**2AC Answers to Russia DA**

**Russia’s invasion of Ukraine is not in response to NATO expansion. NATO has expanded in previous years, yet Russia did not react.**

**Popova & Shevel, 2022**, (Maria is a Jean Monnet Chair and Associate Professor of Political Science at McGill University, Oxana is an Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science at Tufts University’s School of Arts and Sciences), “Russia’s Invasion of Ukraine Is Essentially Not About NATO”. Just Security. 02/24. <https://www.justsecurity.org/80343/russias-new-assault-on-ukraine-is-not-entirely-maybe-not-even-largely-about-nato/>

In his Feb. 15 Just Security article “Ukraine: Unleashing the Rhetorical Dogs of War,” Barry Posen argued that NATO and Ukraine should have cut a deal with Russia because the Ukrainian military would surely be defeated by Russia without direct U.S./Western military participation and U.S. offers of equipment were only encouraging a potential Ukrainian insurgency against Russian occupation that would be as bloody as it would be futile. The prescription depends entirely on Posen’s assumption that to satisfy Russia, all Ukraine would have had to do would be “to swallow the bitter pill of accepting armed neutrality between NATO and Russia, rather than NATO membership.” This assumption contradicts events of recent months and the historical record. While Vladimir Putin has claimed that his goal is keeping Ukraine out of NATO, he also insisted that he was just conducting military exercises. Instead, he is invading Ukraine again. He likewise insisted in 2014 that he wasn’t capturing Crimea, despite the presence of his unidentified “Little Green Men” and his subsequent annexation of the peninsula, or that he was not fighting in Ukraine’s Donbas area in the east all these years, despite all evidence to the contrary. There is no reason to take Putin at his word. His Feb. 21 diatribe conferring Russian recognition of independence for the two eastern Ukrainian regions of Donetsk and Luhansk and his order for Russian troops to move in as ostensible “peacekeepers” shows clearly his disdain for diplomatic resolutions. Moreover, this is not even primarily about NATO. NATO’s eastward expansion may have played a role in straining the relationship between Russia and the West, but mainly because, for Russia, seeing former satellites eagerly abandon it for the greener pastures of Euro-Atlantic integration stung. However, Putin’s rhetoric and actions over almost two decades reveal that his goals extend beyond imposing neutrality on Ukraine or even staving off further NATO expansion. The larger objective is to re-establish Russian political and cultural dominance over a nation that Putin sees as one with Russia, and then follow up by undoing the European rules-based order and security architecture established in the aftermath of World War II. Given these goals, Ukrainian neutrality is a woefully insufficient concession for Putin. If Russia’s main concern had been NATO enlargement, it would have reacted with rhetoric and/or hostile actions in its neighborhood after each step in the NATO expansion process. The largest wave of NATO’s eastward expansion took place in March 2004, when seven Eastern European countries joined, including the formerly Soviet Baltic states. Russia “grumbled,” as the New York Times put it then, by adopting a Duma resolution criticizing the expansion, but no hostile and sustained rhetoric followed about NATO enlargement as a Western plot against Russian interests.

**Russia is too far behind technologically to reach US advancements in AI and cybersecurity innovation.**

**Chernenko and Markotkin, 2020**, (Elena is a journalist with Kommersant newspaper.and Nikolai is an expert with the Russian International Affairs Council), “Developing Artificial Intelligence in Russia: Objectives and Reality”. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. 05/08. <https://carnegiemoscow.org/commentary/82422>

The Russian government finances industry-specific projects—quite generously by Russian standards—which testifies to the high priority assigned to this field. The application of AI in the military industry, in which Russia’s position is traditionally strong, is the subject of particular attention. Nevertheless, it is unlikely that Russia will become a leader in the development of AI as set forth in the national strategy because of its current lag behind the leading technological powers, as well as some other factors, such as a small venture capital investment market. Unlike China and the United States, Russia isn’t a global leader in AI technologies. Although the strategy states that “the Russian Federation possesses significant potential to become one of the international leaders in the development and use of artificial intelligence technologies,” it’s unlikely the country will be able to achieve this goal in the short and medium term. Nevertheless, certain areas of AI development and application do exist; Russia enjoys strong positions there and can succeed in the future. Russia’s ranking in the AI technology race is hard to establish, since current international ratings use different methodologies. Many of them don’t list Russia at all, which is unsurprising, since the country lacked an official AI development strategy until November 2019.

In terms of individual AI-related technology indicators, Russia has only three supercomputers ranked among the 500 most powerful computers in the world, for example, while China has 228, the United States has 117, and Japan has 29. The number of AI start-ups in a given country is also a key indicator of its progress in this field. According to TRAXCN statistics, Russia currently has 168 AI start-ups, compared with 6,903 in the United States and 1,013 in China. These estimates appear to be somewhat exaggerated, since the list includes twenty- and thirty-year-old “start-ups,” but still, they make it possible to assess the bigger picture of the state of venture capital investment markets with respect to AI. In part, the small number of Russian AI start-ups can be explained by the domination of established companies in this sphere. This is what distinguishes Russia from most other developed technological powers. According to Russia’s proposed Artificial Intelligence road map, the country has a total of 400 companies working on developing AI.

In November 2019, the RDIF reported that it had raised $2 billion in domestic and international investments in Russian companies that use AI. The RDIF will also undertake to bring these companies to international markets. According to some media publications, the fund will invest some of its money in creating an Artificial Intelligence Institute at Moscow State University. Such investment volumes are unique for Russian science. But how significant are they on a global scale? It is certainly far less than the leaders of the tech race spend on AI. China annually invests tens of billions of dollars in AI, including at a regional level. Beijing alone is planning to invest $2.1 billion in an AI industrial park, while Tianjin is considering the creation of a $16 billion AI development fund. In turn, the U.S. government allocated $4.9 billion for AI research in 2020. Venture investors have contributed even more, investing over $8 billion in AI start-ups in 2018 alone. As of today, Russia cannot be described as a leader in the AI race. Even if AI development becomes Russia’s highest priority, Moscow essentially has no chance of catching up with Washington and Beijing in this field.

**The current global economy is strong and rapidly recovering following COVID-19.**

**Conference Board, 2021**, (Conference Board is a member-driven think tank that delivers trusted insights for what’s ahead), “Global Economy Enters 2022 in Strong Health after Surprisingly Swift Pandemic Recovery—But New and Pre-Existing Conditions Cloud the Long-Term Prognosis”. Conference Board. 11/03. <https://www.conference-board.org/topics/global-economic-outlook/press/global-economic-outlook-2022>

The global economy is set for another year of above-potential recovery growth in 2022, after expanding by a robust 5.1% in 2021. Global Economic Outlook 2022: From Pandemic Downturn to Growth Revival, our suite of forecasts for the decade ahead, tracks the future of this historically rapid resurgence with detailed analyses for the US, Europe, China, and the Gulf region.

“Despite the depth of the recession in the first half of 2020—and the unexpected setbacks of the Delta variant in 2021—the global economy has recovered rapidly from the pandemic shock compared to past recessions,” said Dana M Peterson, Chief Economist of The Conference Board. “Massive fiscal and monetary stimulus in major economies around the world—which built a bridge to economic reopening enabled by the rapid development of effective vaccines—likely prevented the recession from devolving into a long period of lackluster economic growth.”

Indeed, global GDP—which contracted by an unprecedented 3.3% in 2020—is calculated to have recovered all of its losses by Q1 2021. By the end of 2022, 66 out of 77 key economies, representing 96% of global GDP, should be at or above pre-pandemic output levels, though labor market and income recovery will lag somewhat.

**AFF Extension- No Russian Aggression due to NATO Expansion**

**Putin is not concerned about NATO expansion given statements about Sweden and Finland seeking membership.**

**Bove, 2022**, (Tristan is a graduate of DePaul University with degrees in International Studies and Chinese), “Putin says Sweden and Finland joining NATO and breaking with decades of neutrality is fine after all. ‘No problems’”. Fortune. 05/16. <https://fortune.com/2022/05/16/sweden-finland-join-nato-putin-no-threat-russia/>

But three months into a Ukraine invasion that’s not going according to plan, and after two other countries close to Russia announced that they are joining NATO, Putin appears to be softening his tone, and resigning himself to the fact that NATO’s eastward expansion is happening anyway.

On Sunday, Finland—which shares an 800-mile border with Russia and was part of the Russian Empire for over a century—said it had applied to join NATO to ensure that its own national security would not be threatened by Russia in the future. On Monday, Sweden followed suit after a meeting amongst ruling party officials over the weekend, who voted to end the country’s 200-year neutrality policy. Minister Magdalena Andersson said on Sunday. “We’re facing a fundamentally changed security environment in Europe.”

For months, Russian officials have warned against the two countries taking this decisive step, but now that it has actually happened, Putin appears to be doing his best to diminish the significance of the act. "As for the expansion of NATO, including through new members of the alliance which are Finland, Sweden — Russia has no problems with these states,” Putin said Monday at a summit of the Collective Security Treaty Organization, a military alliance composed of several post-Soviet states.

For months, Russian officials have been saying that should Finland and Sweden join NATO, Russia would receive it as a threat, and respond by building up its military capabilities in the Baltic Sea. Former Russian president Dmitry Medvedev even suggested in April that nuclear weapons and hypersonic missiles could be deployed. Just last week, Putin warned that Finland joining NATO would be a “mistake,” and suggested that Russia would interpret it as an act of aggression. But Putin signaled on Monday that Finland and Sweden’s decision to join NATO is one of relative unimportance, and does not constitute a danger to Russia. "Expansion at the expense of these countries does not pose a direct threat to Russia,” he said.

**AFF Extension- No Nuclear War Impact**

**Russia’s current fight to lead AI and cybersecurity innovation futile due to their focus on Ukraine.**

**Whyte, 2022**, (Christopher is an assistant professor in the homeland security and emergency preparedness program in the Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs at Virginia Commonwealth University), “Russia’s AI setbacks will likely heighten its cyber aggression”. CSO. 04/14. https://www.csoonline.com/article/3656957/russias-ai-setbacks-will-likely-heighten-its-cyber-aggression.html#:~:text=With%20the%20weight%20of%20Western,AI

The consequences of the war waged against Ukraine on Russia’s wealth, workforce and access to sophisticated imported products such as microprocessors used to operate everything from mobile devices to automobiles are immense. Without capital, talent and a line on critical commodities and technologies, Russia will struggle to be competitive in everything from medical technology development to national security practice. This likely result of increasing isolation seems doubly assured with AI. Russia’s relatively weak fundamentals and strong competition from both China and the West virtually guarantee vast opportunity costs to Russia in years to come. This outcome might be seen as a positive development that will cede techno-strategic advantages to defense communities in North America, Europe and East Asia--those most concerned about Russia’s military capabilities and intentions.

Despite Putin’s statements, Russia’s AI efforts have lagged behind most initiatives in other countries. In 2014, barely two years after a breakthrough innovation of deep neural networks by a multinational group of researchers energized AI development, Russia’s buildout of new machine learning applications and other AI tools was already slowing significantly. Collaborations with cutting-edge projects in the West, China, India and elsewhere began to drop away following Putin’s annexation of Crimea and decision to embroil Eastern Ukraine in ongoing conflict. State-sponsored companies and military-intelligence institutions in the Russian Federation have consistently been a leading source of novel AI technologies aimed at bolstering national security and strengthening mechanisms of population control. However, a slow leak of human capital and a complicated relationship with parts of the global economy that dominate critical high technology resources, such as graphics processing units (GPUs), have become a substantial obstacle for the country’s AI ambitions. Even if Moscow matched China’s or the United States’ levels of domestic AI investment, its fundamentals of innovation for the field simply haven’t been concrete for some time.

One major blow to Moscow’s AI ambitions is the dramatic acceleration of the brain drain that has plagued Russian high technology and scientific communities for years. Enticing researchers out of private industry and academia is perennially difficult for governments, but Russia has been even less capable in this regard than most, likely due to the unappealing culture and benefits of Putin’s military and paramilitary communities. Now, up to 70,000 tech workers that were otherwise minimal flight risks have fled the country. Many have ended up in former Soviet states and South Asia, and no small number have left positions tied to the Russian state’s focus on building out facial recognition, autonomous vehicles and surveillance capabilities. Sanctions worsen the impact of this brain drain by cutting across the research and business relationships that Moscow has heavily supported in recent years.

**AFF Extension- No Economic Collapse Impact**

**The global economy is in recovery with positive outlook ahead.**

**OECD, 2021**, (OECD is a global policy forum that promotes policies to preserve individual liberty and improve the economic and social well-being of people around the world), “Global economic recovery continues but remains uneven, says OECD”. OECD. 09/21. <https://www.oecd.org/newsroom/global-economic-recovery-continues-but-remains-uneven-says-oecd.htm>

The global economy is growing far more strongly than anticipated a year ago, but the recovery remains uneven, exposing both advanced and emerging markets to a range of risks, according to the OECD’s latest Interim Economic Outlook. The OECD says extraordinary support from governments and central banks helped avoid the worst once the COVID-19 pandemic hit. With the vaccine roll-out continuing and a gradual resumption of economic activity underway, the OECD projects strong global growth of 5.7% this year and 4.5% in 2022, little changed from its May 2021 Outlook of 5.8% and 4.4% respectively. Countries are emerging from the crisis with different challenges, often reflecting their pre-COVID 19 strengths and weaknesses, and their policy approaches during the pandemic. Even in the countries where output or employment have recovered to their pre-pandemic levels, the recovery is incomplete, with jobs and incomes still short of the levels expected before the pandemic. Presenting the Interim Economic Outlook alongside Chief Economist Laurence Boone, OECD Secretary-General Mathias Cormann said: “The world is experiencing a strong recovery thanks to decisive action taken by governments and central banks at the height of the crisis. But as we have seen with vaccine distribution, progress is uneven. Ensuring the recovery is sustained and widespread requires action on a number of fronts – from effective vaccination programmes across all countries to concerted public investment strategies to build for the future.”