Having already reconnoitered Soviet missile silos in Latvia and Estonia’s southwest, our trip through the northern portions of country would not have been complete without visiting a vestige of the threat of nuclear apocalypse. Thankfully, the countryside outside Narva proved no exception. But the politics of national memory are never that simple, as Estonia learned in 2007. Departing the statue graveyard, we stepped over the figure of a strapping Soviet soldier cleanly sliced in half. On the other side, small memorial markers to Red Army units that fought in Estonia were arranged in an orderly row. And just off to the side, the dark grey crosses of the German War Cemetery were barely visible.

Two of the biggest banks; and firms specializing in communications. It is not clear how great the damage has been. With their reputation for electronic prowess, the Estonians have been quick to marshal their defences, mainly by closing down the sites under attack to foreign internet addresses, in order to try to keep them accessible to domestic users. The cyber-attacks were clearly prompted by the Estonians’ relocation of the Soviet second world war memorial on April 27. Ethnic Russians staged protests against the removal, during which 1,300 people were arrested, 100 people were injured.

This article analyzes the politics of memory around the Estonian government’s decision to relocate Tallinn’s World War II memorial of a Soviet soldier. It shows why and how legitimizing national discourses resonated with and influenced personal narratives among ordinary Estonians. It also discusses discourses of Estonians who took a more critical stance on the relocation. In a similar vein, the relocation aimed at a breakaway from the Soviet past and its discourse, while at the same time reinforcing its perceived continuity. As such, the Estonian case gives insight into processes of remembering, amnesia, and the quest for recognition at the new border of the European Union, within a context of highly contentious minority politics.
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