**AT: NATO Bad**

**Article V Impacts**

**Treaties are sacrosanct — anything else is seen as cherrypicking.**

**Kupchan ’19** — Charles; Government Professor at Georgetown University. “On Great Power Conflict: Entangled or Untangled Alliances?”; *Strategic Studies Quarterly*; <https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/Portals/10/SSQ/documents/Volume-13_Issue-4/SSQWinter2019.pdf>; //CYang

CAK: Treaty commitments are **sacrosanct**. One of the pillars of a rules-based system is for nations to live by their commitments. They do not **cherry-pick**. They don’t only show up on a sunny day and disappear on a rainy day. The US should stand by its **A**rticle **5** commitments if the Russians test those commitments whether it concerns Estonia, Latvia, Poland, or any other member. We should lead a coalition to defend the territory of alliance members. If the US were to fail to uphold its **NATO commitments**, it would raise doubts about US **commitments** globally — in Asia, the Middle East, everywhere.

**Only ironclad commitment maintains the alliance.**

**Hanso ’16** — Hannes; defense minister of Estonia. August 17, 2016; “NATO Is America’s Greatest Strategic Advantage”; *Wall Street Journal*; <https://www.wsj.com/articles/nato-is-americas-greatest-strategic-advantage-1471465396>; //CYang

Instead, we must continue to strengthen collective defense beyond the Warsaw Summit. Russia’s long-term strategy is to erode NATO’s **security guarantee**. If successful, this would have **disastrous effects** for the entire Alliance and the global security situation, not just the Baltic States. The survival of NATO therefore depends on the credibility and the **unconditional nature** of **A**rticle **5**. That strength enables NATO to remain open for dialogue with Russia, despite Moscow’s provocations.

It isn’t only the European Allies that need NATO. As a senior group of former U.S. cabinet officers, officials and military officers pointed out recently, NATO is America’s greatest strategic advantage over countries like Russia that have none, and the Allies help the American people to shoulder the military and financial burden as they seek to maintain peace.

NATO consists of like-minded countries that are glued together by shared values and the most integrated political and military structure ever seen in any alliance. Europe remains America’s natural ally in solving crises around the world. It is worth reminding ourselves that NATO is not simply a marriage of convenience, and this is a rarity in international politics.

For NATO to remain the strongest and **most successful** alliance in history, the security of any Ally should never be seen simply as a question of the fate of that country but as a question of upholding an international order where the rights of nations cannot simply be **subjugated by force**. Only a strong and unified NATO can achieve that, and NATO is only **strong** and **unified** if each and every Ally’s commitment to collective defense is **ironclad**.

**Legal guarantees are key.**

**Perot ’19** — Elie; PhD Researcher at the Institute for European Studies. “The Art of Commitments: NATO, the EU, and the Interplay Between Law and Politics Within Europe’s Collective Defence Architecture” European Security, Volume 28, Issue 1; Accessed Online via University of Michigan Libraries; //CYang

Nonetheless, strictly opposing law and politics is often misleading because “all law is an instrument of policy broadly conceived” (Henkin 1979, p. 90). Put differently, a legal commitment is not an end in itself. “The art of commitment”, in Thomas Schelling’s words, consists indeed in “[persuading] enemies or allies that one would fight abroad, under circumstances of great cost and risk” (Schelling 2008, p. 36). But doing so “requires more than a military capability. It requires projecting intentions. It requires having those intentions, even deliberately acquiring them, and communicating them persuasively to make other countries behave” (Schelling 2008, p. 36). The solemn commitments in which countries enter when they subscribe to **collective defence treaties** is precisely such an instrument to “communicate persuasively” one’s intentions and to influence those of other parties effectively, or at least more effectively than if those commitments had not been formalised into **legal documents**. In turn, this added credibility provided by legal commitments simply comes from the fact that the respect of **legality** as such remains a concern in the conduct of international affairs. Although states’ deference for the “**sanctity**” of treaties should not be overblown, it is also true that states try to live up to their legal obligations, or to appear as such, and, what is also important, other states equally know this. A formal commitment, embodied in a mutual defence clause, serves in sum both to **reassure allies** and to discourage potential aggressors because reneging on them would likely imply a higher loss of reputation (e.g. Morrow 2000).

**AT: Eurodeterrent — T/L**

**The most comprehensive and only analysis concludes that EU strategic autonomy is an illusion.**

**Meijer & Brooks ’21** — Hugo Meijer is CNRS Research Fellow at Sciences Po, Center for International Studies, and the director of the European Initiative for Security Studies. Stephen G. Brooks is a professor of government at Dartmouth College. April 20, 2021; “Illusions of Autonomy: Why Europe Cannot Provide for Its Security If the United States Pulls Back”; International Security, Volume 45, Issue 4; Accessed Online via University of Michigan Libraries; //CYang

Determining whether Europe could achieve strategic autonomy anytime soon if the U.S. pulls back from Europe requires a careful examination of the **historical trajectory** and the current and likely future state of **European interests** and capabilities. A number of existing studies have helpfully examined important elements of European interests and capabilities that are relevant for this counterfactual question, but a more **systematic analysis** is now needed.7 Regarding interests, this article provides the first **comprehensive analysis** and coding of national threat perceptions across **all of Europe**, showing where each country now falls across a set of categories of threat prioritization. Concerning capabilities, this article adds to existing understandings of European shortfalls in defense capacity by providing a longitudinal assessment of European territorial defense capabilities over the past three decades; to the best of our knowledge, this analysis is the **first of its kind**.

Our analysis shows that Europe is **ultimately characterized** by “**strategic cacophony**,” namely profound, continent-wide divergences across all the domains of national defense policies, most notably threat perceptions, and also by **fundamental capability shortfalls**.8 This combination of strategic cacophony and capability shortfalls imposes a **rigid limit** on the capacity of Europeans to “step up” in the field of defense and to achieve strategic autonomy anytime soon. Consequently, even if the U.S. were to **fully withdraw** from the continent, for likely decades the Europeans would find themselves **disunited** and unable to **cooperate sufficiently** to mount a credible deterrent and defense on their own against external threats. To be clear, our claim is probabilistic, not deterministic: we contend it is highly unlikely, not impossible, for Europe to achieve strategic autonomy anytime soon if the U.S. pulls back. And if even the major shock of a complete U.S. withdrawal is very unlikely to push Europe away from its current strategic cacophony and capability shortfalls, a partial U.S. withdrawal — a much more likely counterfactual — would be even more unlikely to produce this effect.

This finding has important **policy implications** for both Europe and America as well as major theoretical implications for the ongoing U.S. grand strategy debate between proponents of “deep engagement”9 and those who advocate a grand strategy of “restraint.10 With regards to this grand strategy debate, Europe is now actually the key area of contention. Proponents of deep engagement support a greatly reduced U.S. presence in the Middle East,11 while some prominent advocates of restraint like John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt favor the U.S. maintaining a forward presence in Asia.12 It is thus regarding Europe where the grand strategy recommendations of deep engagement and restraint diverge most clearly and significantly: all proponents of the former maintain the U.S. should stay, while all advocates of the latter advocate that it should leave. Our analysis indicates that the Europeans would for a **very long time** be unable to **autonomously balance** Russia if U.S. pulled back. As a result, the continent would become **significantly more vulnerable** to Russian meddling and aggression. Furthermore, the potential disappearance of a U.S.-backed NATO would undermine the **only institutional framework** that has fostered **some degree of convergence** in Europe (at the strategic, doctrinal and capability levels) and that has partly contained Europe’s **strategic cacophony**, thereby making institutionalized intra-European defense cooperation **appreciably harder**. Ultimately, the optimistic notion forwarded by restraint scholars that Europe can easily “**pick up the pieces**” and recreate an effective security architecture following a U.S. withdrawal is **illusory**. The policy implication is straightforward: if the U.S. truly wants Europe to be stable, it **needs to stay**.

**AT: Eurodeterrent — NEW**

**Eurodeterrent’s dead — newest ev.**

**Davison ’6-28** — Jason; nonresident senior fellow at the Atlantic Council and professor of political science at the University of Mary Washington. June 28, 2022; "European Strategic Autonomy Is Dead"; *National Interest*; https://nationalinterest.org/feature/european-strategic-autonomy-dead-203222; //CYang

On the eve of NATO’s Madrid Summit, one fact of European security has become increasingly clear: NATO is the **only feasible guarantor** of the security of European states and, thus, the European Union’s (EU) objective of achieving **strategic autonomy** is unlikely to become a reality anytime soon.

In the early days following Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, it would have been reasonable to expect the war would provide the necessary impetus for the European Union to finally achieve strategic autonomy. Unity develops in response to a common threat and Russia’s attack demonstrated its aggressive intentions. Moreover, the Russian threat was such a shock that it seemed to cause a “sea change” in defense policy for many European governments. The Biden administration had already rightfully signaled that it would welcome greater European responsibility for defense and security, as it would allow the United States to focus more on the greater threat posed by China. In a further positive development, the EU published a “Strategic Compass,” outlining its plans for improved defense and security cooperation, only a month after the Russo-Ukrainian War began.

In the months since, however, it has become clear that European strategic autonomy is unlikely to come to fruition anytime soon: the war has increased the stakes and made apparent the risk involved in forming an alternative to NATO, major EU members France and Germany have acted in ways that cast doubt on their ability to lead, and Sweden and Finland’s NATO application demonstrates that the backing of the **U**nited **S**tates is the **only real guarantee** against Russian aggression.

While European autonomy in defense and security has long been a goal, President Donald Trump’s criticism of NATO and expressed desire to withdraw from the alliance, led many European policymakers to search for alternatives to the Atlantic alliance. What do advocates of strategic autonomy mean by the term? In a November 2019 interview with The Economist Emmanuel Macron declared NATO’s “brain death” and said “Europe must become autonomous in terms of military strategy and capability,” later claiming that “Europe has the capacity to defend itself.” Within a week of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, Macron proclaimed that “Europe must invest more in order to decrease its dependence on other continents and to be able to decide for itself. In other words, it must become a power that is both more independent and more sovereign.” So, strategic autonomy, in the view of its leading proponent, would mean an EU that is capable of defending its members without assistance from the United States.

Russia’s attack on February 24, 2022, demonstrated aggressive intentions **fundamentally greater** than anything it has done since the end of the Cold War. Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine suggested to Europeans that a Russian attack on an EU or NATO member, while not likely, is no longer unthinkable. Given this new reality, the stakes of choosing the right security architecture are higher than they have been for decades. If European countries bet on an **unknown** and **untested** EU for their defense, they would risk attack, territorial loss, and even subjugation. Finally, while the early weeks of the war demonstrated Russian military incompetence, experts warn that Russia has learned from mistakes, retains destructive military capabilities, and will likely use its oil and gas sales to rebuild its war machine.

France and Germany — the EU’s **top two economies**, largest military spenders, and **loudest advocates** for strategic autonomy — have acted in ways that have made strategic autonomy **less likely**. First, many European leaders — especially those bordering Russia — view French and German calls for Ukraine to make compromises with Russia with great concern. From the perspective of those countries most concerned with the Russian threat, the appeal to a diplomatic solution could mean they are forced to give up territory for the sake of the greater good. When asked recently about German mediation attempts, an Eastern European diplomat said “[w]e don’t need German protection; history proved it to be on the wrong side of history.” Second, there is a well-documented gap between the military capacity of EU member states and what they would need to be truly autonomous in defense. Despite initial indications to the contrary, it now seems **increasingly unlikely** that Germany will engage in a **significant change** in its defense spending and strategic culture, which will thwart the move towards European strategic autonomy. Aside from the contribution Germany — as the EU’s wealthiest member — will not make toward enhanced European defense capacity, its inaction will signal to **other Europeans** that are still not bothered by the Russian threat that it is fine to return to the **pre-war levels** of defense spending. Finally, there is the issue of France’s nuclear arsenal. The United States has extended its nuclear deterrent to cover NATO members, whereas France’s nuclear arsenal defends its territory and vital interests, not the EU or NATO.

The recent decision by the governments of Sweden and Finland to apply for NATO membership is the **death knell** for EU strategic autonomy. Both countries are EU members, so both should — in theory — be protected by the Lisbon Treaty’s Article 42 defense clause. Moreover, both countries understand that the act of applying to NATO would draw Russia’s ire and potential coercive measures to keep them out of the alliance and impose costs on them. They also knew that there would be at least a few months between when they applied for membership and when they received the full protection of NATO’s Article V mutual defense clause (Turkey’s objections have extended that timeline). As such, if they believed that EU strategic autonomy could provide them with sufficient protection from Russia in the near to medium term, it would have been rational to continue to remain **outside** of NATO. But Sweden and Finland have chosen otherwise. A May 2022 Swedish Foreign Affairs report stated: “It is clear that there is a lack of **political will** among EU Member States to develop **collective defence** within the EU.” While NATO certainly faces challenges, Sweden and Finland’s applications suggest the alliance provides a better **security blanket** against a Russian attack than the EU.

What if Donald Trump or a Trump-aligned, NATO-critical Republican wins the 2024 U.S. presidential election? Wouldn’t that outcome force Europeans to return to strategic autonomy? First, given the American public’s bipartisan concern with the threat posed by Russia since its attack on Ukraine, it would not be politically expedient for a Republican nominee to emphasize criticisms of NATO in the way that Trump did previously. Second, while Trump’s rhetorical criticisms of NATO were fierce, his administration’s policies toward the alliance were quite favorable. Finally, the Russo-Ukrainian War is likely to lead more NATO states to meet the 2 percent of gross domestic product defense spending goal, lessening one of Trump’s most salient criticisms of the alliance.

Given the **death** of EU strategic autonomy — and the United States’ continued interest in European security — NATO will remain the **critical security mechanism** for Europe. The **U**nited **S**tates will have to **remain engaged** in Europe, even as it focuses more on Asia, though it should be able to use the residual threat from Moscow to leverage greater European contributions to their own defense.

**2AC – NATO Inevitable**

**NATO inevitable – only a question of US leadership making it effective.**

**Savage 17** – Pat Savage is a Master’s Student in the Security Studies Program at Georgetown University’s Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service. His concentration is in U.S. National Security Policy, and his research focuses primarily on Russia, Eastern and Central Europe, and the former-Soviet Union. (Gssr, "NATO Without America: A Grim Prognosis," Georgetown Security Studies Review, 3-14-2017, https://georgetownsecuritystudiesreview.org/2017/03/14/nato-without-america-a-grim-prognosis/, Accessed 7-24-2022, LASA-SC)

Statements made by candidate and now-President Donald Trump on the US commitment to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) have caused much consternation **throughout** the alliance over the past year. President Trump has previously suggested that US support for NATO should be **conditional** on nations paying their fair share, with former-President Obama assuring the world after the election that Mr. Trump would be fully committed to the alliance.[i] Since taking office, President Trump has vacillated on support for NATO. He contradicted Defense Secretary James Mattis by stating NATO is obsolete, but then made an about-face to declare support for the alliance.[ii] NATO has weathered its **share of crises** over its nearly 70 years of existence. While **unlikely** in the short term, it is worth considering whether the alliance could survive **without** the unconditional backing of the **U**nited **S**tates given President Trump’s unclear intentions.

On paper, NATO has the potential to be **viable** as a collective security organization without the United States. Remove the **U**nited **S**tates from the equation and NATO retains **27** member states with nearly 600 million people[iii] and a combined nominal GDP of almost $**20 trillion**.[iv] This should be more than adequate to build a self-sufficient military infrastructure. A majority of NATO’s members are also deeply connected both politically and economically through the European Union.[v] In the long term, a NATO without the United States may not only be feasible, but desirable. **However**, these rosy structural facts belie a more **troublingly** reality in NATO’s immediate future.

When looking at NATO’s short-term viability, the picture is **far less** positive without the substantial commitment of the United States. The most obvious item of concern if the US were to leave or moderate its commitment to NATO in the short term would be **sheer manpower**. In 2016, the alliance had a combined troop strength of around 3.1 million active duty personnel. Without the United States, that immediately **drops by nearly half** to somewhere below 1.9 million personnel.[vi] This ignores thousands of pieces of military equipment that would **no longer** support NATO, including armored vehicles, aircraft, and ships. Granted, Russia—the most prominent threat to NATO—has significantly cut down its active duty forces in recent years, estimated at just over 900,000 active duty personnel in 2016.[vii] However, the exact number of **reservists** Russia has at its disposal is unknown, and could be anywhere from **2 to 20 million** personnel depending on the scale of a call up.[viii] While NATO forces may have an advantage in training, equipment, and organization, past a certain point quantity surpasses quality. Russia has also been **increasing efforts** to update its military arsenal, purchasing new weapons and equipment to close that gap as well.[ix]

The more important question, however, may be who would assume the burden of **leadership** for the alliance in the absence of the United States. Among the most influential of NATO’s members, there is **no obvious candidate** to take the lead if the United States were to step aside, and all the obvious candidates face their own significant political issues at home and abroad. The United Kingdom’s relationship with continental Europe has been **strained** in the aftermath of its vote to leave the EU. Its relationship will be further tested in the months and years to come as that process plays out.[x] Germany’s President-elect, former Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier, has **broken** with Chancellor Angela Merkel’s governing coalition with a more conciliatory tone towards Russia. He has **criticized NATO** policies on sanctions and military exercises.[xi] Meanwhile, France remains in a constant state of **high alert** following a string of terrorist attacks over the past several years—a threat it is not alone in facing—with new plots being uncovered and thwarted in February and troops remaining deployed on the streets.[xii]

These existing political issues are aggravated by the fact that the UK, Germany, and France all face populist or nationalist surges in their domestic politics, a trend seen across Europe. The UK Independence Party played an instrumental role in Britain’s decision to leave the EU. National Front candidate Marine Le Pen is highly likely to make it to the second round of the French presidential election this year. The Alternative for Germany party of Frauke Petry and Jorg Meuthen seems poised to gain its first seats in the Bundestag following elections this fall. Among a laundry list of controversial policy positions, these parties have tended to either have highly critical views of NATO, close ties to Russia, or both.[xiii] While the United States is obviously not without its own domestic political issues, the relative size, power, and strength of its institutions all put it in a better position to simultaneously deal with such issues and wrangle NATO at the same time. It is questionable if **Britain**, **France**, or **Germany** would be able to do the same if the mantle of leadership fell upon them.

If the United States were to **leave NATO** in the next four years, **even** if the alliance **were not** to collapse immediately, the ensuring vacuum would call into question its **short-term survivability**. But even if President Trump does not truly plan to leave NATO, the longer the **doubt** over continued US participation, the **greater damage** this uncertainty creates. It encourages **political forces** within member states **not consistent** with NATO’s values and it may encourage potential **adversaries** to undertake **provocative** and **aggressive** actions. It is critical that President Trump be more consistent and clear in voicing his desire to remain in the alliance, and frame whatever criticisms he has of NATO—which are not baseless—in the context of improving the alliance. It is also critically important that the President strive to set a better domestic political example for NATO allies as they face increasing levels of political instability and uncertainty of their own. More than his own approval ratings may be riding on his ability to be a unifying political figure.

**2AC – Sustainability – Turkey**

**Even if Turkey is a thorn in NATO’s side, it can be tolerated.**

**Ebrahim and Lawati 22** [Nadeen Ebrahim and Abbas Al Lawati are breaking news writers for Brookings, 6-29-2022, How Erdogan's Turkey became NATO's wild card, CNN, https://www.cnn.com/2022/06/29/middleeast/turkey-nato-erdogan-mime-intl/index.html] Eric

Abu Dhabi, UAECNN —

NATO formally invited Finland and Sweden to join on Wednesday after Turkey [dropped its opposition](https://edition.cnn.com/2022/06/28/politics/joe-biden-g7-nato/index.html) following an arduous process that has served to remind the alliance of its [deepening fault lines](https://edition.cnn.com/2022/01/25/business/russia-putin-nord-stream-2-gas-pipeline-intl-cmd/index.html).

Finnish President Sauli Niinistö said that Ankara had agreed to support the membership bids of his country and Sweden, removing a major hurdle to the two joining the alliance.

While the move was a big win for NATO and a setback for Russia, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan didn’t give in without a fair share of [political chest-thumping](https://edition.cnn.com/2022/05/18/europe/turkey-nato-finland-sweden-cmd-intl/index.html) as a display of his nation’s weight in the grouping.

Before signing a joint memorandum with the two Nordic nations, Erdogan on Tuesday declared that NATO “cannot afford” to lose Turkey as a member. He was responding to frustration in the Western alliance over [Ankara’s opposition](https://edition.cnn.com/2022/05/16/opinions/putin-allies-orban-erdogan-europe-andelman/index.html) to the admission of the two traditionally neutral countries that felt compelled to join the grouping by Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

**Turkey has become a headache for NATO.** **But** recent geopolitical events have shown that it’s one **the alliance will have to tolerate**. Experts say Erdogan knows that well and has used his country’s place in the grouping to serve its national interests.

In a European war that has essentially become a conflict between the Kremlin and NATO, Turkey has positioned itself as a neutral party, [opting not to join its allies](https://edition.cnn.com/videos/tv/2022/03/02/turkey-russia-ukraine-kalin-ctw-intl.cnn) in sanctioning Russia while offering to [mediate between](https://www.cnn.com/2022/03/29/opinions/turkey-mediator-russia-ukraine-dalay/index.html) the warring parties. It has [supported Ukraine](https://edition.cnn.com/2022/04/11/middleeast/mideast-summary-04-11-2022-intl/index.html) in the war but has been careful not to antagonize Moscow.

**Experts say Turkey is today more valuable than ever to NATO**. The country sits at the south-eastern flank of the alliance, **a key buffer between Russia and the West**. It maintains the **second-largest army** in the alliance after the US, and borders a swathe of Middle Eastern nations with a history of political instability, and where Western states have major interests.

**Sustainability---AT: Swindland**

**Swindland proves sustainability.**

Michael **Claesson 22**. Chief of joint operations of the Swedish Armed Forces. He has previously served as chief of the policy and plans department in the Defense Staff, military adviser in the foreign and defense ministries, and commanding officer of the Swedish military contingent in Afghanistan; Program manager for Security Policy at the non-governmental organization Society & Defense. He has previously co-edited a book on Swedish defense policy and also serves as an infantry squad leader in the Swedish Army Reserves. “How Sweden and Finland Can Bolster NATO.” War on the Rocks. 7-19-2022. https://warontherocks.com/2022/07/how-sweden-and-finland-can-bolster-nato/ //EM

A More Secure Transatlantic Community

We have **noted questions** whether **Sw**edish and F**innish** accession to NATO would **lessen** the **focus on security** in other geographic **areas** of concern to the alliance. These are **legitimate concerns** that we would like to address. It is true that **first** and **foremost** the contributions from a Swedish perspective **would be towards collective defense** in the Baltic Sea region and the High North. This is a **simple fact of geography**. But it also **aligns with clear NATO priorities** since the 2014 Wales Summit and onwards. Both Sweden’s and Finland’s **accession** to the alliance, **would** (as we have argued) make operational **planning** and **preparations** for collective defense scenarios **easier**, which in turn **would enhance deterrence**.

This does not mean, though, that Sweden should be viewed as being **oblivious** to the threats and security challenges in other parts of the alliance nor that Sweden or any other Nordic state is disinterested in the development of European capabilities. For example, all Nordic countries hold a **strong record** for **commitment** to international peace and security through the United Nations, NATO, the European Union, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, as well as coalitions of the willing. Just recently Sweden contributed with a **substantial special forces** contingent to the French-led Task Force Takuba in the Sahel. Norway, Denmark, Finland, and Sweden are all members of the European Intervention Initiative and, as previously noted, the Danish electorate just voted to end Denmark’s opt-out from E.U. defense and security policy. It is safe to say then that as a NATO member Sweden would take its responsibilities and duties towards all of its allies seriously. This includes subscribing to the importance of nuclear deterrence as a core part of NATO’s doctrines, concepts, and policies.

The Nordic states have previously been highlighted as a role model for other subregions in how to deepen cooperation in the defense and security realm. With a Swedish and Finnish accession to NATO, there will be even **greater opportunities** to **harmonize**, coordinate, and even **integrate defense policies** and maximize the **aggregate** collective military potential of the Nordic states. This could both be a strategic bulwark in Northern Europe and a template for other U.S. allies to replicate. The Nordic states can help in showing that cooperation between smaller states who share a similar cultural, political, and economic heritage can be a force multiplier, which would be a win for the United States and NATO as a whole. Even without identical security allegiances, the Nordic states have come far in working together, and if all five are in NATO, the future is promising.

**Sustainability---AT: Afghanistan**

**Afghanistan did nothing---anything else is literally pro-war propaganda.**

Doug **Bandow 21**. Senior Fellow, Cato Institute. “Afghan Withdrawal Enhances Long-Term US Credibility.” Cato Institute. 09-20-2021. https://www.cato.org/commentary/afghan-withdrawal-enhances-long-term-us-credibility //EM

Moreover, despite the **exaggerated** wailing and gnashing of teeth that typically **accompanied** such refusals to fulfill what some saw as **Uncle Sam’s word**, **nothing much happened**. In general, America’s relationships **remained unchanged** despite such incidents over the years. Allies still **cooperated** with Washington. Friendly combatants still cooperated with US troops. Friends still complained while doing nothing when America failed to fulfill imaginary obligations. Indeed, one could argue that the impact on other states was too small, since populous and prosperous Asian and European governments still leeched off the American military rather than build up their own defenses. None of these episodes appeared to deter rampant cheap riding on US service members and taxpayers. Uncle Sam was still uniformly treated as Uncle Sucker.

**Nor did** adversaries **take advantage** of such incidents to launch blitzkriegs and amass empires. The U.S.S.R. did not **overrun Europe**. **North Korea** did **not attack the South**. **Vietnam** did not **seize Thailand**. China did not bombard, blockade, or invade Japan and the Philippines. Iran did not occupy Saudi Arabia. Russia did not capture Ukraine. There have been plenty of confrontations, **firefights**, and attacks around the world, but which **resulted** from lost **American “credibility”?** The problem was that the US went to war far too often, creating more problems than it solved, despite its many previous failures.

Indeed, the endless claims about credibility ignore the fact that allies and adversaries alike are able to judge differences in commitment, relationship, and interest. The US fought two wars over Europe, with which Americans have strong ties. A willingness to go another decade in Afghanistan, which is essentially a geopolitical irrelevancy to the US, matters not at all. Similarly, the status of South Korea and Japan matter much more to Washington than stability in Central Asia.

The credibility argument went from the sublime to the ridiculous when applied to Syria’s Kurds, with whom America worked against the Islamic State. When President Donald Trump proposed bringing home US troops Washington’s War Party erupted into cacophonous shock and outrage. America was over as a global power! Americans forevermore would have to hang their heads in shame! The American experiment was coming to a desultory end!

Yet from what stemmed this alleged sacred and vital commitment? The Kurds, not Americans, were directly threatened by ISIS, which was attempting to create a caliphate, or quasi‐​nation state, which would have consumed what is called Rojava or Syrian Kurdistan. Washington aided the Kurds, who were not fighting as an act of charity, but to defend themselves.

The relationship was **transactional**, since the US — neither the **president nor Congress** — made any **long‐​term** defense commitment, and **certainly not against neighboring Turkey**, an American treaty ally. In fact, Washington’s departure would have prioritized official ties, in this case formalized by the NATO treaty, which was ratified by Congress. The furor over Trump’s proposal to leave Syria after fulfilling America’s security objectives was purely political, reflecting attacks by Democratic partisans, who hoped to damage the president even when he did the right thing, and Republican uber‐​hawks, who supported every endless war, irrespective of the cost to America. If US credibility was at stake, it was only because Trump’s critics claimed that it was.

Where credibility is genuinely at **issue**, promises and commitments should **not be lightly made**. The interests involved should be serious and the guarantees should be in America’s interest. If these conditions are not met, theoretical concerns about credibility cannot justify sticking with a failed policy. Sacrificing wealth and, more important, lives in the name of the credibility chimera not just bad policy. It is immoral policy.

Afghanistan ended **tragically**, but that was **inevitable** once Washington shifted from **responding to 9/11** to imposing a Western‐​style **government**. If future policymakers are **concerned** about the impact on **credibility**, they **should take that risk into account** before making **foolish**, counterproductive commitments. Although America’s **credibility** is likely to **survive another bad exit**, their own might not.

**2AC – A2: EU Army**

**The EU would strengthen NATO as well.**

**Bergmann 21** [Max Bergmann is a senior fellow at the Center for American Progress, 6-1-2021, The Case for EU Defense, Center for American Progress, https://www.americanprogress.org/article/case-eu-defense/] Eric

As this report argues, the EU could significantly **strengthen NATO** and the trans-Atlantic alliance. Integrating European forces, acquiring key capabilities, rationalizing and harmonizing the sprawling EU defense sector, and investing in cutting-edge research are some of the areas where the EU **could play a critical role.** As the EU develops its own defense capabilities, **there would inevitably be some** **institutional overlap and duplication with NATO**, just as there is with any other national military. But even if the EU’s defense efforts were to create some overlap and institutional friction, this would be a rather small bureaucratic concern—one that could easily be addressed by better EU-NATO coordination. Yet the bureaucratic worry over duplication has been elevated to such an extent that it has become untethered from its actual significance, which is quite minor. Instead of fretting over bureaucratic trivia, the United States and NATO should focus on incorporating the EU defense effort into NATO and embedding the EU in the Atlantic framework

**2AC – AT: African Bioterror**

**Zero risk of bioterrorism**

**Blum and Neumann 20** (Marc-Michael Blum is a senior scientist within the verification division of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in The Hague, the Netherlands, after completing a two-year tenure as a director's fellow at Los Alamos National Laboratory; Peter R. Neumann is a German journalist and academic who frequently appears on radio and television as an expert on terrorism and political violence; “Corona and Bioterrorism: How Serious is the Threat?” War on the Rocks; June 22, 2020; <https://warontherocks.com/2020/06/corona-and-bioterrorism-how-serious-is-the-threat/>)

How serious is the threat? There is a long history of terrorists being fascinated by biological weapons, but it is also one of failures. For the vast majority, **the technical challenges associated with weaponizing biological agents have proven insurmountable**. The only reason this could change is if terrorists were to receive support from a state. Rather than panic about terrorists engaging in biological warfare, governments should be vigilant, secure their own facilities, and focus on strengthening international diplomacy. A History of Failures Biological warfare, which uses organisms and pathogens to cause disease, is nearly as old as war itself. The first known use of biological agents as a weapon dates back to 600 B.C., when an ancient Greek leader poisoned his enemies’ water supply. Throughout the Middle Ages, especially during the time of the Black Death, it was common to hurl infected corpses into besieged cities. And during the two world wars, all major powers maintained biological weapons programs (although only Japan used them in combat). Among terrorists, however, the use of biological weapons has been rarer, although groups from nearly all ideological persuasions have contemplated it. Recent examples include a plot to contaminate Chicago’s water supply in the 1970s; food poisoning by a religious cult in Oregon in the 1980s; and the stockpiling of ricin by members of the Minnesota Patriot Council during the 1990s. No one died in any of these instances. The same is true for the biological warfare programs of al-Qaeda and the Islamic State group. Both groups have sought to buy, steal, or develop biological agents. For al-Qaeda, this seems to have been a priority in the 1990s, when its program was overseen by (then) deputy leader Ayman al-Zawahiri, a trained physician. With the Islamic State, evidence dates back to 2014, when Iraqi forces discovered thousands of files related to biological warfare on a detainee’s laptop. Yet none of these efforts succeeded. The only al-Qaeda plot in which bioterrorism featured prominently — the so-called “ricin plot” in England in 2002 — was interrupted at such an early stage that none of the toxin had actually been produced. The Islamic State’s most serious attempt, in 2017, involved a small amount of ricin, whose only fatality was the hamster on which it was tested. Of the tens of thousands of people that jihadists have murdered, not a single one has died from biological agents. It may be no accident that the most lethal bioterrorist attack in recent decades was perpetrated by a scientist and government employee. In late 2001, the offices of several U.S. senators and news organizations received so-called “anthrax letters,” which killed five people and injured 17. Following years of investigation, the FBI identified the sender as Bruce Ivins, a PhD microbiologist and senior researcher at the U.S. Army’s Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases. Unlike the others, he was no amateur or hoaxer, but a trained expert with years of experience and full access to the world’s largest repository of lethal biological agents. Technical Challenges Ivins’ case helps to explain why so many would-be bioterrorists have failed. At a technical level, launching a sophisticated, large-scale bioterrorist attack involves a toxin or a pathogen — generally a bacterium or a virus — which needs to be isolated and disseminated. But this is more difficult than it seems. As well as advanced training in biology or chemistry, isolating the agent requires significant experience. It also has to be done in a safe, contained environment, to stop it from spreading within the terrorist group. Contrary to what al-Qaeda said in one of its online magazines, **you can’t just make a (biological) weapon** “in the kitchen of your mom!” In addition, there is the challenge of dissemination. Unless the agent is super-contagious, a powerful biological attack relies on a large number of initial infections in perfect conditions. In the case of the bacterium anthrax, for example, only spores of a particular size are likely to be effective in certain kinds of weather. State-sponsored programs often needed years of testing and experimentation to understand how their weapons could be used. Though not impossible, **it is unlikely that terrorist groups possess the resources, stable environment,** and patience to do likewise. Doomsday Scenarios Even if terrorists somehow succeeded, it is nearly inconceivable that the resulting “weapon” would be as powerful as the recent coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2. One of its uniquely devastating features has been that people are infectious while experiencing no symptoms. As it spread across the globe, there was no treatment, no vaccine, an incomplete understanding of its pathological modes of action, and no easy, cheap and widely available testing. It was the viral equivalent of a “zero-day exploit” — a cyber-attack that happens before any patch is available. None of the viruses on the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s list of the most dangerous biological agents could be easily “weaponized” or would have the same, devastating effects as SARS-CoV-2. Pathogenic viruses such as smallpox, Ebola, Marburg, and Lassa are extremely hard to find, isolate, and spread. Botulinum and ricin are dangerous toxins, but not contagious, while Tularemia cannot be transmitted from human to human. The plague is, of course, capable of causing pandemics, but most countries are nowadays well prepared for this particular virus, and will be able to limit — and cope with — localized outbreaks. This leaves only anthrax, a soil bacterium which is relatively easy to obtain. Even so, isolating a highly pathogenic strain is difficult. More importantly, anthrax is not contagious, and while its spores are durable and affected areas can be hard to de-contaminate, it is unable to spread on its own. Regarding SARS-CoV-2, it is important to distinguish between the possibility that the virus occurred naturally and escaped from a laboratory, and the idea that it was engineered for maximum infectiousness and deliberately released. The first remains a possibility, although other explanations are equally — if not more — plausible, while the second has been debunked by a comprehensive examination in the journal Nature Medicine, which concluded that **SARS-CoV-2 was “not a laboratory construct or a purposefully manipulated virus.” The chances that terrorists would be capable of engineering a virus such as SARS-CoV-2 without access to a state’s resources are virtually zero.** If anything, the possibility of a lab escape — however remote — highlights the importance of biosafety. While governments have paid much attention to laboratories with the highest biosafety level (level 4), work on bat-born coronaviruses is regularly performed at lower levels (level 3, and even level 2), and should instead be subject to similar safety requirements. In sum, small-scale attacks using anthrax or other agents may be possible, **but the risk of a highly advanced, weaponized pathogen that spreads among large populations — a terrorist-initiated biological doomsday — is very low**. The only exception, of course, is if terrorists received support from a state, acted as its proxies, or were able to draw on its resources — as in Ivins’ case.

**It’s either containable OR inevitable, there are too many methods terrorists could use—insert this list**

**Medline Plus N/D** [MedlinePlus, “Biodefense and Bioterrorism,” <https://medlineplus.gov/biodefenseandbioterrorism.html>, smarx, MLC]

* Abrin (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
* Arsine (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
* Chlorine (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
* Cyanide (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
* Key Facts about Tularemia (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
* Lewisite (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
* Nitrogen Mustards (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
* Phosgene (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)a
* Ricin (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
* Riot Control Agents (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
* Sarin (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
* Sodium Azide (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
* Soman (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
* Strychnine (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
* Sulfur Mustard (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
* Tabun (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
* VX (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

**CDC failures thump**

**SECURITY, 12** -- SECURITY, Security is uniquely focused on solutions for enterprise security leaders. It is designed and written for business-minded executives who manage enterprise risk and security. Security provides management-focused features, opinions and trends for leaders in business, government and institutional sectors in print, in person and online., (6-29-2012, accessed on 7-23-2020, Security Magazine, "Bioterror Security Lapses at CDC Lab, Doors Left Unlocked", https://www.securitymagazine.com/blogs/14-security-blog/post/83275-bioterror-security-lapses-at-cdc-lab--doors-left-unlocked) ICW-AZL

You would think that, at least, a U.S. bioterror lab would know to lock its doors. But internal emails revealed repeated, potentially dangerous security lapses at one of the top bioterror labs that houses deadly biological agents such as anthrax and the SARS virus, ABC News reported June 28. The emails from the Centers for Disease Control describe multiple instances between **2009 and 2010** of doors within a supposedly secure facility in Atlanta **being left unlocked,** potentially allowing **unauthorized access** to the deadly strains. In at least one instance, someone without the proper security clearance was found in a restricted area. One official said that while walking through a high security area, he found two doors unlocked and said it has become a **common failure point**, the emails said. CDC officials told ABC News the public was never at risk and the agency has addressed the concerns at the Atlanta lab. A CDC spokesperson told USA Today the doors were just one layer of security at the labs and it would still be close to impossible for intruders to get their hands on the dangerous microbes. Earlier in June, USA Today reported the same facility was having difficulties with its **air flow system,** which is designed to keep potentially dangerous air from escaping into clean areas. Following the air flow problem reports, Congressional leaders in the House Energy and Commerce Committee launched an investigation into the safety measures at the $214 million facility.

**Best qualifications.**

Filippa **Lentzos 14**, PhD from London School of Economics and Social Science, Senior Research Fellow in the Department of Social Science, Health and Medicine at King’s College London, Catherine Jefferson, researcher in the Department of Social Science, Health, and Medicine at King’s College London, DPhil from the University of Sussex, former senior policy advisor for international security at the Royal Society, and Dr. Claire Marris, Senior Research Fellow in the Department of Social Science, Health and Medicine at King's College London, “The myths (and realities) of synthetic bioweapons,” 9/18/2014, http://thebulletin.org/myths-and-realities-synthetic-bioweapons7626

The bioterror WMD myth. Those who have **overemphasized** the bioterrorism threat typically portray it as an **imminent concern**, with emphasis placed on **high-consequence, mass-casualty attack**s, performed with weapons of mass destruction (WMD). This is a myth with two dimensions. The first involves the identities of terrorists and what their intentions are. The assumption is that terrorists would seek to produce **mass-casualty weapons** and pursue capabilities on the scale of 20th century, state-level bioweapons programs. Most **leading biological disarmament and non-proliferation experts** believe that the risk of a small-scale bioterrorism attack is very real and present. But they consider the risk of sophisticated **large-scale bioterrorism attacks to be quite small.** This judgment is backed up by **historical evidence**. The three confirmed attempts to use biological agents against humans in terrorist attacks in the past were **small-scale**, low-casualty events aimed at causing panic and disruption rather than excessive death tolls. The second dimension involves capabilities and the level of skills and resources available to terrorists. The implicit assumption is that producing a pathogenic organism equates to producing a weapon of mass destruction. **It does not.** Considerable knowledge and resources are necessary for the processes of **scaling up, storage, and dissemination.** These processes present **significant** technical and logistical **barriers**. **Even if** a biological weapon were disseminated **successful**ly, the outcome of an attack would be affected by factors like the health of the people who are exposed and the speed and manner with which public health authorities and medical professionals detect and respond to the resulting outbreak. A prompt response with effective medical countermeasures, such as antibodies and vaccination, can **significantly blunt the impact of an attack**.

**Terror groups’ bioweapons fail –** large ones gave up, and small ones use ricin, which isn’t lethal

Glenn **Cross**, 21, **11-9**-2021, Biological Weapons in the 'Shadow War', War on the Rocks, https://warontherocks.com/2021/11/biological-weapons-in-the-shadow-war/, 11-10-2021 //ArchanSen

The threat of terrorists using biological agents exists but is very limited. The fear of nonstate actors using biological agents rose with Aum Shinrikyo’s 1995 failed efforts to spread botulinum and anthrax in Japan. Fears of bioterror reached its most recent crescendo with the 2001 anthrax letter mailings, coming as they did within weeks after the 9/11 attacks. The threat of further bioterror attacks, however, never materialized.

Despite the fact that terrorist biological weapons attacks have not materialized since the Amerithrax scare, some continue to argue that the supposed ease and lower cost of biological weapons development, production, and use along with the societal disruption of COVID-19 has incentivized bad actors to adopt biological weapons. These concerns have been echoed by others who assume that misuse is inevitable and following the COVID-19 example will result in mass casualties and crippling political, societal, and economic repercussions.

However, the bioterror threat seems to have diminished — not grown — since the 2001 Amerithrax letter mailings. The core al-Qaeda biological weapons efforts were first envisioned in the late 1990s and began in earnest shortly afterward. Yet the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan and the fall of the Taliban in late 2001 effectively disrupted al-Qaeda’s biological weapons work which largely centered on anthrax. Left without a suitable safe haven, al-Qaeda was never able to reconstitute its biological weapons efforts. The Taliban’s return to power in Afghanistan, however, may result in a reemergence of al-Qaeda and its biological weapons ambitions. Time will tell whether the Taliban now will grant safe haven to al-Qaeda that could be used for biological weapons work. What is undoubted is that the Taliban and al-Qaeda have a shared history and have continued to work closely together. Without a presence in Afghanistan, U.S. intelligence will have a more difficult time detecting any resurgent al-Qaeda biological weapons efforts.

The threat of a biological weapons effort by the Islamic State in Iraq never materialized, although the group did manage to produce and use chemical weapons agents until that program was effectively disrupted. Other terrorist groups’ interest in biological weapons has been rudimentary with a focus predominately on toxins such as ricin and botulinum. U.S. domestic extremists, self-radicalized individuals, and lone actors also have gravitated toward ricin, but **no known casualties** have resulted from the decades-long interest in ricin.

Some analysts, however, argue that the life science revolution and global proliferation of related scientific and technical capabilities has opened a Pandora’s Box of biothreats. The argument goes that the rapid revolution in genetic engineering — including synthetic biology — the DIY bio movement, and the advent of technologies like CRISPR (acronym for “clustered regularly interspaced short palindromic repeats”) makes their misuse likely. However, as noted in the 2018 National Academies of Science report, Biodefense in the Age of Synthetic Biology, the large-scale production and delivery of biological weapons agents is inherently difficult, with biological weapons use favoring small-scale, highly targeted attacks.

Conclusion

The threat of intentional, large-scale biological weapons dissemination likely is a thing of the past. Almost no nation, with the possible exception of North Korea, is intent on the theater-wide battlefield use of biological weapons. The threat today is that biological weapons will be used as a tool by intelligence services to assassinate or debilitate high-value targets, or by special forces to conduct small-scale, targeted attacks to sabotage facilities or deny their use by an adversary. Use of non-lethal biological weapons to degrade petroleum, oil, lubricants, and/or electronics almost certainly is more feasible today. In the context of great-power competition, biological weapons use also may be indirect (i.e., biological weapons use directed at a competitor’s allies or proxies/surrogates in a region). However, the recent chemical weapons use in assassinations and the use of chemical weapons in Syria — followed by a tepid international response — likely has incentivized the future use and development of biological weapons agents.

**Empirics and tech barriers**

**Blum** & Neumann **20**, \*former Head of Laboratory at the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. He holds a PhD in Biochemistry from the University of Frankfurt, \*\*Professor of Security Studies at King’s College London, and served as Director of its International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation from 2008-18.. (Marc-Michael & Peter, 6-22-2020, "Corona and Bioterrorism: How Serious Is the Threat?", *War on the Rocks*, https://warontherocks.com/2020/06/corona-and-bioterrorism-how-serious-is-the-threat/)

The novel coronavirus pandemic has put the threat of **bioterrorism** back in the spotlight. White supremacist chat rooms are teeming with talk about “biological warfare.” ISIL even called the virus “one of Allah’s soldiers” because of its devastating effect on Western countries. According to a recent memo by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, terrorists are “[making] bioterrorism a popular topic among themselves.” Both the United Nations and the Council of Europe have warned of bioterrorist attacks.

How serious is the threat? There is a long history of terrorists being fascinated by biological weapons, but it is also one of **failures**. For the vast majority, the **technical challenges** associated with **weaponizing biological agents** have proven **insurmountable**. The only reason this could change is if terrorists were to receive support from a state. Rather than panic about terrorists engaging in biological warfare, governments should be vigilant, secure their own facilities, and focus on strengthening international diplomacy.

A History of Failures

Biological warfare, which uses organisms and pathogens to cause disease, is nearly as old as war itself. The first known use of biological agents as a weapon dates back to 600 B.C., when an ancient Greek leader poisoned his enemies’ water supply. Throughout the Middle Ages, especially during the time of the Black Death, it was common to hurl infected corpses into besieged cities. And during the two world wars, all major powers maintained biological weapons programs (although only Japan used them in combat).

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The same is true for the biological warfare programs of **al-Qaeda** and the **I**slamic **S**tate group. Both groups have sought to buy, steal, or develop biological agents. For al-Qaeda, this seems to have been a priority in the 1990s, when its program was overseen by (then) deputy leader Ayman al-Zawahiri, a trained physician. With the Islamic State, evidence dates back to 2014, when Iraqi forces discovered thousands of files related to biological warfare on a detainee’s laptop.

Yet **none of these efforts succeeded**. The only al-Qaeda plot in which bioterrorism featured prominently — the so-called “ricin plot” in England in 2002 — was **interrupted** at **such an early stage** that none of the toxin had **actually been produced**. The Islamic State’s most serious attempt, in 2017, involved a small amount of ricin, whose only fatality was the hamster on which it was tested. Of the **tens of thousands** of people that jihadists have murdered, not a **single one has died** from biological agents.

It may be no accident that the most lethal bioterrorist attack in recent decades was perpetrated by a scientist and government employee. In late 2001, the offices of several U.S. senators and news organizations received so-called “anthrax letters,” which killed five people and injured 17. Following years of investigation, the FBI identified the sender as Bruce Ivins, a PhD microbiologist and senior researcher at the U.S. Army’s Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases. Unlike the others, he was no amateur or hoaxer, but a trained expert with years of experience and full access to the world’s largest repository of lethal biological agents.

Technical Challenges

Ivins’ case helps to explain why so many would-be bioterrorists have failed. At a **technical level**, launching a **sophisticated**, **large-scale bioterrorist attack** involves a toxin or a pathogen — generally a bacterium or a virus — which needs to be **isolated** and **disseminated**. But this is **more difficult than it seems**. As well as **advanced training** in biology or chemistry, isolating the agent requires **significant experience**. It also has to be done in a **safe**, **contained** environment, to stop it from spreading **within** the terrorist group. Contrary to what al-Qaeda said in one of its online magazines, you can’t just make a (biological) weapon “in the kitchen of your mom!”

In addition, there is the challenge of **dissemination**. Unless the agent is super-contagious, a powerful biological attack relies on a **large number of initial infections** in **perfect conditions**. In the case of the bacterium anthrax, for example, only spores of a particular size are likely to be effective in certain kinds of weather. State-sponsored programs often needed **years of testing** and **experimentation** to understand how their weapons could be used. Though not impossible, it is **unlikely** that terrorist groups possess the **resources**, **stable environment**, and **patience** to do likewise.

**2AC – AT: Prolif**

**No spread AND no impact**

Jonas **Schneider 20**. Senior researcher at the Center for Security Studies, held post-​doctoral fellowships at the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP) in Berlin and at the CSS and worked as a research associate at the Institute for Security Policy at the University of Kiel, holds a PhD in Political Science from the University of Kiel. 2020. “Chapter 26 Nuclear Proliferation and International Security.” Understanding Global Politics: Actors and Themes in International Affairs, edited by Klaus Larres and Ruth Wittlinger, Routledge, pp. 409–425.

Other analysts have sounded a much less alarmist tone, however. Some scholars even suggested that **a**n Iranian bomb held great potential for **stabilising** an **unbalanced** and **volatile** Middle East (Waltz, 2012). Closer to the mainstream of Western strategic discourse, various experts have argued that despite the **risks** of proliferation, nuclear weapons, and the **deterrent** they provide should get (more) credit for **contribut**ing, in combination with other factors, to what has been labelled ‘the **Long Peace’** among the great powers since 1945 (Gaddis, 1999, p. 268–271; Gavin, 2012a, p. 164; Acton 2010, pp. 16–17). Still others have contended that because nuclear **prolif**eration is such a **rare** phenomenon, and since **robust nonprolif**eration measures **tend** to be **disrupt**ive, the **net destabilising effect** of new nuclear countries is **quite small** and, therefore, **manageable** (Mueller 2010, pp. 95–99; Hymans 2013, pp. 293–296).

The question of whether nuclear proliferation has stabilising or destabilising effects is not just fascinating for scholars of the nuclear age, but also highly consequential for practical policy issues. For in order to debate the merits of particular policy choices – such as preventive military strikes against nuclear facilities, grand bargains with potential proliferators or complete nuclear disarmament – we need to understand first how the spread of nuclear weapons impacts regional and global security.

The chapter proceeds in three steps. The first section provides the foundation for the other parts by summarising what we know about empirical patterns of proliferation and the utility of nuclear weapons for statecraft. The second section then engages the literature on the consequences of proliferation, focusing in particular on how proliferation has influenced international stability. The final section explores whether some states have been more affected than others, and what measures these states have taken to prevent proliferation, or at least mitigate its negative consequences.

Patterns of nuclear proliferation and the utility of nuclear weapons

Nuclear proliferation is commonly defined as the spread of nuclear weapons to states that did not previously have them. Within a broader conceptual framework that is rarely used by scholars, yet popular in the arms control community, this diffusion of nuclear weapons to additional states is labelled horizontal proliferation. It is conceptually accompanied by the notion of vertical proliferation, which refers to qualitative improvements and increases in the number of nuclear weapons in the stockpiles of existing nuclear weapon states. In accordance with the typical usage of the term in the scholarly debate, this chapter focuses only on how the horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons affects international stability.

One important empirical pattern that has shaped how nuclear proliferation is understood concerns the way in which nuclear weapons have spread. The word **‘spread’** appears to suggest that the **established** nuclear powers have **provide**d other interested nations with (at least a few) operational nuclear warheads. **Yet such transfers have never been undertaken.** Certainly, states that sought nuclear weapons have often received significant **assistance** from other nations (Schofield, 2014; Fuhrmann, 2012), sometimes in the form of highly sensitive **tech**nologies (Kroenig, 2010). Nonetheless, since **all** these transfers remained **well below** the **weapons threshold**, nations seeking nuclear weapons always had to build them indigenously. Hence, in reality, the spread of nuclear weapons has meant that merely the **ambition** to possess a nuclear arsenal has spread to additional states, each of which then had to pursue that goal primarily through indigenous efforts.

Importantly, since a state’s national efforts to turn its **desire** for nuclear weapons into **reality** naturally span several (and sometimes **many) years**, nuclear **prolif**eration must be conceived of as a **process**, as opposed to just a single step (Meyer, 1986). This point is reinforced by the fact that **29** out **of 39** states that have **embarked** upon that path (Müller and Schmidt, 2010, p. 157; Mikoyan, 2012; Santoro, 2017) have **not acquired a** nuclear **arsenal**. Hence, a lot of nuclear proliferation activity has been undertaken by nations that did not ultimately become nuclear weapon states. Three patterns explain this situation.

First, owing not just to the **technological**, but also the **institutional** and **managerial challenges** of the task, some nations simply **failed in their efforts** to build the bomb (Hymans, 2012; Braut-Hegghammer, 2016). Second, a few countries have chosen a nuclear ‘hedging’ strategy, intentionally confining their efforts to developing the technological capability to build an arsenal quickly while refraining from exercising that option (Narang, 2016–17, p. 134). Third, several states have **undertake**n a ‘nuclear **reversal’**, **abandoning** their nuclear weapons activities before developing nuclear explosive devices (Müller and Schmidt, 2010).

**[ ] Security guarantees don’t stop prolif**

**Bleek and Lober 14** (Philipp C. Bleek, a Fellow at CNS and an Associate Professor in the Nonproliferation and Terrorism Studies Program at the Graduate School of International Policy and Management, and Eric B. Lober, an adjunct Fellow at the Center for a New American Security, a Senior Associate at the Financial Integrity Network, and a senior adviser at the Center for Sanctions and Illicit Finance at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies; “Security Guarantees and Allied Nuclear Proliferation”; The Journal of Conflict Resolution, April 2014, Vol. 58, No. 3, Special Issue: Nuclear Posture, Nonproliferation Policy, and the Spread of Nuclear Weapons (April 2014), pp. 429-454 kp)

Conventional Wisdom among Policy Makers, Less Support from Scholars

The literature on extended nuclear guarantees broadly divides into policy-focused work arguing that such guarantees—if properly calibrated—can prevent allied nuclear proliferation and prescribing mechanisms for increasing their credibility (Congressional Commission 2009; Schlesinger 2008) and academically oriented research **examining whether** **guarantees can be credible** in the first place.

Although the policy literature considers which factors may affect **credibility** (Murdock 2009), its **primary limitation** is **assuming** guarantees can be effective in stemming allied proliferation. The literature presents a toolbox of options for how to increase credibility, but gives **short shrift** to the prior question of whether **security guarantees** can **prevent allied prolif**eration.

The academic literature on guarantees also has shortcomings. Some argue guarantees do not stem allied proliferation because they are incredible (Goldstein 2000), but base the conclusion on analysis of a few cases in which allies chose to proliferate. A modest but **growing** **quantitative literature** addresses the question of **why states do** and do not **proliferate**, but reaches **contradictory conclusions** on security guarantees (see Table 1).

Table

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And none of these studies focused narrowly on guarantees—they were either “garbage can” approaches that sought to test a host of potentially relevant variables or focused on other independent variables—and therefore did not subject their security guarantee findings to robustness checks.

Two recent studies catalyzed a resurgence of interest in applying sophisticated quantitative tools to the proliferation puzzle.4 Employing hazard analysis, Singh and Way (2004) found that states with **nuclear-armed allies** were **neither** less nor more likely to explore **nuclear weapons** options, launch weapons programs, or acquire weapons. Multinomial logit analysis, reported as a robustness check, similarly **found no relationship** between guarantees and states' likelihood of launching weapons programs, but did find a robust negative relationship to both exploration and acquisition. Jo and Gartzke (2007) employed probit regression analysis and concluded that states receiving security guarantees were **no less likely** to have active **nuclear weapons programs**, though less likely to possess nuclear weapons.

Finally, two scholars tweaked Singh and Way's earlier work. Kroenig (2009b) reported that two of the three hazard models found a **negative relationship** between guarantees and acquisition, while one found **no relationship**. In a subsequent 2010 book that conducted analysis along similar lines yet came to the opposite conclusion, Kroenig reported that **all four models** that controlled for guarantees found **no relationship** to acquisition. Fuhrmann (2009), employing probit regression analysis but, unusually, structured like Singh and Way's hazard analysis to drop countries from the data set once they reach a given threshold, reported that all of his models found **no relationship** between **guarantees** and **nuclear weapons program** initiation or acquisition.

**[ ] No impact**

**Mueller ’16** [John; July 2016; Adjunct Professor in the Department of Political Science at Ohio State University, Woody Hayes Senior Research Scientist at the Mershon Center for International Security Studies; Should We Let the Bomb Spread, “At All Costs: The Destructive Consequences of Antiproliferation Policy,” Ch. 3]

These considerations help explain why alarmists have been **wrong for decades** about the pace of nuclear proliferation. **Dozens** of technologically capable countries have considered obtaining nuclear arsenals, but **very few** have done so. Indeed, as Jacques Hymans has pointed out, even supposedly optimistic forecasts about nuclear dispersion have proved to be too pessimistic.15 Thus, in 1958 the National Planning Association predicted “a rapid rise in the number of atomic powers … by the mid-1960s.”16 A few years later C. P. Snow sternly predicted, “Within, at the most, six years, China and several other states [will] have a stock of nuclear bombs” while U.S. President John Kennedy observed that there might be “ten, fifteen, twenty” countries with a nuclear capacity by 1964.17

Such punditry has gone astray in part because the pundits insist on extrapolating from the wrong cases. A more pertinent prototype would have been **Canada**, a country that could easily have had nuclear weapons by the 1960s but declined to make the effort.18 In fact, over the decades, a **huge number** of countries capable of developing nuclear weapons have neglected **even to consider** the opportunity—for example, **Canada**, **Italy**, and **Norway**—even as **Argentina**, **Brazil**, **Libya**, **So**uth **Ko**rea, and **Taiwan** have backed away from or reversed nuclear weapons programs, and **Belarus**, **Kazakhstan**, **South Africa**, and **Ukraine** have actually **surrendered** or **dismantled** an existing **nuclear arsenal**.19 Some of that reduction is no doubt due to the hostility of the nuclear nations, but even without that the Canadian case seems to have proved to have rather general relevance. Its experience certainly suggests, as Stephen Meyer has shown, there is no “technological imperative” for countries to obtain nuclear weapons once they have achieved the technical capacity to do so.20

In consequence, **alarmist predictions about proliferation chains, cascades, dominoes**, waves, avalanches, epidemics, and points of no return have proved to be faulty. Insofar as most leaders of most countries (**even rogue ones**) have considered acquiring the weapons, they have come to appreciate several defects: nuclear weapons are dangerous, distasteful, costly, and likely to rile the neighbors. Moreover, as Hymans has demonstrated, the weapons have also been **exceedingly difficult to obtain** for administratively dysfunctional countries like Iran.21

**[ ] Empirics**

**Mueller 20** (John Mueller is a senior fellow at the Cato Institute. He is also a member of the political science department and senior research scientist with the Mershon Center for International Security Studies at Ohio State University, 6-24-2020, "Nuclear Alarmism: Proliferation and Terrorism," Cato Institute,) <https://www.cato.org/publications/publications/nuclear-alarmism-proliferation-terrorism>

**Alarmists** have been **wrong for decades about** the pace **of nuclear proliferation**. **Dozens of technologically** **capable** countries have **considered** obtaining nuclear arsenals, **but very few have done so**. Indeed, as Jacques Hymans has pointed out, even supposedly optimistic forecasts about nuclear dispersion have proved to be too pessimistic.[7](https://www.cato.org/publications/publications/nuclear-alarmism-proliferation-terrorism#_ednref7) Thus, in 1958, the National Planning Association predicted “a rapid rise in the number of atomic powers … by the mid‐​1960s.“[8](https://www.cato.org/publications/publications/nuclear-alarmism-proliferation-terrorism#_ednref8) A few years later, C. P. Snow sagely predicted, “Within, at the most, six years, China and several other states [will] have a stock of nuclear bombs,” and John Kennedy observed that there might be “ten, fifteen, twenty” countries with a nuclear capacity by 1964.[9](https://www.cato.org/publications/publications/nuclear-alarmism-proliferation-terrorism#_ednref9) As part of that forecasting, it has generally been assumed that nuclear weapons would be important status — or virility — symbols; therefore, all advanced countries would want to have them in order to show how “powerful” they were. Thus, France’s de Gaulle opined in the 1960s, “No country without an atom bomb could properly consider itself independent,” and Robert Gilpin concluded that “the possession of nuclear weapons largely determines a nation’s rank in the hierarchy of international prestige.“[10](https://www.cato.org/publications/publications/nuclear-alarmism-proliferation-terrorism#_ednref10) In Gilpinian tradition, some analysts who describe themselves as “realists” have insisted for years that Germany and Japan must soon come to their senses and quest after nuclear weapons.[11](https://www.cato.org/publications/publications/nuclear-alarmism-proliferation-terrorism#_ednref11) **Such punditry** has **gone astray** in part **because** the pundits insist on **extrapolating from the wrong** **cases**. A more pertinent prototype would have been **Canada**, **a country that** **could easily have had nuclear weapons by the 1960s** **but declined** to make the effort.[12](https://www.cato.org/publications/publications/nuclear-alarmism-proliferation-terrorism#_ednref12) In fact, over the decades, a huge number of countries capable of developing nuclear weapons have neglected even to consider the opportunity — for example, Canada, **Italy, and Norway** — **even** as **Argentina, Brazil, Libya**, **South Korea, and Taiwan** have backed away from or reversed nuclear weapons programs, and **Belarus, Kazakhstan, South Africa, and Ukraine** **have** actually **surrendered** **or dismantled an existing nuclear arsenal**.[13](https://www.cato.org/publications/publications/nuclear-alarmism-proliferation-terrorism#_ednref13) Some of that reduction is no doubt due to the hostility of the nuclear nations, but even without that, the Canadian case seems to have proved to have rather general relevance. To begin with, as Stephen Meyer has shown, there is no “technological imperative” for countries to obtain nuclear weapons once they have achieved the technical capacity to do so.[14](https://www.cato.org/publications/publications/nuclear-alarmism-proliferation-terrorism#_ednref14) Moreover, like military prowess in general, the weapons have not proved to be crucial status symbols. As Robert Jervis has observed, “India, China, and Israel may have decreased the chance of direct attack by developing nuclear weapons, but it is hard to argue that they have increased their general prestige or influence.“[15](https://www.cato.org/publications/publications/nuclear-alarmism-proliferation-terrorism#_ednref15) How much more status would Japan have if it possessed nuclear weapons? Would anybody pay a great deal more attention to Britain or France if their arsenals held 5,000 nuclear weapons, or would anybody pay much less if they had none? Did China need nuclear weapons to impress the world with its economic growth? Or with its Olympics? As Jennifer Mackby and Walter Slocombe observe, “Germany, like its erstwhile Axis ally, Japan, has become powerful because of its economic might rather than its military might, and its renunciation of nuclear weapons may even have reinforced its prestige.“[**16**](https://www.cato.org/publications/publications/nuclear-alarmism-proliferation-terrorism#_ednref16) **Decades of alarmist predictions** about proliferation chains, cascades, dominoes, waves, avalanches, epidemics, and points of no return **have proved to be faulty**. **The proliferation** **of nuclear weapons** **has been far** **slower** than routinely expected because, **insofar as most leaders of most countries** (even rogue ones) have **considered** acquiring the weapons, **they have come to appreciate** **several defects: the weapons are dangerous, distasteful, costly, and likely to rile the neighbors.** Moreover, as Jacques Hymans has demonstrated, the weapons have also been **exceedingly difficult** **to obtain for administratively** **dysfunctional** **countries** like Iran.[17](https://www.cato.org/publications/publications/nuclear-alarmism-proliferation-terrorism#_ednref17)

**2AC – AT RCA Turn**

**Overstretch isn’t true, commitments can oscillate and U.S foreign policy is increasingly consolidated – that’s Beckley.**

**Norman 20** [Greg Norman is a writer at Military.com and is a retired marine sergent, 2-24-2020, The 5 Most Powerful Armies in the World, Military, https://www.military.com/daily-news/2020/02/24/5-most-powerful-armies-world.html] Eric

In what shouldn’t be a surprise, the U.S. “**retains its top spot** as the **undisputed military power** in the world,” [Global Firepower says](https://www.globalfirepower.com/country-military-strength-detail.asp?country_id=united-states-of-america).

America has more air units than any other country on Earth, **with 2,085 fighters**, **967 attack helicopters, 945 transports and 742 special mission aircraft.**

The U.S. also **leads the world** with 39,253 armored vehicles, 91 Navy destroyers, and 20 aircraft carriers. It has an **estimated 1,400,000 active personnel**.

Washington has **allocated $750 billion to the U.S. military budget in 2020.**

**2AC - AT: EU Army**

**Structural factors make an EU army impossible.**

**Münchau 22** – Wolfgang Münchau is a former co-editor of Financial Times Deutschland and director of Eurointelligence. (Wolfgang MüNchau, "What makes the European Union think it can run an army?," No Publication, 6-3-2022, https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/what-makes-the-eu-think-it-can-run-an-army-, Accessed 7-25-2022, LASA-SC)

The German political economist Benjamin Braun recently made an astute observation about the editorial position of a German newspaper - in fact, it is an observation about the German policy consensus in general. “Eurobond? Never, it’ll kill us all. Eurobomb? Bring it on.”

Incomprehensibly, the EU is now discussing yet **another** field of political integration: a **defence union.** But the big task it set itself **20 years ago** remains (to put it politely) **incomplete**. Amongst other things agreed in the recent two-day EU summit was the need to press ahead with defence strategic procurement and coordinating capability. There is a ‘Strategic Compass’ plan for an ‘EU Rapid Deployment Capacity of up to 5,000 troops’ and much more besides.

All this while the EU’s flagship scheme - **monetary and economic union** - remains **dysfunctional** and **plagued** by ever-widening imbalances. Integration of banking has been going in the **reverse direction**. The European banking supervision system is up and running, but the dispute-resolution regime **is a joke.** The debate on deposit insurance is **stuck**. And the impetus for a capital markets union is lost. This is not just a flaw, but a **first-order policy failure.**

Rather than fix this, the European Union is discussing a **security** and **defence union** - another opportunity for these attention-deficit, hyperactive disorder-afflicted policy makers to pretend that they are pro-European. If you can’t do a proper economic union, you should stop right there, and fix the problem. **Otherwise** you end up with a dysfunctional economic union, an ineffective foreign policy regime and - to top it all - an army that can't fight.

The future success of the EU will depend primarily on boring economic matters like innovation and the capital markets union. The EU will require a **eurobond**: a real one, not a ‘recovery fund’ that is ultimately backstopped by national governments. The purpose of a real eurobond is to stabilise a currently-unstable monetary union, not to bankroll reform in member states.

Storms lie ahead. Power structures in global banking are about to be upended by a slew of fintech innovations: this requires banking reforms and a capital markets union for Europe to participate fully. That (and climate change) is what the EU needs to focus on. And for that to happen, it needs treaty change.

But this is not going to happen. The discussions are all about issues like who gets to do what in Brussels. The Russia sanctions are turning into a **political disaster**. You can’t blame veto-wielding member states, or the lack of quality majority voting. The problem lies in the fact that countries like Germany are allowed to pursue national economic strategies at the expense of the union.

So the European Union is now entering a twilight zone of reverse integration - coupled with a sense that it is still moving forward because it’s talking about new projects.

**2AC - AT: Deterrence Wrong – NATO Bad**

**Russia is imperialist – lack of capacity causes desperate nuclear use.**

**Aslan 22** – Murat Aslan graduated from the War College in 1991 and assumed varying tasks in the Turkish Armed Forces. Aslan holds a PhD in International Relations from the Middle Eastern Technical University. His areas of interest cover intelligence, propaganda, defence, and security studies. (Murat, "The Urge to Kill to Survive: Russia’s Imperialist Expansionism Explained," 3-18-2022, https://politicstoday.org/russia-putin-imperialist-expansionism-ukraine-war/, Accessed 7-25-2022, LASA-SC)

Putin’s speech following the Russian military intervention in **Ukraine** outlines Russia’s justification on political and military grounds. Putin show determination to intervene in Ukraine but left minds doubtful about how much further Russia could go. Putin’s way of correcting the Russian Head of Intelligence Sergey Naryshkin implied that the Russian military intervention in Ukraine would be limited.

But his subsequent speech indicates a shift of intention. Putin’s recognition of the independence of the self-proclaimed People’s Republics of Donetsk and Luhansk was an overlooked part of the speech. Putin emphasized the absence of a Ukrainian identity and stressed its Russian roots, demographic purification, Soviet investments and favoritism to Ukraine, and the so-called Nazi-type ideology of the Ukrainian leadership—all according to his reading the events.

Russia’s Political Goals and Military Objectives

Military objectives generally target **achievable** political goals and avoid utopic adventures that may end up in devastation. It is proper to ask, then, whether Russia’s political goals are achievable. This question is related to Russia’s grand strategy. Putin and his comrades represent a generation that enjoyed the **triumph** of the Russia-dominated Soviet Empire, the **demise** of the latter, and the emergence as the **Russian Federation**. It seems **highly likely** that a romantic yearning for the Russian imperial days of the 18th century and the Communist Soviet system of the Cold War may be an **underlying motivation.**

Russian political thinking praises Russian pride, but it is also concerned with survival. Russia needs a story to keep its continent-sized territory functioning and to make its multiethnic yet Russified demography resilient. The **danger** for the Russian leadership is to experience a further **retreat** that could make Russia a loose state on the path of **collapse**. Such a concern makes Putin **more assertive** and expansionist, mainly across Russia’s perceived sphere of influence.

For instance, Russia gained leverage after the **Second Karabakh War** by asserting its military presence at the **heart of Karabakh** for an extendable five-year period. The Kazakhstan stalemate at the beginning of 2022 presented **another chance** where Russia intervened in the **Central Asian** states in order to maintain stability. Furthermore, these regions have **energy reserves** satisfying the appetite of energy seekers as Russia indirectly prepared itself to challenge the energy demand of the broader globe.

Putin’s statements indicate a “**nationalist imperialism**,” which could have destructive consequences for **regional** and **global orders**—let alone Russia itself. Putin’s inclination is nationalist since Russia is at the core of his argument. On the other hand, nationalism in Russian thinking carries the risks of provoking ultranationalism or Slavophobia once a success story is concluded by tangible gains.

The **revisionism** and irredentism of Russia reveal the **limits** of expansion over the borders of former USSR states, with minor alterations. The first group of states are the ones that became NATO members after 1997, that were once the former “Allies of the Soviet Union” and that proceeded with their democratic transition.

The second group are still struggling for a stable regime, like Belarus. Russia coerces these countries to have pro-Russian regimes. The final group are countries squeezed between NATO and Russia, and not yet NATO member states, mainly Ukraine and Georgia.

Putin has employed strategies to **destabilize** these states through **smart moves**, which rest on **five** political and military strategies. Russia successfully achieves these strategies by being **more discreet** in terms of international law, at least, until the aggression against Ukraine, and exploiting strategic gaps and vulnerabilities in those countries.

**First**, Russia **does not** hesitate to intervene militarily and support a pro-Russian regime through political and military means, such as the case of Syria.

Second, Russian private military companies such as the **Wagner Group** are sent to war zones to support pro-Russian figures such as Khalifa Haftar of Libya and attempt to encircle NATO for strategic leverage such as the Russian military presence in Africa.

**Third**, mediation has become a primary effort to obtain political and military initiative, as was the case in the Karabakh war and Syria.

**Fourth**, the Collective Security Treaty Organization has become the platform to inject Russian interests and military presence.

Last, Russia has kept **third parties silent** through **defense sales** and **military cooperation** such as the cases of China, India, and Egypt.

These cases show that Putin successfully employs **political** and **military** means by well-planned strategies, the ultimate goal being the survival of Russia through nationalism and **expansionism** over the Slavic states, and building a sphere of influence in its near abroad.

Russian Strategy in Ukraine

The Russian political goals in Ukraine are threefold. These are the fundamental tenets of the Russian quest for domination: (1) **Repell**ing **the West**, unified under the NATO umbrella, from Russia’s “borders”; (2) Making **the Russian identity dominant over Slavic nations**, **setting Ukraine as a lesson for the rest;** (3) **Show the “able” Russia to the former members of the Soviet Union.**

Russia **needs** a success story to achieve its goals and, as a result, Russia’s possible failure on the ground may create undesirable consequences for the Russian identity, once Russians realize their country’s weakness.

This may cause both a disillusionment and a subsequent dissolution in the pro-Russian regimes, including Putin’s Russia. In this context and at this point, Russia’s coercive strategy over Ukraine and its current war with Ukraine have turned to a matter of life and death.

Russian **Nuclear Threat**

Putin’s order to activate the Strategic Nuclear Forces escalated the military and political tension with the West. Russia regularly updated its nuclear doctrine after 1993 so as to be able to use nuclear weapons if it was not the first to do so. In this sense, Russia challenged the concepts of deterrence and mutually assured destruction (MAD) for atomic warfare. The reason for such a preference would be the following.

Russia **knows** that its conventional military inventory is aged and cannot win a a full-scale traditional war despite its numeric superiority. Modern warfare, including proxy, hybrid, and asymmetric, defy the Russian conventional capabilities, **but** the West, or NATO, may **hesitate** to respond to a nuclear threat.

Nuclear warfare includes tactical and operational assets other than strategic assets. The slow pace of the Russian advance may need a tactical nuclear attack to create a gap in the defense lines of the weaker but stubborn Ukrainian forces. Urban warfare is costly for the Russian conventional forces.

A tactical or operational nuclear attack may clear the cities and push the Ukrainian leadership to accept Russian terms. In short, Russian aggression over Ukraine is related to its expansionism inspired by a political logic based on **nationalist imperialism**. The primary motivation is to revive Russia’s modern imperialism across its sphere of influence. However, despite Putin’s imperial quest, Russia lacks capacity to sustain a full-scale expansionism due to limited economic diversity, ageing weaponry, and an inconsistent strategy-making process.

**NATO is not to blame for Russian lash out**

**Cornell 22** – Svante Cornell is director of the American Foreign Policy Council’s Central Asia-Caucasus Institute. (Svante E. Cornell, Opinion Contributor, "No, the war in Ukraine is not about NATO," Hill, 3-9-2022, https://thehill.com/opinion/national-security/597503-no-the-war-in-ukraine-is-not-about-nato/, Accessed 7-25-2022, LASA-SC)

Russia’s invasion of Ukraine has led to widespread **condemnation** and an unparalleled outpouring of **support** for Ukraine. At the same time, a motley crew, including some academics and former U.S. officials, has essentially blamed the war on the West, and in particular NATO enlargement. The argument is basically that Russia would **not** have become so aggressive if Western powers had been more accommodating. This line of thinking, however, is simply **incorrect**.

That’s because Russia rediscovered its imperial vocation **before** NATO enlargement, and the war in Ukraine **is**, in fact, about Putin’s great power ambitions.

Russian leaders have **emphatically** argued that NATO countries, led by the United States, violated assurances made to Moscow at the end of the Cold War that the alliance would not expand to the east. This claim, however, **has been debunked** as a myth. Even the last Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, has **denied** that the issue of NATO enlargement was even discussed at the time. Russian President Vladimir Putin himself **did not** have much to say about NATO enlargement until his infamous speech at the 2007 Munich Security Conference.

NATO’s enlargement began in the mid-**1990s**, at a time when the alliance was embarking on a **strategic** shift, focusing on out-of-area operations instead territorial defense. NATO urged new member states to focus on **specific** cutting-edge expertise, and programs for partner countries like Georgia were mostly about training for peacekeeping operations in places like Afghanistan. NATO’s shift is perhaps best illustrated by the fact that the alliance lacked a workable plan to defend the Baltic states when Russia invaded Georgia in 2008. It is really only after that war, and in particular after Moscow’s annexation of Crimea in 2014, that NATO returned to its original focus on collective defense.

The **real reason** for the deteriorating security situation in Europe — and most blatantly the Russian invasion of Ukraine — can be found in changes that have taken place **within Russia itself**, and most directly the increasingly **imperialist** worldview of the Russian leadership.

This change began as early as 1994 and accelerated after Putin came to power. The war in the Russian breakaway republic of **Chechnya** from 1994 to 1996 was in many ways the starting point. Russia’s **defeat** there showed how far the country had fallen, leading many former Soviet republics to part ways with Russia. Moscow responded by systematically **undermining** neighboring states like **Moldova**, **Georgia** and **Azerbaijan** through the incitement of ethnic conflicts on their territories — a classic divide-and-rule tactic.

It is largely forgotten today that Putin **built** his political career on regaining control of Chechnya, something he did by starting a bloody war on the basis of a lie. It is generally well established today that the explosions in apartment buildings in Moscow in the summer of 1999 that Putin blamed on Chechen rebels were in fact carried out by the **Russian security service** under Putin’s own leadership — the purpose being to create popular support for Putin’s war, and by extension his leadership.

Putin’s view of the world, in turn, is closely linked to his own hold on power — and that explains Russia’s increasingly aggressive actions.

The “**color revolutions**” in Georgia and Ukraine in 2003-4 had the potential to show that democratic change could happen in former Soviet countries, something that would undermine Putin’s pursuit of authoritarian rule (what he called a “vertical of power”). Democratic rule in neighboring countries **therefore had to fail.**

Ukraine, in particular, was central to Putin. If a kindred Slavic and Orthodox country like Ukraine developed into a functioning democracy, this could pull the rug out from under Putin’s project. If Ukraine showed that something better was possible, why should Russians be content with living under an authoritarian and corrupt regime?

For a time, Moscow tried other tactics. Pro-Russian politician Viktor Yanukovych managed to get elected as president of Ukraine in 2010, but his **misrule** led to the popular uprising of 2013. That event, in turn, showed that the Ukrainian people saw Europe, rather than Russia, as their future. Putin responded by **annexing Crimea** and starting a war in eastern Ukraine. At home, Putin’s rhetoric became increasingly nationalistic, and now focused on concepts such as the “Russian world” in order to foment a divide between Russia and an allegedly decadent West.

For this to succeed, however, Putin needs to bring Belarus and Ukraine into the “**Russian w**orld,” by force if necessary. This, rather than NATO enlargement, is what the war in Ukraine is about.