**2AC---AT: NATO Withdrawal---Turn**

**U.S withdrawing from NATO would be a nightmare---undermines Article V commitments and triggers a European security dilemma.**

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It is February 2021. A few months after his re-election as president of the United States, Donald Trump declares that NATO has become **obsolete** and the United States **withdraws** from the **alliance**. All U.S. forces — military personnel and equipment — including nuclear and missile defense assets will be withdrawn from Europe as soon as possible.

This **nightmare scenario** has been on the mind of many security policy officials, and experts, ever since the New York Times reported in January 2019 that Trump discussed several times over the course of 2018 wanting to withdraw from the alliance. Congress has acted and passed the NATO Support Act, which prohibits the use of funds to withdraw the United States from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Yet the possibility of such a move cannot entirely be excluded.

Trump’s musings about a NATO withdrawal have served as a wake-up call for some in Europe that Europeans urgently need to assume greater responsibility for their own security. This realization is one of the reasons why closer defense cooperation and a greater degree of strategic autonomy are high on the European Union’s agenda. But are Europeans able to defend themselves? How would they think about their defense without the United States?

A **policy game** prepared by Körber-Stiftung and the International Institute for Strategic Studies sought to answer these questions this summer in Berlin. Five country teams with experts from France, Germany, Poland, the United Kingdom, and the United States addressed a fictional scenario that involved a U.S. withdrawal from NATO, followed by crises in a NATO member state in the western Balkans and across Eastern Europe. How would Europeans react to such a scenario? What are the red lines, interests, and priorities of the respective actors? How might Europeans organize their defense if the United States withdraws from NATO, and what role could the United States play in European security after the withdrawal?

The results of the game were **sobering**, with **no clear upside** for any of the participating teams. While a one-time simulation exercise, it provided valuable insights into the interests and preferences of European member states.

At the beginning of the policy game, most European teams adopted a “**wait-and-see**” approach focused on persuading the United States to **return** to NATO, offering concessions that were unthinkable before (from trade to energy). The unfortunate message for transatlantic relations seems to be that a threat to abandon NATO might actually yield some results.

Europeans started to take proactive steps only once the security situation in the scenario **deteriorated significantly**, and when it became clear that the U.S. withdrawal decision — at least in this simulation — was **irreversible**. Faced with a crisis in a NATO member state in the **western Balkans** (in the scenario, a pro-Russian coup d’état with Russian warships blocking access to the Mediterranean Sea), most teams anticipated that remaining NATO members would struggle to agree to invoke the principle of collective defense under Article 5 in this grey-zone scenario. Instead, the invocation of Article 4 — which involves only consultations in case the security or independence of a NATO member state is threatened — paired with sanctions on Russia and a robust response within ad-hoc coalitions were the preferred means of action. Without **U.S. security guarantees**, it seems, the **credibility** of **Article 5** and the **mutual defense commitment** are **questionable**.

And **then it got worse**: In case of an escalation in the east (an incident akin to the Cuban missile crisis, involving an extended-range version of the SSC-8 Screwdriver land attack cruise missile with a range in excess of 4,500 km stationed in western Russia), European shortfalls especially in air and missile defense were identified as an **existential risk** for European countries **without nuclear capabilities** after the United States has withdrawn all nuclear and missile defense assets in the scenario. Given that filling these gaps would require long-term investment, Europe would likely remain vulnerable for **years** to come in such a scenario.

Especially for Germany, a U.S. withdrawal from NATO would represent an **existential security threat**. The German team suggested exploring the possibilities of the Franco-German Aachen Treaty of 2019 and asking France and the United Kingdom to expand their nuclear umbrellas to other European countries. Developing a German nuclear weapons capacity was considered an **unlikely option**, due to **domestic opposition**. Yet, expanding the British and French nuclear umbrella would come at a **significant cost**: The **burden**-**sharing debate** would **return** to Europe. Nuclear deterrence will remain the Gretchenfrage of European security, and if expanding the British and French nuclear umbrella fails, some teams anticipated a **prolif**eration of nuclear weapons in Europe.

When it comes to institutional frameworks, from a French perspective, NATO would be dead without the United States: The French team preferred a new, E.U.-centered collective defense structure in the long term, with other actors affiliating on a bilateral basis. This position was met with skepticism especially from the British and Polish side; Germany, Poland, and the United Kingdom were adamant that the NATO command structure should be maintained after a U.S. withdrawal and provide possibilities for the United States to “opt in” to any future security structure.

A post-Brexit United Kingdom, as envisioned in the scenario, would consider itself a leading actor in European security, willing and capable of shaping Europe’s future security architecture. Given its significant defense capabilities, the U.K. team saw its country in a powerful negotiating position and was skeptical of French and German leadership on defense issues. British red lines were the following: No E.U. army, no E.U. alliance or, as they said, the United Kingdom wants to design European security, not just sign on a dotted line.

As the representative for NATO’s most vulnerable-feeling eastern member states, the Polish team did not trust Europe’s ability to organize collective defense and was tempted to conclude bilateral deals with the United States. As the Polish team said, if the United States withdraws, the eastern flank should be the last place. A “bilateralization” of security and defense with the United States, including bilateral security guarantees, is the likely consequence. Interestingly, all teams rejected Russian overtures for conflict resolution in exchange for concessions on security, such as drafting a European security treaty based on Medvedev’s 2008 proposals. This demonstrates that Russia was not considered a credible security provider in Europe, despite suspicions that Germany might be tempted to engage in a dialogue with Russia on this.

For the U.S. team, subsidizing European security was no longer an option. The team felt that Europeans should put everything on the table for security guarantees, from trade to policy alignment on Iran and China. The U.S. team argued that countries that care will find a way to keep the United States engaged, and that Europe should take the lead in crisis management on the continent. In this scenario, a transactional relationship seems to be the new normal in U.S.-European relations, yet Europeans were disillusioned as they hoped for a continuous strategic U.S. interest in Europe and a values-based partnership. In contrast, the U.S. team in the game focused primarily on a fair deal addressing both defense and trade issues.

Thinking about the broader implications of the policy game, it becomes clear that without U.S. security guarantees, the principles of European unity and mutual solidarity were **quickly challenged** and Europe was at **serious risk** of **splitting** into different camps. While Europeans were in principle willing to organize their own defense, the shortfalls in military capabilities precluded meaningful action and led to a **quick emergence** of **divisions**. This could also occur under conditions short of U.S. withdrawal, such as a reduction in its European force posture or its willingness to engage. **Any degree of reduced U.S. commitment** would thus **exacerbate European divisions**.

**[ARTICLE V CREDIBILITY IMPACT---CORA]**

**Lack of European security cohesion causes German prolif and nuke war, destroys the NPT**.

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Moreover, a German nuclear arsenal would risk **bringing down the international nonproliferation regime**. Before acquiring the bomb, Germany would have to leave the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, a move that would **threaten the continued existence of the treaty itself**. Despite the NPT’s successful record, the treaty's future **already looks uncertain**. Under the NPT, states with nuclear weapons agreed to pursue disarmament, but in recent years, progress toward this goal has **stalled**, and nonnuclear states have **increasingly voiced their frustration** that the nuclear weapons states have not fulfilled their promise. A **foundational goal** of the treaty, moreover, was to **keep Germany from building nuclear weapons**. If Berlin **defected**, the nonproliferation regime might **collapse entirely**, because other countries would no longer feel bound by the treaty's collective bargain.

Germany would also need to modify or withdraw from the so-called Two Plus Four Treaty, the agreement on reunification that East and West Germany signed with France, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, and the United States in 1990. In that document, Germany affirmed its "renunciation of the manufacture and possession of and control over nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons." The treaty was meant not only to end the Cold War but also to prevent any future German Sonderweg; abrogating it would bring back the German question and deliver an affront to the four countries that paid such enormous costs to defeat Nazi Germany in World War II.

Worst of all, the pursuit of a German nuclear arsenal, rather than deterring aggression, could **increase the risk of conflict in Europe**, since Russia would likely work to **prevent Germany from acquiring the bomb**. Moscow could assassinate German nuclear scientists, use cyberattacks to sabotage German nuclear industrial infrastructure, and perhaps go so far as to strike German nuclear facilities from the air. Even covert operations could **quickly spiral into outright confrontation**.

Even if Germany managed to acquire nuclear weapons, it would then face the daunting task of making sure they could survive a Russian attack. In recent years, Russia has moved its missiles westward, targeting Germany and other nato members. Now that Russia has allegedly deployed multiple cruise missiles in violation of the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, under which the Soviet Union and the United States agreed to abandon midrange missiles, its ability to destroy a fledgling German nuclear stockpile is only growing. Unless Germany managed to conceal and protect its nuclear weapons almost immediately, German leaders could, during a crisis with Russia, feel pressure to **launch a preemptive nuclear attack** against Russia in order to avoid losing the arsenal to a Russian first strike.

These formidable barriers to a German nuclear program have led some to return to the idea of a British-French deterrent. But the United Kingdom's impending departure from the eu leaves Germany with the sole option of reaching out to France. This would not be the first time that France and Germany have considered a joint European nuclear deterrent. In 1957, shortly after the Suez crisis, when tensions between France and the United States were running high and the French government began to doubt the credibility of the U.S. nuclear guarantee, France suggested to Italy and West Germany that the three countries develop nuclear weapons together. The next year, French President Charles de Gaulle took office and quickly canceled the secret negotiations and began an indigenous French nuclear program, only to raise the prospect of nuclear cooperation again with German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer in 1962. And in the 1990s, France offered to extend its nuclear umbrella to Germany after reunification in an attempt to decrease U.S. influence in Europe. All these efforts failed, in part because the French consistently refused to relinquish control over their arsenal, as to do so would have been to give up French autonomy in foreign policy. This calculus has not changed, a fact that should give German policymakers pause today. Moreover, by reviving such talk, Berlin risks giving isolationist elements in the Trump administration exactly what they want: an excuse to disengage.

STRONGER TOGETHER

Nuclear weapons will not solve Europe's current woes, but Washington should not dismiss German nuclear yearnings, as they reflect a **growing sense of uncertainty** in Berlin. This uncertainty stems from an **incoherent U.S. policy** toward Russia, which began **well before Trump took office**. Since 2000, Washington has faced **competing policy options**: focus only on defending NATO allies and containing Russia; offer indefinite support to former Soviet states, such as Georgia and Ukraine, that struggle under Russian dominance; or cooperate with Russia to tackle global security challenges.

The United States has **experimented** with all three. It has welcomed new countries into nato despite dire, if vague, warnings from Russia. Washington continues to **keep the door to the alliance open** in the hope that former Soviet states will eventually join, but it **lacks the resolve** to force Moscow to respect the sovereignty of countries such as Georgia and Ukraine. At the same time, successive U.S. administrations have tried to cooperate with the Kremlin on various issues, such as counterterrorism and stopping the Iranian nuclear program.

Three years after the annexation of Crimea and the start of the war in Ukraine, Washington has **yet to choose a clear policy**. This **inconsistency**, coupled with Russian aggression, has led Europe to the **brink of a new Cold War**. Add to this Trump's **erratic stances** toward Russia and nato, and it is **not surprising** that Europeans are asking **what Washington's long-term priorities really are** and **how the U**nited **S**tates **intends to achieve them**.

This crisis in transatlantic relations **presents many perils**, but it also **offers opportunities for leaders** in Berlin and Washington. For Germany, that means **taking practical steps** to increase Europe's ability to **provide for its own conventional security**, not proposing **dangerous nuclear fantasies**. Germany should not focus on nato's blunt spending goal of two percent of gdp but instead **seek closer cooperation** among national EU militaries; contribute larger and betterequipped forces to the eu Battlegroups; encourage eu countries to avoid duplicating one another's military R & D, production, and procurement; overcome German national pride and work to develop a common European defense industry; and increase the resilience of eu states to Russian propaganda.

**AT: Nuclear Umbrella**

**Any singular country isn’t enough for nuclear deterrence, wrong nukes, different power structures, multitude of problems**

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During most of the Cold War and the years since, that question seemed settled. The European NATO members are meant to shelter under America’s nuclear “umbrella.” As part of the transatlantic alliance’s “nuclear sharing,” five **partner** countries — Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Italy and Turkey — host an estimated 100 American nukes on their soil. To retaliate against a Russian strike, the allies would be able to drop these US bombs from their own planes. Aside from those American weapons, **France and the UK also have their own arsenals**. But France has always kept its nukes outside the joint strategizing of the Western alliance — it’s the only nation among NATO’s 30 member states not to participate in the alliance’s Nuclear Planning Group. Even before Putin’s war of aggression against Ukraine this year, some Europeans worried that the American umbrella was becoming less reliable, and thus by definition less of a deterrent. The US has shifted its geopolitical focus from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and specifically toward containing China, which is now adding to its arsenal fast. Washington therefore has to hold up two nuclear umbrellas and plan for two simultaneous wars. Scholars such as Maximilian Terhalle in Germany and Francois Heisbourg in France have been warning that Washington, forced to choose, would probably give priority to its commitments in Asia, and to allies such as Japan, South Korea and Taiwan. Worse, former US President Donald Trump spooked Europeans when he questioned NATO’s mutual-defense clause and even contemplated taking the US out of the alliance. Trump is gone for now. But he, or a president like him, could return. In the long run, the US appears less dependable as a protector than it used to be. Topping all that, Putin has now gone rhetorically ballistic by dropping not-so-veiled threats that he might use nukes against Ukraine or Western countries that interfere in his war. The consensus for now is that he’s bluffing. But from the Baltic to Poland and beyond, Europeans would love to know what the back-up plan is. In one scenario, France could extend its nuclear umbrella to the whole European Union (of which the UK is no longer a member). French President Emmanuel Macron speaks often about achieving European “autonomy,” by which he usually means independence from the US. So he should in theory be amenable. In practice, the French are neither willing nor able. Since Charles de Gaulle, France has always insisted on total sovereignty over its arsenal and all decisions pertaining to it. In that sense, visions of a Europeanized “force de frappe,” as the French call their nukes, suffer from the same problem as ideas about a “European Army.” Without a United States of Europe, it’s not clear who’d be in command, when and how. Moreover, the French **arsenal isn’t suited** for the job. France has a **relatively small** stash of 290 nukes. In the event of all-out war, an adversary like Russia, with thousands of warheads, might be tempted — and able — to take out those weapons with a preemptive first strike. Deterrence only works if retaliation is assured. France’s nukes are also of the **wrong** type. They’re “strategic” — that is, bombs capable of causing many Hiroshimas worth of devastation each, and therefore meant to be used only in a total-war scenario to take out entire cities in the enemy’s homeland. If Russia were to escalate, however, it would do so with “tactical” nuclear weapons — smaller warheads deployed at short ranges to cow an enemy into submission or win specific battles. It’s inconceivable that France (or anybody) would retaliate for an initial and limited tactical strike by going directly to **strategic** retaliation and thus Armageddon. The upshot is that all Western nuclear powers — the US, France and the UK — must add more tactical nukes to their tool kits, to keep up with Russia and become capable of flexible responses to its aggressions. The EU, led by Germany and France, could collaborate in this effort. Even then, however, the Europeans would still have to resolve the old questions about command structure. Alternatively, countries like Germany could build their own nuclear bombs. But for that, Germany would have to withdraw from the international treaty against nuclear proliferation and the agreement that allowed its reunification. Besides, Germany would have to turn its entire postwar political culture topsy-turvy. Many of its leaders today grew up protesting against the stationing of American missiles and nukes in general. For the time being, the realistic answer to Putin is to keep and patch the American umbrella. More US tactical nukes, in more places and deliverable in more ways, is the only language understood in Moscow and Beijing. It’s also probably the only way to slow the pace of other countries, allied or hostile, going nuclear. But the entire American political class, on both sides of the aisle, must underwrite that US commitment to its allies, come Trump or high water. No conclusion could be more depressing. It amounts to entering a new tactical arms race and therefore goes in the opposite direction of the vision behind the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, signed by 86 non-nuclear countries and meant to ban these diabolical arms altogether. Instead of eliminating nukes, we’d look for new ways of deterring their use. For all this, blame Putin. He attacked Ukraine — 28 years after Russia guaranteed the country’s security so Kyiv could surrender its own Soviet-era nukes. He broke the taboo against threatening nuclear escalation in conventional warfare. In all these, ways Putin has made naivete and pacifism untenable. The European Union, deservedly called the greatest “peace project” in world history, must gird for its self-defense.

**2AC---NATO Collapse Bad---I/L**

**Laundry list of impacts from NATO collapse**---Russian adventurism, miscalc, cedes U.S’ sphere of influence, trade, European divisions, Asian alliances, competitiveness, LIO collapse.

Hans **Binnendijk, 19** (Hans Binnendijk is a senior fellow at the Center for Transatlantic Relations at SAIS and an adjunct political scientist at the RAND Corporation, 3-19-2019, accessed on 5-29-2022, DefenseNews, “5 consequences of a life without NATO”, <https://www.defensenews.com/opinion/commentary/2019/03/19/5-consequences-of-a-life-without-nato/>, HBisevac)

To see if they are correct, let’s consider what international life might be like **without NATO**. There would be at least **five set** of consequences, all **negative**.

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. **No**rth **K**orea attacked **So**uth **Ko**rea in 1950 after the United States appeared to remove Seoul from its **defensive perimeter**. **Iraq**i 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 **S**outh **C**hina **S**ea 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 “**l**iberal **i**nternational **o**rder.” 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**. So the answer is clear.

Life without NATO would be more **dangerous** and **less prosperous**. **Russia** and **China** would be the **big winners** at America’s **expense**. NATO simply can’t retire.

Yes, NATO has problems. It needs to be managed. But there is too much left to be done for retirement. And there is **too much to lose** if NATO fails.

**2AC---NATO Collapse---Impact---Russia Land Grabs**

**Extinction.**

Leif **Wenar, 22** (Leif Wenar is a professor of political philosophy at Stanford, 5-2-2022, accessed on 7-25-2022, Wall Street Journal, “Putin’s Land Grab Won’t Be the Last”, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/putin-land-grab-russia-ukraine-war-territorial-acquisitions-crimea-donbas-invasion-xi-orban-international-norms-war-crime-united-nations-sanctions-11651527485>, HBisevac)

If Vladimir Putin is allowed to keep the land he has seized from Ukraine, it will violate one of the modern world’s few meaningful protections of peace—its prohibition against taking territory by force. The West must **stand firm against** the Russian president’s **imperialist aims**, or else the world may see a **resurgence** of the **vicious conquests** that **marked world history** before World War II.

Before 1945, the international rule on territorial acquisitions could be summed up as vae victis, “woe to the vanquished.” Kings, sultans and czars led bloody campaigns to take land from one another and expand their empires abroad. Russia, Prussia and Austria once devoured Poland completely. The Ottomans seized Eastern Europe and Egypt. As political scientist John Vasquez says, “Of all the possible issues states can fight over, the evidence overwhelmingly indicates that issues involving territory . . . are the main ones prone to collective violence.”

Finally, in 1945, that rule changed. Amid the wreckage of failed German and Japanese expansionism, the United Nations Charter declared a new rule for the world: Borders can no longer be changed by force.

This prohibition has been surprisingly successful. Between 1945 and 1975, rates of successful territorial conquest declined dramatically. Remarkably, after 1976 no U.N. member lost territory to another by force (except in a small Egyptian border dispute). For almost 40 years, though wars were fought, this particular strain of war seemed to have been eradicated completely.

Until Mr. Putin’s annexation of Crimea in 2014, with his invasion of “little green men”—Russian soldiers in unmarked green uniforms—and then an illegitimate referendum. The West’s halfhearted response to Crimea’s seizure encouraged Mr. Putin to invade again this year and more brutally. Russia’s indiscriminate shelling of civilians, to say nothing of the heinous treatment of Ukrainians in places like Bucha, shows how ~~savage~~ [**severe**] wars for land can be.

The Russian president’s attitude is a throwback to the **bloody-minded philosophy** that ruled before the U.N. Charter. In Mr. Putin’s aggressive pronouncements, one hears echoes of German ultra-nationalist Heinrich von Treitschke, who in 1870 demanded France’s Alsace-Lorraine as a prize of the Franco-Prussian war: “These territories are ours by the right of the sword, and we shall dispose of them in virtue of a higher right—the right of the German nation, which will not permit its lost children to remain strangers to the German Empire.”

Mr. Putin made similar irredentist claims about protecting Russian speakers in Ukraine before his invasion in February. Though most people in the Donbas don’t want to be annexed (any more than most Alsatians did), this has not stopped the Russian president’s drive to re-create his mythic “Russian world.”

German leaders also desired Alsace-Lorraine’s natural resources, as Mr. Putin does Ukraine’s. Hitler coveted Lorraine’s rich iron mines; Mr. Putin wants Ukraine’s abundant energy. The parts of Ukraine Mr. Putin is trying to conquer contain roughly $1.4 trillion worth of natural gas and coal.

Mr. Putin isn’t the only modern leader with expansionist aims. Think of Chinese President Xi Jinping’s assertiveness in the **South** and **East China seas**, or Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán touting **outrageous maps** of “**Greater Hungary**.” In dozens of countries, claims to foreign land could be used to **inflame support** for **war**. And as we are seeing now, wars can push other international issues **off the agenda**. Supply-chain problems, epidemics, nuclear proliferation—they can all be overshadowed by **one man’s desire to capture territory**.

The West can discourage future land grabs if it stops Mr. Putin. The U.S. and its allies should maintain their most serious sanctions—especially the financial sanctions and boycotts of oil and gas—until Russian troops leave Ukraine, Ukrainian refugees can return, and internationally supervised referendums can be held in all the territory claimed by Mr. Putin.

The **cost will be high** if the West fails to stop Mr. Putin’s **annexations**. One can only **dread** how many **lives** will be **lost** if the future of war becomes like its **past**. The book of Revelation says that the first horseman of the apocalypse rode a white horse and went forth to conquer. Without determined action by the West on Ukraine, **the fearsome White Horseman may ride again**.

**2AC---NATO Collapse---Impact---Spheres of Influence**

**Spheres of influence cause war with Russia and China.**

Dr. Hal **Brands 20**, global affairs professor at John Hopkins, former Special Assistant to the Secretary of Defense, and Yale PhD, 4/20/2020, “Don’t Let Great Powers Carve Up the World: Spheres of Influence Are Unnecessary and Dangerous,” <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2020-04-20/dont-let-great-powers-carve-world>, pacc

Allison’s argument is alluring but wrong. In truth, the United States has resisted the creation of rival spheres of influence for most of its history, even as it has worked assiduously to build its own. **Ceding ground** to China and Russia today would be not a recipe for stability but a blueprint for **coercion** and **conflict**, and it would weaken the United States’ geopolitical hand vis-à-vis its rivals. Nor is a return to spheres of influence foreordained—Washington still has the power to prevent Beijing and Moscow from dominating their regions, so long as it rejects Allison’s advice to cut loose its vulnerable frontline allies. A tougher, more competitive world is unavoidable. A far more dangerous world, divided into competing superpower fiefdoms, is not.

AN AMERICAN TRADITION

Spheres of influence have been common throughout history, but Americans have never been quite comfortable with them. In fact, much of U.S. foreign policy dating back to independence has consisted of efforts to prevent rival powers from establishing such domains. In the nineteenth century, U.S. leaders rejected the idea that any European power should have a sphere of influence in North America or the Western Hemisphere at large. They maneuvered—often quite ruthlessly—to evict European powers from these areas. At the turn of the twentieth century, the United States took this regional policy global. The so-called Open Door policy aimed to dissuade foreign powers from carving up China, and later all of East Asia, into exclusive spheres. Washington joined World War I in part to prevent Germany from becoming the dominant European power. A generation later, the United States fought to deny Japan a sphere of influence in the Pacific and prevent Hitler from establishing primacy over the entire Old World. During and after World War II, Washington also engaged in quieter diplomatic and economic efforts to accelerate the dissolution of the British Empire.

Opposition to spheres of influence is a part of U.S. diplomatic DNA.

Even during the Cold War, Americans never fully accepted Soviet control over eastern Europe. The Truman and Eisenhower administrations sought to roll back the Iron Curtain through ideological warfare and covert action; later administrations expanded trade and diplomatic ties with Warsaw Pact states as a subtler way of undermining Kremlin control. The Reagan administration overtly and covertly supported political movements that were challenging the Kremlin’s authority from within. And when Washington had a chance to peacefully destroy the Soviet sphere of influence after the fall of the Berlin Wall, it did, supporting German unification and the expansion of NATO.

Opposition to **spheres of influence**, in other words, is a part of **U.S. diplomatic DNA**. The reason for this, Charles Edel and I argued in 2018, is that spheres of influence clash with **fundamental tenets** of U.S. foreign policy. Among them is the United States’ approach to security, which holds that safeguarding the country’s vital interests and physical well-being requires preventing rival powers from establishing a foothold in the Western Hemisphere or dominating strategically important regions overseas. Likewise, the United States’ emphasis on promoting liberty and free trade translates to a concern that spheres of influence—particularly those dominated by authoritarian powers—would impede the spread of U.S. values and allow hostile powers to block American trade and investment. Finally, spheres of influence do not mesh well with American exceptionalism—the notion that the United States should transcend the old, corrupt ways of balance-of-power diplomacy and establish a more humane, democratic system of international relations.

Of course, that intellectual tradition did not stop the United States from building its own sphere of influence in Latin America from the early nineteenth century onward, nor did it prevent it from drawing large chunks of Europe, East Asia, and the Middle East into a global sphere of influence after World War II. Yet the same tradition has led the United States to run its sphere of influence far more progressively than past great powers, which is why far more countries have sought to join that sphere than to leave it. And since hypocrisy is another venerable tradition in global affairs, it is not surprising that Americans would establish their own, relatively enlightened sphere of influence while denying the legitimacy of everyone else’s.

That endeavor reached its zenith in the post–Cold War era, when the collapse of the Soviet bloc made it possible to envision a world in which Washington’s sphere of influence—also known as the liberal international order—was the only game in town. The United States maintained a world-beating military that could intervene around the globe; preserved and expanded a global alliance structure as a check on aggression; and sought to integrate potential challengers, namely Beijing and Moscow, into a U.S.-led system. It was a remarkably ambitious project, as Allison rightly notes, but it was the culmination of, rather than a departure from, a diplomatic tradition reaching back two centuries.

GIVE THEM AN INCH…

The post–Cold War moment is over, and the prospect of a divided world has returned. **Russia** is projecting power in the Middle East and staking a claim to dominance in its “near abroad.” **China** is seeking **primacy** in the western Pacific and Southeast Asia and using its diplomatic and **economic influence** to draw countries around the world more tightly into its orbit. Both have developed the tools needed to coerce their neighbors and keep U.S. forces at bay.

Allison is one of several analysts who have recently advanced the argument that the United States should make a virtue of necessity—that it should accept Russian and Chinese spheres of influence, encompassing some portion of eastern Europe and the western Pacific, as the price of stability and peace. The logic is twofold: first, to create a cleaner separation between contending parties by clearly marking where one’s influence ends and the other’s begins; and second, to reduce the chances of conflict by giving rising or resurgent powers a safe zone along their borders. In theory, this seems like a reasonable way of preventing competition from turning into outright conflict, especially given that countries such as Taiwan and the Baltic states lie thousands of miles from the United States but on the doorsteps of its rivals. Yet in reality, a spheres-of-influence world would bring **more peril than safety**.

Russia’s and China’s **spheres of influence** would **inevitably** be domains of **coercion** and **authoritarianism**. Both countries are run by illiberal, autocratic regimes; their leaders see democratic values as profoundly threatening to their political survival. If Moscow and Beijing dominated their respective neighborhoods, they would naturally seek to undermine democratic governments that resist their control—as China is already doing in Taiwan and as Russia is doing in Ukraine—or that challenge, through their very existence, the legitimacy of authoritarian rule. The practical consequence of acceding to authoritarian spheres of influence would be to intensify the crisis of democracy that afflicts the world today.

The United States would suffer economically, too. China, in particular, is a mercantilist power already working to turn Asian economies toward Beijing and could one day put the United States at a severe disadvantage on the world’s most economically dynamic continent. Washington should not concede a Chinese sphere of influence unless it is also willing to compromise the “Open Door” principles that have animated its statecraft for over a century.

Such costs might be acceptable in exchange for peace and security. But **spheres of influence** during the **Cold War** did not prevent the Soviets from repeatedly testing American redlines in Berlin, causing high-stakes crises in which **nuclear war** was **a real possibility**. Nor did those spheres prevent the two sides from competing sharply, and sometimes violently, throughout the “Third World.” **Throughout history**, spheres-of-influence settlements, from the Thirty Years’ Peace between **Athens** and **Sparta** to the Peace of Amiens between the **U**nited **K**ingdom and **Napoleonic France** have often ended, sooner or later, in **war**.

The idea that spheres of influence are a formula for peace rests on assumptions that often go unexamined: that revisionist powers are driven primarily by insecurity, that their grievances are limited and can be easily satisfied, that the truly vital interests of competing powers do not conflict, and that creative statecraft can therefore fashion an enduring, mutually acceptable equilibrium. The trouble is that these premises don’t always hold. **Ideology** and the **quest for greatness**—not simply insecurity—often drive **great powers**. **Rising states** are continually tempted to renegotiate previous bargains once they have the power to do so. **Offering concessions** to a revisionist state may simply convince it that the **existing order** is **fragile** and can be **tested further**. Conceding a sphere of influence to a great-power challenger might not produce stability but simply give that challenger a **better position** from which to realize its ambitions.

**2AC---NATO Collapse---Impact---Trade**

**Global protectionism causes extinction through world wars and collapsed response to existential risks**

Dr. Michael F. **Oppenheimer 21**, Clinical Professor at the Center for Global Affairs at New York University, Senior Consulting Fellow for Scenario Planning at the International Institute for Strategic Studies, Former Executive Vice President at The Futures Group, Member of the Council on Foreign Relations, The Foreign Policy Roundtable at the Carnegie Council on Ethics and International Affairs, and The American Council on Germany, “The Turbulent Future of International Relations,” in The Future of Global Affairs: Managing Discontinuity, Disruption and Destruction, Ed. Ankersen and Sidhu, pp. 23-30

Four structural forces will shape the future of **I**nternational **R**elations: **globalization** (but without liberal rules, institutions, and leadership)1; multipolarity (the end of American hegemony and wider distribution of power among states and non-states2); the strengthening of distinctive, national and subnational identities, as persistent cultural differences are accentuated by the disruptive effects of Western style globalization (what Samuel Huntington called the “non-westernization of IR”3); and secular economic stagnation, a product of longer term global decline in birth rates combined with aging populations.4 These structural forces do not determine everything. **Environment**al events, global **health** challenges, **internal political developments**, policy mistakes, **technology breakthroughs or failures**, will **intersect** with structure to **define our future**. But these four structural forces will impact the way states behave, in the capacity of great powers to **manage their differences**, and to **act collectively** to settle, rather than exploit, the **inevitable shocks** of the next decade.

Some of these structural forces could be managed to promote prosperity and **avoid war**. Multipolarity (inherently more prone to conflict than other configurations of power, given coordination problems)5 plus globalization can work in a world of prosperity, convergent values, and **effective conflict management**. The Congress of Vienna system achieved relative peace in Europe over a hundred-year period through informal cooperation among multiple states sharing a fear of populist revolution. It ended decisively in 1914. Contemporary neoliberal institutionalists, such as John Ikenberry, accept multipolarity as our likely future, but are confident that globalization with liberal characteristics can be sustained without American hegemony, arguing that liberal values and practices have been fully accepted by states, global institutions, and private actors as imperative for growth and political legitimacy.6 Divergent values plus multipolarity can work, though at significantly lower levels of economic growth-in an autarchic world of isolated units, a world envisioned by the advocates of **decoupling**, including the current American president. 7 Divergent values plus globalization can be managed by hegemonic power, exemplified by the decade of the 1990s, when the Washington Consensus, imposed by American leverage exerted through the IMF and other U.S. dominated institutions, overrode national differences, but with real costs to those states undergoing “structural adjustment programs,”8 and ultimately at the cost of global growth, as states—especially in Asia—increased their savings to self insure against future financial crises.9

But all four forces operating simultaneously will produce a future of **increasing internal polarization** and **cross border conflict**, diminished economic growth and poverty alleviation, weakened global **institutions** and **norms of behavior**, and **reduced collective capacity** to confront emerging challenges of global **warming**, accelerating **technology change**, **nuclear weapons** innovation and **prolif**eration. As in any effective scenario, this future is clearly visible to any keen observer. We have only to abolish wishful thinking and believe our own eyes.10

Secular Stagnation

This unbrave new world has been emerging for some time, as US power has declined relative to other states, especially China, global liberalism has failed to deliver on its promises, and totalitarian capitalism has proven effective in leveraging globalization for economic growth and political legitimacy while exploiting technology and the state’s coercive powers to maintain internal political control. But this new era was jumpstarted by the world financial crisis of 2007, which revealed the bankruptcy of unregulated market capitalism, weakened faith in US leadership, exacerbated economic deprivation and inequality around the world, ignited growing populism, and undermined international liberal institutions. The skewed distribution of wealth experienced in most developed countries, politically tolerated in periods of growth, became intolerable as growth rates declined. A combination of aging populations, accelerating technology, and global populism/nationalism promises to make this growth decline very difficult to reverse. What Larry Summers and other international political economists have come to call “secular stagnation” increases the likelihood that illiberal globalization, multipolarity, and rising nationalism will define our future. Summers11 has argued that the world is entering a long period of diminishing economic growth. He suggests that secular stagnation “may be the defining macroeconomic challenge of our times.” Julius Probst, in his recent assessment of Summers’ ideas, explains:

…rich countries are ageing as birth rates decline and people live longer. This has pushed down real interest rates because investors think these trends will mean they will make lower returns from investing in future, making them more willing to accept a lower return on government debt as a result.

Other factors that make investors similarly pessimistic include rising global inequality and the slowdown in productivity growth…

This decline in real interest rates matters because economists believe that to overcome an economic downturn, a central bank must drive down the real interest rate to a certain level to encourage more spending and investment… Because real interest rates are so low, Summers and his supporters believe that the rate required to reach full employment is so far into negative territory that it is effectively impossible.

…in the long run, more immigration might be a vital part of curing secular stagnation. Summers also heavily prescribes increased government spending, arguing that it might actually be more prudent than cutting back – especially if the money is spent on infrastructure, education and research and development.

Of course, governments in Europe and the US are instead trying to shut their doors to migrants. And austerity policies have taken their toll on infrastructure and public research. This looks set to ensure that the next recession will be particularly nasty when it comes… Unless governments change course radically, we could be in for a sobering period ahead.12

The rise of nationalism/populism is both cause and effect of this economic outlook. Lower growth will make every aspect of the liberal order more difficult to resuscitate post-Trump. Domestic politics will become more polarized and dysfunctional, as competition for diminishing resources intensifies. International collaboration, ad hoc or through institutions, will become politically toxic. Protectionism, in its multiple forms, will make economic recovery from “secular stagnation” a heavy lift, and the liberal hegemonic leadership and strong institutions that limited the damage of previous downturns, will be unavailable. A clear demonstration of this negative feedback loop is the economic damage being inflicted on the world by Trump’s trade war with China, which— despite the so-called phase one agreement—has predictably escalated from negotiating tactic to imbedded reality, with no end in sight. In a world already suffering from inadequate investment, the uncertainties generated by this confrontation will further curb the investments essential for future growth. Another demonstration of the intersection of structural forces is how populist-motivated controls on immigration (always a weakness in the hyper-globalization narrative) deprives developed countries of Summers’ recommended policy response to secular stagnation, which in a more open world would be a win-win for rich and poor countries alike, increasing wage rates and remittance revenues for the developing countries, replenishing the labor supply for rich countries experiencing low birth rates.

Illiberal Globalization

Economic weakness and rising nationalism (along with multipolarity) will not end globalization, but will profoundly alter its character and greatly reduce its economic and political benefits. Liberal global institutions, under American hegemony, have served multiple purposes, enabling states to improve the quality of international relations and more fully satisfy the needs of their citizens, and provide companies with the legal and institutional stability necessary to manage the inherent risks of global investment. But under present and future conditions these institutions will become the battlegrounds—and the victims—of geopolitical competition. The Trump Administration’s frontal attack on multilateralism is but the final nail in the coffin of the Bretton Woods system in trade and finance, which has been in slow but accelerating decline since the end of the Cold War. Future American leadership may embrace renewed collaboration in global trade and finance, macroeconomic management, environmental sustainability and the like, but repairing the damage requires the heroic assumption that America’s own identity has not been fundamentally altered by the Trump era (four years or eight matters here), and by the internal and global forces that enabled his rise. The fact will remain that a sizeable portion of the American electorate, and a monolithically pro- Trump Republican Party, is committed to an illiberal future. And even if the effects are transitory, the causes of weakening global collaboration are structural, not subject to the efforts of some hypothetical future US liberal leadership. It is clear that the US has lost respect among its rivals, and trust among its allies. While its economic and military capacity is still greatly superior to all others, its political dysfunction has diminished its ability to convert this wealth into effective power.13 It will furthermore operate in a future system of diffusing material power, diverging economic and political governance approaches, and rising nationalism. Trump has promoted these forces, but did not invent them, and future US Administrations will struggle to cope with them.

What will illiberal globalization look like? Consider recent events. The instruments of globalization have been weaponized by strong states in pursuit of their geopolitical objectives. This has turned the liberal argument on behalf of globalization on its head. Instead of interdependence as an unstoppable force pushing states toward collaboration and convergence around market-friendly domestic policies, states are exploiting interdependence to inflict harm on their adversaries, and even on their allies. The increasing interaction across national boundaries that globalization entails, now produces not **harmonization** and cooperation, but **friction** and **escalating trade and investment disputes**.14 The Trump Administration is in the lead here, but it is not alone. Trade and investment friction with China is the most obvious and damaging example, precipitated by China’s long failure to conform to the World Trade Organization (WTO) principles, now escalated by President Trump into a trade and currency war disturbingly reminiscent of the 1930s that Bretton Woods was designed to prevent. Financial sanctions against Iran, in violation of US obligations in the Joint Comprehensive Plan Of Action (JCPOA), is another example of the rule of law succumbing to geopolitical competition. Though more mercantilist in intent than geopolitical, US tariffs on steel and aluminum, and their threatened use in automotives, aimed at the EU, Canada, and Japan,15 are equally destructive of the liberal system and of future economic growth, imposed as they are by the author of that system, and will spread to others. And indeed, Japan has used export controls in its escalating conflict with South Korea16 (as did China in imposing controls on rare earth,17 and as the US has done as part of its trade war with China). Inward foreign direct investment restrictions are spreading. The vitality of the WTO is being sapped by its inability to complete the Doha Round, by the proliferation of bilateral and regional agreements, and now by the Trump Administration’s hold on appointments to WTO judicial panels. It should not surprise anyone if, during a second term, Trump formally withdrew the US from the WTO. At a minimum it will become a “dead letter regime.”18

As such measures **gain traction**, it will **become clear** to states—and to companies—that a global trading system more responsive to raw power than to law entails **escalating risk** and diminishing benefits. This will be the **end of economic globalization**, and its many benefits, as we know it. It represents nothing less than the subordination of economic globalization, a system which many thought obeyed its own logic, to an international politics of **zero-sum power competition** among multiple actors with divergent interests and values. The costs will be significant: Bloomberg Economics estimates that the cost in lost US GDP in 2019- dollar terms from the trade war with China has reached $134 billion to date and will rise to a total of $316 billion by the end of 2020.19 Economically, the just-in-time, maximally efficient world of global supply chains, driving down costs, incentivizing innovation, spreading investment, integrating new countries and populations into the global system, is being Balkanized. Bilateral and regional deals are proliferating, while global, nondiscriminatory trade agreements are at an end.

Economies of scale will shrink, incentivizing less investment, increasing costs and prices, compromising growth, marginalizing countries whose growth and poverty reduction depended on participation in global supply chains. A world already suffering from excess savings (in the corporate sector, among mostly Asian countries) will **respond** to heightened risk and uncertainty with **further retrenchment**. The problem is perfectly captured by Tim Boyle, CEO of Columbia Sportswear, whose supply chain runs through China, reacting to yet another ratcheting up of US tariffs on Chinese imports, most recently on consumer goods:

We move stuff around to take advantage of inexpensive labor. That’s why we’re in Bangladesh. That’s why we’re looking at Africa. We’re putting investment capital to work, to get a return for our shareholders. So, when we make a wager on investment, this is not Vegas. We have to have a reasonable expectation we can get a return. That’s predicated on the rule of law: where can we expect the laws to be enforced, and for the foreseeable future, the rules will be in place? That’s what America used to be.20

The **international political effects** will be equally **damaging**. The four structural forces act on each other to produce the **more dangerous**, less prosperous **world** projected here. Illiberal globalization represents geopolitical conflict by (at first) physically non-kinetic means. It arises from **intensifying competition** among powerful states with divergent interests and identities, but in its effects drives down growth and **fuels increased nationalism/populism**, which further **contributes to conflict**. Twenty-first-century protectionism represents bottom-up forces arising from economic disruption. But it is also a top-down phenomenon, representing a strategic effort by political leadership to reduce the constraints of interdependence on freedom of geopolitical action, in effect a precursor and enabler of war. This is the disturbing hypothesis of Daniel Drezner, argued in an important May 2019 piece in Reason, titled “Will Today’s Global Trade Wars Lead to **World War Three**,”21 which examines the pre- World War I period of heightened trade conflict, its contribution to the disaster that followed, and its parallels to the present:

Before the First World War started, powers great and small took a variety of steps to thwart the globalization of the 19th century. Each of these steps made it easier for the key combatants to conceive of a general war. We are beginning to see a similar approach to the globalization of the 21st century. One by one, the **economic constraints** on **military aggression** are **eroding**. And too many have forgotten—or never knew—how this played out a century ago.

…In many ways, 19th century globalization was a victim of its own success. Reduced tariffs and transport costs flooded Europe with inexpensive grains from Russia and the United States. The incomes of landowners in these countries suffered a serious hit, and the Long Depression that ran from 1873 until 1896 generated pressure on European governments to protect against cheap imports.

…The primary lesson to draw from the years before 1914 is not that economic interdependence was a weak constraint on military conflict. It is that, even in a globalized economy, governments can take protectionist actions to reduce their interdependence in anticipation of future wars. In retrospect, the 30 years of tariff hikes, **trade wars**, and currency conflicts that preceded 1914 were **harbingers** of the devastation to come. European governments did not necessarily want to ignite a war among the great powers. By reducing their interdependence, however, they made that option conceivable.

…the backlash to globalization that preceded the Great War seems to be reprised in the current moment. Indeed, there are ways in which the **current moment** is **scarier** than the **pre-1914** era. Back then, the world’s hegemon, the United Kingdom, acted as a brake on economic closure. In 2019, the United States is the protectionist with its foot on the accelerator. The constraints of Sino-American interdependence—what economist Larry Summers once called “the financial balance of terror”—no longer look so binding. And there are far too many **hot spots**—the **Korea**n peninsula, the **S**outh **C**hina **S**ea, **Taiwan**—where the **kindling** seems **awfully dry**.

**2AC---NATO Collapse---Impact---EU Divisions**

**European security dilemma causes German prolif and nuke war, destroys the NPT**.

**Kühn and Thorpe, 17**—nonresident scholar at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and a senior research associate at the Vienna Center for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation (VCDNP)/James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies AND nonresident fellow in the Nuclear Policy Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and an assistant professor in the Defense Analysis Department of the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School (Ulrich and Tristan, “Keine Atombombe, Bitte: Why Germany Should Not Go Nuclear,” Foreign Affairs, Vol. 96, Iss. 4, (Jul/Aug 2017): 103-112, dml)

Moreover, a German nuclear arsenal would risk **bringing down the international nonproliferation regime**. Before acquiring the bomb, Germany would have to leave the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, a move that would **threaten the continued existence of the treaty itself**. Despite the NPT’s successful record, the treaty's future **already looks uncertain**. Under the NPT, states with nuclear weapons agreed to pursue disarmament, but in recent years, progress toward this goal has **stalled**, and nonnuclear states have **increasingly voiced their frustration** that the nuclear weapons states have not fulfilled their promise. A **foundational goal** of the treaty, moreover, was to **keep Germany from building nuclear weapons**. If Berlin **defected**, the nonproliferation regime might **collapse entirely**, because other countries would no longer feel bound by the treaty's collective bargain.

Germany would also need to modify or withdraw from the so-called Two Plus Four Treaty, the agreement on reunification that East and West Germany signed with France, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, and the United States in 1990. In that document, Germany affirmed its "renunciation of the manufacture and possession of and control over nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons." The treaty was meant not only to end the Cold War but also to prevent any future German Sonderweg; abrogating it would bring back the German question and deliver an affront to the four countries that paid such enormous costs to defeat Nazi Germany in World War II.

Worst of all, the pursuit of a German nuclear arsenal, rather than deterring aggression, could **increase the risk of conflict in Europe**, since Russia would likely work to **prevent Germany from acquiring the bomb**. Moscow could assassinate German nuclear scientists, use cyberattacks to sabotage German nuclear industrial infrastructure, and perhaps go so far as to strike German nuclear facilities from the air. Even covert operations could **quickly spiral into outright confrontation**.

Even if Germany managed to acquire nuclear weapons, it would then face the daunting task of making sure they could survive a Russian attack. In recent years, Russia has moved its missiles westward, targeting Germany and other nato members. Now that Russia has allegedly deployed multiple cruise missiles in violation of the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, under which the Soviet Union and the United States agreed to abandon midrange missiles, its ability to destroy a fledgling German nuclear stockpile is only growing. Unless Germany managed to conceal and protect its nuclear weapons almost immediately, German leaders could, during a crisis with Russia, feel pressure to **launch a preemptive nuclear attack** against Russia in order to avoid losing the arsenal to a Russian first strike.

These formidable barriers to a German nuclear program have led some to return to the idea of a British-French deterrent. But the United Kingdom's impending departure from the eu leaves Germany with the sole option of reaching out to France. This would not be the first time that France and Germany have considered a joint European nuclear deterrent. In 1957, shortly after the Suez crisis, when tensions between France and the United States were running high and the French government began to doubt the credibility of the U.S. nuclear guarantee, France suggested to Italy and West Germany that the three countries develop nuclear weapons together. The next year, French President Charles de Gaulle took office and quickly canceled the secret negotiations and began an indigenous French nuclear program, only to raise the prospect of nuclear cooperation again with German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer in 1962. And in the 1990s, France offered to extend its nuclear umbrella to Germany after reunification in an attempt to decrease U.S. influence in Europe. All these efforts failed, in part because the French consistently refused to relinquish control over their arsenal, as to do so would have been to give up French autonomy in foreign policy. This calculus has not changed, a fact that should give German policymakers pause today. Moreover, by reviving such talk, Berlin risks giving isolationist elements in the Trump administration exactly what they want: an excuse to disengage.

STRONGER TOGETHER

Nuclear weapons will not solve Europe's current woes, but Washington should not dismiss German nuclear yearnings, as they reflect a **growing sense of uncertainty** in Berlin. This uncertainty stems from an **incoherent U.S. policy** toward Russia, which began **well before Trump took office**. Since 2000, Washington has faced **competing policy options**: focus only on defending NATO allies and containing Russia; offer indefinite support to former Soviet states, such as Georgia and Ukraine, that struggle under Russian dominance; or cooperate with Russia to tackle global security challenges.

The United States has **experimented** with all three. It has welcomed new countries into nato despite dire, if vague, warnings from Russia. Washington continues to **keep the door to the alliance open** in the hope that former Soviet states will eventually join, but it **lacks the resolve** to force Moscow to respect the sovereignty of countries such as Georgia and Ukraine. At the same time, successive U.S. administrations have tried to cooperate with the Kremlin on various issues, such as counterterrorism and stopping the Iranian nuclear program.

Three years after the annexation of Crimea and the start of the war in Ukraine, Washington has **yet to choose a clear policy**. This **inconsistency**, coupled with Russian aggression, has led Europe to the **brink of a new Cold War**. Add to this Trump's **erratic stances** toward Russia and nato, and it is **not surprising** that Europeans are asking **what Washington's long-term priorities really are** and **how the U**nited **S**tates **intends to achieve them**.

This crisis in transatlantic relations **presents many perils**, but it also **offers opportunities for leaders** in Berlin and Washington. For Germany, that means **taking practical steps** to increase Europe's ability to **provide for its own conventional security**, not proposing **dangerous nuclear fantasies**. Germany should not focus on nato's blunt spending goal of two percent of gdp but instead **seek closer cooperation** among national EU militaries; contribute larger and betterequipped forces to the eu Battlegroups; encourage eu countries to avoid duplicating one another's military R & D, production, and procurement; overcome German national pride and work to develop a common European defense industry; and increase the resilience of eu states to Russian propaganda.

**2AC---NATO Collapse---Impact---Asia Alliances**

**Extinction**

Zack **Beauchamp 18**, senior reporter at Vox, where he covers global politics and ideology, and a host of Worldly, Vox's podcast on covering foreign policy and international relations, “How Trump is killing America’s alliances”, Vox, <https://www.vox.com/world/2018/6/12/17448866/trump-south-korea-alliance-trudeau-g7>

How the weakening of American alliances could lead to a **massive war** There has **never, in human history, been an era as peaceful as our own**. This is a hard truth to appreciate, given the horrible violence ongoing in places like Syria, Yemen, and Myanmar, yet the evidence is **quite clear.** Take a look at this chart from the University of Oxford’s Max Roser. It tracks the number of years in a given time period in which “great powers” — meaning the militarily and economically powerful countries at that time — were at war with each other over the course of the past 500 years. The decline is unmistakable: [[TABLE OMITTED]] This data should give you some appreciation for how unique, and potentially precarious, our historical moment is. For more than 200 years, from 1500 to about 1750, major European powers like Britain and France and Spain were warring constantly. The frequency of conflict declined in the 19th and 20th centuries, but the wars that did break out — the Napoleonic conflicts, both world wars — were particularly devastating. The past 70 years without great power war, a period scholars term “the Long Peace,” is one of history’s most wonderful anomalies. The question then becomes: Why did it happen? And could Trump mucking around with a pillar of the global order, American alliances, put it in jeopardy? The answer to the second question, ominously, appears to be yes. There is **significant evidence** that **strong American alliances** — **most notably the NATO alliance** **and US agreements to defend Japan and South Korea —** have been **instrumental in putting an end to great power war.** “As this alliance system spreads and expands, it correlates with this dramatic decline, this **unprecedented drop, in warfare**,” says Michael Beckley, a professor of international relations at Tufts University. “It’s a really, really strong correlation.” A 2010 study by Rice’s Leeds and the University of Kentucky’s Jesse C. Johnson surveyed a large data set on alliances between 1816 and 2000. They found that countries in defensive alliances were **20 percent less likely** to be involved in a conflict, on average, than countries that weren’t. This holds true even after you control for other factors that would affect the likelihood of war, like whether a country is a democracy or whether it has an ongoing dispute with a powerful neighbor. In a follow-up paper, Leeds and Johnson looked at the same data set to see whether certain kinds of alliances were more effective at protecting its members than others. Their conclusion is that alliances deter war best when their members are militarily powerful and when enemies take seriously the allies’ promise to fight together in the event of an attack. The core US alliances — NATO, Japan, and South Korea — fit these descriptors neatly. A third study finds evidence that alliances allow allies to **restrain each other** from going to war. Let’s say Canada wants to get involved in a conflict somewhere. Typically, it would discuss its plans with the United States first — and if America thinks it’s a bad idea, Canada might well listen to them. There’s strong statistical evidence that countries don’t even try to start some conflicts out of fear that an ally would disapprove. These three findings all suggest that NATO and America’s East Asian alliances very likely are playing a major role in preserving the Long Peace — which is why Trump’s habit of messing around with alliances is so dangerous. According to many Russia experts, Vladimir Putin’s deepest geostrategic goal is “breaking” NATO. The member states where anyone would expect him to test NATO’s commitment would be the Baltics — Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania — small former Soviet republics that recently became NATO members. We can’t predict if and when a rival like Putin would conclude that America’s alliances seemed weak enough to try testing them. Hopefully, it never happens. But the more Trump attacks the foundations of America’s allies, the more likely things are to change. The absolute risk of a Russian invasion of a NATO state or a North Korean attack on the South is relatively low, but **the consequences are so potentially catastrophic — nuclear war!** — that it’s worth **taking anything that increases the odds of such a conflict seriously.** The crack-up of the West? The world order is a little like a game of Jenga. In the game, there are lots of small blocks that interlock to form a stable tower. Each player has to remove a block without toppling the tower. But each time you take out a block, the whole thing gets a bit less stable. Take out enough blocks and it will collapse. The international order works in kind of the same way. There are lots of different interlocking parts — the spread of democracy, American alliances, nuclear deterrence, and the like — that work together to keep the global peace. But take out one block and the other ones might not be strong enough to keep things together on their own. At the end of the Cold War, British and French leaders worried that the passing of the old order might prove destabilizing. In a January 1990 meeting, French President François Mitterrand told British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher that he feared a united Germany could seize control of even more territory than Hitler. Some experts feared that in the absence of the external Soviet threat, Western European powers might go back to waging war with each other. Thankfully, those predictions turned out to be wrong. There are multiple reasons for that, but one big one — one that also helped keep relations between other historical enemies, like South Korea and Japan, peaceful — is a shared participation in US alliance networks. The US serves as the ultimate security blanket, preventing these countries from having to build up their own armaments and thus risk a replay of World War I. But if American alliance commitments become and remain less credible, it’s possible this order could crack up. America’s partners aren’t stupid. They understand that Trump is the product of deep forces in American politics, and that his victory might not be a one-off. If they think that this won’t be the last “America First” president in modern history, depending on America the way that they have in the past could quickly become a nightmare. The worst-case scenarios for a collapse in the US alliance system are terrible. Imagine **full** **Japanese and German rearmament**, alongside **rapid-fire prolif**eration of nuclear weapons. Imagine a **crack-up of NATO**, with **European powers at loggerheads** while **Russia gobbles up the Baltic states** and the **rest of Ukraine**. Imagine **South Korea’s historical tensions with Japan reigniting**, **and a war between those two countries** or any combination of them and China. All of this seems impossible to imagine now, almost absurd. And indeed, in the short run, it is. There is no risk — zero — of American allies turning on each other in the foreseeable future. And it’s possible that the next president after Trump could reassure American allies that nothing like this could ever happen again. But the truth is that there’s just no way to know. When a fundamental force for world peace starts to weaken, no one can really be sure how well the system will hold up. Nothing like this — the leader of the world’s hegemon rounding on its most important allies — has ever happened before. What Donald Trump’s presidency has done, in effect, is start up another geopolitical Jenga game. Slowly but surely, he’s removing the blocks that undergird global security. It’s possible the global order survives Trump — but it’s just too early for us to say for sure. **Given the stakes, it’s a game we’d rather not play.**

**2AC---NATO Collapse---Impact---Competitiveness**

**Competitiveness solves extinction**

Zoë **Baird 20** (Zoë Baird is CEO and President of the Markle Foundation, which works to realize the potential of technology to achieve breakthroughs in addressing some of the nation’s most pressing issues, She was a Council on Foreign Relations trustee and served on boards of several publicly held companies and government advisory boards, and a member of the president’s foreign intelligence advisory board and the National Security Agency advisory board, 11/2020, accessed 11/11/21, “Equitable Economic Recovery Is a National Security Imperative”, https://www.aspeninstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Chapter-13\_Baird\_Equitable-Economic-Recovery.pdf)AGabay

Broadly shared economic prosperity is a bedrock of America’s economic and political **strength**—both domestically and in the international arena. A strong and equitable **recovery** from the economic crisis created by COVID-19 would be a powerful testament to the **resilience** of the American system and its ability to create prosperity at a time of seismic change and persistent global crisis. Such a recovery could attack the profound economic inequities that have developed over the past several decades. Without **bold action** to help all workers access good jobs as the economy returns, the United States risks undermining the legitimacy of its institutions and its international standing. The outcome will be a key determinant of America’s national **security** for years to come. An equitable recovery requires a national commitment to help all workers obtain good jobs—particularly the twothirds of adults without a bachelor’s degree and people of color who have been most affected by the crisis and were denied opportunity before it. As the nation engages in a historic debate about how to accelerate economic recovery, ambitious public investment is necessary to put Americans back to work with dignity and opportunity. We need an intentional effort to make sure that the jobs that come back are good jobs with decent wages, benefits, and mobility and to empower workers to access these opportunities in a profoundly changed labor market. To achieve these goals, American policy makers need to establish job growth strategies that address urgent public needs through major programs in green energy, infrastructure, and health. Alongside these job growth strategies, we need to recognize and develop the talents of workers by creating an adult learning system that meets workers’ needs and develops skills for the digital economy. The national security community must lend its support to this cause. And as it does so, it can bring home the lessons from the advances made in these areas in other countries, particularly our European allies, and consider this a realm of international cooperation and international engagement. Shared Economic Prosperity Is a National Security Asset A strong economy is essential to America’s security and diplomatic **strategy**. Economic strength increases our influence on the global stage, expands markets, and funds a strong and agile **military** and national defense. Yet it is not enough for America’s economy to be strong for some—prosperity must be broadly shared. Widespread belief in the ability of the American economic system to create economic security and mobility for all—the American Dream— creates credibility and legitimacy for America’s **values**, **governance**, and **alliances** around the world. After World War II, the United States grew the middle class to historic size and **strength**. This achievement made America the model of **the free world**—setting the stage for decades of American political and economic **leadership**. Domestically, broad participation in the economy is core to the legitimacy of our **democracy** and the strength of our **political institutions**. A belief that the economic system works for millions is an important part of creating trust in a democratic government’s ability to meet the needs of the people. The COVID-19 Crisis Puts Millions of American Workers at Risk For the last several decades, the American Dream has been on the wane. Opportunity has been increasingly concentrated in the hands of a small share of workers able to access the knowledge economy. Too many Americans, particularly those without four-year degrees, experienced stagnant wages, less stability, and fewer opportunities for advancement. Since COVID-19 hit, millions have lost their jobs or income and are struggling to meet their basic needs—including food, housing, and medical care.1 The crisis has impacted sectors like hospitality, leisure, and retail, which employ a large share of America’s most economically vulnerable workers, resulting in alarming disparities in unemployment rates along education and racial lines. In August, the unemployment rate for those with a high school degree or less was more than double the rate for those with a bachelor’s degree.2 Black and Hispanic Americans are experiencing disproportionately high unemployment, with the gulf widening as the crisis continues.3 The experience of the Great Recession shows that without intentional effort to drive an inclusive recovery, inequality may get worse: while workers with a high school education or less experienced the majority of job losses, nearly all new jobs went to workers with postsecondary education. Inequalities across racial lines also increased as workers of color worked in the hardest-hit sectors and were slower to recover earnings and income than White workers.4 The Case for an Inclusive Recovery A recovery that promotes broad economic participation, renewed opportunity, and equity will strengthen American moral and political authority around the world. It will send a strong message about the strength and resilience of **democratic** **government** and the **American people’s** ability to adapt to a changing **global** **economic** **landscape**. An inclusive recovery will reaffirm American leadership as core to the success of our most critical international alliances, which are rooted in the notion of shared destiny and interdependence. For example, NATO, which has been a cornerstone of U.S. foreign policy and a force of global stability for decades, has suffered from American disengagement in recent years. A strong American recovery—coupled with a renewed openness to international collaboration—is core to NATO’s **ability** to solve shared **geopolitical** and **security** **challenges**. A renewed partnership with our European allies from a position of economic strength will enable us to address global crises such as **climate** **change**, global **pandemics**, and **refugees**. Together, the United States and Europe can pursue a commitment to investing in workers for shared economic competitiveness, innovation, and long-term prosperity.

**2AC---NATO Collapse---Impact---LIO**

**Otherwise, US decline causes global nuclear war, heightens regional instability in global hotspots, dissolves alliances, causes proliferation, and transition wars**

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Global retrenchment is fast emerging as the most coherent and ready-made alternative to the United States’ postwar strategy. Yet pursuing it would be a **grave mistake**. By **dissolving** U.S. **alliances** and ending the **forward presence** of **U.S. forces**, this strategy would **destabilize** the **regional security orders** in **Europe** and **Asia**. It would also increase the risk of **nuclear prolif**eration, **empower** **right-wing** **nationalists** in Europe, and **aggravate** the **threat** of **major-power conflict**.

This is not to say that U.S. strategy should never change. The United States has regularly **increased** and **decreased** its **presence** around the world as **threats** have **risen** and **ebbed**. Even though Washington followed a strategy of containment throughout the Cold War, that took various forms, which meant the difference between war and peace in Vietnam, between an arms race and arms control, and between détente and an all-out attempt to defeat the Soviets. After the fall of the Soviet Union, the United States changed course again, expanding its alliances to include many countries that had previously been part of the Warsaw Pact.

Likewise, the United States will now have to do less in some areas and more in others as it **shifts its focus** from **counterterrorism** and reform in the **Mid**dle **East** toward **great-power competition** with **China** and **Russia**. But advocates of global retrenchment are not so much proposing changes within a strategy as they are calling for the **wholesale replacement** of one that has been in place since World War II. What the **U**nited **S**tates needs now is a careful pruning of its overseas commitments—not the **indiscriminate abandonment** of a strategy that has served it well for decades.

RETRENCHMENT REDUX

Support for retrenchment stems from the view that the United States has overextended itself in countries that have little bearing on its national interest. According to this perspective, which is closely associated with the realist school of international relations, the United States is fundamentally secure thanks to its geography, nuclear arsenal, and military advantage. Yet the country has nonetheless chosen to pursue a strategy of “liberal hegemony,” using force in an unwise attempt to perpetuate a liberal international order (one that, as evidenced by U.S. support for authoritarian regimes, is not so liberal, after all). Washington, the argument goes, has distracted itself with costly overseas commitments and interventions that breed resentment and encourage free-riding abroad. Critics of the status quo argue that the United States must take two steps to change its ways. The first is retrenchment itself: the action of withdrawing from many of the United States’ existing commitments, such as the ongoing military interventions in the Middle East and one-sided alliances in Europe and Asia. The second is restraint: the strategy of defining U.S. interests narrowly, refusing to launch wars unless vital interests are directly threatened and Congress authorizes such action, compelling other nations to take care of their own security, and relying more on diplomatic, economic, and political tools. In practice, this approach means ending U.S. military operations in Afghanistan, withdrawing U.S. forces from the Middle East, relying on an over-the-horizon force that can uphold U.S. national interests, and no longer taking on responsibility for the security of other states. As for alliances, Posen has argued that the United States should abandon the mutual-defense provision of NATO, replace the organization “with a new, more limited security cooperation agreement,” and reduce U.S. commitments to Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan. On the question of China, realists have split in recent years. Some, such as the scholar John Mearsheimer, contend that even as the United States retrenches elsewhere, in Asia, it must contain the threat of China, whereas others, such as Posen, argue that nations in the region are perfectly capable of doing the job themselves. Since Trump’s election, some progressive foreign policy thinkers have joined the retrenchment camp. They diverge from other progressives, who advocate maintaining the United States’ current role. Like the realists, progressive retrenchers hold the view that the United States is safe because of its geography and the size of its military. Where these progressives break from the realists, however, is on the question of what will happen if the United States pulls back. While the realists favoring retrenchment have few illusions about the sort of regional competition that will break out in the absence of U.S. dominance, the progressives expect that the world will become more peaceful and cooperative, because Washington can still manage tensions through diplomatic, economic, and political tools. The immediate focus of the progressives is the so-called forever wars—U.S. military involvement in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, and the broader war on terrorism—as well as the defense budget and overseas bases. Although the progressives have a less developed vision of how to implement retrenchment than the realists, they do provide some guideposts. Stephen Wertheim, a co-founder of the Quincy Institute, has called for bringing home many of the U.S. soldiers serving abroad, “leaving small forces to protect commercial sea lanes,” as part of an effort to “deprive presidents of the temptation to answer every problem with a violent solution.” He argues that U.S. allies may believe that the United States has been inflating regional threats and thus conclude that they do not need to increase their conventional or nuclear forces. Another progressive thinker, Peter Beinart, has argued that the United States should accept Chinese and Russian spheres of influence, a strategy that would include abandoning Taiwan.

IS LESS REALLY MORE?

The realists and the progressives arguing for retrenchment differ in their assumptions, logic, and intentions. The realists tend to be more pessimistic about the prospects for peace and frame their arguments in hardheaded terms, whereas the progressives downplay the consequences of American withdrawal and make a moral case against the current grand strategy. But they share a common claim: that the United States would be better off if it dramatically reduced its global military footprint and security commitments.

This is a **false promise**, for a number of reasons. First, retrenchment would worsen **regional security competition** in **Europe** and **Asia**. The realists recognize that the U.S. military presence in Europe and Asia does dampen security competition, but they claim that it does so at too high a price—and one that, at any rate, should be paid by U.S. allies in the regions themselves. Although pulling back would invite regional security competition, realist retrenchers admit, the United States could be safer in a more dangerous world because regional rivals would check one another. This is a perilous gambit, however, because regional conflicts often end up **implicating U.S. interests**. They might thus end up drawing the **U**nited **S**tates back in after it has **left**—resulting in a much **more dangerous** venture than **heading off** the conflict in the first place by staying. Realist retrenchment reveals a hubris that the United States can control consequences and prevent crises from erupting into war.

The progressives’ view of regional security is similarly flawed. These retrenchers reject the idea that regional security competition will intensify if the United States leaves. In fact, they argue, U.S. alliances often promote competition, as in the Middle East, where U.S. support for Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates has emboldened those countries in their cold war with Iran. But this logic does not apply to **Europe** or **Asia**, where U.S. allies have **behaved responsibly**. A U.S. **pullback** from those places is more likely to **embolden** the **regional powers**. Since 2008, **Russia** has invaded two of its neighbors that are not members of NATO, and if the Baltic states were no longer protected by a U.S. security guarantee, it is conceivable that Russia would **test** the **boundaries** with **gray-zone warfare**. In East Asia, a U.S. **withdrawal** would **force Japan** to increase its defense capabilities and change its constitution to enable it to **compete with China** on its own, **straining relations** with **So**uth **Ko**rea.

The second problem with retrenchment involves nuclear **prolif**eration. If the United States **pulled out** of **NATO** or ended its alliance with **Japan**, as many realist advocates of retrenchment recommend, some of its allies, no longer protected by the U.S. **nuclear umbrella**, would be tempted to **acquire** **nuclear weapons** of their own. Unlike the progressives for retrenchment, the realists are comfortable with that result, since they see deterrence as a stabilizing force. Most Americans are not so sanguine, and rightly so. There are good reasons to worry about nuclear proliferation: nuclear **materials** could end up in the hands of **terrorists**, states with **less experience** might be more prone to **nuclear accidents**, and nuclear powers in **close proximity** have **shorter** **response times** and thus **conflicts** among them have a **greater chance** of **spiraling** into **escalation**.

Third, retrenchment would **heighten** **nationalism** and **xenophobia**. In Europe, a U.S. withdrawal would send the message that every country must fend for itself. It would therefore empower the **far-right** groups already making this claim—such as the Alternative for Germany, the League in Italy, and the National Front in France—while **undermining** the **centrist** democratic leaders there who told their populations that they could rely on the **U**nited **S**tates and **NATO**. As a result, Washington would **lose leverage** over the **domestic politics** of **individual allies**, particularly **younger** and **more fragile** democracies such as Poland. And since these nationalist **populist groups** are almost always **protectionist**, retrenchment would damage U.S. **economic interests**, as well. Even more alarming, many of the right-wing nationalists that retrenchment would empower have called for greater **accommodation** of **China** and **Russia**.

A fourth problem concerns **regional stability** after global retrenchment. The most likely end state is a **spheres-of-influence** system, whereby **China** and **Russia** dominate their neighbors, but such an order is inherently **unstable**. The lines of demarcation for such spheres tend to be **unclear**, and there is **no guarantee** that China and Russia will not seek to **move them outward** over time. Moreover, the **U**nited **S**tates cannot simply grant other major powers a sphere of influence—the countries that would fall into those realms have agency, too. If the United States ceded Taiwan to China, for example, the Taiwanese people could say no. The current U.S. policy toward the country is working and may be **sustainable**. **Withdrawing support** from Taiwan **against its will** would **plunge** **cross-strait relations** into chaos. The entire idea of letting regional powers have their own spheres of influence has an **imperial air** that is at odds with modern principles of sovereignty and international law.

A fifth problem with **retrenchment** is that it **lacks** **domestic support**. The American people may favor greater burden sharing, but there is no evidence that they are onboard with a withdrawal from Europe and Asia. As a survey conducted in 2019 by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs found, **seven out of ten** Americans believe that maintaining military superiority makes the United States **safer**, and almost t**hree-quarters** think that **alliances** **contribute** to U.S. **security**. A 2019 Eurasia Group Foundation poll found that over 60 percent of Americans want to maintain or **increase** **defense spending**. As it became apparent that China and Russia would **benefit** from this shift toward retrenchment, and as the United States’ democratic **allies objected** to its withdrawal, the **domestic** **political backlash** would **grow**. One result could be a **prolonged** foreign policy debate that would cause the United States to **oscillate** between **retrenchment** and **reengagement**, creating **uncertainty** about its commitments and thus raising the risk of **miscalc**ulation by **Washington**, its **allies**, or its **rivals**.

Realist and progressive retrenchers like to argue that the architects of the United States’ postwar foreign policy naively sought to remake the world in its image. But the real revisionists are those who argue for retrenchment, a geopolitical experiment of unprecedented scale in modern history. If this camp were to have its way, **Europe** and **Asia**—two **stable**, **peaceful**, and **prosperous regions** that form the two **main pillars** of the **U.S.-led order**—would be **plunged** into an era of **uncertainty**.

**2AC---AT: NATO Bad---Russia/Ukraine**

**Ukraine was not about NATO---Russia doesn’t want to stave off NATO expansion because he knows it will never happen.**

Maria **Popova &** Oxana **Shevel, 22** (Maria Popova is Jean Monnet Chair and Associate Professor of Political Science at McGill University, Oxana Shevel is an Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science at Tufts University’s School of Arts and Sciences, 2-24-2022, accessed on 7-25-2022, Just Security, “Russia’s Invasion of Ukraine Is Essentially Not About NATO”, <https://www.justsecurity.org/80343/russias-new-assault-on-ukraine-is-not-entirely-maybe-not-even-largely-about-nato/>, HBisevac)

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.

In 1997, Ukraine’s President Leonid Kuchma signed the Charter on a Distinctive Partnership between NATO and Ukraine, and in **2002**, he publicly declared **Ukraine’s interest** in **NATO membership**, to **little opposition** from Russia. The NATO membership issue has ebbed-and-**flowed** within Ukraine, as presidents alternated in power who were either more pro-Western or more pro-Russian. Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko advocated during his **2005-2010 tenure** for Ukraine to be **granted** a **NATO** **membership** action plan (MAP), a program of preparation for entry into the alliance, while successor President Viktor Yanukovych backed away from the idea after 2010. Russia **did not respond** to any of these pro-NATO moves by Ukrainian presidents with military threats and aggression.

Russia knows further NATO expansion to the east is **highly improbable** because certain alliance members have **long** **balked** at the prospect, making the required consensus **impossible** **to attain**. Russia also has an **authoritarian ally** within NATO, **Hungary’s** **P**rime **M**inister Viktor **Orbán**, who can help **stave off** any **future consensus**, and other NATO members such as **Germany** and **France** **do not support** membership for **Ukraine**, **Georgia**, or other **post-Soviet states**. The security guarantee that Russia demands now goes **much further** than membership issues. Putin’s Feb. 21 speech shows he perceives any security cooperation between Ukraine and NATO, from modernization of airports to training exercises, as a “knife to [Russia’s] throat.”

Even after a new pro-Western government in Ukraine that followed the **2014** incursions again **embraced** the **goal** of NATO membership and Ukrainian **public support** for such a move rose, Ukraine’s accession was that much more unlikely because of the alliance’s reluctance to embrace new members embroiled in territorial disputes. If Putin’s main concern now was to keep Ukraine out of NATO, he had nothing to fear in 2014, when he first invaded Ukraine and had **even less to fear** in 2021, when he embarked on the current escalation.