# Affirmative Answers

## NATO Good

### Impact

#### Collapse of NATO causes increased Russia aggression and terrorism, economic collapse, and more.

Hans Binnendijk 19 [Hans Binnendijk is a distinguished fellow at the Atlantic Council. He previously served as senior director for defense policy on the Clinton administration’s National Security Council. “5 consequences of a life without NATO”. March 19, 2019. https://www.defensenews.com/opinion/commentary/2019/03/19/5-consequences-of-a-life-without-nato/]

The most catastrophic impact of NATO’s retirement would be the risk of Russian aggression and miscalculation. Without a clear commitment to defend allied territory backed up by an American nuclear deterrent, President Vladimir Putin will certainly see opportunities to seize land he believes is Russian. He has already done this in Georgia and Ukraine. Had they not joined NATO, the Baltic states would probably already be occupied by Russian troops. Certainly Putin would also see an opportunity to seize more of Ukraine without the “shadow” of NATO to protect it.

History teaches us that major wars start when aggressive leaders miscalculate. German leader Adolf Hitler attacked Poland in 1939, believing that after then-British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain’s Munich Agreement, England would be unlikely to respond. North Korea attacked South Korea in 1950 after the United States appeared to remove Seoul from its defensive perimeter. Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait in 1990, believing the United States had signaled that it would not respond.

In each case, miscalculation led to larger conflict.

Secondly, NATO’s retirement would also decrease American military reach, its political influence and its economic advantage. American bases throughout Europe not only provide for the defense of Europe — they bring the U.S. a continent closer to trouble spots that threaten vital American interests. Fighting the Islamic State group, clearly an American interest, would have been markedly more difficult without permanent U.S. bases in Europe and without the American-built coalition that included every NATO nation. Without NATO, the mutual security interests that underpin both U.S. bases and coalition operations would be undermined.

This extends to the economic realm. U.S. annual trade in goods and services with Europe exceeds $1 trillion, and U.S. total direct investment in Europe nears $3 trillion. These economic ties enhance U.S. prosperity and provide American jobs, but they require the degree of security now provided by NATO to endure.

NATO’s retirement would thirdly exacerbate divisions within Europe. NATO’s glue not only holds European militaries together — it provides the principal forum to discuss and coordinate security issues. The European Union is unlikely to substitute for NATO in this respect because it has no military structure, few capabilities and no superpower leadership to bring divergent views together.

Germany and France already seek a plan B should NATO collapse, but without the United Kingdom in the European Union, an all-European approach is likely to fail. The added insecurity of NATO’s collapse would also amplify current populist movements in Europe. The consequence could be renationalization of European militaries, a system that brought conflict to the 19th and early 20th centuries.

The fourth consequences of life without NATO would be global. American bilateral alliances in Asia would each be shaken to their core should NATO fail. America’s defense commitments there would become worthless. With China determined to claim a dominant position in Asia, the collapse of NATO would cause America’s Asian partners to seek accommodation with China, much as the Philippines is in the process of doing.

Trump’s decision to abandon the economic Trans-Pacific Partnership agreement has already given China new advantages in the region. Without credible American security commitments, there would be little to stop China from controlling the South China Sea and probably occupying Taiwan as well. Add to this equation the new footholds that China is building in central Asia, Africa and Europe: Abandoning NATO would help assure China’s competitive success.

The final impact of NATO’s retirement would be the near collapse of what has been called the “liberal international order.” This order consists of treaties, alliances, agreements, institutions and modes of behavior mostly created by the United States in an effort to safeguard democracies.

This order has kept relative peace in the trans-Atlantic space for seven decades. The Trump administration has begun to unravel elements of this order in the naive notion that they undercut American sovereignty. The entire European project is built on the edifice of this order. NATO is its principal keystone. Collapsing this edifice would undercut the multiple structures that have brought seven decades of peace and prosperity.

### Prevents Russian Expansion --- 2AC

#### American power in Europe protects it from Russian encroachment and eastern European nuclear proliferation.

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The argument isn’t wholly wrong. Putin’s wars are indeed meant, in part, to push Western influence back from Russia’s frontiers. But the idea that NATO expansion is the root of today’s problems is morally and geopolitically bizarre.

Far from being a historic blunder, NATO expansion was one of the great American successes of the post-Cold War era. Far from being the act of a domineering superpower, it was part of a long tradition of vulnerable states begging to join America’s liberal empire. And far from posing a mortal threat to Moscow, NATO enlargement actually provided Russia with far greater security than it could have provided itself.

NATO was founded in 1949 with 12 members in Western Europe and North America. It gradually added additional states — Turkey, Greece, West Germany, Spain — over the course of the Cold War. But the big bang of enlargement came once the superpower conflict ended. NATO incorporated the former East Germany into the alliance in 1990; it then added three Eastern European countries (Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic) in 1999; then seven more, including the Baltic states, in 2004.

To understand why NATO grew so rapidly, we have to remember something that nearly everyone has now forgotten: There was no guarantee that Europe would be mostly stable, peaceful and democratic after the Cold War. In fact, many of the analysts who now view NATO expansion as a catastrophe once warned that a post-Cold War Europe could become a violent hellscape.

It wasn’t an outlandish scenario. A reunified Germany might once again try to dominate its neighbors; the old enmity between Moscow and Berlin could reignite. The collapse of Soviet influence in Eastern Europe could liberate those states to pursue long-suppressed territorial claims and nationalist agendas. Ethnic tensions and nuclear proliferation might explode as the Cold War order crumbled.

If the U.S. pulled back once the Soviet threat was gone, there would be no extra-European superpower to put out fires on a continent with lots of geopolitical kindling. “The prospect of major crises, even wars, in Europe is likely to increase dramatically,” Mearsheimer predicted in 1990.

NATO enlargement was the logical answer to these fears. Expansion was a way of binding a reunified Germany to the West and surrounding it with democratic allies. Joining NATO required new members to lay aside any revanchist designs, while allowing them to pursue economic and political reforms rather than investing heavily in military capabilities to defend their newly won autonomy.

NATO’s move to the east also ensured that Poland and other states that easily could have built nuclear weapons didn’t need to, because they had American protection. Most important, enlargement kept the U.S. firmly planted in Europe, by preventing the centerpiece of the transatlantic relationship from becoming obsolete.

No other initiative could have accomplished these objectives. Partnership for Peace — a series of loose security cooperation agreements with former Soviet-bloc states — didn’t offer the ironclad guarantees that came with NATO membership. (If you want to understand the difference between “security partner” and “NATO ally,” just look at what is happening today to Ukraine, one of the former.)

The idea of creating a pan-European security architecture (one that included Russia) had the same defect; plus, it would have given Moscow veto power over the security arrangements of the countries the Soviet Union had so recently dominated.

Only American power and promises could provide stability in Europe, and NATO was the continent’s critical link to the U.S. Since 1949, Washington had tamped down rivalries between old enemies such as France and Germany, while also protecting them from external threats. After 1991, NATO expansion took this zone of peace, prosperity and cooperation that had emerged in Western Europe and moved it into Eastern Europe as well.

The revolutionary nature of this achievement seemed obvious not so long ago. “Why has Europe been so peaceful since 1989?” Mearsheimer asked in 2010. The answer, he acknowledged, was because “America has continued to serve as Europe’s pacifier,” protecting the continent from dangers within and without.

#### NATO division is good for Russia.

Emily Stewart 19 [Staff writer Vox. “Trump has reportedly discussed withdrawing from NATO. That would be great for Russia.” January 15, 2019. https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2019/1/15/18183759/trump-pull-out-of-nato-nyt-mattis]

Trump’s antipathy toward NATO is a good thing for Russia, whether he ultimately withdraws from the agreement (which would require a one-year notification period and likely see pushback from Congress) or not. Moscow benefits from divides between the US and Europe, and Putin has been trying to undermine ties between the two for years.