegian and NATO policies.

An analysis of defense expenditure supports the claim that Russia is conventionally inferior to the West, since NATO spent nearly ten times more on defense than Russia in 2015 (NATO, 2017a; Oxenstierna, 2016). These numbers are misleading though, since the US is the main contributor and only a small portion of US forces are actually stationed in Europe. According to Ringsmose & Rynning (2017), the new enhanced NRF and VJTF do not add much new military muscle to NATO even if they do improve readiness. The 40,000 troops are also partly a result of creative bookkeeping, which means that the real added capability is not as significant as advertised. Ringsmose & Rynning (2017) also assess that the enhanced NRF and VJTF are too small to credibly deter, as well as actually defeat, a military attack from

Russia if it is sufficiently set on capturing for example the Baltics. The lack of a credible follow-on force that can deploy in short notice further exacerbates this problem, and leads to the conclusion that NATO deterrence towards Russia is primarily based on the prospect of punishment. Coker (2016) shares this assessment, and believes that the EFP is too small to have a real deterrent effect on Russia. Consequently, the argument that Russia is conventionally inferior to NATO is not completely accurate in the European theatre.

Since the EFP and enhanced NRF are mainly tripwires, and the real NATO fighting force consists of follow on forces that may take months to deploy, Russia may choose to use military force in pursuit of its interests. Even if Russia will likely not intentionally trigger an Article 5 response, it is possible to envision a scenario where Russia seeks to achieve a significant military victory in one of its neighboring countries and then attempt to settle the conflict in Russia's favor before NATO can muster a response. Russia will combine such an approach with hybrid measures, and will simultaneously attempt to disrupt and break NATO cohesion and consensus. This may create a very challenging situation for NATO that is difficult to counter, and means that Russia may perceive the risk of escalation worth taking if the potential gain is of sufficient value.

The above discussion leads to the conclusion that Russia may in fact choose to exploit Western reassurance measures and lack of deterrence militarily if it assesses that the gain is significant enough. Even if Russia does not want to risk activation of NATO's Article 5, a military intervention may still be substantial enough to inflict major damage and cost to individual NATO members and the alliance as a whole.

7.5.3. Hybrid Strategies

Those who argue in favor of deterrence also claim that the lack of an existential threat to NATO gives Russia an incentive and an opportunity to use coercive diplomacy and hybrid strategies in place of outright military force. This is correct, and as noted in chapter 5, Russia employs a number of hybrid strategies aimed at challenging NATO cohesion and influencing opinions, elections, and political decision-making. This also supports the argument made in the debate that one cannot rule out a confrontational approach from Russia, and that one-sided reassurance sets the stage for Russian coercive diplomacy and exploitation.

The Russian use of hybrid strategies can create substantial challenges to policy makers in both Norway and the rest of NATO. First, Russia may choose to gradually take advantage of reassurance measures over a period of several years, which means that the cost of the

reassurance measures may not materialize until long after they were implemented. Second, if one combines a gradual and long-term approach with hybrid strategies aimed at causing confusion, decision makers may find it extremely difficult to maintain situational awareness and determine what is actually taking place before it is too late. According to Bruusgaard (2016b), Russian use of hybrid strategies is not limited to times of peace, a point that further complicates the matter and increases the risk of exploitation.

Russian use of hybrid strategies in pursuit of its revisionist interests is thus a challenge that Norwegian policy makers must take into consideration when designing policies to meet Russian assertiveness. Consequently, Norway runs the risk of exploitation if it does not tailor its reassurance measures to the situation at hand, and supplements them with policies aimed at containing Russian revisionist tendencies. This is the topic for the next part.

7.5.4. Mitigating Russian Exploitation

Norway can mitigate the danger of exploitation from Russia in two ways. First, it can implement reassurance measures that do not involve significant risk of failure and are not too costly if they do fail. Second, it can supplement reassurance with capable and credible deterrence.

As indicated earlier, the credibility of a reassurance attempt depends on the cost and risk involved. The cost of reassurance can be direct or indirect, can involve both material and symbolic cost, and is incurred the moment the reassurance gesture is forwarded. An example of this is the immediate cost that Norwegian basing restrictions have for the country's ability to defend against Russian aggression. The risk of a reassurance attempt, on the other hand, will not materialize until Russia actually chooses to take advantage of it. Since false reassurance attempts rarely involve a lot of risk and cost to the sender, it naturally follows that the more risk and cost is involved with a reassurance gesture, the more convincing and credible the receiver will perceive it (Tang, 2010).

Norwegian deterrence measures towards Russia must carefully balance potential gain against the risk and cost involved if Russia does not reciprocate or chooses to take advantage of them. There is thus a clear tension between the need to manage escalation and the need to protect against exploitation, and it may not be possible to find the perfect balance without sacrificing one over the other. The question boils down to an assessment of Russian ambitions, interests, and intentions, and the risks involved with being wrong.

It is also important to realize that reassurance is not an independent strategy or an end in itself, but rather a part of a broader strategy of conflict management that includes deterrence (Tang, 2010). Policy makers must therefore have somber expectations as to what reassurance can actually achieve, since an overly optimistic approach may lead to exploitation. According to Tang (2010), a status quo seeking state cannot change the malign intentions of another revisionist state simply by signaling benign intentions. While Wendt (1992) may be correct that unilateral initiatives and self-binding commitments can transform the current security system towards a larger degree of cooperation, he also asserts that the expected cost of transforming roles and identities through sanctions imposed by other states cannot be greater than its rewards. In the current security climate, Russian reciprocity is in no way certain. This means that in the short run, Norwegian reassurance efforts must primarily target Russian fears, uncertainty, and weakness, and aim to reduce the security dilemma, rather than necessarily aim to move the security system towards a more cooperative state. The former may of course lead to the latter over time, but by pursuing too ambitious goals Norway may set itself up for exploitation.

It is obvious that Norwegian deterrence and ability to withstand pressure rely mainly on NATO. Norwegian reassurance efforts should thus not sacrifice NATO cohesion or question the alliance's will to come to Norway's aid in the event of an armed conflict with Russia. The prospect of NATO assistance not only deters against a Russian military attack, but the fear of triggering Article 5 may also prevent exploitation by use of coercive diplomacy and hybrid strategies. In the current security climate, where Russia actively uses such strategies, Norwegian reassurance using military deeds may come at some risk. A reduction in military presence in Norway goes against current NATO policy, and may challenge both cohesion as well as the prospect of allied assistance. It is unlikely that other member states will choose to deploy forces to defend Norway if the country does not show sufficient intent to defend itself. Consequently, Norway should be careful to implement reassurance measures that distance NATO from the defense of Norwegian territory.

Reassurance using non-military deeds and words are less problematic, and may play an even more important role given the limitations on reassurance using military deeds. While non-military deeds should not defy the current sanction regime since this would challenge European cohesion, Norway should continue to cooperate with Russia where possible. Reassurance using words also plays an important role, but should not incur symbolic cost that may challenge cohesion. Reassurance intended at reducing or mitigating the escalatory effect

of new deterrence measures are critical, and should aim to provide transparency, coordinate military activity, and thus reduce the probability of misperception, misunderstandings, and uncertainty over NATO intentions. As noted above, examples of reassurance measures that do not pose a risk of exploitation include notifying Russia of military exercises and activity well in advance, inviting Russian observers to Norway, maintaining sufficient lines of communication, and establishing procedures to prevent accidents and misunderstandings when military forces from both sides operate close to each other.

Russian revisionist ambitions means that a strategy leaning purely on reassurance will always risk exploitation. Deterrence is a policy of influencing the decision-making calculus of an adversary with the intent of preventing hostile action against the deterring state (Morgan, 1983). Chapter 7.6 covers deterrence in detail, but for now it is important to note that deterrence may not only prevent military aggression. It is also important for setting a threshold against exploitation in the form of coercive diplomacy and pressure (Morgenthau, 1967). Deterrence is thus an insurance policy in case Russia chooses to act on its revisionist ambitions. By supplementing reassurance with deterrence, Norway may increase its room to maneuver in some areas. This means that by maintaining credible and capable deterrence, Norway may in fact open the door for more use of certain forms of reassurance because it mitigates and reduces the risk of exploitation.

Summarized, the deterrence side of the debate is correct in claiming that a strategy leaning towards reassurance may open the door for exploitation by Russia. Exploitation may take the form of military aggression in pursuit of political ends, but it is more likely that Russia will use coercive diplomacy and hybrid strategies to undermine Western cohesion and gradually shift the power balance in its favor. Russian revisionist tendencies means that the country may see reassurance as weakness, and Norway must therefore employ policies that mitigate the risk of exploitation. Norway can do this by combining reassurance with capable and credible deterrence, as well as by tailoring reassurance to measures that do not come at the expense of deterrence and Norwegian relative power. Returning to the research question, this indicates that while reassurance plays an important role in controlling the security dilemma, the risk of exploitation means that it should not come at the expense of deterrence.

With the above discussion in mind, the next part looks at how the two cases affect Norwegian vulnerability for exploitation.

7.5.5. The Cases and Exploitation

Both NATO and the Norwegian government have explicitly expressed that TJE is a high visibility exercise aimed at deterring Russia (NATO, 2015b; Søreide, 2016). The same goes for the USMC rotational force at Værnes, since the rapid deployment of allied forces is a critical factor in ensuring Norwegian security (Forsvarsdepartementet, 2015a). The intent of both these policies are well in line with the recommendations outlined above. Both play a role in balancing Russian power, which will have a positive effect on Norwegian security and the ability to maintain status quo. They also help contain Russian revisionist ambitions, prevent exploitation, and aid in mitigating the power asymmetry that exists between Russia and Norway.

Most important in this context, is the way both exercise TJE and the USMC rotational force display NATO cohesion and willingness to stand up for each other. Norway cannot attain credible deterrence if Russia does not believe that NATO will come to its aid, and signaling coherence and consensus is thus a critical part of preventing Russian attempts at breaking Western cohesion. The fact that NATO chose to hold one of its largest and most visible exercises in Norway, and that the US chose to deploy its forces to Norway, is therefore an important signal to Russia that NATO cohesion is solid. Additionally, it sends a signal that the High North is a region of interest that NATO is willing to defend.

Norway could choose to not implement these policies in an attempt to reassure Russia that it has no aggressive intentions. In line with the discussion above, such a reassurance measure would directly affect Norwegian deterrence efforts in a negative way. Particularly if Norway communicates that this is an active policy aimed at reassurance. Given the current security climate, such a direction would challenge NATO cohesion and leave Norway more exposed to exploitation.

Both TJE and the USMC rotational force thus play a role in preventing Russian coercive diplomacy and pressure by presenting the prospect of a unified NATO response and potential activation of Article 5. For the same reason, the policies may also make Russia less inclined to employ hybrid strategies against Norway in times of peace. Both policies are well in line with classical realist theory and aid in offsetting the power asymmetry between Norway and Russia. Consequently, both TJE and the USMC rotational force help contain Russian revisionist ambitions and prevent exploitation.

7.6. The Challenge with Effective Deterrence

The previous parts conclude that Norway must tailor its reassurance efforts towards Russia to mitigate the security dilemma, and combine it with deterrence to avoid exploitation. This section focusses on deterrence, and discusses the specifics as to how Norway should shape its deterrence efforts to improve the probability of successful deterrence and maintaining status quo.

From the debate, those in favor of a strategy of deterrence often argue that deterrence is the most effective way to make an adversary bend to your will, since it seeks to prevent an opponent from choosing to use force against you and thus prevents conflicts from escalating to war. However, they claim that deterrence is only effective as long as it creates adequate fear in the opponent. In order to achieve this, NATO must maintain sufficient military capabilities capable of engaging in high intensity warfare anywhere within NATO territory. They also claim that NATO must deal with Russia proactively, and respond resolutely if Russia attempts to destabilize any European state.

Those in favor of reassurance disagree with this. They argue that offensive security policies may not be effective and that deterrence is both risky and unwise. Deterrence is thus prone to failure, and a strategy focusing on reassurance is therefore less risky, more balanced, and less likely to cause unwarranted escalation.

This part focuses on the particularities of deterrence, and argues that the fact that deterrence may fail is not a valid argument against using the strategy towards a more assertive Russia. To ensure deterrence success, Norway must establish deterrence that is both capable and credible. This requires the prospect of help from NATO. Norwegian deterrence is also mainly deterrence by punishment, since it will take time before allied help arrives. Consequently, NATO cohesion is critical to successfully deterring Russia.

7.6.1. Deterrence as Unreliable Strategy

Those in favor of deterrence are correct in that deterrence is not always effective. According to Lebow (2001), deterrence did not play as significant a role during the Cold War as many argue, and at times instead provoked the sort of behavior it aimed to prevent. Stein (1991) argues that the limitations of deterrence mean that it can fail even if it is perfectly executed, while Quackenbush (2011) emphasizes that deterrence may fail even if states are completely rational. Lebow (2010) asserts that the psychological element of deterrence means that state

leaders may see situations as more favorable than they really are, or choose to fight even if they are aware that the military balance is unfavorable.

However, it does not necessarily follow that deterrence is an inappropriate strategy just because it sometimes fails. As discussed above, reassurance is also prone for failure and exploitation, particularly if applied as a strategy standing by itself. According to Achen & Snidal (1989), the claim that deterrence theory fails both descriptively and prescriptively is exaggerated. They argue that, since researchers study deterrence failure far more often than deterrence success, the selection of cases is biased. Deterrence success is usually a non-event, which means that war did not occur. The world is full of conflicts that do not escalate to war, but these are often overlooked from a deterrence perspective. Further complicating the matter is the fact that it is difficult to determine causality in situations of deterrence success, since a number of reasons may lead to prevailing peace. Consequently, by focusing on cases of deterrence failure, deterrence comes across as an overly flawed strategy.

This means that the claim from the reassurance side of the debate that offensive security policies may not be effective, and that deterrence is both risky and unwise, lacks nuance. Deterrence may fail at times, but to say that it is prone for failure is an overstatement. States must tailor their strategies of conflict management to meet the threat at hand. Depending on the threat, both reassurance and deterrence may therefore fail if applied incorrectly.

For Norway, the key is to balance the two strategies wisely and manage their weaknesses well. This requires knowledge and awareness of Russian interests, capabilities, identity, and intentions. In the current security climate, where Russia acts more assertive, the question remains if there is an alternative to deterrence when dealing with an opportunistic and revisionist state. While reassurance will mitigate some of the challenges involved with deterrence, the risk of exploitation means that deterrence must play a key role in Norwegian strategy today.

Strategies of deterrence can of course take many different shapes and forms. The next section looks at the specifics of deterrence, and discusses how Norway should apply its deterrence efforts to meet Russian assertiveness effectively.

7.6.2. Successfully Deterring Russia

When it comes to the specifics of Norwegian deterrence efforts, deterrence involves the ability “[...] to decisively influence the adversary’s decision-making calculus in order to prevent hostile actions against [national] vital interests” (DoD, 2006, p. 5). Consequently, the

deterrence side of the debate is correct in arguing that Norwegian deterrence efforts are only successful if the country manages to convince Russia that the potential cost of attacking outweighs the potential gain. The goal of Norwegian deterrence is therefore to prevent actions that have not yet taken place, and to maintain status quo (Mazarr & Goodby, 2011; Beeker et al., 2013).

Norway can base its deterrence policy on three methods: denying benefits, imposing costs, or encouraging Russian restraint. Denying benefits involves convincing Russia that it will not be able to reach its objectives, or that the potential benefits of attacking are of insufficient value. Military capability is an obvious tool in that respect. During times of limited crisis, this involves convincing Russia that Norway is capable of physically preventing it from reaching its objectives. Since Norway cannot expect to defend successfully against Russian forces during a war of scale, deterrence by denial involves convincing Russia that Norway can stop or delay an invasion until allied assistance can arrive, and that allied forces coming to help are capable of denying the attack.

Deterrence by imposing costs involves convincing Russia that Norway and its allies will respond to any attacks severely, and that they will likely carry out the response. This involves the ability to punish Russia after the initiation of an attack, as well as communicating clearly that there is a great chance that Russia will suffer unacceptable costs. This is of course problematic if Norway has to act alone. Deterrence by imposing costs can therefore only be credible if Norway is able to convince Russia that allied partners will actually come to its aid.

According to Ringsmose & Rynning (2017), deterrence by denial towards Russia is almost impossible today due to the limited number of military forces deployed in forward positions on European soil. NATO countries must therefore mainly base their deterrence efforts on the prospect of cost imposition by follow on forces that respond to an initial Russian attack. This logic is highly relevant to the Norwegian case as well, and means that Norwegian deterrence efforts towards Russia primarily lean on the prospect of punishment from allied forces. This further supports the emphasis from the debate that NATO unity and cohesion is key to establishing credible deterrence towards Russia. The fact that Russia actively seeks to weaken and break Western cohesion, means that Norwegian deterrence policy must aim to demonstrate and solidify NATO cohesion. This conclusion supports the arguments made by deterrence side of the debate, and is in line with the view expressed by the current Norwegian Government (Søreide, 2017).

A keyword for successful deterrence is credibility, and credible threats are those that are believable and rational to carry out. According to perfect deterrence theory (Zagare & Kilgour, 2000), credibility is the most important factor, but not sufficient by itself, for successful deterrence. Credible Norwegian deterrence therefore involves signaling that the country will resist if attacked by Russia. Since Norway cannot expect to win a high intensity war against Russia alone, it is not certain that Norway will in fact resist if it does not receive help from NATO. Norwegian deterrence credibility is thus closely linked to the prospect of assistance from the NATO partners. This supports the argument that NATO must maintain sufficient operational military capability to conduct high intensity warfare anywhere within the NATO area, since it will improve the likelihood and credibility that NATO will be able to impose costs on Russia.

According to perfect deterrence theory (Zagare & Kilgour, 2000), capability is the only factor that is essential for successful deterrence. Capable threats are threats that will render Russia worse off than if it did not attack, and means that deterrence by both denial and imposing cost must focus closely on a capable military force. A capable threat may of course also lead to deterrence failure, but the lack of capability will always render deterrence ineffective and useless against truly revisionist states (Zagare & Kilgour, 2000). This means that deterrence success relies on sufficient Norwegian military capabilities, and that there is a lower limit to the size of the Norwegian armed forces before deterrence efforts are futile. However, given that deterrence efforts towards Russia must lean primarily on the prospect of imposing cost (Ringsmose & Rynning, 2017), capability is mostly relevant in the sense of NATO's ability to come to Norway's aid and its ability to defeat and punish a Russian attack.

Deterrence by encouraging adversary restraint involves influencing Russian perception of the cost and benefit of maintaining status quo in a favorable direction. The point is to ensure that Russia sees the current status quo as acceptable, and thus make sure that the gain of showing restraint outweighs the gain of attacking. This is closely tied to the concept of the security dilemma, and is particularly important since Russian foreign policy contains an element of fear. Perfect deterrence theory sees the value of status quo as a particularly important strategic variable, and assumes that states differ in their assessments of its value. The intuitive takeaway from this is that high satisfaction with status quo increases the likelihood of deterrence success (Zagare & Kilgour, 2000).

Deterrence theory is thus well in line with theories of reassurance when it emphasizes that states should take measures to improve the perceived benefits of the current status quo and consequently reduce the intensity of the security dilemma. Such measures include economic incentives, prestige, access to markets, trade agreements and so on. In the current security climate, the most relevant measures are those that reduce the Russian perceived cost of showing restraint. Such measures include clearly communicating intentions to avoid surprises, being careful not to inadvertently provoke or escalate by operating in a way that Russia may interpret as overly aggressive, and not challenging the current power balance between Russia and the West without good cause. An example of the latter would include threatening the core capabilities that Russia considers essential to its security and standing as a great power, such as the nuclear triad at the Kola Peninsula.

For Norway, it is thus important to be aware of how policies may affect Russia's perception of status quo, and avoid ill-advised policies that push status quo towards a situation that is unacceptable. Consequently, Norway can in fact strengthen its deterring posture by not taking an overly aggressive stance, as well as by communicating clearly its intentions and interests. Reassurance plays an important role in that respect, and involves influencing Russian perception of both the benefits and costs of maintaining status quo (DoD, 2006).

Summarized, classical realism and deterrence theory support the claim from the debate that Norway should primarily base its policy towards a more assertive Russia on deterrence. The perspective also supports the argument that deterrence is only effective as long as it creates the necessary fear required to prevent Russia from pressuring Norway. Norwegian deterrence is mainly deterrence by punishment, which means that both credibility and capability relies heavily on the prospect of allied assistance. NATO cohesion and solidarity is therefore of primary concern to Norway.

7.6.3. The Cases and Deterrence

It is now time to look at how the two cases affect Norwegian deterrence efforts towards a more assertive Russia, with emphasis on how they affect capability, credibility, and Russian assessment of status quo.

As discussed earlier, both TJE and the USMC rotational force are measures aimed explicitly at deterring Russia. Starting with TJE, the exercise increases the capability and credibility of Norwegian deterrence in several ways. The obvious benefit is improved warfighting capability for both Norwegian and allied forces. Experience with operating in Norwegian

climate and geography enables allied forces to operate effectively under harsh weather conditions, and this will strengthen the overall capability to deny benefits and impose costs. Norway cannot impose significant cost to Russia alone, and the ability of allied forces to come to Norway's aid is thus important because it realistically adds cost imposition and risk of punishment to the Russian calculation. The display of NATO warfighting capability will therefore have a direct impact on deterrence credibility as well.

The exercise involves deploying a large amount of troops and equipment to Norway and this is important in reducing reaction times in case of a crisis. TJE provides an opportunity to test deployment plans in practice and identify weaknesses and delaying choke points. This will improve capability by making sure that NATO troops get to the battlefield in time to engage Russian troops before it is too late. It also improves credibility greatly, by demonstrating NATO's ability and will to help Norway in case of Russian aggression.

TJE also gives NATO an opportunity to test and improve its command and control system, which is critical to conducting effective military operations. Effective command and control is essential to establish and maintain situational awareness, conduct proper planning, manage the battle space, as well as to ensure effective decision-making (DoD, 2006). The ability to deny benefits and impose costs is thus highly dependent on an effective command and control system, and TJE gives NATO chance to test and validate this in a Norwegian context as well as to improve interoperability between the Norwegian Joint Headquarters and NATO. The exercise also provides an opportunity to exercise command and control in a contested environment, which will increase robustness in case of a conflict with Russia. The ability to withstand Russian attempts to attack the NATO command and control system will also have a direct effect on deterrence credibility, since warfighting capability is less likely to be degraded by lack of command and control.

Most important, though, is the way TJE displays NATO cohesion and willingness to stand up for each other. Norway cannot attain credible deterrence if Russia does not think that NATO will come to its aid, and signaling coherence and consensus is thus a critical part of the overall Norwegian deterrence posture. Consequently, the fact that NATO chose to hold one of its largest and most visible exercises in Norway is an important signal to Russia that Norwegian deterrence is both capable and credible.

The High North is strategically important to Norway, and the presence of relevant military capabilities is essential in solidifying Norwegian interests in the region. Allied exercise

activity is an important security policy tool in that respect, and may create a situation where allied presence in the region is the norm, rather than an exception. TJE thus demonstrates a clear Norwegian commitment and ability to prioritize and facilitate for allied presence in the Norwegian backyard. In line with Rottem (2007), the Norwegian government (Forsvarsdepartementet, 2016c) is thus correct when it argues that allied exercises may act stabilizing and contribute to increased predictability.

Regarding the USMC rotational force, forward US military presence increases deterrence capability in several ways. The USMC presence is too small to have a direct effect on Norwegian ability to deny benefits and impose costs in the short run, but the indirect effects are significant. First, prepositioning military equipment reduces response times in case of a crisis considerably and improves the ability to act rapidly. This will have an impact on the capacity to deny Russian benefits by reducing the chance that Russia achieves tactical or strategic surprise. It also gives Norwegian forces an incentive to keep fighting in the face of an overwhelming opponent rather than give up. The fact that the heavy equipment is already in the country also acts as a contingency if Russia successfully blocks the sea routes to Norway through anti-access and area-denial operations (DoD, 2006; Department of the Navy, 2013).

Second, the rotation force will gain valuable experience in operating in Norway, which will increase warfighting capability on a general level. The force only consists of about 300 troops, and one can argue that this effect is rather limited. The main point, though, is that the forward presence gives the USMC a chance to identify weaknesses and important considerations that they can report home and implement in operational plans. Additionally, the MCPP-N can support up to 16,000 marines, which means that the potential effects of the program go beyond the rotational force (DoD, 2006).

The USMC rotational force thus increases the capability to deny Russian benefits and impose costs by setting the stage for rapid deployment and help from the US. However, the effect on deterrence credibility is more important. A forward presence of USMC troops sends a clear message to Russia that the US is committed to assisting Norway in the case of war. This will help convince Russia that fighting back is a rational choice for the Norwegian government, and make Norwegian deterrence efforts far more believable. While the 300 marines will not make a large difference on the battlefield, the fact that US troops get involved in the war from

day one matters. Consequently, the USMC rotational force gives the US a stake in the defense of Norway in a way that increases Norwegian deterrence credibility significantly.

As discussed in chapter 7.4.4, both TJE and the USMC rotational force may affect Russian perception of status quo and intensify the security dilemma to a certain degree. The question, though, is to what degree this effect is relevant compared to the gain in deterrence capability and credibility. Given the non-aggressive nature of both policies, and compared to the positive effect they have on deterrence, the negative effects are manageable.

Summarized, the both TJE and the rotation of USMC troops at Værnes are well in line with realist policy prescriptions to meet a more assertive Russia. They both enhance Norwegian deterrence capability by increasing the ability to deny gains and impose costs. Most important is the fact that they, particularly the rotation force, ties allied partners to the defense of Norway, and thus significantly increases Norwegian deterrence credibility. Additionally, Russia will likely not assess that the two policies threaten to upset status quo significantly. Consequently, both TJE and the USMC rotation force contribute considerably to ensuring successful deterrence towards Russia.

7.7. Synthesis – Comprehensive Deterrence

Norway has combined its strategy of conflict management towards Russia on reassurance and deterrence for years. In the current security situation, where Russia acts more assertive and shows revisionist ambitions, both strategies have complementary roles. Russian foreign policy contains an element of fear and uncertainty over Western intentions, and reassurance therefore plays an important role in mitigating the escalatory effect of deterrence and the security dilemma. However, since Russian behavior indicates that the country may attempt to exploit measures of reassurance, and the cost of this may be significant, Norway must emphasize robust deterrence.

The fact that Russia uses numerous tools, both military and non-military, in a more or less constant struggle to influence Western policy and cohesion is very important. Consequently, Norwegian officials must acknowledge that Russia actively seeks to influence their decision-making, and must take active measures to counter this. Norwegian policy towards Russia cannot be ad-hoc, but must be based on a long-term strategy aimed at maintaining status quo while at the same time setting the stage for the achievement of political ends not related to security.

Such a strategy cannot rely purely on military means, but must use the full spectrum of available Norwegian instruments of power and political tools. Credible and capable deterrence is about the sum of all measures taken, and no single measure can successfully deter Russia alone. Borrowing a term from the NATO doctrine, Norwegian deterrence must be comprehensive in that it should establish the prospect of robust defense at all levels and sectors of society in times of both peace and war. This involves using a combination of the state's inventory of tools, such as diplomatic activities, economic measures, information management, and military power to set the stage for successful deterrence. Comprehensive deterrence involves enhancing the ability to withstand attacks against all aspects of society, and means that civilian readiness and robustness must go hand in hand with military capability.

From the military perspective, Norway must base its deterrence efforts on a capable and credible ability to defend against Russian aggression. In situations of limited tensions or conflict without outright war, credible and capable Norwegian deterrence through military power is critical to resist coercive strategies, pressure and exploitation. Russian use of influence operations and information warfare blurs the line between conflict and peace, and this can challenge the Norwegian ability to establish good situational awareness during a crisis. Similarly, it can be difficult to build a clear and correct picture of specific Russian ambitions and intentions. This involves maintaining a military force that is sufficiently capable to convince Russia that Norway will in fact fight back if attacked, as well as establish a clear line of demarcation of what is acceptable and what is not.

In a larger-scale conflict, Norwegian military forces cannot expect to stop Russian aggression alone, but must be able to delay the advance of Russian forces until allied help arrives. This also requires a capable Norwegian military force, but credible deterrence is primarily tied to the prospect of allied support. It is thus critical for Norway to tie the alliance to the defense of Norway, as well as demonstrate a will to fight back while waiting for help. The latter demands a capable national military, while the former can be achieved by hosting regular exercises in the country, prepositioning equipment, hosting permanent or rotational allied forces, and contributing to the defense of other NATO partners in order to increase and maintain NATO cohesion.

Comprehensive deterrence also involves the active use of reassurance, but given the current security climate, it is questionable if Norway can significantly affect Russian interests and

threat perceptions alone. At least not in the short run. Since there is also a risk that Russia may exploit attempts at reassurance, Norway must carefully weigh the potential cost of each measure against the potential gain. Russia understands that NATO cohesion is of primary concern to Norway, and Norwegian dependency on NATO is, in other words, institutionalized. It also means that Norwegian security is closely linked to the defense of Europe as a whole. Consequently, while Russia and Norway have a tradition for cooperation, it is doubtful that Russia will see its relationship with Norway in isolation from the rest of NATO. Reassurance is thus an important tool in the current security climate, but primarily as an enabler of effective deterrence rather than as a main strategy.

Returning to the three cases, table 1 provides a summary of how the two policies affect deterrence efforts, the security dilemma, as well the risk of exploitation. The second part of the table presents the counterfactual results of not implementing the policies.

Table 1
Summary of cases

Case	Effect of policy on..			Effect of not implementing policy on..		
	Successful deterrence	Security dilemma	Risk of exploitation	Successful deterrence	Security dilemma	Risk of exploitation
TJE	+	0	+	-	0	-
USMC	++	-	++	-	+	-

Note. + = Moderately positive. ++ = Significantly positive. 0 = Insignificant. - = Moderately negative. -- = Significantly negative.

TJE falls well within the framework of comprehensive deterrence and improves Norwegian deterrence capability and credibility by signaling NATO cohesion and warfighting capability in Norwegian climate and geography. It also reduces the likelihood that Russia will attempt to exploit Norwegian reassurance attempts. While it does not encourage Russian restraint, it neither affects Russian threat perceptions, uncertainty, and value of status quo significantly. Consequently, Norway should continue to host NATO exercises such as TJE.

The same goes for the USMC rotational force at Værnes. This policy is particularly important since it increases Norwegian deterrence credibility and reduces the risk of exploitation by tying US troops to the defense of Norway. Additionally, pre-storing equipment in Norway increases both deterrence capability and credibility by reducing deployment times. However, the rotational force sends a more problematic signal to Russia than the TJE, since Russia may perceive it as challenging traditional Norwegian security policy. Compared to the positive

effect on deterrence, these issues are manageable. Norway should therefore further develop its policy of hosting the USMC rotational force at Værnes.

Consequently, the overall conclusion of this study is that Norway should lean towards deterrence in its policy towards a more assertive Russia, and employ a strategy of comprehensive deterrence. The following is a list of specific policy recommendations that will increase the probability that such a policy is successful in deterring Russia.

- Appropriate decisions rely on reliable and valid information. Given that Russia actively distorts and uses information to achieve certain ends, Norway must emphasize high-quality intelligence collection and analysis to provide correct and sufficient situational awareness at all times.
- Norway must work to gain understanding of Russian interests, ambitions, and weaknesses to manage the relationship wisely, but this does not mean that Norway should empathize with the Russian position or accept all types of behavior.
- Norway must continue to tie NATO to the defense of Norway, and must contribute to ensuring NATO cohesion.
- Norway must base its deterrence efforts on capable and credible national military power in order to deter Russia from coercive strategies and ensure NATO assistance in case of a serious conflict.
- Norwegian deterrence efforts must take into consideration that Russia may employ non-conventional or so-called hybrid means against Norwegian interests, and must work to increase robustness at all levels and sectors of society.
- Norway must continue to communicate clearly and transparently any relevant military dispositions, priorities, activity, and exercises that Russia may perceive as threatening. This will reduce uncertainty over intent, prevent misunderstandings, ensure predictability, and will thus reassure Russia.
- Norway should keep official and diplomatic lines of communication with Russia open, regardless of the level of conflict in the future. The direct phone line between the Norwegian Joint Headquarters at Reitan and the Russian Northern Fleet is a good example of such communication that reduces the chance for misunderstandings and escalation.

7.8. Further Research

During the Cold War, deterrence, both as theory and strategy, mostly relied on nuclear weapons. Consequently, after the Cold War classic deterrence theory lost much of its relevance. The new security climate in Europe produced a renewed interest for deterrence among both scholars and policy makers, and this has triggered a need to further develop new general theories of conventional deterrence without the use of nuclear weapons.

New types of threats also create specific challenges to deterrence. More research is needed on how Norway can deter non-conventional threats such as terrorism, cyber-attacks, information warfare, influence operations, and so called hybrid warfare. These threats may not provide a clear indication that Norway is actually engaged in war, and can thus prove very challenging to handle.

The power relationship between Norway and Russia is asymmetrical, and future research should look into how small states such as Norway can best manage a conflictual relationship with a larger neighbor. This is particularly important if the US becomes less involved with European security. The keyword is asymmetrical deterrence, and should include research on how Norway can best deal with a situation where NATO cohesion is significantly reduced.

Further research is also required on how specific military capabilities affect Norwegian deterrence efforts towards Russia. Researchers should look at how new capabilities such as the F-35 Lightning II, in combination with the new long range Joint Strike Missile, affect Norwegian deterrence efforts, since these introduce a greatly increased offensive capability. More research on the use of the Norwegian Coast Guard in conflict management is also interesting, since its dual nature provides Norway with something close to a hybrid tool.

Finally, there is a tension between the need to communicate military strength in order to deter, and the need to keep capabilities secret in order to gain an advantage in an actual armed conflict. More research is required on how policy makers can best utilize clandestine capabilities, such as submarines and the F-35, to prevent conflict in the first place, rather than purely seeing them as tools to win battles.

8. Conclusion

The wisdom of Johan Jørgen Holst (Holst, 1967), that small states like Norway have limited ability to influence the international arena and must therefore adjust to the security climate they exist in, is still valid today. Following the classical realist position, this means that Norwegian policy must be pragmatic, realistic, and long term, and ensure security before pursuing interests of more idealistic nature. Russia currently shows signs of having revisionist ambitions, and the conclusion to the research question is therefore that Norway should lean towards deterrence in its policy towards a more assertive Russia.

The Norwegian need for conflict management starts with uncertainty over Russian intentions. An opponent rarely seeks either status quo or revision exclusively, but its ambitions are placed somewhere on the continuum between the two. If an opposing state seeks primarily status quo, the conflictual relationship is mainly caused by weakness and fear. This situation favors a strategy of predominantly reassurance, and can, in line with social constructivist theory, gradually alleviate some of the mistrust and intersubjective threat perceptions. If successful, this strategy may not only maintain status quo, but may also lead to a more cooperative security system in the end. Relying too heavily on deterrence in this situation may lead to an exaggerated and unnecessary security dilemma and escalation.

Against a revisionist opponent, classical realism prescribes a strategy of conflict management based on capable and credible deterrence to avoid exploitation. However, unless the opponent is set to revise the balance of power no matter what, selective and careful reassurance will reduce the effect of the security dilemma and thus the danger of unwarranted escalation into war. In addition, reassurance may aid in encouraging opponent restraint and prevent or reduce the probability that deterrence fails because the opponent sees the current status quo as unacceptable.

The choice of strategy thus boils down to risk management, and an assessment of Russian ambitions and intentions. Russia currently shows signs of wanting to upset status quo and is leaning towards the revisionist side of the continuum. This leads to the conclusion that the deterrence side of the debate is correct when they claim that Norway should balance towards deterrence in its policy towards Russia. Capable and credible deterrence will counter and contain Russian power, and will reduce the probability that Russia uses coercive strategies and exploits Norwegian reassurance attempts.

However, the analysis supports the claim of the reassurance side that there is a potential for a security dilemma, and that Russia does not share the Western world-view. This means that Norwegian deterrence may in fact lead to escalation and provoke the outcome it aims to prevent. As a result, Norwegian deterrence may lead to increased militarization of the High North. This does not mean that deterrence is the wrong policy, but rather that Norwegian policy makers must have the Russian position in mind when they design policies to avoid unnecessary escalation.

Reassurance is important because it provides both transparency and communicates benign intentions. While social constructivists assert that reassurance has the potential for transforming the relationship between states towards a more cooperative stance, Norwegian policy makers must have realistic expectations as to what it can actually achieve in the current situation. Changing Russian identity, norms, and interests is a time consuming process, and demands reciprocity from Russia. Given the current Russian assertiveness, an overly ambitious belief in reassurance may therefore prove both risky and dangerous. However, since reassurance may help reduce the intensity of the security dilemma, it is not necessarily a question of either-or. Rather, more deterrence may in fact warrant more reassurance. However, due to the risk of exploitation, Norway must tailor its reassurance measures to those that mitigate the escalatory effect of deterrence, while not significantly reducing the ability to deter Russia.

Deterrence may also fail even if it is applied appropriately, and the reassurance side of the debate argues that this makes deterrence a flawed and risky strategy. While this may be true, the fact that a strategy may fail is not a sufficient argument against it if there is no viable alternative. Given Russian assertiveness, the findings of the study support the deterrence side of the debate in that Norway must mitigate the probability of deterrence failure by ensuring that it is both capable and credible, while at the same time providing Russia with an acceptable status quo. However, Norway cannot hope to deter Russia by itself. Consequently, NATO cohesion and tying the defense of Norway to the alliance is a necessity for capable and credible Norwegian deterrence.

TJE and the USMC rotational force fit well into the above conclusions. Both increase Norwegian deterrence capability and credibility, and contribute to tying NATO to the defense of Norway. While they may reinforce Russian threat perception to a certain degree, and thus intensify the security dilemma, Norway and NATO have implemented several measures

aimed at reassuring Russia that neither activity has aggressive intent. The negative impact on the security dilemma is therefore manageable compared to the positive effect on deterrence. Consequently, both cases are good examples of Norwegian policies that properly balance the need for deterrence and reassurance.

Since Russia employs hybrid strategies extensively in times of both peace war, the Norwegian approach to deterrence must be comprehensive. This means that Norwegian deterrence must use all instruments of power and political tools, and seek to establish the prospect of robust defense at all levels and sectors of society at all times. Norway must therefore complement military capability with sufficient civilian readiness and robustness. Reassurance plays a complementary role in this strategy, but mainly as an enabler of effective deterrence rather than as the primary strategy.

Norwegian security policy aims to ensure the welfare of its inhabitants by maintaining peace and the ability to pursue interests not related to security. The international arena is complex, and the period after the Cold War proves that the security situation, as well as ideas, can change rapidly. Consequently, policy makers must avoid dogmatic stances and not jump to conclusions that may have dangerous implications. Norwegian security policy must be long term, free of emotions, rational, pragmatic, and primarily seek to ensure Norwegian sovereignty and freedom to pursue its national interests. This requires an in depth understanding of the context within which Norwegian security policy operates. Today, Russian assertiveness is the single most important factor threatening Norwegian security. The choice of policy to meet this assertiveness is a matter of risk management, and there may not be a perfect solution to the problem. As individual strategies, both reassurance and deterrence involve significant risks that may result in dangerous consequences. Norwegian policy makers must therefore balance them wisely. In an increasingly volatile world, with threats emerging from many directions, capable and credible deterrence is the best insurance policy for safeguarding Norwegian security, and should therefore be the policy of choice.

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