**NATO Bad Updates**

**Eurodeterrent — T/L**

**NATO is a paper tiger. Only a Eurodeterrent solves.**

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It is appropriate to judge post–Cold War NATO a failure. The alliance is a **paper tiger**, beset with slashed **European defense budgets** and **hollow forces**. It has become a social club and an appetizer, a prelude to European Union membership for the formerly-communist states of eastern and southern Europe. What it is not is a **credible military alliance**. Nor is it making America more secure.

NATO’s performance in the foolish limited wars of the past two decades has demonstrated Europe’s failure to take either funding or fighting seriously. In the Kosovo air campaign of 1999, the Royal Air Force nearly ran out of bombs and spare parts. Moreover, it was U.S. aircraft that had to conduct about two-thirds of all sorties during the seventy-eight-day war.

By the 2011 Libya intervention, the situation had actually gotten worse. Only eight of NATO’s then-twenty-eight members chose to fight, using their air forces. Additionally, most European countries ran out of smart bombs and had to be resupplied in a hurry by the United States.

In Afghanistan, some American servicemen muttered that NATO’s ISAF (International Security Assistance Force) actually stood for “I Saw Americans Fighting.” The more charitable would grant that it was “I Saw Anglos Fighting,” including the British and Canadian troops who held ground in the violent south and southwest. Despite the undoubted valor of soldiers from all nations in the coalition, the reality was that most European contingents were hamstrung by risk aversion, restrictive rules of engagement, and national “caveats” that limited their ability to fight. Some were even worse: the Italians were credibly alleged to have bribed Taliban forces not to attack them.

NATO’s relentless expansion has also long since passed the point of farce. The alliance, fifteen members strong throughout most of the Cold War, is about to add its thirtieth state, the newly-renamed North Macedonia. Macedonia boasts a **tiny army** of eight thousand men and a defense budget of $120 million — a rounding error for the Pentagon. The previous mouse that roared, the 2017 addition of Montenegro, is even more militarily irrelevant. Montenegro’s **entire army** has two thousand men — less than two U.S. battalions, or about 5 percent of the size of the New York City Police Department. These nations have been welcomed into a mutual defense alliance because that alliance is no longer serious about mutual defense.

These new NATO members provide **virtually no military capability** to help others, but they do bring one thing to the alliance: **heightened tensions** with Russia. There is ample evidence that the first Bush and Clinton administrations reassured Russian leaders that we would not expand NATO to their doorstep. We have done so, and now wonder why we are continually needing to “reset” relations with Russia

We are told NATO’s Baltic states face the existential threat of invasion and reabsorption into Russia, but they sure don’t act like it. Despite a recent RAND Corporation war game that showed that Russian troops would reach the Baltic capitals in a maximum of sixty hours, the Baltic countries spend **barely 2 percent** of GDP on defense. Yet “E-stonia” can afford free internet throughout the nation.

NATO’s heavyweights, the United States excepted, are nearly as impotent per capita as the alliance’s Baltic and Balkan members. These countries have the money but they have chosen to **shirk** their Article 3 responsibilities and instead rely on the American taxpayer and the American soldier.

Britain, considered among the most capable NATO militaries, has slashed its defense spending to the **bone** since the 2008 financial crisis. The United Kingdom only clears the arbitrary 2 percent of GDP spending threshold through some pensions legerdemain. Britain can now fit its **entire active duty army** into Wembley Stadium, with room to spare. The Royal Navy is so short of personnel that it had a frigate and a destroyer tied to the pier in Portsmouth as “training ships” for most of 2017 and 2018.

Yet Germany manages to put Britain to shame in the free rider sweepstakes. With the fifth largest economy in the world, Germany dominates European politics. But its military, once a large and proud frontline force, is a laughingstock. Germany’s air force has regularly had less than a third of its fighter aircraft ready for combat. Its defense spending has drawn chiding and, now, outright attacks from generations of U.S. presidents. In a story reminiscent of the post–Versailles Reichswehr, due to equipment shortages German troops on a 2015 exercise used **black broomsticks** to simulate **machine guns**.

Europe still has **ample resources** to defend itself, even if one accepts the claim that Putin’s Russia is **resolutely revanchist** and not defensive or merely opportunistic in its conduct. Even without the United States, NATO has **five hundred million people** and a combined GDP of **more than $10 trillion**, **more than triple** Russia’s population and wealth. It also has two **nuclear deterrent** forces.

Only two possible reasons exist for European nations’ failure to field **credible military power**: they have either decided they do not regard Russia as a serious security threat, or they are content to rely on **U.S. defense welfare**.

**Eurodeterrent — French Umbrella**

**French umbrella provides assurance and solves runaway prolif.**

**Schlee ’20** — Rene; Country Director of Friedrich Ebert Stiftung. March 5, 2020; "Tracking the German Nuclear Debate"; *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*; <https://carnegieendowment.org/2018/08/15/tracking-german-nuclear-debate-pub-72884>; //CYang

A withdrawal of Germany from nuclear sharing with the Americans would have **further advantages**. Coordinated with other countries of nuclear sharing, such as Belgium or the Netherlands, one could send the important political **signal** to the Eastern European NATO countries that **even** a **minimal nuclear deterrent** under French leadership would satisfy German as well as **European security interests**. Moreover, it would enable Germany to present itself with **new credibility** in matters of nuclear disarmament. At present, Germany is in the dilemma of only being able to commit itself internationally to nuclear disarmament with **half its strength**, since nuclear weapons are on its own territory. However, the withdrawal from nuclear sharing could give new impetus to the debate on the **N**on-**P**roliferation **T**reaty.”

**Eurodeterrent — AT: NEW Ev**

**Ukraine and a slew of other factors provide momentum — it’s more possible now than ever.**

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On 18 May, the European Commission released a new set of proposals that aim to put some forward movement into the European defence ‘project’. Nothing new there, you might think: the past quarter-century is littered with the wrecks of repeated previous efforts to get member states to match their words with action. So far, the irresistible force of the arguments for greater European defence integration — “spend more, spend better, and spend more together”, in the time-honoured mantra — has made **little headway** against the immovable object of national inertia and vested interests. Could **this time** be **different**?

The proposals (a Joint Communication by the Commission and European Defence Agency) respond to a tasking from EU leaders at their 11 March emergency summit at Versailles, in the wake of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The instruction was to “put forward an analysis of the defence investment gaps by mid-May and to propose any further initiative necessary to strengthen the European industrial and technological base.”

Analysing the capability gaps will have been relatively easy — after all, the agency has been pointing out what is missing for years. As the head of the agency and European Union’s high representative, Josep Borrell, observed at the proposals’ launch, “The European Defence Agency has been working in the last years to explain these gaps, to explain how we can and should fill these gaps. But to tell the truth, we have not gotten a lot of success and nobody was listening to us.” The **emerging lessons** of the war in Ukraine have mostly confirmed the earlier analysis, while highlighting the **particular urgency** of restoring air superiority (air defence has been neglected, and drones underutilised), countering Russian long-range artillery, and developing new systems for **c**ommand **and** **c**ontrol, surveillance, and data-sharing upon which effective all-arms combat depends.

But it is not just the shock of Ukraine and the attention of European leaders (alas, history shows that such attention can be short-lived) that give hope that, this time, people may listen. **Other reasons** for **optimism** include:

1. Many of the old reasons for sterile dispute among member states have **fallen away**. Europeanists and Atlanticists need no longer argue about whether the focus should be on **expeditionary warfare** or **territorial defence**, or whether the point of it all is a stronger NATO or European “strategic autonomy”. The prospective accession to NATO of Finland and Sweden will **further minimise** the differences between NATO and EU membership; and everyone now agrees that European militaries need to make themselves more of a **match for the Russians**. (It would be unhelpful, and perhaps premature, to suggest that, after Ukraine, the Russians may need a longish period to lick their wounds before they again become much of a threat to anyone.)
2. Whether by good luck or judgment, the Versailles tasking focuses on the ‘back office’ of European defence. Capabilities and industry are less susceptible to theological disputes than the ‘front office’ issues of operations and deployments, which give rise to all that angst about European dependency on the Americans. (The unspoken but **widely understood** truth is that eventually the Americans will **refocus** on the Pacific, expecting Europeans to take on **more and more** of the burden of their own defence — but that the Americans can probably still be relied on to dictate the timing and methodology of this transition, which will help avert intra-European rows.)
3. Defence budgets are **growing**, with more and more allies achieving or targeting the NATO target of 2 per cent of **GDP spending** on defence. That means **budgetary headroom** — just how are the Germans going to spend their new €100 billion defence fund? – which in turn means scope for new projects, quite possibly shared with **other Europeans**. (The reverse effect was evident in the years of defence budget cuts following 2008: far from defence ministries embracing more pooling of resources and efforts to get more bang for their depleted euros, defence spending was renationalised and collaboration fell off a cliff.)
4. The new proposals frame what is needed in a **sensible**, **manageable** way, with three phases envisaged. First comes restoration of **combat readiness** — taking training seriously, and “refilling the shelves”. This relates to not just replenishing ammunition, equipment, and spares sent to the Ukrainians, but also to the “hollowing out” that always affects **unused militaries** — the practice of concentrating resources on maintaining a full “shop window” of apparent assets even if that means running down inventories of ammunition and spares (it is little use having, say, a squadron of a dozen aircraft if a majority are unserviceable at any given moment). The second phase is to augment existing forces and capabilities by attending to the **most pressing** of the capability gaps identified, and beefing up numbers where necessary. Third is the need to address the future by putting in place a **longer-term modernisation agenda**, requiring the integration of **new technologies**.
5. Finally, the Commission is proposing to deploy **extraordinary financial firepower**. It is offering to take charge of a coordinated war-stock replenishment exercise in the way it did with covid-19 vaccines — with €500m on offer as subsidy to incentivise member state participation. Beyond that, it proposes that member states interested in collaborating on a new equipment capability should form themselves into European defence capability consortia — which, under a new Commission regulation, would be **VAT-exempt**. And this tax exemption would apply not just to the initial procurement, but also to all through-life costs (operation, maintenance, and decommissioning). The Commission has further suggested that the **E**uropean **I**nvestment **B**ank may feel moved to increase its support for the European defence industry and joint procurement (€6bn is mentioned).

This new cascade of ‘incentives’ comes on top, of course, of the more than €1bn per annum already on offer for **shared R&D** projects through the European Defence Fund (**EDF**) – which, the Commission makes clear, it also **aims to increase**. With so much ‘free’ money on offer, even the most blinkered national defence ministry must surely now join the queue, however counter-cultural the condition of having to collaborate with others may feel. (Hopefully national finance ministries will fail to spot that such generous recourse to the EU budget means that member states are actually being bribed with their own money.)

So — could this truly be a **turning point** on the long and weary road to a **more coherent** European defence effort? The Commission clearly believes so, and that it will be in the driving seat — they “envisage” a future European joint programming and procurement function (that is, the centralised coordination of European defence investment planning and acquisition), to be built on their **EDF** and **joint procurement programmes**.

**Eurodeterrent — AT: Russia**

**Russia’s not a threat.**

**Ruger & Menon ’20** — William Ruger; Anne and Bernard Spitzer Professor of International Relations, The Powell School, The City College of New York/City University of New York. Rajan Menon, Saltzman Institute of War and Peace Studies, Columbia University. “NATO enlargement and US grand strategy: a net assessment”; International Politics, Volume 57, Issue 3; Accessed Online via University of Michigan Libraries; //CYang

Thinking through the enlargement issue requires putting the Russia problem in perspective. Russia — NATO’s only real military adversary — is a pale imitation of the former Soviet Union. Thus, the biggest danger to NATO — and the USA in particular — may be **threat inflation**. Although Russia is geographically large and relatively populous, its economy resembles that of a middling European state. Moreover the Russian economy is **highly vulnerable** to swings in energy prices (oil and gas account for more than two-thirds of Russia’s export earning) and is badly in need of reform, which a host of powerful vested domestic interests **resist doggedly**. Even über-hawk Senator Lindsey Graham (PolitiFact 2014) acknowledged that Russia’s economy was **dwarfed** by the West’s economic power, noting that it only ‘has an economy the size of Italy’ — a **second-tier** European country with **serious economic problems**.

Things have **not changed** in Russia’s favor since 2014. When Graham spoke, Russia’s nominal GDP was $2.06 trillion compared to Italy’s $2.15 trillion. In 2017, Russia’s nominal GDP was only $1.58 trillion compared to Italy’s $1.94 trillion. Based on 2017 purchasing power parity (PPP), Russia fares better than Italy, at $3.78 trillion compared to $2.48 trillion. But Russia’s **GDP per capita** was only $10,749, compared to Italy’s $32,110 (World Bank 2019). Table 1 shows the economic weakness of Russia when compared to the three largest economies of Europe separately and combined, and compared to the USA separately and combined with these three economies. This tally **does not even consider** the combined economic wealth of **all 29 NATO countries**.

Table

Description automatically generated

The combined GDP of European NATO countries, calculated in 2010 prices, was **$18.8 trillion**, and if one considers NATO as a whole, the figure jumps to $38.1 trillion (NATO 2019b). Russia’s, by contrast, totals **$1.6 trillion**. These figures show that NATO has an **enormous advantage** over Russia in economic strength.

Nor is Russia a **military peer competitor** of the USA and its NATO allies. According to the International Institute of Strategic Studies (IISS), Russia’s defense spending in 2017 was $45.6 billion, 3.1% of its GDP. This amounts to **less than 10 percent** of US defense spending, which IISS estimates totaled over $600 billion in 2017, 3.1% of GDP (IISS 2018). The Stockholm Institute for Peace Research (SIPRI) calculates that Russia’s 2018 military spending amounted to $64 billion (in 2017 prices and exchange rates), 4.2% of GDP, compared to the US $634 billion (in 2017 prices and exchange rates), 3.1% of GDP (SIPRI 2020). These numbers are just **blunt comparisons** based on spending alone. The differences become **starker** and favor the USA even more when we consider its **technological edge** in weaponry and superior force employment (Biddle 2004).

Furthermore, military expenditures for NATO countries as a whole in 2018 (in constant 2017 US$) were $933 billion compared to Russia’s $64 billion (SIPRI 2020). Further, many years of similar disparities add to the overall military advantage for the USA and NATO. The gap is substantial even if one allows for the fact that personnel costs — pay and benefits — are far greater in NATO countries than in Russia. The 2018 disparity also holds up **even if** one excludes US and Canadian spending. NATO’s European members spent $278 billion on defense compared to Russia’s $64 billion. Indeed, France, Germany, and the UK each **individually spend** close to what Russia does, with France closest at nearly $60 billion. Moreover, as Michael Kofman (2017) argues, ‘The Russian armed forces are actually small relative to the size of the country they have to defend, perhaps exceeding no more than 900,000 in total size with a ground force **doubtfully greater** than ~ **300,000**. That may not seem small, but Russia comprises one eighth of the earth’s land mass.’

Furthermore, the wealthiest, most populous states of Europe are spending **relatively little** on defense as a percentage of GDP and could fairly **easily** (in terms of economic capacity as opposed to political will) increase their expenditures, widening the resource gap that Russia faces. The balance of power — using military expenditures as a not unreasonable proxy for military capabilities — **clearly favors** the USA, NATO, and Europe.

Russia’s difficulties in Georgia in 2008 (which to be sure have been somewhat remedied based on learning from that conflict) and in the conflicts in Ukraine and Syria offer recent examples of the challenges that the Russian military would face against NATO in Europe. In assessing the Russia-Georgia war, Kofman (2018) concludes:

Russia won, but the Russian military simply was not set up to fight a modern war, even against a smaller neighbor, much less a peer competitor…. The war revealed profound deficiencies in the Russian armed forces. Moscow was surprised by the poor performance of its air power, and more importantly the inability of different services to work together. It truly was the last war of a legacy force, inherited from the Soviet Union. The conflict uncovered glaring gaps in capability, problems with command and control, and poor intelligence.

Russia has fought differently in Ukraine and Syria. ‘Moscow,’ Kofman (2017), argued in an earlier piece, ‘has applied force sparingly, leveraging the local population, its own volunteers, and the militias of allies’ to meets its goals. But this is a **far cry** from the type of conflict that it would be forced to fight to **existentially challenge** NATO in any of its **major member states** whose defeat would represent a serious threat to the US interests (e.g., France, Germany, or even Poland). Kofman’s assessment confirms this. He notes in reference to Ukraine that ‘Russia lacked the force, the money, and the military experience to attempt any **large-scale operation**.’

Russia also faces **considerable social problems** that contribute to its **weakness**. A European Parliamentary Research Service study summed it up well:

Economic recovery [in Russia] has been **anemic**, with growth likely to remain **below 2%** for the next few years. Forecasts suggest that Russia’s share of the global economy will **continue to shrink**, and that it will lag ever further behind the world’s more advanced economies. External factors such as sanctions certainly weigh on Russia’s economy, but the main barriers to growth come from inside the country and are the result of long-standing problems, many originating in the Soviet period or even further back. Despite market-economy reforms in the early 1990s, Russia remains dominated by large and inefficient **state controlled enterprises**. Reforms have improved the regulatory environment and cut red tape, but these gains have not been matched by progress in tackling corruption, which remains a **major scourge** for business. In terms of human capital, a **catastrophic shrinkage** in the size of the workforce caused by low birthrates is expected to hold back economic growth. Inequality remains **high**, and economic recovery has not yet benefted the nearly 20 million Russians living in poverty. A low level of competitiveness correlates with a **general lack** of innovation, low levels of investment and reliance on natural-resource exports (Russell 2018).

**Eurodeterrent — AT: Ukraine**

**Ukraine was a miscalculation of historic proportions for Russia.**

**Daalder & Lindsay ’22** — Ivo Daalder is President of the Chicago Council on Global Affairs and served as U.S. Ambassador to NATO from 2009 to 2013. James Lindsay is Senior Vice President and Director of Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations. April 7, 2022; “Why Putin Underestimated the West And How to Sustain Its Newfound Unity”; *Foreign Affairs*; <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/russian-federation/2022-04-07/why-putin-underestimated-west>; //CYang

Russian President Vladimir Putin’s decision to invade Ukraine has proved to be a **strategic miscalculation** of **historic proportions**. Having failed to produce a **quick victory** for Moscow, the unprovoked invasion faces a ferocious Ukrainian insurgency that has already caused some 15,000 Russian combat fatalities, roughly the same number that the Soviet Union lost in its entire nine-year campaign in Afghanistan. The Russian economy has been battered by **extraordinary international sanctions**. Calls for Putin to be tried as a war criminal have echoed around the world. It is safe to say that none of this was what Putin expected when he launched his attack.

How did Putin get things so wrong? In part, he **clearly overestimated** Russian military power and underestimated the Ukrainian resistance. But just as important was his misreading of the West. His long personal experience — observing the weak international response to Russia’s wars in Chechnya and Georgia, its annexation of Crimea in 2014, and its support for Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad — convinced him that the West would abandon Ukraine. Given Europe’s concerns about Washington’s commitment to European security in the wake of both the Trump presidency and the Biden administration’s botched withdrawal from Afghanistan, he may also have anticipated that the invasion would divide the United States and its European allies, thus delivering a larger strategic victory than simply the installation of a puppet government in Kyiv.

Had Putin been a better student of how Western democracies have responded to vital threats to their security, he would have understood why these assumptions were wrong. True, one lesson of the past century is that Western democracies have frequently ignored emerging security threats, as many of them did in the lead-up to the two world wars, the Korean War, and the September 11 attacks. As the U.S. diplomat and historian George Kennan once put it, democracies are like a **prehistoric monster** so indifferent to what is happening around ~~him~~ [them] that “you practically have to whack off ~~his~~ [their] tail to make ~~him~~ [them] aware that ~~his~~ [their] interests are being disturbed.” But an equally important lesson of the past century is that when their tails are whacked hard enough, Western democracies react with **speed**, **determination**, and **strength**. For the United States and its European allies, Russia’s invasion of Ukraine — which in size and scope constitutes the largest use of military force on the European continent since 1945 and poses a direct threat to NATO territory — has provided just such a case.

Yet even though the Western response has been **surprisingly robust**, it is far too soon for the West to declare victory. If democracies are capable of forming a swift and united front against exceptional threats, they have also long been prone to shifting priorities and turning attention inward once the immediate crisis has passed. For Western leaders, then, having quickly closed ranks to confront Putin’s aggression, the challenge now is how to sustain that unity. U.S. President Joe Biden stressed that point in Warsaw in March: “We must remain **unified today** and tomorrow and the day after and for the years and decades to come.” This is no easy task. To achieve that goal over the long term, the United States and its allies must overcome the political polarization, shifting economic burdens, and changes of leadership that have often fragmented the West in the past. Otherwise, the **unity** over Ukraine could turn out to be **short-lived**, leaving the West once again divided and autocrats strengthened.

PUTIN’S MISTAKE

It is not surprising that Putin would have assumed that the West would respond to a Russian invasion of Ukraine with harsh rhetoric but not much more. In 2008, when Putin sent Russian forces to dismember Georgia, French President Nicolas Sarkozy rushed to negotiate a cease-fire that kept Russian gains in place, while the United States and other European countries declined to back up their official dismay with even symbolic sanctions. The reaction six years later to Putin’s annexation of Crimea and his instigation of a separatist war in eastern Ukraine was only slightly tougher: although Russia was evicted from the G-8 and subjected to limited sanctions, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and U.S. President Barack Obama both ruled out sending lethal military aid to help Ukraine defend itself.

In similar fashion, Washington and its European partners refused to impose meaningful penalties on Russia after it intervened in the Syrian civil war in 2015, indiscriminately bombing civilians, targeting hospitals, and eventually leveling the city of Aleppo. In recent years, attempted assassinations of Putin’s opponents at home and abroad with nerve agents prompted only the imposition of small-scale sanctions and the expulsion of some Russian diplomats from Western countries. And when Russia interfered in the 2016 U.S. presidential election, Western democracies and media outlets criticized the Kremlin but did little else.

The behavior of European leaders in the months leading up to the attack on Ukraine suggested that the West was likely to stick to this pattern. Dismissing the evidence presented by the U.S. and the British governments of an imminent invasion, many European leaders assumed that Putin was amassing troops near Ukraine for leverage to negotiate new security arrangements. Several of them traveled to Moscow looking to cut a deal. The German government in particular recoiled at the prospect of responding forcefully to Putin’s mounting aggression, blocking attempts to activate the NATO Response Force and denying NATO allies permission to send Ukraine lethal equipment of German origin. At a White House press conference in early February, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz pointedly refused to pledge to terminate the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline should Russia invade Ukraine. The apparent divisions of the West were so obvious that Biden openly worried that a “minor incursion” might lead to a Western “fight about what to do and not do.”

These developments reinforced Putin’s conviction that the West was a spent force. “There is also the so-called liberal idea,” the Russian leader told the Financial Times in 2019, “which has outlived its purpose.” Chinese President Xi Jinping, Putin’s collaborator in a strategic partnership “with no limits,” undoubtedly encouraged that thinking. The Chinese president’s mantra had long been: “The East is rising, the West is declining.” But such calculations failed to account for what would happen when Russia undertook a blatant, unprovoked invasion of a sovereign European democracy — an act that went well beyond any of Putin’s earlier aggressions.

CLOSING RANKS

Rather than splitting the West, Putin’s assault against Ukraine **united** it. Within days of the invasion, the United States and its allies joined forces to impose a **sweeping sanctions regime** on Russia, making it the most sanctioned country in the world. Russian banks were barred from using the SWIFT money exchange mechanism, Russian central bank reserves in foreign countries were frozen, and exports of critical technologies were banned, affecting 50 percent of Russia’s technology imports and 20 percent of all imports. Putin, senior officials in his administration, and a host of Russian oligarchs were sanctioned and their assets seized. Russian aircraft were banned from entering the airspace of 33 countries. Germany shelved Nord Stream 2, the United States and other countries cut off imports of Russian oil, and the EU moved to reduce its reliance on Russian energy. Nearly 500 Western companies have left the Russian market. The West’s intent, as French Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire put it, was to “cause the **collapse** of the Russian economy.”

Western countries also mobilized against Russia politically. The UN Security Council voted 11–1, with three abstentions, to condemn the invasion, although Russia’s lone veto blocked its enforcement. The UN General Assembly followed suit, voting 141–5 to demand that Russia withdraw from Ukraine. The International Court of Justice ordered Russia to halt all military operations in Ukraine. International cultural and sporting organizations, such as FIFA, world soccer’s global governing body, also joined in by banning Russian participation in their activities.

The West’s **military response** was equally impressive. Rather than withdraw forces from eastern Europe as Putin had demanded, NATO doubled its **combat presence** in the region, activated its Response Force, and placed 40,000 troops under its command. More than 35 countries began or increased weapons shipments to Ukraine. This aid ranged from the basic—rifles, ammunition, helmets, Kevlar vests, artillery shells, and grenade launchers—to the sophisticated — Stinger antiaircraft missiles, U.S. Javelin antitank missiles, Swedish AT-4 rocket launchers, British next-generation antitank weapons, and armed drones. The **U**nited **S**tates has contributed **over $1.7 billion** in aid to the Ukrainian military since the start of the war, and the EU committed 500 million euros to the Ukrainian defense, marking a first for the bloc, which had previously never provided military assistance to another country.

Support for these measures has also been broad and deep, including in countries that have historically been among the most reluctant to be drawn into international conflicts. Both Switzerland, the quintessentially neutral nation, and Singapore, a proud practitioner of great-power balancing, imposed economic sanctions on Russia. Japan, which has infamously strict immigration policies, opened its doors to Ukrainian evacuees. Most significantly, Scholz announced a Zeitenwende — a historic pivot — in which Germany committed to provide Ukraine with lethal aid, pledged to exceed NATO’s defense spending target of two percent of GDP, created a 100 billion euro defense fund to buy equipment for its depleted armed forces, and promised to rapidly end its reliance on Russian energy. “It is clear that we must invest much more in the security of our country, in order to protect our freedom and our democracy,” Scholz told the Bundestag on February 27. It was a sentiment widely shared in other Western capitals.

JOLTED AWAKE

Putin’s failure to anticipate this unified response reflects a **misunderstanding** of how democracies operate. His flawed analysis is partially rooted in the reality that given that they are responsible to their people, democracies tend to be more concerned about problems at home than about threats gathering abroad. Since the end of the Cold War, moreover, many European governments also seemed instinctively to doubt that other countries might resort to war to achieve their geopolitical aims and assumed that the economic integration and globalization of recent decades had rendered war on the European continent obsolete. Why fight when commerce and exchange are so profitable?

But as Kennan noted, although democracies are slow to anger, they react with fury when their interests are directly threatened. German Kaiser Wilhelm II never anticipated that his support for Austria’s ultimatum to Serbia would trigger war with France and the United Kingdom, a dynamic that repeated itself 25 years later when Adolf Hitler invaded Poland. Washington sought to sit out both world wars and joined them only after Germany resumed unrestricted submarine warfare and Japan attacked Pearl Harbor. The U.S. policy of containment, which sought to prevent the spread of communism during the Cold War, took root only after North Korea invaded South Korea. Western leaders eagerly embraced the peace dividend that came with the collapse of the Soviet Union, and they were only partially awakened from their slumber after 9/11.

The tendency of democracies to switch from passivity to action is just that — a tendency, not a rule. Whether or not they do so is often determined by the choices that Western leaders make. Here Biden’s adroit diplomacy in the face of an exploding crisis was critical. He and his team used the threat posed by Putin’s aggression to make good on his long-standing vow to strengthen transatlantic relations and the broader democratic community. When U.S. intelligence concluded in late 2021 that Russian forces were preparing to invade Ukraine, Biden made two critical decisions. The first was that the United States would not defend Ukraine itself. The second was that he would work with NATO members and other partners to pursue a three-pronged strategy to impose massive economic penalties on Russia, bolster NATO’s posture in eastern Europe, and send more weapons to Ukraine to help it defend itself.

Beginning in mid-November 2021, Biden worked to build a **collective Western response** to Russia’s likely invasion. Top U.S. **intelligence officials** briefed allies on Putin’s plans, sharing sensitive information that even senior U.S. officials normally wouldn’t see. U.S. diplomats engaged with their counterparts to map out possible sanctions packages. U.S. military leaders met with NATO and other allies to discuss how to improve **readiness** and devise possible **security assistance** for Ukraine. This painstaking diplomacy reflected the conviction that making demands of allies would be counterproductive. Instead, Washington needed to give allies time and space to make their own decisions. Biden wasn’t seeking credit for his exceptional leadership; he was seeking to forge a **united Western response** that could meet the moment.

That initial objective was achieved because of the audacity of what Putin attempted. Had he simply seized another slice of Ukraine, as he did when he took Crimea, he might have left Biden facing a NATO alliance that remained split on whether or not a redline had been crossed. But by opting for a full-fledged invasion, Putin removed any doubt regarding the extremity of his actions.

STRONGER TOGETHER

For Biden’s approach to succeed, however, the West’s **unified front** against Russia’s invasion must not be allowed to **weaken** or **erode** as the war progresses. Many obstacles stand in the way: Putin will doubtless attempt to exploit divisions within the alliance; disputes could arise over what steps to take next or what concessions to offer; and the burden of punishing Russia will inevitably fall unequally across countries, fueling resentment and disagreement. These problems will be multiplied if, as Kennan warned, democracies react with so much fury they not only damage the adversary but also themselves — as could be the case if the objective morphed from restoring Ukraine’s sovereignty and independence to a policy of active regime change in Russia. It is possible to do too much as well as too little.

**AT: NATO Bad**

**It doesn’t delete US presence — just eliminate the dangerous components of NATO!**

**Carpenter** **’19** — Ted; senior fellow for defense and foreign policy studies at the Cato Institute. Carpenter served as Cato’s director of foreign policy studies from 1986 to 1995 and as vice president for defense and foreign policy studies from 1995 to 2011. 2019; *NATO: The Dangerous Dinosaur*; Cato Institute; //CYang

Great wailing and despair from the NATO preservation crowd on both sides of the Atlantic will inevitably accompany any meaningful policy shift. But 75 years is an exceedingly long period for any policy to be relevant and beneficial (much less optimal), and America’s NATO membership is no exception. Indeed, it seems to epitomize the problem of policy entropy. A U.S.-led NATO is now well beyond its appropriate expiration date. It is time to accord the alliance the retirement celebration that should have been held when the Cold War came to an end and the Soviet Union dissolved. Moving to a new, more restrained posture does not mean that the **U**nited **S**tates will take **no interest** in Europe’s affairs. We need to reject the simplistic “**light switch** model” of America’s engagement in the world, with only two possible settings: “off or on.”13 There are many settings between those two extremes, and there are multiple forms of engagement— diplomatic, economic, and cultural, as well as security.

Every effort should be made to preserve a robust, mutually beneficial transatlantic economic relationship. The United States also can and should maintain extensive diplomatic and cultural connections with Europe. And Washington should establish a consultative body either with a new European security organization or with the Continent’s main military powers to address issues of mutual concern. Beyond that aspect, there is **nothing** to prevent joint military exercises and even temporary deployments of U.S. air and naval units, if the security environment turns more threatening. The point is just that America should not seek to be Europe’s **permanent security blanket** and hegemon.

This more flexible approach would constitute an updated version of Robert A. Taft’s policy of the free hand. Moreover, it would be one component of a U.S. global grand strategy based on realism and restraint.14 America would **no longer shackle** itself to commitments that have more drawbacks than benefits or those that lock the republic into obligations that no longer make sense. It would end the thankless, **unproductive strategy** of trying to **micromanage** the security affairs of both Europe and the neighboring Middle East. For U.S. leaders to seek to deny their own country the essential element of policy choice is perverse. Indeed, a sustainable transatlantic policy for the 21st century must rest firmly on the **principle of maximum choice** for the **U**nited **S**tates.

**US credibility is structurally low.**

**Shifrinson ’17** — Joshua; Assistant Professor of International Relations at Boston University. He earned a B.A. from Brandeis University and a Ph.D. from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The recipient of fellowships from the Dickey Center, the Institute for Security and Conflict Studies, and the Belfer Center, Shifrinson was an Assistant Professor Government at Texas A&M University. April 26, 2017; “Time to Consolidate NATO?”; *The Washington Quarterly*, Volume 40, Issue 1; Accessed Online via University of Michigan Libraries; //CYang

The credibility of the U.S. commitment to its NATO allies has long been **unclear**. At root, credibility hinges on the perception in the minds of foreign decisionmakers that a state has sufficient interest in a given issue that it is willing to pay a certain — potentially large — cost to **obtain** or **secure** that objective. Owing to the exorbitant prospective costs of a U.S.–Soviet nuclear exchange during the Cold War, regular transatlantic crises revolved around the question of whether the United States would trade “Boston for Bonn” in the event of a general European war.8 So long as the United States retained sole control of NATO’s decision to escalate past the nuclear threshold, U.S. policymakers faced a real problem in making Soviet policymakers and American allies alike believe that they would willingly take the nuclear plunge if events dictated.9 As Thomas Schelling noted long ago, it is **inherently difficult** to convince other actors that the **U**nited **S**tates will **commit suicide** for other states.10

Still, this problem was at least **plausibly manageable** during the Cold War.11 Despite the prospective costs, the United States retained a large and pervasive interest in keeping Western Europe’s economic and military potential beyond Soviet control. These objectives, in fact, heavily shaped the United States’ Cold War commitment to European security as the United States moved (1) to defend Western Europe from potential Soviet machinations, and (2) to deter Soviet adventurism against the area in the first place.12 The alternative was clear: if the Soviet Union were to dominate Europe’s war-making strength, it might tip the balance of power against the United States, requiring a potentially ruinous counter-mobilization and global competition that an isolated United States might be unable to win. Geography reinforced this imperative, as failure to deter or defend against a Soviet assault across the inner-German border meant the USSR could quickly overrun the region. The result was a concerted effort by the United States to make its promise to defend its NATO allies as credible as possible by forward-deploying large military force and seeking ways to escalate a contest with the USSR should it prove necessary.13

Today, the situation is **reversed**. The grand bargain in which Washington kept its finger alone on the nuclear button remains intact; if the United States is to fully honor its treaty commitments, it must ultimately be willing to engage in a nuclear exchange with Russia for the sake of its allies. However, where the United States could plausibly claim to trade Boston for Bonn prior to 1991, **no amount of reassurance** can make the promise to trade Toledo for Tallinn credible today — the stakes of the game are **too low**.

Alliances function when states decide that their mutual preservation adds to each side’s national security and can be attained at a cost proportional to the benefit. For better or worse, NATO’s post-Cold War enlargement altered this equation by notionally committing the United States to defend a host of states in Eastern Europe of questionable relevance to U.S. security. Indeed, those states most immediately threatened by Russia — Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, followed by Poland — are among the **least important** allies in **crude geopolitical terms**. The three Baltic states combined accounted for only 0.13 percent of total NATO defense expenditures and 0.26 percent of NATO members’ GDP as of 2016; Poland represented 1.17 and 1.54 percent, respectively.14 American exchange with these states is similarly limited: trade with the Baltic states as a whole came to less than $3 billion in 2015 against over $3.75 trillion in total U.S. trade.15 Baldly stated, these states could disappear without compromising the United States’ **economic security** or NATO’s **military viability**. The questionable value of these states alone thus renders the U.S. commitment to their defense **highly contestable**.16 The American public, meanwhile, seems to recognize this very dynamic at some basic level, with 37 percent of U.S. citizens in a 2015 Pew Global Attitudes survey expressing reluctance with aiding a NATO ally threatened by Russia.17

Political geography **further compounds** NATO’s problems. Not only can countries threatened by Russia be lost without compromising NATO’s ability to defend the rest of Europe, but even an expanded Russia would be **poorly placed** to dominate the continent. Belarus and Ukraine, after all, lie across any Russian advance into Central Europe, while simply retaining control of a unified Germany affords NATO a defense-in-depth it never enjoyed during the Cold War. Add in the reality that Russia is an economic, political, and military pygmy compared to the Soviet Union everywhere except in the nuclear realm, and the **U**nited **S**tates’ **intrinsic interest** in those states most immediately threatened by Russia is **substantially less** than during the Cold War.18 Simply put, unlike the situation vis-à-vis the Soviet Union, Russian dominance over the Baltic states, Poland, and other new(er) NATO members would not result in the United States’ eviction from Europe and concomitant loss of the region’s economic or military strength.

Military pressures **reinforce** these dilemmas. Whereas a conventional defense of Western Europe was at least a possibility prior to 1989–1991, distance, reinforcement rates, and force-to-space ratios mean a conventional defense in Eastern Europe is not a **realistic option** today.19 War games by the Rand Corporation highlight the problem in the Baltics context. To be sure, forces stationed in Eastern Europe can serve as a tripwire to deter Russian aggression by seemingly promising to bring NATO members’ collective strength to bear.20 If deterrence fails, however, and short of committing nearly all of NATO’s conventional ground and air power to the theater, even **heavily-armored NATO forces** can only slow down a Russian assault and promise a lengthy East–West conflict. Yet here, NATO again faces **real limits** to fighting in and around NATO’s East European members.21 Though the United States can threaten conventional escalation, it cannot **credibly commit** to fighting for states of **low strategic value** if doing so risks a strategic nuclear exchange.

Nevertheless, the United States would undoubtedly face calls for precisely such steps that might lead to nuclear escalation in any losing conventional fight. Moreover, since any sustained effort to defend or retake the Baltics requires NATO conventional operations close to the Russian homeland, it risks attacks (accidental or otherwise) on Russian territory that invite an escalatory response. Russian antiaccess and area-denial (A2/AD) assets used against reinforcements flowing into the region — to say nothing of direct attacks on Poland — may also result in strikes on Russian-owned Kaliningrad, generating a similar escalation problem. In short, NATO cannot readily defend its Eastern flank through conventional means, faces implausibly large strategic risks if it tries, and so confronts an **insoluble credibility crisis**.22 Indeed, that Estonia is now preparing to wage a lengthy guerilla war against a prospective Russian occupying force, while Lithuania is slowly moving to reinstate a military draft suggests vulnerable states recognize the **U**nited **S**tates’ **credibility dilemma** and are hedging their security bets as best they can.23

If anything, the main function of NATO deployments has been to antagonize a Russia that has far more at stake in Eastern Europe for geographic and historical reasons than the United States.24 To be clear, NATO expansion in and of itself did not cause East–West relations to deteriorate.25 However, U.S.-backed efforts to expand NATO eastward and subsequently deploy military forces to the region have been met with Russian pushback — Russian overflights of NATO airspace, diplomatic obfuscation, and military deployments have all accelerated in recent years.26 Assuming NATO efforts in Eastern Europe continue, Russian leaders are prone to respond with further bellicosity that generates further strains in NATO–Russian relations.27 Paradoxically, the resulting insecurity spiral increases the likelihood that efforts to deter Russia will result in deterrence failure.28 Combined with the possibility that a NATO–Russia crisis may see Russia escalate the confrontation in order to de-escalate the situation, the risk of miscalculation is clear.29 Collectively, this situation simultaneously invites Russian actions designed to discredit the United States in the eyes of its allies, gives threatened allies incentives to force events with Russia to tie American hands and deepen the United States’ involvement, and increases the risk of an action-reaction cycle.30

The net result is a **dangerous standoff**. To deter aggression, NATO relies on a collective security promise ultimately capped by the pledge that the United States will risk its own survival by putting its nuclear forces to use on behalf of its allies. For the Baltic states, Poland, and— potentially in the future — NATO’s other post Cold War additions, this pledge is **no longer realistic** on strategic or military grounds. The steps the United States and its allies are taking to reassure the most vulnerable members of NATO, however, increase the odds of a **NATO-Russia crisis**. Yet if and when a crisis erupts, the clarifying effect of a prospective nuclear exchange is apt to cause cooler heads to prevail and encourage U.S. efforts to restrain the dogs of war — revealing that American security guarantees to Eastern Europe **were not credible** in the first place. The more the United States continues **pretending** that its commitment to all NATO members is created equal, the more it risks creating a situation that will reveal the **shibboleth** of the U.S. commitment.

**The US can never credibly threaten to trade New York for Paris.**

**Noda ’20** — Orion; PhD candidate researching nuclear symbolism, nuclear weapons and nuclear politics at the International Relations Institute of the Universidade de São Paulo. May 1, 2020; “Risking New York for Paris? The Illusion of the US Nuclear Umbrella”; *Strife*; http://www.strifeblog.org/2020/05/01/7577/

Deterrence theory is almost as old as the nuclear age. Consequently, the idea of Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD) and the use of nuclear weapons as a retaliatory deterrent has dominated the field of nuclear weapons and politics from the 1950s onwards.[1] However, like any field, a series of **biases infect** it. This blind trust and belief in the postulations of **Deterrence Theory** has established what Nick Ritchie called the “regime of nuclear truth” and denominated “nuclear absolutism.”[2] The effects of this unquestionable belief in Deterrence Theory sharply increases States’ reliance on and valuing of nuclear weapons. Consequentially, it poses an **existential threat** to disarmament processes and severely undermines nuclear weapon States’ Article VI obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). It is long past time these ‘truths’ were punctured.

Deterrence Theory, derived from a Realist school of thought, postulates that the possession of nuclear weapons – the ultimate deterrent – will thwart and deter attacks against the possessor. The sheer destructive power inherent in a single nuclear weapon, let alone thousands detonating in quick succession, make their use (almost) unthinkable. As a means to solidifying a unified front against the Soviet Union in the aftermath of the Second World War, the Western European States along with the United States formed the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1949 to deter the Soviet Union’s massive conventional forces, as well as its ever-increasing nuclear arsenal after its first test a few months later. With NATO, the United States became the guarantor of the defence of Western Europe, and the so-called US **nuclear umbrella was born**.

As stated in **Article V** of the NATO treaty, an attack on one member was an attack on all of them. The US nuclear umbrella is, therefore, a security assurance agreement that the US deterrent intended primarily to defend itself, also extends over the **territory of its NATO partners**.[3] In other words, the United States would defend NATO members against aggressors, even resorting to nuclear weapons, should the situation require these capabilities to be deployed**. In theory**, the US nuclear umbrella would soothe NATO members’ anxieties and serve as an alternative to the acquisition of their own nuclear weapons.[4] However, given its Realist roots, the crucial question arises: **when push comes to shove**, would the United States be willing to risk its own security to defend its allies in Europe? What are the costs of sustaining the **illusion of the US nuclear umbrella?** While these questions retained an academic quality for some time, in the Age of Trump, they urgently require revisiting.

Alliances under Anarchy: a Realist Take

Realism puts significant emphasis on self-help given the anarchical setting of the International System. Cooperation is scarce and limited, and only possible if states see it in their primal interest of survival and quest for power. Nevertheless, military alliances do happen and are circumscribed in the theoretical postulations of Realism—they last for as long as the states involved see it as comparatively advantageous. In particular, alliances are formed to counter a third, more powerful, state.[5]

The US nuclear umbrella, one of the crown jewels of NATO, relies heavily on the existence and credibility of military alliances. If the alliance fails, so do the security assurances. In that sense, even though military alliances do exist, it seems almost **incredible** that, under Deterrence and, therefore, Realist logic, military alliances would include credible nuclear security assurances. In other words, following the Realist rationale of self-help and its ultimate goal of survival, it seems highly unlikely that a state would risk its own security and survival to come to the defence of another state, ally or not, that is threatened by a third.

Historically, military alliances based on mutual assistance and defence have proven to be nothing but **empty promises**. In 1924, Czechoslovakia and France signed the Treaty of Alliance and Friendship, which stated that the two States would come to the other’s aid in times of peril.[6] In 1938, given the rise of tensions just before the Second World War in Europe, Czechoslovakia also had a gentleman’s agreement with the United Kingdom regarding the latter’s aid in case of a military invasion of the former by Germany.[7] However, when Germany invaded Czechoslovakia, neither agreement was fulfilled, following several of the bedrock assumptions of the Realist school of thought.

Alliances, therefore, are **susceptible to failure**. As hard as it is for military alliances to succeed, the nuclear age amplifies the obstacles for their endurance. **Even at the height of the Cold War**, inside the war planning rooms of the Pentagon and the Strategic Air Command, the nuclear security assurances seemed to tremble. During the Berlin Crisis of 1961, top US officials were reconsidering whether the United States should employ nuclear weapons to defend an eventual military incursion of the USSR in **West Germany.[**8] Since the development of nuclear weapons and the dominating logic of nuclear deterrence, it is perfectly reasonable to argue that security assurances in the nuclear age **are quasi-empty words**. **In 2020**, revisiting the bases of the US nuclear umbrella—particularly in Europe—**does it still hold any value as a credible security assurance**?

New York for Paris? The US Nuclear Umbrella Revisited

The strength of the US nuclear umbrella guarantee raised questions from the very start, most notably from France. In the 1960s, General Charles de Gaulle was highly sceptical of US nuclear security assurances, particularly after the USSR developed intercontinental ballistic missiles with enough range to reach the United States. This scepticism led de Gaulle to pose the question whether US President John F. Kennedy would be willing to risk **New York for Paris**. Eventually, this very lack of confidence fomented the development of **France’s force de frappe**—the French nuclear arsenal – allowing France to be able to protect itself and avoid a strict dependency on NATO.[9]

The question posed by de Gaulle summarises the central issues with the credibility of US – or any – nuclear security assurances and umbrellas. In 1970, given the USSR’s massive conventional forces and its **nuclear parity** with the US, President Richard M. Nixon believed the nuclear umbrella was no longer sustainable.[10] Despite his beliefs, Nixon could not publicly admit the frailty of the US nuclear umbrella lest it create anxieties in its European allies and tampers with the Cold War balance.[11]

Fast forward to the present day, Donald Trump was elected President in 2016 with the slogan ‘America First.’ Ever since tensions have risen in the nuclear sphere in multiple fronts. President Trump, echoing President Harry S. Truman’s words from 1945, famously threatened “fire and fury” against North Korea and withdrew from the Iran Nuclear Deal. Moreover, relations with Russia have also deteriorated after the mutual withdrawal from the Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty and the seemingly unwillingness to extend New START—the only treaty remaining treaty limiting US and Russia’s nuclear arsenals—despite Russian President Putin’s positive signalling towards extension.

Similarly, President Trump has repeatedly shown his contempt for NATO, after moving to cut US contributions to the organisation. Despite Trump’s increased reliance on nuclear weapons and desire of a larger arsenal, it seems unlikely Trump and his ‘America First’ mentality would risk New York – or any other US city, for that matter—for Paris. The illusion of the US nuclear umbrella seems to be **surfacing at last. On** the other side of the Atlantic, a recent poll conducted by the Körber Foundation showed that the German population would **rather either rely on France and the United Kingdom** for nuclear assurances or even forgo them than to rely on the US nuclear umbrella. Notwithstanding, high-ranking military officers seem to hold on to the current regime of nuclear truth.

Sustaining the illusion of the US nuclear umbrella incurs other costs whose effects have a global reach. By perpetuating the current **regime of nuclear truth**, the US is selling its nuclear umbrella, using it as a rock-solid **alibi to keep the United States from abiding by its disarmament commitments**. Under Article VI of the NPT, each State “[…] undertakes to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament”.[12] One key-argument against US nuclear disarmament for decades has been the anxieties it would create amongst its allies under the US nuclear umbrella.

The nuclear non-proliferation regime is already **strained** as it is. Arms control seems to be **failing** and non-nuclear weapons States are frustrated with the slow pace of disarmament efforts. The so-called ‘grand bargain’ of the NPT – non-proliferation in exchange for nuclear technology for peaceful purposes and the promise of disarmament – is in jeopardy. The maintenance and belief in the US **nuclear umbrella** and the growing frustration from the non-nuclear weapon States with its nuclear peers coalesce in **existential threats** to the **cornerstone treaty keeping nuclear proliferation at bay**. Were the **illusion of the umbrella** finally exposed, it would eliminate a key hindrance to nuclear disarmament.

The US nuclear umbrella seems to have **lost its credibility**. President Trump, in practicing his ‘America First’ policy has opened the blinds showing the illusion of its nuclear security assurances, particularly in the post-Cold War world. The dismantlement of the US nuclear umbrella – being replaced by a European nuclear umbrella, led by France and the United Kingdom, or eliminated completely – would likely **have no de facto changes in** European security. Rather, it would cripple to anti-disarmament movement in the United States. The United States is unlikely to risk New York for Paris, and its European allies seem to **already know it.** Waking up from this illusion would create a more inviting environment for nuclear disarmament.

**1NC – China War**

**NATO causes China war**

**Rohrs 22** [Michael Rohrs is a VP of Finance at the International foreign Language at HarperCollins Publishers, 7-4-2022, What is NATO aiming for? To scare China, expand its military business in the Asia-Pacific or threaten global peace?, European Sting - Critical News & Insights on European Politics, Economy, Foreign Affairs, Business & Technology - europeansting, https://europeansting.com/2022/07/04/what-is-nato-aiming-for-to-scare-china-expand-its-military-business-in-the-asia-pacific-or-threaten-global-peace/] Eric

Let’s try to connect the dots. Back in 2020, when the newbie European Commission took office and there was no war in Ukraine in the first place, the EU shockingly described [China “a systemic rival”.](https://europeansting.com/2020/06/23/on-the-22nd-china-eu-summit-negotiating-partner-economic-competitor-and-systemic-rival-is-this-the-right-eu-approach-to-address-its-2nd-biggest-trading-partner/) Two years later and after a war of Russia in Ukraine the G7 countries promulgated a $600 billion plan to counter China’s Belt and Road, although they had all more or less benefited from it. Also, G7 accused China’s stance at the “East and South China Seas”. And a couple of days later, as if it was nicely planned, which it was, NATO came to officially name China as a challenge for the many years to come. The dot connection shows that the world had been trying to hurt China’s rise in global power already since 2020 when the freshman Commission called for the first time in 50 years of productive diplomatic ties the country a systemic rival, despite depending on its trade with the Asian giant in order to prosper.

Not unexpectedly, NATO’s Cold War declaration to China **infuriated the**[**Chinese side**](https://europeansting.com/2022/07/01/is-china-a-challenge-to-nato/) that is feeling **more and more an unprovoked hostility** by the West. Sure, China has its own domestic worries e.g. Taiwan but did China start the blame game with the West or **declared unprovoked a Western country as challenge**? What is NATO aiming for? To scare China, expand its military business in the Asia-Pacific or threaten global security and peace?

The most likely eventuality of the above can only be the latter, only that this is the world’s mere biggest accomplishment since World War II. The fact that **NATO doesn’t seem to care for it anymore** and **starts a new Cold War with gigantic China** is simply beyond comprehension.

Instead of the world trying to chill out, recuperate losses from the war in Ukraine and the financial and health systems’ catastrophe caused by the pandemic and so many other curses, the West goes back to zero sum games in the 21st century **that can blow up global peace in less than a minute**. When will NATO and the peer learn from rich human history, the atrocity of global war conflicts and the sheer vanity of human opportunism? Not quite soon seems to be the answer, sadly.

**2NC---NATO Bad---China**

**China draws lessons from NATO action towards Russia---prompts aggression.**

Reid **Standish, 22** (Reid Standish is an RFE/RL correspondent in Prague and focuses on Chinese foreign policy in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, 5-11-2022, accessed on 5-29-2022, RFE/RL, “China Takes Aim At NATO”, <https://www.rferl.org/a/china-nato-ukraine-war/31845030.html>, HBisevac)

China increasingly sees the war in Ukraine -- and the **roles** of the **U**nited **S**tates and its **NATO** allies in **backing Kyiv** against Moscow -- as a **reflection** of **future tensions** to come between the military bloc and Beijing in the Indo-Pacific. Ever since Russian tanks **first crossed** into Ukraine on February 24, Beijing has walked an **awkward line** between not giving outright support to Moscow's invasion while accusing the United States and other NATO countries of **provoking** the war by allowing the security alliance to **expand eastward** despite protests from the Kremlin. Now, as the war continues to grind on with the Russian military suffering **major setbacks** on the battlefield, China has **ramped up** its rhetoric to **warn** about NATO and the United States' **footprint** in **Asia**. "NATO, a military organization in the North Atlantic, has in recent years come to the Asia-Pacific region to **throw** its **weight** **around** and **stir up conflicts**," Wang **Wenbin**, a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman, said in late April. "NATO has **messed up Europe**. Is it now trying to mess up the **Asia-Pacific** and even the **world**?" Wang's comments were in response to earlier remarks from U.K. Foreign Secretary Liz Truss, who called for **boosting NATO** in the wake of the Ukraine war and **warned China** that it should "**play by the rules**." The added focus on NATO from Beijing comes as both China and the United States see Russia's invasion as a foil for future tensions between the two countries in Asia. NATO said last year that it intended to focus more on China and Beijing is expected to play a large role in the bloc's strategy moving forward. Likewise, Washington is **increasingly convinced** that the conflict provides it with an **unexpected advantage** in the long term, with Bloomberg reporting on May 10 that U.S. officials believe that **bolstered European defense spending** and a **weakened Russia** could allow it to accelerate a **security shift** toward China. Those aims are part of the **shared distrust** toward NATO and the United States that has led **Beijing** and **Moscow** to become **closer** in recent years and why many analysts believe that China has not abandoned Russia throughout its brutal war in Ukraine. Similarly, experts and Western officials warn that Beijing is **closely watching** the response to Russia's invasion and drawing **potential lessons** for any tensions over **Taiwan**, which China claims as its territory and has threatened to invade if Taipei refuses to submit to its control. "If China joins the West in condemning Russia, it will be much applauded in Washington and most European capitals. But it will lose Russia's partnership," Senior Colonel Zhou Bo, a retired officer of China's People's Liberation Army (PLA), wrote in The Economist on May 9. "And it is only a matter of time before America takes on China again. The Biden administration's policy towards my country is 'extreme competition' that stops just short of war." The parallels drawn between **U.S. strategy** in the **Indo-Pacific** and **NATO**'s **expansion** in **Europe** are **not new**, with both China and Russia underlining this point in the 5,000-word **joint statement** they released in February when Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin declared a "no-limits" partnership. The document voiced their **opposition** to the "further **enlargement** of **NATO**" and pledged to "remain **highly vigilant** about the **negative impact** of the United States' **Indo-Pacific strategy**." Despite Chinese protests, experts point out there are key differences between NATO's role and U.S. strategy in the Indo-Pacific region, which also includes a wider range of economic and political policies beyond the bloc and the United States dealing with its long Pacific Ocean border. Still, the Ukraine war is set to affect the region, with Chinese Deputy Foreign Minister Le Yucheng saying in March that the crisis could be used as a "**mirror**" to view the **security situation** in the Asia-Pacific region.

**2NC -- EU Army Works**

**Political will is key**

**Braw 22** [Elisabeth Braw is a columnist at Foreign Policy and a fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, 03-20-2022, Is an EU Army Coming? – Foreign Policy, archive.ph, https://archive.ph/oTCah] Eric

Elisabeth Braw: The EU has suddenly emerged **as a serious actor** in the security of Europe, and EU governments are increasing defense spending. Is the EU militarily stronger now than it was two months ago?

Claudio Graziano: Absolutely yes. Russia has brought war back to Europe, which was something **so serious and dangerous** that it wasn’t even considered possible. Even for people who had read about the risk, it was impossible to believe it would happen. When it did happen, it was a shock of immense magnitude that provoked a huge common response from the European Union.

At the Versailles meeting [on March 10-11], the heads of state and government discussed how the European Union can live up to its responsibilities in this new reality. Doing so **requires a clear political will,** and **now the European Union is more united than ever**. This gives an **incredible push to building a more concrete** and credible European defense union. And a defense union is really the only possible answer to this crisis.

We know that’s a long path, but we know that we have to do it now because later will be too late. As part of this effort, we’ll start developing an EU Rapid Deployment Capacity that will give us the chance to deploy a modular and multidomain force of up to 5,000 troops that can intervene in nonpermissive [hostile] environments.

This force will also have strategic enablers that have in the past normally been provided by the United States—for example, command and control structures, strategic airlift, strategic transport, intelligence surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities, cyberdefense, unmanned air vehicles, space communication assets, electronic warfare systems, anti-missile defense, and I hope in the near future main battle tanks and next-generation fighter jets.

EB: But the EU **already has battlegroups** that have never been deployed. How can you be sure that this deployable force will be successful when the battlegroups have not?

CG: The EU battlegroups are designed to be **used for stabilization** management [crises less severe than war], and it’s true that they’ve never been used. That’s because we never reached an agreement among the EU member states on certain issues, such as cost and who was supposed to lead the effort. The other complication was that they shouldn’t compete with NATO. In the past, I served in NATO missions for many years, including in Afghanistan, and NATO does foreign deployments well. It also has at least nine rapid reaction corps, and they’re much bigger than the EU battlegroups. Our new EU Rapid Deployment Capacity is an effort to answer a security need without competing with NATO. But to be a real answer, the Deployment Capacity must also be used in exercises. And having it on the roster will send a message of European unity to Russia and others.

EB: Speaking of unity, Poland wants to give Ukraine its MiG-29 fighter jets but doesn’t want this to be just a Polish initiative. The United States said no because it didn’t want to be drawn into the war in the active way that sending aircraft from Ramstein Air Base in Germany would mean. Can the EU step in to help Ukraine now?

CG: The provision of combat aircraft is currently not on the agenda. But you have to remember that on Feb. 27, only 72 hours after Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, the EU adopted an **unprecedented aid package** to help the Ukrainian armed forces defend Ukraine’s territory and population. This aid package included lethal weapons. **That’s a milestone!** It’s even more than a historical moment. Remember that in 2013 we weren’t able to provide anything to Mali. [Editor’s note: Despite having monitored the 2012 Islamist takeover of the country’s north closely, the EU failed to intervene militarily. Instead, France launched an intervention in which it was assisted by Germany, Denmark, and other EU member states.]

Regarding lethal weapons, we’re sending whatever the Ukrainians need most—for example, ammunition and anti-tank weapons. This will help the Ukrainians fight for freedom, and their will to do so is the most important surprise in this war. Neither the Russians nor we probably understood how far the Ukrainians would go to defend their freedom. It’s so different from Afghanistan this past summer, when we saw the Afghan armed forces melt away.

EB: What is your own role in this growing military role the EU is taking on? Does the Ukrainian government come to you directly with requests for military assistance?

CG: It works a bit differently. The Ukrainians tell us what they need, the EU member states check what they have and can give to the Ukrainians, and we—through the EU military staff —function as the clearinghouse.

EB: One idea that keeps being floated in every discussion about the EU and its military capabilities is the prospect of an EU Army. It’s clearly not feasible, especially considering that it has taken [Germany and the Netherlands years of painstaking work to establish their joint panzer division](https://archive.ph/o/oTCah/https:/foreignpolicy.com/2022/02/09/to-deter-russia-europe-needs-more-military-integration/). Short of complete military integration, what can the EU do to strengthen its military capabilities, beyond increasing defense spending, of course? As we know, countries like to spend money on weapons made by their own companies.

CG: Integrating armed forces really is extremely difficult, but it’s not impossible. **It starts with the political will**. But what we can do first to strengthen our military capabilities is to improve interoperability. After this war, we need to conclude that life won’t be as it was before and that we’ve made a backward leap of at least 70 years.

**EU army can deter Russian conflict – Ukraine was Europe’s 9/11.**

**Eder and Moyer 22** [Teresa Eder is a program associate for the Global Europe Program at the Wilson Center and Jason Moyer is a Program Associate for the Global Europe Program at The Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 3-2-2022, The European Union’s U-Turn: Emergence of a Great Power?, Wilson Center, https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/european-unions-u-turn-emergence-great-power] Eric

Observers are calling the Russian invasion of Ukraine [**Europe’s “9/11**,”](https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/02/28/putins-war-ukraine-europe-hard-power/) and the European Union’s immediate reaction **a**[**Copernican revolution**](https://euobserver.com/opinion/154453). This past weekend saw the EU’s typical doctrine of slow process and indecisiveness **go out the window**. At long last, the EU **acted as a geopolitical force** to be reckoned with - at least by Russia. After an initially slow start, the European Union demonstrated **an abrupt U-turn** in security policy and is finally acting like a great power capable of projecting influence.

The conflict in Ukraine has stirred the emergence of a newly awakened European Union that is willing to provide arms and seriously rethink its security posture. For the first time ever, the EU **will purchase and provide weapons** and equipment to a warzone with [its announcement](https://www.euronews.com/2022/02/27/eu-to-buy-and-deliver-weapons-to-ukraine-the-first-time-the-bloc-has-financed-military-sup) of **€450 million in weapons for Ukraine**. The EU is shutting down its airspace to Russian planes, including private jets chartered by oligarchs. It also banned all Russian-owned media and froze Russian bank assets. These sanctions against Russia and the support for Ukraine were a result of swift decision-making, and for good reason–because for the first time in 30 years Europe’s security order is under attack. War in Europe was something unimaginable for the post-Cold War generation, but Russia shattered any illusions of peace when it invaded Ukraine and made it easy for all EU members to take a stance against Putin’s attack. Very rarely has a conflict ever been as a black-and-white, with aggressor and defender clearly identifiable. After much soul-searching in Europe’s capitals, leaders and citizens reached the obvious conclusion: economic appeasement of Russia had completely failed to deter Russian aggression - in fact, it only galvanized Putin’s military action.

Within the European bloc, Germany showed the biggest about-face. In just a few short days, Germany’s approach to defense issues and its relations with Russia **dramatically shifted.** The new Chancellor Olaf Scholz announced the German government will send **1,000 anti-tank weapons** and 500 Stinger anti-aircraft defense systems to Ukraine, [reversing its historic policy](https://www.politico.eu/article/ukraine-war-russia-germany-still-blocking-arms-supplies/) of never sending weapons to conflict zones. He committed Germany to spending more than 2 percent of its GDP on the military, a new high water mark for defense spending and hitting the NATO benchmark. And Germany suspended the controversial Nordstream 2 gas pipeline from Russia. Although many of these policy changes may seem like Germany simply coming around to better alignment with the West, it reflects a dramatic upheaval of decades of foreign policy and precedent.

Far from “brain dead”, as it was declared in 2019 by French President Emmanuel Macron, Russia’s invasion of Ukraine has **reinvigorated the alliance for decades** to come. This is apparent by the dramatic shift in popularity for joining the alliance on display in Finland and Sweden. For the first time, support for Finland to join the NATO alliance [**exceeded 50 percent**](https://www.jpost.com/international/article-699006)**.** And the European Union’s own efforts to create a defensive union, one that would run parallel to NATO without duplication, **saw its first ever action** through [the deployment of a cyber division](https://www.politico.eu/article/ukraine-russia-eu-cyber-attack-security-help/) **to combat cyber attacks from Russia.**

**AND Chinese conflict – Taiwan proves they are successful**

**Shandilya 21** [[Aparna Shandilya](https://www.republicworld.com/author/aparna-shandilya) is a senior writer at the Republic World, 10-30-2021, European Union mulls intervention to stop China's aggression towards Taiwan, Republic World, https://www.republicworld.com/world-news/china/european-union-mulls-intervention-to-stop-chinas-aggression-towards-taiwan.html] Eric

Despite Chinese military threats, the European Union has pledged its support for Taiwan, causing concerns among Chinese officials, according to local media, ANI reported. Taiwan's Foreign Minister Joseph Wu travelled to Europe just days after the European Union **reaffirmed its support for Taiwan**. Beijing was infuriated since the minister's trip to Europe gave a clear message that the EU is standing with the US, Japan, and Australia, which have been attempting to corner China on a number of problems, and supporting Taiwan, including human rights breaches and territorial expansions, according to the international think tank, International Forum for Rights and Security (IFFRAS).

Taiwan's allies, the United States and Japan, have been increasing their engagement with the democratic island nation in order to assist it to defend itself against a growing threat from China, **putting Beijing in a difficult position**. In terms of involvement and support from regional partners, Taiwan has had a reasonably positive month. The US President Joe Biden and his Japanese counterpart, Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga, issued a joint statement in April that underscored the importance of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait and support the peaceful resolution of cross-Strait disputes.

**EU hinted the change in its policy toward Beijing**

China's expanding domination and military transgressions in the region have been criticised by major democracies throughout the world. In such a scenario, **the EU's intervention** **has put a stop to Beijing's plans to annex Taiwan**, according to IFFRAS, ANI reported. Weeks ago, the EU had also hinted at the change in its policy toward Beijing after European Commission Executive Vice-President, Margrethe Vestager expressed solidarity with Lithuania stating that the EU will continue to push back at these attempts and adopt appropriate tools, such as the anti-coercion instrument, currently under preparation, according to ANI reports.

**Second strike is secured.**

René **Schlee**, German think tank writer, **1-28**-20 “Mut zum Wechsel,” Internationale Politik und Gesellschaft, January 28, 2020, <https://www.ipg-journal.de/rubriken/aussen-und-sicherheitspolitik/artikel/mut-zum-wechsel-4023/>. [Translated to english by Ulrich KüHn, Tristan Volpe, Bert Thompson, 3-5-2020, "Tracking the German Nuclear Debate," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, https://carnegieendowment.org/2018/08/15/tracking-german-nuclear-debate-pub-72884]

“The assertion of the necessity of an increased conventional armament in case of a [European deterrent] is not plausible. For it is completely irrelevant under which nuclear defence shield a state is placed. In order to credibly maintain an extended French deterrent for Germany and other European states, there is no need for massive nuclear armament. France alone currently has some 300 nuclear warheads that could be deployed both sea- and air-based. If 300 nuclear warheads are not enough, how many would be enough?

**2NC – Sustainability – General**

**No capacity for burden-sharing exists anymore. Only we cite polls.**

**Moloney 21** [William Moloney, Ph.D., is a Fellow in Conservative Thought at Colorado Christian University’s [Centennial institute](https://centennial.ccu.edu/) who studied at Oxford and the University of London and received his doctorate from Harvard University. He is a former Colorado Commissioner of Education, Opinion Contributor, 12-20-2021, NATO today: The sad decline of a grand alliance, Hill, https://thehill.com/opinion/national-security/585673-nato-today-the-sad-decline-of-a-grand-alliance/] Eric

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is the most successful military alliance in modern history. For 40 years, NATO protected Western Europe from the hostile might of the Soviet Union until that ideologically driven empire [collapsed](https://www.history.com/topics/cold-war/fall-of-soviet-union) in 1990. Victory in the Cold War, however, would be the beginning of the end for NATO, an alliance that has outlived its time and today is an expanded membership group of disparate nation-states unable to agree on its current purposes.

The [72-year-old alliance](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_67656.htm) **has become the victim of its own success** and the simple passage of time. In NATO’s heyday, the glue that held it together was a very realistic fear of Soviet Russia and its immense military establishment. Now most members of NATO do not feel threatened by today’s post-communist Russia — and worse, **feel little inclination to militarily support** the **few “frontline” states** (e.g., Poland, the three Baltic nations) that do feel threatened.

Polls in recent years confirm this new reality. In 2015, a [Pew Research Center poll](https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/natosource/nato-publics-reluctant-to-provide-military-aid-to-allies-under-attack/) found that, among NATO members, only in the United States and Canada did a majority support military force to aid a NATO member that was invaded. Earlier this year, the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR) polled 60,000 people in its 11-member states and found that, by margins well over 2 to1, public opinion believes that their countries [should remain neutral](https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/09/22/europeans-want-to-stay-out-of-the-new-cold-war/) in conflicts between the U.S. and Russia or China.

These sentiments **flatly contradict the core tenet of the NATO Treaty** — [**Article5**](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_110496.htm), which obligates all members to militarily support a member who is under attack. If European NATO members prefer to remain neutral in any Russia-America conflict, what is the point of the alliance from the United States’s perspective? Add to this the fact that almost all European NATO members long have been [defaulting](https://www.washingtonpost.com/videopolitics/trump-nato-members-havent-been-even-close-to-meeting-financial-obligations/2017/02/06/4cd31a8e-ec9e-11e6-a100-fdaaf400369a_video.html?deferJs=true&outputType=default-article) on the financial obligations required by the treaty, and American skepticism about NATO in recent years is entirely understandable.

The seeds of NATO’s decline were sown **at the moment of the alliance’s greatest triumph**, and the context was the issue of NATO expansion into the former Soviet satellites. The not unreasonable view of former Soviet leader [Mikhail Gorbachev,](https://thehill.com/people/mikhail-gorbachev/) and later former Russian President [Boris Yeltsin,](https://thehill.com/people/boris-yeltsin/) was that with the Cold War over, the Soviet-sponsored [Warsaw Pact](https://www.nato.int/cps/us/natohq/declassified_138294.htm#:~:text=The%20Warsaw%20Pact%20was%20a,(Albania%20withdrew%20in%201968).) dissolved, and with an economically prostrate Russia struggling to become a democracy, there was no justification for expanding a Western military alliance hundreds of miles closer to the Russian border.

Initially, Presidents Bush and Clinton seemed to agree. Then-U.S. Secretary of State James Baker assured Gorbachev in February 1990 that NATO wouldn’t move “[one inch eastward](https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/briefing-book/russia-programs/2017-12-12/nato-expansion-what-gorbachev-heard-western-leaders-early).” In October 1993, Clinton’s Secretary of State Warren Christopher assured Yeltsin that there would be no NATO expansion, but instead a new organization, “[Partnership for Peace](https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/briefing-book/russia-programs/2018-03-16/nato-expansion-what-yeltsin-heard),” that would include all of the former satellite states and Russia as well. Yeltsin enthusiastically embraced this concept. However, his fury knew no bounds a year later when Clinton reversed course, expanded NATO to include the satellites and excluded Russia. Yeltsin insisted that what was agreed upon was “[Partnership for all, not NATO for some](https://warontherocks.com/2019/11/promises-made-promises-broken-what-yeltsin-was-told-about-nato-in-1993-and-why-it-matters-2/)” and he spoke of betrayal and the purposeful humiliation of a weakened Russia. From the sidelines, Gorbachev lamented the rejection of his concept of a “[common European home](https://www.theguardian.com/world/from-the-archive-blog/2019/jul/10/gorbachev-vision-for-a-common-european-home--july-1989).”

This toxic issue has haunted relations between Russia and the West ever since, and became particularly dangerous when President [George W. Bush](https://thehill.com/people/george-w-bush-2/)said in April 2008 that he “[strongly supported](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2008/apr/01/nato.georgia)” NATO membership for Georgia and Ukraine and wouldn’t accept any Russian attempt to veto this. Bush’s proposal, however, was strongly rebuffed by six NATO members led by Germany’s Angela Merkel, who called such NATO expansion “needlessly provocative.” An outraged Russian President [Vladimir Putin](https://thehill.com/people/vladimir-putin/)declared that NATO membership for Georgia and Ukraine was a direct threat to Russia’s national security and he viewed it as a “red line” that could not be crossed.

Putin further countered by becoming involved in the savage ethnic politics of Georgia by supporting dissident separatist groups in Abkhazia and South Ossetia and ultimately recognizing them as independent republics backed economically and militarily by Russia. In 2014, when Western-backed mass protests led to the overthrow of a pro-Russian president of Ukraine, Putin [acted swiftly](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2014_pro-Russian_unrest_in_Ukraine) to intervene militarily in those areas of Eastern Ukraine whose inhabitants were largely Russian ethnically (Crimea 65 percent) or Russian-speaking (Donbas 70 percent).

It is ironic that, with all its internal problems, NATO should be [pursuing](https://www.voanews.com/a/europe_72-nato-alliance-faces-new-challenges-enduring-threats/6204263.html) high-risk policies on behalf of countries that are not NATO members; are not allies; and assuredly would bring far more burdens to the alliance than assets. As for the United States, which has seriously damaged itself through long wars in distant places, why would we be risking more of the same in places so little-connected to our true national interests?

**Clearly it is time for NATO to re-examine the reasons for its existence so far beyond its prime**.

**Collective security causes nato overstretch.**

Dr. Sara **Moller**, Assistant Professor of International Security @ Seton Hal **20**, “Will NATO still be relevant in the future?” atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/will-nato-still-be-relevant-in-the-future/#:~:text=“It%20boils%20down%20to%20whether,answer%20to%20that%20is%20no.”&text=“Three%20areas%20of%20the%20world,Asia%2C%20and%20the%20Persian%20Gulf. \*\*Transcription autogenerated by youtube.

Thank You Corey and thanks to the Atlantic Council and Charles Koch Institute is NATO still relevant relevant to whom I would ask and so I want to make clear that I'm arguing about NATO's collective relevancy for all of its members and I would argue that NATO is in danger of becoming irrelevant because it **lacks** a **strategic focus** already you can probably tell that my argument in my decision shares much in common with the French president's brain death sentiments from last winter **a club whose members can't** **agree on the purpose of the club** who each **want and expect different things** from the club is a club that is in trouble so NATO is in danger of losing its collective relevancy for all of its members I would argue because it suffers from a strategic deficit the central question as I see it is what is NATO's purpose today during the Cold War it had a very clear and defined purpose it was to deter and defend against the Soviet Union since the 1990s NATO has been engaged in never-ending transformations starting with the 1991 strategic concept where we saw the adoption of two new security mandates for NATO we get projecting stability and crisis management cooperative security along with an open door to enlargement and I would argue that the net result has been mission creep for NATO so NATO gets into the peacekeeping business NATO gets into admittedly at the request of the Americans that counterterrorism the nation-building business NATO gets into the security suspect er reform business you know gets into the counter piracy and fighting illegal migration business there are even those who now argue that NATO is ideally situated for tackling organised crime and corruption so the result is that members want and expect different things from NATO they no longer see eye to eye and here I think the clearest example of this is with respect to Russia we have the classic split in the alliance between the eastern and southern flank but we also have a NATO member Turkey who's purchasing men weapon systems from Russia and attempting to block the defense plan for the Baltics on the other hand we have countries like France which is exploring rapprochement with the Russians so there's a lack of consensus about the strategic purpose and this lack of consensus about NATO strategic purpose **jeopardizes its future relevancy** I would argue the last point I want to make here is that the strategic crisis the strategic deficit that NATO faces today **predates President Trump** and his administration so I think it's a mistake to assume that come January 2021 if there's a change in occupancy in the White House that NATO can just go back to normal a return to normal back to business as usual I don't see that happening because for me $question NATO needs to deal with that the members need to address is what is it NATO's purpose.

**NATO commitments unsustainable because of the rise of china.**

William **Ruger**, Professor of IR @ CUNY, **and** Rajan **Menon** War and Peace Studies @ Columbia, **5-11**-20, “NATO enlargement and US grand strategy: a net assessment,” *International Politics,* Vol 57, Iss 3. Springer.

Some aver that alliance relations will revert to normal should President Trump depart the White House in 2021. But they forget that US concerns about the relative contribution of the Europeans are **long-standing**, harking back to the 1960s. Moreover, these concerns are likely to intensify as the USA faces economic constraints (the colossal national debt and soaring budget defcits—especially in the post-COVID-19 world) and long-neglected domestic problems increase disaffection among Americans. Since the early decades of NATO, European countries have become economic competitors of the USA and neomercantilists and populists in the USA have become more vocal—in Democratic as well as Republican ranks. US leaders will ratchet up pressure on NATO allies to assume more of the burden of collective defense—and **NATO may not survive if Europe does nothing more than tinker** in response. Moreover, the rise of China will inevitably divert US military resources from Europe. In short, Trump’s departure in 2021 or 2025 won’t restore the status quo ante for NATO, at least not for long (Becker 2017; Menon 2007; NATO 1995; Putin 2007; Ruger 2017, 2019; Shlapak and Johnson 2016; US Department of Defense 2011).

**It’s impossible for NATO to take on new responsibilities**

Sara Bjerg **Moller 20**. An assistant professor in the School of Diplomacy and International Relations at Seton Hall University. “IT WILL TAKE MORE THAN A BIDEN VICTORY TO SOLVE NATO’S STRATEGIC MALAISE” War on the Rocks. 09-25-2020. <https://warontherocks.com/2020/09/it-will-take-more-than-a-biden-victory-to-solve-natos-strategic-malaise/>

When More Is Less, and Less Is More For an alliance that has long prided itself on its commonality of purpose and interests, the truth is that **NATO is in danger of losing both.** On paper and in public, the members still agree the core purpose of the 71-year-old alliance is deterrence and defense of the North Atlantic region. When internal disagreements are aired publicly, other allies are quick to dispel reports of rifts by pointing out that differences of opinion are nothing new. But unlike during the Cold War, when a single adversary occupied all of the alliance’s attention, today’s security environment — as the allies routinely remind each other — is **multifaceted and complex**. In an effort to address members’ often disparate security requirements, NATO has taken on additional tasks over the past three decades almost as quickly as it has taken on additional members. The **NATO-ization of every security challenge** has meant that issues once considered the purview of individual nations or other international organizations — such as migration, terrorism, and foreign security force assistance — are now **lumped onto NATO’s agenda under the guise** of fulfilling its ambitious (and potentially limitless) post-Cold War mandate of “projecting stability.” For far too long now, alliance leaders have tasked the NATO military infrastructure with a seemingly **impossible undertaking: weighing down the military organization with new responsibilities** like peacekeeping and counter-terrorism while simultaneously allowing members to shirk on contributing the resources required to fulfill old and new alliance missions. To date, much of the criticism surrounding NATO’s current strategic deadlock has focused on the resource issue and the strains caused by uneven burden-sharing within the alliance. **Far less attention** has been paid to the first part of the “ends-means-ways” formulation of strategy, namely **NATO’s original purpose**. While addressing “means” and “ways” are crucial elements in any strategic enterprise, it is past time the Allies got around to focusing on NATO’s strategic ends once more.

**2NC – Sustainability – Afghanistan**

**Afghanistan destroys the global credibility of NATO.**

**Kulikov 21** [Valery Kulikov is a political expert at New Age, 01-03-2022, NATO collapse comes closer, https://www.newagebd.net/article/148030/nato-collapse-comes-closer] Eric

THE shameful events in Afghanistan in recent weeks have **led to a dramatic loss of credibility** for the United States and NATO in the minds of the Western public. The earlier criticism of the Atlantic Alliance’s policies and actions **has now increased enormously** and has become the most widespread meme in the publications of various media.

The mournful announcement of the British Daily Mail is more straightforward than ever. Next to the image of a coffin covered in the national flag, is posed a question Britain has never been able to answer: what, in the end, did they all die for in Afghanistan?

The British TV channel Sky rightly points out that after the withdrawal of Soviet troops in 1989, the official government of Afghanistan endured for three years, and after the US withdrawal it did not last even three hours.

The seizure of power in Afghanistan by the Taliban (banned in Russia) **is a grave disgrace** and a shameful defeat for NATO, believes the Swiss TV channel SRF. One of the Alliance’s grandest projects of the past two decades has been brought to an ignominious grave. Western countries **have failed to build democracy in Afghanistan, and now they refuse to even address the future of the country and its people.**

NATO secretary general Jens Stoltenberg is not cut out for big speeches; indeed, even when he has something positive to say, he gives, to put it mildly, ‘an excessively reserved impression’, writes a diplomatic correspondent of the Swiss TV channel SRF. When Stoltenberg was finally confronted about the failure of the Western military alliance in Afghanistan, he looked deeply broken and depressed.

As the Wall Street Journal points out, Biden’s ‘**disgraceful departure’** from Afghanistan **was a slap in the face for NATO**. Following the 9/11 attacks, when the Collective Defence Clause was invoked for the first time in history in Afghanistan, America’s allies in the Alliance have shed much blood in that country, spent vast sums of money in the conflict, and lost more than a thousand people. The newspaper stresses that Washington almost mocked its partners when in his speech about the withdrawal of troops Biden only briefly mentioned NATO and did not say a word about the European allies of the United States. So it is not surprising that European leaders are seething with anger, concludes The Wall Street Journal.

In his time, French president Emmanuel Macron was met with a barrage of criticism when he spoke of NATO as ‘brain dead’ in 2019. But it was then that he warned that no matter who was in charge of the United States, it was becoming an increasingly less dependable ally. And today, Macron’s words **seem nothing short of prophetic** throughout the European capitals.

For Europe, the Taliban’s seizure of power in Afghanistan is an unmitigated nightmare, writes Deutsche Wirtschafts Nachrichten. First of all, because the US has shown through its hasty withdrawal that **it no longer intends to defend the ‘free world’**, and without American support **Europe does not have enough strength to defend itself**, and this catastrophic deficit is unlikely to be eliminated soon.

**2NC – Sustainability – Trump**

**Trump solidified NATO’s doom. It zeroes their offense but EU leadership is now necessary more than ever.**

**Palacio 20** [Ana Palacio, a former minister of foreign affairs of Spain and former senior vice president and general counsel of the World Bank Group, is a visiting lecturer at Georgetown University, 7-15-2020, NATO Is Dying, Project Syndicate, https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/france-turkey-naval-row-nato-by-ana-palacio-2020-07] Eric

MADRID – NATO may be “the most successful alliance in history” – as its secretary-general, Jens Stoltenberg, [claims](https://www.economist.com/special-report/2019/03/14/how-nato-is-shaping-up-at-70) – but it may also **be on the brink of failure.** After a turbulent few years, during which US President Donald Trump has **increasingly turned America’s back on NATO**, tensions between France and Turkey **have escalated sharply**, laying bare just how fragile the Alliance has become.

The [Franco-Turkish spat](https://www.reuters.com/article/us-nato-france-turkey-analysis/france-turkey-tensions-mount-after-nato-naval-incident-idUSKBN2481K5) began in mid-June, when a French navy frigate under NATO command in the Mediterranean attempted to inspect a cargo vessel suspected of violating a United Nations arms embargo on Libya. France [alleges](https://www.reuters.com/article/us-libya-security-france-turkey/nato-to-investigate-mediterranean-incident-between-french-turkish-warships-idUSKBN23P2SJ) that three Turkish ships accompanying the cargo vessel were “**extremely aggressive**” toward its frigate, flashing their radar lights three times – a signal indicating imminent engagement. Turkey denied France’s account, claiming that the French frigate was harassing its ships.

Whatever the details, the fact is that two NATO allies came very close to exchanging fire in the context of a NATO mission. That is a new low for the Alliance – one that may herald its demise.

Lord Hastings Ismay, NATO’s first secretary-general, famously quipped that the Alliance’s mission was to “keep the Russians out, the Americans in, and the Germans down.” The dynamic obviously changed over the subsequent decades, especially the relationship with Germany. But the broad basis of cooperation – a common perceived threat, strong American leadership, and a shared sense of purpose – remained the same.

Without US leadership, the whole structure is at risk of crumbling. It is no coincidence that the last time two NATO allies came this close to blows – during the Turkish invasion of Cyprus in 1974 – the US was preoccupied with the Vietnam War. In fact, the spat between Turkey and France occurred just days after it was [revealed](https://www.wsj.com/articles/trump-directs-u-s-troop-reduction-in-germany-11591375651?mod=searchresults&page=1&pos=2) that Trump had decided, without any prior consultation with America’s NATO allies, to withdraw thousands of US troops from Germany.

Germany may no longer be on the front line, as it was during the Cold War, but US forces there still serve as a powerful deterrent to Russian aggression along NATO’s eastern flank. By drawing down those forces, Trump has sent a fundamental message: ensuring European security is no longer a top US priority.

While America’s drift away from Europe has accelerated under Trump, it began over a decade earlier. In 2011, when Trump’s predecessor, Barack Obama, was touting his “pivot to Asia,” then-US Secretary of Defense Robert Gates [warned](https://archive.defense.gov/Transcripts/Transcript.aspx?TranscriptID=4839) that, unless NATO proved itself relevant, the US may lose interest. NATO did no such thing: until last December, its summit declarations failed even to [acknowledge](https://www.dw.com/en/nato-recognizes-china-challenges-for-the-first-time/a-51519351) the challenges posed by China’s rise. By then, the US had lost interest. And now, under Trump, that disinterest has become open hostility.

Without the US as a rudder, NATO allies have begun to head off in different directions. Turkey is the clearest example. Before the recent squabble with France, Turkey [purchased](https://edition.cnn.com/2019/07/13/europe/turkey-russia-missiles-nato-analysis-intl/index.html) a Russian S-400 missile-defense system, despite US objections. Moreover, it has brazenly intervened in Libya, providing air support, weapons, and fighters to the Tripoli-based Government of National Accord.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan seems confident that his [direct relationship](https://edition.cnn.com/2020/06/29/politics/trump-phone-calls-national-security-concerns/index.html) with Trump will protect him from suffering any consequences for his behavior. Trump’s decision not to impose sanctions over the missile purchase, beyond cutting Turkey’s participation in the F-35 fighter jet program, seems to vindicate Erdoğan’s reasoning.

But Turkey is not alone in striking out on its own; France has done the same, including in Libya. By providing military support to the Russian-backed General Khalifa Haftar, who controls eastern Libya, to fight Islamist militants, France has gone against its NATO allies. While President [Emmanuel Macron](https://www.project-syndicate.org/columnist/emmanuel-macron)[denies](https://www.nytimes.com/reuters/2020/07/01/world/middleeast/01reuters-libya-security-turkey-france.html) supporting Haftar’s side in the civil war, he did recently express support for Egypt’s pledge to intervene militarily against Turkey, which he says has a “criminal responsibility” in the country.

As tensions with Turkey rise, France is more insistent than ever that a European approach to security and defense – one that would be de facto led by France – is vital. The fact that popular support for Macron within France is [waning](https://www.reuters.com/article/us-france-election/frances-macron-takes-drubbing-in-local-elections-greens-surge-idUSKBN23Z007) only augments his sense of urgency.

Political motivations aside, Macron has [said aloud](https://www.economist.com/europe/2019/11/07/emmanuel-macron-warns-europe-nato-is-becoming-brain-dead) what few others have acknowledged: NATO is experiencing “brain death,” owing to Trump’s dubious commitment to defend America’s allies. Given that the US drift away from NATO began well before Trump, there is little reason to believe that this trend will be reversed, though it may be slowed if he loses the November election. Unless Europe begins thinking of itself as a geopolitical power and takes responsibility for its own security, Macron argues, it will “no longer be in control of [its] destiny.”

Last December, NATO commemorated 70 years of underpinning peace, stability, and prosperity on both sides of the Atlantic. But cracks in the Alliance are deepening, raising serious doubts about whether it will reach its 75th anniversary. The time for Europe to shore up its defenses and capabilities is now.

**2NC – Sustainability – AT: Troops Increasing**

**That’s a warrant for the neg. This is “number magic.”**

**AZƏRBAYCAN24 7-17** [7-17-2022, Britain's military decline exposes NATO's collapse in credibility and capability, https://www.azerbaycan24.com/en/britain-s-military-decline-exposes-nato-s-collapse-in-credibility-and-capability/] Eric

NATO’s plan to vastly increase its forward force is wishful thinking, and the UK’s struggle for military relevance **is a perfect case in point** Scott Ritter is a former US Marine Corps intelligence officer and author of ‘Disarmament in the Time of Perestroika: Arms Control and the End of the Soviet Union.’ He served in the Soviet Union as an inspector implementing the INF Treaty, in General Schwarzkopf’s staff during the Gulf War, and from 1991-1998 as a UN weapons inspector. Scott Ritter is a former US Marine Corps intelligence officer and author of ‘Disarmament in the Time of Perestroika: Arms Control and the End of the Soviet Union.’ He served in the Soviet Union as an inspector implementing the INF Treaty, in General Schwarzkopf’s staff during the Gulf War, and from 1991-1998 as a UN weapons inspector. @RealScottRitter@ScottRitterFILE PHOTO. © Getty Images / Sean Gallup

The secretary general of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Jens Stoltenberg, recently announced the US-led military bloc’s goal of expanding its so-called ‘Response Force’ from its current strength of 40,000 to a force of more than 300,000 troops. “We will enhance our battlegroups in the eastern part of the Alliance up to brigade-levels,” Stoltenberg declared. “We will transform the NATO Response Force and increase the number of our high readiness forces to well over 300,000.”

The announcement, made at the end of NATO’s annual summit, held in Madrid, Spain, apparently **took several defense officials** from the NATO **membership by surprise**, with one such official calling Stoltenberg’s figures **“number magic.”** Stoltenberg appeared to be working from a concept that had been developed within NATO headquarters based upon assumptions made by his staffers, as opposed to anything resembling coordinated policy among the defense organizations of the 30 nations that make up the bloc.

**Confusion is the name of the game** at NATO these days, with the alliance still reeling from last year’s Afghan debacle and unable to adequately disguise the impotence shown in the face of Russia’s ongoing military operation in Ukraine. The bloc **is but a shadow of its former self, a pathetic collection of under-funded military organizations** **more suited for the parade ground than the battlefield**. No military organization more represents this colossal collapse in credibility and capability than the British Army.

**2NC – Sustainability – AT: Strat Con and Swindland**

**Swindland didn’t reduce overstretch or overdependence on the U.S and Strat Con was an empty promise.**

**Eyal 22** [Jonathan Eyal is associate director at the Royal United Services Institute in London, 7-3-2022, Yes, Nato has a new vitality. But its united front could collapse when it has to deal with Russia, Guardian, https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/jul/03/yes-nato-has-a-new-vitality-but-its-united-front-could-collapse-when-it-has-to-deal-with-russia] Eric

But **what each enlargement failed** to achieve and what the entry of Sweden and Finland will miss too is to reduce Nato’s **overwhelming dependence** on the contribution of the United States. The transatlantic alliance reacted well in response to Russia’s invasion of [Ukraine](https://www.theguardian.com/world/ukraine). Since March, Nato has not only been present with multinational battle groups in the Baltic states and Poland, but also in Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria. The Nato presence **stretches from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea**. The military alliance has also increased the number of soldiers on the ground. Around 10,000 of the 40,000 Nato soldiers are divided among eight battle groups. The battle groups are equipped with different units geared to the respective location’s military needs. **Each battlegroup is led by a different nation**, providing the bulk of the troops.

Yet, although many allies have brought in beneficial assets, the US contribution **dwarfs** that of **all the Europeans put together**. Had it not been for the fact that [US troops in Europe](https://www.stripes.com/theaters/europe/2022-03-15/us-forces-record-high-europe-war-ukraine-5350187.html) now number 100,000 – the highest figure since the mid-1990s – it’s doubtful that the alliance could have presented such a united front.

Recent pledges to boost defence spending have also been impressive. But, at least for the moment, only [nine of the 30 members](https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-8175/CBP-8175.pdf) dedicate 2% of their GDP to defence, and those who fail to reach this threshold include big European nations such as France, Germany, Italy and Spain. The rest, as they say, remains a “work in progress”.

Nato calculates that its members have promised to spend £172.6bn in [additional defence expenditure](https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/06/29/remarks-by-president-charles-michel-before-the-nato-summit-in-madrid/) on top of existing defence budgets, with Germany accounting for perhaps half this amount. But the question is how this will be spent and over what period. The easiest way to improve European capabilities would be to use this cash to buy US equipment off the shelf: this offers substantial economies of scale and time. Yet such an approach will go against European aspirations to boost their defence industries; French diplomats are warning that the Ukraine war must not end up as a bonanza for US arms manufacturers. Chances are high that Nato’s eternal “burden-sharing” debate will continue, even if more cash is available. Across the Atlantic, Donald Trump and his disciples are poised to argue – as “The Donald” did when he was in the White House – that Nato is a scam to fleece American taxpayers. Even if he does not stage a comeback, the idea that the US is spending far more than it should to defend fat, wealthy Europeans is likely to feature prominently when a new Congress is elected this November.

The sheer audacity of the Russian aggression has allowed the Biden administration to get the cash it needed from Congress. Still, it is taken for granted in Washington that the [$40bn package](https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/live/2022/may/16/us-ukraine-aid-bill-vote-joe-biden-baby-formula-inflation-latest-news) recently approved by Congress for security assistance to Ukraine is unlikely to be repeated. And a future Nato burden-sharing debate is bound to get more acrimonious when it is joined with a parallel discussion about paying for Ukraine’s postwar economic reconstruction, a project estimated at an eye-watering $500bn.

Nato has also set itself a huge objective by pledging to increase the number of high-readiness forces to more than 300,000. For this still does not answer the fundamental question of whether, to deter further Russian aggression, the alliance must position significant forces in the countries near Russia permanently. Not doing so could expose existing Nato members to the danger of a Russian occupation for at least a period until help arrives to liberate them, a risk that, given the [horrors of Bucha](https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/ukraine-crisis-bucha-killings-soldiers/), no alliance nation is ready to contemplate. But keeping multinational troops deployed permanently in central and eastern Europe will be hugely expensive, well beyond current raised spending plans.

In effect, all that Nato has done in Madrid is to issue a promissory note on this score in the hope that both the nature of the promise and the conditions of its redemption could be discussed later. Yet the biggest paradox for the alliance is that the glue that holds it so solidly together – the determination to stand up to Russia’s imperial intentions – remains its most significant vulnerability. Despite all the back-slapping in Madrid there is no consensus on how to deal with [Russia](https://www.theguardian.com/world/russia). Everyone agrees that it must not be allowed to succeed in its current aggression. But does this mean that it should be physically defeated on the battlefield in Ukraine, as Britain and most of the central and eastern Europeans are arguing, or would it be enough if the war ends without Moscow being able to make a plausible claim to victory, as Germany’s leaders would prefer?

For now, this debate seems abstract. But the moment Moscow hints that it wants a ceasefire in Ukraine, all these differing opinions within Nato will come into the open. Nato’s new [Strategic Concept](https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2022/6/pdf/290622-strategic-concept.pdf) adopted at Madrid includes a total of **71 “we will**” categorical **commitments**, spread across just 11 pages of text. An admirable set of pledges, no doubt. But **some won’t endure when the guns in Ukraine fall silent**.

**2NC – Sustainability – AT: Swindland Solves**

**Swindland increases unsustainability**

**Vought 22** [Russ Vought is the president of the Center for Renewing America and was President Trump’s Director of the Office of Management and Budget., 6-13-2022, Finland and Sweden joining NATO won't make U.S. safer, Fox News, https://www.foxnews.com/opinion/finland-sweden-joining-nato-us-safer] Eric

In the aftermath of Russia’s immoral invasion of Ukraine, the news that Sweden and Finland are abandoning their long-held neutrality in favor of joining the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is being met with **much exuberance** by the American political elite. President Joe Biden celebrated the move with a joint press conference at the White House featuring the leaders of both countries. On the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue, Senators Chuck Schumer and Mitch McConnell — leaders in two parties that seemingly agree on almost nothing these days — jointly sponsored a resolution calling for expedited NATO accession.

Much of the Beltway media predictably joined the chorus, with editorials from newspapers such as the Washington Post heralding the move.

For America’s political establishment, NATO expansion has been one of the closest things to a foreign policy holy sacrament in the post-Cold War era. But our policy-making elite are doing the American people a disservice by rubber-stamping an expansion of America’s security commitments through NATO during a period of economic turmoil at home and emerging security challenges in other parts of the world.

It is not in the national interest of the United States, through NATO, to commit to defend two wealthy European welfare states whose neutrality has kept them safe and prosperous for more than 70 years. While some insist Russia’s invasion of Ukraine changes everything, the fact remains that new [security guarantees will force trade-offs,](https://www.foxnews.com/politics/nato-confident-turkey-sweden-finland-admittance) consume more resources, and increase the likelihood of a confrontation with a nuclear-armed adversary.

Despite rhetoric from NATO evangelists that can often give the contrary impression, adding Finland and Sweden to NATO **will lead to increased costs** for the U.S.

Admitting both nations to NATO could generate up-front [**expenses of over $8 billion**](https://video.foxbusiness.com/v/6307458684112#sp=show-clips)  **along with $1.5 billion in additional annual costs**. And while U.S. military leaders are currently claiming that their membership in NATO won’t lead to a permanent stationing of troops in either nation, they do admit that more U.S. troops will likely rotate to both Finland and Sweden on a more frequent basis. This will place **further strain on a U.S. military that** **is already struggling to sustain deployments in support of dozens of ongoing operations including active combat missions in Iraq, Syria, and Somalia.**

One frequently cited justification for admitting Finland and Sweden to NATO is that **they have capable militaries that would enhance NATO.** However, the reality is that both countries have **relatively small professional militaries** of around 20,000 troops each that rely on large reserve forces in a time of war and which lack long-range force projection capabilities. Sweden **is already requesting** a larger U.S. naval presence in the Baltic Sea, calling into question the ability of their military to secure their own backyard.

Additionally, **neither country** currently **meets** the **2 percent** of GDP defense spending goal that was agreed to by NATO members. Just as in other parts of Europe, a security guarantee provided by the United States could **encourage free-riding and disincentivize** **increased investment in defense capabilities** in favor of more spending on politically popular social programs.

But most dangerously, adding Finland and Sweden to NATO **will increase the risk of a nuclear confrontation with Russia**. As a result of its failures in Ukraine, the threat posed by Russia’s conventional forces has been reduced. But Russia still possesses a large nuclear arsenal that, according to the head of the Defense Intelligence Agency, they will likely rely on more to secure their borders — including the nearly 850-mile one they share with Finland. NATO membership for Finland and Sweden includes extending the umbrella of America’s nuclear deterrent to both nations**, thus elevating the risk that any border dispute could escalate into a nuclear exchange.**

**2NC – AT: Deterrence**

**Western border insecurity independently causes Russian preemptive self defense – goes nuclear.**

Alexey **Arbatov et al**, head of the Center for International Security at the Primakov National Research Institute of World Economy and International Relations, Major General Vladimir Dvorkin, a principal researcher at the Center for International Security at the Primakov National Research Institute of World Economy and International Relations and Peter Topychkanov, fellow at the Carnegie Moscow Center’s Nonproliferation Program, **‘17** “Russian And Chinese Perspectives On Non-Nuclear Weapons And Nuclear Risks” *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Publications,* <https://www.russiamatters.org/sites/default/files/media/files/Entanglement_interior_FNL.pdf>

Alternatively, if air-space war assumes a non-nuclear conflict, then the concept raises serious doubts of a different nature. Russian state and military leaders have regularly depicted terrifying scenarios of large-scale conflicts being won through non-nuclear means. Former deputy defense minister General Arkady Bakhin, for example, has described how “leading world powers are staking everything on winning supremacy in the air and in space, on carrying out massive air-space operations at the outbreak of hostilities, to conduct strikes against sites of strategic and vital importance all across the country.”15 It is difficult to imagine, however, that such a conflict, in reality, would not quickly escalate to a nuclear exchange, especially as strategic forces and their C3I systems were continually attacked by conventional munitions.

Right up until the mid-1980s, the military leadership of the USSR believed that a major war would likely begin in Europe with the early use by Warsaw Pact forces of hundreds of tactical nuclear weapons “as soon as [they] received information” that NATO was preparing to launch a nuclear strike.16 After that, Soviet armies would reach the English Channel and the Pyrenees in a few weeks, or massive nuclear strikes would be inflicted by the USSR and the United States on one another, and the war would be over in a few hours, or at most in a few days, with catastrophic consequences.17

After the end of the Cold War, the task of elaborating probable major war scenarios was practically shelved because such a war had become unthinkable in the new political environment. However, strategic thinking on the next high-technology global war apparently continued in secret (and probably not only in Russia). Now, at a time of renewed confrontation between Russia and the West, the fruits of that work are finally seeing the light of day. In all likelihood, the authors of the strategy imagine that over a relatively long period of time—days or weeks—the West would wage a campaign of air and missile strikes against Russia without using nuclear weapons. Russia, in turn, would defend against such attacks and carry out retaliatory strikes with long-range conventional weapons. Notably, in 2016, Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu stated that “by 2021, it is planned to increase by four times the combat capabilities of the nation’s strategic non-nuclear forces, which will provide the possibility of fully implementing the tasks of non-nuclear deterrence.”18

In other words, the basic premise is that the U.S.-led campaigns against Yugoslavia in 1999 or Iraq in 1990 and 2003 (which are often cited by experts in this context) may be implemented against Russia—but with different results, thanks to the operations of the Russian Air-Space Forces, the Strategic Rocket Forces, and the Navy against the United States and its allies.

The emphasis on defensive and offensive strategic non-nuclear arms does not exclude, but—on the contrary—implies the limited use of nuclear weapons at some point of the armed conflict. Sergei Sukhanov, one of the **most authoritative representatives** of the defense industries as the constructor general of the Vympel Corporation, which is responsible for designing strategic defense systems, has exposed the whole panorama of Russia’s contemporary strategic logic on the interactions between offensive and defensive systems and between nuclear and non-nuclear systems:

If we cannot exclude the possibility of the large-scale use of air-space attacks by the U.S. and other NATO countries (i.e., if we accept that the Yugoslavian strategy might be applied against Russia), then it is clearly impossible to solve the problem by fighting off air-space attacks with weapons that would neutralize them in the air-space theater, since this would require the creation of highly effective air- and missile defense systems across the country. Therefore, the strategy for solving the air-space defense tasks faced in this eventuality should be based on deterring the enemy from large-scale air-space attacks by implementing the tasks facing air-space defense in this eventuality at a scale that would avoid escalation but force the enemy to refrain from further airspace attack.19 (Emphasis added.) In other words, because of the inevitable limitations in Russia’s ability to defend against air-space attacks, Sukhanov argues that Russia may have to resort to the limited use of nuclear weapons in order to compel the United States and its allies into backing down. This basic logic is **widely accepted** in Russia.

Judging by the available information, the United States does not have—and is not expected to have for the foreseeable future—the technological means or the operational plans to wage non-nuclear air-space warfare against Russia. However, the fact that a major war with the United States and NATO is ***seen*** in contemporary Russian strategic thinking as a prolonged endeavor involving an integrated technological and operational continuum of nuclear and non-nuclear operations, defensive and offensive capabilities, and ballistic and aerodynamic weapons creates a breeding ground for entanglement. The result could be the rapid escalation of a local non-nuclear conflict to a **global nuclear war**. The remainder of this chapter discusses how new and emerging military technologies might contribute to such an escalation.

**Not credible. Permanent extended deterrence invites Russia war – commitments to low value targets are inherently incredible.**

Ted Galen **Carpenter**, PhD, **’19**, NATO: The Dangerous Dinosaur. Cato Institute. P 108-110.

U.S. leaders relied on the assumption that the geostrategic assets at stake were large and important enough that extended deterrence to cover Western Europe was inherently credible to the Kremlin and would not be challenged. The assumption proved valid in the Cold War context. Even if the Soviets (and the West Europeans) may have wondered from time to time if Washington’s professed willingness to commit national suicide to prevent the Red Army from conquering Europe was genuine, **no rational person wanted to test that** proposition.

In today’s world, however, the inherent believability of the U.S. pledge is **weak**er. A vow to incur even **grave risks** to prevent a **totalitarian superpower enemy** from dominating such key international economic and strategic assets as Britain, France, Germany, and Italy had a reasonable degree of credibility. But the notion that the United States would honor such a security pledge to prevent a conventional, conservative regional power like post-Soviet Russia from reasserting imperial control over one or more weak neighboring states **strains credulity to the breaking point**. America’s risks under Article 5 are at least as great as they were during the Cold War, while the stakes involved—and the benefits to America of retaining a bloated roster of allies—are much less.

The **intrinsically weaker credibility** of **extended deterrence** under these new circumstances **cannot be overcome by** pounding the table or **increasing the number and intensity of America’s security pledges** to NATO allies. But NATO partisans blindly refuse to acknowledge that reality. Former U.S. ambassador to NATO Ivo H. Daalder, for example, argues that “the biggest threat today is not a deliberate war, as it was [in the Cold War], but the possibility of miscalculation. One worry is that Russia might not believe that NATO would actually come to the defense of its most exposed allies— which is why strong statements of reassurance and commitment by all NATO countries, and not least the United States, are so vital.” Daalder even puts the verbal aspect on the same plane as tangible military deployments. The forward presence of NATO forces is an important signal of resolve, he states, “but they need to be backed by words that leave no doubt of the intention to use these forces to defend allies if they are attacked.”41 Daalder misses the crucial point: a potential adversary will more likely judge the credibility of a deterrence pledge based on the importance of the tangible interests at stake to the guarantor power compared to the risks the power incurs. Simply repeating assurances that “we really mean it” will not make a possible challenger believe an implausible guarantee. Washington’s problem today is that promising to risk national suicide for small allies that have little economic or strategic importance looks like a bluff—one that **Moscow may call** in the midst of a crisis, if Russian leaders believe their country’s vital interests are at stake. That is why expanding NATO and adding an assortment of marginally relevant, volatile dependents in Russia’s immediate neighborhood merely weakens the credibility of Washington’s long-standing security guarantee to more significant alliance partners farther west. Daalder’s emphasis on the need to repeat and emphasize the sanctity of the U.S. pledge to all European allies suggests just how much he and other NATO defenders worry that otherwise a Kremlin leader might call that bluff.

The greater disparity between risks and benefits virtually **invites a challenge** at some point. Despite the overwrought propaganda in much of the Western media about Putin being the new Hitler, his behavior indicates that he is a prudent risk taker, not a reckless one. But **one of the worst aspects of a permanent military alliance is that it is permanent**. We must assume that unknown Russian leaders a decade or a generation from now will not be gamblers. The questionable notion that the United States is really willing to risk **thermonuclear war** to protect minuscule states in Russia’s neighborhood or on Russia’s border itself must be reconsidered. It is an extremely imprudent assumption and a high-stakes bet on Washington’s part.

Moreover, the willingness of current U.S. leaders to placate NATO’s East European members by stationing American troops and warplanes and establishing permanent bases on their soil increases the likelihood of a future tragedy. The goal of European governments, now as during the Cold War, is to deny U.S. policymakers the element of choice about America becoming embroiled in any conflict that breaks out. U.S. forces there serve as tripwires to guarantee that Washington must honor the Article 5 pledge, even if doing so is self-destructive folly. The underlying perverse logic of insisting on U.S. tripwire forces is that the Kremlin, believing that the United States will have no choice but to intervene on behalf of an ally if American troops are among the initial casualties in a conflict, will never take the fateful first step of attacking a NATO member, even a small, vulnerable one. By collaborating in this denial of policy choice, American officials are engaging in the geostrategic equivalent of making a huge wager on one turn of the roulette wheel—except in this case, the lives of millions of Americans are at stake, rather than mere dollars. It is a foolish and irresponsible bet.

Secretary of State Henry Kissinger reportedly once observed that great powers do not commit suicide on behalf of allies. But he should have said that great powers do not willingly commit suicide on behalf of allies. As the cataclysmic descent into war by Europe’s rival blocs in 1914 demonstrated, great powers sometimes do end up, however inadvertently, committing suicide on behalf of allies. Washington must adopt important policy changes to make certain that America does not stumble into a similar tragedy in the 21st century.

**The plan allows the US to return if necessary.**

**Carpenter**, Ted Galen, PhD, **’19**, NATO: The Dangerous Dinosaur. Cato Institute. P 147-148.

Great wailing and despair from the NATO preservation crowd on both sides of the Atlantic will inevitably accompany any meaningful policy shift. But 75 years is an exceedingly long period for any policy to be relevant and beneficial (much less optimal), and America’s NATO membership is no exception. Indeed, it seems to epitomize the problem of policy entropy. A U.S.-led NATO is now well beyond its appropriate expiration date. It is time to accord the alliance the retirement celebration that should have been held when the Cold War came to an end and the Soviet Union dissolved. Moving to a new, more restrained posture **does not mean** that the United States will take no interest in Europe’s affairs. We need to reject the simplistic “light switch model” of America’s engagement in the world, with only two possible settings: “off or on.”13 There are many settings between those two extremes, and there are multiple forms of engagement— diplomatic, economic, and cultural, as well as security.

Every effort should be made to preserve a robust, mutually beneficial transatlantic economic relationship. The United States also can and should maintain extensive diplomatic and cultural connections with Europe. And Washington should establish a consultative body either with a new European security organization or with the Continent’s main military powers to address issues of mutual concern. Beyond that aspect, there is nothing to prevent joint military exercises and even temporary deployments of U.S. air and naval units, if the security environment turns more threatening. The point is just that America should not seek to be Europe’s **permanent** security blanket and hegemon.

This more **flexible approach** would constitute an updated version of Robert A. Taft’s policy of the free hand. Moreover, it would be one component of a U.S. global grand strategy based on realism and restraint.14 America would no longer shackle itself to commitments that have more drawbacks than benefits or those that lock the republic into obligations that no longer make sense. It would end the thankless, unproductive strategy of trying to micromanage the security affairs of both Europe and the neighboring Middle East. For U.S. leaders to seek to deny their own country the essential element of policy choice is perverse. Indeed, a sustainable transatlantic policy for the 21st century must rest firmly on the principle of **maximum choice** for the United States.

**Only withdrawal solves -- withdrawal is crucial for security, but worst case, the US could still act as a balancer of last resort**

Ivan **Eland 19**. Senior Fellow and Director of the Center on Peace and Liberty. “Trump’s Push To Leave NATO May Help Putin, but It Will Help Americans More” Independent Institute. 01-18-2019. <https://www.independent.org/news/article.asp?id=11688>

Even if this were true—as it may be—the time has come to **reassess** whether the U.S. needs to **stay in an outdated alliance** that was designed to deter the Soviet Union from an attack on Western Europe during the Cold War, which ended more than a quarter century ago. In fact, once the Soviet Union fell in 1991, the United States should have turned NATO over to the by-then rich Europeans to deter a much-diminished Russia. It was no longer 1949, when the Soviets still had a massive tank army in central Europe, and most of Western Europe was in rubble from World War II. Despite today’s hype of a resurgent Russian threat, Russia still has a GDP roughly equivalent to Spain. In contrast, the Europeans combined have a GDP **greater** than the United States. However, Trump is correct that the wealthy **Europeans are free riders** on massive and excessive U.S. defense spending. For example, the mighty German economy only spends one percent of GDP on defense. And despite establishment analysts perennially noting that the only time NATO’s Article V mutual defense clause has been invoked was after the Cold War ended in response to the 9/11 attacks against the United States, European efforts in Afghanistan have been mostly window dressing, and in any major war, the United States would be defending Europe and not vice versa. For most of American history, the country followed the prescription of George Washington and Thomas Jefferson to avoid “permanent” and “entangling” alliances, respectively. Only after World War II did the United States go wild in policing the world via Pax Americana, with NATO being one of the first permanent alliances established, which has now turned into an entangling end in itself. Washington and Jefferson realized that the United States had geographical advantages that other countries could only dream about—two huge ocean moats separating it from the world’s usual zones of conflict—and thus had the luxury of using only temporary alliances to enhance its security. In contrast, historically, Russia has had very poor intrinsic security; because of bad geography and topography on its western flank, it has been invaded many times—by, for example, Poland, Sweden, France, and Germany—the last of which resulted in 25 million dead Russians at the hands of Adolf Hitler. Two primary reasons exist for the failure of post-Cold War democracy in Russia and the rise of the now autocratic Putin: 1) given Russia’s precarious security situation, it may be impossible for a stable democracy to take root there; and 2) the **eastward expansion to Russia’s borders** of NATO, an alliance **hostile** to Russia (think about what the U.S. reaction would be to Russia forming an alliance with Mexico), after promising Russia that it would not happen, **contributed** to the historically aware country’s **attraction** to an ex-KGB authoritarian ruler. Putin is certainly no gem, meddling in the U.S. election, stealing Crimea from Ukraine by armed force, and surreptitiously invading eastern Ukraine; but Ukraine is **very important** within Russia’s security buffer. Although Presidents Barack Obama and Trump both should have taken stiffer action in response to Putin’s election meddling to deter future interference, that has **little** to do with whether the United States still needs to **formally pledge to defend** affluent European nations against a second-rate conventional power, such as Russia. Even in the nuclear weapons area, in which Russia is still a superpower, the British and French nuclear forces provide a deterrent against a conventional or nuclear attack by Russia on Europe. In a post-Cold War world—with the rise of China and $150 trillion in unfunded American liabilities (Social Security, Medicare, and federal and state pensions), including a $22 trillion U.S. national debt—the Europeans need to take over the burden of their own defense so that the U.S. can focus on more important things, such as its own prosperity and thus security. This change would entail the **U.S. withdrawing from NATO** but potentially acting as an **informal balancer of last resort** only in the unlikely event, given the aforementioned wealth disparity, that the balance of power between Russia and Western Europe got out of whack. Despite the histrionics from establishment pundits and even President Trump’s potentially suspect motives, the best U.S. policy is to **withdraw from NATO**, even if it helps the nefarious Putin in the short term. In the long term, the move will **enhance both U.S. and European security** by making American policy more independent and the Europeans more **self-reliant.**

**Commitment trap – makes deterrence failure inevitable.**

Steve **Fetter**, School of Public Policy, University of Maryland, College Park, MD, USA; **and** Jon **Wolfsthal** Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, USA, **’18**, “No First Use and Credible Deterrence”, https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/25751654.2018.1454257

We are witnessing in real time how statements and veiled threats of nuclear use – “fire and fury such as the world has never seen” (Baker and Choe 2017) – can have lasting consequences. Statements by President Trump suggesting a willingness to use nuclear weapons first in a crisis with North Korea has exacerbated the risks of accidental nuclear escalation. But in even calmer times, such vague threats are ill advised. For example, US officials apparently believe that repeatedly stating or demonstrating America’s willingness and ability to use nuclear weapons in response to many kinds of nonnuclear threats can be reassuring. Japan might imagine that references to nuclear weapons use, such as an American president announcing that “all options are on the table” in response to nonnuclear options might deter China or North Korea from initiating a conventional attack and make war less likely. But China and North Korea are well aware that the US has nuclear weapons; there is no need to make explicit threats. Anything that would be interpreted by them – or by Japan – as a direct commitment to make a nuclear threat in response to anything but the use of nuclear weapons create what has been called “a **commitment trap**” (Sagan, 2000). In these cases, the United States and Japan may feel compelled to follow through with a nuclear response, even if they believe it was unwise and might trigger a catastrophic an otherwise avoidable response. If we are fighting and likely to prevail in a conventional war on the Korean peninsula, using nuclear weapons could lead to a move devastating nuclear attack by the North on South Korea and stalemate any conventional conflict. Yet, failing to respond could **expose past commitments** to use nuclear weapons as a **bluff** and the call into question the **credibility** of the **U**nited **S**tates on all security and military matters

**Conventional deterrence low now – NATO is a paper tiger.**

Paul **Taylor**, Editor At Politico Europe and Senior Fellow At Friends Of Europe, 30+ years as a NATO correspondent, **‘19**, "Judy Asks: Is NATO Deterrence a Paper Tiger?," Carnegie Europe, https://carnegieeurope.eu/strategiceurope/78254

Paper tiger? No, more **cardboard elephant**. Thomas Schelling said that deterrence is the power to hurt as bargaining and best held in reserve. NATO has become a collective deterrent rather than a collective defender. On the eve of a short but violent war NATO would be the last place the Americans would turn to. Rather, as NATO continued to talk deterrence, Washington would put together a high-end coalition under its command to do the fighting.

NATO is too **slow of thought**, **decision**, and **foot** to fight a contemporary war. The conduct of war will become far faster with new technologies appearing in a battlespace that will stretch across air, sea, land, cyber, space, information, and knowledge. The Russians understand this and have built a thirty**-day** “wham, bam, thank you Vlad” war machine that would exploit NATO’s slowness of force generation and military mobility. NATO assumes at least **thirty days of warning**. Adaptation is thus buttressing deterrent value by accelerating NATO’s **speed of response** and extending its power to hurt. NATO could fight a short war if it had the warning, or a long war if it was given the chance. Hmmm . . .

**Russia responds to aggression with nuclear strikes---they’ll perceive US capabilities as offensive and miscalculate.**

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Although the risk of **nuclear war** between the United States and Russia may not appear to be as much of a threat as it was during the Cold War, it is still a **looming** possibility. As a matter of doctrine, Russia has articulated its **willingness** to **use nuclear weapons** in response to anything it deems to be an existential threat, stating,

The Russian Federation shall reserve for itself the right to employ nuclear weapons in response to the use against it and/or its allies of nuclear and other kinds of weapons of mass destruction, as well as in the case of aggression against the Russian Federation with use of conventional weapons when the state’s very existence has been threatened.86

Against the backdrop of Russia’s violations of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty and the U.S. announcement that it would walk away from that treaty, as well as the earlier U.S. 2002 withdrawal from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, Russia’s **strategic enhancements** to its nuclear forces—including changes to its intercontinental ballistic missiles and submarine-launched ballistic missiles—appear **particularly problematic**.87

In this context, any changes or perceived changes in U.S. and NATO **nuclear forces**—such as the recent placement of missile defense systems in Eastern Europe and discussion of increasing nuclear force posture—serve to **further jeopardize strategic stability** with Russia.88 Putin has expressed a great deal of concern about U.S. nuclear force developments, which he sees as being targeted at Russia despite U.S. assertions that the focus of its nuclear deterrence is on threats from Iran and North Korea.89 Thus far, nuclear deterrence has largely rested on the strategic stability enabled by the **relative parity** between U.S. and Russian nuclear forces. Any shifts in this balance, coupled with the Russian belief that the United States intends to launch a nuclear attack, may spark Russian fears that it will **lose** its **second-strike** capability, increasing its incentive to **strike first**.90 In a classic security dilemma scenario, U.S. and NATO attempts to **strengthen** their **defensive capabilities**, particularly in the nuclear realm, may **inadvertently appear** to be **offensive**—and therefore threatening—behavior and trigger the outbreak of **conventional** or even **nuclear war**.91 Given Russia’s expressed willingness to use nuclear weapons and Putin’s tendency to interpret any U.S. nuclear force developments as offensive, the United States should be careful to avoid **inadvertently provoking a nuclear response** from Russia while attempting to deter this exact behavior. Risks of **Russian nuclear escalation** might also be prompted by major changes in the balance of **conventional forces**. From this perspective, the ultimate risk associated with enhancing **any form** of U.S. or NATO **military capabilities** is that Russia may feel that it has to respond with a **nuclear attack** if it is unable to **match** U.S. and NATO combined conventional military strength. Therefore, enhancing and expanding capabilities, **even if** they are defensive in nature, may create such a **strong perception of threat** for Russia that it could prompt a **preemptive nuclear attack**.92

**Extended deterrence generates a commitment trap – no capabilities can surmount interest asymmetries.**

**Shifrinson**, Joshua, Prof of IR @ BU, **’17**, “Time to Consolidate NATO?” *The Washington Quarterly,* Vol. 40, Issue 1.

The credibility of the U.S. commitment to its NATO allies has long been unclear. At root, **credibility hinges on the perception in the minds of foreign decisionmakers that a state has sufficient interest** in a given issue that it is willing to pay a certain—potentially large—cost to obtain or secure that objective. Owing to the exorbitant prospective costs of a U.S.–Soviet nuclear exchange during the Cold War, regular transatlantic crises revolved around the question of whether the United States would trade “Boston for Bonn” in the event of a general European war.8 So long as the United States retained sole control of NATO’s decision to escalate past the nuclear threshold, U.S. policymakers faced a real problem in making Soviet policymakers and American allies alike believe that they would willingly take the nuclear plunge if events dictated.9 As Thomas Schelling noted long ago, it is inherently difficult to convince other actors that the United States will commit suicide for other states.10

Still, this problem was at least plausibly manageable during the Cold War.11 Despite the prospective costs, the United States retained a large and pervasive interest in keeping Western Europe’s economic and military potential beyond Soviet control. These objectives, in fact, heavily shaped the United States’ Cold War commitment to European security as the United States moved (1) to defend Western Europe from potential Soviet machinations, and (2) to deter Soviet adventurism against the area in the first place.12 The alternative was clear: if the Soviet Union were to dominate Europe’s war-making strength, it might tip the balance of power against the United States, requiring a potentially ruinous counter-mobilization and global competition that an isolated United States might be unable to win. Geography reinforced this imperative, as failure to deter or defend against a Soviet assault across the inner-German border meant the USSR could quickly overrun the region. The result was a concerted effort by the United States to make its promise to defend its NATO allies as credible as possible by forward-deploying large military force and seeking ways to escalate a contest with the USSR should it prove necessary.13

Today, the situation is reversed. The grand bargain in which Washington kept its finger alone on the nuclear button remains intact; if the United States is to fully honor its treaty commitments, it must ultimately be willing to engage in a nuclear exchange with Russia for the sake of its allies. However, where the United States could plausibly claim to trade Boston for Bonn prior to 1991, **no amount of reassurance can make the promise to trade Toledo for Tallinn credible** today—the stakes of the game are too low.

Alliances function when states decide that their mutual preservation adds to each side’s national security and can be attained at a cost proportional to the benefit. For better or worse, NATO’s post-Cold War enlargement altered this equation by notionally committing the United States to defend a host of states in Eastern Europe of questionable relevance to U.S. security. Indeed, those states most immediately threatened by Russia—Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, followed by Poland—are among the **least important allies** in crude geopolitical terms. The three Baltic states combined accounted for only 0.13 percent of total NATO defense expenditures and 0.26 percent of NATO members’ GDP as of 2016; Poland represented 1.17 and 1.54 percent, respectively.14 American exchange with these states is similarly limited: trade with the Baltic states as a whole came to less than $3 billion in 2015 against over $3.75 trillion in total U.S. trade.15 Baldly stated, these states could disappear without compromising the United States’ economic security or NATO’s military viability. The questionable value of these states alone thus renders the U.S. commitment to their defense **highly contestable**.16 The American public, meanwhile, seems to recognize this very dynamic at some basic level, with 37 percent of U.S. citizens in a 2015 Pew Global Attitudes survey expressing reluctance with aiding a NATO ally threatened by Russia.17

Political geography further compounds NATO’s problems. Not only can countries threatened by Russia be lost without compromising NATO’s ability to defend the rest of Europe, but even an expanded Russia would be poorly placed to dominate the continent. Belarus and Ukraine, after all, lie across any Russian advance into Central Europe, while simply retaining control of a unified Germany affords NATO a defense-in-depth it never enjoyed during the Cold War. Add in the reality that Russia is an economic, political, and military pygmy compared to the Soviet Union everywhere except in the nuclear realm, and the United States’ intrinsic interest in those states most immediately threatened by Russia is substantially less than during the Cold War.18 Simply put, unlike the situation vis-à-vis the Soviet Union, Russian dominance over the Baltic states, Poland, and other new(er) NATO members would not result in the United States’ eviction from Europe and concomitant loss of the region’s economic or military strength.

Military pressures reinforce these dilemmas. Whereas a conventional defense of Western Europe was at least a possibility prior to 1989–1991, distance, reinforcement rates, and force-to-space ratios mean a conventional defense in Eastern Europe is **not a realistic option** today.19 War games by the Rand Corporation highlight the problem in the Baltics context. To be sure, forces stationed in Eastern Europe can serve as a tripwire to deter Russian aggression by seemingly promising to bring NATO members’ collective strength to bear.20 If deterrence fails, however, and short of committing nearly all of NATO’s conventional ground and air power to the theater, even heavily-armored NATO forces can **only slow down a Russian assault** and promise a lengthy East–West conflict. Yet here, NATO again faces real limits to fighting in and around NATO’s East European members.21 Though the United States can threaten conventional escalation, it **cannot credibly commit** to fighting for states of low strategic value if doing so risks a strategic nuclear exchange.

Nevertheless, the United States would undoubtedly face calls for precisely such steps that might lead to nuclear escalation in any losing conventional fight. Moreover, since any sustained effort to defend or retake the Baltics requires NATO conventional operations close to the Russian homeland, it risks attacks (accidental or otherwise) on Russian territory that invite an escalatory response. Russian antiaccess and area-denial (A2/AD) assets used against reinforcements flowing into the region—to say nothing of direct attacks on Poland—may also result in strikes on Russian-owned Kaliningrad, generating a similar escalation problem. In short, NATO cannot readily defend its Eastern flank through conventional means, faces implausibly large strategic risks if it tries, and so confronts an **insoluble credibility crisis**.22 Indeed, that Estonia is now preparing to wage a lengthy guerilla war against a prospective Russian occupying force, while Lithuania is slowly moving to reinstate a military draft suggests **vulnerable states recognize the United States’ credibility dilemma** and are **hedging their security bets** as best they can.23

If anything, the main function of NATO deployments has been to antagonize a Russia that has far more at stake in Eastern Europe for geographic and historical reasons than the United States.24 To be clear, NATO expansion in and of itself did not cause East–West relations to deteriorate.25 However, U.S.-backed efforts to expand NATO eastward and subsequently deploy military forces to the region have been met with Russian pushback—Russian overflights of NATO airspace, diplomatic obfuscation, and military deployments have all accelerated in recent years.26 Assuming NATO efforts in Eastern Europe continue, Russian leaders are prone to respond with further bellicosity that generates further strains in NATO–Russian relations.27 Paradoxically, the resulting insecurity spiral increases the likelihood that efforts to deter Russia will result in deterrence failure.28 Combined with the possibility that a NATO–Russia crisis may see Russia escalate the confrontation in order to de-escalate the situation, the risk of miscalculation is clear.29 Collectively, this situation simultaneously invites Russian actions designed to discredit the United States in the eyes of its allies, gives threatened allies incentives to force events with Russia to tie American hands and deepen the United States’ involvement, and increases the risk of an action-reaction cycle.30

The net result is a dangerous standoff. To deter aggression, NATO relies on a collective security promise ultimately capped by the pledge that the United States will risk its own survival by putting its nuclear forces to use on behalf of its allies. For the Baltic states, Poland, and— potentially in the future—NATO’s other **post Cold War additions**, this pledge is **no longer realistic** on strategic or military grounds. The steps the United States and its allies are taking to reassure the most vulnerable members of NATO, however, increase the odds of a NATO– Russia crisis. Yet if and when a crisis erupts, the clarifying effect of a prospective nuclear exchange is apt to cause **cooler heads** to **prevail** and encourage U.S. efforts to restrain the dogs of war—revealing that American security guarantees to Eastern Europe **were not credible in the first place**. The more the United States continues pretending that its commitment to all NATO members is created equal, the more it risks creating a situation that will reveal the shibboleth of the U.S. commitment.

**The Baltics are logistically indefensible – NATO faces a choice of embarrassing defeat or nuclear escalation.**

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However, in the Baltic region, Russia enjoys significant advantages of time and space, and also of force ratios and in key capabilities such as air defence.32 These advantages might, if Moscow believed the costs and consequences to be manageable, **tempt it** towards military **adventurism**; indeed the Russian armed forces reportedly rehearsed an attack on NATO countries in their most recent western direction strategic exercise, **Zapad 2017**. 33 It is only prudent to seek to deter such an eventuality, and to plan to ensure that it could not succeed.

A commonly discussed scenario in the Baltic context is the so-called **fait accompli**, in which Russia would use forces in the Western MD to mount a **rapid, surprise attack** to seize some or all Baltic territory, confronting NATO with a series of unpalatable choices, such as: a humiliating – and probably for the Alliance, fatal – acceptance of the new facts on the ground; bloody and costly conventional operations to restore the Alliance’s territorial integrity; or nuclear escalation. In such a scenario, Russia would expect to increase its chances of success through three interrelated actions. First, it would conduct operations employing, as a coordinated whole, military means supported by non-military means (e.g. **disinformation and cyber-attacks**) – this approach is at the heart of General Gerasimov’s ‘strategy of active defence’, sometimes known in the West as ‘hybrid’ warfare.34 Second, it would likely contest the freedom of NATO forces to move into and within the conflict zone using, for example cyber-attacks or precision longrange weapons. Russia’s ability to successfully execute a denial strategy with kinetic means, known to the West as Anti-Access/Area Denial (A2/AD), may be a subject of some debate amongst analysts, but its deployment of a substantial number of long-range weapons systems in and beyond the Western MD, could still be expected to at least complicate NATO’s decision-making regarding reinforcement and at worst paralyse it.35 Third, it may use, or threaten to use nuclear weapons in an attempt to further disrupt NATO’s decision-making.36 In this regard, Russia’s deployment of the dual-capable ground-launched cruise missile, 9M729/SSC-8, is a particular concern. These weapons would allow Russia to intimidate European Allies and partners without threatening the US with its intercontinental nuclear capability, greatly raising the potential cost of a counterattack and perhaps fracturing Alliance cohesion.37

In this fait accompli scenario, Russia would move large numbers of forces rapidly into the Baltic states. The RAND corporation’s wellknown series of table top exercises, for example, assumed that 27 Russian manoeuvre battalions from the Western MD and Kaliningrad exclave would be available to carry out such an attack on either Estonia or Latvia.38 Once the limited Baltic and NATO defence had been overcome, these forces would presumably be supplemented or replaced by follow-on-forces from the Western and other MDs. For restoration of territory operations, NATO would need to deploy comparably large forces to the Baltic region. In order to provide a more concrete basis for our consideration of this scenario and our discussions with experts, we assumed that the following forces would need to be moved to/towards the Baltic region:

• The NRF including the VJTF. The VJTF land component includes around 5 000 troops, while the NRF is up to 40 000 strong.39

• A US Corps, comprising at least three mechanised or armoured divisions, perhaps 80 000 -100 000 troops.

• One German, one French, one UK mechanised or armoured division, perhaps 60 000 to 75 000 troops in total.40

Without exception, our interviewees agreed that troop movements at large scale would prove very challenging for the Alliance. In part, this is because NATO is no longer accustomed to moving large numbers of military personnel and equipment and needs to relearn skills that were lost after the end of the Cold War. Even so, the complexity of this task should not be underestimated. Military movement specialists contend that rapidly moving even a brigade is a concern. Moving a division, as in exercise Defender-Europe 20 (described by one interviewee as “changing the paradigm”) is expected to throw up a range of problems that have not even been foreseen during the decades of decline in NATO large-scale collective defence thinking.

In the Baltic region, this problem is compounded by the lack of infrastructure to support large-scale movement – for example, depots, vehicle parks, fuelling facilities – and, more fundamentally, by the simple lack of geographical space. The shortage of space is more acute in some areas than in others. The Suwałki corridor – a 65km-wide piece of land along the border between Lithuania and Poland between the Kaliningrad exclave and Belarus – is a notable bottleneck. The corridor, which is the only land connection between the three Baltic states and the rest of NATO territory, is served by **just two roads** (one with a restricted 7.5 tonne capacity) and a single railway line.

As a further complication, military movements during times of crisis, in particular on the roads, are likely to be impeded by the movement in the opposite direction of large numbers of refugees and displaced persons. Finally, though it is beyond the scope of our report, any deployed armed forces must also be sustained. Provision of fuel, water, food, accommodation and so forth massively complicate the logistics challenges of largescale deployments and place substantial pressure on Host Nation Support (HNS) organisations, whose aim is to relieve deploying forces of these burdens in order that the ratio of combat forces to support forces can be kept as high as possible. During Trident Juncture 2018, for example, the Norwegian Armed Forces provided 35 000 beds, served 1.8 million meals and 4.6 million bottles of water, did 660 tonnes of laundry, and established 50 camps. To achieve this and other sustainment tasks, they concluded contracts worth around EUR €159 million with Norwegian companies.41 According to our interviewees, a key lesson from Trident Juncture is that the HNS requirements were substantially larger than anticipated, and at some points, exhausted the capacity of the supporting troops.

**2NC – AT: Withdrawal is Key**

**Withdrawal is key---it eliminates EU dependence on the US and causes an effective shift towards China.**

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The EU and its member states are not likely to **rebalance towards China** and Asia, but they are **looking** for ways **to increase** European “**strategic autonomy**.” Through **NATO**, the U.S. continues to be Europe’s **main security provider**. Europe needs the U.S. as a counterbalance to Russia. As long as this remains so, the EU and its member states will **remain** geopolitically **much closer to the U.S. than** to **China**. Nevertheless, the European Union is likely to look for ways to **diminish** its economic and financial **dependence** on the United States. EU and U.S. interests are often aligned but not always, and from a European point of view the U.S. is **less dependable** as a long-term partner than it used to be. In my view, EU-U.S. tariff tensions are not a crucial issue, but an escalation of U.S.-China geopolitical competition would be. Potential U.S. pressure, at some point in the future, on Europe to decouple economically from China, to end cooperation with China within international organizations, or to participate in military activities directed against China would probably create severe transatlantic tensions.

**2NC – AT: Revisionism – OV**

**Overwhelming theoretical and empirical research confirms our hypothesis. Increasing Russia and China’s status channels behavior into preserving, not overturning the LIO.**

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Dissatisfied with their relative standing in the world, China and Russia are challenging the US-dominated liberal order. China has built and militarized artificial islands in the South China Sea to gain control over a strategic waterway. Russian President Vladimir Putin annexed Crimea from Ukraine and meddled in the 2016 US elections. These recent actions by China and Russia appear to have a common denominator—**the desire to assert their status as global great powers** (Larson and Shevchenko 2019, 198, 202–3). Could US accommodation of Chinese or Russian status ambitions help **channel their behavior in a more constructive direction**?

The rationale for status accommodation is that attempts by established powers to obstruct the rise of a state such as China are apt to provoke a backlash in the form of heightened nationalism, military buildups, or geopolitical rivalry. This is rooted in the psychological insights of social identity theory (SIT), which argues that impermeable status barriers, combined with the perception of unfair treatment and the possibility of change in the status hierarchy, will **motivate a lower-status group to challenge the status quo** (Tajfel 1978a, 1978b; Tajfel and Turner 1979). Steven Ward (2017) argues that the case for status accommodation rests on shaky scholarly ground. Ward contends that scholars who draw this connection (Larson and Shevchenko 2010, 2014b, 2019) have misused the psychological theory and presents an alternative explanation of status competition in international relations (IR), which he claims is more consistent with SIT. In Ward’s version of SIT, impermeable elite group boundaries only affect individuals who try to leave their group for a higher-status one; impermeability does not influence the behavior of groups. Thus, instead of being motivated by anger or hostility at persistent status denial, states pursue geopolitical competition because they have the capability to do so and the international community values advanced weaponry and overseas possessions as indicators of status.

To refute the argument that persistent status denial leads to conflict, Ward discusses “most likely” cases for the IR version of SIT—Germany’s Weltpolitik before World War I and Japanese foreign policy in the interwar period. In neither case, he asserts, was geopolitical competition driven by reactions to status barriers thrown up by the established powers.

Ward’s narrow critique misses the meaning and real-world implications of SIT. Most crucially, he overlooks the psychological dynamics of why lower-status groups choose to challenge the status quo—their frustration and anger over being denied the chance for status advancement, their unfair treatment by society, and the illegitimacy of the status hierarchy. In what follows, we will first present the basic propositions of SIT. We will then highlight several of Ward’s principal misconceptions, errors that could mislead researchers and have disastrous policy implications.

Social Identity Theory Propositions

SIT was developed in the 1970s by Henri Tajfel and his colleagues at the University of Bristol in the United Kingdom to correct for the reductionism of US social psychology, which attributed such intergroup phenomena as prejudice to the characteristics of individuals (Hogg and Abrams 1988, 12– 13). One insight of SIT is that individuals have both a personal identity and a social identity, derived from the social groups to which they belong (Tajfel 1978a, 41–43).

Because a person’s social group membership constitutes part of the self, members want their group to have a “**positively distinctive” identity**. Unfavorable comparisons with a similar reference group **threaten collective self-esteem** and may lead to the adoption of an identity management strategy. The choice of strategy depends on beliefs about the permeability of group boundaries and the legitimacy and stability of the status hierarchy (Tajfel and Turner 1979, 40). If lower-status group members believe that boundaries between social groups are permeable, they may try to “pass” into a higher-status group (Tajfel and Turner 1979, 43)— a mobility strategy. Although Ward insists that mobility is limited to individuals, in his original theoretical statement, Tajfel (1978a, 94) refers to the lower-status group strategy of becoming “more like the superior group,” with the aim of “cultural, social, and psychological assimilation of the group as a whole.” In order for this to take place, there would have to be a “breaking down of the barriers preventing the group from obtaining improved access.” In their analysis of identity management strategies, Blanz et al. (1998, 700) report that there is “no consensus among social identity theorists on the conceptualization of assimilation as either an individual or a collective strategy.”1

In international politics, when states perceive that elite group boundaries are permeable, states seek social mobility through emulation of the values, practices, and norms of the higher-status states in order to be admitted to elite clubs (Larson and Shevchenko 2010, 71–73; 2014a, 38–40; 2014b, 271) or a more prestigious social category such as middle power (Gilady 2018, 113–18).

When the status hierarchy is perceived as secure, that is, legitimate and stable, the lower-status group cannot even conceive of any alternatives to the status quo (Tajfel 1978a, 87). Under these conditions, the lower-status group may reduce unpleasant feelings of inferiority by engaging in social creativity, that is, reinterpreting their situation. A social creativity strategy may (1) identify a new dimension on which the in-group is superior, (2) reevaluate an existing characteristic as positive, or (3) choose an even lower-status group as the target of comparison (Tajfel and Turner 1979, 43). In international relations, social creativity frequently entails reframing a negative characteristic as positive or finding a new dimension on which the state is superior (Larson and Shevchenko 2010, 73). For example, the Chinese Communist Party now celebrates Confucianism as an element of Chinese culture, although Mao Zedong condemned the philosophy as feudalistic. But when the lower-status group begins to regard its position as illegitimate and the status hierarchy as changeable, it may adopt a strategy of social competition (Tajfel and Turner 1979, 45–46). Social competition seeks to “reverse the relative positions of the in-group and out-group on salient dimensions” (Tajfel and Turner 1979, 44). To achieve this goal, social competition “aims to equal or outdo the dominant group in the area on which its claim to superior status rests” (Larson and Shevchenko 2010, 72). Ward (2017, 826) mistakenly claims that the Larson and Shevchenko application of SIT restricts social competition to military and economic competition, but it can assume various forms. For example, during the Cold War, the Soviet Union sought to “catch up and surpass” the United States in economic production, modernization, culture, and standards of living, as well as military power (Larson and Shevchenko 2014a, 39; 2019).

Misconceptions about SIT

Ward’s (2017, 822–23) reason for contending that impermeable group boundaries do not play any role in SIT is that only individuals have the unpleasant experience of being denied the opportunity to join a higher-status group. However, according to SIT, impermeable boundaries cause individuals to identify more strongly with their in-group and to act as group members (Tajfel and Turner 1979, 35; Ellemers 1993; Bettencourt et al. 2001). Ward’s account also downplays the importance of the legitimacy of the status hierarchy, which is central to SIT. Impermeable group boundaries combined with the perceptions of the illegitimacy of the status hierarchy and the possibility of change can **turbocharge** social **competition** (Turner and Brown 1978; Ellemers 1993; Bettencourt et al. 2001). Lower-status groups will **“lash out” at the illegitimacy of their status** (Hornsey 2008, 214; Tajfel and Turner 1979, 45– 46). As Tajfel (1978b, 52) observes, “a combination of illegitimacy and instability would become a powerful incitement for attempts to change the status quo.” The role of illegitimacy in encouraging challenges to the higher-status group distinguishes SIT from alternative explanations. For example, Wohlforth (2009) argues that uncertainty about which state will prevail due to uneven distribution of power **increases the likelihood of status competition**. Renshon (2017, 57–58) argues that states that receive less status than they believe they deserve are likely to take military action because it provides dramatic, visible, and unambiguous evidence of the state’s power and resolve.

Ward (2017, 825–26) claims that Larson and Shevchenko’s interpretation of SIT does not adequately distinguish mobility from competition. However, this assertion stems from misreading the fundamentals of SIT, where social competition clearly refers to seeking relative advantage over the out-group (Turner 1975), not “acquisition of consensually valued attributes,” as Ward asserts. Social competition is a zero-sum game. One group cannot be better unless another is worse (Brown and Ross 1982, 156–57). The higher-status group’s identity is threatened by the challenger, and it will attempt to hold on to its position by any means available (Tajfel 1978, 88; Tajfel and Turner 1979, 38, 45–46; Brown and Ross 1982). Although social creativity does not try to compete directly with the out-group, but merely to win recognition in a different domain, and thus is not subject to zero-sum logic, it may also result in conflict if the higher-status group refuses to recognize alternative criteria for status or the lowerstatus group’s preeminence on that dimension. When this happens, SIT predicts “intense hostility in intergroup attitudes and . . . marked discrimination in intergroup behavior” (Tajfel 1978, 97). Brown and Ross (1982) finds that lower-status group members expressed anger and hostility toward the higher-status group’s belittling of its achievements. In short, “when a group’s action for positive distinctiveness is frustrated, impeded, or in any way actively prevented by an out-group, this will promote overt conflict and hostility between the groups” (Tajfel and Turner 1979, 46).

Ward’s discussion of historical cases does little to strengthen his overall argument since it is not clear why Wilhelmine Germany or interwar Japan are “most likely” cases for SIT. If neither state faced obstacles to its status ambitions before adopting imperialist policies, then by definition SIT is not relevant. Moreover, Ward does not demonstrate that China and Russia are similar to the cases of Germany or Japan in the variables that caused them to engage in geopolitical rivalry. Thus, it is hard to see how one can draw inferences from these two historical cases about the policy implications for dealing with a rising China and a resurgent Russia.

Conclusion and Policy Implications

Ward concludes that the United States should try to convince China and Russia of the high costs or futility of status competition. **SIT and empirical research**, however, suggest that US efforts to frustrate the status aspirations of China and Russia will generate intense frustration and resentment (Deng 2008, 60), resulting in a backlash, analogous to Russia’s reaction to the West’s rejection of its efforts to be accepted as a player after the end of the Cold War, but potentially more dangerous given China’s increased military spending and enhanced naval capabilities (Larson and Shevchenko 2019, 248–51). Rather than trying to impede their efforts to gain increased influence, which could lead to military conflict, SIT implies that the United States should reinforce efforts by Russia or China to achieve status through social creativity in nongeopolitical areas, such as establishing new institutions or clubs, mediating international conflicts, or controlling proliferation. Successful status accommodation should be a continuing process and could involve formal summits, working groups, or strategic dialogues. **Instead of containment, the goal would be social cooperation**, where the United States, Russia, and China acknowledge each other’s achievements or preeminence in different issue areas, specialize in particular issues, or share leadership roles (Larson and Shevchenko 2010, 95; 2019, 249–50). Ward (2017, 831–32) confuses status accommodation with “appeasement” but this is yet another misconception about SIT. In fact, SIT implies that a status accommodation strategy should be supplemented with continuing investments in shaping perceptions of the stability and legitimacy of the status hierarchy to avoid contributing to Russian or Chinese beliefs that they can change their position unilaterally. This means that the United States should preserve its overall military and economic power and alliance networks. It should also ensure international support for its global leadership by resisting unilateralist temptations and by promoting universal rules.

**2NC – AT: Russian Revisionism**

**Russia is status-seeking, not revisionist**

Deborah **Larson and** Alexei **Shevchenko** **14**, “Russia says no: Power, status, and emotions in foreign policy (j.postcomstud.2014.09.003 Communist and Post-Communist Studies ,Vol.47(3-4), p.269-279)

In this essay we outline a theoretical framework for explaining ostensible shifts and vacillation in Russia's foreign policy. Realism would expect Russia to assert its predominance in neighboring areas where it would come into conflict with the United States and China. Liberals would attribute Putin's anti-American stance to his return to authoritarianism and domestic repression and the corresponding need for an external enemy. **A review of Russia's actions since the end of the Cold War,** however, **does not lend support to either power or domestic politics as the main source of variation in Russian foreign policy**. Instead, Russia's stance toward the United States has been strongly influenced by the **degree of external validation** of its self-image as a great power. Russia is **striving for enhanced global recognition** while at the same time retaining its national identity. Russia reacts strongly, at times emotionally, to perceived humiliation and disrespect. We argue that a better understanding of Russia's status concerns is essential not only to understand Moscow's volatile behavior but to encourage its cooperation in global governance. Our theoretical argument derives from social identity theory (SIT) (Hogg and Abrams, 1988, Tajfel, 1978, Tajfel, 1982, Tajfel and Turner, 1979) in social psychology, which argues that social groups strive for a positively distinctive identity and offers hypotheses concerning the identity management strategies used by groups to enhance their relative position. Extrapolating the identity management techniques predicted by SIT to status-seeking in the international arena, we argue that states may enhance their relative standing by imitating more advanced states (strategy of social mobility), trying to displace the higher-ranked state (strategy of social competition), or finding a new arena in which to be superior (strategy of social creativity). Emotions accompanying aggrieved status (in particular anger and vengefulness) can explain the intensity of social competition as well as the breakdown of social creativity efforts. We apply these theoretical insights to Russian status-seeking since the end of the Cold War as a plausibility probe. 1. Explaining Russia's assertiveness What explains Russia's abrupt shifts and prickly sensitivity to alleged slights and insults? Available theoretical explanations account neither for the pattern of changes in Russian policy, nor for the tone of grievance frequently adopted by Russian elites. Russia's increased assertiveness might be viewed as the inception of long-awaited “balancing” against U.S. predominant power. Russia's opposition to U.S. initiatives in the United Nations (U.N.) could be described as “soft balancing,” that is, coalition-building and diplomatic bargaining within international institutions to constrain the dominant power (Layne, 2006). On the other hand, a genuine balancing strategy for Russia would entail competition with the United States for predominant influence in Eurasia while forming an anti-U.S. coalition with China and other non-Western states, as advocated by Russian Eurasianists, but **Russia has avoided commitments** to these states (Tsygankov, 2008, Tsygankov, 2014). **An even more pessimistic interpretation argues that Moscow is trying to overturn the post-Cold War order**, restore its position as a global superpower, and reassert control over its lost empire in a modern guise (Bugajski, 2009, Lucas, 2014). While Russia's takeover of Crimea and its behavior during the 2014 Ukrainian crisis seem on the surface to validate this “offensive realist” reading of Russian foreign policy, Russia's determination to prevent further enlargement of NATO and its demand for a **droit de regard** (historically, an intrinsic aspect of great power status in international politics), should **not be confused with imperial expansionism**. Russia's aspiring for greater regional influence may lead to spoiler behavior, but not full-scale revisionism. Others charge that Russia's assertiveness reflects the “energy superpower” strategy, an effort to use Russia's energy exports as an instrument of power and prestige (Baev, 2008, Goldman, 2008). It is difficult to see how Russian elites could reasonably expect to carry out such a policy, given Russia's greater dependence on the European energy market (for two-thirds of its foreign exchange revenue) than Europe's on Russian gas (about 25 percent of their imports) (Trenin, 2007, p. 107). Relative changes in the market price of oil and gas are imperfectly correlated with Russia's overall stance toward the West. Russia's recent chilly relations with the United States coincide with the emergence of U.S. shale gas, which has lowered the market price of gas (Herszenhorn and Kramer, 2013). Another explanation rooted in the liberal tradition and popular among prominent Russia watchers views anti-Westernism in Moscow's foreign policy as an attempt to distract public attention from the growing centralization of Russia's domestic politics and shift towards authoritarianism, camouflaged as “sovereign democracy” or discourse about national specificity (Shevtsova, 2007, Shevtsova, 2010). Despite his anti-American rhetoric, though, Putin has **continued the policy** of allowing U.S. military and supplies to transit through Russian territory to and from Afghanistan and has cooperated on important geopolitical problems such as removing chemical weapons from Syria and negotiating the future of Iran's nuclear program. A number of scholars have attributed the deterioration of Russian relations with the United States and Europe to Russia's desire to recover its status as a great power and reaction to perceived humiliations by the United States, going back to the 1990s when Russia's wishes on international security issues were ignored (Stent, 2014, Sakwa, 2011, Simes, 2007, Trenin, 2006, Tsygankov, 2008). Building on that insight, we attempt to place Russia's status aspirations within a well-developed theoretical framework from social psychology that relates social groups' desire for status to their strategies for achieving a positively distinctive identity – Social Identity Theory (SIT) (Larson and Shevchenko, 2003, Larson and Shevchenko, 2010; Clunan, 2009). The next section discusses SIT and a typology of strategies by which states can improve their international standing. We also introduce complementary research on emotions evoked by disrespect for status, depending on the target's attribution of responsibility. In the third section, we apply this framework to the Russian elite's 1990s status frustrations. The fourth section analyzes Putin's social creativity strategy, and the fifth discusses Putin's emotional reaction to the U.S. failure to accept Russia as an equal. The sixth section reviews why President Obama's efforts to redress some of Russia's status grievances failed, only to provoke more intense anger from Russia and anti-American rhetoric. 2. Identity, status and emotions According to SIT, social groups strive to attain an identity that is both positive and distinctive ([Tajfel and Turner, 1979](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib110), [Turner, 1975](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib133)). Similarly, states are concerned with intangible needs for positive self-esteem and recognition as well as power and wealth. A group assesses its relative standing through comparison to a reference group, one that is similar but slightly superior ([Brown and Haeger, 1999](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib20)). If the group's standing is inferior on important dimensions, it may decide to pursue an identity management strategy. The group may try to emulate a higher status group (social mobility), compete with it for preeminence (social competition), or establish excellence in a different area ([Tajfel and Turner, 1979](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610#bib110)). Applied to international relations, states may enhance their relative standing by imitating more advanced states, trying to outdo the higher-ranked state, or finding a new arena in which to be superior. To be successful, a strategy of social mobility requires that elite group boundaries be permeable to new members ([Ellemers et al., 1990](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib33), [Tajfel and Turner, 1979](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610#bib110)). If elite group boundaries are impermeable ([Ellemers, 1993](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib32)) and the status hierarchy is perceived as unstable or illegitimate, groups may turn to social competition ([Turner and Brown, 1978](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib134)). Social competition aims at besting the higher-status group in its own domain, striving to be better on some comparative dimension ([Turner, 1975](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610#bib133)). Similarly, states engage in social competition when they strive to have the most destructive weapons, acquire more clients than the other, display advanced weapons in parades, intervene militarily against a weaker power, prevent the other state from achieving particular goals or act as a spoiler to block collective efforts to restore regional stability. If existing status distinctions appear to be legitimately based, or at least durable, groups may try to establish a new area in which to be superior—social creativity. Groups may reevaluate what is ostensibly a negative trait as positive, as in the “gay pride” movement. Or groups may identify a new area in which they are better than the established group ([Lemaine, 1974](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib67)). The concept of “Asian values”—stressing that these states are more harmonious, orderly, and communitarian than the individualistic and materialistic West—is an example of this. States may use social creativity to achieve prestige on criteria other than those conventionally associated with being a great power (military capabilities or economic weight) such as regional leadership, diplomatic influence, economic growth rate, cultural achievements, or norm entrepreneurship. For a social creativity strategy to succeed, the higher-status group must accept the new value dimension as positive and acknowledge that the lower-status group does indeed stand out on this dimension ([Tajfel, 1978](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib108), p. 96–97) The higher-status group is more likely to acknowledge the out-group's accomplishments if it believes that its own position is legitimate and secure (ibid., pp. 89–90). Refusal by the higher-status group to recognize a group's status claims shows disrespect ([Wolf, 2011](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib136)), which is likely to result in an escalation of inter-group competition ([Tajfel, 1978](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610#bib108): 89–90) and increased hostility from the lower-status group ([Brown and Ross, 1982](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib21)). Having one's self-esteem or dignity reduced is humiliating ([Saurette, 2006](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib137)). Reactions to perceived humiliations and slights are likely to exhibit intense emotions. SIT provides a link between individual-level psychological theories of emotion and collectivities such as states. SIT holds that when individuals identify with a group, they experience actions toward the group as if aimed at them personally—similar to emotions experienced when a favorite soccer team wins or loses. Members react emotionally to events that thwart or further group goals ([Sasley, 2011](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib95), [Smith, 1993](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib103), [Smith, 1999](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib104)). Maintaining or improving group status is a fundamental goal. When a group loses status, the emotions experienced depend on the perceived cause of this loss. When the group perceives that its own actions were responsible for loss of status, it will experience shame and embarrassment ([Kemper, 1978](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib54), p. 61). When others are perceived as responsible for loss of status—through humiliation, withholding approval or deference, denial of expected benefits—the group will display anger ([Kemper, 1978](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610#bib54), p. 128). The emotion of anger or irritation often leads to offensive action tendencies against the out-group (designed to harm either verbally or physically in retaliation for injuries to dignity and prestige). Belief that the in-group is strong increases the level of emotion and the likelihood of offensive action ([Mackie et al., 2000](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib76)). Anger is elicited by perception of injustice or illegitimacy. The purpose of an offensive reaction is not merely to deter repeated humiliations in the future, but to restore power and status, to return the situation to a desired state of affairs ([Shaver et al., 1987](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib96); pp. 1077–1078). A lower-status group may experience malicious pleasure or Schadenfreude at the misfortunes or failures of a higher-status group, which is perceived to have mistreated it ([Leach et al., 2003](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib65)). Vengefulness is prompted by others' unfair denial of status, and is intended to restore actors to their rightful positions ([Barbalet, 1998](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib17), p. 136). Unlike anger, which is an acute emotion, vengefulness may endure over an extended period of time, motivating retaliatory action on an occasion far removed from the original provocation ([Mackie et al., 2000](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610#bib76)). The influence of both anger and vengefulness on status-seeking efforts can be illustrated by Khrushchev's desire to get back at the Americans for years of humiliating over flights of Soviet territory by spy planes. When the Soviets shot down a U-2 spy plane less than two weeks before the 1961 Paris summit, Khrushchev decided not to disclose the Soviet downing of the plane, wait for the United States government to come up with a false cover story about the missing plane, and then embarrass Washington by revealing it to be false ([Taubman, 2003](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib112), p. 446, 455, 458). After exposing President Eisenhower's equivocation, Khrushchev demanded a personal apology, ending the summit before it began ([Fursenko and Naftali, 2006](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib35), p. 290). A focus on status-seeking, as well as the emotions accompanying failure to win respect, helps to explain some of the shifts in Russian foreign policy, beginning with the abandonment of Russia's immediate post-Cold War policy of trying to integrate with the West, as we discuss below. 3. Yeltsin's diplomacy: from social mobility to social competition The collapse of the Soviet Union threatened both the value and distinctiveness of Russia's identity. Russia suffered profound internal and external identity crises, exacerbated by the difficulty of adjusting to the rapid decline in its status and loss of its position as a superpower ([Hopf, 2002](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib48), [Trenin, 2002](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib122)). At the root of difficulties in post-Cold War relations between Russia and the West was Russia's self-conception as a great power and the West's refusal to accept that status. In the early 1990s, Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev and other Russian liberals pursued a strategy of social mobility, aspiring to be admitted to higher-status Western clubs such as GATT, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Group of Seven (G-7), and even the North Atlantic Treaty Organization ([CIS, 1992](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib24)). The Clinton administration, however, held off admitting Russia into elite Western clubs until it was a stable, capitalist democracy ([Stent, 2005](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib105), p. 265). The U.S. decision in early 1994 to enlarge NATO to include former members of the Warsaw Pact indicated that Russia would not be admitted into “civilization,” just as it appeared to be playing by the rules ([Aron, 1998](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib3), p. 33). As consolation, Russia was invited into the Partnership for Peace, established in 1994 supposedly as a transition to NATO membership, although it was unlikely that Russia would ever graduate ([Trenin, 2011](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib126), p. 104). Negotiations for Russia's membership were prolonged by insistence that Russia should have a special status, above the other Eastern European states ([Light, 1996](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib68)). Although Russia was a member of the Contact Group on the former Yugoslavia, beginning in August 1995, NATO carried out sustained bombing of Serbian positions in Bosnia over Russia's fervent and loud opposition, prompting heated rhetoric from Boris Yeltsin about igniting “the flames of war in Europe” ([Lynch, 2001](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib74), p. 16). Widespread dissatisfaction with Kozyrev's concessions to the West led to his replacement as foreign minister by Yevgeny Primakov ([Tsygankov, 2006](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib130), pp. 83–84; [Trenin, 2002](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610#bib122), pp. 273–275). From 1996 to 1999, Primakov used “multipolar” diplomacy to restore Russia's status by forming diplomatic partnerships to check the United States, a strategy of social competition ([Pushkov, 1998](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib83), [Pushkov, 2000](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib84)). Primakov tried to mediate on Iraq and Kosovo to establish Russia's centrality as a key player ([Lo, 2002](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib69), pp. 89–90, 107–108, 142). In the end, Primakov's balancing strategy did not restrain the United States from enlarging NATO or carrying out military action against Iraq and Yugoslavia ([Tsygankov, 2006](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610#bib130), p. 106). The use of NATO to bomb Yugoslavia, bypassing the United Nations Security Council where Russia had a veto, was regarded as particularly humiliating ([Baranovsky, 2000](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib16), p. 454–455), marking the end of the strategic partnership between Russia and the West for many Russian elites ([Antonenko, 2007](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib2)). Russian elites were particularly concerned that NATO had abandoned its traditional defensive strategy, asserting the right to carry out military actions outside its area of responsibility in the name of humanitarian intervention ([Torkunov, 2000](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib121)). The change in Russian foreign policy was symbolized by the “Primakov loop” ([Trenin, 2011](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610#bib126), p. 105): when he learned of the Kosovo bombing, Primakov ordered his plane, which was headed toward the United States, to turn around in midair ([Goldgeier and McFaul, 2009](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib38), p. 253). Russians sought to regain respect and to throw the U.S. off balance by sending 200 Russian peacekeepers to capture the airport of Pristina before NATO troops arrived, risking a dangerous military clash between U.S. and Russian soldiers ([Talbott, 2002](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib111), pp. 342–347). At the end of the 1990s, Russian efforts to regain great power status seemed to be doomed to failure, with Moscow viewed as an angry anachronism in world politics, making empty threats. Although Russia was invited to join the G-7 in 1997, largely to mitigate Yeltsin's humiliation over NATO's enlargement, the organization was still “G-7 plus Russia,” because Russia was only admitted to the political side rather than to the conference of finance ministers ([Talbott, 2002](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610#bib111), p. 124, 237). The West declined to accept Russia as a member of the elite clubs of NATO and the EU, although Russians believed that their representatives should be at least co-chairs ([Trenin, 2006](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib123)). In addition to the scope and complexity of economic and political reforms required for Russia to be accepted, social mobility would have entailed Russia's imitation of the higher-status Western states, a humiliating position for a former superpower. To add insult to injury, Russia's image was further damaged by Yeltsin's numerous health problems and frequent erratic behavior fueled by too much alcohol during foreign trips and dealings with foreign dignitaries. As Clinton's former Deputy Secretary of State Strobe [Talbott (2002)](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610#bib111) reveals, U.S. officials sometimes took advantage of Yeltsin's drinking problem to gain more concessions from Russia—perhaps a perfect metaphor for the Russian perception of its relations with the U.S. during the 1990s. By the turn of the millennium, optimistic expectations that Russia would become a partner with the West were replaced with disillusionment and the belief that Russia's interests had been ignored. Contrary to Yeltsin's and others' assumption that Russia would assume the status of a coequal superpower with the United States, Russia was treated by the United States as a defeated state and “junior partner” ([Pushkov, 2007](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib85), [Simes, 2007](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib101)). The gap between Russia's self-image as a great power and its reception by the West evoked anger and frustration among Russian elites. In this case, however, Russia did **not pursue social competition,** but sought to achieve prestige in a different area than geopolitical might. 4. Putin's social creativity Widespread realization of the futility of social competition encouraged the formation of a new foreign policy strategy, one based on a more accurate and realistic assessment of the post-Cold War status hierarchy. Efforts at competing with the United States had been humiliatingly fruitless, only accentuating Moscow's inferiority to Washington. Russia's possession of Soviet status markers such as nuclear weapons and a permanent seat in the U.N. Security Council were increasingly irrelevant in a unipolar world where the United States was able to act unilaterally. Primakov's diplomatic balancing and partnerships with other major powers merely registered Russia's current low standing while failing to generate new sources of Russian prestige and legitimation in the post-Cold War system. In addition to its weak economy and declining military, in contrast to the Cold War, Russia lacked a militant anti-Western ideology that might have attracted followers. In an era of peace between the leading international powers, geopolitical competition (the most visible manifestation of social competition in the past) remained largely subdued ([Jervis, 2002](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib51)). After recovering from the shock of unipolarity and having restored a modicum of economic and political stability in the early 2000s, Russian leaders themselves realized that they did not wish to change the international system but to achieve a higher status position within it. Accordingly, Yeltsin's successor, Vladimir Putin decided to seek status by identifying new areas where Russia could assume a prominent role—a strategy of social creativity. Not surprisingly in light of Russia's stunning decline in the 1990s, Putin's principal foreign policy goal upon his election at the end of 1999 was to restore Russia's great power status ([Hanson, 2004](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib42), [Lo, 2003](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib70), [Mankoff, 2009](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib77), pp. 23–24). Putin seized the opportunity provided by the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks against the United States to reframe Russia's identity as a partner with the West in the war on terror and to align with the United States ([Lo, 2003](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610#bib70), pp. 124–125, 128–129). President George W. Bush and Putin declared their relationship a “strategic partnership.” Russia shared with the United States valuable political and military intelligence about international terrorists, allowed U.S. planes to fly over Russian territory, acquiesced to U.S. military bases in Central Asia, participated in international search and rescue missions, and gave increased assistance to an anti-Taliban force in Afghanistan, the Northern Alliance ([Aron, 2002](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib4)). Before the 2001 November U.S.–Russia summit, Putin privately compared his relationship with Bush to that between Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill during World War II ([Baker and Glasser, 2005](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib12), p. 135). This attempt at becoming a partner with the United States, however, required validation by the United States. 5. Aggrieved status, emotions, and a crisis for social creativity For social creativity to be successful, the dominant power must accept the aspiring state's efforts to attain recognition in a new area. The Bush administration, however, did not regard Russia as an equal partner ([Hanson, 2004](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610#bib42), p. 173; [Shevtsova, 2007](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib98), p. 230), as became apparent with Bush's failure to consult with Putin before invading Iraq, a former Soviet client where Russia had substantial financial stakes ([Balmforth, 2003](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib15)). Instead of showing respect for Russia's status as a regional power, with a droit de regard in the post-Soviet space, the Bush administration supported “color” revolutions in Georgia (2003), Ukraine (2004), and Kyrgyzstan (2005), regime changes that were perceived as humiliating interference in Russia's backyard. The Ukrainian “Orange Revolution,” in particular, was a shock and personal slap on the face for Putin, who had staked his personal reputation on victory for the pro-Russian candidate, only to see the election results overturned as fraudulent by the Ukrainian opposition and the West ([Shevtsova, 2007](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610#bib98), p. 230, 237–238, 240; [Lo, 2008](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib71), p. 94; [Mankoff, 2009](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610#bib77), p. 117, 119, 123; [Judah, 2013](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib52), pp. 84–86). **Putin complained about the lack of respect** showed to Russia, as in December 2004 when he compared the United States to a “strict uncle in a pith helmet instructing others how to live their lives,” and in 2006 when he referred to the United States as wolf “who knows who to eat and is not about to listen to anyone” ([Shevtsova, 2007](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610#bib98), p. 233). In his emotional and bellicose February 2007 Munich address, Putin accused the United States of having “overstepped its national borders in every way,” as evidenced by the “economic, political, cultural, and educational policies it imposes on other nations” ([Putin, 2007](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib86)). At a Victory Day celebration in May 2007, Putin even obliquely compared U.S. policies to those of the Third Reich ([Kramer, 2007a](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib55), [Kramer, 2007b](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib56)). As the literature on status, power, and emotions would predict, emotions of anger and vengefulness associated with not receiving due recognition led to offensive reactions, which were amplified by perceptions of the increased strength of the lower-status party. Russian elites were more confident in making claims to great power status given the increase in the price of oil from $27 a barrel in 2000 to $130 a barrel by mid-2008 ([Stent, 2008](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib106), p. 1092). As the minister of defense Sergei Ivanov wrote in 2006, “Russia has now completely recovered the status of great power that bears global responsibility for the situation on the planet and the future of human civilization” ([Tsygankov, 2008](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib131), p. 49). Russia reacted harshly to U.S. plans to deploy elements of its missile defense system, ostensibly directed at Iran, on Polish and Czech territory in 2007—including threatening to withdraw from the 1987 Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces Treaty—in part because the missile interceptors could be the basis for a larger system undermining Russia's nuclear deterrent ([RFE/RL Newsline, 2007](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib90)) but primarily because Russia had once again been excluded from a major European security decision, contrary to the prerogatives of a great power ([Economist, 2007b](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib114), p. 70). The Russians felt that the United States had violated its commitment not to deploy significant conventional military forces on the territories of states recently added to NATO, part of the 1997 Russia-NATO Founding Act. The choice of the Czech Republic and Poland as the site of the initial deployment heightened Russian ire over NATO's enlargement ([Pikayev, 2009](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib82), [Slocombe, 2008](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib102)). Nevertheless, at the June 2007 G8 summit in Heiligendamm, Germany, Putin offered to allow the United States to use the radar at Azerbaijan as part of a joint missile defense system, adding a newly built radar to the offer at a follow-up summit with Bush in Kennebunkport, Maine ([Economist, 2007a](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib113)). The United States rejected Putin's offer of cooperation on the grounds that the radars were not technically suitable. A month later, Putin suspended Russian cooperation with the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty ([Kramer and Shanker, 2007](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib60)) and in August, he resumed regular strategic bomber patrols over the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans ([Kramer, 2007a](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610#bib55), [Kramer, 2007b](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610#bib56)). Russia's **desire to assert its comeback** on the international stage was **encapsulated in the Russia–Georgia War** ([Sherr, 2009](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib97), pp. 204–207). On August 7, Georgian President Mikhail Saakashvili launched an artillery attack followed by ground invasion of the South Ossetian capital of Tskhinvali, killing several Russian peacekeepers. Saakashvili had hoped to seize South Ossetia as a fait accompli, before Russia had time to react. Russian troops subsequently occupied important towns of Georgia, apart from South Ossetia, and the Russian Air Force destroyed much of Georgia's military infrastructure to teach the Georgians a lesson ([Trenin, 2011](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610#bib126), p. 30). Putin felt that Russia's status as a great power was threatened. Putin intervened in Georgia primarily to reassert Russia's predominant interest in the area, which was endangered by the possibility of imminent membership for Georgia and Ukraine in NATO. Saakashvili's foreign policy priorities were for Georgia to join Western security and economic structures and to reassert control over the breakaway provinces of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Viewing Saakashvili as a model democratic reformer (even after his November 2007 crackdown on the political opposition), the Bush administration encouraged his efforts to restore Georgian territorial integrity instead of acting as an honest broker in resolving the “frozen conflict” ([Cooley and Mitchell, 2009](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib28)). In April 2008, the NATO Summit at Bucharest promised Ukraine and Georgia eventual membership in NATO (not a membership action plan), although Putin had joined the summit for the first time to express his objections in person, informing Bush that this was a “red line” for Russia ([Cooper et al., 2008](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib29), [Asmus, 2010](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib6), pp. 134–135). The NATO-Bucharest decision, a compromise between the French-German and U.S. positions, achieved the worst of both worlds, angering the Russians without satisfying the Ukrainians or Georgians ([Trenin, 2011](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610#bib126), p. 28). In addition to anger, vengefulness was an important factor in Russia's response to Georgia's attempt to take over the disputed provinces. In February 2008, the West had recognized Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence without UN approval, an action that Putin had strongly opposed. Russian diplomats had drawn comparisons between Kosovo and the Georgian provinces of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. If Kosovo could be independent, why not the breakaway provinces of Georgia ([Antonenko, 2007](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610#bib2))? Georgian President Saakashvili was also aware of the parallels, cautioning EU leaders and U.S. officials that Russia was likely to retaliate against Georgia if Kosovo were allowed to secede from Serbia without Russian approval, but Western diplomats assured him that Russia was bluffing ([Asmus, 2010](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610#bib6), p. 100). Shortly after the Georgian war, Russia recognized South Ossetia and Abkhazia as independent states, although none of the other states in the Commonwealth of Independent States followed suit, including even Belarus. Russia's **emotional response** to Georgian defiance **was costly.** Although Russia easily won the war, foreign capital flight damaged the Russian economy, as the benchmark Russian Trading System index fell by nearly fifty percent ([Kramer, 2008a](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib57), [Kramer, 2008b](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib58)). From the Georgian war onward, Russia would no longer tolerate further expansion of NATO or expansion of U.S. influence into states of the former Soviet Union. Russian President [Medvedev (2008)](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib78) affirmed Russia's “privileged interests” in the post-Soviet space. As noted by [Lukyanov (2012)](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib73), for Russia the war “was something approaching psychological revenge after a 20-year geopolitical retreat, proof that Moscow can say no.” 6. Anger mismanagement The Obama administration's policy to “reset” relations with Russia, inaugurated in February 2009, was based in part on redressing injured Russian prestige and national pride. The term “reset” implied that the Obama administration was jettisoning aspects of President Bush's foreign policy that were most objectionable to Russia, such as wooing countries in the post-Soviet space or placing missiles and radars in former members of the Warsaw Pact, while cooperating with Russia on issues of common interest. For Russian leaders the **major appeal of the “reset” policy was the promise of a more equal relationship** with Washington. Since its possession of a sizable nuclear arsenal is one of the few remaining areas where Russia and the U.S. are equals, the Russian side was pleased that Obama initiated negotiations for a new START agreement, signed in spring 2010 and promptly ratified by the U.S. Senate and Russian Duma ([Goldgeier, 2009](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib37), p. 23). START negotiations emerged as an important vehicle for restoring Russia's status as at least a “quasi-superpower” ([Economist, 2009](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib115), p. 23). Russian leaders reciprocated by agreeing to open up an air corridor, allowing up to 4500 flights per year of U.S. troops and equipment to Afghanistan. By spring 2011 twenty percent of American cargo and fifty percent of U.S. troops transited through Russia ([Economist, 2011](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib118)). The Obama administration refrained from directly criticizing Russian treatment of dissidents or human rights ([Baker, 2009a](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib9)). The Russian leadership was also relieved by Obama's September 2009 decision to put on the back burner another humiliating issue—deployment of the U.S. missile defense systems in Eastern Europe–in favor of a four-phased system in which the first phase would consist of smaller missile interceptors based on ships and aimed at Iranian missiles ([Baker, 2009b](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib10)). During her July 2010 tour of the former Soviet states, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton emphasized that the United States would maintain good relations with Russia as well as with Georgia, Ukraine, and Azerbaijan ([Economist, 2010b](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib117)). **Russian foreign policy moved in a more constructive and pragmatic direction**, as reflected in improvement of previously tense relations with Poland and the Baltics, settlement of the marine border with Norway, greater reliance on soft power instruments in its relationship with post-Yushchenko Ukraine, and presentation, as Medvedev termed it, of “a smiling face to the world” ([Interfax, 2010](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib49)). In addition to appreciation of the status accommodation aspects of the “reset,” Moscow's cooperation was motivated by recognition of the dangers of dependence on natural resource exports and the need to diversify, a realization that was brought home by the 2008–2009 financial crisis, and a goal that would require cooperation with the West to obtain foreign investment and technology. Cooperation between Russia and the United States reached its height in spring 2010, when Obama and Medvedev signed the New START Treaty in Prague ([Baker and Bilefsky, 2010](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib11)); U.S., French, and British troops were invited for the first time to participate in Moscow's annual May 9 Victory Day parade to commemorate victory over Nazi Germany in World War II ([Economist, 2010a](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib116); [Barry, 2010](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib18)); and Russia reached agreement with other permanent members of the U.N. Security Council on the most severe sanctions yet against Iran's nuclear program. Moscow later canceled the sale of advanced S-300 ground-to-air missiles to Iran ([Sanger and Kramer, 2010](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib138)). Despite these promising beginnings, in 2011–2012 the reset entered a period of diminishing returns, largely because the policy was focused on obtaining agreements on particular issues, without connection to a larger vision for the relationship. As observed by Thomas Graham (2011), a former senior director for Russia in the Bush White House, the problem with the “reset” was that it never had a coherent answer for “what the two countries should aspire to now so as to foreclose a return to dangerous geopoliticl rivalry and hold open the promise of mutually advantageous strategic partnership,” ([Russia Profile Experts, 2011](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib91)). Aiming to assuage some of the symptoms of Russia's anger and frustration, the reset **ultimately failed to address the root cause**s of Moscow's grievances over its loss of status. As a recent study of U.S.–Russian relations notes, “a central Russian objective has been to regain its status as a great power and be treated as an equal by the United States—a goal that was constantly frustrated” ([Stent, 2014](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib107), p. xi). In June 2011, the NATO-Russia Council, created in 2002 for joint projects and cooperation, rejected Moscow's idea of a joint anti-missile system in favor of two separate systems linked by information exchange. To add to the humiliation, the U.S. and its NATO allies turned down Russia's demands for legally binding guarantees and technical limitations to ensure that future European ABM systems would not be directed against Russia ([Ivanov, 2011](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib50)). In a replay of the 2007 dispute, Russia reacted angrily to Obama's decision to proceed with a European missile defense system that would entail putting missile interceptors in Romania and Poland, including warning of a possible preemptive strike against missile defense sites ([Clover and Dyer, 2012](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib26)). In his May 9, 2012 speech commemorating the anniversary of victory over Nazi Germany, President Putin, elected in March, declared that Russia had “a great moral right” to the respect of other nations, because of its role in defeating Nazi Germany. He informed President Obama that he would not be attending the G-8 summit meeting that the U.S. president had moved to Camp David—so that Putin would not feel excluded from the subsequent NATO summit in Chicago—because he was needed in Moscow to help select the new cabinet (the responsibility of Prime Minister Dmitri Medvedev) ([Cooper and Barry, 2012](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib30)). This was a snub, perhaps in retaliation for Obama's failure to attend the Asia–Pacific Economic Cooperation meeting in Vladivostok. Humiliated and angered by the 2011–2012 domestic protests accompanying Putin's return to presidency, Putin's team once again invoked the threat of Washington-sponsored “color revolutions,” at one point directly blaming the U.S. Department of State and Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton for sponsoring the opposition movement ([Anishchuk and Gutterman, 2013](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib1); [Trenin, 2013a](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib127)). Even the triumph of Russia's 2012 admission into the WTO, after two decades of negotiations, was marred by Russian status grievances. Russian political circles were predictably enraged by the decision of the U.S. Congress to replace the obsolete Cold War-era Jackson–Vanik amendment (which conditioned trade relations with the USSR on freedom of Jewish emigration) with the December 2012 Sergey Magnistky Rule of Law Accountability Act (which denied visas to Russian officials implicated in “gross human rights violations” and froze their U.S. assets), viewing it as intolerable interference in their domestic affairs ([Herszenhorn, 2012](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib43)).[1](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "fn1) According to Alexei Pushkov, chair of the Russian Duma's international affairs committee, the Magnitsky Act reflected American “pure double standards.” Russia was castigated for its human rights practices while authoritarian partners of the U.S., including China, continued to get a pass from Washington ([Weir, 2013](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib135)). Russia responded tit for tat, first with a bill targeting political nongovernmental organizations receiving financial support from the United States and prohibiting U.S. adoptions of Russian orphans. The latter provision was ostensibly designed to protect Russian children from abuse by American parents, but attracted much opposition within Russia, including from some members of Putin's cabinet ([Economist, 2013](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib120)). A day after the United States released the name of Russian officials subject to sanctions Russia provided its own list of eighteen current and former U.S. officials who would be barred from entering Russia. A spokesperson for the Russian Foreign Ministry, Alexander Lukashevich, commented that the United States must realize that it cannot conduct its relationship with Moscow “in the spirit of mentoring and undisguised diktat” ([Barry, 2013](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib19)). Putin's resentment over the West's use of Russia's March 2011 abstention, rather than a veto, of a UN SC resolution 1973, allowing the NATO air campaign against Gaddafi's troops in Libya, to promote “regime change” in that country contributed to Russia's falling out with the West over the civil war in Syria, which broke out in 2012 ([Economist, 2012](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib119)). Tellingly, Putin initially signaled his willingness to cooperate with the U.S. in stopping the war and leading the post-conflict peace process, but insisted that this should be a cooperation of equals, a condition which Washington, despite the reset rhetoric, refused to accept ([Trenin, 2013b](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib128)). By saying “no” to Western intervention in Syria and by supporting Syrian President Bashar al-Assad in his military campaign against rebels Putin aimed at restoring Russia's status as an “indispensable power” in global politics and earning the respect of China and other rising powers ([Baev, 2013](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib8)). Russian status concerns and related emotions were prominently on display in the summer 2013 Russo-American spat over the fate of Edward Snowden, a former National Security Agency contractor, who fled the United States to Hong Kong and later to Moscow after exposing the U.S. government's wide-ranging communications surveillance programs. While attempting to avoid damaging relations with Washington (Putin publicly demanded that Snowden stop leaking information damaging to the U.S. national security as a pre-condition of his stay in Russia), the Russian side ultimately could not afford to succumb to American pressure to extradite Snowden due to considerations of prestige. The decision to grant Snowden temporary political asylum in Russia was influenced by “Russian irritation at the U.S. presumption that the American justice system's demands must be honored but that Washington is free to criticize and impugn the activities of Russian courts and law enforcement” ([Gvosdev, 2013](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib41)). The Russian response was also in part driven by vengefulness. Putin could not resist the temptation to embarrass the U.S. by exposing the hypocrisy of American democratic rhetoric and by positioning Russia as a genuine protector of civil liberties. As Putin declared, tongue-in-cheek to the laughter and applause of his audience in May 2014, “Russia is not a country that extradites fighters for human rights” ([Kremlin.ru, 2014](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib61)). In the end, Russian (and American) status concerns wound up contributing to a new low point in the relationship, leading to the U.S. decision to cancel the Obama–Putin meeting originally planned at the sidelines of the September 2013 G-20 summit in St. Petersburg, the first time an American president had called off a bilateral summit in decades ([Baker and Meyers, 2013](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib14)). An opportunity for cooperation with the United States, however, unexpectedly presented itself when it became clear in September 2013 that the Obama administration faced the likelihood of failing to secure congressional authorization for punitive military strikes against Syria. Russian diplomats seized the moment by promoting a plan to place Syria's chemical weapons under international control, thus helping the U.S. to save face by embracing a diplomatic solution to the crisis and at the same time enhancing Russia's prestige as a world power broker ([Baker and Gordon, 2013](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib13)). This episode of social creativity, however, could not prolong the life of the “reset” relationship. In addition to halting further expansion of NATO, since the 2008 war with Georgia Russia has resisted the extension of the European Union's economic domain to the former Soviet sphere. Moscow's distrust of the European Union was further provoked by the European Union's Eastern Partnership Program, which was presented as a “civilizational choice” for post-Soviet states—a characterization likely to be regarded as an insult by Moscow. At the same time, Putin, who had previously included Russia within the European cultural sphere, started positioning Russia as a unique civilization, a genuine repository of traditional Christian values in contrast to the moral decadence of contemporary Europe ([Merry, 2014](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib80), [Aron, 2014](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib5)). Moscow applied pressure on Moldova, Armenia, and Ukraine not to sign association and free trade agreements with the EU (which could disrupt those countries' economic ties with Russia) in favor of joining a Russia-led customs union, the first step in Putin's ambitious project for a Eurasian Union, an economic and civilizational project separate from the West ([Herszenhorn, 2013](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib44)). As the Russian political class was basking in the triumph of the successful 2014 winter Olympics games in Sochi—the most expensive Olympic Games in history, designed to celebrate Russia's resurgence as a great power and Putin's personal vanity project ([Herzenhorn, 2014](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib46))—the biggest crisis in Russia's relationship with the West since the end of the Cold War struck. When the Ukrainian president Viktor Yanukovich, who had earlier declined to sign the EU partnership agreement under Russian pressure, was toppled by the street protest movement and fled in the evening of February 21, 2014, Putin immediately perceived his ouster as yet another “orange revolution.” He treated it not only as a geopolitical threat (since it raised the possibility of Kiev's reneging on the 2010 agreement that allowed Russia to station its fleet in Crimea until 2042), but also as a personal humiliation, which this time, a full decade after the first one, he was determined not to tolerate. While Russia undoubtedly had contingency plans for sudden instability in Ukraine, as some Western analysts pointed out, Putin's subsequent behavior can **better** be **explained as** “fundamentally driven by psychological impulses and **highly emotional responses**” to the crisis ([Mendelson and Harvey, 2014](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib79)), an “angry and ad hoc” reaction to the situation in Kiev ([Sakwa, 2014](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib93)). The presence in the provisional Ukrainian government of several ultra-nationalists (a few of whom had publicly praised Nazism and embraced the legacy of Stepan Bandera, the Ukrainian World War II nationalist leader who fought with the Nazis against the Soviet army) and their immediate call for rescinding the status of Russian as a second language, later vetoed by the interim president, along with other anti-Russian measures, gave Putin the ground to denounce the new provisional regime as illegitimate, extremist, Russophobic, and pro-fascist ([Kramer, 2014](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib59)). Within a week, Russian special operations forces and troops secured control over strategic locations across the peninsula, while the Crimean parliament, partially disbanded and partially voting in the presence of the masked gunmen who were under control of Sergei Aksyonov, alias “Goblin,” known for his connections with the mafia, declared independence from Ukraine and scheduled a referendum on joining Russia ([Reuters, 2014](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib89)). Moscow first manipulated and then was quick to recognize the fraudulent results of the referendum. On March 18, 2014, Putin and Crimean leaders signed a treaty of accession making Crimea and the city of Sevastopol (the location of the Russian Black Sea Fleet) parts of the Russian Federation ([Meyers and Barry, 2014](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib81)). Putin's address to the country's political elite before signing the accession treaty was emotional and defiant in the face of the threat of Western economic sanctions and Russia's expulsion from the G-8. Putin emphasized that after the Soviet collapse, the Russian people became “one of the biggest—if not the biggest—divided nation in the world” and pledged to protect the rights of compatriots abroad. He appealed to Russian history, pride, and glory, but also to shame over losing the former superpower status by calling the loss of Crimea after the collapse of the Soviet Union an “outrageous historical injustice” which Russia had to accept because it was simply too weak to protect its interests. He scorned the West for accusing Russia of violating international law and invoked the right of nations to self-determination to justify Russia's actions in Crimea. If Ukraine could secede from the USSR and Kosovo Albanians were permitted by the West to separate from Serbia, then citizens of Crimea had the right to join with Russia. The Russian president also revisited several themes of his 2007 Munich speech, lamenting the loss of stability in international politics after the end of bipolarity and accusing the United States of attempting to rule by force. He recited the list of state grievances over not being treated as an equal partner, ranging from the enlargement of NATO and the 1999 bombings of Belgrade to the threat of sanctions over Crimea and continuing restrictions on Russian import of technologies and exports. In short, in his view, Western behavior constituted a return to the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth century policies of containment, which Russia could no longer tolerate. By recognizing the interim Ukraine government, which quickly emerged after the departure of Yanukovich, the United States and the EU had crossed a “red line.” “Russia found itself in a position it could not retreat from. If you compress the spring all the way to its limit, it will snap back hard.” Like other countries Russia had its “own national interests that need to be taken into account and respected” ([Putin, 2014](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib87)). After taking over Crimea, Russia engaged in spoiler behavior designed to humiliate and destabilize Ukraine by providing military, economic, and political support to the pro-Russian separatists in the Ukraine's south-east, the majority of whom were Russian citizens, led by two former FSB (Federal'naya Sluzhba Bezopasnosti, the successor to the KGB) officers, Alexander Borodai and Igor Girkin (with the nickname Strelkov), who later resigned ([Buckley, 2014](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib22)). Russia's overarching goal was probably to force the Ukrainian authorities to accept federalization of the country, which would have weakened Kiev's control over the southeast and eliminated the very possibility of future Ukrainian membership in NATO ([Fenenko, 2014](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib34)). Moscow remained defiant when faced with the threat of Western economic sanctions, Russia's de-facto expulsion from the G-8, and international outrage over the July 17, 2014 destruction of Malaysian Airlines Flight 17 with 298 passengers on board over eastern Ukraine—a tragedy attributed to the pro-Russian separatists' inability to distinguish between a military target and a civilian passenger jet, but also potentially implicating Russia, which was suspected of delivering powerful anti-aircraft missiles to the rebels ([MacFarquhar, 2014](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib75)). With the remnants of Russia's social creativity supplanted by what one journalist dubbed “the ideology of ressentiment” over the loss of “imperial greatness” ([Remnick, 2014](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib88), p. 61), U.S.–Russian relations increasingly appeared to be an escalating rivalry, analogous to the nineteenth century Great Game between Russia and Britain for influence over Central and South Asia—except for the asymmetric character of the twenty-first century version—with the U.S. and Russia competing for influence over such states as Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia ([Trenin, 2014](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib129)). According to historian [Geyer (1987, p. 205)](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib36), the Great Game for Russia was motivated by considerations of prestige and the desire to at least appear to be a great power. [Karaganov (2014)](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib53), an influential Russian foreign policy expert, suggested a more troubling historical analogy to a Western-imposed “velvet-gloved version of the Versailles policy” which “by pushing Russia into the periphery of global politics” had unleashed “a kind of Weimar syndrome in Russia, a great nation whose dignity and interests were trampled underfoot.” 7. Conclusion Although the danger of military conflict among major powers has dramatically receded in the post-Cold War era, states continue to compete for status and prestige. The desire for status is particularly acute for Russia, which suffered a catastrophic decline in its position in the 1990s and has viewed itself as a great power for centuries. Consistent with psychological research and theory, Russia responded emotionally to perceived humiliation. The Russian takeover of Crimea and the 2014 Ukrainian crisis illustrate the risk that continued Russian bitterness over its loss of great power status could lead to a return of geopolitical competition. As [Deng (2008, p. 292)](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0967067X14000610" \l "bib31) observes in his study of Chinese status concerns, “withholding due status recognition based on zero-sum power politics logic and negative stereotype-driven categorization is a recipe for a traditional great-power struggle.” **Perceived humiliation and status dissonance better account for twists and turns in Russia's relationship with the West than more conventional power or interest-based explanations.** Russia was obstructionist and vocal in opposing U.S. policies in the late nineties, when Russia's economy was on the verge of collapse. Since late 2011, Russia has been assertive and anti-Western, despite lower energy prices and lessened European dependence on Russian gas. Contrary to the idea that Russia's policy reflects cold calculation of consistent national interests, Putin's emotional rhetoric and defiant reaction to Western criticism discourages needed foreign investment in Russia's economy. Periods of U.S.–Russian cooperation have coincided with efforts by U.S. policymakers to show respect for Russia as an equal partner, as in the initial phase of the reset policy. At the same time, Russian elites are hypersensitive, and may overreact to perceived insults that were not intended as such. Domestic politics within the United States is a complicating factor, as the Obama administration was unable to prevent passage by Congress of the Magnitsky Act. The literature on identity, status and emotions suggests that isolation and exclusion of emerging great powers will evoke anger, vengefulness, and competition to supplant the dominant powers. Continued indifference to Russia's great power aspirations, especially in the former Soviet space, will encourage Russian elites' sense of injury and humiliation, possibly leading to further conflict.

**Deterrence theory wrong – Russia has an idiosyncratic culture that prohibits leaders from publicly displaying weakness. Pro deterrence theorists wrongly universalize western psychology.**

William **Ruger**, Professor of IR @ CUNY, **and** Rajan **Menon** War and Peace Studies @ Columbia, **5-11**-20, “NATO enlargement and US grand strategy: a net assessment,” *International Politics,* Vol 57, Iss 3. Springer.

Holbrooke’s attitude is instructive because it marked the thinking of other advocates of NATO expansion (and still does). They believed that Russians, especially the democrats among them, could not truly believe that an enlarged NATO posed a threat to their country. Stated diferently, **US officials** committed to expanding the alliance seemed to **believe that the only reasonable way Russia could view their policy was the way that they themselves viewed it.** In consequence, they regarded Russian objections as, in the main, rhetoric designed for domestic consumption, the result of misunderstanding of US intentions, or simple paranoia. They also believed that Russia’s leaders could be won over by a variety of means, whether economic aid and inclusion in the Partnership for Peace or inclusion in security forums such as the Russia–NATO Consultative Council, and that personal chemistry between Russian and US presidents, notably Boris Yeltsin and Bill Clinton’s bonhomie, would calm Moscow’s anxiety.

This view discounted the possibility that Russian leaders would regard the alliance’s movement eastward toward their country’s borders as provocative—and disingenuous given US assurances that the Cold War was over and that Russia was a partner. In an October 1993 cable that was subsequently declassifed, Yeltsin insisted to Clinton that ‘the spirit of the treaty of the fnal settlement with respect to Germany [i.e., the deal under which a unifed Germany became part of NATO], signed in September 1990, especially its provisions that prohibit[ed] the deployment of foreign troops in the eastern lands of the Federal Republic of Germany, preclude[d] the option of expanding the NATO zone into the east’ (National Security Archive 1993). The question of whether the USA pledged not to expand NATO remains disputed. Jack Matlock (quoted in Zelikow 1995), the USA’s last ambassador to the Soviet Union, insists that ‘we gave categorical assurances to Gorbachev back when the Soviet Union existed that if a **united German** were able to stay in NATO, NATO would not be moved eastward.’ Philip Zelikow (1995), who served on the National Security Council from 1989 to 1991, disagrees, contending that the USA provided merely the assurance that the alliance’s military forces and equipment would not be moved into the territory of the German Democratic Republic (East Germany). Academics remain divided on the matter (MccGwire 1998; Shifrinson 2016; Kramer 2009; Sarotte 2014).

In the end, however, **it does not matter whether the George H.W. Bush administration ever gave Soviet president Mikhail Gorbacheva binding**, let alone written, **commitment** not to enlarge NATO in exchange for Moscow’s cooperation on German unification. The Russians believed that they had been given an assurance and that the United States later reneged—at a time when Russia was beset by weakness, unable to push back, and did not pose any military threat to Europe. Opponents of NATO expansion had warned that Russia’s leaders would interpret expansion precisely that way and would be unmoved by the argument that it was needed to provide security to and foster democracy in the lands to NATO’s east (Mandelbaum 1996, 1997; GovInfo 1997). After all, Russia was scarcely in a position to attack its western neighbors. During the 1990s, its economy contracted by one-third (Reddaway and Glinski 2001; Rutland 1997) and, in the words of a leading expert on the Russian military, the country ‘was left with a shambles of an army and a totally confused military doctrine’ (Felgenhauer 1997). As for promoting democracy, it would surely have made sense to apply the underlying logic—namely that military alliances advance democracy and that the latter fosters peace—to Russia, by far the most consequential of the ex-communist countries in Europe. And, as Clinton and his foreign policy team understood, during the Yeltsin years Russia’s democratic experiment was under siege from both the communists (led by Gennady Zyuganov) and the nationalists (such as Vladimir Zhirinovsky), both unrelenting critics of NATO expansion (Berger 2005). There was, to be sure, the prospect of a resurgent Russia, but including it in NATO would have been one way to prevent that outcome from threatening Eastern Europe. That, after all, was the reasoning behind bringing West Germany into NATO following World War Two and a unifed Germany into NATO following the Cold War.

Declassifed US documents demonstrate that Russian leaders desired a post-Cold War European order that would include them, and not as a mere adornment. This vision underlay Mikhail Gorbachev’s 1989 proposal to the Council of Europe for restructuring Europe to create ‘a common home.’ Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russian leaders regarded NATO expansion and Russia’s integration into a pan-European security order as incompatible. As Yeltsin explained to Clinton, even reform-minded politicians in Russia would regard NATO expansion.

as a sort of neo-isolation of our country in diametric opposition to its natural admission into the Euro-Atlantic space…. We have a diferent approach, one that leads to a pan-European security system, an approach predicated in collective (but not on the basis of bloc membership) actions…. Security must be indivisible and based on pan-European security structures (National Security Archive 1993).

Unsurprisingly, Russian leaders regarded NATO enlargement not as a step toward inclusiveness but rather as a repudiation of it. James Collins, chargé d’afaires at the US embassy in Moscow and later ambassador to Russia, wrote in a cable to Secretary of State Warren Christopher in 1993—prior to the latter’s visit to Moscow— that the Russians had made clear their fear that NATO expansion would exclude them and therefore strategically bifurcate Europe in a new manner. ‘No matter how nuanced,’ Collins noted, ‘if NATO adopts a policy which envisions expansion into Central and Eastern Europe without holding the door open to Russia, it would be universally interpreted in Moscow as directed against Russia and **Russia alone**— or “Neo-Containment” as Foreign Minister [Andrei] Kozyrev recently suggested’ (National Security Archive 2000).

Russia’s leaders made their opposition to NATO enlargement unambiguous from **1991 onward**. In 3 July of that same year, as the Soviet Union was unraveling, a senior delegation from the Russian Federated Soviet Socialist Republic (RSFSR)— which, once the Soviet state dissolved, became the independent Russian Federation—wrote in a memorandum to Boris Yeltsin, who was then the RSFSR’s president, that it had stressed to senior NATO ofcials that ‘expanding NATO would be seen negatively in the USSR and the RSFSR’ and that the alliance’s secretary general, Manfred Woerner, had assured his Russian interlocutors that he and the NATO Council were opposed to expansion (National Security Archive 1991). But as discussions about expansion nevertheless proceeded within the alliance, Yeltsin made his objections clear during a December 1993 meeting with Woerner (Chicago Tribune 1993). In March 1995, Yeltsin’s foreign minister, Kozyrev, a liberal reformer whom Europe and the USA considered a staunch advocate of partnership with the West, remarked that ‘whatever one may think of NATO, it’s still a military alliance that was created when Europe was divided…. It should be replaced by a new model based on comprehensive security.’ Kozyrev, echoing Gorbachev, added archly that ‘the gap between NATO’s very active moves to studying potential enlargement and its passive attitude in developing this new model of comprehensive security is a very wide one, and it could be dangerous’ (quoted in Whitney 1995).

Later that year, Russian president Boris Yeltsin, true to form, used blunter phraseology. In criticizing NATO’s frst major out-of-area endeavor, Operation Deliberate Force, which launched airstrikes against Bosnian Serb redoubts as part of the efort to end Bosnia’s civil war, he called for a European (including Russia) solution to the confict and wondered why Europeans allowed themselves ‘to be dictated to from beyond the ocean,’ an obvious reference to the USA. Turning to the broader NATO enlargement issue, he noted that ‘when NATO approaches the borders of the Russian Federation, you can say there will be two military blocs, and this will be a restoration of what we already had’ (quoted in Erlanger 1995). Yeltsin could be emotional and erratic, among other things, but his assessment proved prescient. By the end of Barack Obama’s presidency, talk of a ‘**new Cold War’** between Russia and the West had become commonplace. Hopes for partnership had all but evaporated (Legvold 2014, 2016).

True, when Kozyrev and Yeltsin made their remarks, Russia was part of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council, established in 1991. Yet to Russian leaders this forum and others that it later became part of, such as the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council and the Partnership for Peace, were scant recompense for NATO’s advance toward its borders, which from the outset they deemed a threat to their country’s security. A 1993 report by Evgenii Primakov, the head of Russia’s Foreign Intelligence Service, who would succeed Kozyrev as Foreign Minister 3 years later, warned that ‘a stereotypical bloc mentality’ persisted in the West, which still regarded Russia as a threat. He noted that though NATO’s leaders might not intend to exclude and isolate Russia, the country should nevertheless anticipate a future in which the alliance’s ‘zone of responsibility…reache[d] the borders of the Russian Federation.’ Primakov opined that although that outcome would not result in creation of ‘a bridgehead to strike Russia or its allies,’ this did not mean that NATO’s eastward expansion would ‘not afect Russia’s military security interests.’ NATO was the world’s ‘biggest military grouping,’ and its movement toward Russia’s borders would, in his assessment, necessitate ‘a fundamental reappraisal’ of Russia’s defense doctrine and posture’ (Izvestiia 1992).

Russia did not beef up the military units deployed on its western fank, but that does not establish that its leaders regarded NATO expansion as unthreatening. For one thing, they made **abundantly clear** that they did see it as such, and one would have to dismiss all of their protestations as propaganda in order to conclude that they were merely engaged in theatrics. In addition, Russia’s economic free fall in the 1990s, coupled with the continuing necessity to deploy forces along a vast frontier that abutted 16 countries, rendered a countervailing military response infeasible. Russia’s leaders held a weak hand, but that only served to increase their resentment over what they regarded as the West’s **disregard for their legitimate security interests**. Their bitterness was not contrived. Consider Sandy Berger’s characterization of President Clinton’s response to Yeltsin’s objections at the 1996 Helsinki summit: ‘Give it up on NATO enlargement…. We’re going ahead; stop rocking it. All you’re doing Boris is creating a defeat for yourself.’ When Yeltsin sought to salvage something by asking that the Baltic states not be inducted into NATO, Clinton’s answer, as characterized by Berger was ‘No, I will not make that commitment…. All you are doing is moving the line of the divide between East and West…farther to the east’ (Berger 2005).

**NATO made Russia into a revisionist power by backing them into a corner.**

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Vladimir Putin is a brutal autocrat and the Kremlin’s actions in Ukraine undoubtedly constitute a gross violation of international law. However, the popular characterisation of Putin’s grand strategy as imperialist is erroneous. Russia’s primary foreign policy objective regarding the Ukraine has been to prevent the country joining the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the world’s most formidable military alliance, which Russia justifiably regards as dire threat to its security. In a Foreign Affairs article entitled, “Why the Ukraine Crisis is the West’s Fault”, John Mearsheimer explains that “[Russian leaders] would not stand by while their strategically important neighbour turned into a Western bastion.”[5] Within the Australian media, Tom Switzer has been a rare voice of thoughtful moderation on Russia, observing that Putin has been, “protecting legitimate security interests”, and that his, “**objectives are limited**.”[6]

It is vitally important that the West understands that Russia’s conduct in the Ukraine is a rational response to the strategic pressure that has been placed on the country by an encroaching military alliance, NATO. The Kremlin’s foreign policies conform to the expectations of **defensive realism**. A defensive realist foreign policy prioritises state security, which is maximised when a stable balance of power is established in the international system.[7] Defensive realists advise against imperialism and aggression, but they do advocate power projection by threatened states to the extent that is necessary to restore the international system to a stable state of equilibrium.[8] As Robert Person argues, Putin has been pursuing a defensive realist strategy because his, “ultimate objective is to maximize his security, not his power.”[9] NATO’s hubristic expansion has destroyed the balance of power that existed in Europe during the Cold War and engendered feelings of insecurity and vulnerability in the minds of Russia’s leaders. These attitudes are rooted in a rational conception of the international as a realm in which the threat of war is constant and each state must take responsibility for its own survival.

To say this is not to condone the Kremlin’s actions in Ukraine on an ethical level. But the righteous condemnations of Russia in the Western media have only served to obscure the origins of the Ukraine crisis and potential strategies for mediating it. If peace and stability are to be re-established in Eastern Europe, then it is vital that we look past the scaremongering and hyperbole, and re-examine the origins of Russia-NATO antagonism.

New Russia, Same Old NATO Mentality: A Lost Opportunity for Détente

NATO was founded in 1948 to balance the power of the USSR and its communist allies in Eastern Europe. The organisation’s founding members were the United States (US), Canada and ten Western European nations. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, it seemed that the nascent Russian state would soon be integrated into the US-led world order. NATO appeared obsolete and some predicted that it would be disbanded.[10] So how did we get to a situation where Russia and NATO are once again at loggerheads?

To understand the re-emergence of NATO-Russia antipathy, we have to return to the final years of the Soviet Union and a meeting between Mikhail Gorbachev and then US Secretary of State, James Baker. On February 9, 1990 in the Kremlin’s St. Catherine’s Hall, Gorbachev made a stunning concession to Baker, agreeing to allow East Germany’s incorporation into NATO. [11] The Soviet leader pledged to withdraw 380,000 troops from East Germany and approved the reunified, remilitarised Germany’s incorporation into a hostile military alliance. In return for his cooperation, Baker promised Gorbachev that, “there would be no extension of NATO’s jurisdiction for forces of NATO one inch to the east.”[12] But by 1993, the Clinton administration had already embarked on plans to renege on Baker’s promise and extend NATO membership to Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic.[13] Whilst Baker’s promise was not legally binding, NATO’s willingness to disregard Russia’s preferences and take advantage of the country’s weakness would set the tone for future interactions between the two entities.

In 1994, Russia began trying to marginalise NATO by promoting the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE)[14] as the continent’s preeminent collective security body. Russia pushed for the deployment of CSCE peacekeepers within the post-Communist world and even allowed a CSCE force to be sent into Chechnya in 1995.[15] Though these actions did to an extent empower the CSCE, the organisation soon became subordinated to NATO when addressing large-scale issues of European security.

During the latter stages of the Bosnian War in 1994-5, NATO carried out airstrikes against Russia’s allies, the Serbs, in spite of Russian protestations.[16] At the conclusion of the conflict, NATO insisted that it, rather than the UN, be charged with the implementation of the Dayton Accords. In 1999, NATO again intervened in Serbia, bombing the country for 78 days until Belgrade was forced to grant de facto independence to Kosovo.[17] NATO’s war, which it dubiously justified as a humanitarian intervention, undoubtedly had much more to do with asserting the alliance’s preeminence in Eastern Europe than assisting Serbia’s oppressed Kosovar Albanian minority.[18] NATO’s wanton use of force so close to Russia’s border alarmed the Kremlin, with Russia’s Foreign minister Igor Ivanov warning NATO’s actions risked ushering in a new Cold War.[19]

In 1999, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland were also incorporated into NATO, as the alliance moved ahead with plans to admit the Baltic states of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia.[20] Whilst NATO has justified its expansion as a means for promoting freedom, democracy and human rights,[21] the alliance’s enlargement had the effect of entrenching a formidable Western military presence in Central Europe.

Realising that NATO enlargement would antagonise Russia, the distinguished American diplomat **George Kennan opposed the strategy from the beginning**. As the chief architect of the Marshall Plan and one of the original advocates for US containment of the Soviet Union in the immediate aftermath of WWII, Kennan was nothing if not tough on Russia.[22] But in 1997 he wrote “expanding NATO would be the most fateful error of American policy in the post cold-war era”[23] such a move might “impel Russian foreign policy in directions decidedly not to our liking.”[24] In a prescient 1998 interview Kennan explained that such a decision “shows so little understanding of Russian history and Soviet history. Of course there is going to be a bad reaction from Russia, and then [the NATO expanders] will say that we always told you that is how the Russians are – but this is just wrong.”[25]

The Arrival of Putin: Conciliation Fails Amid NATO Provocations

When Vladimir **Putin came to power in January 2000**, relations between Russia and NATO were at a very low ebb. Yet far from exhibiting any anti-Western tendencies, Putin initially attempted to facilitate rapprochement between Russia and the West. Putin characterised NATO as a minimal threat to Russia’s security, and even went as far as to suggest that Russia may still consider joining the alliance in the right circumstances.[26] NATO responded with a conciliatory gesture of its own, establishing the NATO-Russia Council in November 2001.[27] However, Putin’s overtures failed to dampen the alliance’s expansionist zeal.

From 2003 to 2005 the West extended its influence further into Eastern Europe by aiding revolutions against pro-Russian regimes in Georgia and the Ukraine. Between 1993 and 2003, $700 million in US aid and $420 million European Union (EU) aid was directed into Georgia.[28] Most of this money was channeled through Western NGOs and was used toward electoral and judicial reform and citizen mobilisation.

Vote rigging by Georgia’s pro-Russian government in 2003 sparked widespread protests against the incumbent President Eduard Shevardnadze. Western NGOs played a key role in financing opposition parties and organising demonstrations.[29] When popular pressure forced Shevardnadze to resign, he was succeeded by the pro-NATO Mikhail Saakashvili. Voter fraud orchestrated by the Ukraine’s pro-Russian President, Victor Yanukovich, in 2004 sparked similar protests in the Ukraine. Again, state-funded Western NGOs played a central role in mobilising anti-government demonstrators. Protestors were entertained with rock music, provided with free food and tent accommodation and even paid small amounts of money for attending rallies.[30] When popular pressure prompted Ukraine’s Supreme Court to annul the election result and order a revote, the Western-backed Victor Yushchenko was elected President.

In March 2004 NATO accepted seven new member states including the three Baltic states. For the first time, NATO was right on Russia’s border.[31] Twelve hundred miles had separated Saint Petersburg from NATO during the Cold War, but that distance had been reduced to less than one hundred miles. Later that year Georgia and the Ukraine signed Individual Partnership Action Plans, and joint NATO-Ukraine military exercises in Crimea soon followed.[32]

Whilst Putin downplayed the importance of these events, others in his administration expressed much alarm. Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov warned “we cannot, of course, watch impartially the military structure of the alliance moving ever closer to our borders.”[33] It was quite reasonable for the Kremlin to view NATO’s incorporation of the Baltic States as an outright threat. Unlike the existing NATO members and former Warsaw Pact states, the 1990 Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty, which was designed to prevent any country from amassing the weaponry required to launch an offensive war, didn’t bind the Baltic nations.[34] NATO now held the legal right to deploy an unlimited quantity of troops and military hardware in the Baltic.[35] Plans were made for the Baltic states to accede to an adapted CFE treaty, but a series of diplomatic stalemates resulted in the US and its NATO allies refusing to ratify the new agreement.[36]

In 2007, the Bush Administration announced plans to construct a missile defence shield in Eastern Europe.[37] The pretext for this decision was that it was necessary to protect Europe from an Iranian nuclear attack. However, Moscow quickly realised that the shield would have the potential to undermine and perhaps even neutralise Russia’s nuclear deterrent. Putin suggested an alternative, namely the construction of a joint Russia-US radar warning system in Azerbaijan, but the US rejected this proposal.[38] At this point, **Putin was forced to abandon his conciliatory approach**. In his 2007 State of the Nation Address, the Russian President characterised NATO as, “a real threat”.[39] Russia formally suspended its observance of its CFE treaty obligations a month later.

At a summit in Bucharest in April 2008, NATO released a statement affirming that Georgia and the Ukraine would be offered membership.[40] US pressure was the chief driver of this decision, as several Western European alliance members expressed opposition to the plan.[41]

This was NATO’s most threatening and provocative move towards Russia yet. Ukraine, as the biggest country is Europe, constitutes an important strategic buffer between Russia and NATO. Napoleonic France, Wilhelmine Germany, and Nazi Germany all invaded Russia through southeastern Europe and consequently, the Kremlin is extremely reticent to allow the armies of those countries to once again be stationed there. Georgia borders Russia’s volatile Caucasus region, already rife with minority nationalism and secessionist sentiment. Furthermore, both Georgia and the Ukraine are proximate to Russia’s Volga region, its agricultural heartland and its access point for Caspian Sea oil. The Kremlin cannot and will not risk its control over these assets being compromised.

The Fight over Georgia and the Ukraine: Russia’s Militarist Turn

It was only a matter of time before tension between Russia and NATO over the status of Georgia and the Ukraine spilled over into conflict. After winning wars of secession against Georgia in the early 1990s, the breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia had enjoyed de facto independence from Tbilisi.[42] Both had been reliant on Russia for strategic and financial support, though Russia still formally recognised them as part of Georgia. In May of 2008, when Georgian President Mikhail Saakashvili requested that Russian peacekeepers in Abkhazia be withdrawn and replaced by either EU or NATO forces, Russia responded by increasing the size of its force.[43] In June, Georgia detained Russian peacekeepers stationed in Abkhazia. Then on August 7 Georgia launched an attack on South Ossetia, killing numerous civilians and 12 Russian soldiers.[44] A day later, Russia sent ground troops into the secessionist territories and began bombing Georgian military and industrial targets. After five days of fighting, Moscow forced Tbilisi to agree to a ceasefire on Russian terms. Russia formally recognised the two breakaway polities as sovereign nations and announced that a force of 7,600 would remain in the territories indefinitely for their “protection”.[45]

Russia’s strong-arming of Georgia was the Kremlin’s way of signaling to NATO that it would not tolerate any further expansion of the alliance. Russian Prime Minister Dmitri Medvedev evoked a siege mentality, stating that “we do not have any illusion of partnership [with NATO]… Naturally we are not happy with being surrounded by military bases.”[46]

Russia’s war succeeded, as NATO’s plans to extend membership to Georgia were put on an indefinite hold. The alliance could hardly incorporate Georgia when Tbilisi had no sovereignty over 20 percent of its territory. Nonetheless, the West continued to put geostrategic pressure on Russia. NATO suspended the Russia-NATO Council, established a permanent military presence in the Baltic and, in December 2009, refused a Russian proposal to replace the CFE treaty.[47] In 2010 the US relocated a Patriot missile battery from Germany to Poland and, in 2012, opened phase one of its European Missile Defence Shield.[48]

With tensions high and the issue of Ukraine’s NATO membership still unresolved, another conflict always seemed likely. Ukrainian society is deeply divided between pro-Russian and pro-Western segments, and voting in the country tends to follow this division.[49] The Westernisation of Ukraine had been stalled by the election of the pro-Russian Victor Yanukovich in 2010. On 25 November 2013, Yanukovich delayed his decision to sign an Association Agreement with the EU which would have forced the Ukraine to sever all economic ties with Russia. Instead, Yanukovich signed a deal with Russia whereby the Kremlin would buy $15 billion of Ukrainian bonds and cut its gas prices to the country by one third.[50] This decision angered pro-Western Ukrainians, who took to the streets in protest.

As civil unrest grew, police began to crack down violently on demonstrators.[51] On the 21 February 2014, after three months of protests, Yanukovich fled to Russia and, in what can only be described as a coup, a new pro-Western government took power in Kiev.[52] The full extent of US involvement in the coup is at this stage unknown, but a leaked conversation between US assistant secretary of state for European and Eurasian affairs Victoria Nuland and US Ambassador to the Ukraine Geoffrey Pyatt suggests it could have been substantial. During the conversation, Nuland expressed her support for regime change in Ukraine and her desire to see Arseniy Yatsenyuk become the country’s new Prime Minister – which he did.[53]

Russian troops moved into the Crimean Peninsular on 22 February. Putin chose to take Crimea primarily because it contains the strategically important Black Sea port of Sevastopol, which Russia had been leasing from the Ukraine since the end of the Cold War.[54] The annexation of Crimea was a warning that Moscow would not tolerate the Ukraine slipping out of its orbit. On the day of the Crimean annexation, Putin warned NATO not to “make itself at home in our backyard or in our historical territory.”[55] Russia then orchestrated a proxy war in Eastern Ukraine, arming pro-Russian rebels and probably also deploying several hundred Special Forces soldiers in Eastern Ukraine to aid them.[56] In May, Ukraine elected a pro-Western government that renounced the country’s non-aligned status and signaled its desire to join NATO.[57]

Russia’s militarist tactics were once again successful in stalling NATO’s advance. In March 2016, European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker affirmed that the Ukraine would not gain NATO membership within the next two decades.[58] However, since 2014, NATO and the Ukraine have conducted numerous joint military exercises and NATO has committed $5.4 million to assist with the modernisation of Ukraine’s army.[59] The alliance has also increased its troop presence in the Baltic and conducted a military parade in Estonia less than a kilometer from Russian territory.[60] In 2016, the US completed phase two of its missile defence shield, opening a weapons system in Romania and announcing that a similar system will be opened in Poland in 2018.[61] Russia, meanwhile, has ensured that Eastern Ukraine remains in a state of frozen conflict and has effectively consolidated its control over South Ossetia and Abkhazia.[62]

Russia and NATO: Where to Next?

Winston Churchill once famously remarked that Russia is, “a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma.”[63] However, since the end of the Cold War at least, the Russian mindset has been remarkably easy to understand.

Russia regards NATO, the world’s most powerful military alliance, as a dire threat the its security. Russia’s goal of trying to halt NATO’s eastward march is rooted in a **defensive realist view** of international politics. The Kremlin is attempting to safeguard its security; it is not looking to reclaim lost status or recapture an empire. Analysts such as Derk Eppink have contended that, “Putin’s mind-set is largely rooted in the 19th century. Politics [for him] is about power.”[64] Those who dismiss this worldview as outdated would do well to remember that Russia was almost destroyed twice in twentieth century by invasions through Eastern Europe. At least twenty-seven million Russians were killed during WWII, roughly one third of the war’s overall death toll.[65] It should hardly be surprising that a sense of vulnerability still pervades Russian strategic thinking today.

**Russia is not an expansionist power – but they do want a limited sphere of influence.**

**Carpenter**, Ted Galen, PhD, **’19**, NATO: The Dangerous Dinosaur. Cato Institute. P 73-79.

Those who contend that Russia’s annexation of Crimea in 2014 proves that the Putin government is pursuing an aggressive, expansionist foreign policy are **misreading the situation**. Crimea was a **special case** for several reasons. First, the peninsula had been part of Russia between 1783 and 1954, during both the czarist and Soviet eras. Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev, for reasons that are not entirely clear, arbitrarily transferred Crimea to Ukraine in 1954. Since Ukraine and Russia were both part of the Soviet Union, that decision didn’t seem to matter much at the time. When the Soviet Union dissolved at the end of 1991, however, Russia suddenly faced the reality that its key naval base at Sevastopol now was on the territory of a foreign country. Yet even that development didn’t seem to alarm Russian officials, since Ukraine’s government remained in the hands of generally pro-Russian political leaders throughout the 1990s and the early years of the new millennium. Kiev provided further reassurance by granting Russia a 25-year lease on the facility shortly after gaining independence.

The situation became problematic, though, when Viktor Yushchenko, an anti-Russian, pro-Western figure, became Ukraine’s president in 2004, leading the so-called Orange Revolution. Russian officials were noticeably nervous when Yushchenko indicated a renewal was unlikely when Moscow’s lease at Sevastopol expired in 2017. That danger passed, however, once another pro-Russian politician, Viktor Yanukovych, won Ukraine’s 2010 presidential election. Moscow’s anxiety then receded.

Those worries resurfaced with a vengeance in 2014, though, when antiYanukovych demonstrators, encouraged if not actively aided by Washington and the European Union, overthrew the Ukrainian president nearly two years before his term expired.28 Extremely nationalist, anti-Russian factions dominated the regime that emerged from the Maidan Revolution. Not only did the Crimean naval base now seem in jeopardy, but the new leaders avidly sought NATO membership for Ukraine—something that Washington had pushed for years.

The Kremlin responded quickly and decisively to the Ukraine developments. Barely disguised Russian special forces reinforced the normal garrison at Sevastopol and set up positions elsewhere on the peninsula. Pro-Russian political figures in Crimea immediately called for a referendum on secession from Ukraine, which was held days later and produced a predictably affirmative vote. Newly elected Crimean officials then asked that their territory be allowed to join the Russian Federation—a “request” that Moscow quickly granted.

U.S. anger at such a transparent territorial grab was volcanic. The Obama administration denounced the move, and Washington imposed an array of economic sanctions on Russia. The administration also induced and pressured its European allies to do the same. Such a response constituted an overreaction, and a hypocritical one. Much of the blame for the Crimea episode should be put at Washington’s door. The U.S.-EU meddling in Ukraine’s politics to encourage the ouster of a pro-Russian government—a democratically elected one at that—could hardly be seen as other than hostile and threatening to both Russian leaders and the Russian public. Indeed, polls indicated that Putin’s approval rating soared to over 80 percent following the annexation.29

The Crimea issue became the principal grievance that anti-Russia types in the United States cited to justify a confrontational policy—until the allegations of Russian interference in U.S. elections eclipsed that complaint. But one might ask why so many U.S. political leaders and policymakers elevated a parochial territorial dispute to such prominence, much less why they insist that the arbitrary edict made back in 1954 by the communist dictator of a defunct country must be treated with reverence.30

It would have been better if the successor republics collectively had addressed and implemented territorial adjustments involving Crimea and other potential problem areas when the USSR dissolved, but Moscow’s decision to resolve the Crimea question unilaterally was not necessarily a sign of broader territorial ambitions.

The conquest is not even unprecedented in the post–World War II era. Israel seized the Golan Heights from Syria in 1967 during the Six-Day War and later annexed that territory. Turkey seized a major portion of Cyprus and continues to occupy that land, establishing a puppet state as a façade. It is certainly an **overstatement** to contend, as does UCLA political science professor Daniel Treisman, that “By annexing a neighboring country’s territory by force, Putin overturned in a single stroke the assumption on which the post–Cold War European order had rested.”31 One could make a stronger case that the first major blow to that post–Cold War European order came 15 years earlier when the **Western powers amputated Kosovo** from Serbia.

Yet Western opinion leaders routinely cite the Crimea annexation and Moscow’s subsequent assistance to secessionist factions in eastern Ukraine as proof that Russia has broad, perhaps even unlimited, expansionist goals. In February 2015, Gen. Sir Adrian Bradshaw, the senior British officer in NATO, asserted that Russia’s expansionism threatened to become an “obvious existential threat to our whole being.”32 The following year, Leon Panetta, the former secretary of defense, expressed similar alarm. “Let’s not kid anybody,” Panetta stated, “Putin’s main interest is to try to restore the old Soviet Union.”33

When advocates of a confrontational policy toward Moscow were not alleging that Putin wanted to revive the Soviet Union, they accused him of seeking to restore the pre-Soviet Russian empire. That allegation even predated the seizure of Crimea. Senator McCain made the accusation in 2008, at the time of the Russo-Georgian war. “I think it’s very clear that Russian ambitions are to restore the old Russian Empire,” McCain stated. “Not the Soviet Union, but the Russian Empire.”34

That line of argument at least implicitly acknowledged that Putin was not a doctrinaire communist, but it still was misplaced and exaggerated. As Harvard University professor Andrei Shleifer and his co-author Daniel Treisman observe in Foreign Affairs, “To many in the West, Russia’s 2008 invasion of Georgia seemed to prove the Kremlin’s land hunger.” Shleifer and Treisman argue that such a conclusion reflects poor logic. “Kremlin leaders bent on expansion would surely have ordered troops all the way to Tbilisi to depose [Georgia President Mikheil] Saakashvili. At the least, Russian forces would have taken control of the oil and gas pipelines that cross Georgia.” Instead, the Russians “left those pipelines alone and quickly withdrew to the mountains.”35

Shleifer and Treisman raise a very important point. If Putin is a rogue leader with massive expansionist objectives, why would he relinquish territory that Russian forces already occupied? Indeed, with very little additional effort, those forces could have captured Tbilisi and the rest of Georgia. Yet Moscow did not attempt to do so. Hitler never willingly gave up any of his conquests. And until the East European satellite empire collapsed in 1989–1991, the USSR disgorged only one occupied area—the portion of Austria it controlled at the end of World War II. Even that modest retreat took place only after laborious, multiyear negotiations for a treaty guaranteeing Austria’s strict neutrality. If Putin truly harbors malignant expansionist ambitions comparable to those of Hitler and Stalin, declining to conquer and absorb all of Georgia when that achievement was easily within reach is a curious step. His decision merely to maintain and consolidate Abkhazia and South Ossetia as Russian protectorates suggests much more **restrained and limited ambitions.**

Allegations that Putin wants to reconstitute the Soviet or the czarist empires are vastly overblown. Former NATO supreme commander Gen. Philip M. Breedlove is a little closer to the mark when he contends that “Moscow is determined to reestablish **what it considers its rightful sphere of influence**, undermine NATO, and reclaim its **great power status**.”36 But wanting, indeed insisting upon, a sphere of influence has long been standard behavior for major powers. Indeed, the United States declared such a sphere when James Monroe’s administration proclaimed the Monroe Doctrine— and it did so at a time when the country was still far from attaining great power status. As for wishing to undermine NATO, it is more accurate to say that Moscow is belatedly trying to fend off the alliance’s seemingly inexorable advance east. Finally, Russian leaders would presumably like to reclaim great power status for their country; at the very least, they insist on a **seat at the table** when major decisions about Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and Central Asia are made. That position is not unreasonable, and an especially clumsy aspect of Western policy toward Moscow has been the unwillingness to accord even basic respect to Russia and not trample on its core interests.

**Not Russia wants an SOI, not an imperial ambition. This implies they won’t expand past of Ukraine.**

**Carpenter**, Ted Galen, PhD, **’19**, NATO: The Dangerous Dinosaur. Cato Institute. P 79-82.

In her address to the UN Security Council, U.S. Ambassador Nikki Haley blasted Moscow for “outlaw actions” and stated that the latest “outrageous violation of sovereign Ukrainian territory is part of a pattern of Russian behavior.”47 Former CIA station chief Daniel Hoffman asserted, “Containment and deterrence are vestiges of the Cold War, which effectively countered the Soviet Union. They are similarly applicable today because Putin—the KGB operative in the Kremlin reviving the ethos of the Soviet evil empire—would best be countered with a 21st-century version of President Reagan’s ‘peace through strength’ strategy. Ukraine is on the front lines of defense against Russia’s pernicious espionage, military, cyber and economic attacks. The time is ripe for U.S. leadership, and Ukraine’s sovereignty is where we should draw and enforce a red line.”48 One could scarcely imagine a more blatant and **simplistic attempt** to equate today’s Russia with the totalitarian and messianic expansionist Soviet Union. Hoffman’s proposal to “draw and enforce a red line” to protect Ukraine also would erase any meaningful distinction between Washington’s security obligations to NATO members and European nonmembers. Kiev would have an Article 5 guarantee in all but name, and that would be an appallingly reckless, provocative step. A scholar for the staunchly pro-NATO Atlantic Council seemed to embrace reasoning similar to Hoffman’s, speculating that although the alliance probably would not send combat units to defend Ukraine in response to further Russian encroachments, it might well dispatch “military advisers” to assist Kiev’s forces.49 The role of such American “advisers” in Vietnam, Syria, Yemen, and other arenas suggests just how perilous such a move might be. The angry Western response to Russia’s behavior in and around Crimea over the past five years is **overdone**.50 Because of its size, geographic position, and both economic and strategic importance, Ukraine occupies a special position in Moscow’s geopolitical calculations. Russian leaders are even more concerned about the prospect of Ukraine becoming a NATO outpost than they are about Georgia doing so. **Other portions of the Soviet Union’s former domain do not generate the same level of worry or determination**. Yet despite the country’s critical importance, there is **little evidence** that the Putin regime seeks to reabsorb Ukraine into a “Greater Russia.” Russian leaders likely understand the difficulty of trying to rule directly a seething Ukraine—or even control it indirectly by installing a puppet government. The idea would soon evoke memories of the USSR’s unhappy experiences in such places as Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Afghanistan.

There is **even less evidence** that the Kremlin has ambitions to reincorporate the Baltic republics, Finland, or Poland, although they were also part of the czarist empire. Russian claims to Crimea were much stronger than claims to any of those states, and the strategic motivations were stronger too—especially after the Western-backed Maidan Revolution. The Russian government’s actions regarding Crimea, even the annexation, seem more likely a defensive (over)reaction to a flagrant Western incursion into Russia’s security space rather than the opening salvo in a vast expansionist campaign. Hillary Clinton and others who professed to see in Vladimir Putin’s seizure of Crimea a repetition of Hitler’s moves in the late 1930s make an unwarranted, over-the-top comparison.51 That interpretation of events is also a false rationale for preserving, much less expanding, NATO.

**Russia views NATO as a vehicle for American dominance---enhanced US presence prompts escalation from hardliners.**

Ruslan **Pukhov 19**. Director of the think tank Centre for Analysis of Strategies and Technologies. “NATO is the obstacle to improving Russian-Western relations” Defense News. 3-28-19. <https://www.defensenews.com/opinion/commentary/2019/03/28/nato-is-the-obstacle-to-improving-russian-western-relations/>

One of the distinctive features of the modern Western political narrative with regard to NATO is an almost total misunderstanding of how the alliance is perceived in Russia. First and foremost, the Western political establishment seems blithely unaware of the fact that the issue of NATO is the main stumbling block in Russian-Western relations, and that **any detente is impossible** while that obstacle remains unresolved. **In Russia, NATO is** generally **viewed as part of the American war machine and an instrument of U.S. global dominance**. That view is shared by almost the entire Russian political spectrum. In fact, the same view also prevails among NATO members from eastern Europe, where the alliance is seen as an instrument of U.S. influence and U.S. defense assurances. That is why Russia is utterly baffled by U.S. accusations that the Kremlin — and President Vladimir Putin specifically — are trying to “drive a wedge between NATO partners.” **No one in Moscow has ever regarded NATO as an independent entity that exists separately from the United States**. There is a deep conviction in Russia that NATO is nothing more than an **instrument of U.S. military policy**, and that **Washington will always be able to ram any decision through the NATO governing bodies**, regardless of what its Western European partners might think of that decision. That explains why any NATO enlargement is automatically regarded in Russia as a **ruse to deploy U.S. forces** in close proximity to Russian borders; NATO’s own role in that ruse is seen as a cover story — nothing more. The ongoing deployment of NATO forces in eastern Europe with the ostensible purpose of “containing and deterring Moscow” is seen in Russia as another piece of evidence to confirm that view. These new **deployments are conducted under direct U.S. leadership**, and most of the new forces deployed are American. The military presence of other NATO members in places such as the Baltic states is **insignificant and purely symbolic**. Washington and NATO describe these deployments as a “clear signal to Moscow.” In Moscow itself, that signal is read as clear evidence that all the Russian criticisms and concerns about NATO have always been entirely justified, and that the moderate Russian reaction to NATO’s enlargement in the 1990s and early 2000s was a colossal strategic blunder. The Russian hawks have always insisted that the only reason for admitting the Baltic states to NATO was to give the United States a new forward-staging post for military deployment against Russia. It now turns out that the hawks were right all along. That is why Russia is now determined not to make the same mistake again; **it will do all it can to prevent any further NATO encroachment** into former Soviet territory — namely, into Ukraine and Georgia. It’s only a matter of time until this unspoken “red line” drawn by Moscow becomes an official stance. The West does not realize that Russia views NATO enlargement as a threat of U.S. forces (potentially including missile systems) deployed ever closer to critical Russian targets. As a result, Western decision-makers underestimate the strength of the Russian national consensus on this issue. There is a popular opinion in the West that Russia opposes NATO only because of President Putin’s personal animus. That opinion is a **gross and primitive misreading of the situation**.

**Containment causes war---Russia is status-seeking, not revisionist.**

Andrej **Krickovic 18**. Assistant Professor at the Higher School of Economics. “Russia’s Challenge: A Declining Power’s Quest for Status.” PONARS Eurasia. Policy Memo. 10-2018. <http://www.ponarseurasia.org/memo/russia-challenge-declining-power-quest-status>

Pursuing Status

What these dominant **IR paradigms** have **missed** is the **pivotal importance** of **status to Russia**. Status is the collective belief held by states and statesmen about a country’s ranking in the international hierarchy based on valued attributes, such as military capabilities, economic wealth, culture, and socio-political organization. Most studies of status focus on its social and psychological dimensions. States want to improve their status because of its integral importance to individuals’ and groups’ sense of identity and self-esteem. But states also pursue status because it has instrumental value. It is the “currency” of international relations; when a state has status, it does not have to use its material resources to get what it wants.

**Status concerns** have played a **pivotal role** in **Russian foreign policymaking** throughout the **post-Soviet period**. Under its first post-Communist foreign minister, Andrey Kozyrev, Russia pursued democratic and liberal reforms not only because it would improve the material wellbeing of its people, but also because its leaders believed Russia would be allowed to take its rightful place alongside the democratic and liberal powers of the West. When this strategy of **status seeking** through social mobility failed, Russia, under the stewardship of Yevgeny Primakov, former foreign minister and prime minister, sought to increase its status through limited geopolitical competition with the West. However, it was still too weak to counter U.S. power effectively. Its efforts to do so, such as Primakov’s attempts to form a strategic triangle with China and India to balance the United States, or the hasty decision to dispatch Russian paratroops to Kosovo to beat out the arrival of NATO peacekeepers in 1999, yielded few results, making Russia look impotent, incompetent, and out of touch with reality.

Russia abandoned these seemingly quixotic policies during Putin’ first two terms and again tried to find its place in the U.S.-led order. This time not by transforming itself into a model liberal democratic state but by establishing itself as a valuable partner for the United States in the post-9/11 “War on Terror” and by using its natural resource wealth to modernize its economy and emerge as an energy super power. Neither of these aspirations came to fruition. The **U**nited **S**tates **did not** accept Russia as an **equal partner** and it continued to pursue policies, such as NATO enlargement, that **led to further status losses for Moscow**. Russia’s resource-led growth model exhausted itself domestically and was undermined by larger changes to world energy markets.

**As a result**, Russia has again **turned toward geopolitical competition** with the **U**nited **S**tates. U.S. relative decline and Russia’s limited recovery from the Soviet collapse make this strategy more effective this time around. Moscow can leverage its still formidable military, diplomatic, and espionage capabilities to act as global spoiler to Washington. Russia’s goal is **not** to knock the **U**nited **S**tates off the top spot in the global status hierarchy and assume this position for itself. **Instead**, Russia is trying to force the **U**nited **S**tates to **recognize Russia’s continued relevance** and get it to acquiesce to a “grand bargain” on the international order that is more favorable to Russia’s status aspirations.

What IR liberals missed is that Russia could not join the liberal international order on the terms that were acceptable to its leaders and public. Russia would not only have to accept a subordinate role to the more powerful United States, it would also have to accept a lower status to Germany, Japan, and Great Britain, which are more advanced in other attributes that are valued inside the liberal order such as democracy, human rights, and economic liberalism. For their part, **IR realists** **failed** to recognize the **importance of status** and how it could push a **declining power** such as Russia to pursue policies that are not commensurate with its capabilities. Russia opposes NATO enlargement and ABM **not** because they are a threat to its security **but** because they **undermine its status** as **regional hegemon** in the post-Soviet space and nuclear equal of the **U**nited **S**tates.

Status concerns are **particularly important** to **declining great powers**, such as Russia today or Austria-Hungary in 1914. These powers face the predicament of decline: they have inherited a **large patrimony of interests** from the times when they were great and powerful, yet they have a declining material capability to defend this patrimony. They must rely on status to defend their interests and thus fiercely resist its decline.

Russia is not the typical challenger envisioned by PT theories. It **is not** trying to completely overturn the order and replace it with governance structures of its own design. It is **more accurate** to characterize Russia as a “**reactionary challenger**,” using the term “reactionary” strictly in its definitional rather than pejorative sense, as referring to a person or entity’s preference for a return to the status quo ante. In place of U.S. unipolar dominance, Russia would like to see the return of multipolarity enshrined in a Great Power Concert where the United States would have to share power with other great powers. A Great Power Concert serves Moscow’s status aspirations in that it firmly entrenches Russia’s position as one of the leading states in the international system—even as its relative power continues to decline.

Policies and Conclusions

How should the United States and its Western allies deal with a declining challenger such as Russia? One seemingly rational policy might be to ignore Russia for the time being and to postpone the day of reckoning to the future, when Russia will be weaker. This was the approach largely followed by the Obama administration. However, it **provokes Russia** into engaging in **even more reckless and destabilizing behavior** in order for it **to have its voice heard**—as Obama soon found out in Ukraine and Syria. **Containment**, the policy now favored by many Russia hawks in Washington, **risks dangerous confrontation** with a country that, despite its weaknesses, is still a **nuclear superpower** with a formidable military. What’s more, **containment is unnecessary**. Russia’s leaders are **well aware** of the limits of their country’s power and are **not looking to overtake** the **U**nited **S**tates as the global hegemon or to take over management of the international system. Accommodating Russia’s status aspirations will **not embolden** it to pursue more radical revisionism.

**Instead of ignoring or containing Russia**, Western leaders must try to find ways to **channel its status-seeking behavior** in **constructive ways** that contribute to **global peace, stability, and development**. Russia’s efforts toward economic reintegration of the post-Soviet space may have been such an opportunity. From the very start, Russian leaders made it clear that these efforts were not aimed at creating a closed neo-Soviet trade block, but were designed to strengthen Russia’s position in the larger process of pan-European integration with the EU. Eurasian economic integration could have contributed to the economic development and stability of a problematic and dangerous region while also allowing Russia to improve its international status through peaceful and constructive means. Instead of engaging with Russia’s regional integration efforts, the United States and the EU pushed back against them, threatening Moscow with further status losses and provoking (what should have been) a predictable backlash.

Other opportunities to engage Russia’s status seeking in a constructive way will present themselves in Syria, Ukraine, and in the geopolitical realignments that China’s rise will generate. They will confront Western policy makers with difficult choices that will force them to find a balance between their beliefs and values and the harsh realities of power politics. In making these choices, they must understand just how important status concerns are for Russia and realize that the **bigger dangers** come not from empowering a declining Russia through accommodation, **but from ignoring its status aspirations or seeking to constrain them**.

**Offense only goes one direction---Russia only escalates in response to NATO provocation.**

Gregor **Schöllgen 19**. Professor of history at the University of Erlangen and at the German Foreign Office and was a visiting scholar at Columbia and Oxford universities as well as at the London School of Economics and Political Science. “NATO and the EU were created in a world that vanished 30 years ago. Clinging to that lost era means denying the facts of the present day.” <http://www.german-times.com/nato-and-the-eu-were-created-in-a-world-that-vanished-30-years-ago-clinging-to-that-lost-era-means-denying-the-facts-of-the-present-day/>.

And **the Western alliance went even further**. In the spring of 2009, the EU entered into an “Eastern Partnership” with six former Soviet republics, for all practical purposes forcing them to choose between the West and Russia. Yet another far-reaching step was NATO’s decision to station Western troops in former Soviet republics and Warsaw Pact countries, and to include Ukraine – which wasn’t even a NATO member – **step by step into its military operations**. In the eyes of the Kremlin leaders, this was evidence of NATO’s expansion to the East and the permanent deployment of American troops in, for example, Poland, which began during the US presidency of Barack Obama **meant above all one thing: NATO was now only 200 kilometers away from St. Petersburg.** This could be dismissed as a bit of paranoia on Russia’s part, **but that would do nothing to change Moscow’s perception of the situation**. From the Russian vantage point, **the radical eastern expansion of NATO and the build-up of the American missile defense shield in former Warsaw Pact states are two links in a tangible chain of escalation**. For Putin and his team, **these moves provided the jumping-off point to break international law, annex Crimea and start a war in Eastern Ukraine.** These actions revive an old image of Russia, the archenemy of the West. While the downfall of the Soviet Union meant that NATO had won the Cold War, it also stripped the Atlantic Alliance of its **fundamental raison d’etre**. But since it simply clung to its treaties and stuck to its adversarial concept, it had to keep the East – **and everything associated with it – alive**. The fact that Vladimir Putin regularly nourished this image of the East as a threating enemy, at least according to the West’s interpretation, lent it additional credence. Of equal consequence is **the continuation of America’s supervisory control. The fact that US troops remained** – at the express wish of the Europeans – exactly where they were after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 meant that **no one in Washington had any reason to give up or even modify their approach toward their junior partners on the other side of the Atlantic.**

**Russia is defensive**

Elias **Götz 18**. \*\*Postdoctoral Researcher at the Uppsala Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies (UCRS), Uppsala University, Sweden. \*\*Camille-Renaud Merlen, PhD Candidate in International Relations at Kent. “Russia and the question of world order.” *European Politics and Society* 11/15/2018. T&F.

To begin with, there are a **number of reasons** to be **sceptical** about the ‘revanchist Russia’ perspective. First, it adopts an **overly deterministic position**, which negates the open-ended character of history by underlining its predetermined course through certain ‘iron laws’ and the supposedly unchanging ‘essence’ of Russia. In so doing, this perspective **effectively denies** the role of individual agency: Whoever the leader is, or whatever the regime may be, Russians are subordinate to the quest for imperial greatness. This is a view that incidentally dovetails with that of extreme Russian nationalists, who see Russian history in similar holistic terms of a ‘single stream’ that connects Ivan IV, Peter the Great, Stalin, and Putin. However, Russia has experienced **tremendous upheavals** throughout history that **dramatically changed** its society and its relations with the outside world. This happened often at the instigation of one or a few individuals. Both the beginning and the end of the Soviet Union, for example, serve as powerful reminders of the role agency plays in affecting Moscow’s internal and external affairs. Furthermore, essentialist claims about Russian identity do not offer much insight into the dynamics of Moscow’s approach to the liberal international order, which has significantly fluctuated over time (Tsygankov, 2016). Second, Russia’s revisionist behaviour should **not be exaggerated**. Its intervention in Ukraine has remained **relatively limited**, as has its military activity in other post-Soviet states (Götz, 2016, p. 9). In fact, the scope of Russia’s revanchist aims is a matter of debate. It is **doubtful** whether Moscow has a blueprint for an alternative international order with different norms and principles than the current one. Nor does its promotion of conservative authoritarianism seem to constitute a genuine agenda. As Lewis (2016) writes, ‘the export of conservative social and political values (…) has so far not developed into a coherent campaign, but remains a rather ad hoc and inchoate critique by Russian politicians of “multiculturalism”, LGBT rights and “political correctness” in Europe.’ Furthermore, the ‘**revanchist Russia’ perspective** is **unable** to account for the **numerous instances** in which Moscow has **adhered to the norms, rules, and institutions** that are associated with the **existing liberal order**. While it might be a stretch to describe Moscow as a consistent defender of multilateralism (Lo, 2015), it has **supported frameworks** such as the 2015 **Iran nuclear deal**. It also acceded to the **W**orld **T**rade **O**rganization in 2012 – after 19 years of talks – and continues to be a member of the **E**uropean **C**ourt of **H**uman **R**ights. The **liberal goals** and supranational methods of these institutions **hardly fit with a revisionist imperial agenda**. Third, Moscow’s behaviour is much more in line with that of an ordinary great power than the ‘revanchist Russia’ perspective makes it out to be. For one thing, Russia is by no means unique in its quest to establish a zone of influence in its near neighbourhood. As Carpenter (2017, January 19) points out, Russia is hardly the only country to regard the [sphere of influence] concept as important for its security. Or do U.S. officials believe that Chinese actions in the South China Sea, Turkey’s policies towards Iraq and Syria, and Saudi Arabia’s actions in Bahrain and Yemen do not involve such a consideration? For another, interference in the domestic affairs of other states is something of a habit for great powers. Whether they are democratic or authoritarian does not seem to make a difference in this regard. The United States, for example, has a long track record of meddling in the internal affairs and electoral processes of other countries (Levin, 2016). It is therefore unlikely that a more democratic Russia will substantially change its key foreign policy objectives and activities. Furthermore, the discrediting of Russian concerns over NATO enlargement as an ‘imagined’ threat, rather than a ‘real’ one, misses the mark. Any international relations scholar worth their salt knows that uncertainty about others’ intentions is central to security dilemma dynamics. Thus, Moscow’s fears should not be brushed aside as idiosyncratic Russian paranoia. In conclusion, it seems fair to say that the ‘revanchist Russia’ perspective faces an array of explanatory challenges and shortcomings.

**It prefers liberal integration.**

Patrick J. **Riebsame 20**. Candidate for a Master of Arts In Political Science “Russia’s Foreign Policy Strategy, A New Approach or More of the Same: A Comparative Historical Analysis” Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. 05-06-2020. <https://vtechworks.lib.vt.edu/bitstream/handle/10919/98845/Riebsame_PJ_T_2020.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

Drawing from Russia’s imperial conquests in the 16th through 19th centuries as well as during the era of the Soviet Union, Russia has developed an identity which includes the ‘Little Russians’ (Ukrainians), the ‘White Russians’ (Byelorussians), and the ‘Great Russians’ (ethnic Russians). Additionally, due to their shared language Russia’s identity is also connected to many of the post-Soviet states and regions of Central Asia. Russia’s responsibility to this diverse group of states and peoples is communicated through what Russia calls the Russkiy Mir, or Russian world, meaning support for Russia’s “compatriots.”33 This **Russian identity** applies to a significant amount of territory across two continents, which directly contributes to its **sense of historical insecurity**. Stephen Kotkin, a professor of history and international affairs at Princeton University observed, “Russia has **felt perennially vulnerable and has often displayed a kind of defensive aggressiveness**...Today, too, smaller countries on Russia’s borders are viewed less as potential friends than as potential beachheads for enemies.”34 This far-reaching concept of vulnerability does not wholly originate from outside of Russia, the threat from within is widely understood by the current administration as well. Russia’s swift leadership changes have not always been peaceful matters, and the prospect of regime change from within is not lost on Putin or his inner circle. Gleb Pavlovsky, a former advisor to Putin, observed that “In the Kremlin establishment, ever since Yeltsin’s 1993 attack on the Parliament, there has been an absolute conviction that as soon as the power centre shifts, or if there is mass pressure, or the appearance of a popular leader, then everybody will be annihilated. It’s a **feeling of great vulnerability**.”35 Therefore, the United States’ propensity for seeking regime change in unstable states is certainly **perceived as a threat across the Russian leadership establishment.** To this end, the collapse of the Soviet Union has been misinterpreted by the West, unlike the defeat of Nazi Germany, Russia would not emerge as a completely different society open to a transition towards Western liberalism. Rather, while Russia did initially transition away from the authoritarian governments of Leninism and adopt some liberal economic practices and institutions, it did not escape the transition away from a top-heavy oligarchy capable of monopolizing specific aspects of the country’s economy and government. This transition has been largely guided by ex-Chekist Vladimir Putin, who in turn has sought to combine political, economic, informational, and irregular warfare techniques, backed by conventional military operations and a nuclear arsenal to challenge the West. In doing so, Putin has steered Russia back into contention as a great power through a largely opportunistic yet **defensive approach** to foreign policy. As a substitute to NATO, Russia has **pursued the development of regional security arrangements within its perceived spheres of influence.** In November 1990, twenty-two NATO and Warsaw Pact countries signed the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty (CFE) in Paris. That same day, those same nations and their neutral neighbors adopted the Charter of Paris at the second security summit of the Conference on Security and Cooperation (CSCE) further linking security to democratic principles. Russia encouraged the elevation of the CSCE, with the goal of developing a Eurasian-European institution that could **enhance cooperation with the West**, while keeping Russia’s interests and influence intact throughout the region. CSCE was one of the few surviving institutions of the Soviet Union. Created in 1970s during negotiations between the Eastern and Western Blocs, the CSCE was born out of the 1975 Helsinki Final Act, which established shared principles, specifically tying hard security with human rights, as well as reinforced territorial integrity concepts. The CSCE would later be renamed as the Organization on Security and Cooperation (OSCE), which simply replaced “Conference” with “Organization.” Russia’s preference for the OSCE over NATO lies with its veto power within the organization, which has granted it significant weight in the decision. However, this veto power is one of the larger reasons why the continuation of the OSCE was largely unsuccessful in encouraging the United States’ participation.

**Russia is defensive---specifically in the context of NATO. Official documents prove and offensive realism proponents agree**

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In many cases, the insecurity of states drives actions that are perceived as revisionist, particularly actions taken by states that fear a rival’s advantage. Growing insecurity from a relative loss of power places a state at a great disadvantage should war occur. Military build-ups of one state can cause a reduction in security for another in two ways: first through the reduction in a state’s ability to defend itself, and second, through a belief in motives by ‘convincing the adversary that the state is inherently more dangerous that it had previously believed’ (Glaser 1997, 178). Both the West and Russia have **historical reasons to fear the actions of the other**, as much of modern history places the two sides at odds, absent a brief, uneasy alliance against a revisionist German power. The remainder of this article explores the U.S.–Russian relationship in terms of the security dilemma, exploring the possibility neither the West nor Moscow possesses aggressive intentions, but instead they experience a security dilemma. On one side, it is the West, dominated by the American power and the NATO alliance of free democratic states. Membership is simply the promotion of democracy, viewed as an inherent good and intended to reduce state conflict by making regimes answerable to the population. Led by the liberal hegemon, the West simply wishes to promote freedom and international institutions aimed at economic interdependence and peace. Georgia and Ukraine’s invitation to pursue NATO membership at the 2008 Bucharest Summit was not an aggressive manoeuvre against Russia, but the promotion of this peaceful alternative. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said of the Summit, ‘And that has had a significant impact on the nature of the Alliance; it has had a significant impact on the Alliance’s commitment, dedication – and intensive dedication – to the cause of freedom’ (Rice 2008). Alternatively, there is Moscow, the successor state to the former pole of the bygone bipolar era. It is a non-democratic state witnessing the growth of NATO, an organisation **formed in hostility to its very existence**. While the **Cold War is over**, NATO survives and thrives, continuing to **challenging the existence of states such as Russia.** Russian and Western perceptions of the Ukraine Crisis were so **vastly different**, and it is hard to reconcile that they are discussing the same event. Former British Prime Minister David Cameron (2014) called the actions of Russia indefensible, stating that Ukraine’s ‘territorial integrity has been violated and the aspirations of its people to chart their own future are being frustrated’. Cameron’s assertion reflects the Western ideals of self-determination and freedom. But Moscow viewed the Maidan protestors who ousted an elected government as a sinister move by the West to bring NATO to Ukraine, an objective sought since the late 1990s. Richard Sakwa (2016) argued the structural conditions of the international system, East versus West, caused the Ukraine crisis but the West prefers to portray Russia as a foil (5). Structurally, the growing Western military alliance taking over the home base of the Black Sea Fleet was too great a relative gain by the West at Russian expense to allow in terms of the regional power balance. The Kremlin expanded on the argument that the West’s ‘meddling’ in Ukrainian affairs sparked internal instability within an already corrupt and unstable state. The 2015 Russian NSS places the ‘blame’ for Ukraine solely at the hands of the West. The document states, ‘The support of the United States and the European Union for the anti-constitutional coup d’état in Ukraine led to a deep split in Ukrainian society and the emergence of an armed conflict’ (Section II, Paragraph 17). While difficult to unpack all the potential perspectives of Russia in the causes of the crisis, the document focuses on two primary reasons: the internal conflict between eastern and western Ukraine, as a result Western interference and the perceived demonising of Moscow by Western influencers. The security strategy continues, “The strengthening of far right nationalist ideology, the deliberate shaping in the Ukrainian population of an image of Russia as an enemy, the undisguised gamble on the forcible resolution of intrastate contradictions, and the deep socioeconomic crisis are turning Ukraine into a chronic seat of instability in Europe and in the immediate vicinity of Russia’s border” Foundational to the security dilemma is the idea that one state’s increase in security reduces the security of another, should both states possess benign intentions. While it is difficult to tell a state’s revisionist intentions until after they have initiated conflict, it is useful to explore how an adversary may view one’s actions to differentiate between calculated aggression and defensive measures of self-preservation. Unfortunately, short of access to historical files, like in Germany following the fall of the Nazi regime, much of these assessments must be inferred. For this purpose, the following evaluation of the Russian perspective **takes the statements by Russian leadership and documents** of the Russian Federation at, of close to, face value. Based on these data, Russia feared Ukraine’s potential EU membership as a gateway to NATO accession. In that logic, NATO brings the militarisation of the accessed state **by the American power at the cost of Russian security.** In this sense, the loss of Near Abroad nations is a zero-sum game, where they transition from either affiliated states or non-affiliated states to potential NATO platforms of attacks against Moscow should hostilities escalate. Contrary to the U.S. perception, **even proponents of offensive realism assert the defensive motives of Moscow** in Ukraine. Mearsheimer argued that the Western policies of NATO enlargement, EU expansion and democracy promotion **pose an existential threat to Russian power** (2014b). He blamed liberal objectives and the denials of Western leaders ‘that Putin’s behavior might be motivated by legitimate security concerns’ (Ibid., 86). Alternatively, Western officials tend to shift focus from Western actions to Vladimir Putin and his fear of losing power. Former U.S. Ambassador to Russia Michael McFaul (2018) argued that Moscow exaggerates the Western role in the colour revolutions as the West proves to be a convenient foe (84). McFaul seemed to dismiss Russian security concerns by arguing Putin’s training in the Komitet Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti or the ‘KGB’ led to his distrust of the U.S. McFaul continued, that while anti-Western rhetoric is ‘theater intended for a domestic audience’, Putin ‘genuinely believed’ the U.S. is a threat to his regime (Ibid., 86). This viewpoint dismisses the balance of power realities in preference for biases at the individual leadership level. In this regard, Western actions and Russian insecurities are dismissed as secondary factors to Putin’s beliefs as the primary cause of international tension. Russia views Western actions as **aggressive towards its interests**, regardless of how Washington interprets its own actions. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov (2016) summarised the Russian counterargument to the Western narrative. He wrote, “Western propaganda habitually accuses Russia of ‘revisionism,’ and the alleged desire to destroy the established international system, as if it was us who bombed Yugoslavia in 1999 in violation of the UN Charter and the Helsinki Final Act, as if it was Russia that ignored international law by invading Iraq in 2003 and distorted UN Security Council resolutions by overthrowing Muammar Gaddafi’s regime by force in Libya in 2011. There are many examples.” It is essential to see how rivals view actions, as states will perceive their own actions as benign while perceiving those of adversaries as pure aggression. The Ukraine crisis fits within this framework of a defensive Russian action for two main reasons. First, the potential enlargement of NATO, through the EU, into another Russian border nation removes both critical strategic depth in addition to the essential Russian Navy base in Sevastopol. Second, the military operations, and very design of the ‘New Look’ military, potentially suggest a force designed to protect Russian interests and with limited capability of challenging the United States or NATO within Europe. As defensive realism argues, states such as Russia seek enough security to **maintain the status quo**, before diminishing returns on military investment occur through overspending at the cost of the economy and appearing to possess expansionist intent. It is this **misperception** that drives states to see possible hostile states where a status quo power exists, and Moscow’s actions in Ukraine signalled to the West that Russia has expansionist tendencies. However, the Kremlin argued that it is the West that seeks greater influence into Eurasia. At face value, these arguments may reflect a classic security dilemma. Arguably, a post-Soviet era security dilemma spiral began when the former Warsaw Pact and Baltic state entered NATO, for while increasing their own state security they undermined that of Russia and the region (Sakwa 2016, 4). New NATO states received the protections under NATO Article 5 as well as acceptance into the West through the economic benefits provided by the EU’s common market. In theory, small states, such as Estonia and Latvia, were no longer solely responsible for their own security, particularly against the potential of a Russian resurgence. Estonia’s relatively small military budget, a meagre U.S.$267 million in 2003 and U.S.$281 million in 2004, no longer served as the only protection against Russia’s estimated U.S.$32 billion military expenditure in 2004 (SIPRI 2019). Moscow, on the other hand, then had NATO member nations on its border. Moscow has remained sceptical of the security alliance, once aimed at defending Western Europe from the Soviet Union remaining in existence following its collapse. Richard Sakwa (2016) argued that NATO’s very being is ‘justified by the need to manage the security threats provoked by its enlargement’ (4). While this commentary ignores why the former Warsaw Pact and Baltic states would perceive Moscow as a threat, it still serves to represent the alternative viewpoint, not of a benevolent NATO seeking peace and justice, but of a menacing military alliance taking over strategic territory through membership. Furthermore, NATO is viewed as a lingering tool of U.S. dominance in Europe. For many realists, the survival of NATO following the Cold War says more about American power and influence over Europe than multilateral institutions (Waltz 2000, 20). Waltz argued, ‘that international institutions serve primarily national rather than international interests’ (21). In other words, NATO survived because it was in the **national interest of the United States** and its expansion continues to be a **policy pursued for American interests**. Moscow, therefore, **perceives NATO as an imperial weapon of an expansionist, unchecked U.S. power.** To this end, Russia sees NATO as a weapon against its interests and a potential **threat to its survival**. Russian academic Sergei Karaganov (2014) argued, ‘the West has continually sought to expand its zone of military, economic, and political influence through NATO and the EU. Russian interests and objections were flatly ignored. Russia was treated like a defeated power, though we did not see ourselves as defeated’. This perception is not isolated within Moscow. Prominent Cold War figures warned of the policy of expansion towards Russian borders. George Kennan (1997), the American diplomat and author of the original containment policy, warned that expansion of NATO would be disastrous for U.S.–Russia relations, as perception in Moscow questions the need for a military alliance following the end of hostile tensions.

**NATO expansion causes conflict with Russia and arms racing---there have been multiple close calls**

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The three smartest words that Donald Trump uttered during his presidential campaign are **“NATO is obsolete.”** His adversary, Hillary Clinton, retorted that NATO was “the strongest military alliance in the history of the world.” Now that Trump has been in power, the White House parrots the same worn line that NATO is “the most successful Alliance in history, guaranteeing the security, prosperity, and freedom of its members.” But Trump was right the first time around: Rather than being a strong alliance with a clear purpose, this 70-year-old organization that is meeting in London on December 4 is a **stale military holdover** from the Cold War days that **should have gracefully retired** many years ago. NATO was originally founded by the United States and 11 other Western nations as an attempt to curb the rise of communism in 1949. Six years later, Communist nations founded the Warsaw Pact and through these two multilateral institutions, the entire globe became a Cold War battleground. When the USSR collapsed in 1991, the Warsaw Pact disbanded but NATO expanded, growing from its original 12 members to 29 member countries. North Macedonia, set to join next year, will bring the number to 30. NATO has also expanded well beyond the North Atlantic, adding a partnership with Colombia in 2017. Donald Trump recently suggested that Brazil could one day become a full member. NATO’s post-Cold War expansion toward Russia’s borders, despite earlier promises not to move eastward, has **led to rising tensions between** Western powers and Russia, including **multiple close calls** between military forces. It has also **contributed to a new arms race**, including upgrades in nuclear arsenals, and the largest NATO “war games” since the Cold War. While claiming to “preserve peace,” NATO has a **history of bombing civilians** and committing **war crimes**. In 1999, NATO engaged in military operations without UN approval in Yugoslavia. Its illegal airstrikes during the Kosovo War left hundreds of civilians dead. And far from the “North Atlantic,” NATO joined the United States in invading Afghanistan in 2001, where it is still bogged down two decades later. In 2011, NATO forces illegally invaded Libya, creating a failed state that caused masses of people to flee. Rather than take responsibility for these refugees, NATO countries have turned back desperate migrants on the Mediterranean Sea, letting thousands die. In London, NATO wants to show it is ready to fight new wars. It will showcase its readiness initiative—the ability to deploy 30 battalions by land, 30 air squadrons and 30 naval vessels in just 30 days, and to confront future threats from China and Russia, including with hypersonic missiles and cyberwarfare. But far from being a lean, mean war machine, NATO is actually riddled with **divisions and contradictions**. Here are some of them: French President Emmanuel Macron questions the U.S. commitment to fight for Europe, has called NATO “brain dead” and has proposed a European Army under the nuclear umbrella of France. Turkey has **enraged NATO members** with its incursion into Syria to attack the Kurds, who have been Western allies in the fight against ISIS. And Turkey has threatened to **veto** a Baltic defense plan until allies support its controversial incursion into Syria. Turkey has also infuriated NATO members, especially Trump, by purchasing Russia’s S-400 missile system. Trump wants NATO to push back against China’s growing influence, including the use of Chinese companies for the construction of 5G mobile networks—something many NATO countries are **unwilling** to do. Is Russia really NATO’s adversary? France’s Macron has reached out to Russia, inviting Putin to discuss ways in which the European Union can put the Crimean invasion behind it. Donald Trump has publicly attacked Germany over its Nord Stream 2 project to pipe in Russian gas, but a recent German poll saw 66 percent wanting closer ties with Russia. The UK has bigger problems. Britain has been convulsed over the Brexit conflict and is holding a contentious national election on December 12. British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, knowing that Trump is wildly unpopular, is reluctant to be seen as close to him. Also, Johnson’s major contender, Jeremy Corbyn, is a reluctant supporter of NATO. While his Labour Party is committed to NATO, over his career as an anti-war champion, Corbyn has called NATO “a danger to world peace and a danger to world security.” The last time Britain hosted NATO leaders in 2014, Corbyn told an anti-NATO rally that the end of the Cold War “should have been the time for NATO to shut up shop, give up, go home and go away.” A further complication is Scotland, which is home to a very unpopular Trident nuclear submarine base as part of NATO’s nuclear deterrent. A new Labour government would need the support of the Scottish National Party. But its leader, Nicola Sturgeon, insists that a precondition for her party’s support is a commitment to close the base. Europeans can’t stand Trump (a recent poll found he is trusted by only 4 percent of Europeans!) and their leaders **can’t rely** on him. Allied leaders learn of presidential decisions that affect their interests via Twitter. The lack of coordination was clear in October, when Trump ignored NATO allies when he ordered U.S. special forces out of northern Syria, where they had been operating alongside French and British commandos against Islamic State militants. The U.S. unreliability has led the European Commission to draw up plans for a European “defense union” that will coordinate military spending and procurement. The next step may be to coordinate military actions separate from NATO. The Pentagon has complained about EU countries purchasing military equipment from each other instead of from the United States, and has called this defense union “a dramatic reversal of the last three decades of increased integration of the transatlantic defence sector.” Do Americans really want to go to war for Estonia? Article 5 of the Treaty states that an attack against one member “shall be considered an attack against them all,” meaning that the treaty obligates the U.S. to go to war on behalf of 28 nations—something most likely **opposed** by war-weary Americans who want a less aggressive foreign policy that focuses on peace, diplomacy, and economic engagement instead of military force. An additional major bone of contention is **who will pay** for NATO. The last time NATO leaders met, President Trump derailed the agenda by berating NATO countries for not paying their fair share, and at the London meeting, Trump is expected to announce symbolic U.S. cuts to NATO’s operations budget. Trump’s main concern is that member states step up to the NATO target of spending 2 percent of their gross domestic products on defense by 2024, a goal that is unpopular among Europeans, who prefer that their tax dollars go to nonmilitary items. Nevertheless, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg will brag that Europe and Canada have added $100 billion to their military budgets since 2016—something Donald Trump will take credit for—and that more NATO officials are meeting the 2 percent goal, even though a 2019 NATO report shows only seven members have done so: the U.S., Greece, Estonia, the UK, Romania, Poland and Latvia. In an age where people around the world want to avoid war and to focus instead on the climate chaos that threatens future life on earth, NATO is an anachronism. It now accounts for about three-quarters of military spending and weapons dealing around the globe. Instead of preventing war, it **promotes militarism**, exacerbates global tensions and **makes war more likely.** This Cold War relic shouldn’t be reconfigured to maintain U.S. domination in Europe, or to mobilize against Russia or China, or to launch new wars in space. It should not be expanded, but disbanded. Seventy years of militarism is more than enough.

**2NC – African BioTerror**

**Now is the transition moment -- denial only delays response to structural decline.**

Steven **Erlanger 10/22/20**. Chief diplomatic correspondent in Europe for The New York Times. "Europe Wonders if It Can Rely on U.S. Again, Whoever Wins". No Publication. 10-22-2020. https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/22/world/europe/europe-biden-trump-diplomacy.html?action=click&module=Top%20Stories&pgtype=Homepage

BRUSSELS — Treated with contempt by President Trump, who considers them rivals and deadbeats instead of allies, many European leaders look forward to the possibility of a Biden presidency. But they are painfully aware that four years of Mr. Trump have changed the world — and the United States — in ways that will **not be easily reversed**.

Even if civility can be restored, a fundamental **trust has been broken**, and many **European diplomats and experts** believe that U.S. foreign policy is **no longer bipartisan, so** is **no longer reliable**. “The shining city on the hill is **not** as **shining** as it used to be,” Reinhard Bütikofer, a prominent German member of the European Parliament, put it bluntly.

For the first time, said Ivan Krastev, director of the Center for Liberal Strategies, “Europeans are afraid that there is no longer a foreign-policy consensus in the United States. Every new administration can mean a totally new policy, and for them **this is a nightmare**.”

The ideological divide will be on display on Thursday, when Mr. Trump and Joseph R. Biden Jr. are scheduled to hold their final presidential debate.

There will be what most consider low-hanging fruit for a Biden administration that will please Europeans. The crop includes an extension to the New Start nuclear arms control treaty with Russia and returns to the Paris climate accord, the World Health Organization and even the Iran nuclear accord. There will be feel-good meetings and statements about multilateralism, less confrontation about trade, renewed efforts to reform the World Trade Organization and a less combative atmosphere at summit meetings of the Group of 7 and NATO.

But Mr. Trump’s complaints are shared by many Americans, and given the polarization in America, President Emmanuel Macron of France has pushed Europe to step up in an altered world, where **China is rising** and the **Trump** administration **is only a symptom of an American retreat** from global leadership, not the cause.

The idea of European “strategic autonomy” — of a Europe less dependent on Washington and with its own strong voice in the world — has been gaining ground, even if it is more aspiration than reality.

Some, like Nathalie Tocci, director of Italy’s Institute of International Affairs, and François Heisbourg, a French **security analyst, fear** that a Biden presidency could short-circuit European autonomy and let Europeans continue, as Ms. Tocci said, “**stick**ing **our heads in the sand**.”

A Trump re-election, of course, might accelerate the trend toward autonomy, even if few believe that Mr. Trump would be able to pull out of NATO, as one of his former national security advisers, John Bolton, suggested he might.

American foreign policy was traditionally bipartisan — the old phrase that “politics stops at the water’s edge” had merit, especially during the Cold War. But the collapse of the Soviet Union meant that foreign policy, too, was subject to deepening political **polarization** in the United States.

“There is an **incredible decay** in Europe of the sense of the United States as a leader,” accelerated and symbolized by mishandling of the **coronavirus**, said Jeremy Shapiro of the European Council on Foreign Relations.

“**Biden doesn’t solve their America problem**,” he said. “He’s not going to be president for ever, and Democrats won’t always be in power, and people have learned that the U.S. can’t be trusted on foreign policy, because **the next administration will come in and wipe it away**.”

The inconsistency of U.S. foreign policy **has undermined American credibility**, some warned.

**There is “an American decline in geopolitical weight**,” said Francis Fukuyama of Stanford University. “The single fact that shapes the U.S. role in global politics is **polarization**, and this **polarization will not disappear** if Joe Biden is elected,” he said. “Americans simply **don’t agree** with one another on basic premises, even on how much America should be involved in global affairs and NATO.”

William J. Burns, a former senior American diplomat who now runs the Carnegie Endowment in Washington, thinks **the damage is lasting, no matter who wins** the election.

“One of the more insidious effects of polarization is to make foreign policy a tool of **partisan politics**,” he said. “It’s done enduring damage to America’s reputation in the world for being able to keep its word.”

**The plan solves---causes the EU to subsume NATO -- it’s key to successful civilian driven OOAs.**

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An important discussion can start to revolve around whether the USA still belongs to NATO. Right-sizing is not enlarging; it is a change of configuration. Such a change in configuration is possible in that **the USA** (and we already see increasing Atlantic fractions) **could leave NATO**, and let the **Europeans** (including East-European states) take full **responsibility** for their own safety (including allowing all the Balkan countries into such an **EU-NATO arrangement**).

Letting the USA out of NATO would imply **subsuming the European part of NATO into the EU**. Such a possible development can have **many advantages** for the countries concerned, as well as for Russia.

First of all, subsuming a “NATO-excluding-the-USA” into the EU would, as mentioned, **force the Europeans** (including the eastern ones) to take full responsibility for their own security. This will prevent “moral hazard” of **political escalations** in the hope that the USA will “save” them or spend money on them for new US bases in their location. An EU-NATO (without the USA) would have to find new ways of working with the UK as well as with, of course, Russia.

Second, there is sometimes a **profound need for measures outside Europe**, where security and civilian efforts need to be thoroughly **coordinated**. Using **NATO “out-of-area”** tends to be a **recipe for disaster** today, and the NATO-bombing creating a collapse of **Libya** was one such catastrophic example. Complex **civilian needs** during conflict basically **cannot be taken care of by NATO**, because NATO as an organisation (though big enough in bureaucracy) is simply **not designed for civilian efforts** in connection with conflict. NATO was created to deter an all-destructive war, which would probably not have left much civilian life left to “reconstruct” afterwards. The cold-war scenario was therefore so totally **different** from the many extremely complicated **social-economical-etchnical-religious-resource-climate-poverty** types of civilian-military problems, which we see around in the world of today. That is why NATO interventions **automatically**, because of the organization’s outdated design to focus so heavily on a now defunct “all-or-nothing” type of armagedon-conflict tends to create **purely military**, and hence quite **destructive, approaches**. NATO is still so much designed as a **hammer**, that sadly too many problems seem to be **perceived as if they had the shape of nails**. As another example of the results of this, take a look at **Afghanistan**, where most of NATO’s “military-civilian” approaches in reality tended to become too much “military-more-military” approaches.

NATO is designed as a pure military organization, an by all means, militaries are (still) designed **only to destruct, not to construct**. NATO simply does **not have notable resources for civilian efforts** to go with its military efforts. In parallel to this, we regrettably also see in **the USA a very unfortunate long-term general tendency to militarize US foreign policy**, sometimes at the **expense of resources and focus for civilian** US foreign policy. Tools should be **designed for situations**, not the other way around. But instead of embarking on the long overdue redesign of the setting of NATO, a lot of western politicians instead sadly try to redesign perceptions of today’s security-realities in Europe, trying to make the modern world’s security perception look more like the old “them-or-us” type, which existed during the cold war. But there is a better road, which can be taken. The EU does have a **constructive other tradition** than NATO’s “all-out-war-preparedness” to build on, and the EU is still totally far from the over-militarized development path, which the USA unfortunately has taken. The EU has developed a **robust and broad civilian-oriented conflict management capability**. The EU already has quite a range of experience with **civilian “out-of-area” missions**. And the EU is already developing in a direction to integrate all these political management dimensions: The civilian capabilities, and now increasingly upcoming, also an EU military dimension.

We must remember, that military is politics with other means, and **military should not be a destructive stand-alone option**, but part of as a series of differentiated **political tools**. Not just a “hammer”, but very varying shades and shapes of tools, within a fully integrated political civil-military toolbox. It therefore can make enormous sense to **leave** the **NATO** fully over as a new institutional part of the EU. To enable the EU to manage the full range of all political dimensions, in case a non-European conflict might benefit from European assistance: military, civilian and economical.

**Civilian driven OOAs solve terrorism and African instability -- an EU with all policy tools is key.**

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Fresh trouble is brewing on Europe’s southern flank. Surges in migration and the spread of **jihadi groups** such as **Boko Haram** and **al-Qaeda** in the Islamic Maghreb in recent years have made European strategists nervous about **instability** in the Sahel and Horn of **Africa**. Germany, the Netherlands, and Nordic countries have sent peacekeepers to Mali. French commandos are tracking down jihadis across the Sahel. British troops are serving with the United Nations in South Sudan. European Union missions are training Malian and Somali soldiers and Nigerien police officers, while EU-flagged ships patrol the Mediterranean and the coast around the Horn of Africa looking for human traffickers and pirates. European governments and institutions have ploughed funds into UN agencies and looked to cut deals with African governments to stem migratory flows across the Sahara. Yet serious **violence persists** from Nigeria to the Sudans, **fuelling a humanitarian crisis that threatens to create more instability** on Europe’s borders.

UN officials have warned that northern Nigeria, South Sudan, and Somalia are all on the brink of famine.[1] A combined total of 25 million people need help in these three countries and the UN estimates that it requires $4.4 billion to deal with these immediate challenges and the parallel threat of famine in Yemen. The citizens of these countries are being displaced in numbers comparable to the mass flight from Syria, with two million internally displaced persons in northern Nigeria and over three million in South Sudan. Two million Somalis are either displaced inside the country or living in neighbouring countries.

If the **humanitarian situation** in one or more of these countries **deteriorates** in the short or medium term, the chances of large numbers of new **refugees and migrants** looking for ways to Europe will be high. The odds that recent EU efforts to bolster regional mechanisms will be able to handle the flow are uncertain. Even if human flows can be controlled, international donors will need to dig deep to find additional cash to address these four crises. As of mid-April, the UN had received only one-fifth of the funds it needs to manage them.[2]

The UN, already overstretched by the crisis in Syria, has been asking for record sums of around $20 billion a year to cover humanitarian needs.[3] Before he became secretary-general in late 2016, Antonio Guterres described the organisation’s relief efforts as “broke and failing”.[4] The UN’s latest calls for more money have, however, coincided with a series of threats from the new American administration to cut its contributions to multilateral activities by half or more. While this proposal has to be approved by Congress, it would create vast funding gaps for some of the biggest UN agencies that rely most heavily on aid from the United States. Washington gave a combined total of nearly $3.5 billion to the World Food Programme (WFP) and UN refugee agency (UNHCR) in 2016, representing about a third of the total budget. The EU institutions and Germany, the biggest individual European donor, gave about $1.2 billion each to the two institutions combined. Although EU members could fill the funding gap in theory, doing so would create financial and political strains for them at home. The EU’s high representative, Federica Mogherini, has warned that if the projected US cuts go through “certain regions of the world would get completely destabilised.”[5]

In sum, Europe faces a **humanitarian catastrophe** to its south, and just as its major ally is distancing itself from some of the multilateral organisations that are meant to mitigate such problems. Even if Congress does not enforce all the possible US cuts, it remains prudent to assume that the Trump administration will do as much as it can to avoid new humanitarian commitments in future. This is not only a test of Europe’s financial resources and humanitarian instincts. It is also a serious challenge to European crisis managers on the frontline.

The current humanitarian crises to Europe’s south mainly stem from **political instability and recurrent conflicts**. Despite the flurry of European efforts to boost security across the region, instability is likely to remain endemic for the foreseeable future. Large-scale UN-led and African-led peace operations have struggled to build order from Mali to Somalia. The decade-old blue helmet mission in Darfur, once the darling of humanitarian campaigners, appears to be especially vulnerable. UN aid workers, crisis managers, and even the secretary-general argue that it is no longer possible to mitigate the region’s conflicts and manage its fragility through reactive humanitarian deployments and stabilisation missions.

This report argues that European governments and **the EU as a whole need to invest** in more proactive efforts **to manage the sources of disorder** in the Sahel and the Horn of **Africa**. This means strengthening **European civilian crisis management mechanisms and missions** (defined in more detail below) and concentrating on **mediating recurrent conflicts** rather than simply trying to help African governments manage migrant flows better. In some cases, European crisis managers **should lead these political efforts** – and this is a field in which the United Kingdom and EU can continue to cooperate despite Brexit – but in others, UN officials and African diplomats are better placed take the lead. Even so, EU members can still **provide resources and diplomatic support** to help them tackle complex crises. **European support** to the UN and African Union will be even **more important** if the Trump administration insists on cutting back existing peacekeeping missions across the Sahel. There is both a **moral and political imperative** to ease the suffering to the south – and taking early steps to tackle these humanitarian crises is an opportunity to show that the EU has not entirely lost a sense of strategic purpose.

While addressing the challenges to Europe’s south requires a **range of policy tools** – ranging from basic food aid to military action – this report focuses on **civilian crisis management as an essential part** of the equation. ‘Civilian crisis management’ is a fairly expansive term: recent EU civilian missions have done everything from monitoring ceasefire lines in Georgia to helping boost security arrangements at South Sudan’s international airport. This report notes that, when it comes to the Sahel, the EU increasingly equates civilian crisis response with programmes to improve border management and policing mechanisms to minimise migration flows. But, while this sort of capacity-building may be useful, the report argues that it is also necessary to invest in politically focused crisis management, including: firstly, mediating in major conflicts and situations of lower-level violence; secondly, using political leverage and persuasion to get governments and rebel groups to allow aid into areas hit by humanitarian crises; and, thirdly, coordinating closely with other players, like the UN and the AU, to create strong diplomatic frameworks to **stop existing conflicts spreading and potential crises spinning out of control**.

Politically focused civilian crisis management is hard to deliver, and success is even harder to guarantee. But, as this report argues, it **is crucial to mitigating the cycles of violence** affecting the Sahel and Horn of Africa – without it, more technocratic assistance will be in vain.

**Al Qaeda and Boko Haram will get CBRNs -- causes existential WMD terrorism.**

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The end of the Cold War might have represented the end of mutually assured destruction (MAD), but it did not necessarily dispel the dangers of the nuclear age – in fact, to some extent the globalised proliferation of non-conventional weapons has instead escalated the possibilities for a nuclear attack being carried out. During the Cold War, the belligerents of any nuclear conflict would have been easily identifiable; however, in the post-Cold-War era, non-state actors and **terrorist** groups like **Boko Haram** have emerged as potential players in a new variety of **nuclear conflicts** that would entirely be based on terrorist models. The ominous possibilities for this new kind of warfare are indeed terrifying, and the rise in terrorist attacks around the globe enhances the likelihood of such an occurrence. Since 9/11, the body of academic literature on the threat posed by terrorists regarding weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) and chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) devices has increased. In Gary Ackerman and Jeremy Tamsett’s edited volume, Jihadists and Weapons of Mass Destruction, there is disagreement as to whether this threat is overestimated or underestimated.1 In recent times, however, ample ideological incentive for the use of **CBRN** devices has been provided by the likes of Abu Mus‘ab al-Suri – author of the ‘Global Islamic Resistance Call’ – who has stated that ‘[t]he aim of carrying out resistance missions and individual jihad terrorism “jihad al-irhabi al-fardi” is to inflict the largest human and material casualties possible on American interests and its allied countries’.2 This echoes the previous call of Grand Ayatollah Ahmad Husayni al-Baghdadi, who maintained:

If the objective and subjective conditions materialize, and there are soldiers, weapons, and money – even if this means using biological, chemical, and bacterial weapons – we will conquer the world, so that ‘There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is His Prophet’ will be triumphant over the domes of Moscow, Washington, and Paris.3

For Boko Haram and other groups, there definitely exists a strong motivation for the use of **WMDs**, and the global reach of this thinking is not in doubt:

The globalization of the jihadist struggle has also led to an increased emphasis on Islamic identity. In combination with the ideological theme of revenge, the global struggle for Islamic identity has the potential to create a new jihadist cultic worldview in which its endorsers seek out WMDs because they represent the only means to significantly transform reality.4

Contextual scenarios in Nigeria strongly suggest that Boko Haram is one such group which has embraced the jihadist world view that endorses the use of WMDs. In this regard, the strengthened affiliation of Boko Haram’s splinter group – the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) – with the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) confirms their ideological persuasions. The motivation for Boko Haram to use such weapons is thus grounded in the recent use of chemical weapons by ISIS in both Iraq and Syria against both military and civilian targets.5 If ISIS is claiming ownership of a faction of Boko Haram as its West African province, it is likely to extend its tactics to its African allies.

In the light of the above, the use of WMDs by terrorists cannot be explained within the framework of orthodox terrorism theories. With this in mind, what Russell Worth Parker refers to as the ‘Islamic just war theory’ suitably anchors a discourse on terrorism and advanced weapons of war.6 Most theorists do not support a subjective theory of ‘just war’, but rather the traditional version that relies on Western ideas of morality and proportionality, as well as on motives for waging war.7 On the other hand, jihadist traditions reinterpret just war’s key tenet of proportionality to suit Islamists’ conflict rationale. According to the Western form of just war theory, wherein discrimination proves strategically impossible, any response should be proportionate to the action that compels it – hence, proportionality dictates that a military operation should not cause greater harm than the act that it was designed to counter or prevent.8 This proportionality argument is exemplified in the use of nuclear weapons in the Second World War; since casualty estimates for an invasion of Japan exceeded one million Allied lives, with similar estimates for Japanese military and civilians, a nuclear attack was preferable. Eventually, the actual casualties suffered from the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki reached 200,000, which represents 10% of the casualties that would likely have been incurred if Japan had been invaded (see https://avalon.law.yale.edu/). In the light of this argument, justification for the use of WMDs by terrorist groups would rest on their interpretation of the extent of the damage caused by the military aggression and long-term imperialism of Western powers.

Fighting faceless enemies in a CBRN conflict, whether in West Africa or the Middle East, is hard to imagine. Enemies who can easily blend into the crowd and take on the face of ordinary civilians represent a nightmare scenario for security strategists all around the world. The risk of WMDs falling into the hands of terrorist groups is largely dependent on their ability to obtain weapons-grade nuclear material like uranium and plutonium, combined with gaining the capability to build and deploy weapons which make use of them. The global proliferation of nuclear material has made this possible today.

Global proliferation of fissile material

The collapse of the Soviet military-industrial complex ushered in a period of uncertainty regarding the security of nuclear material. Consequently, the risk of fissile material falling into the hands of terrorist groups – or into the hands of states that sympathise with or harbour such groups – increased considerably. Lax security at former Soviet nuclear facilities was widespread, making the theft of nuclear material possible. In the chaos that followed the Soviet collapse in the early 1990s, radioactive material was frequently stolen from poorly guarded reactors and nuclear facilities in Russia and its former satellite states. Police operations have intercepted shipments of Soviet nuclear material in cities as far away as Munich and Prague, and experts believe that large batches are still unaccounted for and most likely accessible to well-connected traders on the black market.9

Over 1800 metric tons of nuclear material is still stored in facilities belonging to more than 25 countries all around the world.10 Not all of this material is located in military stockpiles – in fact, most countries maintain civil stockpiles of plutonium for use in nuclear power reactors. The civil stockpiles in the United Kingdom (UK), India, Belgium, France, Germany, Japan and Russia add up to over 230 metric tons of plutonium. In spite of these enormous quantities, the UK, India, France, Japan and Russia have not yet reduced the reprocessing of plutonium for civil use. Although civil plutonium is not weapons-grade, it remains viable as a raw material that can be transformed through an enrichment process for use in a bomb. The United States (US) on the other hand has a comparatively small amount of civil plutonium because of its 1970 policy to suspend the separation of plutonium from spent nuclear fuel.11

About 25 kg of highly enriched uranium (HEU) is required to build a bomb – an insignificant amount in comparison to the global stockpile, which is in excess of 1.6 million kg. On the other hand, about 8 kg of plutonium is needed to build a bomb – a tiny fraction of the 500,000 kg global stockpile.12 Nuclear facilities that are relics of the Cold War era, especially those located in Eastern Europe, represent a high security risk. More than 130 nuclear reactors powered by HEU are operational in over 40 countries – the fallout of an early Cold-War-era programme in which the US and the Soviet Union helped their allies to obtain nuclear technology. Several other reactors have been shut down but may still contain nuclear fuel on site. In total, the world’s research reactors contain 22 tons of HEU – enough to build hundreds of nuclear bombs. The problem is that research reactor fuel tends to be stored under notoriously light security, making it a very vulnerable target for terrorists.13

In 2004, the US Government Accountability Office (GAO) published a report that details security lapses at civilian nuclear installations, citing a case in which the fences surrounding an unnamed foreign research reactor were in very poor condition and there were no guards securing the reactor building itself. In this report, Harvard expert Matthew Bunn explains that unlike the bulky and extremely radioactive fuel rods used in commercial nuclear power plants, research reactor fuel consists of small pellets that weigh only a few pounds each and moreover are easier to handle –a simple backpack can conceal several pellets.14 Naturally, civilian stockpiles are at greater risk of theft than those held in military installations. Consequently, the possibilities of such dangerous material falling into the hands of terrorists groups have become increasingly plausible.

Regarding military stockpiles, Russia and the US possess the largest amounts of weapons-grade plutonium – 100 and 150 metric tons, respectively. Diplomatic attempts aimed at reducing these stockpiles have resulted in an agreement for the two countries to dispose of 34 metric tons each via the method of turning the weapons-grade plutonium into fuel for nuclear power reactors. Although this agreement has not been effected yet, it is obvious given the above that the process may expose the material to greater risk of theft rather than securing it.15 On the other hand, in 2005 the US Congress eliminated the long-standing restrictions that were placed on the exporting of HEU to other countries for the purpose of manufacturing medical isotopes, which has also created new avenues for the proliferation of nuclear material through civilian use.16

Although the civilian use of nuclear material has increased the risk of its proliferation, the military facilities currently holding nuclear material around the world – especially in Russia – are also not well secured. Thousands of Cold-War-era tactical weapons are stored at very poorly guarded military installations, and most of these weapons are small and do not have electronic locks that prevent unauthorised usage.17 Since the collapse of the Soviet Union there has been no viable security strategy for securing the nuclear material contained in many of the former empire’s cities. During the Cold War era, the citizens of these cities had access to these facilities – and they still do, a problem further compounded by the fact that a strict inventory of the nuclear material contained in these facilities is not maintained.18

The likes of infamous arms dealer Leonid Minin (who was found guilty in a court of law for supplying weapons to non-state actors in African conflicts) are all too willing to do business with terrorists.19, 20 Arms dealers and smugglers all over the world are always seeking lucrative opportunities, and it is almost certain that some nuclear material has already been acquired by dangerous fanatics.

Several incidents in recent decades give every reason to believe that this is the case. In 1993, Kazakhstani authorities discovered HEU capable of arming 20 bombs in a building that was poorly secured.21 In 2006, Russian citizen Oleg Khinsagov was arrested in Georgia for carrying 100 g of HEU and attempting to find a buyer for what he claimed was many additional kilograms.22 In 2011, six men with 4 g of uranium were arrested by security forces in Moldova. Upon questioning, they claimed that the 4 g represented a sample of the product they were ready to market. They claimed to possess an additional 9kg, which represents one third of the quantity needed to create a nuclear weapon. The leader of this group and the North African buyer escaped.23 Four years before this incident, gunmen raided a facility in Pelindaba, South Africa; the details of the event are still shrouded in mystery.24

Efforts by terrorist organisations to **purchase and use nuclear weapons** continue unabated. The most high profile of these known efforts is that of Osama bin Laden, who in 2001 attempted to purchase a canister of uranium in Sudan for US$1.5 million. Intelligence reports claim that he also met with two Pakistani nuclear scientists, and sketches of nuclear weapons were found at an **al-Qaeda** training camp.25

From the foregoing, it is clear that there exists a robust and thriving black market in fissile material that seems to be tailor-made for use by terrorists groups. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) as at December 2015 had recorded in its trafficking database a total of 2889 incidents involving losses, thefts and/or attempts to traffic fissile material across international borders.26 This is an incredibly high rate of security lapses considering the security priority that nuclear facilities are supposed to possess. More pressing is the fact that the agency does not inspect every nuclear facility globally, and as such is not in a position to comprehensively enforce strict security and safety regulations. As a consequence of this, fissile material often goes missing and subsequently appears on the black market without being reported to the agency. Furthermore, several nations which maintain nuclear facilities do not possess the requisite resources to subject employees to the kind of extensive background checks that can ensure their trustworthiness for working at such high-security sites. In the absence of this screening, the likelihood of people with terrorist ties applying for jobs at nuclear facilities for the purpose of obtaining nuclear material is very high.

There is mounting evidence worldwide that increasing amounts of fissile material are being stolen and traded. Although the Russian government refuses to admit that it has lost any nuclear weapons, at least four Russian nuclear submarines have sunk, and it is believed that the warheads on board are yet to be recovered. The US on the other hand has admitted to losing a staggering 11 nuclear weapons.27

How can Boko Haram obtain nuclear material?

Boko Haram is one of the deadliest terrorist groups in the world. Since 2009, it has engaged with the Nigerian state in a lethal terrorism campaign aimed at toppling the secular structure and replacing it with an Islamist state. By May 2014 over 12,000 Nigerians had been killed in the insurgency,28 while one in five persons from Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states had been internally displaced. According to the 2017 Global Terrorism Index, Boko Haram ranks as the second deadliest terrorist group in the world, with an all-time high death toll of over 6000 in 2014 alone.29

With known ties to al-Qaeda, Boko Haram has an estimated annual income in excess of US$25 million.30 By 2017, Boko Haram had been forced to retreat from the large areas it had previously occupied in the north-east of Nigeria, driven back by the joint international military efforts of several countries in West and Central Africa. This created the need for them to reassert themselves. The likelihood of this group re-strategising and reconsolidating is high. Consequently, their acquisition of fissile material for the development and deployment of radiological ‘dirty bombs’ has increased in probability. The availability of this material on the continent and within Nigeria itself presents **ominous opportunities** for the group. Apart from large deposits of uranium ore found in Africa, several countries including South Africa, Morocco, Libya, Ghana, Egypt, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Nigeria itself presently possess nuclear research reactors.31

The IAEA has reported no less than 12 incidents of natural uranium smuggling between 1995 and 2005 in Africa alone. In fact, illegal uranium mining at the Shinkolobwe mine in Katanga, DRC is presently a source of great concern. More importantly, this is where the source material for the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombs was obtained.32 The proliferation of fissile material across the continent heightens the possibility of non-state actors like Boko Haram gaining access to it. Although there has only been one recorded theft of eight uranium fuel rods from a Kinshasa research reactor in 1997, the disturbing fact about this is that seven of the rods were never recovered.33

Within Nigeria itself, opportunities abound for terrorist groups like Boko Haram and other militant organisations to obtain fissile material for use in nuclear devices or dirty bombs. In 2004, Nigeria commissioned a 30-kW miniature neutron source reactor (NIRR-1) for the purpose of nuclear energy research.34 This nuclear facility is located at the Centre for Energy Research and Training at Ahmadu Bello University Zaria in the north of the country, where terrorist activities and Islamist extremism have been going on for centuries. The possibility of Islamist extremists infiltrating nuclear facilities and smuggling out fissile material has been an ongoing security concern for a number of years. An outright attack on a lightly secured facility is a second possibility that actually played out in 2007, when a nuclear research facility in Pelindaba, South Africa was raided by armed assailants, who breached its security perimeter and gained entry.35 Another concern is unsecured radioactive waste – namely 234 legacy sources presently located at the Ajaokuta Steel Company in Kogi State – that has not been disposed of and could easily be obtained by Boko Haram.36 To complicate matters further, the construction of a low to medium radioactive waste management facility at Nigeria’s Nuclear Technology Centre has been abandoned.37

Can Boko Haram build and use non-conventional weapons?

The poor state of nuclear security combined with the tenacity of Boko Haram makes Nigeria a prime location for the advent of nuclear terrorism. Knowhow on building a nuclear device is widely available, as is the key component, HEU, which can be found all over the world in dozens of military and civilian nuclear facilities – like the one at Ahmadu Bello University. Once Boko Haram has obtained enough HEU, a choice can be made between two types of nuclear device. The first is the gun-type mechanism, in which the HEU is smashed together to produce an explosion. The second type, which is more advanced, requires a chamber in which the HEU is compressed in a highly symmetrical manner in order to create an implosion. The gun-type mechanism is the more likely option for terrorist groups because it is simpler.38

In order to use the gun-type mechanism to activate a nuclear device, Boko Haram operatives would need to assemble a crude cannon that can smash HEU together – and the more highly enriched the uranium, the less advanced the weaponry that is needed. The viability of any terrorist group accomplishing such a task has been tested by US senator Joe Biden. In 2004 he asked scientists at three national laboratories to see if they could assemble the mechanical components of a gun-type bomb with commercially available equipment alone. A few months later, they reported back that they had succeeded.39 With over US$25 million in annual income, Boko Haram has the resources to obtain both the scientific knowhow and the materials needed to build and deploy a gun-type nuclear weapon.

Radiological dirty bombs

The threat of non-conventional weapons proliferation and terrorism goes beyond nuclear weapons – it also encompasses radiological dirty bombs. The raw materials used to create nuclear weapons are very dangerous; they contain highly radioactive substances that would pose a serious health hazard if dispersed in human populations using a detonation device. Plutonium and uranium could thus be weaponised in the form of a radiological dirty bomb, also known as a radiological dispersal device (RDD), which would cause widespread fatalities and cost billions of dollars in clean-up, evacuation and relocation operations.40

Terrorist groups like Boko Haram could easily build and use an RDD, given the widespread proliferation of fissile material – and more importantly given the dual-use materials that can produce the same radiological effects as fissile material from nuclear installations. Radiological dual-use materials from smoke alarms and medical services are among the most easily accessible; highly radioactive isotopes are in fact used in life-saving blood transfusions and cancer treatments in hospitals all around the world, including several in Nigeria. These isotopes include cesium-137, cobalt-60 and iridium-192, which can easily be used as base materials for a bomb or an RDD.41 The challenge is that most of the medical, commercial and industrial groups that handle these materials are not adequately equipped to provide the security needed to prevent them from being stolen. On the other hand, the lack of regulatory controls in many countries has led to thousands of instances of missing or stolen radiological material that cannot be accounted for. Recently, the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies found in an alarming study that 170 incidents where nuclear or radiological material was lost, stolen or outside regulatory control occurred in 2014 alone.42

RDDs are viable weapons for terrorist groups like Boko Haram to pursue – and terrorist states have also attempted to obtain them. On 28 March 2002, Abu Zubaydah – a key al-Qaeda operative – was captured in Pakistan. He is widely believed to have told US investigators that al-Qaeda was ‘interested’ in building or obtaining a dirty bomb. Further evidence emerged on 8 May 2002, when Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) agents arrested Abdullah al Muhajir on charges of planning a radiological attack in the US at the direction of al-Qaeda operatives.

States that sponsor and support terrorist groups are likely to pass on fissile and radiological material to them. Iraq under Saddam Hussein is known to have sought radiological material for this purpose. In 1987, Iraq tested a bomb weighing 1400 kg that carried radioactive particles derived from irradiated impurities in zirconium oxide. A further 100 prototypes were designed from the casings of Muthanna-3 aerial chemical bombs, which were then modified to a 400-kg weight so that aircraft could carry more of them. It is likely that only 25 of these prototypes were destroyed, and that the other 75 were sent to the Al Qa Qaa State Establishment, a massive Iraqi weapons facility; their current status and whereabouts remain unknown.43

Chemical and biological weapons

The most commonly used non-conventional weapons are chemical or biological in nature. The long history of chemical and biological weapons usage dates as far back as 600 BC when, during a siege, Solon of Athens poisoned the drinking water of the city of Kirrha.44 More recently – starting with the use of mustard gas during the First World War – nations have acquired chemical and biological weapons easily, deploying them against enemies and their own citizens alike. For terrorist groups like Boko Haram, **chemical and biological weapons** are uniquely suited to their agenda and as such present very attractive alternatives to nuclear; they are extremely difficult to detect, cost effective and easy to deploy. Aerosols of biological agents are invisible to the naked eye, silent, odourless, tasteless and relatively easily dispersed. Most importantly they are 600 to 2000 times cheaper than other WMDs. Recent estimates place the cost of biological weapons at about 0.05% of the cost of a conventional weapon which could produce similar numbers of mass casualties per square kilometre.45

The proliferation of chemical and biological weapons has proved to be very fluid over the past century due to advancements in technology. Production is comparatively easy via the commonplace technology that is used in the manufacturing of antibiotics, vaccines, foods and beverages, while delivery systems such as spray devices deployed from airplane, boat or car are widely available. Another advantage of biological agents is the natural lead time provided by the organism’s incubation period (three to seven days in most cases), allowing the terrorists to deploy the agent and then escape before an investigation by law enforcement and intelligence agencies can even begin. Furthermore, not only would the use of an endemic infectious agent likely cause initial confusion because of the difficulty of differentiating between a biological warfare attack and a natural epidemic, but with some agents the potential also exists for secondary or tertiary transmission from person to person or via natural vectors.46

Unlike their nuclear and radiological counterparts, biological and chemical weapons have been used for terrorism by both state and non-state actors. The challenges faced in preventing the use of these weapons through international control mechanisms include the increasing availability of larger quantities of substances, ease of use and most especially advanced technological deployment facilities that portend a high risk factor to larger populations. Table 1 catalogues the use of biochemical weapons in warfare and by terrorists and other groups or individuals over the past century, offering concrete historical precedent and empirical grounds for the potential future actions of Boko Haram. The data shows consistent recourse to the use of these weapons, in spite of the chemical and biological weapons conventions outlawing them. It can be seen that from the 1970s onwards there has been an increase in the use of biochemical weapons by religious cults and terrorist groups in pursuit of their agendas. The rise of Boko Haram and its ISIS affiliation could lead to a future where the use of biochemical weapons is the norm rather than the exception.

As stated previously, the contextual scenarios in Nigeria that validate this prognosis regarding Boko Haram’s possible actions are strongly supported by their ideological persuasions. The fact that Boko Haram embraces a jihadist world view which endorses the use of WMDs is strengthened not only by its affiliation to ISIS through ISWAP but also by the similarities in its strategic modus operandi. Like ISIS, Boko Haram both believes in the slaughter of other Muslims who are deemed to be in cahoots with infidels, and advocates for the destruction of civilian populations – whether Muslim or otherwise – that are regarded as obstructing the advancement or creation of their caliphate.47 This was practically demonstrated by ISIS in Syria and Iraq when they used chemical weapons against both civilian and military populations, as shown in Table 1.48

Nigeria’s counterterrorism strategy

The central control measure for preventing nuclear terrorism is to ensure at the international level that nuclear material does not fall into the hands of terrorist groups like Boko Haram and other non-state actors in the first place. This is very difficult to achieve, given the lax security measures found at nuclear installations all over the world. Recognising the danger, the US under the Obama administration committed in 2010 at a nuclear security summit in Washington DC to securing all nuclear material within four years in an effort to prevent nuclear terrorism.49 Nigeria was a participant of this summit and is also committed to implementing the agreements that were reached. These attempts by the Obama administration followed up on the efforts embedded in the landmark 1987 Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (CPPNM), which was meant to prevent nuclear material from being obtained by terrorists. The provisions of this convention were amended in 2005, and by 2010 the Washington summit had created the needed sense of urgency regarding the security of fissile material.50 Negotiations around the CPPNM started in 1979,51 and over the decades the growing proliferation of fissile material has combined with the increase in global terrorism to raise the profile of the issue of fissile material security. As of 2016, a total of 93 states including Nigeria had ratified the CPPNM, resulting in tighter security around the world at nuclear installations and border controls.

Nigeria has been engaged for decades in international efforts to control nuclear proliferation and terrorism. The country has ratified and acceded to over a dozen international instruments since 1963, including the Convention on Offences and Certain Other Acts Committed on Board Aircraft (1963), the CPPNM (1987), the Amendment to the CPPNM (2006) and the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism (2007).52 At the level of global collective security, Nigeria is involved in implementing the United Nations (UN) Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, which was adopted unanimously by the General Assembly in Resolution 60/288.53 At the regional and subregional levels, the counterterrorism strategies of the African Union (AU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) have been ratified and are in the process of being implemented. In pursuance of effecting these various international agreements, Nigeria has also instituted their National Counterterrorism Strategy (NACTEST), which was revised in 2016. Presently the country is also working with the UN Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF) on projects designed to build community resilience against terrorism, enhance cooperation among law enforcement agencies and strengthen judicial institutions.54

Towards an integrated chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) counterterrorism protocol

**The CBRN terrorism threat** in Nigeria **is** both **real and present**. The country has one of the highest rates of terrorist activities in the world; in fact, according to the 2016 Global Terrorism Index, Nigeria ranked third among 163 countries, with a terrorism death rate of 16.8% of the global total.55 Although attacks declined in 2017, Nigeria still retained third place on the Global Terrorism Index.56 Recently, Boko Haram has initiated a comeback that has seen renewed attacks and the abduction of more girls from schools in the north-east of the country. Security forces have continued to engage the group on the frontlines in their forest bases; with the assistance of local and international joint task forces, much of the conflict has been shifted to more remote areas in the north-east. Although the government security forces have gained the upper hand in their frontal clashes with Boko Haram forces, by January 2018 the group had successfully carried out several brutal assaults, including one on UN and Doctors Without Borders staff, shifting their strategy back to traditional hit-and-run guerrilla tactics. During Easter of the same year, a single attack utilising 5 suicide bombers resulted in over 29 dead and 84 wounded.57

The likelihood that Boko Haram may begin to use CBRN weapons is increasing, and biological and chemical terrorism is potentially more difficult to prevent than conventional terrorist attacks. Since the latter part of the twentieth century, the Internet has contributed to the spread of chemical and biological weapons knowhow, thereby increasing the likelihood of Boko Haram being able to obtain not only the ingredients needed to create biochemical weapons but also the information needed to build and successfully deploy them. Some of the base materials for such weapons even occur naturally, like castor beans, which can be processed to produce the dangerous toxin ricin and deployed against unsuspecting populations. Furthermore, live strains of very dangerous viruses like Ebola can be found in high-tech research labs, like those at the African Centre of Excellence for Genomics and Infectious Diseases (ACEGID) at the Redeemer’s University Ede in Osun State. If Boko Haram were to secure this virus and weaponise it, the age of biowarfare would arrive in Nigeria – with deadly consequences. More importantly, the materials that are needed to create most chemical weapons exist in large quantities as dual-use materials that can be purchased on the open market and ferried into the country via forged end-user certificates.

The chemical and biological weapons conventions represent control structures geared towards the containment of these non-conventional weapons, and to a large extent state signatories like Nigeria have implemented a good level of the instruments contained in them; however, some nations still maintain secret stockpiles and have used them in recent conflicts, like Iraq against Iran and Kurdish dissidents in the 1980s and 1990s, and the Syrian government, which is presently using them against its civilian population.

On the whole, the counterterrorism measures put in place to deal with the aftermath of a chemical or biological attack have gained more credibility in the international community. Although there is no dedicated international inter-agency mechanism for coordinating the response to terrorism involving the release of toxic chemicals or biological agents, there are mechanisms that have evolved in the context of humanitarian assistance and emergency response after natural catastrophes, such as earthquakes; these include the Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network (GOARN), the World Health Organization (WHO), the Global Early Warning System (GLEWS), the Global Framework for the Progressive Control of Transboundary Animal Diseases (GF-TAD) and the International Food Safety Authorities Network (INFOSAN). The primary inter-agency mechanism that coordinates responses to emergencies involving the agencies mentioned above is the UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC).58 To further strengthen inter-agency coordination in the wake of a terrorist attack of catastrophic proportions, the UN CTITF is also focusing on planning for such an eventuality.

At the local level, several key aspects of Nigeria’s NACTEST are presently being utilised. The strategy is divided into five work streams:

* Forestall: Prevent terrorism in Nigeria by engaging the public through sustained enlightenment and sensitisation campaigns and deradicalisation programmes.
* Secure: Ensure the protection of life, property and key national infrastructure and public services, including Nigerian interests around the world.
* Identify: Ensure that all terrorist acts are properly investigated, and that terrorists and their sponsors are brought to justice.
* Prepare: Prepare the populace so that the consequences of terrorist incidents can be mitigated.
* Implement: Devise a framework to effectively mobilise and sustain a coordinated, cross-governmental, population-centred effort.59

Presently, the first three aspects of these work streams are receiving full attention. However, in regard to WMDs, the counterterrorism strategy is lacking a well-integrated CBRN protocol for engaging with the work streams for preparation and implementation. Nigeria currently handles issues relating to nuclear and radiological matters through two institutions: the Nigerian Atomic Energy Agency (NAEC) and the Nigerian Nuclear Regulatory Authority (NNRA). It is therefore expected that, given the growing CBRN threat level in the country, these agencies will collaborate with the Office of the Security Adviser to the President in order to initiate a proper CBRN counterterrorism protocol.

The NACTEST does not currently include a dedicated protocol for handling CBRN threats; Nigeria is however involved in nuclear security at the international level, which has primarily provided for capacity-building and human resources development. Activities in these areas include the gradual process of converting the miniature neutron source reactor in Zaria from using HEU to low enriched uranium (LEU), partnerships for nuclear and radiological security with the US Department of Defence (DoD) and the IAEA, establishing a nuclear security support centre in the country, reviewing the 2012 design basis threat (DBT) for protecting nuclear and radiological material, the development of a programme for locating and securing orphan legacy radioactive sources, training security officers, the installation of a radiation portal monitor at the Murtala Muhammed International Airport in Lagos in 2008 and the acquisition of three more monitors for other international airports in the country.60

An integrated CBRN protocol would fall under the preparation and implementation work streams of the NACTEST. The protocol should include a strategy for detecting CBRN agents in the wake of terrorist events, followed by disaster response and countermeasure initiatives to be carried out by security, medical and disaster response teams. Given the availability of advanced technology, the integrated CBRN counterterrorism protocol should also include the deployment of handheld radiological and biochemical detectors to high-risk areas, and security forces and disaster response teams should be trained in their usage. Embedding a standard protocol in the NACTEST on how to prepare for and respond to CBRN events is essential for repositioning counterterrorist activities in the country to meet the present threat level. The US and Canada along with the UK and most other European countries facing CBRN threats have already repositioned accordingly in order to accommodate this new reality.

**Conclusion**

Any terrorist attack involving WMDs is the **ultimate nightmare scenario**. Fortunately, at least some of these potential attacks are preventable. If and when the nuclear security summit achieves its goals, the possibility of a nuclear terrorist attack in Nigeria will be immensely reduced. Unfortunately, the likelihood of radiological, chemical and biological attacks is more difficult to regress, making it all the more vital to integrate a CBRN protocol into Nigeria’s counterterrorism strategy.

Preventing such a tragic event from occurring will require very close ongoing monitoring of the strategic manoeuvrings of Boko Haram. From its inception to the present day, the organisation has depended on the looting of military armouries to source most of its heavy weapons and equipment. It has built up an impressive arsenal in this manner and there is no indication that the group will stop using this highly profitable strategy, which could be further employed to obtain advanced CBRN weaponry from facilities that are vulnerable to being raided. The civilian facilities mentioned in this paper are at high risk of being targeted in this fashion; hence, the recalibration of Nigeria’s CBRN counterterrorism protocols should include a security framework that provides military security for facilities like the ACEGID in Osun State and the Centre for Energy Research and Training at Ahmadu Bello University Zaria. Lastly, although the IAEA has assisted in the conversion of Nigeria’s reactor from HEU to LEU,61 the availability of fissile material at the facility means that the risk of radioactive dirty bombs being created from looted material is still present.

**2NC – Prolif Scenairo**

**AND EU non-prolif agenda prevents global instability -- specifically, Middle East and Asia wars**

Federica **Mogherini 18.** High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. “The EU as a Global Non-Proliferation Actor”. http://www.iai.it/sites/default/files/eunpd\_e-newsletter\_1.pdf

“In times of global uncertainty, the Euzropean Union has become a **global point of reference** for all those who believe in non-proliferation and multilateralism.

Our partners know where we stand. They know we are an honest broker, and we will always seek **win-win solutions to preserve peace and security**. And they know we have **world-class expertise on non-proliferation** – also thanks to the work of the European Network of Independent NonProliferation and Disarmament think-tanks. Independent analyses and recommendations are an essential contribution to our policy-making, so I am glad that the Council decided to extend our support to the network, also as a contribution to the implementation of the EU Strategy against **proliferation of weapons of mass destruction**.

This is a **delicate moment** for the global non-proliferation regime. The United States have decided to unilaterally re-impose sanctions on Iran, after their withdrawal from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action – a multilateral agreement endorsed by the UN Security Council. Our European strategic and security interest is clearly to save the nuclear deal. So we have reacted decisively to protect both our security interests and our economic sovereignty.

This is also an incentive for Iran to continue comply with its nuclear restrictions. Any alternative could have tragic consequences – and it would make all of us **less secure**, both **in Europe**, in **the United States and** in **the Middle East**. Let us not forget: the nuclear deal with Iran has **prevented a nuclear arms race** in one of the most fragile regions in the world; it has ensured that Iran cannot acquire a nuclear weapon; it has brought economic benefits to the people of Iran; and it has opened new channels for diplomacy and dialogue. Preserving the deal is in everyone's interest.

Preserving the deal is also essential to the credibility of multilateral diplomacy and the global nonproliferation regime. This is even more important as talks on the **North Korean nuclear programme** are ongoing. We have always believed that sustainable peace requires a complete, verifiable and irreversible **de-nuclearisation** of the Korean peninsula. The path will not be easy and negotiations could take time. But this is the only way to achieve an agreement that can stand the test of time. So our policy of "critical engagement" is more valid than ever. The European Union keeps standing for maximum pressure on North Korea, as we support the diplomatic track with all possible means.

**Only diplomacy and dialogue can advance the cause of non-proliferation**. We will continue to put our unparalleled expertise to the service of **peace**. From the **Middle East to Asia**-Pacific, from conventional to nuclear weapons, the European Union is playing its part. We owe it to our citizens and we owe it to the **world**.”

**Both are proliferating now---causes arms racing and extinction**

Dr. Richard **Haass 19**. President of the Council on Foreign Relations; Veteran diplomat, a prominent voice on American foreign policy, and an established leader of nonprofit institutions. "The Coming Nuclear Crises". Council on Foreign Relations. 11-18-2019. https://www.cfr.org/article/coming-nuclear-crises

Now, however, Iran has begun a slow but steady process of getting out from under many of the agreement’s limits. It may be doing this to persuade the US and Europe to ease economic sanctions. It may also be calculating that these steps could dramatically reduce the time it would need to produce nuclear weapons without being attacked. But it is at least as likely that Iran’s actions will lead the **US, or** more probably **Israel, to undertake a preventive strike** designed to destroy a significant part of its program.

Such a strike could lead several other regional powers, including **Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt**, to develop or acquire **nuclear weapons** of their own. Turkey, increasingly estranged from many of its allies, has suggested that it may choose to develop nuclear weapons regardless of what Iran does.

North Korea is far ahead of Iran: it already has several dozen nuclear weapons and missiles, has tested missiles that can reach the US, and is developing submarine-launched nuclear weapons. The notion that North Korea will agree to give up its weapons and “denuclearize” is fanciful. Its leader, Kim Jong-un, believes that only nuclear weapons can ensure his regime’s survival, a belief understandably strengthened by the experience of Ukraine, which accepted security guarantees in exchange for giving up the nuclear weapons it inherited from the Soviet Union, only to be invaded by Russia 25 years later.

One risk is that North Korea will over the next few years come to possess a significant arsenal that will pose a meaningful threat to the US. Another is that North Korea’s neighbors, including **South Korea and Japan, will determine that they**, too, **need nuclear weapons** given the North Korean threat and their diminished confidence in the reliability of the US and its guarantees to protect them with its nuclear forces.

The danger **in both regions** is that a race to acquire nuclear weapons could trigger a **preventive war**. Even if such a war were avoided, the presence of multiple nuclear arsenals would increase the temptation for one or more countries to **strike first** in a crisis. “**Use them or lose them**” has the potential to become a recipe for **instability and conflict** when capabilities are not sufficiently robust to absorb an attack and still be able to mete out the sort of devastating retaliation essential for effective deterrence.

**UQ**

**Proliferation now.**

Kartike **Garg 7-10**-2022. International Relations and Area Studies, School of International Studies. Rahul Jaybhay. "After Ukraine, Will More Countries Want Nukes?". National Interest. https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/after-ukraine-will-more-countries-want-nukes-203474. Pen-DL

With Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the **stability** of Europe has been **shattered**. After four months of the “special operation” launched by Vladimir Putin on February 24 to “demilitarize and de-nazify Ukraine,” the liberal international order is in disarray. The devastation in Ukraine with total casualties of more than 10,000 civilians and tens of thousands of soldiers has **resuscitated** the debate of whether **relinquishing** nuclear weapons landed Ukraine in this terrible situation.

In 1994, under the **Budapest** memorandum, Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan returned almost 2,000 nuclear weapons to Russia, although Ukraine never had operational control over the weapons. Politically, Ukraine’s decision to hand over nuclear weapons to Russia allowed Kyiv to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Russia would also likely have perceived Kyiv’s nuclear arsenal as a threat, inflating regional insecurities. More so, housing nukes could have attracted severe international economic punishment, which would have curtailed the prospects of Ukraine’s post-Cold War economic growth.

**However, today** Ukraine might be wondering whether keeping its nuclear weapons would have been a **better** idea. The West's **reticence** to provide **timely help** to Ukraine could be persuading **other states** to do so.

The West’s sympathy for Ukraine and support through sanctions on Russia shows an appreciation for Kyiv’s dire situation. But the West does not want to get too involved in the war or risk provoking Russia. Direct intervention would escalate the conflict, as the West’s involvement will be interpreted by Moscow as seeking a “total defeat” of Russia. The fear of getting entrapped in such a situation precludes NATO from providing full-fledged support to Ukraine. Since NATO military aid is still **inadequate**, though generous, it will embolden Ukraine to help itself and end up in the quest to acquire nuclear weapons.

Other states **are suspicious** of Washington’s **commitment to** keep them “dry” under the cover of its nuclear umbrella. As more states like Finland and Sweden join NATO, the reluctance of the United States “**to trade** New York” for Helsinki or Stockholm in a nuclear confrontation **will increase**. Fearing American abandonment, states like Germany and Japan that **already** maintain **latent nuclear** capabilities will **activate** them.

The neutral states turning to the West have increased Washington’s responsibility to navigate the risks posed by the Russo-Ukrainian War carefully. The West's disposition, ultimately, will be a litmus test of its credibility as a reliable partner. Failing to **assuage** their fears, the states observing the plight of Ukraine may **seriously consider** going nuclear. Sweden, by applying for NATO membership, is hedging against future risks. After World War II, Swedish policymakers discontinued the development of nukes due to domestic constraints. But the possibility of further Russian aggression and the fear of American abandonment will **compel** Sweden to resume its **dormant mission**.

Kyiv's vulnerability **is enough** to propel other states to pursue nuclear weapons as the **most strategic** optimal choice for **self-preservation**. Since nuclear weapons are a “defensive weapon **par excellence**”, Kyiv could have leveraged its nuclear capability to **blackmail** the Russian regime into backing down. If Russia failed to oblige, the threats of using nuclear weapons to inflict heavy damage on the other side would have been enough to discourage Russian aggression. Such coercive nuclear tactics are easily discernible in the case of North Korea, which has not shied away from invoking nuclear threats to achieve political objectives. **Today**, the lack of security assurances from NATO and the United States might drive Kyiv to find **solace** in nuclear weapons while also **emboldening** other states like **Japan** and **South Korea** to follow a **similar strategy**.

Despite Ukraine’s past decision to give up nuclear weapons, Kyiv may be wondering now about the fallacy of such a decision. Bearing the brunt of the invasion, Ukraine could have alerted Moscow by signaling its reliance on nuclear weapons. If threatened states, as Vipin Narang explained in his book Seeking the Bomb: Strategies of Nuclear Proliferation, anticipate the plausibility of coercion from other powers, they will pursue technical capabilities to develop a nuclear weapon no matter the challenges involved. Further, technological constraints **rarely obstruct** a state’s pursuit of nuclear weapons. States like **Syria,** **Taiwan**, and **South Africa** all tried to acquire nuclear weapons **clandestinely** by generating the necessary **technical** capabilities. Others failed, but South Africa **did succeed**. Nuclear weapons could have forestalled Russian aggression.

The whole Russia-Ukraine crisis has caught Washington between a rock and a hard place. Washington will **have to navigate** this geopolitical **tightrope** cautiously. Russian threats have **created anxiety** in most states, demanding a **more credible** commitment from the United States. While assurances may have mattered before, allies will now **demand** more tangible commitments. Failing to do that will **ensure** greater nuclear proliferation which may ensure peace but could also be more menacing if not handled responsibly.

**Nuclear Umbrella**

**UK can step up**

* Might have a france warrant too idk

**Bond 21** (Ian Bond, Ian holds an MA in classics from Oxford University. Ian Bond joined the Centre for European Reform as director of foreign policy in April 2013. Prior to that, he was a member of the British diplomatic service for 28 years. His most recent appointment was as political counsellor and joint head of the foreign and security policy group in the British Embassy, Washington (2007-12), where he focused on US foreign policy towards Europe, the former Soviet Union, Asia and Africa. He was British Ambassador to Latvia from 2005-07, receiving a CVO (Commander of the Royal Victorian Order) for his work on the Queen’s state visit in 2006. “BRIDGING THE CHANNEL: THE UK'S NUCLEAR DETERRENT AND ITS ROLE IN EUROPEAN SECURITY”, https://www.cer.org.uk/publications/archive/policy-brief/2021/bridging-channel-nuclear-deterrent)LR

In March 2021, the UK announced that after three decades of reducing its nuclear weapons stockpile, the number of nuclear warheads would begin to increase. The UK also reiterated its long-standing positions that all its nuclear weapons would be committed to NATO – that is, available for use at the request of NATO’s Supreme Allied Commander Europe (the alliance’s most senior military commander); and that they would only be used “in extreme circumstances of self-defence, including the defence of our NATO Allies”.1 In other words, as during the Cold War, the UK accepts the possibility, however remote, of suffering a nuclear strike on its own territory in retaliation for a British nuclear strike carried out in defence of other countries that do not have their own nuclear weapons. The UK’s European allies ought to be grateful for the UK’s willingness to bear such risks on their behalf. But it seems that not all of them see this policy as credible. The UK has largely succeeded in keeping its defence relationships with European allies separate from Brexit-related tensions, but there are concerns among NATO partners about future UK intentions towards the continent of Europe. Though UK nuclear forces have been committed to NATO since the early 1960s, there has been little debate in recent years about what that commitment means in concrete terms, either in the UK or in allied countries. That needs to change: the UK needs to show how its deterrent fits into Europe’s changing security environment, and reassure its allies that its commitment is not just rhetorical. This paper explores how the UK thinks about its nuclear weapons, both as the ultimate guarantee of its national security and as components in NATO’s deterrent posture; and how European allies see the UK’s nuclear deterrent, including in the context of Britain’s overall commitment to defending NATO territory. It looks at the roles played by the UK and French deterrents. And it makes recommendations for improving UK messaging on nuclear issues. Despite the increased warhead ceiling, the main principles of the UK’s nuclear policy have not changed since the then Labour government set them out in 2006, as part of the case for procuring new submarines: The focus is on preventing nuclear attack. The weapons are not designed for war-fighting. The UK will only retain the minimum amount of destructive power needed to achieve its deterrence objectives. The bigger stockpile is said to reflect a changed calculation of the number of warheads needed for that purpose. The UK will maintain ambiguity about when, how and at what scale it might use nuclear weapons. In particular, it will not exclude the first use of nuclear weapons. Except when (undefined) supreme national interests are at stake, the UK’s nuclear weapons will be used exclusively for the defence of NATO.3 Most Western European allies – including those who operate aircraft carrying US nuclear bombs – are more focused on arms control than deterrence, and hope that Biden’s support for further nuclear negotiations with Russia will help them to deal with domestic political opposition to the presence of US nuclear weapons in Europe. Some of them face considerable domestic pressure to sign up to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW – which entered into force in January 2021). Norway, Slovenia and the Netherlands were involved in various stages of the negotiation of the treaty, though none ultimately signed it. The alliance, however, issued a statement in December 2020 stating its opposition to the treaty “as it does not reflect the increasingly challenging international security environment”.6 Despite this, the new Labour-led coalition government in Norway has said that it will attend the next conference of parties to the TPNW, while the Belgian coalition government that took office in 2020 is committed to exploring how the treaty “can give new impetus to multilateral nuclear disarmament”.7 As NATO works on its new Strategic Concept, due to be adopted at a summit in 2022, these differences among allies which want to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in NATO and those that support a strong nuclear deterrent may come to the fore. Complicating the debate on NATO’s future nuclear strategy is the parallel debate in the US on its national nuclear posture review. The last review was published in 2018, under Donald Trump, and it made more explicit than the Obama administration’s 2010 review that the US might use nuclear weapons first in a conflict, in extreme circumstances which “could include significant non-nuclear strategic attacks”.15 Indeed, the review firmly rejected a shift to a ‘no first use’ policy. The Biden administration is now engaged in its own nuclear posture review, due to be completed in 2022. When he was running for office, Biden argued that “the sole purpose of the US nuclear arsenal should be deterring – and, if necessary, retaliating against – a nuclear attack” – a policy that the Obama administration said conditions did not allow it to adopt in 2010.16 While such a policy would fall short of a full commitment never to use nuclear weapons first, sought by some arms control advocates, it would imply that an adversary could launch a conventional attack with a high degree of confidence that the US would not respond with nuclear weapons. That might win Biden plaudits with the incoming German coalition and in some other Western European countries, but it would add to a perception in Poland and other parts of Central Europe that the US is disarming itself. America’s allies in Europe and Asia – including the UK and France – are reportedly lobbying against any change in US policy.17 The UK has allowed discussion of the nuclear section of the integrated review to focus almost entirely on the increase in its warhead stockpile. But it has the opportunity to leverage its deterrent to reinforce security ties with its European partners, provided it can get the messaging right. The UK needs to ensure that its commitment to use its nuclear weapons to deter and if necessary respond to attacks on its allies is understood and believed by those most exposed to Russian pressure. This is partly a matter of regularly putting it into speaking notes for high-level contacts with Central and Eastern European foreign and defence ministries, and partly a matter of outreach to the small number of experts who follow nuclear issues in the region, to allay their concerns about the UK’s commitment.

**RCA**

**Support for Ukraine only emboldens the RCA alliance**

Dr Karin **von Hippel** **and** Lt Gen (Ret'd) Sir Robert **Fry** 19 July **2022** Prior to that, she co-directed the Post-Conflict Reconstruction Project at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, DC and was a senior research fellow at the Centre for Defence Studies, King’s College London. She has also worked for the United Nations and the European Union in Somalia and Kosovo, and has direct experience in over two dozen conflict zones. Sir Robert completed a full military career that included posts as Commandant General of the Royal Marines and Director of Operations in the MoD, advising successive Prime Ministers on the response to 9/11. After leaving military service in 2007 he became CEO of Hewlett Packard’s defence and security business. In 2011 he became chairman of Albany Associates, a company specialising in communications in the most challenging environments. In addition, he advises a number of companies in the security, communications and banking sectors.

The Ukraine war has further entrenched and exacerbated the geopolitical rivalry between the West and the Russia–China camp. This new 'Superpower Plus' clash leaves the so-called ‘Rest’ in a difficult position, with some countries feeling pressure to choose sides, and others trying to remain neutral. Worryingly, many are leaning closer to the Russia–China position than the West. In the [2 March vote at the UN General Assembly](https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/03/1113152), 141 countries ‘deplored the aggression’ committed by Russia against Ukraine, with five votes against (not surprisingly, these were Belarus, Eritrea, North Korea, Syria and, of course, Russia). But 35 countries abstained, indicating tacit support for Russia, and these votes came from across the globe: from El Salvador to Equatorial Guinea to Namibia to Mongolia. The abstainers also represent places that will be significantly impacted by the negative spill-over from the war, whether in terms of food scarcity, prohibitive energy prices, supply chain blockages or rising inflation, which could lead to a global recession and new refugee flows. Many in the Global South simply do not share the sense of moral outrage and strategic threat that is felt in the Euro-Atlantic bubble. ‘It’s not our war, it’s a European problem’ and ‘what about the many conflicts on our continent that you ignored?’ [sums up the prevailing mood](https://www.politico.com/news/magazine/2022/05/25/ukraine-sidelines-regional-not-global-conflict-00034793). American and European governments preoccupied by maintaining a coalition at the same time as handling pressing domestic issues have come late to understanding the implications of this. While they congratulate themselves on the tactical impact of weapons they are supplying to Ukraine, Western powers are only now registering the strategic impact of losing the battle between competing narratives. And this matters, because the political and intellectual isolation of the West will serve only to break apart an already fragile coalition into its parochially minded constituent parts. It will also leave the way open for naked aggression to be rewarded, and repeated. Significantly, it would mark the reversion to an international system dominated by power blocs and the inherent tensions that accompany this. The evidence for the loss of the narrative battle is there in plain sight, especially among the ‘Rest’. [Ukraine no longer dominates the news agenda](https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/digital-news-report/2022/perceptions-media-coverage-war-Ukraine), and the recurring theme globally is a negotiated end to the conflict on Russian terms, rather than the defeat of Russian forces. Perversely, fighting in the south and east of Ukraine does not elicit the outrage that the failed seizure of Kyiv provoked; indeed, it is in danger of becoming normalised. At the same time, Russian accusations that the West and NATO are responsible for the growing food crisis because of Western sanctions are cutting through to audiences outside the Euro-Atlantic bubble – as is Russian leverage of the European colonial legacy, casting the war in Ukraine as a struggle against NATO neo-imperialism. News of Russian losses is filtering through to the Russian domestic audience, and there is some evidence of reserves trying to avoid military service. However, independent and usually reliable sources, like the [Levada Center](http://www.levada.ru/), suggest support for the war in Russia is running at over 80% of those polled. While conventional news coverage globally is increasingly patchy, the Russian narrative dominates discussion on a number of key social media platforms, at home and internationally. The Russians have proven themselves adept at the sort of disinformation techniques that mask war crimes and reframe them as Ukrainian false flag attacks aimed at discrediting the Russian army. While these tactics may look crude, they are capable of engaging audiences that trust neither conventional media nor government-sanctioned statements. Overall, Russia's leadership has reason to feel confident that the ‘Rest’ is with them, as the West is being subsumed by political chaos caused by inflation and the energy and food crises, to the extent that it will eventually accept a compromise solution dictated on Russian terms. The acceptance of such a compromise could only be seen as a Russian victory, which would change the terms of strategic engagement between the Russia–China axis, the West and the 'Rest', and perhaps encourage the sort of adventurism of which the invasion of Ukraine has been a seminal example. So, how is the West to regain the initiative in the contest of narratives? Perhaps the first requirement is to recognise the different audiences that need to be engaged and the different messages that need to be conveyed to them. For the Euro-Atlantic audience, the priority should be to counter the acceptability of a forever war and seek a decisive outcome in the short term. For the Russian audience, the challenge is how to widen the existing cracks in civil society and attack the morale of the Russian army. For the strategically decisive audience in the Global South, the focus should be on exposing misinformation about the causes of the war, to constantly restate Ukraine’s legitimacy as an independent entity, and to reveal Russia’s culpability in the food crisis, along with its pervasive attacks on civilians. This could include a reminder and amplification of Kenyan Ambassador to the UN Martin Kimani’s [warnings at a Security Council debate](https://www.npr.org/2022/02/22/1082334172/kenya-security-council-russia) just days before the Russian invasion, when he decried Russian recognition of the breakaway republics in the east of Ukraine, pointing to his country’s own experience with colonialism. The second requirement is to figure out how this will be achieved, which will need some innovative thinking. First up is a reboot of Ukraine’s strategic narrative. The current script of heroic Ukrainians, sustained by Western logistic support, out-thinking and out-fighting Russia is untenable in that it implies a status quo that can be maintained indefinitely. A new script should identify the global consequences of the war – energy, food and economic crises – and reject the appeasement that will only perpetuate them. It will not be enough to rely on a traditional news-based methodology to deliver this. The ‘Rest’, in particular, consists of demographically young societies, and – like the young everywhere – they do not consume information in traditional ways. To tell Ukraine’s story will require far smarter application of user-generated material and ways of identifying the organic social networks that share and spread them. In Africa, this will probably be based around the ubiquity of mobile phone networks; in India, around proliferating local wireless systems. And it will need to be done at scale. The traditional and rather bespoke techniques of government communication will need to borrow from the industrial heft and ambition of corporate marketing if they are to deliver global effect. This might take us in unexpected directions. For example, online games can promote the organic development and sharing of compelling memes, tropes and influencer commentary that has the feel of popular authenticity rather than the manufactured texture of official statements. While gaming might sound like a deeply improbable instrument of strategic communications, it does provide a direct channel to gamers. Advertisers sell commercial products by this route every day; why can’t we communicate political messages in the same way? It would be easy to dismiss the triviality of, for example, TikTok, but considering the huge volume of user-generated material it attracts, especially when content simply captures the zeitgeist and goes viral, that is the effect we need to replicate. Returning to more conventional methods of exerting influence, the one country that has fully aligned with Russia – China – is also the one that has a clear opportunity to burnish its credentials as a positive actor on the international stage, by encouraging Russia in the direction of moderation. Not only is President Xi Jinping the only leader Putin might listen to, but he is also a voice guaranteed to resonate among the ‘Rest’. Doing so would also significantly improve the current frosty standoff between the US and China, and contribute to a course correction in relations. Only the Ukrainians can decide when they will come to the negotiating table and what they might be willing to concede – a situation recognised and accepted by Western governments. Those same Western governments can, however, go some way to shaping the strategic context with more effective engagement of the ‘Rest’, a constituency they neglect at their peril.