Chapter 6
American Military Doctrines of the New Generation

This chapter will analyse the so-called American doctrines of the new generation which have been approved between 2012 and 2015 (Gross 2016). These documents are very important because they articulate the concretisation of the grand strategy of the US Armed Forces for their missions, and for their build-up and necessary modernisation. As all of this book examines the process of the NATO expansion after the end of the Cold War and its consequences, its last chapter is reserved for the examination of these documents. The first of them is one doctrinal document of the highest level from May 2010, which is in the category of grand strategy and which is signed by the 44th President of the USA. After this basic text, four other doctrines were published and signed by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the USA, and they will be analysed on the following pages.

6.1 Key Concepts

As its mission is to explain all the important circumstances, the chapter is divided into two sections. The first one is short; it explains the basic theoretical concepts: namely grand strategy and doctrine, with their specification for the USA and its strategic culture. After this brief presentation, the section continues with a basic analysis of the key features of the international and military context of the ISR during the second decade of the present century.

And the second section represents the key part of the entire chapter and is consecrated to a detailed analysis of the US doctrinal documents. It explains the international and military context of all the important doctrinal documents as well as their key missions and aims.
6.1.1 The Basic Concepts of This Book

The key attention of this part of the section is to explaining four basic concepts: grand strategy, security culture, strategic culture, and doctrine. Generally speaking, grand strategy is a very important concept. A major classic author of strategic studies, Basil Liddell Hart, defined grand strategy as a concept which is inseparable from war. Indeed it is “practically synonymous with the policy which guides the conduct of war” (Liddell Hart 1991). According to Colin Grey, grand strategy or high strategy comprises the “purposeful employment of all instruments of power available to a security community” (Gray 2007). This approach is shared by another important author, John Gaddis, who underlines that “the fighting of wars and the management of states have demanded the calculation of relationships between means and ends for a longer stretch of time than any other documented area of collective human activity” (Gaddis 2009). Lastly, Stephen Walt, one of the key neorealist authors, concludes that the first purpose of every grand strategy is to define the approach of states or alliances to the security threats which they face.1

Security culture represents a set of values, norms and measures. Its international dimension is defined in the light of the instrumental preferences of states. All states can opt for unilateralism or multilateralism, coercive or convictive strategy, military or non-military instruments, or prevention or pre-emption (Kirchner and Sperling 2007). And Gariup (2009) emphasises another pillar of the security culture: it is the approach to the security threats, which can be anywhere between their underestimation2 on one hand to their exaggeration on the other.3

The concept strategic culture covers a complex of ideas, reactions and paradigms which are typical for national as well as for international communities, and which are acquired via long term education or the imitation of successful nations and their armed forces (Snyder 1977). If the security culture is primarily the job of the political leaders, the strategic culture is the job of the military leaders.

Lastly, the term “doctrine”4 will be used as a common denominator for a set of central beliefs or principles for how to face existing security threats and challenges (Posen 1984). At the same time, doctrines give an answer to the question how to wage war in order to achieve the desired military ends, if it is necessary (Attrill 2015). According to the philosophy of NATO, “doctrine is defined as the fundamental principles by which the military forces guide their actions in support of objectives. It is authoritative but requires judgment in the application (AAP-6). It provides the philosophical basis for the particular action taken by military forces

1 Stephen M. Walt stresses the value of understanding state action as a response to perceived threats rather than potential enemies in The Origins of Alliances.
2 This behaviour was typical for J. V. Stalin and his approach to Hitler’s Germany between 1939 and 1941.
3 This behaviour was typical for G. W. Bush in his approach towards the regime of Saddam Hussein in Iraq.
4 Generally speaking, a doctrine is defined as a set of particular principles, positions, and thoughts which define a government’s orientation in the field of national and international security.
and the reasons behind that action”. Every doctrine has its direct implications for the force structure, training, and equipment of the related armed forces (Gray 1999); it creates a framework for their engagement in a concrete strategic environment (de Montbrial and Klein 2000).

6.1.2 The International and Military Context of the US Doctrinal Documents Approved Between 2012 and 2015

All the doctrinal documents from the period 2012–2015 are based on a profound and systematic analysis of the development of the ISR during the two preceding decades. They have five important common denominators which resulted from the dynamic of the international, historical, and military context after the end of the Cold War and which will be examined on the following pages.

6.1.2.1 The International and Historical Context

All these documents reflected the profound political, economic as well as military changes which happened during the two decades after the end of the Cold War on the political and military fields. They articulated American reactions to the profound changes that happened during the last three decades, namely the Eastern expansion of NATO, the enormous successes of the US military in the wars after 1990, and the long-term general weakening of Russia, which contrasted with the above mentioned successes of the USA. The Russian Federation, the successor state of the USSR, lost more than 5 million km² and 140 million inhabitants when the USSR was dismantled (Strategic Trends 2017). In terms of general economic force, Russia fell to the 12th place in the world, behind Canada and South Korea (IMF 2016). Its military budget dropped to under the level of 10% of the budget of the USA (The Balance 2016; Russia & India Report 2016). This Russian general decline clearly contrasted with the unprecedented rise of the USA, and especially with its strengthened self—confidence.

As Chapters 3 and 4 of this book have shown, after two waves of its expansion, NATO entered into the so-called vacuum on the territory of the POW and even in the North-Western part of the post-Soviet space. During the presidency of G. W. Bush, the large Northern and Southern part of the post-Soviet space passed under the direct (namely the three Baltic states) or indirect economic and political control (namely Ukraine and Georgia) of the USA and its allies. Of course, the numbers of the US units on the territory of the post-Soviet space are modest. They are much more modest than the numbers in the case of the overlarge military units (regiments, divisions, army corps, military districts) of the USSR during the Cold War.

The US doctrines reflect the fact that the USA and its allies are present on this strategically important territory, which could be, in case of an international crisis or war, used for projections of military force in directions leading towards St. Petersburg,
Moscow and other important Russian cities (Sprūds and Bukovskis 2014). This large space represents the military pillar of a large and rich portfolio of advantages of the external balancing of the USA as the hegemon of NATO after the first two waves of its post-Cold War expansion. All these strategic advantages determine the ambitions of the US doctrinal documents approved during the third decade after the end of the Cold War.

The doctrinal documents of the new generation covered the second decade of the new century, which means that they offered a vision and orientation for the two following decades, if not until the middle of the twenty-first century. It is no surprise that they fixed the concrete strategic and military ambitions, aims, and tasks of the US military in the post-Soviet area. Lastly, the US doctrines reacted to the fact that with the beginning of the new century, Russia started its long-term initiative aimed to reduce its military backwardness, underdevelopment, and inferiority in comparison with the USA. The key attention was paid to the build-up of A2/AD systems on its North-Western frontier (Frühling and Lasconjarias 2016). The numbers of the planes on the air bases as well as those of mechanised brigades and divisions rose to the maximum levels from the beginning of the 1990s (Jones 2012).

6.1.2.2 The Military Context of the US Doctrinal Documents in 2012–2015

From the military point of view, the A2/AD arms systems represent a common denominator of all these documents. They manifest the determination of the US operative realists to show that they will not hesitate to use the US’s contemporary spectacular military supremacy against all “challengers with A2/AD arms systems.” Before 2014, only China and Iran had been concretely mentioned as countries with systems of the category A2/AD. But even during this period, it was evident that huge concentrations of these arms systems were typical particularly in the post-Soviet space, and that Russia was the power with the strongest arsenal of these arms systems. Yes, this country was not directly mentioned in these doctrines, but nevertheless all these documents send an implicit, between-the-lines message that the post-Soviet space is a new important area of the American grand strategy and particularly of the following military doctrinal documents for the next decades.

The documents signed between 2012 and 2015 concretise the basic tasks for the A2/AD warfare. It is a warfare which includes hybrid and ambiguous instruments and methods in the new military environment, which has a lot of typical features (Gross 2016, p. 1). The first of them is a dramatic increase in the levels of military activity in the early phases of operations as well as increased modularity, agility, and flexibility across the functions of war. Second, the wars waged after 1990 confirmed the growing importance of the integration of intelligence and operations as well as of deception, stealth, and ambiguity in terms of complicating enemy calculations from the beginning until the end of military hostilities. Lastly, the military combat with A2/AD systems implies new concepts of combined arms and sea power; and it facilitates a philosophic return to the roots of war (Table 6.1).
### Table 6.1 The hierarchy of the American doctrinal documents of the new generation

| Category                        | Name of the doctrinal document                                      | Guarantor(s)                              | Month and year of publication |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| The highest political level (grand strategy) | NSS 2010                                                            | The President of the USA                  | May 2010                      |
| The highest political level (grand strategy) | Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for twenty-first century Defence | The President of the USA                  | January 2012                  |
| Military level                  | JOAC: Joint Operational Access Concept                               | The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) | January 2012                  |
| Military level                  | Air-Sea Battle (ASB)                                                 | The Chiefs of the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, and Air Force | May 2013                      |
| Military level                  | The Joint Concept for Entry Operations (JCEO)                        | The Chiefs of the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, and Air Force | April 2014                    |
| Military level                  | The Joint Concept for Rapid Aggregation (JCRA)                       | The Chiefs of the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, and Air Force | May 2015                      |

*Source* Compiled by the author

Besides the above mentioned documents, some others have been published. These are the Joint Concept for Command and Control of the Aerial Layer Network (JC2ALN, or JALN), signed in March 2015 (JC2ALN 2015), the Joint Concept for Health Services (JCHS), signed in August 2015 (JCHS 2015), and the Joint Concept for Logistics (JCL), signed in September 2015 (JCL 2015).

All of them are very important, particularly in the field of the so-called globally integrated logistics, which plays an important role in modern warfare (Ross 2018). Nevertheless, they will not be analysed in the following text particularly because of the fact that they represent “only” the application of the four above mentioned pivotal documents of basic importance. Instead, attention will be paid to the document which created the basic framework for the A2/AD warfare and articulated the most important tasks for the US soldiers in the A2/AD environment.

From the military point of view, all these documents were written with the aim to specify the role of the US military and technological superiority across all domains in the era of unimpeded operational access within the framework of long distance force projection. Under the phrase “unimpeded operational access”, it is necessary to understand the access to the decisive areas and targets, and quick control of them. This phrase demonstrates the determination of the U.S. to carry out as quickly as possible the positioning of its armed forces overseas with the aim to manage crises and prevent war, or defeat an enemy in a war (JOAC 2012).
6.2 From the NSS 2010 to the JCRA

This part of the chapter will analyse the most important doctrinal documents which have been approved within the relatively short period between 2012 and 2018. It will not cover all the documents from this period, but only the most important ones among them. The key attention will be paid to the documents which have a clear relevancy for the NATO expansion and its consequences in the field of ISR in post-Cold War Europe. The chapter will start with an analysis of the document in the category of grand strategy which has been signed by the 44th President of the USA Barack Obama, and it will be closed with an examination of the document JCRA, which fixes the concrete tasks of the US commanders and soldiers in the field of rapid aggregation of their military units.

6.2.1 The Grand Strategy and Security Culture of Barack Obama

6.2.1.1 From Obama as a Candidate...

All the US doctrines of the new generation have been written and published during the two mandates of Barack Obama, the 44th President of the USA. Before entering the White House, this former teacher of constitutional law at the University of Chicago Law School and former senator from Illinois (2003–2008) was known thanks to his views on health care reform and his exceptionally critical (and perspicacious) attitude towards the so-called Global War on Terror (GWOT) of the 43rd President of the USA and, especially, towards the war in Iraq. He shared the conclusion of Francis Fukuyama that global terror was not an existential threat, but a threat generated by the US foreign policy in the Middle East (Fukuyama 2006). From the point of view of the key topic of this book, it is necessary to remember that the process of NATO expansion was not his big priority. But once elected as the new President, Barack Obama was in the position of a statesman who inherited this process, with all its international consequences, from his two predecessors B. Clinton (the political guarantor of the first wave) and G. W. Bush (the political guarantor of the second wave).

6.2.1.2 To Obama as the President

And during his first mandate (2009–2014), he presented his original security culture, which had two basic dimensions: the negative and positive ones. The negative dimension of the security culture of Barack Obama has its roots in his famous speech against the Iraq War (Obama 2002). In this speech, delivered in Chicago on October 2, 2002, the then senator did not hesitate to call this war a dumb and rash war which had
been cynically pushed by Richard Perle and Paul Wolfowitz. In this sense, Obama fully shared the critical attitude of Zbigniew Brzeziński, who gave G. W. Bush an F grade when assessing his foreign policy (Brzeziński 2007). He did not relativise the danger of Saddam Hussein and his dictatorial rule, but nevertheless, he openly declared that Saddam posed no imminent and direct threat to the United States or his neighbours. In this sense, he clearly refuted the basis of the dominant US security culture, which was based on the exaggeration of this threat and a clear preference of a military approach and military instruments. And this courageous attitude, this negation of the negative attitude towards Iraq that was so typical for the then US mainstream approach, led Obama to a clear formulation of his own security culture.

The positive dimension of the security culture of Barack Obama was articulated in his programme from 2007 (Obama 2007). In this document, Obama, as a presidential candidate, presented his alternative vision, in which he advocated the demilitarisation of the security strategy of the USA and underlined the necessity to fight not only military threats, but also non-military ones, such as ignorance and intolerance, corruption and greed, and poverty and despair. And his logic of the negation of the negative foreign policy of his country resulted in the appeal to force the so-called allies in the Middle East, the Saudis and the Egyptians, to stop oppressing their own people, suppressing dissent, tolerating the corruption and inequality in their countries, and mismanaging their economies. Last but not least, Obama underlined the necessity of the renewal of an active security cooperation with Russia, namely in the field of nuclear arms control.

6.2.1.3 Negation of the Negative Features of the US Foreign Policy

Obama’s emphasis on the negation of the negative aspects of the foreign policy of his country gained the support of some important thinkers in the USA. Samuel P. Huntington and Steve Dunn appreciated the move from hegemonic thinking towards a cosmopolitan approach which meant that the USA should react and act as a member of a large international community (Huntington and Dunn 2004). And Obama’s emphasis on the demilitarisation of the US security strategy was strongly supported by Philip Gordon, a leading US thinker in this field due to his widely cited book (Gordon 2007–2008). Lastly, John Ikenberry, a leading author of liberal institutionalism, openly supported the move from the power-based international order towards international cooperation (Ikenberry 2014).

Just at the beginning of his first mandate, Obama managed to attract a global attention, especially by his famous Prague Speech in April 2009 (Obama 2009), in which he underlined that the existence of thousands of nuclear weapons is the most

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5 Two enormously radical and influential proponents of this war.

6 During his career, he held a number of research and teaching positions, especially those at the Brookings Institution in Washington, D.C. and the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London.
dangerous legacy of the Cold War. At the same time, he declared his commitment to seek the ways towards a world without nuclear weapons, even if the realisation of this dream may exceed his lifetime.

### 6.2.2 NSS 2010

Obama’s initiative in the field of security culture and grand strategy continued with the National Security Strategy 2010 (NSS 2010a). This important document was published during the second year of his first mandate. It reflects his original approach toward the stakes of peace and war and towards the role of force and diplomacy. The then new president underlined that it was a strategy of national renewal and global leadership and that the US’s long term security would come not from its ability to instil fear in other peoples, but through its capacity to speak to their hopes (NSS 2010b). And he continued by being critical towards the US overuse of its military might, its actions imposed without partners, and the overstretching of the US military.

At the same time, the new President accepted that the use of force is sometimes necessary, but he argued that it should come only after the exhausting of other options and a careful reflection of the costs and risks, and under the conditions of a broad international support and with a clear mandate of the U.N. Security Council. In his preface to the Nuclear Posture Review 2010, he underlined, once again (Sanger and Shanker 2010), his determination to make nuclear weapons obsolete, and to create incentives for countries to give up any nuclear ambitions they might have (NPRR 2010).

Of course, within the USA, Barack Obama provoked a lot of criticism. For example, Charles Krauthammer reproached him for his hesitation, delays, indecision and plaintive appeals to the (fictional) “international community” (Obama 2011). According to another US author, Obama’s foreign policy, particularly that in Libya in 2011, was a debacle (Kuperman 2015). And one of the most influential critics condemned Obama as the first “post-American” president, who reduced the emphasis on US hegemony in world politics and decreased the American military potential abroad, which is the most important pillar of the US exceptionalism (Bolton 2009).

From the global point of view, we can conclude that in the field of grand strategy and security culture, Barack Obama acted as a typical Wilsonianist of the twenty-first century. He put a key emphasis on the demilitarisation and denuclearisation of the security strategy of the USA, the respect for the international and the unavoidable role of the UN SC. Thanks to his courage, the world witnessed an incontestable move towards positive peace. And from the point of view of the NATO expansion, Obama paid key attention to the grand strategy and the security culture, while the doctrines, especially military doctrines, and strategic culture stayed under the authority of the US generals, namely the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Chief of Staff of the United States Army. And they continued to modernise the doctrines for the space of the expanded NATO.
6.2.3 Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for Twenty-First Century Defense

On the following pages, the doctrinal document with the title above will be called simply the *Priorities for twenty-first century Defense*. It was approved in the period which was characterised by the military and technological superiority of the USA and the backwardness of the Russian Federation (Zapfe and Haas 2016, p. 36). Its strategic and historical importance relies on two pillars. First, the *Priorities* opened a new era in the doctrinal thinking in the USA, which can be called the era of military activities in the A2/AD environment. At the same time, they paved the way for the following doctrinal documents which fixed concrete priorities for the Army, Navy and Air Force of the USA.

The *Priorities for twenty-first century Defense* were approved after a long series of important changes which had happened during the 1990s. First, the ISR have profoundly changed since the RF removed its big military units from the territories of its former satellite states (the RDA, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, the three Baltic states, Bulgaria, and Romania) and relocated them eastward, namely to the area of Kaliningrad and, sometime later, under the commandment of the Western Military District, to St. Petersburg (Friedman 2015). This movement of historical importance confirmed that Russia definitively lost all its strategic depth (Frühling and Lasconjarias 2016). Moreover, the area of Kaliningrad witnessed a reduction of the numbers of tanks (by one half), fighters (from 155 to 28) and submarines (from 42 to 2) (Hyde-Price).

Second, the *Priorities for twenty-first century Defense* reflected the four spectacular military successes that the USA obtained in the following large military operations: ODS in 1991, OAF in 1999, OEF in 2001, and OIF in 2003. All these operations showed the American military supremacy in comparison with all other countries of the contemporary world and led to manifestations of the growing American political as well as military engagement and responsibility in the post-Cold War world. These big successes of the US military resulted in profound changes of the ISR after the Cold War.

In reaction to the above mentioned changes, the document *Priorities for twenty-first century Defense* was conceived as a general political framework for the use of the US military superiority for the projection of American military forces into areas with Anti-Access/Area Denial systems. It has two basic characteristics. In its negative sense, this doctrine very often uses the word “challengers,” which represents a non-confrontational, maybe more “digestible” expression or label for possible military adversaries who could become military obstacles for the projection of American military power over great distances.

And in its positive sense, this doctrine declares the necessity to assure that the US soldiers have a free access to all areas where their challengers have their A2/AD systems. This document creates a general framework for the use of the US technological superiority in the most favourable conditions. It defines the concept of Anti-Access (A2) as a large set of actions intended to slow the deployment of friendly
forces into a theatre or force them to operate from distances farther from the locus of conflict than they would otherwise prefer. The A2 concept covers all the related activities, including the movement of military forces to a theatre. And the concept of Area-Denial (AD) is defined as a large set of actions intended to impede friendly operations within areas where an adversary cannot or will not prevent access. This means that the AD concept affects military manoeuvres within a theatre far away from the territory of the USA (Table 6.2).

The US doctrinal documents never explicitly mentioned Russia as an adversary or as a challenger, even if it was generally known that the RF was the state with the biggest quantity of A2/AD systems and that its A2/AD systems were at a very respectable level. The document only explained the key characteristics of the A2/AD systems, but all experts working with it understood the true context and message of this explosive subject and its importance for the future (Zapfe and Haas 2016, p. 36). The Russian arms systems of the A2/AD category are, since the beginning, at the disposal of the Western Military District and the forces on the Crimea peninsula. From among them, much attention is paid to the batteries of the S-300 and S-400 (Majumdar 2015) missiles which were furnished to the Russian military units with the aim to strengthen the capacities of the air defence (Freedberg 2015). Another important measure came with the introduction of the system of regular large scale military exercises whose aim is to reinforce the system of defence (RT News 2014) (Table 6.3).

### Table 6.2 A2/AD systems thirty year after the end of the Cold War

| Main systems                                      | Their capabilities                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|--------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| surface-, air- and submarine-launched ballistic and cruise missiles | They have the capability to carry out very accurate and precise attacks against forwarding bases (in peacetime) and deployed U.S. forces (during crisis and war operations) |
| Ballistic missiles with conventional heads       | They can destroy important US installations, particularly military airports                                                                                                                                         |
| Kinetic and non-kinetic anti-satellite weapons    | They can destroy space systems vital to U.S. force projection, namely C2 and ISTAR systems                                                                                                                        |
| Submarine forces and anti-ship missiles          | They can interdict U.S. and friendly sea lines of communications in both sovereign and international waters between U.S. bases and the theatre of possible operations                                                 |
| Air–defence systems                              | They have the potential to complicate the realisation of the ASB strategy, particularly the entry operations                                                                                                       |
| Long-range reconnaissance and surveillance systems | They provide necessary targeting information, including information related to satellites, aircraft, and land- and ship-based radars                                                                                       |

*Source* Compiled by the author
### Table 6.3  The most important Russian A2/AD systems in the light of American doctrines

| The name of the system | The key mission of the system | Location |
|------------------------|------------------------------|----------|
| SAM = surface-to-air missile SAM-300 and SAM-400 | Protection of Russian units and important centres | Kaliningrad and Crimea |
| K–300 P Bastion mobile systems | Littoral anti-ship capabilities = attacks against enemies landing military vessels\(^a\) | The Baltic Fleet, The Black Sea Fleet |
| Krasуча | Electronic warfare | The Baltic Sea and Crimea |

*Source* Compiled by the author

\(^a\)With the use of SS–N–26 Strobile missiles, 636. 6 Varšavjanka (Kilo) non-nuclear submarines and shallow-water mines

Out of the above mentioned systems, the Krasуча radars raise particular concerns in the USA. These systems can paralyse radar signals at a distance of 150–300 km, and they are able to jam land radars and radars of supersonic planes and drones. Moreover, they have the capacity to analyse the trajectories of their flights and the use of their arms systems; they are thus called “anti-plane radars” (Zapfe and Haas 2016, pp. 34–41).

#### 6.2.3.1 The Challenger in the Role of the Weak Actor

The basic characteristics of the Priorities for twenty-first century Defence rely on an implicit categorisation of the key actors in a hypothetical direct military confrontation in case of a projection of the US military forces at great distances. This implicit categorisation indicates that the military units of the USA and its allies represent the strong actor, while the units of the target state of that projection are in the role of the weak actor. In all the analysed doctrines, this weak actor is called the “challenger” and this relatively impartial label will be used on the following pages of this book for the explication of the substance of the entire philosophy of A2/AD. If the strong actor carries out a projection of its armed forces, the weak actor is determined to resist, his aim being to complicate the projection, or to deny it.

Within this implicit categorisation, the “challenger,” in the role of the weak actor, has no possibility to carry out a counter-offensive against the strong actor. The stronger actor projects his military units over very long distances so that they are far away from his own territory, which means that his homeland has the status of a sanctuary. On the other hand, the ambition of the weak actor, of the “challenger”, is much more modest. His ambition is to reduce and weaken the military superiority of the strong actor who carries out the projection of his offensive units to the targeted territory. This basic circumstance explains the fundamental importance of the A2/AD systems—they give the “challenger” the possibility to reduce the military superiority of the strong actor and complicate his offensive operations.

According to this doctrinal approach, the so-called “challenger” relies on his A2/AD systems with two key aims. His minimal aim is to reduce the speed of the
projection of the military forces of the strong actor. In this case, the tactics called attrition can happen. The maximal aim of the weak actor is to stop the projection of the strong actor and defeat him. In this case, the victory of the weak actor could discredit the strong actor and force him to forget his ambition to project his military units over a very long distance (Krepinevich 2010).

6.2.4  The Joint Operational Access Concept (JOAC) of January 2012

The JOAC (2012) is the first document to concretise the above analysed Priorities for twenty-first century Defence and apply them to the military level. It was published only two weeks after this document of the category of grand strategy. As it fixes the concrete tasks for all units and Headquarters conceived as a general conceptual framework for A2/AD warfare which fixes the tasks for the combat activities of US soldiers during their projections over long distances into areas with a high concentration of A2/AD systems.

6.2.4.1 The Cascade of Arguments

This doctrinal document is based on a sophisticated cascade of arguments which has the six following levels: the American way of life (AWL), its pillars, foreign actors (challengers) who could threaten the AWL, the instruments that they have at their disposal, the US determination to eliminate these threats, and the key instruments that it can use with the aim to face its challengers.

At the first level, the USA defines itself as a global power with global interests. Its political as well as military elites are convinced that the AWL represents the top political value of all its doctrines, including the JOAC. At the same time, the AWL represents the basis for the arguments on all five of the following levels. At the second level, the AWL rests on two mutually intertwined pillars: the USA categorically requires a free access to the global strategic resources (as a part of the so-called global commons) as well as to the global markets. At the same time, the JOAC underlines that the USA has not only the right, but also the duty to send its soldiers into areas where the USA or its allies could be exposed to imminent and serious security threats.

On the third level, the cascade of arguments continues with the presentation of the serious and imminent threats to which the USA and its allies are exposed. These threats are identified with the so-called challengers, which concretely means the countries which could try to limit the freedom of action of the USA and its allies during the projection of their armed forces over long distances into every place of the globe. This document identifies the future enemies as both states and nonstate...
actors which would see the adoption of an anti-access/area-denial strategy against the United States as a favourable course of action for them (JOAC 2012, p. 13).

At the fourth level, the key instrument of these “challengers” is identified as their arsenal of A2/AD arms systems. The JOAC concretely mentions the most dangerous A2/AD systems, which could be used with the aim to deny the projection of force of the US military units. It divides these instruments into two categories. The first of them is the category A2, which includes the long-range systems designed to prevent an opposing force from entering an operational area. This category concretely includes missiles launched from land, planes or military ships whose range is more than 1000 miles, long range radars and anti-satellite systems. The second category is identified with AD systems, systems of a shorter range designed not to keep an opposing force out, but to limit its freedom of action within the operational area; these systems are engaged with the aim to oppose the military activities of projected forces which managed to enter the given territory, which is called the operational area. This category includes particularly air forces, air defence, precision guided missiles, artillery, land forces and drones (JOAC 2012, p. 17).

At the fifth level, the cascade of arguments continues with the declaration of the determination of the USA to eliminate these systems with projections of force, and it is crowned by an open declaration that the JOAC is a warfighting concept. On the sixth level, the instruments of the USA are charged with the projection of force and forcible entries into the territories of states that are perceived as challengers or even as threats for the USA or its allies. The JOAC states that the preparation of the units charged with these tasks is oriented in two basic directions. The first of them is that of the system of long term preparation of the operation in the A2/AD environment, which could be regularly organised on the territory of the USA or of its allies. And the second is that of the realisation of entry operations which open the way for the following quick advancement into the territory of the enemy armed with A2/AD systems.

The JOAC underlines that the most important ability of the US armed forces is force projection, which is defined as the ability to project a military instrument of national power from the United States or another theatre in response to requirements for military operations (DOD Dictionary). Also, the document explains the importance of operational access, which is defined as the ability to project military force into an operational area with sufficient freedom of action to accomplish the mission (JOAC 2012, p. 1). Lastly, this doctrine emphasises the role of assured access, which is defined as open access to the maritime, air, space and cyberspace domains (NATO’s Act 2011). From a military perspective, the Alliance relies and increasingly depends on assured access to all four domains—often simultaneously (NATO’s Act 2011, p. 3). The aim of the JOAC is to assure the unhindered national use of the global commons and select sovereign territories, waters, airspace and cyberspace, which is achieved by projecting all the elements of national power.

On the sixth level (instruments of the USA), the JOAC mentions not only the instruments, but also the abilities which are necessary for success in the field of projection of force into a so-called A2/AD environment. It starts by discussing operational access in the face of armed opposition. The following general principles,
when applied to each situation through planning and execution, amplify that basic concept with an additional level of description. Among them, the Operational Access Precepts play a very important role. They are based on the requirements of the broader mission, while also designing subsequent operations to lessen access challenges.

At the same time, the JOAC underlines the importance of the preparation of the operational area in advance with the aim to facilitate access, namely to seize the initiative by deploying and operating on multiple, independent lines of operations. The Precepts include provisions for the exploitation of the advantages in one or more domains to disrupt enemy anti-access/area-denial capabilities in others, the disruption of enemy reconnaissance and surveillance efforts while protecting friendly efforts, as well as the creation of pockets or corridors of local domain superiority to penetrate the enemy’s defences and maintain them as required to accomplish the mission. Lastly, the JOAC underlines the importance of direct manoeuvres against key operational objectives from a strategic distance, in-depth attacks against enemy anti-access/area-denial defences and the maximisation of surprise through deception, stealth, and ambiguity to complicate enemy targeting (JOAC 2012, p. 17).

The concept of deception has two basic meanings in this case. On the level of grand strategy, this behaviour includes, according to Mearsheimer (2018) three key methods. The first is lying, which is defined as knowingly making an untrue statement. The second is spinning, in other words emphasising or de-emphasising of certain facts. And the last is concealment, which is withholding information from the public that might undermine or weaken a favoured policy. As a result, deception creates distrust, weakens the rule of law, undermines policy making, and provokes a loss of faith among the public which might lead the given society to be open to an authoritarian regime.

On the military level, deception is defined as a complex of measures designed to mislead the enemy by manipulation, distortion, or falsification of evidence and to induce the enemy to react in a manner prejudicial to its interests. In the US military doctrines, military deception (MILDEC) is conceived as a complex of actions executed with the aim to deliberately mislead adversary military, paramilitary, or violent extremist organization decision makers, thereby causing the adversary to take specific actions (or inactions) that will contribute to the accomplishment of the friendly mission (MILDEC 2012). And the doctrines of the new generation define it as a large portfolio of actions which are executed with the aim to deliberately mislead adversary military decision makers in regard to friendly military capabilities, intentions, and operations, thereby causing the adversary to take specific actions (or inactions) that will contribute to the accomplishment of the friendly mission (JOAC 2012, p. 25).

### 6.2.5 Air-Sea Battle, May 2013

The third of the doctrinal documents of the new generation was approved in the spring of 2013 under the name Air-Sea Battle (2013). The basic philosophy of this
enormously important document was inspired by the Air-Land Battle (ALB) concept from the last decade of the Cold War, whose aim was to face the conventional quantitative superiority of the POW. The ALB doctrine put the main emphasis on the combat activities of the Allied Air Forces, namely their massive attacks against the armies in the second and even third echelons on the territory of the former Czechoslovakia, the DDR, and Poland and the Eastern parts of the USSR. This doctrine paid decisive attention to a close coordination between land forces acting as an aggressively manoeuvring defence, and air forces attacking rear-echelon forces feeding the front line enemy forces (Grant 2001).

The ALB doctrine was approved in 1982 (AirLand Battle 2018) as a warfighting concept of the US Army for the war in the European theatre and served as a doctrinal base until the end of the Cold War (Winton 1996). Its key purpose was the elimination of the large conventional superiority of the USSR and its satellite states (Starry 1981). This doctrine oriented the efforts of the US armed forces toward the destruction of the conventional forces and of all of their logistics pertaining to the territories of the satellite countries.

6.2.5.1 The International Context of ASB

The philosophy of the above mentioned ALB was so consistent that it became the basic inspiration even for the concept of Air-Sea Battle. More than 20 years after the end of the Cold War, the ASB doctrine was elaborated with the aim to develop the long tradition of the integrated battle doctrine which became official in February 2010. Thus ASB’s name was changed to the Joint Concept for Access and Maneuver in the Global Commons (JAM-GC) in 2015 (Goldfein 2015). The primary target of this doctrine is not the post-Soviet space, but the “asymmetrical threats” in the Western Pacific and the Persian Gulf. This doctrine was elaborated as the US response to the military modernisation of two problematic countries in the Eastern hemisphere: China and Iran (Gady 2015). For their detailed and profound analysis, the Pentagon created a China Integration Team (CIT) composed of U.S. Navy officers. Following their military analysis and recommendations, the Obama Administration declared in 2010 that freedom of maritime navigation in the South China Sea was a U.S. national interest (Glain 2011) (Table 6.4).

### Table 6.4  The basic definition of ASB

| General aims | Concrete aims |
|--------------|---------------|
| Operational superiority of the armed forces of the USA | The ability to operate in the A2/AD environment |
| The USA will have the advantage of the escalation of military activities | The USA will decide about the conditions and circumstances of the employment of the destructive arms systems |

Source: Compiled by the author
Even if this new doctrine is not specifically oriented to the area of the South China Sea, its key principles could be applied even at the Eastern frontier of the expanded NATO. This is especially the case with the North Eastern area, where four new member states of NATO (Poland and the three Baltic countries) are littoral countries with strategically important coasts which could be used, if necessary, for the projection of military forces over necessary distances. In the South-Eastern frontier of the expanded NATO, Bulgaria and Romania, as new member states of NATO, don’t offer the same possibilities for the projection of military forces, but in case of the inclusion of Ukraine and Georgia in NATO, the geostrategic importance of this area could enormously grow.

6.2.5.2 Military Aims of ASB

The above mentioned circumstances explain the strategic and military importance of the ASB doctrine and of its emphasis on a large portfolio of tasks for the coordination of the Air Force and Navy for cases of invasive operations in the areas of A2/AD operations (Krepinevich 2010). In this new international context, ASB presents new doctrinal priorities as well as new general and concrete aims for the military at the beginning of the new century (Lock-Pullan 2005).

The ASB doctrine underlines three military aims for the US military in the A2/AD environment. The first of them is defined as a successful fight against the A2/AD systems, a fight which must be based on the operational superiority of the US armed forces across all domains. The second aim is to have an escalation advantage within the framework of all military operations. Lastly, ASB is oriented toward the projection of military force and unlimited freedom of actions in the so-called global commons. The phrase “global commons” is not used here with the aim to identify any concrete territory. It refers to the air, waters, space, and cyber-space which are in the possession of no state, but which have vital importance for the USA, namely for the projection of its military force towards a hostile territory. The more GCs the USA has under its control, the more platforms it can use for the application of its Priorities for twenty-first century Defense and other doctrines of the new generation, namely for the projection of force.

6.2.5.3 The 3D Missions and Their Importance

Another important pillar of ASB is represented by the so-called 3D missions, which have a common denominator: intensive and concentrated attacks into the depths of the “challenger” with the aim to destroy the maximum number of their A2/AD systems (O’Hanlon and Steinberg 2012). They are conceived as integrated operations in all five domains: air, land, sea, space and cyberspace. This means that ASB covers the large space between a doctrine and a military concept (O’Hanlon 2012).

From the geopolitical point of view, ASB is not a strategy of combat against a concrete enemy or state; it is not conceived for a concrete region. It is conceived
as a strategy for the entire globe. Its key attention is paid to modern arms systems, which represent the most important obstacles for entry operations of the US armed forces (O’Hanlon and Steinberg 2012). The phrase “arms systems” is used to refer to the following systems: ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, sophisticated systems of air defence, and systems of electronic combat which are able to destroy C4ISR systems. Since the beginning, all these systems have been deployed eastward from the contemporary Eastern border of NATO; more specifically, they are at the disposal of the Western Military District in St. Petersburg.

And from the military point of view, this doctrine has two basic missions. The first is to augment the combat superiority of the US Armed Forces at any place of the world and across all domains. The second mission of ASB is to assure a full escalation advantage of the US military units. It puts a particular emphasis on a perfect coordination and integration of military operations in all the dimensions: land, sea, air, space and cyberspace. Within this framework, ASB underlines the importance of the following key aims. The first is the manoeuvres in the A2/AD milieu, and the second is the freedom of action in the projection of force into the so-called global commons (GC), which can be used as the bases from which it is possible to reach the hostile territory (Table 6.5).

In comparison with ALB, the ASB doctrine manifested two basic changes. The first is the rising importance of the intensity as well as the extensity of the military operations of the USA and its allies. The second is that the missions of the Air Force are now enlarged from the initial support of the land forces in the case of ALB to the support of the maritime infantry during large and intensive sea landing operations in the countries with a strong potential in terms of A2/AD arms systems in the case of ASB.

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Table 6.5 The “3D” Missions

| Name of the mission | The key purpose of the mission |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|
| Disrupt             | To destroy the adversary’s C4IS systems |
| Destroy             | To destroy the adversary’s A2/AD systems |
| Defeat              | To destroy the adversary’s combat units |

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7 C4ISR is an acronym used by the U.S. Department of Defense, U.S. intelligence agencies, and the defense community which stands for Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance.
6.2.6 The Joint Concept for Entry Operations (JCEO) of April 2014

The fourth in the line of the doctrinal documents of the new generation was published in April 2014 and represents an important document which presents concrete missions and aims of the armed forces of the USA and its allies during their projections over long distances into environments saturated by A2/AD systems (JCEO 2014). Before its detailed examination, it is necessary to remember that the USA has a long and deeply rooted tradition of so-called long distance entry operations which covers the long period from the Korean War (namely the battles at Pusan /Utz 1954/ and the Yalu/MacArthur 1964/) to Operation Restored Hope in Somalia (Stewart 1994).

The Joint Concept for Entry Operations is a doctrinal document of the US Army and it has been authorised in spring 2014 by General Martin E. Dempsey. This four-star general underlined in his message that the JCEO is a vision for how joint forces will enter a foreign territory and immediately employ their capabilities to accomplish a full variety of possible assigned missions. The entry operation should be conducted in the presence of an armed opposition which would be characterised by increasingly advanced area-denial systems in places where the environment and infrastructure may be degraded or austere. Like in the other doctrinal documents, possible enemies are referred to as “opponents,” or “adversaries” (Air-Sea Battle 2013, p. 7). They are characterised as forces that will limit the freedom of action of the US mission-tailored joint forces or military forces, which are operating in a difficult security environment far away from their homeland. The key aim of this doctrine is to gain and maintain accessions of foreign territory (JCEO 2014, p. vi).

The US military activities are defined as forcible entries against armed opposition with the aim to fulfil broader strategic goals. Entry operations of this kind are conceived as sea and air penetrations of the foreign territory with the aim to fulfil all the strategic aims of the USA and its allies. Forcible entries as one the most important mission types are defined as the seizing and holding of a lodgement in the face of armed opposition (Joint Chiefs of Staff 2017). The word lodgement refers to a designated area in a hostile environment which has been seized and held with the aim to assure a continuous landing of troops and materials there and to provide manoeuvre space for subsequent military operations within the framework of the projection of force over long distances (JCEO 2014, p. 1) (Table 6.6).

This doctrinal document defines not only new missions of the armed forces and the capabilities necessary for their fulfilment but also new types of armed forces that should realise these operations in case of war: entry forces, support forces, support of entry forces and follow-on forces. Last but not least, this document pays much attention to the military bases of the USA and its allies in the territories far from the

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8He has in his background the functions of the commander of a regiment, the commander of armored divisions and even the commander of the Vth Corps.

9The 18th Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, in office from October 1, 2011 until September 25, 2015.
Table 6.6 Basic characteristics of entry operations

| Key missions                                      | Projection of force over a long distance | Rapid manoeuvres of navy and air assaults | Forcible entries into foreign territories |
|--------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| Key tasks                                        | Defeating all resistance of adversary forces | Rapid entries and destroying the adversary’s A2/AD systems. |
| Key types of manoeuvres                         | Envelopment, infiltration and penetration |

Source Compiled by the author

Table 6.7 Military bases of the USA

| Types of military bases                       | Main tasks                                      |
|-----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| Bases near the possible entry operations      | Rapid manoeuvres                                |
| Rotational forward bases                      | Preparation of entry operations                 |
| Homeland bases                                | Long–term preparation for the military activities in the A2/AD environment |

US homeland and as near as possible to the frontiers of “challengers” armed with A2/AD systems. These bases are enormously important, and they represent one of the pillars of the doctrinal thinking (Table 6.7).

ASB is characterised by a clear definition of three key types of military manoeuvres: envelopment, infiltration and penetration. The first type is described as a quick military action on the territory of the enemy based on technological superiority and high mobility. The aim of the second type of manoeuvre is the destruction of the cohesion of a potential enemy and, particularly, of its A2/AD systems. And penetration, as the third type, is defined as a series of rapid attacks against the defensive units of the enemy.

Finally, several key instruments are defined within the framework of ASB: multinational operations, modern intelligence and the growing firepower aimed particularly against air defence and anti-navy A2/AD systems. The same logic is characteristic for the contemporary doctrine JCEO from April 2014. This doctrine is officially presented as a warfighting concept (Department of Defence 2012) against all “adversaries” or “opponents” who could limit the freedom of action of the US military forces in the environment with A2/AD systems.

The main mission of the JCEO is to gain and maintain access to foreign territories against the so-called armed opposition of states which could use their A2/AD systems with the aim to stop the military units of the USA and its allies. This means that forcible military entries represent the key instrument of this doctrine (JCEO 2014, p. vi). The USA is determined to carry out these large and rapid entry operations at
every place in the contemporary world where its vital interests could be exposed to a menace.

At the same time, the JCEO doctrine explains the main forms of war to be waged against states with A2/AD systems. It underlines the key importance of air and sea assaults and operations prepared and waged in accordance with the Air-Sea Battle concept. Within this framework, the US soldiers should be able to satisfy all the criteria of projection of military power and forcible entries in all parts of the contemporary world, and operate at global distances (Department of Defence 2012, p. 3).

According to this doctrine, the forcible entry operation will be followed by the so-called joint entry operations, which are to be realised by the specialised mission–tailored joint forces. During the first stages of these operations, the combat units of the USA and its allies have the mission to search for the weak and vulnerable elements of the adversaries and to transform them into entry points not only for the first echelons, but also for the units which will reinforce the potential of the projected attack forces.

### 6.2.7 The Joint Concept for Rapid Aggregation (JCRA) of May 2015

The month of May 2015 saw the publication of the first doctrinal document approved after the Russian annexation of the Crimea. Nevertheless, this dramatic event had no direct impact on the JCRA (2015), which is based on a continuity with the philosophy of the Priorities for twenty-first century Defense of 2012. The JCRA openly declares that it takes its inspiration particularly from current doctrines, lessons learned from recent operations, best practices, and ongoing development work, and their evaluation for the purpose of finding a solution to the problem of the future operational environment (JCRA 2015, p. iii).

From the military point of view, the JCRA represents a coherent operational platform for the combined forces which are charged with the so-called globally integrated operations—GIO. These operations are characterised by high flexibility, decentralised cooperation with all the Allied commanders, a high preparedness for combat and a capability to take part in combat in the A2/AD environment. They are conceived as the US strategic approach to a large portfolio of global security tasks (MECC 2018). In the definition of this doctrine, General Martin Dempsey, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, underlined the global dimension and mission of this doctrine. According to him, the USA has the ambition to create a “globally postured Joint Force” which will be able to operate “anywhere in the world with a wide array of partners.” This means that “[t]here may be times when a large centralized force is needed, but more often than not, the Joint Force will operate as a decentralized network that can aggregate on demand and dial capabilities up or down depending on the mission and the operating environment.”
The entirety of this doctrinal document is based on two basic words. The first of them is the substantive “aggregation”, which is defined as the ability “to collect units or parts into a mass or whole” with the aim to form “a group, body, or mass composed of many distinct parts or individuals able to achieve unity of effort in the accomplishment of common objectives.” And the adjective “rapid” (Merriam Webster) denotes the speed of action required to aggregate forces under the compressed timelines of crises. Ultimately, the necessary response speed is relative to the mission’s tempo as it unfolds.

The key aims of this doctrine are to improve the US’s ability to rapidly aggregate forces, to achieve efficiencies and synergies at a qualitatively new level, and to quickly connect with a diverse and evolving set of partners and networks with substantively improved collaborative tools and practices. Rapid aggregation aims toward a significant strategic and operational agility which would be achieved by increasingly globally integrated planning and resourcing strategies. Its final aim is to generate and aggregate the military forces necessary for successful operations. The JCRA concept orients the military training of the US armed forces towards gaining the ability to realise so-called globally integrated operations which are characterised by a high flexibility, decentralised cooperation with all the Allied commanders, a high preparedness for combat and a capability to take part in combat in the A2/AD environment.

6.3 The Conclusion of the Chapter

This entire chapter has been consecrated to the analysis of the American doctrinal documents approved during the half-decade 2010–2015. These documents symbolise a new stage in the history of the US security and strategic culture. They have been analysed on two basic levels: those of grand strategy and military doctrines.

The category of grand strategy is represented by the NSS 2010 and the Priorities for twenty-first century Defense—both of which have been signed by the 44th President of the USA and shaped by his emphasis on the demilitarisation and denuclearisation of the US security culture, and on the move from unilateralism towards multilateralism. Within this general framework, the NATO expansion and its political and military aspects did not play a central role. These aspects have been reserved for the category of military doctrines.

From the geopolitical point of view, all the military doctrines from the period 2012–2015 were written as a concentrated reaction of American operative realists to the fact that the second Russian president initiated, after the so-called lost decade symbolised by his predecessor, a large and intensive modernisation of the Russian Armed Forces which, since the beginning, had two basic characteristics. First, it had been motivated by the Russian fears of encirclement after the second wave of the NATO expansion. Second, as the fears of Russian operative realists were identified particularly with large amphibious invasive anding operations, the modern A2/AD anti-landing systems became the pillar of this intensive modernisation. Their mission
is limited to attacking and destroying all systems which can be used to approach the territory of the RF with the aim to carry out an entry operation. This concretely means that they are to attack military vessels, submarines, planes and systems of navigation and reconnaissance, including modern satellites.

From the military point of view, the US military doctrines have four common denominators. First, they reflect the US’s growing military self-confidence acquired after a lot of successful military operations and regime changes after 1990 (Zapfe and Haas 2016, p. 38). Second, they react to the so-called challengers’ obsession with offensive operations with an emphasis on quick attacks on the arms systems in the depths of the given territory. Third, they underline the enlargement of the Western values as well as of the right of other countries to demand and obtain security guarantees from the USA. Lastly, they are oriented towards offensive entry operations (Zapfe and Haas 2016, p. 38) waged with the aim to destroy as much as possible of the A2/AD systems. No wonder that Michael Haas concludes that these doctrines have no “altruistic basis” (Haas 2014, p. 69).

The growing military self-confidence of the USA is manifested in three important directions. First, the US military doctrines send out an implicit general message that the post-Soviet space, particularly its Western part, is seen as an area vital for the American hegemonic system. Second, they underline the strategic importance of the American technological and military primacy. Third, they overtly manifest the determination of the US elites to use the US’s military primacy not only in peace but also, if necessary, on the military field. Lastly, all the US doctrinal documents are oriented towards offensive entry operations that would go into the depths of states equipped with A2/AD systems. They reflect the determination of the American operative realists to accumulate as much destructive force as possible and locate it as close to the Eastern frontier of the enlarged NATO as possible. Nevertheless, all the doctrines could have some counterproductive consequences.

In peacetime, the risk of a regionalisation of NATO could grow. This risk results from the fact that the Eastern frontier of NATO is characterised by a high degree of military tension and of danger of a direct military confrontation. On the other hand, the Western flank of the Alliance can differ from the new member countries, and they could differ especially in their perceptions of security threats. This situation could lead to a so-called regional security dilemma and internal tension in the Alliance, as was so precisely explained by Snyder (1997) and Massala (2010). Today, the border with the RF represents the most controversial area of all of NATO, and it is characterised by an enormously high military tension. On the one hand, the Poles and the Baltic states live with major security fears regarding their Eastern neighbour. On the other hand, the threat perception of the South-Western flank of NATO is profoundly different (Zapfe and Haas 2016, p. 35).

And in case of war, there is a risk of a counterproductive and unintended military escalation and of big losses on the part of the Allied forces during the first days of armed hostilities. As the Allied VJTF and NRF military units require between 2 and 5 days for their transfer, the fate of the Baltic countries would be sealed without any armed conflict in this scenario (Haas 2014). The Baltic States could be annexed by Russia without a single shot being fired (Fiott 2016).
6.3 The Conclusion of the Chapter

6.3.1 The Primordial Importance of the Bay of Finland

The years that followed the publication of the above analysed documents confirmed the primordial importance of the Bay of Finland. Russia accelerated the production and the deployment of the new A2/AD systems, while none of them can be used to attack the territory of the USA or that of the so-called old member countries of NATO. In this category of Russian arms systems, there is only one partial exception: the new missile called SS-26 Stone or “Iskander,” a road-mobile short-range ballistic missile (SRBM) with a range of up to 500 km (SS-26 Iskander 2016). Using a common transporter-erector-launcher (TEL) and support vehicles, the system can also fire 9M728 (R-500, SSC-7) and 9M729 (SSC-8) cruise missiles. The installation (The Guardian 2016) of these systems has been interpreted as the Russian answer to the American antimissile systems in Europe (Richardson 2011). This measure provoked an enormously controversial reaction because the Iskanders can be launched against targets at a distance of 700 km, which means that they could reach the Eastern part of the FRG (Akulov 2016).

As the Baltic area and particularly the Bay of Finland represent a doorstep to the Northern part of the RF, the Russian operative realists pay key attention to the modernisation of the Baltic Fleet. This important unit of the Russian Navy obtained new corvettes of the class Steregushchiy (Russian: Стэргушц̄ий, lit. ‘Vigilant’) (Global Naval Forces). It is a new category of multipurpose corvettes which was designed for combat in littoral zone operations, namely for engagement against three key military threats: enemy submarines, surface ships, and gun support of landing operations (rusnavy.com 2012).

6.3.2 Military Exercises and Growing Tension

But on the other hand, the USA and its allies continue to object that these systems represent a threat for the security of the new member states. As a result, this part of our continent is witnessing a growing military tension which is manifested particularly during military exercises. Among them, a large test of the above mentioned corvettes played an important role. March and April 2020 saw six corvettes participating in large-scale drills of the Russian Navy. Since the beginning this exercise was planned and largely presented as an answer (BMPD 2020) to the largest NATO post-Cold War simulation of amphibious landing in Europe, which received the code name DEFENDER-Europe 20. It was a large U.S.-led multinational exercise that included NATO’s participation. During this deployment of U.S.-based forces to Europe, the largest in more than 25 years, more than 20,000 soldiers were deployed directly from the U.S. to Europe. This exercise was planned with the aim to demonstrate the U.S. commitment to NATO and its resolve to stand by its European allies and partners (Defender Europe 20).
Today, we know that this regularly repeated military exercise carried out all over Europe, as well as the exercises Dynamic Front, Saber Strike, and Swift Response, was cancelled due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic (Milevski 2020). Nevertheless, the plans and the preparations of this large scale, multi-national drill provoked a Russian response in the form of an exercise of the Baltic Fleet. This escalation confirmed the dangerous logic of the mirror security behaviour between NATO and the RF. The annexation of the Crimea was followed by the exercises of NATO and they were followed by the exercise of a big Russian unit. As a result, the military tension between the RF and NATO continues to rise to a very dangerous and explosive level.

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