Notes:
1. Below are informal notes taken by a JHU/APL staff member at the Seminar.
2. Links to the video, audio, bulletized notes, and presentation files for past seminars can be found on www.jhuapl.edu/rethinking and the JHU/APL YouTube Playlist.

Introduction
Dr. Kearns began by describing the European Leadership Network, the organization he co-founded with Des Browne, the former UK secretary of state and defense. The organization's objective is to make the concept European leadership not an oxymoron. To do so 160 former, current, and emerging military and political leaders from throughout Europe participate in programs to share and distribute information about European foreign, defense and security policy challenges. The ELN defines Europe broadly, even including Russia because of the serious security issues.

The focus of the Seminar’s talk would be one of the most serious challenges that face the European security establishment – the confrontation between Russia and the West. Dr. Kearns noted that he would go beyond the current crisis in Ukraine and the wider implications for Europe to include what could be done.

Context Points
1. For the situation in Ukraine today
   • Over 6,000 dead and 12,000 wounded
   • More than 1 million displaced people
     o About 600,000 left Ukraine with about 500,000 going to Russia
   • About 5 million people are in the conflict zone
   • Tremendous economic costs of conflict
     o Ukraine’s economy has contracted by 15%
     o Average income in Ukraine is now about $4 a day – a staggering concept for a country with 45 million people in Europe today
     o Data on the ELN website describes how much funding Ukraine needs to survive ($27.4 billion in 2015-2016 just for the short term economic crisis)
   • Current problems come on top of what was already a dysfunctional, corrupt state
• Problem: Ukraine could become a failed state of 45 million people within the next few years with various implications for the rest of Europe
  o Flows of refugees to both Europe and Russia
  o Opportunities for organized crime and cross-border terrorists to operate
• Bottom line: Europe faces a significant security challenge in Ukraine complicated by the overall Russia-West dynamic, which is even more worrying

2. From the 2014 ELN report *Dangerous Brinkmanship* on recent proactive Russian activities
• Incidents mapped in the report included:
  o Abduction of an Estonian security official
  o NATO territory violations
  o Submarine operations in Swedish waters
  o Several simulated cruise missile attacks on the US, Denmark, elsewhere
• Problem: While not out of control, the developing dynamic was serious because of the potential for miscalculations, accidents, something that could trigger escalation
  o No clear rules of engagement (ROE) as there were between Soviet and US ships and aircraft during the Cold War
  o Consider how the shooting down of a civilian aircraft last year set off sanctions and the current round of tension between Russia and the West
• Since then, ELN has been mapping and will report soon on the increasing number/location of military exercises that have been taking place on both sides in last year
  o Russian exercises have been increasing in number and scale
  o Western exercises have been occurring closer to the Russian periphery

3. Other background issues to consider
• Prime Minister Putin’s statements about nuclear weapons including saying that he put Russia’s nuclear weapons on alert during the Crimea operation
  o Concept: Nuclear weapons were potential tools to be used to intimidate Russia’s neighbors when Russian security interests were involved
• Arms control regimes that have been relied on are falling by the wayside
• US State Department contacts have noted a number of dialog options have been suspended to show displeasure with Russian behavior
• Significant discussions in the West about whether to arm Ukraine
• All this happening against a backdrop of the economic sanctions put on Russia

Points above explain the reason for the focus of the Seminar
• Russia’s behavior goes to the heart of the problem – absence of an agreed, significant European security structure
  o Meaning potential for escalation is great
• Worrying because fundamental interests are at stake for the West beyond Ukraine
  o Russia has violated the elements of post-Cold War order
    ▪ Primarily it has changed borders by use of force
    ▪ Has demonstrated that it will use military force to settle disputes when its essential national interests are at stake
Putin has talked about Russia’s responsibility to defend large Russian populations living elsewhere

- Bottom line: Russia has violated the Helsinki Principles and now there are no agreed principles about how European borders should be maintained

- Other incidents of Russian aggression go beyond the Ukraine crisis
  - EU is taking Russia’s Gazprom to court over its use of its “energy weapon” to gain influence in Europe
    - Gazprom told countries it can have gas only if they do not try to diversify their energy sources or make moves away from fossil fuels
    - Customers only allowed to do certain things about energy and climate change
  - Clear evidence that Russia is buying support in the parliaments of both eastern and western European governments
    - Especially supportive of western extremist groups such as Marie LePen’s party in France
    - Some supported parties are anti-Semitic and/or want to dump the EU
    - Russia even recently hosted meetings of far right extremist groups
  - Bottom line: Russia now a revisionist power in eastern and western Europe; as such threatens Europe’s political, security, economic, and environmental interests

The Basic Problems

- Russia’s view of Ukraine crisis: begun with an unconstitutional coup backed by primarily by the US with some European support
  - Done as a trial run for regime change efforts against Russia itself
  - Many Russian military and political elites seem to believe in this view
  - Ukraine crisis may then be seen as more than Russian foreign policy ambitions – really a crisis of regime viability in Moscow
- At the end of the Cold War there were agreed to ROEs
  - Both sides knew who owned what and what states could do or not do
  - Now there are a lot of gray areas and no common vision for the region
    - Makes tremendous potential for miscalculations
    - Decision-makers can no longer tell where the safe ground is or what will trigger escalation

What Should Western Policy-Makers Do About It?

- Must have clear objectives
  - Some EU leaders argue that Ukraine should be given the choice to move more toward Europe including eventual membership in the EU
  - Russia disagrees: Ukraine should not have such a choice
- Should recognize that those countries already in the EU do not want to expand eastward at this point
  - EU does not want to take on Ukraine’s underlying problems given its own economic problems (e.g., 25% unemployment rate in some places)
  - Some NATO members will never allow Ukraine or Georgia to join anyway
- Europe’s policy objective should be to bring Putin to the negotiating table under terms favorable to both sides while avoiding a nuclear confrontation.
- Given that objective, policies should be constructed around the elements of:
  - Resolve
  - Restraint
  - Dialog

**Resolve – to resist what Russia is doing and reassure Eastern allies**

So far Western policy has been stronger on the Resolve side than on the Restraint side of the equation.
- Some significant steps, however, have already been taken for reassurance:
  - Well-along in the development of a NATO spearhead or quick reaction force
  - Visit by President Obama to the Baltic states identifying important red lines to Russia on what lands are sacrosanct to NATO
- Much more could be done such as preparing security troops for deployment to the Baltic states for the type of hybrid warfare that is expected:
  - Don’t need a big force since the main threat would come from “little green men” not wearing real uniforms, and carrying out para-military operations
  - Also must be concerned about information and cyber warfare threats
- But there are limits: Would Latvia actually invoke Article 5 of the NATO treaty (an attack against one would be considered an attack against all)?
  - Some NATO countries would be sure to say that the perpetrators were not clearly identified making NATO’s response not very strong
  - That would destroy NATO’s credibility and eventually NATO
  - Latvia would want to wait until it really needs help before making the call

More discussions about the issues should be going on in both NATO and the EU:
- Both need to prepare and be resilient but may need to be more of an EU response:
  - May need more of a police response to Russian provocations rather than military
- Governance should be strengthened in the likely threatened areas using EU aid
- Latvia needs to worry about a hybrid warfare and needs to address various existing problems:
  - Regional economic development should be stimulated
  - The capital may hold but outside regions, especially those with significant numbers of Russian-speakers suffer from high levels of poverty
  - May make them more sensitive to outside pressures
- Both NATO and the EU must coordinate their efforts with threatened states to help them get ready

Need to get more support to Ukraine for the resist side of the equation:
- Start with lots of developmental challenges there but getting little help with them
- Ukraine also needs help to defend itself – can’t develop into a fully functioning democratic European state without having the capability to defend itself:
  - Needs help so that it does not become a failed state
Might also inspire even more far right movements throughout Europe spurred on by immigration problems growing out of European instability

- Further dissolution of Ukraine could cause even greater immigration problems within Europe – millions of Ukrainians could move west
  - Could destabilize the domestic political viability of migration policies in Western Europe, too
  - Bottom line: Need to help Ukraine both economically and with defense to avoid further problems in Western Europe

Problem of additional military forces in the Baltic

- Some consider forces as a trip wire that doesn’t now exist there
- NATO would never have enough forces there to protect the Baltics
  - But NATO never could defend Berlin during the Cold War either – provided only a tripwire force sufficient to deter
  - Need more discussion/debate on having such a force in the Baltics

Restraint

- In supplying Ukraine’s defense requirements
  - Ukraine has asked for BMD capabilities, which Russia would see as a direct threat
  - However, Russia appears to be willing to show that it would go all the way in its efforts in Ukraine
- In economic sanctions
  - In December the ruble collapsed and has recovered a little since then but further sanctions could cause a collapse of the Russian economy
  - Could lead to a government collapse so must worry about what would follow Putin – something worse: a failed state with nukes
  - Economic sanctions are not designed to take the policy strain that they have been asked to do – not a strategy
    - An instrument with limits
  - Not clear that anyone has figured out yet what the Russians need to do to allow the sanctions to be lifted
    - Have tied all assumptions to the Minsk II agreement
    - Concept: If Minsk II fails, it must be because of something the Russians have done but it could collapse because of what Ukraine does
    - What would happen to Western strategy
- In how to help Ukraine defend itself
  - Not with weapons directly from NATO directly, especially from the US
    - Would create a direct proxy war between Russia and the West
    - There are 16 major weapons-exporting countries including Ukraine and not all are in NATO
    - Ukraine already has its own weapon system similar to the Javelin missiles
  - Better to provide Ukraine with command, control, and communications support; battlefield intelligence; training; etc.
• Need to help them professionalize their military and teach them how such a force works under a civilian democratic government
  ▪ Model could be Israel, or perhaps the situation in Finland in 1939-40, or Switzerland with their territorial defense capabilities
• There are options in between giving weapons that create a proxy war and doing nothing
• In the types of activities that NATO would carry out in the east
  o Bringing nuclear weapons back would be a bad idea by starting a reaction cycle resulting in escalation
  o Exercising dual-capable aircraft in the area would be a better option to oppose Putin’s nuclear saber rattling
• In how the West reacts to what Russia can and does do about its military
  o Making advances with conventional forces
  o It is reasonable that Russia is also modernizing its nuclear force – other countries are too, since there is a cyclical requirement to upgrade weapons
  o Doesn’t mean that either side is becoming more aggressive – need to look at intentions
• In how the West uses intel about Ukraine
  o Russia really did send troops into Ukraine but some in German and French intelligence disagree
  o Problem: There is no process in NATO to agree politically on what to say about such intelligence reports
    ▪ Issues associated with domestic politics always get involved
    ▪ Example: At the time of the Cuban Missile Crisis UK Prime Minister McMillan was being pressured at home to disperse nuclear forces
      ▪ Intelligence chiefs were against it because that would appear escalatory since the USSR had not done the same on its side
    ▪ Bottom line: Use of this intelligence message had an important political effect
      ▪ Ukraine’s situation may not be the Cuban Crisis, but intel could be used to ratchet up the pressure or clearly explain things
      ▪ It appears that some may be using intel for political agenda not in support of their governments’ agendas
• In the discussions about enlarging NATO
  o Statements about adding Ukraine to NATO are misleading to the people of Ukraine since it cannot happen
    ▪ Many NATO members will never accept the membership of some of the eastern European members
  o A hot button issue with Russia
  o Should let those in Ukraine know that it won’t happen
  o Developing a non-aligned or un-aligned status would work better
Dialog

- **Background:** Architecture of the world order is changing
  - The 2008-09 financial crisis forced the Euro Zone members to look more closely at their already advanced economic integration
  - UK won’t become part of the Euro Zone and will vote on its continued relationship with the EU probably in 2016
  - Unclear what future relations will be between EU members who are Euro Zone members and those who are not
  - Other issues occur with countries like Turkey – in NATO and on EU track but never will get into the EU
  - Can’t be sure of relationships long-term
    - Between eastern and western European countries?
    - NATO and Russia?
- **Problem:** No conversations going on about what the architecture of relationships should look like in the future
  - Example problem: Turkey is in NATO but depends on Russia for energy
    - Doesn’t want to see confrontation between NATO and Russia since that could threaten their security
- **Look at Ukraine to see how things change in different periods of history**
  - Need to think differently about the current situation
  - Different architectural picture for this different period of history so need to think differently
- **There are two different, obstructive views that needs to be discussed**
  - Dialog with Russia is seen as a dirty word especially in eastern Europe
  - Any dialog with Russia is seen as a concession to Russian behavior
- **West needs to talk to others to understand what they are thinking about – look for every opportunity to get into dialog**
  - It is a good thing that states are now talking about issues like Iran
  - Of note: the US and China recently talked enough to come up with methods for signaling each other in confrontations to avoid escalations and accidents
    - ELN about to work on something similar between NATO and Russia
    - Both sides have security interests in avoiding incidents
- **ELN last year’s Dangerous Brinkmanship Report showed the increase in near miss incidents between Russian military and European civilian aircraft**
  - Should say to Russia: What would happen if that Russia military plane incident had caused the Danish civilian aircraft to crash?
  - Western leaders would have to tell Putin either stop this or the West will need to take more robust measures to keep Russian aircraft further away
  - Would be complicated by the fact that it would be playing out in public
  - Must tell Russians that such situations are as bad for you as for the West
    - There are ways to manage such confrontations that must be put in place
- **Bottom line:** These ideas are not idealistic or concessional, but instead a calculated point of view that should be used in dialogs with Russia
  - Two track of economic dialog are still working
Implementation of Ukraine’s closer relations with the EU
  • Delays are on-going due to Russian concerns – in face of Russia threats
  • Same players (EU / Ukraine / Russia) are negotiating on how Ukraine pays for its gas supplies from Russia
    o Either could provide bridges for discussions about rebuilding Ukraine’s economy and its further development
    o Would be strong common interest for both the West and Russia
    o Dialogs can then go on about the new security architecture of Europe and a more productive relationship in Europe to play against Putin

Summary
  • The situation is very serious since the chances for miscalculations are significant
  • Must remember that the main objective is to get Putin to the negotiating table without a nuclear confrontation
  • Need to work on the subtle relation between Resolve and Restraint (carrots and sticks) using Dialog
    o Must find the sweet spot between doing nothing and being escalatory but must get the Dialog going to find that point
    o Must look for all the interaction opportunities possible – even for university to university and people to people encounters
    o Must talk to Russia and not just Putin

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS
Re: Russian Attempts as Seizure of Mariupol
  • Not clear that Russia means to seize Mariupol
    o Probably having discussions in Moscow about the costs of the Ukraine operation
    o Depends on real overall intentions – Was Russia being reactive or is there larger plan involved?
  • Perhaps Putin thought it would be easier to take Mariupol
    o May now be pausing for thought
    o Costs of the attack increased because of the lack of support from locals
  • Mariupol is a bigger town with a likely a more robust defense than where they have been in Ukraine
    o Must also consider what the reaction would be from the West?
    o What would that do to the economy even if oil prices are rising slightly?
  • Economic situation may not be as bad as some in the West think, but still not good
    o Some silver lining as sanctions have forced home industries to grow but probably not enough to save the economy
  • Strategic decisions must be made and it may not be Russia’s intention to take Mariupol
Re: Ukraine’s Economy
- Average pay is now $4 a day – much lower than in neighboring countries and lower than a couple of years ago
- Might have something to do with the depreciation of the currency, too
- This low level is shocking for a modern day country in Europe
- Even Romania’s daily average is much higher

Re: International Civil Aviation Organization Report on Civilian Aircraft Shoot down
- Not likely to change the calculus about Russian involvement
  - Won’t be able to say that there is evidence that Russia ordered the shoot down
  - Will likely find that a Russian weapon system was involved
- Already factored into the sanctions calculus but will reinforce current positions
- West will say that Russia bears a significant part of the responsibility but nothing will change until Russia changes its behavior

Re: Opinion of the Russian Regime
- Believe that in the mind of Kremlin leaders, the current situation is a matter of regime viability and sustainability
  - Mistake to consider it just rhetoric
- West won’t just roll over and tell them to do what they like
  - Need to say to them neither side wants to let the situation get out of hand
  - Russians do take their own security interests into account – had good reasons to sign the new START Treaty
- Need to find ways to talk to Russia
- Need to use the tactics of
  - Looking for opportunities to condemn their behavior and demonstrate Western resistance
  - Imposing costs on Russia to show that the West is serious on this
  - Resisting mindfully to avoid military confrontations and finding ways to deescalate situations
  - Convincing Russia that it is in their best national security interests, too
- Must find way to get Russians to get to a dialog to agree on way forward
  - Not about “defeating Putin”

Re: Assessment of Russian Military Exercises and Capabilities
- Need to use some restraint in assessing all the things the Russian military is doing
- Putin is spending a lot more on defense recently – but started from a low base
  - Compared to the size of the Russian economy
  - Wants the West to believe that Russia is coming back as a military power
- Learned from the mistakes they made in their operations in Georgia
- Some of the activity looks ridiculous – sending destroyers to accompany Putin to meetings in Australia – to look as though their muscles are bigger than they are
- The Russian defense budget is growing but very small compared to that of the US
About equal to that of the UK and France combined where there is much fighting about merely maintaining or dropping levels of support

- Putin is trying to be a spoiler and intimidate his neighbors with actions like long-range bomber flights
  - Has backfired – triggered debates in Finland and Sweden about joining NATO
- There are lots of other things that the West should be talking with Russia about
  - Should be a player with Syria where it has influence
  - Of special concern should be issues with Islamic extremism – both sides need help on such issues
- Dealing with Russia should be about managing its weakness, not strength
  - Dealing with a weak country trying to mask some of its weaknesses

**Re: European Demographics**

- Demographic issues will be one of the biggest and most fundamental challenges to European integration over the next two decades
  - Europe does not have population basis to sustain economic growth
  - Domestic politics won’t accept the levels of immigration needed to sustain growth
    - Problems for the growth model and the welfare model
    - Feeding the beast in whole range of problems
- UK example of domestic politics problem:
  - What do you tell hard-working plumbers about preserving their way of life when Polish immigrant plumbers are willing to work for much less
  - Since members of the EU, nothing can be done due to regulations about the free travel of workers
- Europe needs to find a way to manage the social adhesion aspects of immigration in order to bring in enough people to support economic growth

**Re: NATO Troops in the Baltic States**

- There may not have been an official request for a brigade of NATO troops there, but there is some talk about it
  - Even if there is a formal request, NATO should not feel compelled to comply
- NATO should be issuing statements of reassurance
  - Preparing a spearhead force but that will take time to develop
- Region likely to be more threatened by a hybrid attack rather than a conventional one, which would trigger a tripwire force
- Even if a force was deployed there:
  - Where would such a brigade be stationed? On a border?
  - Where would the violence likely be – 40 miles inside the border?
- Should ask whether the West is doing enough to deter Russia – the issue is not really defense of the region
- Must realize that whatever the West now says, it will likely be tested
  - Must be ready to follow through
  - Was not the case in the past
Re: Possible Models for Ukraine’s Future
- Ukraine may want to be in NATO but that is not going to happen
  - Will need to be able to defend itself and needs to be able to develop properly
- Consider Finland’s position: It didn’t win against the Soviet Union in 1939-40 but it did manage to maintain its independence
  - The fight was long because it was able to mobilize 2 million troops
- If Ukraine develops into a well-governed, economically stable country, its people will have reason to defend it and even die doing so
  - Best chance for Ukraine to find a way to defend itself
  - Would need to go together with training people to use guns – a territorial defense force like Switzerland’s
  - Would involve a high level of motivation
- Ukraine will need help to get there
- Moscow would have to rethink its efforts in Ukraine if such a defense force existed
  - Russian military people remember the problem of their long war in Afghanistan when they lost support at home

Re: Baltic Support
- There already is a US company level force on a rotational basis in Lithuania or Latvia
- Not really as a tripwire, just showing US commitment
- Must ask “Are we doing enough now?”