Negative Brief: NATO Expansion - not a problem

By “Coach Vance” Trefethen

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

The AFF plan has the U.S. establish a policy of blocking any further expansion of NATO by objecting to any more countries being invited to join. Since NATO membership requires unanimous vote of all present members, any country, like the US alone, could block any new member from joining. NATO expansion, according to its charter, can only be offered to European countries, so the AFF plan is a policy towards Europe only, and there are at least 5 European countries presently applying for NATO membership (Bosnia, Ukraine, Georgia, Finland and Sweden).

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Negative: NATO Expansion - not a problem

INHERENCY

1. Ukraine won't join NATO

Ukraine won't join NATO until all issues with Russia are resolved - a long way to go

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) (brackets in original)

Today, Moscow is reviving its rhetoric in the context of the Ukraine crisis by turning Kiev's possible future NATO membership into a new red line not to be crossed. Ukraine currently has "partner country" status with NATO. In reality, Kiev still has a long way to go before it can qualify for full membership. "One of the main rules of the Alliance is that member countries must have solved all of their border issues so as not to integrate a new crisis factor into the Organisation. With the continuing conflict [with Russia over] Crimea, it is unlikely Ukraine would be able to join NATO," said Kempf.

France & Germany oppose membership for Ukraine

Edward Wong & Lara Jakes 2022 (journalists) 14 Jan 2022 " NATO won’t let Ukraine join soon. Here’s why" NEW YORK TIMES <https://bdnews24.com/world/2022/01/14/nato-wont-let-ukraine-join-soon.-heres-why> (accessed 18 June 2022)

If Ukraine were a NATO member, the alliance would be obligated to defend it against Russia and other adversaries. US officials say they will not appease President Vladimir Putin of Russia by undermining a policy enshrined in NATO’s original 1949 treaty, which grants any European nation the right to ask to join. “Together, the United States and our NATO allies made clear we will not slam the door shut on NATO’s open-door policy — a policy that has always been central to the NATO alliance,” Wendy R. Sherman, the deputy secretary of state, said Wednesday. But France and Germany have in the past opposed Ukraine’s inclusion, and other European members are wary — a deal-breaker for an alliance that grants membership only by unanimous consent.

Neither Georgia nor Ukraine have a formal action plan for joining NATO, and Biden is backing down on Ukraine

Edward Wong & Lara Jakes 2022 (journalists) 14 Jan 2022 " NATO won’t let Ukraine join soon. Here’s why" NEW YORK TIMES <https://bdnews24.com/world/2022/01/14/nato-wont-let-ukraine-join-soon.-heres-why> (accessed 18 June 2022)

In 2004, seven Eastern European countries joined the alliance, and in 2008, President George W. Bush pushed NATO to issue a declaration that Ukraine and Georgia would become members despite reservations from US intelligence agencies. However, the alliance has never offered either country a formal action plan to join, a necessary step for them to do so. As recently as June, Secretary of State Antony Blinken told senators that “we support Ukraine membership in NATO.” Biden, however, has been far more circumspect in his public comments and “has soft-pedaled talk of extending NATO membership to Ukraine,” two foreign policy scholars, Joshua Shifrinson and Stephen Wertheim, wrote in September in Foreign Affairs.

2. Status Quo is cautious about new members

NATO policies today are carefully evaluating circumstances with Russia. Georgia & Ukraine are on hold, but we shouldn't have a blanket policy of closing the open door to all countries

Dr. Henrik B.L. Larsen 2021 (P*h.D., is a senior researcher at the Center for Security Studies at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich. He served as political adviser for the European Union in Ukraine from 2014 to 2019* ) 8 June 2021 " WHY NATO SHOULD NOT OFFER UKRAINE AND GEORGIA MEMBERSHIP ACTION PLANS" <https://warontherocks.com/2021/06/why-nato-should-not-offer-ukraine-and-georgia-membership-action-plans/> (accessed 18 June 2022)

In responding to Russia’s intimidation, Western countries [voiced strong support](https://www.rfi.fr/en/international/20210405-france-joins-calls-for-concern-over-russian-army-buildup-at-ukraine-border-germany-united-states-european-union) for Ukraine, while the NATO secretary general [declared](https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSKBN2C012V) that only NATO would decide on enlargement. However, the unfortunate truth is that NATO will not offer membership to Ukraine and Georgia any time soon. The reluctance of the alliance to do so is based on sound geopolitical reasoning and a sober evaluation of the two countries’ limited progress on much-needed reforms. NATO should not officially close its “[open door](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_49212.htm#:~:text=NATO's%20%E2%80%9Copen%20door%20policy%E2%80%9D%20is%20based%20upon%20Article%2010%20of,of%20the%20North%20Atlantic%20area%E2%80%9D.)” to new members, but Ukraine and Georgia remaining outside the alliance is ultimately the best policy for NATO given the circumstances.

HARMS / SIGNIFICANCE

1. NATO expansion increases security

NATO's open door policy has contributed greatly to security in Europe

Luke Coffey & Daniel Kochis 2022 (Kochis - senior policy analyst in European affairs, Heritage Foundation; Master of Arts Degree in Comparative Political Science. Coffey - director of the Allison Center for Foreign Policy Studies at The Heritage Foundation; master of science degree in the politics and government of the European Union from the London School of Economics, former security advisor to the British government) " Finland’s and Sweden’s NATO Accession Is in the National Interest and Should Receive Senate Support" 26 May 2022 <https://www.heritage.org/global-politics/report/finlands-and-swedens-nato-accession-the-national-interest-and-should-receive> (accessed 18 June 2022)

NATO’s open-door policy for qualified countries has contributed greatly to transatlantic security since the first round of enlargement in 1952, helping to ensure the Alliance’s central place as the prime guarantor of security in Europe. The North Atlantic Treaty’s Article 10 states that any European state that is “in a position to further the principles of this Treaty and to contribute to the security of the North Atlantic area” can be invited to join the alliance.

Finland & Sweden would increase security, reduce the risk of war in the Arctic, Baltic and Nordic regions

Luke Coffey & Daniel Kochis 2022 (Kochis - senior policy analyst in European affairs, Heritage Foundation; Master of Arts Degree in Comparative Political Science. Coffey - director of the Allison Center for Foreign Policy Studies at The Heritage Foundation; master of science degree in the politics and government of the European Union from the London School of Economics, former security advisor to the British government) " Finland’s and Sweden’s NATO Accession Is in the National Interest and Should Receive Senate Support" 26 May 2022 <https://www.heritage.org/global-politics/report/finlands-and-swedens-nato-accession-the-national-interest-and-should-receive> (accessed 18 June 2022)

The NATO accession of Finland and Sweden is an important decision that will bolster transatlantic security by adding two members to NATO who have the political will to contribute and the capabilities to back up their commitments. Their accession will better secure the Arctic, Baltic Sea, and Nordic regions—and make future conflict there less likely. There are myriad reasons why Finnish and Swedish NATO membership will advance U.S. national interests. Their bids deserve U.S. support.

US national security benefits from NATO expansion

Luke Coffey & Daniel Kochis 2022 (Kochis - senior policy analyst in European affairs, Heritage Foundation; Master of Arts Degree in Comparative Political Science. Coffey - director of the Allison Center for Foreign Policy Studies at The Heritage Foundation; master of science degree in the politics and government of the European Union from the London School of Economics, former security advisor to the British government) " Finland’s and Sweden’s NATO Accession Is in the National Interest and Should Receive Senate Support" 26 May 2022 <https://www.heritage.org/global-politics/report/finlands-and-swedens-nato-accession-the-national-interest-and-should-receive> (accessed 18 June 2022)

NATO has done more than any other organization, including the European Union, to secure U.S. national interests, promote stability, and ensure security in the Euro-Atlantic region. NATO accomplished this by enticing countries to become a part of the Alliance. It is in America’s interest that NATO’s door remain open to deserving European countries, like Finland and Sweden, who commit to their defense and strengthen the Alliance rather than relying on the United States to pick up the tab.

2. Putin's anger at NATO expansion is unjustified

There never was any "agreement" that NATO would not expand after Germany reunified in 1990

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)

To understand Russia’s claims of betrayal, it is necessary to review the reassurances then US secretary of state James A. Baker made to former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev during a meeting on February 9, 1990. In a discussion on the status of a reunited Germany, the two men agreed that NATO would not extend past the territory of East Germany, a promise repeated by NATO’s secretary general in a speech on May 17 that same year in Brussels. Russia and the West finally struck an agreement in September that would allow NATO to station its troops beyond the Iron Curtain. However, the deal only concerned a reunified Germany, with further eastward expansion being inconceivable at the time. "The Soviet Union still existed and the countries of Eastern Europe were still part of the Soviet structures – like the Warsaw Pact – which was not officially dissolved until July 1991,"  said Amélie Zima, doctor of political science at the Thucydide Centre (Panthéon-Assas) in Paris. "We cannot speak of betrayal, because a chain of events that would rearrange the security configuration in Europe was about to take place."     In short, at a time when Westerners were offering the "guarantees" spoken of by Vladimir Putin, no one could have predicted the [collapse of the USSR](https://graphics.france24.com/30-years-since-the-collapse-of-the-USSR/) and the historic upheavals that followed.

There was no guarantee to not-expand NATO and no American conspiracy to betray Russia at the end of the Cold War

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) (brackets added)

[quoting Amélie Zima, doctor of political science at the Thucydide Centre:] "In addition, these promises were made orally and were never recorded in a treaty,” recalled Olivier Kempf, associate researcher at the Foundation for Strategic Research. "The turning point of NATO enlargement came much later, in 1995, at the request of the Eastern European countries."  That year, NATO published a study on its enlargement before starting membership talks two years later with Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic, all of which would become members in 1999. The addition of these new members has long sparked debate within NATO, thus undermining the Russian myth of a betrayal orchestrated by the West.

Even last Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev admits: There never was any promise of no NATO expansion

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

They say the United States and NATO have repeatedly betrayed this verbal commitment in the decades since, taking advantage of Russia’s tumultuous post-Soviet period and expanding the Western alliance several times, all the way to Russia’s doorstep in the case of the Baltic states.  However, many Western analysts and former U.S. officials involved in these discussions dispute what they say is a selective view of history. They point out that, in early 1990, the focus of the diplomacy between the so-called Two Plus Four (East and West Germany plus the United States, France, the Soviet Union, and the United Kingdom) was the future of Germany and the question of whether the soon-to-be unified country would be part of NATO. (West Germany was already an alliance member, while East Germany was part of the Soviet-aligned Warsaw Pact.) They say that the discussions were not about NATO’s long-term plans for eastward expansion, which would have made little sense at that time; the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union still existed, and there was scant indication they would dissolve as quickly as they did, in a matter of months. In a 2014 interview, [Gorbachev said as much](https://www.rferl.org/a/nato-expansion-russia-mislead/31263602.html): “The topic of ‘NATO expansion’ was never discussed. It was not raised in those years.”

3. NATO isn't threatening Russia

Russia calls it a threat, but they agreed to work with NATO in 1997 to guarantee peace in Europe

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)

Faced with these Russian concerns, Western governments consistently underscore the defensive nature of the NATO alliance.   "The Russians find it difficult to accept NATO enlargement, but they forget that they signed a document called the [NATO-Russia Founding Act](https://www.nato.int/cps/su/natohq/official_texts_25468.htm) in 1997, through which they become partners and committed to guaranteeing peace and security in the Euro-Atlantic area as well as the territorial integrity of all member states," Zima noted.

4. "Expansion of NATO" is not the real cause of Russia's aggression

Russia and NATO lived together peacefully for years before Putin suddenly decided to get aggressive

Dr. James Jay Carafano 2019 (PhD; adjunct professor at Georgetown University and visiting professor at National Defense University; formerly assistant professor at the U.S. Military Academy in West Point, and as director of military studies at the Army's Center of Military History) 8 Apr 2019 “America Needs a Bigger NATO to Stymie Russia’s Ambitions” <https://www.heritage.org/europe/commentary/america-needs-bigger-nato-stymie-russias-ambitions> (accessed 18 June 2022)

Unlike Putin's Russia, NATO poses no threat of aggression. It is and always has been a purely defensive alliance. Even at the height of the Cold War, NATO harbored no designs on Soviet Russia and its satellites. And once the Berlin Wall fell and the Soviet Union crumbled without a shot being fired, NATO welcomed new members to the alliance – contributing further to the mutual security of all and the expansion of freedom and democracy in Europe. NATO and the new Russia lived peacefully side-by-side for years, until Putin embraced the fiction that, by increasing its membership, NATO was somehow encroaching on Russia and threatening its security. Inside and outside the alliance, no one wants to pick a fight with Russia. Yet Putin's aggressiveness – from his invasions of Georgia and Crimea to his militarism in Ukraine – has made joining the alliance even more attractive.

Blaming NATO is just a stupid Putin excuse for aggression

Dr. James Jay Carafano 2019 (PhD; adjunct professor at Georgetown University and visiting professor at National Defense University; formerly assistant professor at the U.S. Military Academy in West Point, and as director of military studies at the Army's Center of Military History) 8 Apr 2019 “America Needs a Bigger NATO to Stymie Russia’s Ambitions” <https://www.heritage.org/europe/commentary/america-needs-bigger-nato-stymie-russias-ambitions> (accessed 18 June 2022)

Europe needs NATO. America needs NATO. You know who else needs NATO? Vladimir Putin. The Russian leader has long used the existence of NATO to justify his antagonism toward the West. Moscow's aggressiveness, you see, is merely a response to the "threat" NATO poses to Russian security. It's malarkey, of course – like a burglar claiming it's your fault he robbed your house because you had the audacity to buy a new TV.

Russia already knows Ukraine can't join NATO, so that's not the issue. But Putin is thrilled we're talking about blocking NATO expansion

Edward Wong & Lara Jakes 2022 (journalists) 14 Jan 2022 " NATO won’t let Ukraine join soon. Here’s why" NEW YORK TIMES <https://bdnews24.com/world/2022/01/14/nato-wont-let-ukraine-join-soon.-heres-why> (accessed 18 June 2022)

But France and Germany have in the past opposed Ukraine’s inclusion, and other European members are wary — a deal-breaker for an alliance that grants membership only by unanimous consent. American and Russian leaders know this. With Russian troops amassed on Ukraine’s eastern border, some current and former American and European officials say Putin might just be raising the NATO issue as a pretext for an invasion. Michael McFaul, a former US ambassador to Russia, has suggested that Putin is trying to distract from more urgent matters. “Everybody’s talking about NATO expansion,” McFaul said on a podcast by the Center for a New American Security that was released Tuesday. “Suddenly, we’re debating this issue that wasn’t even an issue. That’s a great advantage to him.”

Putin admits: We don't object to Finland & Sweden because there's no threat to Russia

Luke Coffey & Daniel Kochis 2022 (Kochis - senior policy analyst in European affairs, Heritage Foundation; M.A. in Comparative Political Science. Coffey - director of the Allison Center for Foreign Policy Studies at Heritage Foundation; master of science degree in politics and government of the European Union from London School of Economics, former security advisor to the British government) " Finland’s and Sweden’s NATO Accession Is in the National Interest and Should Receive Senate Support" 26 May 2022 <https://www.heritage.org/global-politics/report/finlands-and-swedens-nato-accession-the-national-interest-and-should-receive> (accessed 18 June 2022)

While Russia has made blustery statements threatening Finland and Sweden should they join NATO, Russia has recently toned down its rhetoric. For instance, President Vladimir Putin recently stated, “As far as expansion goes, including new members Finland and Sweden, Russia has no problems with these states—none. And so in this sense, there is no immediate threat to Russia from an expansion to include these countries.”

5. Further expansion would help, not harm NATO

Finland & Sweden would strengthen 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)

The accession of Finland and Sweden to NATO would bring the alliance’s full force to the far north and bolster its presence in the Baltic Sea region. It would gain two sophisticated militaries with deep experience operating near Russia’s frontier. Sweden also holds the strategically important island of Gotland, just 200 miles from the Russian military in Kaliningrad.

Finland & Sweden would provide net contribution to regional security

Luke Coffey & Daniel Kochis 2022 (Kochis - senior policy analyst in European affairs, Heritage Foundation; Master of Arts Degree in Comparative Political Science. Coffey - director of the Allison Center for Foreign Policy Studies at Heritage Foundation; MS degree in the politics & government of the EU from London School of Economics) " Finland’s and Sweden’s NATO Accession Is in the National Interest and Should Receive Senate Support" 26 May 2022 <https://www.heritage.org/global-politics/report/finlands-and-swedens-nato-accession-the-national-interest-and-should-receive> (accessed 18 June 2022)

Finland and Sweden possess robust military capabilities and decades of experience working with the U.S. and NATO. Far from being like other “free riders” who have contributed little to the Alliance in recent years, their entry into NATO would provide a net contribution to regional security. The U.S. should support their membership in the Alliance, ensure steps are taken to help bolster their defense during the period of their application process, lead efforts inside the Alliance to update and modernize NATO’s contingency plans in the Baltic region, and get NATO focused on Arctic security.

SOLVENCY

1. Appeasing Putin won't work

Zero chance Putin would stop complaining even if NATO stopped accepting new members

Dr. James Jay Carafano 2019 (PhD; adjunct professor at Georgetown University and visiting professor at National Defense University; formerly assistant professor at the U.S. Military Academy in West Point, and as director of military studies at the Army's Center of Military History) 8 Apr 2019 “America Needs a Bigger NATO to Stymie Russia’s Ambitions” <https://www.heritage.org/europe/commentary/america-needs-bigger-nato-stymie-russias-ambitions> (accessed 18 June 2022)

No wonder Putin wants NATO to stop expanding. It crimps his style. There is zero likelihood that Putin would stop harassing the alliance if NATO stopped taking in new members. Much like the czars of old, he wants a hard sphere of influence over Europe – something possible only if Moscow can break up NATO and decouple the U.S. from Europe.

We shouldn't change our foreign policy to please Putin because nothing will work: He is unreasonable

Josh Rogin 2022 (columnist for the Global Opinions section of The Washington Post. He writes about foreign policy and national security. Rogin is also a political analyst for CNN) 24 Feb 2022 "From his prison cell, Georgia’s former president reminds the West how to deal with Putin" WASHINGTON POST <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2022/02/24/ex-georgia-president-saakashvili-lessons-georgia-2008-invasion-ukraine/> (accessed 18 June 2022)

“The major mistake is to have any illusion that you can make a reasonable deal with Putin,” said Georgian politician Giga Bokeria, Georgia’s national security adviser from 2010 to 2013. “Putin’s goal is to annihilate the Euro-Atlantic order. So, you cannot have a deal; you can only oppose and defeat his plan.”

Putin won't give up his claim on eastern Europe no matter what we do

Katja Hoyer 2022 (Global Opinions contributing columnist; Anglo-German historian and journalist) 17 June 2022 "European leaders still can’t shake the urge to appease Russia" WASHINGTON POST <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2022/06/17/macron-scholz-draghi-kyiv-ukraine-russia-appeasement/> (accessed 19 June 2022)

Yet even as Moscow continues its indiscriminate bombing and shelling of Ukrainian civilians, Russia’s politicians are still treated as rational actors by those who seek peace at all costs. Putin cannot, and will not, give up his claim on Eastern Europe. The supposed realpolitik of Europe’s most powerful countries is both shameful and ill-considered. France and Germany, of all countries, should know that an ambitious dictator can never be appeased.

Only way to reduce Putin's threat is to increase security support to front-line states

Josh Rogin 2022 (columnist for the Global Opinions section of The Washington Post. He writes about foreign policy and national security. Rogin is also a political analyst for CNN) 24 Feb 2022 "From his prison cell, Georgia’s former president reminds the West how to deal with Putin" WASHINGTON POST <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2022/02/24/ex-georgia-president-saakashvili-lessons-georgia-2008-invasion-ukraine/> (accessed 18 June 2022)

While sanctions on Putin, his kleptocracy and the Russian economy are good and necessary, they were never going to deter Putin on their own, Bokeria said. The only way to deter and roll back Putin’s aggression now is to support the front-line states he is attacking, with real and long-term security, diplomatic and economic assistance.

Best way to change Putin's behavior is to NOT stop expanding NATO

Dr. James Jay Carafano 2019 (PhD; adjunct professor at Georgetown University and visiting professor at National Defense University; formerly assistant professor at the U.S. Military Academy in West Point, and as director of military studies at the Army's Center of Military History) 8 Apr 2019 “America Needs a Bigger NATO to Stymie Russia’s Ambitions” <https://www.heritage.org/europe/commentary/america-needs-bigger-nato-stymie-russias-ambitions> (accessed 18 June 2022)

Yet, NATO's open door policy is more than symbolism. It represents what NATO is: an alliance of free nation-states committed to mutual defense cooperation. As long as there are rulers like Putin, the need for that kind of commitment will not diminish. Putin knows that. He fears that. It restrains him. This is no time for NATO to remove that restraint.

DISADVANTAGES

1. Russian aggression

Link: US intervention successfully blocked Russian aggression in Georgia in 2008

Josh Rogin 2022 (columnist for the Global Opinions section of The Washington Post. He writes about foreign policy and national security. Rogin is also a political analyst for CNN) 24 Feb 2022 "From his prison cell, Georgia’s former president reminds the West how to deal with Putin" WASHINGTON POST <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2022/02/24/ex-georgia-president-saakashvili-lessons-georgia-2008-invasion-ukraine/> (accessed 18 June 2022)

In August 2008, as Russian tanks advanced through Georgia’s sovereign territory and headed toward the capital, Tbilisi, President George W. Bush announced that he was [mounting a U.S. military airlift to Georgia](https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB121866388366238327) under the banner of “humanitarian assistance.” Those U.S. Air Force planes, once on the ground in Tbilisi, never took off again. If Vladimir Putin wanted to take Tbilisi, he was going to have to go through the United States. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice [traveled to Tbilisi](https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=93575217) to help secure a truce. This mix of military pressure and diplomacy worked. Putin halted his advance.

Link: More aggression will follow if we don't stand up to Putin now

Josh Rogin 2022 (columnist for the Global Opinions section of The Washington Post. He writes about foreign policy and national security. Rogin is also a political analyst for CNN) 24 Feb 2022 "From his prison cell, Georgia’s former president reminds the West how to deal with Putin" WASHINGTON POST <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2022/02/24/ex-georgia-president-saakashvili-lessons-georgia-2008-invasion-ukraine/> (accessed 18 June 2022)

The echo of 2008 is ringing loudly today in the minds of Ukrainians, who feel abandoned by a West that had promised them security guarantees while they attempted to build a democratic, pluralist, European state. “If the West had replied with a very strong reaction against Russia invading Georgia back in 2008, we would not have had the other Ukraine invasion in 2014, and then today would never happened,” said Ukrainian member of parliament Lisa Yasko, who told me she woke up on Thursday morning in Kyiv to the sound of explosions. The history of 2008, 2014 and now 2022 should make clear that, for Putin — like all militaristic, expansionist dictators — the appetite grows with the eating. Ukrainians are the ones fighting him today, and they need more help. If we fail, history shows, Putin’s next aggression will be bigger and closer to home.

Impact: Existential threat to east European countries

Daniel Kochis, Thomas Spoehr, Luke Coffey and Patty Jane Geller 2022. (Kochis - senior policy analyst in European affairs, Heritage Foundation; Master of Arts Degree in Comparative Political Science. Spoehr - Director of Heritage Foundation Center for National Defense; Master of Arts in Strategic Studies from the U.S. Army War College. Coffey - director of the Allison Center for Foreign Policy Studies at The Heritage Foundation; master of science degree in the politics and government of the European Union from the London School of Economics, former security advisor to the British government. Geller - senior policy analyst for nuclear deterrence and missile defense at The Heritage Foundation; Master of Arts degree in Military Operational Art and Science from the Air Command and Staff College) "The Russian Threat: Bolstering NATO Deterrence at a Critical Time" 14 Mar 2022 <https://www.heritage.org/defense/report/the-russian-threat-bolstering-nato-deterrence-critical-time> (accessed 18 June 2022)

From the Arctic to the Levant, Russia remains an aggressive and capable threat to NATO and the interests of its members. For member states in Eastern Europe, Russia represents a real and potentially existential threat. Russia’s entrenched position in Belarus, along with its ongoing actions to cleave Ukraine, a nation that borders four NATO members, in two, scramble the geostrategic map of Europe and necessitate changes to NATO operational planning, exemplifying the need for the Alliance to take swift and resolute steps to bolster deterrence measures along its eastern flank.

2. Increased risk of Baltic war

Finland & Sweden would reduce the risk of a war in the Baltic states if they were allowed to join NATO

Luke Coffey & Daniel Kochis 2022 (Kochis - senior policy analyst in European affairs, Heritage Foundation; Master of Arts Degree in Comparative Political Science. Coffey - director of the Allison Center for Foreign Policy Studies at The Heritage Foundation; master of science degree in the politics and government of the European Union from the London School of Economics, former security advisor to the British government) " Finland’s and Sweden’s NATO Accession Is in the National Interest and Should Receive Senate Support" 26 May 2022 <https://www.heritage.org/global-politics/report/finlands-and-swedens-nato-accession-the-national-interest-and-should-receive> (accessed 18 June 2022)

Finland’s and Sweden’s entry into NATO would allow the Alliance to defend the Baltic states more easily and deter Russian aggression more effectively in the region.Russia has proven to be keenly aware of which nations are and are not NATO members. The Alliance’s Article 5 statement that an attack against one member is an attack against all has proven effective in deterring Russia. Currently, the three Baltic states—Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania—are geographically isolated from the rest of the Alliance. Finland’s and Sweden’s NATO accession will ease operational planning and increase regional security. Finland and Sweden both are critical for NATO’s ability to defend and, if necessary, retake the Baltic states from potential future Russian aggression. The accession of Finland and Sweden to NATO decreases the risk of war in the Baltic region by removing any lingering ambiguity that Russia may have perceived with Finland and Sweden outside NATO.

3. Russian hegemony

Link: Appeasing Putin now leads to second coming of the Soviet Union

Katja Hoyer 2022 (Global Opinions contributing columnist; Anglo-German historian and journalist) 17 June 2022 "European leaders still can’t shake the urge to appease Russia" WASHINGTON POST <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2022/06/17/macron-scholz-draghi-kyiv-ukraine-russia-appeasement/> (accessed 19 June 2022)

Putin has notoriously [argued](https://www.nbcnews.com/id/wbna7632057) that the collapse of the Soviet Union, of which Ukraine was a constituent republic, was “the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the century.” He has [made it clear](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/23/world/europe/putin-speech-russia-ukraine.html) that he seeks to undo this “catastrophe.” If Putin is appeased now, as he was in 2014 when Germany and France failed to freeze the conflict in Ukraine, he will simply take the time to regroup.

Link: Accepting Finland & Sweden into NATO would defeat Putin's objectives

[Daniel Michaels](https://www.wsj.com/news/author/daniel-michaels) and [Sune Engel Rasmussen](https://www.wsj.com/news/author/sune-engel-rasmussen) 2022. (journalists) WALL STREET JOURNAL 18 MAY 2022 <https://www.wsj.com/articles/what-is-nato-russia-ukraine-which-countries-members-no-fly-article-5-11646236897> (accessed 18 June 2022)

Finland and Sweden [officially applied for NATO membership](https://www.wsj.com/articles/finland-sweden-apply-for-nato-membership-breaking-decades-of-neutrality-11652854966?mod=article_inline) on May 18, dealing a blow to Russian President [Vladimir Putin](https://www.wsj.com/topics/person/vladimir-putin)’s goal of using the invasion of Ukraine to deter other nations from joining the alliance.Mr. Putin has sought to justify [his invasion of Ukraine](https://wsj.com/livecoverage/latest-updates/russia-ukraine-latest-news) in part based on a threat he sees to his country from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the alliance’s offer to Ukraine of potential membership. But rather than weaken NATO, Mr. Putin’s invasion has in less than three months pushed two heavily militarized Nordic neighbors, including Finland, which shares an 830-mile border with Russia, to discard decades of neutrality and join the alliance.

Link: Russia and China both would like to stop US hegemony

Marta Rodriguez Martinez 2015 (MA in journalism, globalism and media) Dec 2015 THE SINO-RUSSIAN AXIS AGAINST THE US HEGEMONY - An approach to the power political strategies and world order policies of China and Russia within a world in power transition <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/316989287_THE_SINO-RUSSIAN_AXIS_AGAINST_THE_US_HEGEMONY_-_An_approach_to_the_power_political_strategies_and_world_order_policies_of_China_and_Russia_within_a_world_in_power_transition/link/591c1b880f7e9b7727d9f00b/download> (accessed 18 June 2022)

Russia and China share the strategic goal of challenging the US hegemony in favor of a more multipolar world in which they can hold the dominance of their regions. Although several challenges lie ahead, they have already started to forge financial, military and institutional strategic ties to balance the US hegemony and bring a multipolar world in the long run.

Link: US hegemony weakens as Russia gains

Seth Cropsey & Gary Roughead 2019 (Seth Cropsey is a senior fellow at Hudson Institute and former deputy undersecretary of the U.S. Navy. Retired Adm. Gary Roughead is the Robert and Mary Oster distinguished military fellow at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University, and former U.S. chief of naval operations) 17 Dec 2019 "A U.S. Withdrawal Will Cause a Power Struggle in the Middle East" https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/12/17/us-withdrawal-power-struggle-middle-east-china-russia-iran/

The strength of hegemonic powers waxes and wanes, and allies respond accordingly. In 2018, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe made the first visit to China by a Japanese leader in seven years. There, he and Chinese President Xi Jinping agreed to elevate bilateral relations. Although Benjamin Netanyahu was first elected prime minister of Israel in 1996, he only visited Russia for the first time during his third term, in 2013. (He did not serve as prime minister during the decade from 1999 to 2009.) Since then he has been to the country 11 times, indicating that staunch allies that had previously relied on the United States for security now sense the need to open lines of communication with its adversaries. The United States should reexamine its global commitments, especially those in the eastern Mediterranean, with a view to Russia’s expanding power.

Impact: Apocalyptic consequences if we lose US hegemony to Russian aggression

Brook Manville 2018 (principal of Brook Manville LLC, consulting on strategy and organization) 14 Oct 2018 “Why A Crumbling World Order Urgently Needs U.S. Leadership” FORBES <https://www.forbes.com/sites/brookmanville/2018/10/14/why-a-crumbling-world-order-urgently-needs-u-s-leadership/#2bb8912f2e61> (brackets added) (accessed 18 June 2022)

The botanical metaphor in [Brookings Institution Senior Fellow Robert] Kagan’s book title began our recent conversation. “We’ve been living in a tranquil garden of largely peaceful practices and liberal expectations across much of the world, ignoring the dark forces of jungle multiplying under the rocks. If we don’t defend civilization’s cultivation—especially American’s guarantee of peace and economic integration across the world—the toxic creatures and weeds will roar back.” Thus [China’s determined military rise](about:blank), [Russia’s continuing aggressions](about:blank), [fiery authoritarians on the march in so many once democratic countries](about:blank). [**END QUOTE]** As [Brookings Institution Senior Fellow Robert] Kagan continued, “[Trump has been damaging the system](about:blank)—he too seems to have forgotten what good it has delivered—but actually America’s desire for maintaining the global order has been diminishing for years. After [the dissolution of the Soviet empire in the 1990s](about:blank), people talked about [‘the end of history”](about:blank)—that America didn’t have to worry anymore about war or aggression. History doesn’t end, it simply paused. [**He goes on later in the same context to say QUOTE:]** The ugliest aspects of human nature are surging again.”

**Vanishing Leadership, Vanishing Peace**

Kagan’s apocalyptic message, repeated [in other recent writings](about:blank), is lucid and terrifying, all the more devastating for its relentless use of history. It’s a footnoted plea that “we’ve seen this movie before.” He reminds us that Americans have frequently turned away from defending world order, with regrettably familiar outcomes: to be dragged in later at greater cost (e.g. [helping to stop Hitler earlier might have prevented World War II](about:blank)); or, simply hoping that “the problem would go away,” to watch it get ten times worse (e.g. [Obama’s policy in Syria](about:blank)). Kagan acknowledges that America has sometimes misstepped (e.g. Viet Nam, Iraq), but he still argues that overall our foreign engagement has produced more peace and prosperity than not. “History shows,” he summarized, “that world order has never been achieved without some constructive force to keep the peace. The relative harmony and fair play we’ve created in the modern world will vanish if the U.S. forsakes international leadership.”