## AT: Cease CP

### 2AC – Baltics – No UQ

#### The U.S. has already recommitted to the Baltic region

Matthew, Lee, 03/07/2022; Diplomatic Writer for The Associated Press, covering the State Department and U.S. foreign policy since 1999. He has traveled with every secretary of state since Madeleine Albright, reporting from more than 120 countries on America’s evolving international interests and priorities. Lee joined the AP in 2007 after 12 years with the French news agency AFP where he covered the State Department, served as the Kenya-based deputy bureau chief for East Africa and bureau chief in Phnom Penh, Cambodia and recipient of the Arthur Ross Media Award for Reporting in 2019; “US assures nervous Baltics of NATO protection against Russia” <https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-middle-east-estonia-antony-blinken-latvia-dde3c30bfc32e7c71e32e6c027ab12af>//ekc

RIGA, Latvia (AP) — U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Monday assured Lithuania and Latvia of NATO protection and American support as he made quick visits to two of the three Baltic states that are increasingly on edge as Russia presses ahead with its invasion of Ukraine.

Along with Estonia, which Blinken will visit on Tuesday, the former Soviet republics are NATO members, and the Biden administration is aiming to calm any fears they have about their security in the event Russia chooses to expand its military operations.

In the Latvian capital of Riga, Blinken said the Baltics have “formed a democratic wall that now stands against the tide of autocracy” that Russia is pushing in Europe. “The United States is more committed than ever to standing with you as our democracies rise to the challenge,” he said.

“We are bolstering our shared defense so that we and our allies are prepared,” Blinken said. He stressed that the U.S. commitment to NATO’s mutual defense pact is “sacrosanct” and that NATO and the United States were discussing the permanent basing of troops in the Baltics.

“We will defend every inch of NATO territory if it comes under attack,” he said. “No one should doubt our readiness. No one should doubt our resolve.”

Leaders in both countries expressed grave concerns about Russian President Vladimir Putin’s intentions as it relates to former Soviet bloc countries that are now allied or otherwise linked to the West.

“We have no illusions about Putin’s Russia anymore,” Latvian Foreign Minister Edgars Rinkevics said after meeting Blinken in Riga. “We don’t really see any good reason to assume that Russia might change its policy.”

Rinkevics said that the Russian invasion of Ukraine had shown the Baltic countries in particular the need to bolster air and coastal defenses and that Latvia would like its security cooperation with NATO to be “more efficient.”

“Unfortunately, the worsening security situation in the Baltic region is of great concern for all of us and around the world,” Lithuanian President Gitanas Nauseda told Blinken earlier in Vilnius. “Russia’s reckless aggression against Ukraine once again proves that it is a long-term threat to European security, the security of our alliance.”

Memories of Soviet rule are still fresh in the Baltics and since the invasion of Ukraine last month, NATO has moved quickly to boost its troop presence in its eastern flank allies while the U.S. has pledged additional support.

Blinken’s opened his Baltic tour in Vilnius, where Lithuanian support for Ukraine’s resistance to the Russian invasion was palpable as signs of solidarity with Ukrainians are evident in many businesses and on houses, public buildings and buses. He later traveled to Riga, which has been similarly festooned with blue and yellow Ukrainian flags.

Lithuania’s Nauseda said a policy of deterrence was no longer enough and that “forward defense” was now needed. He predicted that “Putin will not stop in Ukraine if he will not be stopped.”

“It is our collective duty as a nation to help all Ukrainians with all means available,” said Nauseda. “By saying all, I mean, indeed all means all, if we want to avoid the Third World War. The choice is in our hands.”

Lithuanian Foreign Minister Gabrielius Landsbergis called for a surge in assistance to Ukraine, noting that the NATO allies “are doing a lot, but we cannot stop.” He also called for an immediate halt to imports of Russian energy. “We cannot pay for oil and gas with Ukrainian blood,” he said.

Lithuania is also dealing with pressure from another large power — China — for its relationship with Taiwan, the island China regards as a renegade province. China has taken actions, including halting imports of certain products, against Lithuania for allowing Taiwan to open a de facto embassy in Vilnius.

Blinken said the Ukraine situation was relevant to Lithuania’s Taiwan situation as all countries should have the right to pursue their own foreign policies. “Every nation is free to associate with whom it chooses,” he said. “The United States continues to stand by Lithuania and every nation to choose its own path.”

Blinken arrived in the Baltics late Sunday from non-aligned Moldova, which is also warily watching the war on its doorstep, and Poland, where he visited the Polish-Ukrainian border and met with refugees from Ukraine.

After his meetings with senior Latvian officials and Israeli Foreign Minister Yair Lapid in Riga, Blinken will visit Tallinn, Estonia on Tuesday and then go on to Paris for talks with French President Emmanuel Macron.

Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett met with Putin over the weekend and Macron has been in frequent contact with the Russian leader. Both Israel and France sought meetings with Blinken to discuss those interactions.

Blinken declined to discuss those meetings in detail before they have been held but said: “There is certainly no change in our message to Moscow, our message to Russia and to President Putin: End the war. End it now.”

### 2AC – Baltics – Turn

#### Continued solidarity to the Baltics ensure the strength of democratic leadership and European security

Sally A. Painter, 20; Co-Founder and Chief Operating Officer of Blue Star Strategies, LLC, Atlantic Council board director, and a senior adviser to the Atlantic Council’s Future Europe Initiative; “US must remain committed to NATO and the Baltic States” Sept. 8, 2020 https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/us-must-remain-committed-to-nato-and-the-baltic-states//ekc

The three Baltic countries of Northern Europe have long been allies of the United States and valued members of the NATO community. In the 20th century, the United States refused to recognize the Soviet Union’s claim on Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia and supported the restoration of their independence in 1991. Our Baltic friends never forgot this important solidarity, and since then have promoted democracy and stability in their corner of Europe and worked diligently to attain membership in NATO and the EU community through systemic reforms to their economy, governance, and security. Rightfully so, the Baltics saw their integration into Euro-Atlantic institutions as an important deterrent to Russian influence, which continues to loom as a regional threat to their sovereignty and national security.

These threats have only escalated since Russia’s invasion of Georgia in 2008 and the annexation of Crimea from Ukraine in 2014. In this context, it is vital that the United States firmly recommit to NATO and increase its support of the Baltic countries to ensure the continuation of strong bilateral relations and the effective partnerships that have strengthened the entire transatlantic community.

Membership in NATO, a long-time aspiration for the Baltics, required that they undergo robust changes, and the subsequent reform process served as a key element for strengthening bilateral relations with the United States and a foundational pillar of transatlantic security. Since their accession in 2004, Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia have been responsible members of, and active contributors to, the NATO alliance. Despite the size of their national military forces, each country has actively supported regional security in Europe and participated in global NATO activities, including contributing troops to missions in Afghanistan. By 2019, all three countries increased their defense spending to the recommended two percent of their overall national budgets.

This upwards trajectory has resulted in vital support from the international community. At the 2016 NATO Summit in Warsaw, Poland, NATO reaffirmed its support for the Baltics by introducing Enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) units to all three Baltic states as well as Poland. NATO also now provides fighter aircraft to the Baltics, which have been increased following the 2014 Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Unfortunately, the non-permanent nature of these programs is not sufficient to guarantee the full military capabilities of the Baltics nor to bring peace of mind to its citizens. Given increased Russian presence in the region, each country must rely heavily on the collective defense agreement of the North Atlantic Treaty if it hopes to stand a chance against foreign interference. The United States together with its European partners and the international community must do more to prevent such foreign interference and ensure that the Baltic states are fully equipped with the tools and support structures that underpin their security.

To date, the United States has demonstrated its support for the Baltic region through the US-Baltic Charter, an alliance of values among the countries signed in 1998. The signatories agreed to a shared vision “of a peaceful and increasingly integrated Europe, free of divisions, dedicated to democracy, the rule of law, free markets, and respect for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all people.” The Charter’s emphasis on the vitality of independence and territorial integrity established grounds for a prosperous partnership and paved the way for Baltic integration into NATO. It provides an established path to follow for re-engaging with our allies and strengthening this vital transatlantic partnership. Perhaps even more so than in any recent year, this mission remains relevant and timely.

Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia have strongly demonstrated their dedication to the transatlantic alliance and have worked diligently to implement systematic reforms on a variety of shared concerns ranging from energy security, transparency, and economic vitality.

It is therefore highly unfortunate to witness recent statements and actions taken by US President Donald Trump that do not appear to recognize these important achievements nor the Baltics’ role as vital allies. Recent public comments by the president and in private conversations reported by former National Security Advisor John Bolton indicate that rather than strengthening and appreciating the value of the NATO Alliance, if elected to a second term, President Trump may wish to pull the United States out of the North Atlantic Treaty. This has not gone unnoticed by our European friends. A recent New York Times article notes analysis by the Atlantic Council’s Jorge Benitez that some European officials “see the escalation of negative steps, and they are definitely concerned that that negative pattern could continue if Trump is re-elected.” This concern is not only worrying to Europeans but also to many leaders in the US Congress. Senator Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), a senior member of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations warned in the same article that “withdrawing from NATO would be nothing short of catastrophic.”

The United States has profound interests in maintaining NATO and the sovereignty and security of the Baltic region. Now is the time for the United States to rise to this leadership role by deepening our commitment to NATO and supporting the Baltic countries to foster a strong and united transatlantic community. There exists today the opportunity to work on a new US-Baltic Charter to address today’s challenges. These could include promoting democracy, free and fair elections, and freedom of the press in the region; combating disinformation; expanding bilateral trade and investment between the United States and the Baltics; and supporting nations that wish to join the Euro-Atlantic family. Just as in 1991, a show of solidarity by the United States can help strengthen and protect the Baltic States, allowing them to continue to grow and faithfully contribute to the transatlantic community.

### 2AC – France

#### France wants US involvement defensively

Pannier, 2-4 (Alice Pannier, 2-4-22, assistant professor of European studies and international relations at Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies, [https://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/en/analyses/how-to-keep-france-engaged-in-nato///mahimahi )](https://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/en/analyses/how-to-keep-france-engaged-in-nato///mahimahi%20))

French-US relations are a key factor in determining the French attitude towards NATO, even if the Alliance is not the primary vehicle for defence and security cooperation between Paris and Washington. Two factors matter in particular: the extent to which Paris perceives that Washington takes into account the security concerns of Europeans, not least in the Middle East and Africa; and the [US attitude](https://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/en/analyses/one-plus-four-what-natos-new-strategic-concept-should-say-and-how-to-achieve-it/) towards European defence initiatives.

On the former, French authorities are concerned about the gradual US disengagement from unstable regions, not least the Sahel and the Middle East. Seen from Paris, a US disengagement from the Middle East and Africa would hurt European interests by harming their counter-terrorist efforts, which could potentially lead to the emergence of new havens for terrorist networks and organised crime, and/or would let other powers fill the vacuum and gain influence in Europe’s vicinity. Thus, the French government expressed a particularly strong reaction in 2019 when the US announced its intention of [withdrawing troops from northern Syria](https://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/en/commentaries/syria-strains-turkeys-ties-to-the-west-even-after-us-withdrawal/) without prior consultation with its European allies. In the view of French diplomats, the discrepancy between US and European security interests, which has led the US to be unwilling to take military or political risks in the MENA region, was not the result of Trump’s election but of a longer-term shift in US foreign policy priorities. The incoming [Biden Administration](https://especiales.realinstitutoelcano.org/eeuu/2020/) was seen as a hopeful sign for transatlantic cooperation in a increasingly degraded strategic environment. The messy disengagement from Afghanistan in August 2021 and the ‘blundering’ lack of consultation ahead of the AUKUS alliance announcement in September 2021 illustrate that effective foreign policy coordination should be at the heart of NATO’s role in the coming years.

#### Both presidents have shared interests over NATO

White House, 11-29 (White House, 1-29-21, “United States-Fra ce Joint Statement,” <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/10/29/united-states-france-joint-statement/>//mahimahi)

The Presidents resolve to maintain our collective defense and security, cultivate our resilience, enhance their solidarity, and ensure international stability in response to the full range of modern threats. The United States and France share the goal of continuing to bolster deterrence as a core element of our collective defense and to contribute to the indivisible security of the NATO Alliance.   
  
The fundamental purpose of NATO’s nuclear capability is to preserve peace, prevent coercion, and deter aggression.  Given the deteriorating security environment in Europe, we reaffirm that a credible and united nuclear Alliance is essential. In light of this security environment, allies should continue close consultations on nuclear and arms control matters, particularly within NATO. We will work together to strengthen arms control, disarmament, and non-proliferation, as a key element of Euro-Atlantic security.  
  
As noted in the September 22 Joint Statement between the two Presidents, the United States recognizes the importance of a stronger and more capable European defense that contributes positively to global and transatlantic security and is complementary to NATO. The United States supports European Allies’ and Partners’ growing investments in the military capabilities that enable our shared defense, given the benefit to transatlantic security of stronger European military capabilities and more committed European partners.  European-led missions and operations such as in the Sahel and in Bosnia are positively contributing to transatlantic security.  
  
The Presidents reaffirm their support for strengthening the NATO-EU strategic partnership, which is unique and essential for the security and prosperity of our nations and of the Euro-Atlantic area. They support the invitation of the EU and other partners to the upcoming NATO Leaders’ Summit in Madrid in 2022. The Presidents also reaffirm support for a U.S.-EU dialogue on security and defense and work towards an Administrative Arrangement for the United States with the European Defense Agency, as decided at the U.S.-EU Summit in June.   
  
The Presidents affirm the importance of stronger and interoperable defense industrial bases in Europe and in the United States, which will deliver better military capabilities, to the benefit of the Alliance. The Presidents intend to launch a U.S.-France defense trade strategic dialogue to foster a shared view on defense market access and export issues. In this context, the two governments will identify steps to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of defense export authorizations.