Shut the Door: The Case Against NATO Expansion

By “Coach Vance” Trefethen

***Resolved: The United States Federal Government should substantially reform its policy towards one or more countries in Europe***

This case has the United States revoke and veto any invitations NATO may want to extend to other European nations (like Bosnia, Georgia, Ukraine, Sweden and Finland). Adding more nations to NATO is a terrible idea, and the discussion of NATO expansion is partly to blame for the Ukraine war, which itself fueling discussion of NATO expansion. The plan is topical because, although NATO contains one non-European country besides the US (Canada), this plan's policy is only directed at new European countries that might want to join NATO. The NATO charter (Article 10) says NATO is only open for new applications from European countries, so by NATO's definitions, new memberships (now that Canada and the US are already in) can only come from Europe. By NATO rules, the US could not unilaterally (all by itself) bring another country into NATO, because it requires unanimous agreement of all existing NATO members. However, the US could unilaterally block any new members from joining (because if the US says "no," then there can't be unanimous agreement to accept a new member).

OBSERVATION 1. DEFINITIONS & TOPICALITY 3

Substantial 3

Policy 3

NATO 3

NATO Expansion: A policy directed solely towards European countries 3

OBSERVATION 2. INHERENCY, or facts about the conditions of the Status Quo. 3

FACT 1. The Open Door 3

The United States antagonizes Russia by insisting on the open door NATO expansion policy 3

FACT 2. Committed to Expansion 4

Tbe US is committed to advocating expansion of NATO to additional European countries 4

OBSERVATION 3. HARMS. US policy promoting NATO expansion produces 3 HARMS 4

HARM 1. European Conflict. Discussion of NATO expansion fuels east European conflict. We see this in 2 examples 4

A. Georgia 4

B. Ukraine 4

HARM 2. Additional European security risks 5

Countries that talk about joining NATO are in greater danger, because they aggravate tensions with Putin 5

HARM 3. Nuclear risk 5

NATO expansion creates new challenges that would increase the threat of nuclear weapons in Europe 5

OBSERVATION 3. The Plan, implemented by the President and the Secretary of State 5

OBSERVATION 4. ADVANTAGES 6

ADVANTAGE 1. Reduce conflict with Russia 6

Now is the time to pull back from further hostilities with Russia by rejecting further NATO expansion 6

ADVANTAGE 2. Reduced risk of nuclear war 6

Blocking further NATO expansion reduces the risk of nuclear war in Europe 6

2A Evidence: Block NATO Expansion 7

INHERENCY 7

Five European countries are trying to join NATO 7

NATO said they're going to admit Georgia and Ukraine - and that frightens Russia 7

NATO says Ukraine and Georgia will become members - and that crosses a "red line" for Russia 7

Biden is all in favor of NATO expansion and announced support for Finland & Sweden 7

A/T "Turkey blocks Finland & Sweden" - They lifted their objection. F & S are proceeding into NATO 8

HARMS / SIGNIFICANCE 8

NATO expansion played a big role in motivating Russian invasion of Ukraine 8

NATO expansion is responsible for bad relations with Russia and motivated the Ukraine invasion 8

The NATO "Open Door" policy maximizes friction with Russia 9

NATO expansion caused the mess in Ukraine, and lots of analysts predicted it 9

Russia cannot back down on Ukraine: They consider it essential to their national security 9

A/T "They're not actually joining NATO any time soon" - Just talking about it triggers the harms 9

A/T "NATO's just a pretext - Putin has other issues" - Even if so, we should still worry about NATO expansion 10

Discussing, advocating, and then not granting Ukraine NATO membership created the mess we're in now 10

Russia vows retaliation if Sweden & Finland join NATO 10

Finland & Sweden would give net negative results for NATO: They add more cost than benefit 10

Sweden & Finland would destabilize the region and create unnecessary nuclear risks with no security benefit 11

SOLVENCY / ADVOCACY 11

Biden's CIA Director has been warning for years that NATO expansion provokes military response from Russia 11

Experts knew NATO expansion was a bad idea when we first started expanding it 11

If only we'd listened: 50 foreign policy experts told Pres. Clinton in '97 that NATO expansion would upset European stability 12

Admitting Finland to NATO would have costs that outweigh any benefits 12

US should oppose Finland joining NATO 12

Blocking NATO expansion would reduce tensions with Russia 12

We don't owe other nations membership in NATO - and we should stop inviting more 13

DISADVANTAGE RESPONSES 13

A/T "Ukraine invasion justifies NATO expansion" - Turn: It weakens Russia and makes attack elsewhere less likely 13

A/T "Ukraine invasion proves Russian threat" - Turn: It proves Russian incompetence and lack of threat 13

A/T "Sweden & Finland" - Not a problem, neither would suffer from not being in NATO 13

A/T "European Security" - Turn: "NOT" bringing countries into NATO is better for security because NATO incentivizes them to reduce defense spending 14

No US national security benefit to adding Finland & Sweden to NATO 14

No threat to US national security if we don't expand NATO 14

No threat to European security if we don't expand NATO: They can and will defend themselves, and we should let them 14

Shut the Door: The Case Against NATO Expansion

Whenever a fire is raging, pouring gasoline on it is certainly the wrong way to put it out. The war in Ukraine is a raging fire, but our response to it, advocating expansion of NATO, makes it worse. And it's not just expanding NATO that makes things worse, but simply the US policy of talking about and advocating for the expansion of NATO. That’s why my partner and I are affirming that The United States Federal Government should substantially reform its policy towards one or more countries in Europe.

OBSERVATION 1. DEFINITIONS & TOPICALITY

Substantial

Merriam Webster Online Dictionary copyright 2022. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/substantial> (accessed 5 Aug 2022)

**:**[IMPORTANT](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/important), [ESSENTIAL](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/essential)

Policy

Merriam Webster Online Dictionary copyright 2022. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/policy> (accessed 10 May 2022)

a high-level overall plan embracing the general goals and acceptable procedures especially of a governmental body

NATO

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NATO Expansion: A policy directed solely towards European countries

Article 10 of the North Atlantic Treaty, originally written in April 1949. <https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_17120.htm> (accessed 16 June 2022)

The Parties may, by unanimous agreement, invite any other European State in a position to further the principles of this Treaty and to contribute to the security of the North Atlantic area to accede to this Treaty

OBSERVATION 2. INHERENCY, or facts about the conditions of the Status Quo.

FACT 1. The Open Door

The United States antagonizes Russia by insisting on the open door NATO expansion policy

Jonathan Guyer 2022 (Senior Foreign Policy Writer for Vox) " How America’s NATO expansion obsession plays into the Ukraine crisis" 27 Jan 2022 <https://www.vox.com/22900113/nato-ukraine-russia-crisis-clinton-expansion> (accessed 16 June 2022)

When tens of thousands of Russian troops started moving toward the Ukrainian border late last year, Russian President Vladimir Putin [effectively issued an ultimatum:](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/12/01/world/europe/putin-nato-russia-ukraine.html) They won’t go home until he had “concrete agreements prohibiting any further eastward expansion of NATO.” This week, as the US and Russia exchange formal diplomatic letters, Secretary of State Antony Blinken emphasized that “NATO’s door is open, remains open, and that is our commitment.”

FACT 2. Committed to Expansion

Tbe US is committed to advocating expansion of NATO to additional European countries

Jonathan Guyer 2022 (Senior Foreign Policy Writer for Vox) " How America’s NATO expansion obsession plays into the Ukraine crisis" 27 Jan 2022 <https://www.vox.com/22900113/nato-ukraine-russia-crisis-clinton-expansion> (accessed 16 June 2022)

Now, America’s foreign policy establishment is dominated by people who are even more committed to the alliance’s power than those who saved it in the 1990s. NATO’s existence and enlargement is a baseline assumption. Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, and Ukraine aspire to join. That has consequences. James Dobbins, who served as a senior diplomat in Europe during the ’90s and 2000s, says that a commitment to NATO expansion has limited Biden’s options. “It’s particularly out of tune — the idea that the United States should expand its defense perimeter to a half-dozen countries in Europe, when we should be shifting our focus on China,” Dobbins said.

OBSERVATION 3. HARMS. US policy promoting NATO expansion produces 3 HARMS

HARM 1. European Conflict. Discussion of NATO expansion fuels east European conflict. We see this in 2 examples

A. Georgia

Gregoire Sauvage 2022 (journalist) 30 Jan 2022 "Did NATO ‘betray’ Russia by expanding to the East?" <https://www.france24.com/en/russia/20220130-did-nato-betray-russia-by-expanding-to-the-east> (accessed 16 June 2022)

For many years, the question of NATO enlargement has fuelled tensions between the United States and its allies, on the one side, and Russia on the other. In August 2008, Georgia's NATO and EU ambitions helped prompt Moscow to back pro-Russian separatists in Georgia’s self-proclaimed autonomous republics of South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

B. Ukraine

Ted Galen Carpenter 2022. (senior fellow for defense and foreign policy studies at the Cato Institute) "Many predicted Nato expansion would lead to war. Those warnings were ignored" 28 Feb 2022 <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/feb/28/nato-expansion-war-russia-ukraine> (accessed 16 June 2022)

Could the Ukraine crisis have been avoided? Events during the past few months constituted the last chance to avoid a hot war in eastern Europe. Putin demanded that Nato provide [guarantees on several security issues](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/12/17/world/europe/russia-nato-security-deal.html). Specifically, the Kremlin wanted binding assurances that the alliance would reduce the scope of its growing military presence in eastern Europe and would never offer membership to Ukraine. He backed up those demands with a massive military buildup on Ukraine’s borders. The Biden administration’s response to Russia’s quest for meaningful western concessions and security guarantees was tepid and evasive. Putin then clearly decided to escalate matters. Washington’s attempt to make [Ukraine](https://www.theguardian.com/world/ukraine) a Nato political and military pawn (even absent the country’s formal membership in the alliance) may end up costing the Ukrainian people dearly.

HARM 2. Additional European security risks

Countries that talk about joining NATO are in greater danger, because they aggravate tensions with Putin

Prof. Ronald Suny 2022 (prof. of history & political science, Univ of Michigan) 28 Feb 2022 " **Ukraine war follows decades of warnings that NATO expansion into Eastern Europe could provoke Russia"** <https://theconversation.com/ukraine-war-follows-decades-of-warnings-that-nato-expansion-into-eastern-europe-could-provoke-russia-177999> (accessed 16 June 2022)

Leaders like Putin who feel cornered and ignored may strike out. He has already threatened [“military and political consequences” if the currently neutral Finland and Sweden](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-10553723/Putin-turns-attention-Finland-Sweden-Kremlin-official-warns-nations.html) attempt to join NATO. Paradoxically, NATO has endangered small countries on the border of Russia, as [Georgia learned in 2008](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2022/02/24/ex-georgia-president-saakashvili-lessons-georgia-2008-invasion-ukraine/), that aspire to join the alliance.

HARM 3. Nuclear risk

NATO expansion creates new challenges that would increase the threat of nuclear weapons in Europe

Doug Bandow 2022. (J.D.; senior fellow at the Cato Institute, specializing in foreign policy and civil liberties. He worked as special assistant to President Ronald Reagan ) 22 Apr 2022 "Nine Reasons Why NATO Should Close the Door to Sweden and Finland" <https://www.cato.org/commentary/nine-reasons-why-nato-should-close-door-sweden-finland> (accessed 16 June 2022)

**Since including the two states would address no Russian threat to existing members, doing so would be seen as threatening by Moscow**. Indeed, Finland provides another route to St. Petersburg, with the Finnish border little more than 100 miles away. [Warned long‐​time Putin ally](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/04/14/russia-baltic-nuclear-deployment-finland-sweden-nato/) Dmitry Medvedev: “If Sweden and Finland join NATO, the length of the land borders of the alliance with the Russian Federation will more than double. Naturally, these boundaries will have to be strengthened.” Meaning that Moscow likely would rely on America’s Cold War policy of [“massive retaliation,”](https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/dulles-announces-policy-of-massive-retaliation) using nuclear weapons to cover conventional weakness.

OBSERVATION 3. The Plan, implemented by the President and the Secretary of State

1. The United States drop its policy of encouraging NATO expansion and replaces it with a policy declaring opposition to any further expansion of NATO.

2. Enforcement through the US Ambassador to NATO and the US Senate. The Ambassador will vote NO to any request for any European nation to begin, continue or finalize the process of joining NATO. The Senate will refuse to ratify any treaty accepting new members into NATO.

3. Funding from general federal revenues to pay for electricity for emails and paper for press releases announcing the new policy, along with any transportation needed for the US Ambassador to NATO to attend meetings where he will vote NO.

4. Plan takes effect the day after an Affirmative ballot.

5. All Affirmative speeches may clarify.

OBSERVATION 4. ADVANTAGES

ADVANTAGE 1. Reduce conflict with Russia

Now is the time to pull back from further hostilities with Russia by rejecting further NATO expansion

Doug Bandow 2022. (J.D.; senior fellow at the Cato Institute, specializing in foreign policy and civil liberties. He worked as special assistant to President Ronald Reagan ) 22 Apr 2022 "Nine Reasons Why NATO Should Close the Door to Sweden and Finland" <https://www.cato.org/commentary/nine-reasons-why-nato-should-close-door-sweden-finland> (accessed 16 June 2022)

**Although further expanding NATO might appear to be an appropriate riposte to Moscow’s invasion of Ukraine, doing so would reinforce the security fears which animated Russia’s aggressive policy against both Georgia and Ukraine.** Despite the Washington Blob’s blithe denial that U.S. policy had anything to do with Russia’s actions, the allies [recklessly violated](https://www.theamericanconservative.com/articles/we-poked-the-bear/) their assurances that NATO would not expand, conducted aggressive military operations undermining Russian interests, and promoted regime change against Russo‐​friendly governments. Had Moscow acted similarly in Latin America the U.S. would have threatened war. Further deepening Europe’s division with Finland’s and Sweden’s inclusion would exacerbate already deepening hostilities.

ADVANTAGE 2. Reduced risk of nuclear war

Blocking further NATO expansion reduces the risk of nuclear war in Europe

Doug Bandow 2022. (J.D.; senior fellow at the Cato Institute, specializing in foreign policy and civil liberties. He worked as special assistant to President Ronald Reagan ) 22 Apr 2022 "Nine Reasons Why NATO Should Close the Door to Sweden and Finland" <https://www.cato.org/commentary/nine-reasons-why-nato-should-close-door-sweden-finland> (accessed 16 June 2022)

The Russian attack on Ukraine offers a stark reminder that Washington should stop distributing security guarantees like candy to children. The allies did not bring Kyiv into NATO because they had no reason to defend it, risking war, especially one that could go nuclear. The same rationale applies to Finland and Sweden.

2A Evidence: Block NATO Expansion

INHERENCY

Five European countries are trying to join NATO

North Atlantic Treaty Organization 2022 (NATO official website) last updated 10 June 2022 Enlargement and Article 10 <https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_49212.htm> (accessed 18 June 2022)

NATO’s door remains open to any European country in a position to undertake the commitments and obligations of membership, and contribute to security in the Euro-Atlantic area. Since 1949, NATO’s membership has increased from 12 to 30 countries through eight rounds of enlargement. Currently, five partner countries have declared their aspirations to NATO membership: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Finland, Georgia, Sweden and Ukraine.

NATO said they're going to admit Georgia and Ukraine - and that frightens Russia

Jonathan Masters 2022 (writer for the Council on Foreign Relations;  BA in political science from Emory University and an MA in social theory from the New School) 20 Jan 2022 " Why NATO Has Become a Flash Point With Russia in Ukraine" (accessed 16 June 2022) https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/why-nato-has-become-flash-point-russia-ukraine

Russian leaders have long been wary of the eastward expansion of NATO, particularly as the alliance opened its doors to former Warsaw Pact states and ex-Soviet republics in the late 1990s (the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland) and early 2000s (Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia). Their fears grew in the late 2000s as the alliance stated its intent to admit Georgia and Ukraine at an unspecified point in the future.

NATO says Ukraine and Georgia will become members - and that crosses a "red line" for Russia

Jonathan Masters 2022 (writer for the Council on Foreign Relations;  BA in political science from Emory University and an MA in social theory from the New School) 20 Jan 2022 " Why NATO Has Become a Flash Point With Russia in Ukraine" (accessed 16 June 2022) https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/why-nato-has-become-flash-point-russia-ukraine

For the Kremlin, the notion that [Ukraine](https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/ukraine-conflict-crossroads-europe-and-russia%22%20%5Co%20%22Ukraine%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank), a pillar of the Soviet Union with strong historic ties to Russia, would join NATO was a red line. “No Russian leader could stand idly by in the face of steps toward NATO membership for Ukraine. That would be a hostile act toward Russia,” Putin warned U.S. Undersecretary for Political Affairs [William J. Burns](https://www.amazon.com/Back-Channel-American-Diplomacy-Renewal/dp/0525508864), who is now director of the CIA, in the weeks leading up to NATO’s 2008 Bucharest Summit. Although NATO did not announce a formal membership plan for Ukraine and Georgia at the Bucharest Summit, the [alliance did affirm](https://www.nato.int/docu/update/2008/04-april/e0403h.html) “that these countries will become members of NATO,” and it extended formal invitations to accession talks to Albania and Croatia, which became members in 2009. NATO expanded again in 2017, admitting Montenegro, and in 2020, welcoming North Macedonia.

Biden is all in favor of NATO expansion and announced support for Finland & Sweden

WASHINGTON POST 2022 (journalists [Emily Rauhala](https://www.washingtonpost.com/people/emily-rauhala/), [Michael Birnbaum](https://www.washingtonpost.com/people/michael-birnbaum/) and [Ellen Nakashima](https://www.washingtonpost.com/people/ellen-nakashima/) ) 18 May 2022 " Turkey blocks start of NATO talks on Finland’s and Sweden’s applications" <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/05/18/finland-sweden-nato-apply/> (accessed 18 June 2022)

In a statement Wednesday, Biden said: “I warmly welcome and strongly support the historic applications from Finland and Sweden for membership in NATO and look forward to working with the U.S. Congress and our NATO Allies to quickly bring Finland and Sweden into the strongest defensive alliance in history.”

A/T "Turkey blocks Finland & Sweden" - They lifted their objection. F & S are proceeding into NATO

Reuters News Service 2022 (journalists Humeyra Pamuk & Anne Kauranen) 28 June 2022 "Turkey lifts veto on Finland, Sweden joining NATO, clearing path for expansion" https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/us-press-turkey-finland-sweden-hope-nato-breakthrough-2022-06-28/ (accessed 29 June 2022)

 NATO ally Turkey lifted its veto over Finland and Sweden's bid to join the Western alliance on Tuesday after the three nations agreed to protect each other's security, ending a weeks-long drama that tested allied unity against Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The breakthrough came after four hours of talks just before a NATO summit began in Madrid, averting an embarrassing impasse at the gathering of 30 leaders that aims to show resolve against Russia, now seen by the U.S.-led alliance as a direct security threat rather than a possible adversary. It means Helsinki and Stockholm can proceed with their application to join the nuclear-armed alliance, cementing what is set to be the biggest shift in European security in decades, as the two, long-neutral Nordic countries seek NATO protection.

HARMS / SIGNIFICANCE

NATO expansion played a big role in motivating Russian invasion of Ukraine

Ted Galen Carpenter 2022. (senior fellow for defense and foreign policy studies at the Cato Institute) "Many predicted Nato expansion would lead to war. Those warnings were ignored" 28 Feb 2022 <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/feb/28/nato-expansion-war-russia-ukraine> (accessed 16 June 2022)

Russia’s military offensive against Ukraine is an [act of aggression](https://www.19fortyfive.com/2022/02/russia-war-on-ukraine-what-does-putin-hope-to-achieve/) that will make already worrisome tensions between Nato and Moscow even more dangerous. The west’s new cold war with Russia has turned hot. Vladimir Putin bears primary responsibility for this latest development, but Nato’s arrogant, tone‐​deaf policy toward Russia over the past quarter‐​century deserves a large share as well. Analysts committed to a US foreign policy of realism and restraint have warned for more than a quarter‐​century that continuing to expand the most powerful military alliance in history toward another major power would not end well. The war in Ukraine provides definitive confirmation that it did not.

NATO expansion is responsible for bad relations with Russia and motivated the Ukraine invasion

Doug Bandow 2022 (J.D.; senior fellow at the Cato Institute, specializing in foreign policy and civil liberties. He worked as special assistant to President Ronald Reagan) 19 May 2022 " Sweden and Finland in NATO: What’s in It for Us?" <https://www.cato.org/commentary/sweden-finland-nato-whats-it-us> (accessed 18 June 2022)

All the while the transatlantic alliance abandoned its role as continental guardian and became a militarized Welcome Wagon for the detritus of the Soviet empire. The European Union was better suited to that task, but the U.S. did not control the E.U. Hence, Washington’s preference was to use NATO to extend America’s reach. Unfortunately, this process violated a multitude of assurances given Moscow that the alliance would not advance ever eastward. The alliance also shifted from defense to offense, most importantly against Yugoslavia (an enhanced Serbia, for which Russia went to war in WWI). Although Vladimir Putin started out inclined to do business with the West, by 2008 his patience was gone and he turned toward confrontation, starting with Georgia. Although NATO expansion continued, even alliance members recognized that adding Georgia and Ukraine were steps too far: For 14 years the allies prevaricated, simultaneously reiterating and then ignoring promises to Tbilisi and Kyiv. Yet when the Ukraine crisis began last fall, the U.S. and European NATO members refused to state the obvious, that Kyiv would not be joining the alliance. Doing so might have forestalled Putin’s invasion. Of course, allied irresponsibility did not justify Moscow’s invasion, but Washington and Brussels share blame for the tragic war.

The NATO "Open Door" policy maximizes friction with Russia

Jonathan Guyer 2022 (Senior Foreign Policy Writer for Vox) " How America’s NATO expansion obsession plays into the Ukraine crisis" 27 Jan 2022 <https://www.vox.com/22900113/nato-ukraine-russia-crisis-clinton-expansion> (accessed 16 June 2022)

“The open-door policy is the one that maximizes friction with Russia, which has culminated in the crisis we have now,” said Mary Sarotte, a historian of international relations at Johns Hopkins University. “I don’t think Vladimir Putin is primarily interested in historical accuracy, but I believe he is genuinely aggrieved at the way the post–Cold War order includes no stake for Russia.”

NATO expansion caused the mess in Ukraine, and lots of analysts predicted it

Ted Galen Carpenter 2022. (senior fellow for defense and foreign policy studies at the Cato Institute) "Many predicted Nato expansion would lead to war. Those warnings were ignored" 28 Feb 2022 <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/feb/28/nato-expansion-war-russia-ukraine> (accessed 16 June 2022)

History will show that Washington’s treatment of Russia in the decades following the demise of the [Soviet Union](https://www.19fortyfive.com/2021/12/rip-soviet-union-one-of-the-greatest-revolutions-of-modern-times/) was a policy blunder of epic proportions. It was entirely predictable that Nato expansion would ultimately lead to a tragic, perhaps violent, breach of relations with Moscow. Perceptive analysts warned of the likely consequences, but those warnings went unheeded. We are now paying the price for the US foreign policy establishment’s myopia and arrogance.

Russia cannot back down on Ukraine: They consider it essential to their national security

Ted Galen Carpenter 2022 (senior fellow for defense and foreign policy studies at the Cato Institute) 11 June 2022 " Nato’s Cynical, Risky Strategy of Arms Aid to Defeat Russia in Ukraine" <https://www.cato.org/commentary/natos-cynical-risky-strategy-arms-aid-defeat-russia-ukraine> (accessed 18 June 2022)

As a mid‐​sized country directly on Russia’s border, Ukraine automatically occupies a much more important status due to geographic factors alone. That is why Putin [warned](https://www.reuters.com/world/kremlin-says-nato-expansion-ukraine-crosses-red-line-putin-2021-09-27/) US and European leaders repeatedly against trying to make Ukraine a NATO member or an Alliance military asset. Add several important economic, cultural and historical considerations, and it becomes clear why Russian leaders consider Ukraine so central to the security and wellbeing of their country.

A/T "They're not actually joining NATO any time soon" - Just talking about it triggers the harms

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The prospect of Ukraine and Georgia joining NATO has antagonized Putin at least since President George W. Bush expressed [support](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2008/apr/01/nato.georgia) for the idea in 2008. “That was a real mistake,” said Steven Pifer, who from 1998 to 2000 was ambassador to Ukraine under President Bill Clinton. “It drove the Russians nuts. It created expectations in Ukraine and Georgia, which then were never met. And so that just made that whole issue of enlargement a complicated one.”

A/T "NATO's just a pretext - Putin has other issues" - Even if so, we should still worry about NATO expansion

Jonathan Guyer 2022 (Senior Foreign Policy Writer for Vox) " How America’s NATO expansion obsession plays into the Ukraine crisis" 27 Jan 2022 <https://www.vox.com/22900113/nato-ukraine-russia-crisis-clinton-expansion> (accessed 16 June 2022)

Revisiting NATO’s own history is not to justify Putin’s revanchism and threats to democracy. It is certainly true that he is a repressive leader who has [annexed](https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2020/03/17/crimea-six-years-after-illegal-annexation/) neighbors and [funded](https://www.rferl.org/a/russia-ukraine-donetsk-luhansk-/31479593.html) separatists, [cracked down](https://www.economist.com/interactive/repression-in-putins-russia/) on activists and allegedly [poisoned](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2020/08/21/why-poison-is-weapon-choice-putins-russia/) enemies. Some experts say that his criticism of NATO expansion is a mere pretext. Still, the stakes of NATO’s presence on Russia’s borders and potential expansion are high, and at least in today’s Washington, few question that presence.

Discussing, advocating, and then not granting Ukraine NATO membership created the mess we're in now

Jonathan Guyer 2022 (Senior Foreign Policy Writer for Vox) " How America’s NATO expansion obsession plays into the Ukraine crisis" 27 Jan 2022 <https://www.vox.com/22900113/nato-ukraine-russia-crisis-clinton-expansion> (accessed 16 June 2022)

No country can join the alliance without the unanimous buy-in of all 30 member countries, and many have opposed Ukraine’s membership, in part because it [doesn’t meet](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/01/13/us/politics/nato-ukraine.html) the conditions to join. All of this has put Ukraine in an untenable position: an applicant for an alliance that wasn’t going to accept it, while irritating a potential opponent next door, without having any degree of NATO protection.

Russia vows retaliation if Sweden & Finland join NATO

WASHINGTON POST 2022 (journalists [Emily Rauhala](https://www.washingtonpost.com/people/emily-rauhala/), [Michael Birnbaum](https://www.washingtonpost.com/people/michael-birnbaum/) and [Ellen Nakashima](https://www.washingtonpost.com/people/ellen-nakashima/) ) 18 May 2022 " Turkey blocks start of NATO talks on Finland’s and Sweden’s applications" <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/05/18/finland-sweden-nato-apply/> (accessed 18 June 2022)

Russia’s Foreign Ministry tweeted Wednesday that “Russia will have to take retaliatory measures,” with “their essence, including military and technical aspects,” to be determined after assessing the terms of Finland’s and Sweden’s membership in NATO.

Finland & Sweden would give net negative results for NATO: They add more cost than benefit

Doug Bandow 2022. (J.D.; senior fellow at the Cato Institute, specializing in foreign policy and civil liberties. He worked as special assistant to President Ronald Reagan ) 22 Apr 2022 "Nine Reasons Why NATO Should Close the Door to Sweden and Finland" <https://www.cato.org/commentary/nine-reasons-why-nato-should-close-door-sweden-finland> (accessed 16 June 2022)

**Finland and Sweden would add greater defense obligations than assets to NATO.** Neither country would significantly change the balance of forces with Russia. Geographically Finland and Sweden help shield Norway from Russia, but no such attack is in the offing. Finland could host allied forces ready to aid the Baltic states, but then it would make more sense to station them in the latter. Yet adding Finland would expand NATO’s border with Russia by more than 830 miles, requiring a larger allied and, in practice, mostly American, commitment.

Sweden & Finland would destabilize the region and create unnecessary nuclear risks with no security benefit

Doug Bandow 2022 (J.D.; senior fellow at the Cato Institute, specializing in foreign policy and civil liberties. He worked as special assistant to President Ronald Reagan) 19 May 2022 " Sweden and Finland in NATO: What’s in It for Us?" <https://www.cato.org/commentary/sweden-finland-nato-whats-it-us> (accessed 18 June 2022)

The U.S. also loses by further contributing to Russian paranoia. The invasion of Ukraine should make obvious that Putin’s [oft‐​repeated concerns](https://www.theamericanconservative.com/articles/we-poked-the-bear/) about NATO expansion were real. Overturning the peaceful Scandinavian status quo and creating another allied front just a few score miles from St. Petersburg will encourage a response likely to further unsettle regional security. Of course, there is little that Russia can do directly against Helsinki and Stockholm. However, Moscow is likely to further rely on nuclear weapons to bolster deterrence. [Putin ally](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/04/14/russia-baltic-nuclear-deployment-finland-sweden-nato/) (and former stand‐​in president) Dmitry Medvedev warned: “If Sweden and Finland join NATO, the length of the land borders of the alliance with the Russian Federation will more than double. Naturally, these boundaries will have to be strengthened.” It would be one thing to accept enhanced nuclear risks as a response to necessary defense measures. But should we do so because two more wealthy European countries desire a share of America’s defense subsidy?

SOLVENCY / ADVOCACY

Biden's CIA Director has been warning for years that NATO expansion provokes military response from Russia

Prof. Ronald Suny 2022 (prof. of history & political science, Univ of Michigan) 28 Feb 2022 " **Ukraine war follows decades of warnings that NATO expansion into Eastern Europe could provoke Russia"** <https://theconversation.com/ukraine-war-follows-decades-of-warnings-that-nato-expansion-into-eastern-europe-could-provoke-russia-177999> (accessed 16 June 2022) (ellipses in original)

Putin has been clear for many years that if continued, the [expansion would likely be met with serious resistance](https://www.vox.com/2022/2/23/22948534/russia-ukraine-war-putin-explosions-invasion-explained) by the Russians, even with military action. That perspective isn’t held just by Russians; some influential American foreign policy experts have subscribed to it as well. Among others, Biden’s CIA director, William J. Burns, has been warning about the provocative effect of NATO expansion on Russia since 1995. That’s when Burns, then a political officer in the U.S. Embassy in Moscow, reported to Washington that “[hostility to early NATO expansion is almost universally felt across the domestic political spectrum here](https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CREC-2022-02-10/html/CREC-2022-02-10-pt1-PgS632-2.htm).”

Experts knew NATO expansion was a bad idea when we first started expanding it

Jonathan Guyer 2022 (Senior Foreign Policy Writer for Vox) " How America’s NATO expansion obsession plays into the Ukraine crisis" 27 Jan 2022 <https://www.vox.com/22900113/nato-ukraine-russia-crisis-clinton-expansion> (accessed 16 June 2022)

A [debate](http://theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1996/01/a-new-iron-curtain/305915/) over NATO’s [merits](https://www.armscontrol.org/act/1997-09/features/debate-over-nato-expansion-critique-clinton-administrations-responses-key) erupted in Washington in the ’90s. George Kennan, the eminent architect of the Soviet “containment” strategy and a former ambassador to the Soviet Union, wrote in 1997 that expanding NATO would be a “[fateful error](https://www.nytimes.com/1997/02/05/opinion/a-fateful-error.html)” because it would “inflame the nationalistic, anti-Western and militaristic tendencies in Russian opinion.” Kennan was far from alone in his criticism, as journalist [Peter Beinart noted this week](https://peterbeinart.substack.com/p/americas-generation-gap-on-ukraine):
Thomas Friedman, America’s most prominent foreign policy columnist, [declared](https://www.nytimes.com/1996/12/06/opinion/IHT-nato-expansion-letters-to-the-editor.html) it the “most ill-conceived project of the post-Cold War era.” Daniel Patrick Moynihan, widely considered the most erudite member of the US Senate, [warned](https://www.nytimes.com/1998/03/20/world/iron-ring-around-russia-comment-provokes-outburst.html), “We have no idea what we’re getting into.”
Meanwhile, military leaders saw enlargement as [detrimental](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/european-journal-of-international-security/article/reconsidering-nato-expansion-a-counterfactual-analysis-of-russia-and-the-west-in-the-1990s/356448EA9D5C63C53BE1EC6B33FE470A) to US interests, the Congressional Budget Office saw it as [too expensive](https://www.cbo.gov/sites/default/files/104th-congress-1995-1996/reports/1996doc25.pdf), and, later, intelligence agencies outright [opposed](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/12/08/world/europe/nato-ukraine-russia-dilemma.html?smid=tw-share) adding Ukraine and Georgia. Clinton’s Secretary of Defense William Perry wrote in his [memoir](https://www.sup.org/books/title/?id=25448) that he nearly resigned over enlargement.

If only we'd listened: 50 foreign policy experts told Pres. Clinton in '97 that NATO expansion would upset European stability

Prof. Ronald Suny 2022 (prof. of history & political science, Univ of Michigan) 28 Feb 2022 " **Ukraine war follows decades of warnings that NATO expansion into Eastern Europe could provoke Russia"** <https://theconversation.com/ukraine-war-follows-decades-of-warnings-that-nato-expansion-into-eastern-europe-could-provoke-russia-177999> (accessed 16 June 2022) (ellipses in original)

When President Bill Clinton’s administration [moved to bring Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic into NATO](https://millercenter.org/president/clinton/foreign-affairs), Burns wrote that the decision was “[premature at best, and needlessly provocative at worst](https://peterbeinart.substack.com/p/bidens-cia-director-doesnt-believe).” He continued, “As Russians stewed in their grievance and sense of disadvantage, a gathering storm of ‘stab in the back’ theories slowly swirled, leaving a mark on Russia’s relations with the West that would linger for decades.” In June 1997, [50 prominent foreign policy experts](https://www.armscontrol.org/act/1997-06/arms-control-today/opposition-nato-expansion) signed an open letter to Clinton, saying, “We believe that the current U.S. led effort to expand NATO … is a policy error of historic proportions” that would “unsettle European stability.”

Admitting Finland to NATO would have costs that outweigh any benefits

Justin Logan & Benjamin Friedman 2022 (Logan - master’s degree in international relations from Univ of Chicago ; Senior Fellow, Cato Institute. Friedman - PhD candidate in political science at the MIT, and an adjunct lecturer at George Washington University’s Elliott School of International Affairs) 22 May 2022 " The Case against Finland Joining NATO" https://www.cato.org/commentary/case-against-finland-joining-nato (accessed 18 June 2022)

It’s a story as old as time: When the world looks scarier, countries reach for more security by heightening their own defenses and/​or joining alliances. But Finland’s interests are not the same as other NATO countries’, and its prospective benefits to the alliance, particularly to the United States, are small and outweighed by costs.

US should oppose Finland joining NATO

Justin Logan & Benjamin Friedman 2022 (Logan - master’s degree in international relations from Univ of Chicago ; Senior Fellow, Cato Institute. Friedman - PhD candidate in political science at the MIT, and an adjunct lecturer at George Washington University’s Elliott School of International Affairs) 22 May 2022 " The Case against Finland Joining NATO" https://www.cato.org/commentary/case-against-finland-joining-nato (accessed 18 June 2022)

The case for Finland is especially problematic. Washington should withhold its support, at least until existing European allies make a convincing case that they will bear any added burden. The United States can have good and mutually beneficial relations with Finland without threatening nuclear annihilation of Russians—the core promise on which NATO runs—on its behalf. Nor does it leave Finland very insecure: Finland’s long‐​time neutrality has been a great security success, and it is still safe.

Blocking NATO expansion would reduce tensions with Russia

CNN 2022. (journalists Ivana Kottasova and Bryony Jones) 28 Jan 2022 " What is NATO and when does it act?" <https://www.cnn.com/2022/01/27/world/nato-explainer-intl-cmd/index.html> (accessed 18 June 2022)

Ukraine is not a member of NATO, but has long hoped to join the alliance. This is a sore point for Russia, which sees NATO as a threat and vehemently opposes the move. Amid recent tensions with the West, Russia has asked for[iron-clad guarantees](http://www.cnn.com/2021/12/21/europe/russia-europe-us-nato-ukraine-intl/index.html) that the alliance won't expand further east -- particularly into Ukraine.

We don't owe other nations membership in NATO - and we should stop inviting more

Doug Bandow 2022 (J.D.; senior fellow at the Cato Institute, specializing in foreign policy and civil liberties. He worked as special assistant to President Ronald Reagan) 19 May 2022 " Sweden and Finland in NATO: What’s in It for Us?" <https://www.cato.org/commentary/sweden-finland-nato-whats-it-us> (accessed 18 June 2022)

Instead of waving more applicants through NATO’s door, Washington should end expansion. Nothing in the alliance or its founding documents requires the organization to accept applications, let alone grant them. To the contrary, [Article 10 provides](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_17120.htm): “The Parties may, by unanimous agreement, invite any other European State in a position to further the principles of this Treaty and to contribute to the security of the North Atlantic area to accede to this Treaty.” The transatlantic alliance is supposed to take the initiative and act for the benefit of existing members. That is, NATO was created to promote security, not extend charity.

DISADVANTAGE RESPONSES

A/T "Ukraine invasion justifies NATO expansion" - Turn: It weakens Russia and makes attack elsewhere less likely

Justin Logan & Benjamin Friedman 2022 (Logan - master’s degree in international relations from Univ of Chicago ; Senior Fellow, Cato Institute. Friedman - PhD candidate in political science at the MIT, and an adjunct lecturer at George Washington University’s Elliott School of International Affairs) 22 May 2022 " The Case against Finland Joining NATO" https://www.cato.org/commentary/case-against-finland-joining-nato (accessed 18 June 2022)

A Russian invasion of Finland, a remote risk in normal times, is even lower now, with Russian forces tied down in Ukraine and being lost without near term replacements. Russia possesses few resources, military, political, or economic, for an attack on Finland. Nor is there indication that Finland produces the same neuralgia in the Kremlin that Ukraine does. Russia could eventually threaten Finland, but not anytime soon. That low short‐​term risk of attack, though, also argues against the need for NATO membership in the first place. As does the frequently‐​voiced protest that Finland has a capable military. While the Finnish military is likely enough to deter attack on it, it contributes little to NATO beyond that.

A/T "Ukraine invasion proves Russian threat" - Turn: It proves Russian incompetence and lack of threat

Doug Bandow 2022 (J.D.; senior fellow at the Cato Institute, specializing in foreign policy and civil liberties. He worked as special assistant to President Ronald Reagan) 19 May 2022 " Sweden and Finland in NATO: What’s in It for Us?" <https://www.cato.org/commentary/sweden-finland-nato-whats-it-us> (accessed 18 June 2022)

Although Russia’s attack on Ukraine understandably unsettled Europe, Moscow never demonstrated any interest in reviving hostilities with Helsinki or threatening Sweden. And Russia’s poor military performance demonstrates that, contra its pre‐​conflict reputation, Moscow could not conquer its many neighbors, let alone the entire continent, even if it desired to do so. The two countries’ desire to join appears to be an attempt to get an insurance policy at America’s expense, expanding still further Washington’s already lengthy list of defense dependents.

A/T "Sweden & Finland" - Not a problem, neither would suffer from not being in NATO

Doug Bandow 2022. (J.D.; senior fellow at the Cato Institute, specializing in foreign policy and civil liberties. He worked as special assistant to President Ronald Reagan ) 22 Apr 2022 "Nine Reasons Why NATO Should Close the Door to Sweden and Finland" <https://www.cato.org/commentary/nine-reasons-why-nato-should-close-door-sweden-finland> (accessed 16 June 2022)

**Neither Finland nor Sweden is under threat.** Both are well‐​armed and friendly with the West; neither has major disputes with Moscow. Indeed, Helsinki maintained its independence as a neutral against the Soviet Union. Even the most Russophobic analysts offer no evidence that Russian President Vladimir Putin plans to conquer the two states and add them to an expanded U.S.SR. And if he attempted to do so, Ukraine’s experience suggests that the two would exact a terrible price.

A/T "European Security" - Turn: "NOT" bringing countries into NATO is better for security because NATO incentivizes them to reduce defense spending

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**Both Finland and Sweden have capable militaries that would promote an independent European defense system.** However, further expanding America’s European defense dole would discourage defense efforts by them and others. Today [19 NATO members (including Canada) devote less than two percent of GDP to their armed forces](https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2021/6/pdf/210611-pr-2021-094-en.pdf). Among the largest European countries, [Germany](https://original.antiwar.com/doug-bandow/2021/05/16/germanys-greens-plan-a-tough-foreign-policy/), Italy, and Spain most dramatically leave the spending and fighting to others. Even the Baltics and Poland, so vocal about their fears of Russian aggression, spend little more than two percent of GDP on their defense, a pittance if their independence is truly at risk.

No US national security benefit to adding Finland & Sweden to NATO

Doug Bandow 2022. (J.D.; senior fellow at the Cato Institute, specializing in foreign policy and civil liberties. He worked as special assistant to President Ronald Reagan ) 22 Apr 2022 "Nine Reasons Why NATO Should Close the Door to Sweden and Finland" <https://www.cato.org/commentary/nine-reasons-why-nato-should-close-door-sweden-finland> (accessed 16 June 2022)

**The U.S. has no substantial security interests in either nation and thus no reason to go to war for them**. Despite NATO’s polite fiction that the U.S. and Europeans are cooperating in their collective defense, in practice Washington is defending them. In recent years the alliance has expanded to the helpless, irrelevant, minuscule, and defenseless, including Croatia, Albania, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Slovenia, and the Baltics, none of which matter to America’s security.

No threat to US national security if we don't expand NATO

Justin Logan & Benjamin Friedman 2022 (Logan - master’s degree in international relations from Univ of Chicago ; Senior Fellow, Cato Institute. Friedman - PhD candidate in political science at the MIT, and an adjunct lecturer at George Washington University’s Elliott School of International Affairs) 22 May 2022 " The Case against Finland Joining NATO" https://www.cato.org/commentary/case-against-finland-joining-nato (accessed 18 June 2022)

The United States needs to get back to basics in Europe, which means letting capable states balance Russian power. It did not bleed and die in two European wars in the twentieth century for the peripheral stakes NATO demands it defend today. It went to war and spent big in the Cold War to prevent one country from dominating the industrial heartland of Europe, a development that could have threatened U.S. national security. Whatever else we think about Russian aggression against Ukraine, or potentially against Finland, it does not threaten our security.

No threat to European security if we don't expand NATO: They can and will defend themselves, and we should let them

Justin Logan & Benjamin Friedman 2022 (Logan - master’s degree in international relations from Univ of Chicago ; Senior Fellow, Cato Institute. Friedman - PhD candidate in political science at the MIT, and an adjunct lecturer at George Washington University’s Elliott School of International Affairs) 22 May 2022 " The Case against Finland Joining NATO" https://www.cato.org/commentary/case-against-finland-joining-nato (accessed 18 June 2022)

But the broader costs are more important. The largest one is that it recenters European security around NATO at a time when the United States, which faces huge economic problems at home and a worsening security picture in Asia, should be [handing Europe over to Europeans](https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/why-america-should-encourage-european-strategic-autonomy-202500). The shock of the Russian attack on Ukraine has impelled European states to do more for their own security. Europe’s reawakening combined with Russia’s incompetence shows that [Europe can defend itself](https://theweek.com/russo-ukrainian-war/1011475/europe-can-stand-on-its-own-the-ukraine-invasion-proves-it). The United States should be exiting stage left from Europe rather than restoring its role as [Europe’s pacifier](https://www.jstor.org/stable/1148355).