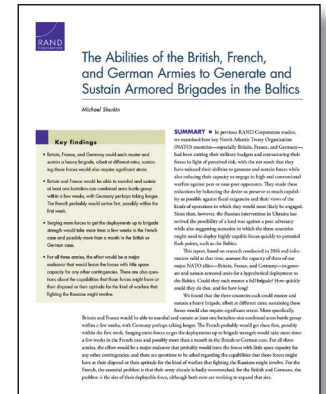




The Abilities of the British, French, and German Armies to Generate and Sustain Armored Brigades in the Baltics

Michael Shurkin

www.rand.org/t/RR1629



Britain, France, and Germany had been cutting military budgets and conventional military capabilities, until the Russian intervention in Ukraine revived the possibility of a land war against a peer adversary. This report assesses the current capacity of Britain, France, and Germany to generate armored units for a hypothetical deployment to the Baltics. Could they muster a full brigade each? How quickly could they do that, and for how long?



RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What is the current capacity of three of the United States’ major NATO allies—Britain, France, and Germany—to generate armored units for a hypothetical deployment to the Baltics?
- Could they muster a full brigade each?
- How quickly could they do that, and for how long?



KEY FINDINGS

British Army Conclusions

- The British Army can provide an armored task force within 30 days and would require between 30 and 90 days to scale up to a full armored brigade.
- Britain should be able to sustain at least one armored brigade indefinitely, although there are lingering doubts associated with the undermanned nature of the Adaptive Force, which will be called upon to provide units to relieve the units of the Reactive Force.

French Army Conclusions

- France can probably field one medium or heavy battalion task force within a week. Generating the equivalent of a full armored brigade probably would take several weeks to a month.

continued on back

- The toll of France’s ongoing operations—especially Operation Sentinelle—on French Army readiness introduces a significant degree of uncertainty regarding France’s capacity to sustain a brigade and that brigade’s proficiency. This uncertainty will linger until France finds a way to lighten the load currently carried by its ground forces, particularly in the army’s homeland security role, while also growing the overall size of the force.

German Army Conclusions

- The German Army most likely would require a week or more to mobilize an armored battalion; a full brigade probably would take a month.
- Because the Germans will have to strip other units of equipment to provide for an armored brigade, they will have a hard time fielding a larger force or engaging in other operations until equipment shortages are addressed.

