Negative: Trilateral Finland Norway

By “Coach Vance” Trefethen

AFF plan has the US do military cooperation with Finland and Norway (in some way separate from NATO) to counter the dangerous threat from Russia.

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Negative: Trilateral Finland Norway

HARMS / SIGNIFICANCE

1. No threat to Norway

Norwegian Prime Minister sees no security threat between Norway and Russia

Lili Bayer 2022 (journalist) 30 June 2022 POLITICO "Norway says NATO’s northern expansion will aid Nordic defense plans" (accessed 22 Mar 2023) https://www.politico.eu/article/norway-says-natos-northern-expansion-will-aid-nordic-defense-plans/ (brackets added)

Nevertheless, the Norwegian leader [Norwegian Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Støre] underscored that he does not see the security in the alliance’s north as unstable.  The security landscape, according to the prime minister, “has been marked by what we in Norway call ‘high north – low tension.’ Norway has shared a border with the Soviet Union and then Russia, and while being a member of NATO, managing a balanced relationship of cooperation and also necessary deterrence next to military power.”

2. No threat to Finland

Russia is no threat to Finland

Doug Bandow 2022 (JD; senior fellow at the Cato Institute; former special assistant to Pres. Reagan) 22 Apr 2022 "Nine Reasons Why NATO Should Close the Door to Sweden and Finland" (accessed 22 Mar 2023) https://www.cato.org/commentary/nine-reasons-why-nato-should-close-door-sweden-finland

1) **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.

3. Russia is no threat to Europe in general

Ukraine war proves how weak Russia is. We shouldn’t be wasting resources on such a weak “threat”

Prof. Anatol Lieven 2022 (Professor at Georgetown University School of Foreign Service, Qatar, visiting professor in the War Studies Dept of King’s College London, senior fellow of the New America Foundation ) 14 July 2022 “Just How Much Bigger Is the US-NATO Military Force Than Russia's?” <https://www.commondreams.org/views/2022/07/14/just-how-much-bigger-us-nato-military-force-russias> (accessed 26 July 2022)

The Russian invasion of Ukraine, and the atrocities that have accompanied it, have naturally caused deep anxiety throughout Europe. NATO's new Strategic Concept for the next decade calls Russia "the most significant and direct threat to Allies' security and to peace and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area." But before devoting huge additional resources to confront Russia, it would be a good idea to take a level-headed look at Russian military resources and the nature and extent of the Russian military threat to NATO. We should not forget how, after the USSR's collapse, Western intelligence agencies concluded that their Cold War estimates of Soviet military power were greatly[exaggerated](https://www.csmonitor.com/1995/1024/24191.html) (just as, it's worth noting, were Western[predictions](https://www.rferl.org/a/russia-ukraine-invasion-scenarios/31614428.html) of an easy Russian[victory](https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR2500/RR2563/RAND_RR2563.pdf) over Ukraine this year). After all, U.S. and Western resources are not unlimited, and devoting them to defend against Russia means limiting them elsewhere.

Ukraine proves weakness of Russian military. No way they can threaten the rest of Europe

Doug Bandow 2022 (JD; senior fellow at the Cato Institute; former special assistant to Pres. Reagan) 28 Mar 2022 “With Russia’s Weakness on Full Display: Hawks Now Want America to Fight Russia and China” <https://www.cato.org/commentary/russias-weakness-full-display-hawks-now-want-america-fight-russia-china> (accessed 29 July 2022)

Putin also inadvertently showcased the limits of the Russian armed services. They have significant firepower but suffer from important weaknesses. While raw numbers of troops and tanks would suggest that Moscow could defeat any European nation, poor logistics, maintenance, morale, and training make Russia look substantially less threatening. No doubt, Moscow will learn from its mistakes and address its military’s shortcomings, though it might be short of money to refurbish its force. Nor should Russians be underestimated if defending their country from attack. However, looking ever less plausible are scare stories of a revived Red Army driving across Europe to the Atlantic.

Ukraine war is a humanitarian crisis, not a military threat: Don’t over-react

Doug Bandow 2022 (JD; senior fellow at the Cato Institute; former special assistant to Pres. Reagan) What Now for Russia? 3 March 2022 <https://www.cato.org/commentary/what-now-russia> (accessed 29 July 2022)

Third, Washington should treat Russia’s invasion primarily as a humanitarian crisis, not a military threat. Russian President Vladimir Putin is a bad guy, but he has never demonstrated the slightest interest in war against America, which would be beyond foolish. Thus, the Biden administration should not overreact. Its principal obligation is to ensure that the Russian invasion does not turn into a security crisis for the U.S.

4. No US obligation

Foreign policy towards Europe should be judged by how it protects American citizens, not Europeans

Doug Bandow 2022 (JD; senior fellow at the Cato Institute; former special assistant to Pres. Reagan) 22 May 2022 " Why Russia Would Start a Nuclear War over Ukraine" (accessed 22 Mar 2023) https://www.cato.org/commentary/why-russia-would-start-nuclear-war-over-ukraine

Washington’s job is to protect the US, [not wealthy](https://www.newsweek.com/nato-shouldnt-rubber-stamp-finlands-bid-join-opinion-1706511), spoiled allies who believe they are entitled [to forever live](https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2021/6/pdf/210611-pr-2021-094-en.pdf) at Americans’ expense. Policy toward Ukraine and [NATO](https://www.19fortyfive.com/2022/05/meet-russias-tu-160-bomber-nato-hates-it-for-a-reason) should be based on protecting this nation—its people, territory, liberties, and prosperity.

Russia isn’t much of a threat. Whatever problem it may be, it should be managed by Europe, not us

Doug Bandow 2022 (JD; senior fellow at the Cato Institute; former special assistant to Pres. Reagan) 28 Mar 2022 “With Russia’s Weakness on Full Display: Hawks Now Want America to Fight Russia and China” <https://www.cato.org/commentary/russias-weakness-full-display-hawks-now-want-america-fight-russia-china> (accessed 29 July 2022)

After World War II, many democratic and friendly states were vulnerable to Soviet subversion and assault. Hence Washington’s policy of containment. Thankfully, the justification for this policy disappeared: the USSR collapsed, the Warsaw Pact dissolved, Eastern European nations raced westward. Had Washington and its allies behaved differently, not treating Moscow as a defeated nation through NATO expansion and more, Russia likely would not have reemerged as a threat. But Putin has helpfully demonstrated that Moscow, though certainly not a paper tiger, nevertheless is not equipped for continent‐​wide aggression. Russia remains a problem, but one that could and should be managed by Europeans, not Americans.

US national security is best served by NOT confronting Russia and letting Europe deal with it

Doug Bandow 2022 (JD; senior fellow at the Cato Institute; former special assistant to Pres. Reagan) 28 Mar 2022 “With Russia’s Weakness on Full Display: Hawks Now Want America to Fight Russia and China” <https://www.cato.org/commentary/russias-weakness-full-display-hawks-now-want-america-fight-russia-china> (accessed 29 July 2022)

Ultimately, Russia’s criminal aggression against Ukraine offers a reminder why US security is best served by remaining outside of unnecessary conflicts, not making other nations’ wars America’s own. It is well past time for Washington’s allies and friends to take over their own security and confront whatever threats exist. The American people defended much of the world over the last eight decades. Now it is time for them to retire.

INHERENCY - Status Quo solves

1. Norway is already a NATO member

In fact, Norway was one of the founding members of NATO and has been in NATO since 1949

NATO official web site 2022. "Member countries" last updated 4 Oct 2022 (accessed 22 Mar 2023) https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\_52044.htm

At present, NATO has 30 members. In 1949, there were 12 founding members of the Alliance: Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the United Kingdom and the United States. The other member countries are: Greece and Türkiye (1952), Germany (1955), Spain (1982), Czechia, Hungary and Poland (1999), Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia (2004), Albania and Croatia (2009), Montenegro (2017) and North Macedonia (2020).

2. US & Finland already doing the AFF Plan

US and Finland are already negotiating a security agreement

Pekka Vattinen 2023. (journalist with EURACTIV) 9 Jan 2023 "Finland prepares security agreement with the US" (accessed 22 Mar 2023) https://www.euractiv.com/section/politics/news/finland-prepares-security-agreement-with-the-us/

Finland is preparing to sign a bilateral security and defence agreement with the United States, paving the way for closer cooperation, strengthening security in Finland and across Europe, and broadening US reach. Speaking with tabloid newspaper Iltalehti on Sunday, Foreign Minister Pekka Haavisto said the agreement is still in the preliminary stages and unlikely to be finalised during the spring. At the end of September 2022, the Finnish Foreign Affairs ministry announced it would open negotiations on a Defence Cooperation Agreement (DCA) with Washington. The deal “would also create conditions for closer cooperation if the security situation so requires”, the ministry said in a [statement,](https://um.fi/current-affairs/-/asset_publisher/gc654PySnjTX/content/yhdysvallat-ja-suomi-kaynnistavat-sopimusneuvottelut-puolustusyhteistyosta) adding the negotiations are expected to take one to two years.

DISADVANTAGES

1. European defense weakened by us doing it for them

Link: US defending Finland would increase Europeans' motivation to stop defending themselves and just let us do it (and pay for it)

Doug Bandow 2022 (JD; senior fellow at the Cato Institute; former special assistant to Pres. Reagan) 22 Apr 2022 "Nine Reasons Why NATO Should Close the Door to Sweden and Finland" (accessed 22 Mar 2023) https://www.cato.org/commentary/nine-reasons-why-nato-should-close-door-sweden-finland

**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. [**END QUOTE**] 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. Moreover, surveys found that popular majorities in many European states oppose defending each other. [**HE GOES ON LATER IN THE SAME CONTEXT QUOTE:]** Although Berlin and several other European states have begun talking a good game, public enthusiasm for spending more on the military is likely to ebb as Washington deploys more forces to the continent. Europe is likely to treat its security seriously only when the U.S. ends [its policy](https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2014/06/03/fact-sheet-european-reassurance-initiative-and-other-us-efforts-support-) of constantly [“reassuring” allies](https://www.voanews.com/a/europe_biden-reassure-nato-allies-us-commitment-mutual-defense-clause/6206969.html) that it will forever do whatever is necessary to protect them no matter how little they contribute.

Brink: Europe on the brink of slipping back to their old ways of refusing to spend on defense and letting the US pay for it - and it's unsustainable because we can no longer pay for it

Doug Bandow 2022 (JD from Stanford; senior fellow at the Cato Institute; worked as special assistant to President Ronald Reagan ) 27 July 2022 "So If Europe Wants to Escalate against Russia Who Foots the Bill?" https://www.cato.org/commentary/so-europe-wants-escalate-against-russia-who-foots-bill (accessed 27 Aug 2022)

If finally forced to choose between social services at home and military subsidies abroad, America’s aging population is likely to join its European cousins in choosing the former. Then the latter will have to decide whether they believe their countries are worth defending. Russia’s criminal invasion of Ukraine was a great wrong that seemed to wake a militarily somnolent continent. Now the Europeans show signs of slipping back into their previous defense stupor, but the old way of doing things is no longer sustainable.

Link: Only way Europe will increase its defense capabilities is if the US stops defending them

Doug Bandow 2022 (JD from Stanford; senior fellow at the Cato Institute; worked as special assistant to President Ronald Reagan) 13 July 2022 "Europe Is Rich. So Why Does It Need America’s Help against Russia?" <https://www.cato.org/commentary/europe-rich-so-why-does-it-need-americas-help-against-russia> (accessed 27 Aug 2022)

A succession of presidents, secretaries of defense, and secretaries of state have asked, pleaded, insisted, whined, begged, and abased themselves in pressing the Europeans to do at least as much for themselves as the U.S. did. But continental governments took America’s measure, recognized that its foreign policy elite was determined to run the world irrespective of the cost to the American people, and would continue protecting Europe even if the Europeans disarmed completely. If so, Biden and company would express their disappointment … and then send more troops to cover the European shortfall! So the U.S. continues to provide defense welfare to its populous, prosperous “allies.” Instead of adding forces to Europe, Washington should be bringing American personnel home. Europe needs to decide if it believes Russia poses an existential threat and if so, take effective action accordingly. The only way that will happen is if Uncle Sam does less. Starting now.

Impact: Weaker European security. They're less secure relying on the US and we can't defend them in a crisis

Hans Binnendikj, Daniel Hamilton and Alexander Vershbow 2022. (Binnendiki - Distinguished Fellow at The Atlantic Council. Hamilton - Non-Resident Senior Fellow, Brookings Institution. Vershbow - Distinguished Fellow - The Atlantic Council. Former NATO Deputy Secretary General; former Assistant Secretary of Defense and former US Ambassador to NATO, Russia and S.Korea) Strategic responsibility: Rebalancing European and trans-Atlantic defense 24 June 2022 https://www.brookings.edu/articles/strategic-responsibility-rebalancing-european-and-trans-atlantic-defense/

China’s aggressive territorial claims in the South and East China Seas, and its threats to the integrity of Taiwan, present a real risk of conflict in the Indo-Pacific, including direct confrontation between China and the United States. In such a situation, critical sea lanes of communication, maritime shipping, and European commercial interactions with China, and with Asia more broadly, would be disrupted. The interests of various European allies in the Indo-Pacific would be at risk. Opportunities would also be created for Russia. U.S. forces might not be available to adequately reinforce European allies against a simultaneous Russian military challenge. The Europeans would need to quickly fill those gaps. They need to plan now how they would do so.

2. Finland provocation

Link: Any deployment of US forces in Finland will be a very serious provocation against Russia

Dr. Ted G. Carpenter 2022 (PhD in diplomatic history; senior fellow for defense and foreign policy studies at the Cato Institute) 7 Sept 2022 "Sweden and Finland May Be Making a Fatal Blunder" (accessed 22 Mar 2023) https://www.cato.org/commentary/sweden-finland-may-be-making-fatal-blunder

It is a far‐​fetched fear, and Helsinki’s decision to join NATO actually increases rather than decreases the danger of tensions with Russia and the onset of a military confrontation. Moscow especially will consider any effort to station U.S. troops and weaponry on Finnish territory a very serious provocation. With their new policy, the Finns risk being caught in the middle of a geostrategic power play between Russia and the United States.

Brink & Impact: No room for more escalation - Russia is already talking about nuclear war

J.D. Tuccille 2022 (contributing editor) 10 June 2022 REASON magazine " Ukraine War Unlikely to End Anytime Soon" <https://reason.com/2022/06/10/ukraine-war-unlikely-end-anytime-soon/> (accessed 23 June 2022)

Inevitably, the Russian government [threatened retaliatory strikes](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/putin-warns-west-rocket-systems-russia-ukraine-war_n_629c95d6e4b090b53b865dd9) against unspecified targets that had previously been left alone. What that means is unclear, given that Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov was [already hinting in April at nuclear war](https://reason.com/2022/04/27/the-world-is-back-on-a-war-footing-and-well-all-pay-the-price/) with the West. Whatever it does militarily, Putin's regime isn't leaving a lot of room for further rhetorical escalation. Those threats understandably have some western countries looking for solutions that don't involve widening the conflict.

3. Hyping the threat

Link: Inflating the evil Russian threat makes things worse: Hardens Putin, increases risk of retaliation

Doug Bandow 2022 (JD; senior fellow at the Cato Institute; former special assistant to Pres. Reagan) 23 May 2022 “The Washington Blob: Its Blind Arrogance May Lead to War with Russia” <https://www.cato.org/commentary/washington-blob-its-blind-arrogance-may-lead-war-russia> (accessed 29 July 2022)

Worse, administration officials are not just pursuing inflated war aims, but promoting them publicly, expressing desire for regime change, war crimes trials, and a weakened Russia. This ostentatious challenge raises the stakes for the Putin government, increasing pressure on it to respond. Public discussions of America’s role in combat operations, including targeting Russian generals and ships, also highlights Washington’s status as a cobelligerent and tempts Moscow to retaliate.

Impact: World War 3

Doug Bandow 2022 (JD; senior fellow at the Cato Institute; former special assistant to Pres. Reagan) 23 May 2022 “The Washington Blob: Its Blind Arrogance May Lead to War with Russia” <https://www.cato.org/commentary/washington-blob-its-blind-arrogance-may-lead-war-russia> (accessed 29 July 2022)

Escalation could be [striking Western aid shipments](https://www.thenationalnews.com/world/europe/2022/04/11/poland-risks-russian-agression-as-it-becomes-key-weapons-route-for-ukraine/) before they reach Ukraine, perhaps in Poland; encouraging attacks by Russian or proxy forces on US garrisons elsewhere, such as in Syria or Iraq; augmenting the military capabilities of American adversaries, most dangerously Iran or North Korea; employing more [destructive weapons and firepower](https://www.bbc.com/news/world-60664169), including nuclear weapons; and [declaring full mobilization](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/05/19/russians-criticize-military-war-ukraine/), thereby committing the Russian people to a modified version of total war. All of these would set up a potentially dangerous confrontation with Washington. It would be madness for the US to match or trump Moscow, given the stakes. However, backing down, seemingly abandoning Ukraine, would sacrifice US credibility. This is how World War III could start.

4. Economic damage from deficit spending

Link: Increased US defense commitments are unaffordable because of high federal budget deficits

Doug Bandow 2022 (JD; senior fellow at the Cato Institute; former special assistant to Pres. Reagan) 22 Apr 2022 "Nine Reasons Why NATO Should Close the Door to Sweden and Finland" (accessed 22 Mar 2023) https://www.cato.org/commentary/nine-reasons-why-nato-should-close-door-sweden-finland

 **The U.S. no longer can afford to underwrite a gaggle of wastrel, indifferent states**. Uncle Sam should shrink, not expand, [his defense dole](https://www.aier.org/article/spendthrift-uncle-sam-no-longer-can-afford-to-run-the-world/). The annual federal deficit ran roughly [$3 trillion](https://www.cbo.gov/system/files/2021-07/57263-outlook.pdf) in [2020 and 2021](https://thehill.com/policy/finance/budget/578039-us-deficit-hits-28-trillion-in-2021-second-biggest-in-history). This year red ink will run [about $1.3 trillion](https://www.cbo.gov/system/files/2021-11/57432-NIPA.pdf), assuming the Biden administration is unable to further boost election‐​year spending. Even with the end of the COVID pandemic, [the Congressional Budget Office predicted](https://www.cbo.gov/system/files/2021-07/57263-outlook.pdf) more than $12 trillion worth of red ink over the next decade, with much more to come as America’s population ages. [Publicly held federal debt](https://www.cbo.gov/system/files/2021-03/56977-LTBO-2021.pdf) is already over 100 percent, approaching the record of 106 percent set in 1946. CBO warned that the national debt could break 200 percent by 2050. Significant spending cuts will be necessary.

Impact: Every increase in the deficit hurts the economy

Dr William Gale and Benjamin Harris 2010. (Gale - PhD in economics, Stanford Univ.; senior fellow at the Brookings Institution and co-director of the Urban-Brookings Tax Policy Center; former assistant professor of Economics at UCLA, and a senior economist for the Council of Economic Advisers under President George H.W. Bush; Harris - master’s degree in economics from Cornell Univ and master’s degree in quantitative methods from Columbia University; senior research associate with the Economics Studies Program at the Brookings Institution) “A VAT for the United States: Part of the Solution” (notes about the date: This article is one of several in the overall publication at this source. The publication date was 2011, but this article was written in 2010) https://www.taxpolicycenter.org/sites/default/files/alfresco/publication-pdfs/1001418-A-Value-Added-Tax-for-the-United-States-Part-of-the-Solution.PDF (accessed 26 Jan 2022)

But even in the absence of a crisis, sustained deficits have deleterious effects, as they translate into lower national savings, higher interest rates, and increased indebtedness to foreign investors, all of which serve to reduce future national income. Gale and Orszag (2004a) estimate that a 1 percent of GDP increase in the deficit will raise interest rates by 25 to 35 basis points and reduce national saving by 0.5 to 0.8 percentage points of GDP.