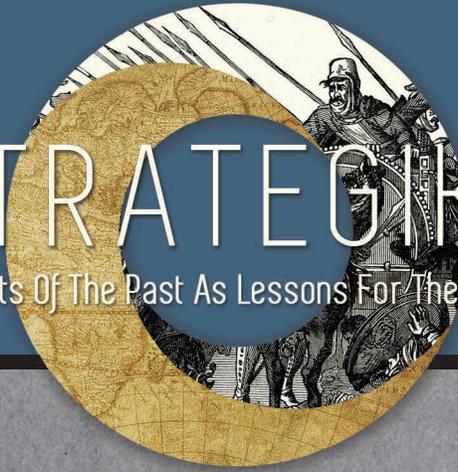


STRATEGIKA

Conflicts Of The Past As Lessons For The Present

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NATO AND UKRAINE

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What Is America's Strategic Interest in Ukraine?

By David Goldman

As the Ukraine war enters its twelfth month, the military situation remains a stalemate, but a stalemate that gives the political advantage to Russia. If Russia can hold most of the territory in the oblasts of Luhansk, Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia, and Kherson that it annexed on Sept. 30, 2022, it will claim success for its “special military operation.” A dismembered Ukraine will be left with a trillion-dollar reconstruction bill on a GDP of barely \$100 billion, a resident population of perhaps 25 million with ten million of its citizens living abroad as refugees, and a dim future.

In furtherance of what strategic interests has the United States acted in Ukraine? Is Ukraine's NATO membership an American *raison d'état*? Did American strategists really believe that sanctions would shut down Russia's economy? Did they imagine that the trading patterns of the Asian continent would shift to flow around the sanctions? Did they consider the materiel requirements of a long war that is exhausting American stockpiles? Did they consider what tripwires might elicit the use of nuclear weapons? Or did they sleepwalk into the conflict, as the European powers did in 1914?

Why did Russia invade? Would Russia have invaded Ukraine if the West and the Zelensky government had put Minsk II into effect, with autonomous Russophone regions within a sovereign and neutral Ukraine? Contrafactual history is inherently unprovable, but there are good reasons to believe that this is true. Protecting the rights of Russians separated from the motherland by the breakup of the Soviet Union is a Russian *raison d'état*. After more than 14,000 casualties in fighting between Ukrainian nationalists and pro-Russian separatists in Donbas before the February 24th invasion, it is hard to argue that Russia's concerns were groundless.

In 2008, Russia intervened in Georgia to uphold the principle that anyone who holds a Russian passport—Ossetian, Akhbaz, Belorussian, or Ukrainian—is a Russian. Russia's survival depends neither on its birth rate, nor on immigration, nor even on prospective annexation, but on the survival of the principle by which Russia was built in the first place. That is why Putin could not abandon the pockets of Russian passport holders in the Caucasus.

A generation of American diplomats, including Henry Kissinger and former ambassador to Russia William Burns, warned that expanding NATO to Ukraine was a tripwire for Russia. German documents published by *Der Spiegel* in February 2022 confirm that Western powers gave Russia written assurance in 1990 against NATO expansion. Russia's prostration after its 1998 debt default, though, allowed NATO to ignore these assurances. Under Clinton, NATO's mission morphed into a nebulous human rights and social welfare agenda. NATO added Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic in 1999, and another seven former Soviet-zone countries in 2004. Meanwhile the Bundeswehr shrank to five ill-equipped divisions from the twelve combat-ready, heavily armed divisions of 1990. NATO degraded its military function as it padded its membership.

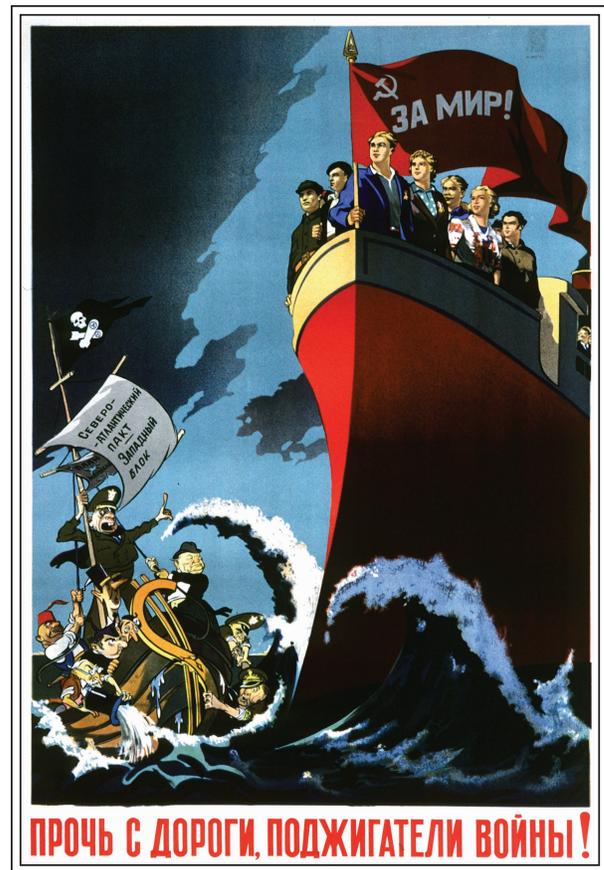


Image credit: Poster Collection, RU/SU 2085, Hoover Institution Archives.

Ukraine is another matter. Russia regards its inclusion in NATO as an existential threat. Putin stated on the eve of the invasion on February 23:

Positioning areas for interceptor missiles are being established in Romania and Poland as part of the US project to create a global missile defense system. It is common knowledge that the launchers deployed there can be used for Tomahawk cruise missiles—offensive strike systems.

In addition, the United States is developing its all-purpose Standard Missile-6, which can provide air and missile defense, as well as strike ground and surface targets. In other words, the allegedly defensive US missile defense system is developing and expanding its new offensive capabilities.

The information we have gives us good reason to believe that Ukraine's accession to NATO and the subsequent deployment of NATO facilities has already been decided and is only a matter of time. We clearly understand that given this scenario, the level of military threats to Russia will increase dramatically, several times over. And I would like to emphasize at this point that the risk of a sudden strike at our country will multiply.

In October 2021, Russia tested its first submarine-launched hypervelocity missile and deployed the first S-500 air defense system around Moscow. If American strategists were not angling for advantage in a prospective nuclear exchange, as Putin believed, why then abandon Minsk II and the principle of Ukrainian neutrality? Regime change in Russia has been on the agenda of some senior Biden administration officials for a decade. As Undersecretary of State Victoria Nuland, head of the State Department Eastern European desk, told a congressional committee on May 6, 2014: "Since 1992, we have provided \$20 billion to Russia to support the pursuit of transition to the peaceful, prosperous, democratic state its people deserve."

What Moscow saw was not the America of 1983, which pursued peace through strength, but rather provocation from weakness. It miscalculated on an invasion with just 120,000 troops. If regime change was not Washington's agenda before February 24, it became so explicitly afterward. On March 26, President Biden declared that Putin "cannot remain in power," defining America's goal as regime change. This was a grave miscalculation. The Russian elite has rallied behind the regime, aware that its privilege and position will disappear if the regime falls, and the Russian people stoically follow their orders. December opinion polls show near-record 81% support for the regime.

Contrary to earlier American claims that economic sanctions would reduce Russia's economic output by half, Russia's GDP shrank by only 4% in 2022. Russia's exports to China rose to \$190 billion in 2022 from \$86 billion in 2021, and exports to India reportedly doubled to \$27 billion in 2022 from \$13 billion in 2021, although the true total probably is higher. Russian fertilizer revenues rose by 70% in 2022 vs. 2021 despite a 10% drop in volume. Chinese and Indian goods have replaced many Western items, with only minor inconvenience to Russian consumers. Turkey, Armenia, Georgia, and other countries on Russia's periphery have boosted exports to Russia, effectively circumventing U.S. sanctions. At about RUB 69 to the U.S. dollar, Russia's currency trades higher than it did a year ago. New trading relationships, especially in energy, have emerged in Eurasia that consolidate Chinese influence.

It is unclear whether the West has an advantage over Russia in the prospective provision of materiel. By Estonian estimates, Russia can produce 9,000 artillery shells a day, compared to a present U.S. total of 15,000 a month. U.S. capacity to provide precision munitions to Ukraine is constrained, according to a January 9, 2023, CSIS assessment. Russia meanwhile has added substantial amounts of mobilized manpower, improved ground-air coordination, deployed additional SU-35 and SU-57 warplanes, and sent a significant number of its most advanced T90 tanks to the front.

The West probably does not have the military capacity to drive Russia out of Ukraine. To be sure, some U.S. analysts see military aid to Ukraine as a cheap option. The Hudson Institute's Rebecca Heinrichs tweeted on January 12, 2023, that the U.S. risks "running out of certain weapons systems. But those weapons are also destroying weapons of a top-tier adversary cooperating with our number one adversary. Not a waste." That

is, the U.S. may sacrifice Ukraine in an unwinnable war of attrition in the hope of degrading Russian capabilities. U.S. military analysts touted one Wunderwaffe after another as the key to victory: Javelin anti-tank missiles, Switchblade drones, HIMARS, and so forth. Even if the U.S. provided Abrams tanks and F-16s to Ukraine, though, these systems would require many months of training before deployment. Russia meanwhile has successfully mobilized forces roughly double the size of its initial invasion force and improved its performance on the ground.

Having stumbled into a war for which it was poorly prepared, and having then failed to crush the Russian economy through sanctions, the United States faces a dilemma. A cease-fire in place, even an armistice like the North–South Korea divide, would allow Russia to claim success in its annexation of Ukrainian territory. Continuing the war, though, eventually will reduce Ukraine to dysfunctionality, as Russian forces continue to inflict casualties on the Ukraine Army, and Russian ordnance degrades Ukraine’s infrastructure. The U.S. could deploy weapons to strike targets deep inside Russia, or even deploy American combat forces, but at the risk of nuclear war with Russia, something the Biden administration appears to recognize.

Barring a decisive offensive by either the Ukrainian or Russian side during the coming months, the war of attrition will continue. Western weapons will not give Ukraine a decisive advantage. With roughly five times Ukraine’s much-reduced population, Russia is the likely victor in a war of attrition.

The most likely outcome is a humiliating armistice. Paradoxically, that may redound to the long-term benefit of the United States. North Vietnam did the United States a favor by humiliating us before the Soviet Union did. It destroyed the limited-war illusion that possessed American military planners from the late 1950s onward. Our humiliating withdrawal from Vietnam in 1975 made possible a radical rethinking of American military strategy, beginning under Defense Secretary Harold Brown in 1977 and continuing through the Reagan administration. The United States undertook a revolution in defense technology that produced modern avionics and precision weapons, reversing the advantage that Russia enjoyed in conventional weapons in the early 1970s. The Russian military concluded after the 1982 Beqaa Valley air war and the initiation of the Strategic Defense Initiative that it could not keep pace technologically with America.

Utopian illusions about exporting democracy motivated America’s great blunders of the past generation, from Afghanistan and Iraq to Libya and Syria, and ultimately Ukraine. Perhaps we require another national humiliation on the scale of Vietnam to bring us back to the drive for technological superiority that ultimately won the Cold War.



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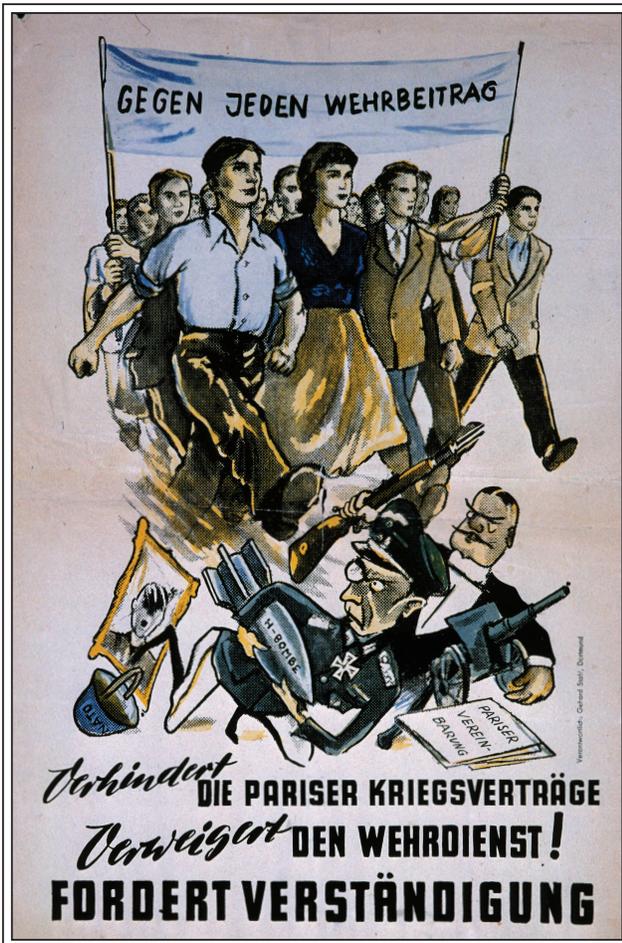


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Russia against the Rest

By Josef Joffe

At age 74, “obsolete” and “brain-dead,” NATO is proving its mettle again. Otherwise, Ukraine would be a goner by now. The West has taken up Kyiv’s cause because it is also its own.

“We have no eternal allies and no perpetual enemies. Our *interests* are eternal and perpetual,” Lord Palmerston laid down in 1848. Actually, there are “perpetual enemies.” England and France have fought each other for eight centuries, from the 12th to the 19th. France and Habsburg-Spain did so from the 15th to the 19th. Why? To thwart the hegemony of whoever reaches for it.

Except: Then as today, the balance of power takes time to kick in. Fast forward to Ukraine. When Vladimir Putin grabbed Crimea and Southeast Ukraine in 2014, NATO hesitated. Yet the annexation was an assault not only on a country of which we knew little, but also on hard-core Western interests. At stake was a European order that had kept the

peace for a lifetime. The rule was neither war, nor conquest. When Vladimir broke it, the Alliance was not up to the historical challenge.

Regard the eight years before Russia’s second invasion in 2022. Barack Obama was turning away from Europe, pulling out U.S. troops from there and retracting from the Middle East, where he granted Putin a free hand in Syria. Donald Trump would call NATO “obsolete.” France’s Emmanuel Macron diagnosed it as “brain-dead.”

NATO was not in good shape. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Europe had been disarming, cutting forces, and closing down military production lines. For instance, Germany reduced its tank force from 3,000 to 300. Not ready for war, NATO’s deterrence power dwindled. When Putin pounced in 2014, his risks were low. So was the price: modest sanctions sparing oil and gas, Russia’s key source of income. So why not double down with the full-scale invasion last year?

Putin’s lunge for Kyiv should have been the final wake-up call. Even at this point, harnessing the allies was like herding cats. Europe’s Big Two, France and Germany, went with their familiar reflexes. Don’t confront Russia, play the go-between and mediator. Even after the second invasion, Berlin and Paris would not supply Ukraine with serious stuff like main battle tanks, let alone combat aircraft and long-range missiles. Nor did the U.S. “Don’t rile the Bear,” let’s give Putin a face-saving “offramp.”

The dramatic turn was not foreseen by Putin, nor by so many Western experts. Palmerston’s “permanent interests” finally did kick in, as they had not during the thirties when the West had ignored the precipitous rise of Germany until Hitler unleashed World War II. After years of caution, NATO is back in business. So, three cheers for the old lady, who looked wheelchair-bound when Russia first attacked Ukraine in 2014.

Why is the Alliance booming, why the *Zeitenwende*, the “sea-change,” proclaimed by German chancellor Olaf Scholz after decades of making nice to Moscow? The answer comes in three parts.

The weightiest factor is America’s return to leadership under Joe Biden, ending the creeping neglect of Europe under Obama and Trump. Why is the American role so critical? If the U.S. doesn’t commit, no other Alliance member will; only the U.S. can recruit a posse. So it took Joe Biden to promise Abrams tanks to Ukraine, and then Olaf Scholz followed with Leopard panzers. It takes a nuclear-armed superpower to calm allies by insuring them against the risks of confronting the Russian Behemoth next door. Safety breeds valor. To boot, given twenty years of European disarmament, only the U.S. as the world’s largest economy could serve as the “arsenal of democracy,” to recall FDR.

The second factor is Ukraine itself and its miraculous victories that put Russia’s miserable performance to shame. States don’t want to back losers, nor to accept deadly risks, as posed by the Russian giant next door. They would rather do business with the presumptive winner, offering compromise and conciliation to keep the war away from their own turf.

Had Russia taken Kyiv by blitzkrieg, the Europeans—probably the U.S. as well—would have swallowed the *fait accompli*. After all, they had done so after Russia had grabbed Crimea and the Southeast in short order. What had been hashed out in Minsk in 2015—withdrawal of foreign forces and Ukraine’s full control over its borders—was illusionary from day one. Still, as Macron put it as late as February 8, 2022, two weeks before the onslaught, this deal was the “only path to peace.” In fact, it tacitly ratified Russia’s conquests while unwittingly extending an invitation to go for more, as Putin did. That his army was driven back so quickly surely encouraged the U.S. and EU to grasp the nettle with tens of billions for economic and military aid.

The third factor brings us back to the largest question of them all: peace and war, order and balance. What had made Europe’s great powers plunge into endless war in centuries past, embroiling France, England, and Habsburg-Spain again and again? What explains Europe’s Second Thirty Years War that pitted the West and Russia against Wilhelmine and Hitlerite Germany in the 20th century? At the root lay the eternal injunction: Hegemonists must be stopped.

After WWII, it was the West vs. Soviet Russia. Fortunately, the war remained cold, but it was prosecuted with the full panoply of power: massive armament, nuclear deterrence, and forward deployment of a million NATO troops along the East–West divide. Throughout history, the issue was always the same: Who prevails, who rules the rest?

The current contest looks modest by comparison. But the stakes transcend Ukraine. They explain why the U.S. waded in while France and Germany after toing-and-froing have fallen into line, dispatching ever more sophisticated gear. Behold the classic neutrals Finland and Sweden now pushing into NATO. The Baltics and former Soviet satrapies like Poland are shouldering the biggest risks for obvious reasons. The closer a nation to the Bear, the keener it is to huddle under the U.S. umbrella.

So as in past centuries, the logic of balance and deterrence has finally kicked in against Vladimir Putin, who does not hide, but celebrates his wild-eyed ambitions. At a minimum, he wants a certified sphere of influence (which used to be called *droit de regard* in Palmerston’s days). At a maximum, he wants to restore the old Soviet Empire, which has splintered into 15 republics. Economic sanctions, as always, are not enough. Given its rational fear of Moscow’s neo-imperialism, most of Europe—leave out Hungary or Serbia—has evolved into an anti-Russian coalition, though it will not intervene directly.

Again, why the turn? To crib from Samuel Johnson, a deadly threat “concentrates the mind.” Kyiv is fighting not just for itself, but also as a stand-in for the rest. The central issue is *kto kovo* to borrow a classic Russian line—who bests whom? Hence, the rejuvenation of NATO. Hence the “sea-change” in Germany, which has so often stuck to Bismarck’s counsel “never to cut the link to St. Petersburg.” Berlin has abandoned Nord Stream 2, searching for gas all over the world while earmarking an extra 100 billion euros for

defense. Alas, these will not soon translate into hands-on rearmament, given the country's drawn-down production facilities.

"*Pourvu que ça dure*"—let's hope it lasts—warned Napoleon's mother Laetitia when the emperor boasted of his exploits. In the case of NATO, it will last as long as the three factors outlined here continue to operate. That is not guaranteed, given the differences of interests bedeviling any alliance. If the Ukraine fight degenerates into a war of attrition, or if Putin throws ever more fresh troops into the battle, Western electorates may tire—look at the GOP's growing opposition to U.S. infusions of aid. Public opinion in democracies is fickle; better to jaw-jaw than to war-war.

So, beware of soothsayers. We only know how wars begin, not how they end. But the stakes are enormous. The struggle is not just about Ukraine. It is about stopping and reversing aggression on a continent that has enjoyed 77 years of peace—the longest in European history.



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Turkey and the West: A Parenthesis or a Historical Shift?

By Zafiris Rossidis

A poll conducted in December 2022 by the Turkish company Gezici found that 72.8% of Turkish citizens polled were in favor of good relations with Russia. By comparison, nearly 90% perceive the United States as a hostile country. It also revealed that 24.2% of citizens believe that Russia is hostile, while 62.6% believe that Russia is a friendly country. Similarly, more than 60% of respondents said that Russia contributes positively to the Turkish economy.

Turkey began to distance itself from the United States as early as 2003, when it refused the passage of American troops to Iraq. In 2010, it destroyed the U.S.–Israel–Turkey triangle, breaking up with Israel. In 2011, Turkey implemented a policy in Syria that was hardly in line with U.S. interests. The final distancing took place in 2016, with the July coup, for which Turkey blamed the United States.

Turkey considers itself very important to the United States but declares that Ankara can live without Washington. This concept has become the point of departure for Turkey in its quest to reconstitute the Ottoman Empire. Minister of the Interior Süleyman Soylu declares that the Turkish government will design the new world order with the help of Allah, and Western powers will eat the dust behind almighty Turkey.¹

According to a RAND Corporation volume on Turkey, there are four scenarios for the future of Turkish strategic orientation: 1) Turkey will remain a difficult partner for the United States; 2) Turkey will become democratic and unite with the West; 3) Turkey will be between East and West, but have better relations with powers such as China, Iran, and Russia, than with the U.S. and the EU; and 4) Turkey will completely abandon the West.

From the evidence in the case of the Russian–Ukrainian war, Russia, China, Turkey, and Iran justify the Russian invasion since NATO and the EU have designs on their neighborhood. Above all, they are united by a common hatred for the West. They are frenemies and they know it: on the contrary, the U.S. tends to invest in frenemies as if they were true friends.

The U.S. observed the rapprochement of Turkey and Russia without renouncing the traditional alliance with Turkey, which today has no longer such importance. Turkey was useful when it was an “enemy” of the USSR and the U.S. made far too many concessions for the sake of this useful enmity. In short, there is some inertia in the modification of the principle “the enemy of my enemy is my friend,” as of course “the friend of a friend is my friend.” Turkey’s role in NATO worries the U.S., as Ankara–Moscow relations have acquired some shared strategic characteristics.

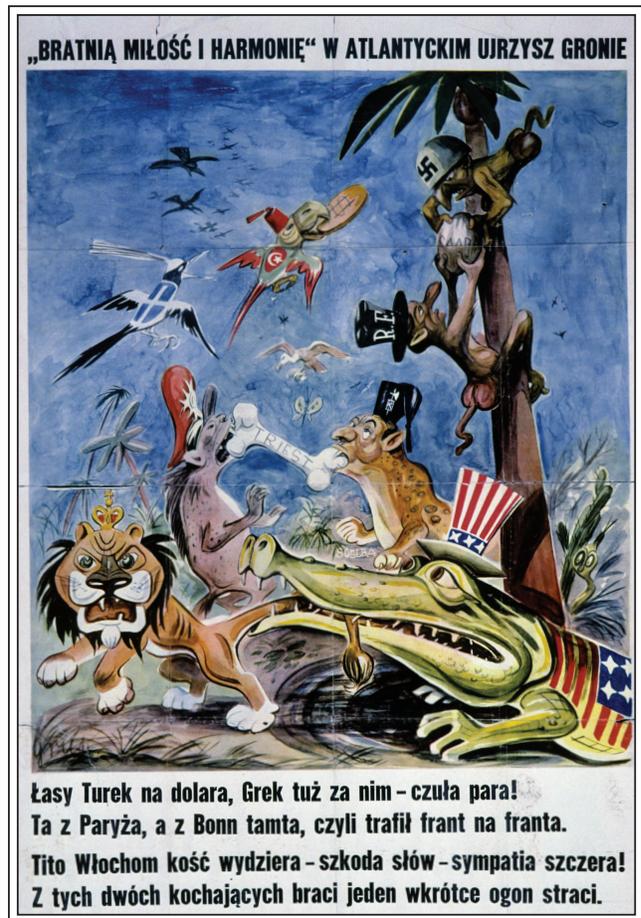


Image credit: Poster Collection, PL 202, Hoover Institution Archives.

POLL: Is the NATO alliance becoming stronger or weaker?

- All of NATO came together in historic fashion to help Ukraine.
- Europe admirably followed the United States' lead in aiding Ukraine.
- The Ukraine War revealed German vulnerability and NATO impotence.
- The Greek–Turkish crisis may tear open NATO's southern flank.
- There are now too many separate member agendas for NATO to recover.

The attraction between the two countries lies in their equally authoritarian governance models and the fact that their strategic culture and operational codes bear similarities: Both countries are revisionist, aggressive, and assertive in their regions; both countries claim to be encircled, which they use as a pretext for their unilateral actions; and both countries have militarized their foreign policy, waging hybrid warfare, resorting to proxy warfare, and blackmailing countries that offer resistance. Russia and Turkey cooperate on natural gas and oil pipelines; Russia has sold weapons such as the S-400 missile system to Turkey; Russia has provided technical assistance in the construction of Turkey's nuclear plants; the two nations have collaborated in Central Asia (i.e., Azerbaijan); they import and export each other's commodities; and Turkey has illegally transported Russian fuel to China and Iran, thereby bypassing sanctions on Russia, to mention only a few.

But the big issue for U.S.–Turkey relations against the backdrop of the Russian–Ukrainian war has four strands: First, the issue of the important role Turkey plays in the grain export agreement, which if canceled will create a food crisis in Africa. Second, Turkey's blackmailing of the NATO candidacies of Sweden and Finland. Third, the Turkish application to purchase the F-16 and the pos-

sible conflict between Congress and the Biden administration over the administration's request to grant Turkey the license to do so. Finally, Turkey's non-adoption of NATO sanctions against Russia. The possibility of Erdoğan using a strategy of tensions with Greece (e.g., multiple violations of Greek airspace, aggressiveness in the Aegean, weaponization of immigration, threats of bombing Athens with the new "Tayfun" short-range ballistic missile) to rally the electorate around his party and detach it from any opposition—all recent polls have AKP trailing the opposition—prior to the June election is one explanation for Turkey's behavior that is being considered by the U.S., which nonetheless is angered that Turkey is the only NATO country that has not adopted the sanctions against Russia.

The latter is one of the main arguments of many congressional lawmakers to block the Turkish government's request for the purchase of F-16s from the United States.

But what about enemies of friends? Turkey is an "enemy" of Greece and an "ally" of the U.S. in NATO. And here we see dysfunction on the U.S. part: it favors Turkey as always.

The triangle of relations between Greece–USA–Turkey has troubled the governments of the three countries since 1952 when Greece and Turkey entered NATO. Monteagle Stearns in his famous book *Entangled Allies: U.S. Policy Toward Greece, Turkey, and Cyprus* (1992) thoroughly analyzed the very difficult equations with numerous variables that American foreign policy has to solve towards two of its important NATO allies. After all, the last thing the U.S. would want to see during the war in Ukraine would be a rift in NATO's S/E wing.

Turkey's threats towards Greece are of particular concern to the United States, which recognizes that these threats are also related to U.S.–Turkish relations, as the U.S. is often included along with Greece in the rhetorical attacks launched by Turkish officials. The Turks accuse the U.S. of spoiling the Greeks and furthermore, they claim that America is behind every move that does not coincide with their interests, such as the new U.S. bases in Greece at Alexandroupolis and Larissa.

So this is where the F-16s come into the American picture, with Congress and especially the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee, headed by Robert Menendez (D–NJ), adamantly insisting that such a move would not only reward the authoritarian and anti-ally Erdoğan, but also risk a military clash over the Aegean. Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu last December threatened Greece with retaliation if Athens proceeded with any expansion of its territorial waters south of Crete, saying that it would still be seen as a *casus belli* justifying military action. The first *casus belli* emerged from a parliamentary declaration in 1995, when Turkey said such an extension in the Aegean would be seen as a cause of war. In addition to the Aegean, Turkey threatens Greece in the Eastern Mediterranean, in contravention of current international maritime law (UNCLOS) that allows Greece to extend its territorial waters up to 12 nautical miles. Are all these issues small and trivial for the White House in the face of the big stakes? It's more important that American diplomacy believes that it can smooth out the friction points on both sides—especially those of the Greeks and Turks—and promote the selling of American jets to both countries.

But is there a convincing argument for the “legitimate” security concerns of Turkey that need to be eased by procuring cutting-edge F-16V fighter jets? The Syrian refugees? The stateless Kurds?

The American operation to restore Turkey to NATO normalcy is in full throttle. Normality, however, without abandoning the Turkish strategy of revisionism at the expense of Greece, is not feasible. Are Americans capable of pulling it all together? It remains to be seen.

1 December 8, 2022, <https://twitter.com/abdbozkurt/status/1580174398015012864>



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The Divide within NATO

By Seth Cropsey

It has become a truism that the Ukraine War has created a NATO more united and, with the addition of Finland and impending addition of Sweden, more militarily capable than ever. A closer look at the post-24 February situation suggests a NATO that is more brittle than before. None of the fundamental contradictions within NATO have been resolved: U.S. “alliance management” simply papers over a growing fissure between Western and Eastern Europe that NATO’s adversaries, Russia included, can exploit.

Russia’s escalation of the Ukraine War began the largest European ground war since World War II. Putin sought far more than “another bite at the Ukrainian apple,” as Eastern European diplomats beyond the Baltic States put it, let alone the delusions of French and German leaders that dismissed out of hand the possibility of war. Macron’s last-minute dash to Moscow in early February 2022, complete with a court audience in the Kremlin across a multi-meter-long table, was a pitiful farce which the UK’s appeasers of the 1930s would have approved. Putin’s mind was made up no later than November 2021. Yet Macron still clung to the hope that European diplomacy could diffuse an intractable situation.

The irrationality of this position stems from the Ukraine War’s concrete stakes. At first, Putin’s gambit was a high-stakes attempt to overturn the European security system. The weeklong Ukraine operation, complete with a parade in occupied Kyiv, would enable the country’s de facto annexation by mid-June. Putin would never have stopped there. Belarus would have been brought under full Russian control through the Union State. Transnistria would have been incorporated into Novorossiia, and perhaps the rest of Moldova as well. Georgia would have been similarly absorbed, if not legally, then practically, and Russia would have become the dominant Caucasus power, allowing it to surround Turkey on three sides. Ankara, then, would have broken with NATO, allowing Russian forces to spill out freely into the Eastern Mediterranean. The result of a successful invasion would have been the creation of an autarkic Russian entity wholly capable of confronting NATO directly.

Through a combination of Ukrainian strategic skill and resolve, Western—primarily American—military aid, and Russian failures, Putin’s gambit has morphed into a war for imperial survival, a war directly against NATO. Yet now, just as in February 2022, the Western European powers show no desire to accelerate or expand military assistance to Ukraine. Nor have the Western European powers, particularly Germany given its vaunted manufacturing capacity, expanded their defense industrial production, despite Olaf Scholz’s much-trumpeted *Zeitenwende*. Germany still stalls, waffling over whether to permit other countries to transfer German-made Leopard tanks to Ukraine—as of this writing, Germany may shift policy, but only after months of cajoling and concerted NATO-wide pressure. The overwhelming majority of military assistance to Ukraine comes from the United States. And even that has been hesitant, sporadic, and more enthusiastic in word than deed. But even the poorer Eastern European NATO powers, including the Baltics and Poland, have provided proportionally and, in some metrics, absolutely more capabilities to Ukraine than France and Germany.

The inexorable conclusion is that Berlin and Paris—likely coordinating in Brussels—still seek to hedge between Washington and Moscow. The Russia-European energy relationship has died, especially now that Europeans, after grumbling from the summer through the mid-autumn, have now expanded their ability to receive and process American natural gas. Nevertheless, the pure geopolitical hope of triangulation between the great powers remains. Western Europe still seeks strategic autonomy, even if its leaders pay lip service to NATO’s integral role in their defense.

This explains the fundamentally scarring nature of the Ukraine War. Minsk II was the clearest expression of Franco-German strategic autonomy, for they were the ones who, alongside a legally neutral Russia, adjudicated an “internal Ukrainian dispute.” This diplomatic fiction, that a Russian invasion was in fact a Ukrainian

civil war, was necessary to give France and Germany the leverage they needed to deal with Russia directly, rather than to accept a NATO-wide policy, and by extension, American leadership on the Ukraine question and in Europe-Russia relations.

Western Europe still seeks a strategic reset, a wriggling out from under Washington's oppressive policy yoke that demands such miseries as moderate sacrifices for European stability and the maintenance of international law. Nearly a year into the Ukraine War, the fundamental fissures between Western European, Eastern European, and American NATO have not been resolved. Barring a hard course correction in Paris and Berlin, once again coordinating through Brussels, Western European NATO will continue to hedge, providing shards of assistance to stave off accusations of appeasement, but quietly offering themselves as "honest brokers" between all parties. That is, by letting the U.S. and Eastern European NATO do the hard work of supporting Ukraine, Western European NATO risks nothing and, if Ukraine loses, gains a direct line to the Kremlin to negotiate a new European order.



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The Future of Europe

By Chris Gibson

We are now more than a year into Russia's unprovoked invasion of Ukraine. With massive losses on both sides, this conflict has become a war of attrition with seemingly no end in sight. The strategic effects have reverberated across Europe and the world. The Ukrainian refugees and displaced persons dislodged from the war has exacerbated the humanitarian crisis that already existed in Europe stemming from migrants from Syria and other parts of the Middle East. This naked Russian aggression has also disrupted the global economy, and although thankfully it has not yet happened, still threatens to escalate into a regional, possibly even a world war, with potentially cataclysmic consequences for all of humankind, especially if nuclear weapons are used.

On the current path, more danger awaits the U.S. and the West. If we maintain the same strategic assumptions, all of our options are wanting. On the one hand, if we escalate to facilitate a Ukrainian victory, we run the risk of a strategic Russian response against NATO, possibly even the United States. At that point China could also directly join the war in an Axis that could potentially also include North Korea, Iran, Syria, and Venezuela. On the other hand, a decisive Russian victory over Ukraine would be very destabilizing for the West, undermining the rules of the current international order. That must be unacceptable to us. That leaves a potential negotiated settlement. However, the current constructs considered also appear fraught with strategic peril as they include Ukraine ceding yet more territory beyond Crimea to Russia further eroding deterrence without any guarantees that Russia wouldn't resume the military offensive in the future.

It's clear to me we need fresh thinking, and ultimately, a strategic game-changer. For that to occur, the United States must take a leading role. To fully consider this option, as hard as it is, we must set aside ideologies, attempt to deescalate the current situation, and then do the hard work to mediate differences, find common interests, and reach a sustainable longer-term arrangement for all the nations of Europe.

To start, let's recognize up front that the real civilizational challenge for Europe is China.

China has the intent, and as this century unfolds, the emerging capacity (both economically and militarily) to dominate the world. This threatening trajectory is bolstered by the Chinese Communist Party and its leader Xi Jinping, who have formidable domestic surveillance and policing capacity to crush internal dissent and effectuate their will on the Chinese people, regardless of how unpopular it may become. Given that, we can expect that China will continue to pursue its "One Belt, One Road" comprehensive campaign to extend Chinese influence over the entire world.

Despite this apparent existential threat, the United States has failed to rally Europe, potentially our strongest partners in this struggle, to deter and positively shape a rising China. To the contrary, we have further alienated Russia and pushed her towards China, and that has contributed to the current crisis we are witnessing.

To be clear, during his over two-decade tenure, Russia's dictator Vladimir Putin has perpetrated evil on both the Russian people and Russia's neighbors, and this unjustified attack on Ukraine is yet another example. A fair reckoning for this aggression must be a part of any new diplomatic endeavor. For starters, a lasting peace must include all seized lands (including Crimea) returning to Ukraine. For that to be acceptable to Russia, the new security arrangement will need to address some of their underlying concerns. In short, there's a real need for artful diplomacy to get us out of this present strategic dilemma.

Controversial as it may be, we should also put on the table some other obvious facts bearing on the strategic problem. Putin is a man, and as such, is mortal. He will die someday (or could be replaced by the Russian people) and Russia will eventually have another leader. Thus, our current diplomatic efforts regarding Russia should include approaches for dealing with both Putin and his eventual successor.

On Russia, here are some other salient facts. First, let's recognize that this country has an economy the size of Illinois and an Army that could not defeat the Prairie State's Army National Guard. It should be ever clearer now (although it was so even before this war), from a conventional forces' standpoint, Russia is not a threat to NATO. However, Russia's strategic arsenal (nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons stockpiles and the hypersonic missile technology they likely possess) is a threat to Europe and the United States. For that reason, we must take Russia seriously, which means at a minimum, *we must understand Russia's security concerns and interests*, even if we don't like them or even agree with them.

Russia has long protested NATO expansion, claiming that this was a threat to its security. Given the series of invasions over the centuries Russia has endured, history should at least give us the strategic empathy to understand Russia's position (again, even if one doesn't agree with it). This should be the departure point for our diplomatic engagement with Russia. Ukraine has been the focal point for Russia's actions over the past decade. Russia has consistently made it clear that a Ukraine in NATO would not be acceptable to them. If we

are concerned about Russia's strategic weapons, and if we believe Russia could help us and the West deter and shape a rising China, we should be interested in assuaging Russia's concerns on that score.

All that stated, perhaps our problem has not been too much NATO expansion, but not enough.

We should immediately move to take off the table Russia's concerns with NATO encroachment by informing Russia's leader that Ukraine will not be offered entrance to NATO any sooner than Russia. This is an offer Russia (including Putin) will not be able to refuse, as much as they may want to do so. Their woeful performance in the war to date and the global isolation and economic wreckage it has endured as a consequence have Russia necessarily looking for a strategic game-changer. This is precisely why I believe the time is ripe for a bold move with creative ideas for re-imagining a new, sustainable security and economic arrangement for all of Europe.

I believe the nations of Europe, led by the United States, should move immediately to incorporate all the countries in Europe into both the European Union and NATO (including both Russia *and* Ukraine). Because this approach addresses Russia's underlying concerns, the yielding back to Ukraine of all lands seized since 2014 would be a condition of this new security arrangement.

Next, the charter of these entities should be refocused on unifying Europe to check and shape a rising China, and in the process, to advance the economic interests of all parties. If there is a silver lining in this current crisis, it's that for the first time since World War II, Europe (minus Russia) is truly united (indeed, even Germany is now finally putting in writing its pledge to fully meet its NATO obligations). We should build on that to achieve sustainable peace and prosperity.

Critics will say the West can't trust nor work with Putin and Russia. Really? We worked with Stalin, one of the vilest tyrants in the history of the world. We've worked with other strong men who did terrible things many times over in our history when mutual interests were aligned and the circumstances required it, as it does now given the civilizational challenge from China. Critics will also say Russia is a corrupt nation. Yes, absolutely. And again, we've worked with other corrupt nations in our history when it's been in our best interests, as it is now. Part of our new diplomatic endeavor should include clear and verifiable steps to clean up corruption, facilitate interoperability, and ensure compliance by all nations with these potentially new arrangements.

Finally on this score, as esteemed historian Ralph Peters has outlined, the U.S. and Russia have worked together effectively in the past when examining the six-decade period from 1860 to 1920. We can, and we must, find a way to do it again, as this current situation in Ukraine is not in anyone's interests when considering the loss of life on both sides, the threat of escalation into a global war, the humanitarian crisis in Europe, and the hit to the global economy, including exacerbated inflation here at home. Short of an entirely new strategic direction, whatever battlefield outcome we see in the short term in Ukraine, will not change any of that.

As I move to close this essay, I turn to potential critics who might question this entire diplomatic endeavor and want nothing to do with Russia, except wishing them a long, slow, especially painful military defeat in Ukraine. Let's recognize that beyond the aforementioned consequences of a protracted struggle in Ukraine, an isolated and militarily struggling Russia may become desperate and could turn to unthinkable military actions. While in any potential nuclear exchange between Russia and the West, Russia is likely to end up the loser, the only potential winner in that scenario would be China. The unimaginable human toll (including potentially in the United States) and the ensuing global environmental wreckage, would surely usher in another dark age for all of humanity.

There is another course, but it won't come about by chance—leadership must take us there. That will require us to break out of the Cold War mindset that stunts our national imagination still, all these decades later. As Americans, we have shown we are capable of thinking differently and changing the course of history, as we

did with our bold exceptional Founding and when we changed directions in the 1980s and prevailed in the Cold War. Our strategic agility was informed by *Realpolitik* and a deep belief in ourselves as a nation, and our ability to overcome long odds to lead the world to a better place. We need to do it again.



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A Critical Test for American-Led NATO

By David Goldman

The Ukraine war has strengthened NATO, both in terms of political support (a clear majority of Europeans in major polls favors support for Ukraine's defense) and in new prospective members, notably Finland and Sweden. It has also forced Europe to diversify its energy sources away from Russia and thereby reduce Russia's strategic leverage. Whether the display of NATO solidarity in response to Russia's invasion has positive or negative consequences depends on the outcome of the conflict. A prolonged stalemate that failed to eject Russian forces from Ukraine's borders would constitute a political victory for Russia, discredit American leadership in NATO, and encourage populist, anti-Atlanticist political parties in Europe.



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Ukraine: A Confident State on the Frontier

By Jakub Grygiel

Tragically for its people, Ukraine is on the path of Russia's persistent westward push and thus it serves as the West's rampart. Ukraine is the *antemurale* of Europe. With Ukraine under Moscow's domination, Europe is directly threatened and likely to be torn by even deeper divisions among its nations, which are likely to pursue divergent approaches toward Russia. With Ukraine as an independent and strong state, the West has a buffer on its eastern frontier, protecting it from the assaults of Muscovite power. The key question, then, concerns the nature of the connection between Europe and Ukraine. Assuming that Ukraine survives as an independent state at the end of the current war, what should its relationship be with the West, in particular the institutions of NATO and the EU underpinning it?

Despite a pervasive rhetorical support for Ukraine's EU and NATO membership, there is very little chance that Kiev will join these institutions in the near future. The EU is too unwieldy to accept such a large country, which is one of the largest agricultural producers in the world. Were Ukraine to join the EU it would create massive problems for the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), one of the oldest EU policies that gives money to its members according to the size of arable land. Ukraine's arable land is as big as all of Italy, and thus Kiev would automatically become the main recipient of CAP funds, competing with farmers in the rest of Europe. Moreover, Ukrainian agricultural products would flood Europe, displacing local producers, something that has already happened briefly late last year when Ukraine redirected its grain exports to its Western neighbors as its usual markets became less accessible because of the war. Hence, while now there may be support for Ukraine's EU membership among Western political leaders, the politics of accession would be extremely difficult and divisive. In brief, EU membership for Ukraine is highly unlikely.

NATO is equally hard to join. Even though Ukraine has now contributed more to the defense of Europe than the vast majority of current NATO members, to join NATO the applicants have to fulfill several requirements. A particularly difficult one for Ukraine will be to resolve its territorial disputes, even though they are not Kiev's fault. As the 1995 "Study on NATO Enlargement" clarified, "States which have ethnic disputes or external territorial disputes, including irredentist claims, or internal jurisdictional disputes must settle those disputes by peaceful means in accordance with OSCE [Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe] principles. Resolution of such disputes would be a factor in determining whether to invite a state to join the Alliance." One of the effects of Russia's war against Ukraine since 2014 is that it has created hard-to-resolve territorial disputes. In order to end them, Ukraine would have either to reconquer the lost lands (including Crimea) or give up its sovereignty over them, ceding them to Moscow. Either option is difficult to pursue for Kiev militarily or politically, likely resulting in a long-term territorial problem with Russia. Consequently, it is highly unlikely that NATO members would be willing to accept Ukraine into the alliance with this festering problem. It may be desirable to have Kiev in NATO, just as it is very beneficial to have Finland as its newest member, but it is also hard to conceive at the moment.

The more likely outcome is that Ukraine will remain a buffer state: neither anchored in Western institutions nor subjugated in the Russian sphere. There are reasons to believe that this is a feasible outcome because the great powers—Russia, Turkey, and the Western alliance—around Ukraine may be interested in such a status as preferable to a clear alignment one way or another. Turkey and the West do not want Ukraine to fall under Moscow's domination for moral but also geostrategic reasons. At the same time, Russia has obviously demonstrated that it will use protracted brutal military force to seek Ukrainian subservience. And, as mentioned above, the West is unlikely to extend its economic and security mantle to the Wild Fields of the Dnieper basin. This "either-or" geopolitical dynamic—but with neither side willing or capable of fully controlling the area—points to a stalemate of sorts, resulting in Ukraine in neither camp. This may of course be disappointing to Ukrainians who have expressed a desire to join Western institutions and have clearly incurred heavy sacrifices not to be under Russian rule. But all Ukrainians can do is to carve for themselves a space of liberty between the competing great powers.

Russia will, of course, not give up its imperial aspiration to control Ukraine. It will remain an enduring power, seeking to rebuild its status and possessions on its western frontier, especially as the Asiatic region becomes less permissive with a growing China. Hence, for Ukraine the best solution is a “fortified neutrality,” remaining nonaligned but with sufficient arms, a defensible space, and a viable economy to deter and, if necessary, defeat further Russian offensives. The role of the West and of Turkey, therefore, is to arm Ukraine not just for the ongoing operations against Russian forces, but for the long term, creating a militarily robust, geopolitically independent, and economically confident state on Europe’s frontier.



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NATO’s Flawed Nature

By Edward A. Gutiérrez

The war in Ukraine altered the nature and membership of NATO in a positive fashion. Although, without intense escalation—i.e., a widening war in Eastern Europe or East Asia—actual long-term positive change or membership augmentation, remains doubtful due to modernity’s false perception of mankind’s fallen nature. Thus, time decays NATO positivity.

Altered Nature

When the war began on February 24, 2022, it seemed a perceptive pivot back to Cold War defense doctrine and a corrective on the post-1991 halcyon milieu. Even within the corridors of the Beltway and Brussels, the Francis Fukuyama thesis of the end of history and democracy’s transcendence solidified.¹ The West assumed conventional warfare was dead. They were wrong. Thus, Russia’s 2022 invasion of Ukraine sobered many NATO countries, such as Germany; however, she already displays signs of a waning will with Chancellor Olaf Scholz’s trepidation to deploy promised Leopard 2 battle tanks. Moreover, many countries stated they would meet the two percent GDP defense spending requirement, but few have yet to match rhetoric with action, and after decades of monies feeding pensions rather than combat effectiveness, unless the war escalates little will change.

Altered Membership

The initial European reaction seemed to clarify grand strategic visions, not only in NATO's thirty existing members, but with countries long prideful in their passivity, i.e., Finland and Sweden. In May 2022, both countries applied for NATO membership. This was a historic event, in particular for Sweden, whose last major wartime role occurred during the Napoleonic Wars. As of today, however, Sweden's acceptance, due to Turkey's blocking on religious grounds, hampers the process.

It is important to understand Putin. He is a rational actor and his doctrine comprises three key policies: nuclear parity with the United States, the reclamation as Eurasian hegemon, and the expansion of Russia's geostrategic position. With Putin in power, his primary goal remains returning Russia to superpower status and countering the expanding NATO threat . . . his 2007 Munich Security Conference speech best exemplifies his doctrine.

NATO Positivity Decay

Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine served as a corrective to those who believe that the curse of war abates from humanity. This line of reasoning, such as the works of Steven Pinker, assume that we continue to progress and have become less violent because no major global wars have occurred since 1945.² Historical and ontological truth educate otherwise.³ Unless the war expands and escalates, NATO and the West will return to their disordered understanding of man's nature with only American hard power holding them afloat. This is not a grand strategy that will win the next conventional war against an enemy with iron will and the finances to feed it.

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- 1 See Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Free Press, 1992). He reinforced his thesis when considering the Russo-Ukrainian War; see Francis Fukuyama, "A Country of Their Own: Liberalism Needs the Nation," *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2022.
 - 2 For example, see his recent work, Steven Pinker, *Enlightenment Now: The Case for Reason, Science, Humanism, and Progress* (New York: Viking, 2018). Paul Weithman counters this school of thought well. He contends, "Many of the best political theories now on offer are premised on psychologies that are extremely optimistic. They leave us without the conceptual resources necessary to understand the evil which human beings visit on one another." Paul Weithman, "Augustine's Political Philosophy," in *The Cambridge Companion to Augustine*, 2nd ed., eds. David Vincent Meconi and Eleonore Stump (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 249.
 - 3 Tanisha M. Fazal and Paul Poast provide a superb review of this certainty, and also note that the world wars "have severely skewed our sense of what war is" due to their size and scale. Tanisha M. Fazal and Paul Poast, "War Is Not Over: What the Optimists Get Wrong about Conflict," *Foreign Affairs*, November/December 2019.



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Russia's Renewal of NATO

By Jerry Hendrix

Both the nature and the membership of NATO is very much up in the air. As few as five years ago, the sense of fracturing within NATO was palpable. There were geographic divisions along both north and south, and east and west axes, with each region viewing both the nature and the mission of NATO differently. I organized a war game in 2016 with my colleague Julianne Smith at the Center for a New American Security in which NATO Council members had real difficulties reaching consensus on a Russian incursion of a Baltic, hence NATO, state.

Today NATO has been much more united in its response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, a non-NATO country. It has decried Russia's actions, imposed limited economic sanctions, and sent increasing levels of military and humanitarian aid to Ukraine. Still, the evolutionary process of Europe's security policy has been slow. Poland and the Baltic nations have been aggressive in their public statements. Germany, which had the most dependence upon Russian energy and Chinese markets, has been reticent to engage strongly with military support, including sending tanks as promised, due to perceived conflicts with its long-term economic interests. France, which views itself as the political center of Europe, has been eager to proceed with peace talks that would include Ukraine ceding portions of its territory. Not unsurprisingly, eastern Europe, to including Ukraine, have not wanted to follow its "lead."

Still, there is an overall sense that Europe once again understands where its threat-axis points, to the east, and at last sees Putin and Russia as its foremost adversary on the Eurasian continent. Defense spending has, at last, begun to climb throughout NATO's membership, nearly a decade after the entire membership had made a pledge to meet the 2 percent of GDP defense budget commitment that had been agreed upon at the Wales Summit in 2014, to meet the continent's minimal security requirements. While there is still a strong need for coordination in both military planning and procurement strategies, the trend is positive. Putin, who once evidenced a strategy of fracturing NATO, has in fact brought it together in a manner not seen since the fall of the Soviet Union, which he views as the greatest cataclysm in human history. It is ironic that the current cataclysm visited upon Russia is self-inflicted.

Regarding membership in NATO, it is now the most desired club on the Eurasian continent. Ukraine has always, and still desires, to become a member. Both Sweden and Finland, reticent members of the EU who could never quite bring themselves to join the alliance, now desire to come into the other council located in Brussels. Of course, Turkey, the non-European, and, to a degree, non-Western NATO member, is holding up Sweden's application as a bargaining chip to get NATO to turn a blind eye while Turkey's increasingly authoritarian leader Erdoğan commits genocide against the Kurds in his own country as well as Syria and Iraq. It is doubtful that he will succeed in anything other than raising more questions about whether Turkey, especially under his leadership, should remain in the alliance. Time and the upcoming election will tell whether Erdoğan gives way or finds himself facing pushback from his people and elites.

Regardless, the alliance is stronger today because of Putin's action than it was before the invasion.



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What Has the Ukraine War Done to/for NATO?

By Josef Joffe

This author's confidence in the Alliance was low when Putin pounced a year ago. As it turned out, NATO has not been in better shape for a couple of decades. Just remember Messrs. Macron and Trump. One called the Alliance "brain-dead," the other "obsolete." Trump, like Obama, pulled U.S. troops from Europe.

War does strange things to alliances. On the one hand, members hesitate to commit when the going gets tough. Or they reach out the other side, as the French president and the German chancellor initially did by being on the phone with Putin every other day after the invasion. On the other hand, the Samuel Johnson dictum kicks in: "When a man knows he is to be hanged in a fortnight, it concentrates his mind wonderfully."

So, it did, and the Alliance is booming. There was indeed a *Zeitenwende*, the "sea-change" proclaimed by Olaf Scholz after decades of making nice to Moscow. Why?

The weightiest factor is America's return to leadership under Joe Biden, ending the creeping neglect of Europe under Obama and Trump. If the U.S. doesn't commit, no other member will. Only the U.S. can herd cats. So, it took the United States to beef up forces in Europe and step up as the biggest armorer of Ukraine. Only when he promised Abrams tanks to Kyiv did Scholz follow with Leopards. It takes a nuclear-armed superpower to corral allies by insuring them against Russian retaliation. Safety makes for valor.

The second factor is Ukraine itself and its miraculous victories that exposed Russia's miserable performance. States don't want to back losers, nor face deadly risks posed by a seemingly invincible foe. They would rather hold back to keep the war away from their own lands.

Had Russia taken Kyiv by blitzkrieg, the Europeans—probably the U.S. as well—would have swallowed the loss. They had done so after Russia had grabbed Crimea and southeastern Ukraine. The West tacitly ratified

Russia's conquests, which must have enticed Putin to go for more, as he did on February 24, 2022. That his army was turned back so quickly encouraged the West to line up behind Ukraine, unleashing an unending stream of arms and funds.

The third factor brings us back to the greatest concern of them all: peace and war, order and balance. Putin's lunge raised the specter of Russian hegemony over Europe. At a minimum, he wants a certified sphere of influence, at a maximum to restore the old Soviet empire. In other words, a 77-year-old peace was suddenly tottering, and hence, the stakes are far bigger than Ukraine. A telltale sign are Sweden and Finland, age-old neutrals who suddenly applied for NATO membership. The closer to Russia nations are—Poland, the Baltics, the Scandinavians—the more eager they are to huddle under the NATO (and American) umbrella.

Hence, the rejuvenation of NATO. Hence the "sea-change" in Germany, whose Ostpolitik was dedicated to the rule: Don't rile the Russian Bear. Now it is panzers for Kyiv, no more Nord Stream 2, and an extra hundred billion euros for defense. Alas, these will not soon translate into hands-on rearmament, given the country's drawn-down production facilities.

Which goes for the rest, as well. The Ukraine War has revealed the true price of three decades of disarmament. The Alliance has shrunk not only its munition stockpiles but also its manufacturing lines. High-intensity and protracted warfare seemed a thing of the past, but in Ukraine it is back. The war will not end soon, but whichever way it goes, it holds a lesson for the West: Invest in readiness. Prepare, train, and pile up plenty of gear and ordnance.



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Ukraine and NATO: The Hour of the Little Guys (and Tough Gals)

By Ralph Peters

As Vladimir Putin's wanton slaughter in Ukraine continues, each day validates anew the worth of NATO, weakens its detractors, and aligns European Union and NATO policy goals ever more closely. Putin expected to divide Europe and wrong-foot the United States. Instead, he achieved the opposite—even convincing Sweden and Finland that they need to formally join the Atlantic alliance.

Yet, there is much else to the galvanization of an alliance and continent long mocked as moribund by politicians in search of an issue. One of the keys to strengthening NATO after February 2022 has been a moral rebalancing between member states, the revelation of military neglect and weakness in, above all, Germany, but also the forthright, courageous, and vital contributions of the “little guys,” the smaller, often poorer NATO members generally regarded by strategists (of the sort who predicted that Kyiv would fall to the Russians in a few days) as minor players—to the extent they were players at all.

Although the United States and Britain led, it was often the smallest states who made a vital supplementary difference, early on. The Baltic states, the Czech Republic, the Netherlands, and others moved promptly to give what material aid they could to Ukraine. Not least, Poland, the defender of Western civilization against barbarism for a millennium, became the de facto early leader of NATO’s response to Russian aggression: Although Poland is an increasingly robust military power and linchpin European state, the traditional great powers within NATO regarded it as eternally consigned to a second tier. But when the bombs began to fall and millions of refugees began to flee, it was Poland that acted with alacrity, strength, and utility.

With Germany—paralyzed by the collapse of its beloved Ostpolitik fantasy—and France annoyed that Putin had spoiled the imagined coziness between Paris and Moscow, the eastern and central Europeans (except Hungary), their warnings about Russian ambitions vindicated, stepped into the political and economic, if not yet literal, line of fire. In the future, NATO’s smaller members will play a bigger role in decision making, to the benefit of all. They have earned chairs closer to the head of the negotiating table.

Another noteworthy development is that, while President Biden has done a remarkable job of leading NATO and global supporters of Ukraine forward step by step, accurately judging which weapons and actions could be provided at a given time without rupturing alliances formal and informal, on the other side of the Atlantic, the fiercest defenders of Ukraine and freedom have been women. To note but a few:

Germany’s foreign minister, Annalena Baerbock, a product of the Green Party that long sympathized more with Russia than with NATO, took a tough stand against Putin and Germany’s willful blindness vis-à-vis Moscow’s strategic machinations even before Putin’s second invasion of Ukraine. As a new and bewildered chancellor, Olaf Schultz, dithered, Frau Ministerin Baerbock became the face of Germany’s return to reality.

Within the EU framework, Ursula von der Leyen—another clear-sighted German woman and the president of the European Commission—immediately took and maintained the moral high ground, condemning Putin with purpose and precision. Yet another member of the EU’s leadership triumvirate, Maltese European Parliament president Roberta Metsola ignored Putin’s implicit threats to her country and its economy, visiting Kyiv and making it clear that, this time, the conscience of Europe would not be for sale.

Perhaps the most-reassuring (and most frustrating for Putin) belle dame sans merci has been Italian prime minister Georgia Meloni, who has emerged as an uncompromising Atlanticist and defender of Ukraine. The leader of a right-wing party derided by the Euro-intelligentsia for its (long since retired) Fascist roots, Signora Meloni has long been underestimated and misunderstood—a subject of misogyny masquerading as analysis—while those paying serious attention would have noted that she possessed vision, clarity, and above all, integrity.

Putin had invested heavily in Italian politics, making illicit contributions to both the far right and the far left. Months into the Second Ukraine War, then prime minister Mario Draghi, a firm Atlanticist, saw his government pulled down by the withdrawal of support from right and left—apparently, Putin had called in the chips, expecting Draghi to be replaced by someone in his debt and biddable. Instead, he got Meloni, who, in less politically correct times, a Hollywood B-movie script writer would have described as “one tough broad.”

Even though her coalition partners were either known or alleged to have taken Russian funding, Meloni never had done so. Slapping her corrupt and clumsy coalition partners (the has-been Silvio Berlusconi and the never-to-be Matteo Salvini) into line, Meloni not only maintained Draghi’s hard line on Ukraine but made it harder still.

And one might fairly note that, if Meloni’s party, the Brothers of Italy, did have long-ago roots in the soil of Fascism, our own Democratic Party was, more recently, the party of Jim Crow, while, until an even more

recent hour, our Republican Party stood for loyalty to the Constitution and rational policy making. Political parties, here and abroad, are not immutable.

So . . . Putin, to his immeasurable frustration, has unified NATO and reinvigorated its purpose. His ill-starred campaign of butchery, rape, and ruin has robbed his own country of a better future, and, to be gleefully blunt, he is getting his ass kicked by European women.

It may be gallows humor, but the laugh's on Putin.



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Putin's Folly in Ukraine: NATO *Redivivus*

By Paul A. Rahe

When an army dispatched by Vladimir Putin marched into Ukraine on February 24, 2022, next to no one expected the citizens of that country to put up a fight, cause the invasion to stall, and retake much of the territory lost—and virtually everyone supposed that the United States and its allies in Europe would acquiesce in Russia's conquest of its neighbor. With regard to this dispute, appeasement had for some time been their preferred policy; and, after having witnessed America's botched withdrawal from Afghanistan six months before, Putin could not imagine a dramatic shift in policy on the part of Joseph Biden. The man was a weakling. Of that, he was sure.

It was only when, two days after the invasion, Volodymyr Zelensky refused the American president's offer of escape, saying, "I need ammunition, not a ride." And when, six weeks thereafter, Ukrainian soldiers, armed with Javelin missiles, forced the withdrawal of the Russian tanks sent to capture Kiev that attitudes began to change. The Ukrainian president had made Biden a request that, with the midterms looming, the American president could not refuse. Dithering was not an option. The mess in Afghanistan had been a blot on his escutcheon. Politically, Biden could not afford a second foreign-policy debacle—especially one in which the United States stood idly by while in Europe, of all places, an imperialist dictatorship slaughtered determined freedom-fighters, captured their intrepid leader, and executed the man.

The effect on public opinion of what Zelensky said and of what his soldiers did on this occasion was electric, and its impact in Europe was no less profound than in the United States. Prior to that spring, to say that the North

Atlantic Treaty Organization was in disarray would have been an understatement. Apart from the countries that shared a border with Russia, none of its members were spending on defense anything remotely like what they had pledged, and the United States was looked upon with a disapproval bordering on contempt in Germany and, to a lesser extent, elsewhere. The Germans and the citizens in some of their neighboring countries supposed that all disputes could be resolved by negotiation. They had all but renounced even threatening a resort to force—and they prided themselves on what they took to be their moral superiority to their less civilized, nominal allies on the other side of the Atlantic. Although repeatedly warned by the Americans, they could not imagine that their becoming dependent on the Russian dictatorship for energy posed any danger to anyone.

Between them, Putin and his minions and Zelensky and his shattered the illusion that history had come to an end and that there would be no more wars of any consequence in Europe. In the process, they breathed new life into an old, nearly moribund alliance thought to have outlived its usefulness. Between them, moreover, they persuaded the Swedes and the Finns, hitherto neutral, to vote to join NATO—which, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan’s Turkey notwithstanding, they will surely achieve. In practice, this means that the Baltic Sea has become NATO’s lake. If in the coming months, the Ukrainians drive the Russians from the Crimea, the same will be true for the Black Sea. Even if the Russians win or there is a cease-fire and a truce, the war with Ukraine will be remembered as a catastrophe, no less by those in Russia who harbor atavistic, imperial ambitions with regard to Europe than by those who had hoped that Russia would become a normal European power.

There is in this a measure of irony. Post–Cold War Europe was no threat to Russia. There is not a country on that continent that harbors a claim on Russian territory. In Asia, however, there is one such country, and it is publicly dedicated to overturning what it calls the “unequal” treaties it negotiated with other powers in the past—among them the nineteenth-century agreement that awarded Siberia to Russia. The other legacy of Vladimir Putin’s obsession with re-establishing the Russian empire in Europe may well be his nation’s loss of that territory. He has, in effect, made Russia a satellite of the one country with claims on its territory.

Whether the debacle in Ukraine will catapult another leader to the helm in Russia, attuned to the real threat posed to Russia by China, remains to be seen. It may be too late to do anything about Russia’s dependence on its only declared enemy. In the late 1960s, Charles de Gaulle predicted that, by the end of the twentieth century, Russia’s border in the east would end at the Urals. It is tolerably likely that he erred only in underestimating the time it would require for this to take place.



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Putin's Accidental Restoration of NATO

By Andrew Roberts

There is no more iron commandment in politics and international relations than the Law of Unintended Consequences. Vladimir Putin intended his invasion of Ukraine to strike a proxy blow at NATO, exposing its rifts and leaving it crushed and humiliated after his blitzkrieg on Kyiv. Instead, the Alliance is at its strongest, most focused, and soon will be at its most territorially extensive.

As recently as November 2019, President Emmanuel Macron declared NATO “brain dead,” Germany was putting such anaemic amounts of money into her defense that her reservists were training with broom-handles instead of rifles, and Sweden and Finland pursued separate defence policies outside NATO with no active plans to join.

The West's humiliation during its scuttle from Afghanistan in late August 2021 was of course primarily the fault of the Biden administration, but the other nations of the coalition were humiliated in America's wake and felt it. Small wonder that Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping thought it an opportune moment further to test NATO with the invasion of a European country, albeit the latter did stipulate that it was not to happen until after the Winter Olympics in Beijing.

It is extraordinary how often in history dictators have assumed weakness and appeasement will be the automatic response on the part of democratic Western countries. There is something endemic in dictatorships that, because they entirely forbid them in their own societies, energetic debate and dissension in democracies are regularly mistaken for internal weakness and even stasis. The idea that street demonstrations, verbally violent TV and press altercations, angry parliamentary exchanges, and so on, might actually be *positive* signs of a healthy democracy and a strong country does not occur to foreign dictators like Putin and Xi. They therefore make entirely incorrect deductions.

History is littered with examples of dictators underestimating the West's resolve, from Stalin blockading Berlin in 1948 and giving Kim Il-Sung the green light to invade South Korea two years later, to Khrushchev believing he could take advantage of a young president to install nuclear weapons in Cuba in 1962, to Saddam Hussein assuming he could keep Kuwait in 1990 and ignore fourteen UN Resolutions in 2003. Putin and Xi made exactly the same false assumption over the West's response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine last year. (And Xi might well yet again, should China ever invade Taiwan, with more devastating consequences even than we have seen in Ukraine.)

Had NATO failed the test in Ukraine and failed to supply President Zelensky with the intelligence and materiel he needed, it would have devastated the alliance. Instead, NATO has been revealed as a living, vigorous, righteous entity fighting—necessarily vicariously due to the restrictions imposed by MAD—for the right of Ukrainian independence and integrity, and the wider cause of national self-determination. Finland and Sweden are finally doing what they should have decades ago, and defence budgets are soaring across the alliance.

Far from being “brain-dead,” therefore, NATO is carefully and so far remarkably successfully acting as the arsenal of democracy, punishing Putin's hubris with supplies of ever more lethal weaponry to Kyiv. It is rare in history for voluntary international organizations to become utterly indispensable, but that is the case with NATO today, and it is all down to Vladimir Putin ignoring the Iron Law of Unintended Consequences.



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NATO's Future Depends on Who Wins in Ukraine

By Hy Rothstein

The future of NATO, in almost every dimension imaginable, depends on the outcome of the war in Ukraine. That outcome is unknown. While there is reason to be optimistic, events, and especially wars, can take unanticipated paths and generate unexpected results. Moreover, underestimating Putin's willingness to kill as many Ukrainians as possible—and to throw hundreds of thousands of Russian men into the fray against Ukrainian bullets until there are no more Ukrainian bullets left—would be a big mistake. Furthermore, politicians and politics change constantly in NATO's liberal democracies, but in his own mind, Putin is staying forever. Time and math may be on Russia's side.

The First Year of the War—Coming Together

Many experts have suggested that the invasion will go down as one of history's greatest geostrategic blunders. Putin clearly intended to show that Russia's modernized military would present a formidable capability against a country that had no right to exist. And that the West, as it had done in 2014 after the annexation of Crimea and the seizing of territory in eastern Ukraine, would respond feebly. The outcome was very different. The war revealed Russian military incompetence as well as the defects of a corrupt, authoritarian political system. The Ukrainians fought and kept the Russian invaders from entering Kyiv. Putin's plan for a quick and easy victory was shattered. Even Henry Kissinger, who for decades cautioned against Ukraine's membership in NATO, concluded, "Ukraine is a major state in Central Europe for the first time in modern history," and a peace process should link Ukraine to NATO. Putin generated the opposite of what he intended. More importantly, NATO, having struggled for more than two decades to reach a shared view with Moscow, finally acknowledged Putin's expansionist agenda in Europe, and as a result came together with a common purpose to arm Ukraine and stop Russia.

NATO's initial reluctance to assist Kyiv to fight Russia turned into a massive military assistance program. The courageous actions of President Zelensky and Ukrainian fighters, coupled with the barbaric, genocidal, and

war crimes of Russian leaders and their troops, certainly helped to solidify NATO's strong support. During his recent visit to Kyiv, President Biden expressed Western resolve and unveiled an additional \$460 million U.S. weapons package to the total of \$32 billion in aid since Russia's invasion began. The West's determination to support Ukraine has been remarkable though gradual and measured. Russian foreign minister Sergei Lavrov was accurate when he recently said that the West is engaged in a proxy war with his country. Though NATO has not put boots on the ground, Western leaders' words and deeds have made the war in Ukraine their war too, even though their commitment brings its own risks.

After President Biden's address, Putin delivered his own message of undying commitment to the fight. He addressed the Russian parliament, stressing the stakes of the war: "This is a time of radical, irreversible change in the entire world, of crucial historical events that will determine the future of our country and our people, a time when every one of us bears a colossal responsibility." In what sounded like a wartime speech, Putin discarded the initial justification for his limited "special military operation" to "demilitarize and denazify" Ukraine, and recast the conflict as a war against Western civilization. Putin has now framed the conflict, blaming imperial America and its allies for starting the war despite Russian efforts for peace. Putin was trying to justify the mobilization of hundreds of thousands of Russians and placing Russia on a wartime footing. It also gave him political cover as he prepares for a long fight. The West, according to Putin, has become an existential threat to Russia. Now Russian soldiers will be fighting and dying to defend not just Russians in Ukraine, or even the Russian border, but their entire culture against aggression from the West. The war has become Russia against the West.

The Second Year of the War—Falling Apart?

The second year of the war will likely be more consequential than the first. Moscow seems to have gotten smarter. Strategic decisions are starting to make military sense. The partial mobilization of reservists that Putin ordered in September 2022 strengthened Russian forces at the front. The redeployment of forces to eastern Ukraine and the withdrawal of Russian forces from Kherson in November saved units from destruction and made them available for action elsewhere. Undeniably, to avert immediate disaster, Russia has been sending a mix of the trained and untrained soldiers to fight. But now, thousands of troops are receiving more substantial training in Russia and Belarus. During the first year of the war, Ukraine's military achieved considerable success when Russia's forces were at their weakest and its leadership was at its poorest. In 2023, the Ukrainian army should expect to fight a better led and trained opponent. A Darwinian process has produced some competent Russian planners and battlefield commanders.

Russia has also launched a brutal, methodical bombing campaign against Ukraine's electrical system to turn the winter into a struggle for survival for Ukrainian civilians. This campaign has not proved decisive so far, but like most strategic bombing campaigns, it imposes direct and indirect military costs. For example, modern military air defense, command and control, and intelligence-gathering systems all run on electricity. While generators can fill the gap, making that transition degrades these systems' performance. Moreover, the heat signatures produced by generators, are easily detected by Russian intelligence, facilitating further targeting. The bombing campaign also impacts the Ukrainian weapons and ammunition industry that depends on electricity, as does much of the rail system that moves war materiel around the country. NATO is helping Ukraine repair the grid, but from the Russian perspective, this is good news as the repairs consume resources that cannot be used to support fighting at the front.

Casualty figures are notoriously inaccurate. The U.S. intelligence estimates put the number of total casualties after one year of fighting at 100,000 for the Russians and 100,000 for the Ukrainians, roughly comparable for both sides. Russia has already mobilized 300,000 additional troops and routinely recruits and trains 250,000 annually. So far, Ukraine has managed to replenish its army relatively effectively. Tens of thousands of Ukrainians, eager to defend their country, have volunteered for combat. However, the manpower arithmetic works to Moscow's advantage. Russia has 3.5 times Ukraine's population. Russia can lose twice as many soldiers as Ukraine and still have a manpower advantage. Russia can likely do what Russia has always done—use sheer numbers to win in the end.

The math on ammunition and weapons is also complicated. Ukraine now uses Western 155mm artillery shells. They are firing these shells at twice the rate that they can be manufactured. The same problem exists with other munitions. Although there are indications of Russian ammunition shortages, ammunition plants seem to be producing munitions at a rate to keep pace with their operations. Plus, Russian munitions stockpiles seem to be plentiful, though old. NATO, in part worried about their own war stocks, is finally investing in ammunition production but it may take until next year to narrow the growing gap.

Even more troubling, while the U.S. and Germany are trying to figure out how to get the very limited numbers of tanks committed into Ukrainian hands, Russia is pulling World War II-era T-60 tanks out of storage and sending them to the battlefield because any tank is better than no tank. What is frustrating is that the U.S. and NATO are sitting on large numbers of tanks that are ready to go. Why these assets aren't already in Ukrainian hands where they would significantly alter the balance of power against Russia is maddening. Issues such as training and logistics can be taken care of by using contractors, which is a standard military practice. Putting contractors in Ukraine would not cross any meaningful threshold of escalation. It is worth remembering that the Soviets had thousands of advisors in Vietnam assisting the North Vietnamese. Many of those advisors routinely flew combat aircraft attacking American forces on the ground. The seemingly standard pattern of denying Ukraine's requests for certain weapons systems, only to approve the transfer later needs to stop, especially if Russia begins to receive arms from China.

In the second year of the war, there's an increased focus on how it will end. The NATO position seems to be that Western governments will support Ukraine "as long as it takes" to drive Russian forces out of its territory. For all the bold rhetoric, it's still uncertain how far NATO can go. There are limits to the amount of material and money Western countries can send to Ukraine. And while President Biden may want to support Ukraine for the long haul, that could quickly change, given that a segment of Republicans increasingly opposed to doing much more to help Ukraine. Leadership changes in European countries can also upset the current trajectory of support. Fortunately for now, opinion polls show broad, if not overwhelming, U.S. and European support for backing Ukraine.

NATO's Future Is Ukraine's Future

The first year of the war found NATO coming together to assist Ukraine beat back a poorly trained and led Russian army. The second year of the war may not be cascading in NATO's and Ukraine's favor, especially if Russia's learning curve is faster than NATO's ability to get vital weapons and munitions into Ukrainian hands. Ukraine can only sustain its fight with help from the West, and that help has generally been too little, late, and may falter with changes in Western leadership, or significant Russian success on the battlefield. What brought NATO together in 2022 may come undone in 2023. NATO will reflect Ukraine's fate.

The nature of reality is also on the line. Putin tells lies for power. His control is based on the production of fiction, murdering political opponents, and outlawing language contrary to official state views. Denazification, NATO's intention to deny Russia its rightful place in the international arena, Ukraine being on the cusp of joining NATO, Ukrainians killing their Russian-speaking citizens, Ukraine not being a legitimate, independent state, the West starting the war, claiming to prevent genocide while committing it, and Putin's warped interpretation of history are but a few examples of distorted reality. If Russia wins, the truth dies along with the hundreds of thousands of people who perished defending Ukraine.

Finally, the outcome of the war transcends what happens to Ukraine. A Russian victory would strengthen tyrants whose visions of geopolitics render any concept of a liberal democratic order obsolete. Russian actions in Ukraine make the case for what is at stake. In areas under Russian control, male Ukrainians have been murdered or forced to become cannon fodder and die at the front. Women have been raped. Millions of Ukrainians have been forcibly deported to Russia, many of them women with young children, to eliminate their Ukrainian heritage and force them to accept being Russian or face prison and torture. Russia has destroyed Ukrainian archives, libraries, universities, and publishing houses to erase Ukraine. The war is about the future of a democracy, the principle of self-rule, and the rule of law. A Ukrainian victory would

confirm this. A Russian victory would destroy hope for countries working towards a democratic future and the rule of law.

This war will change the face of Europe as much as World War II did. And NATO will reflect this change. The Ukrainian people, seeking the right way to live, remind us that democracy sometimes requires accepting human risk to defend liberal principles. A Ukrainian victory would rejuvenate sleeping democracies. NATO must end the practice of trickling support into Ukraine to avoid defeat, but not enable Ukraine to crush the invaders. Time is in Putin's corner. He still expects Western resolve to eventually crumble, or military stockpiles to become depleted, negating NATO's capacity to provide material assistance. Russia can do what it has done in the past, use time and sheer numbers to win unless the West finds a way to defeat Russia soon. If Putin gets what he wants in Ukraine, NATO, democracy, and the rule of law will be diminished and recovering will be difficult and costly.



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Has Putin Paved the Way for NATO in the Indo-Pacific?

By Miles Yu

Contrary to the popular view that the outbreak and continuation of the war in Ukraine symbolizes the failure of NATO, Putin's gambit in Ukraine has proved the opposite, i.e., NATO's primary mission of deterrence worked, no kinetic activities have happened in any NATO member states, and the fighting has been strictly limited to a small region in a non-NATO country. This has been made possible entirely because of NATO's powerful multilateral collective defense nature.

Furthermore, one unique development of war in Ukraine is that, unlike the situation in Syria, the war in Ukraine has a successful refugees' settlement, without mass starvation and displacement. That's because

NATO member states are emboldened by NATO's collective security guarantee and boldly stepped in to assist the war refugees from Ukraine with tremendous efficiency.

Moreover, NATO's success in Europe has endangered profound inspiration for the rest of the world. Thanks to the war in Ukraine, the nature of NATO as a highly effective multilateral collective security alliance has become an exemplary model for the rest of the world. Particularly keen to NATO's positive role in the Ukraine crisis are countries far away from Ukraine—in the Indo-Pacific region. Nations such as Taiwan, Japan, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand, and others that are bullied and threatened by the far more powerful China have been rushing to NATO's orbit. For the first time in NATO history, countries in Asia actively seek a NATO-like multilateral collective defense system to mitigate the deficiency of the existing U.S.-led alliance system in Asia, which is fundamentally bilateral, not NATO-like multilateral and collective.

Bolstered by its enhanced impact and efficacy, NATO has been responsive to the world's calling for inclusion. Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg has become a strong advocate for expanding NATO's influence, if not quite membership yet, to the Indo-Pacific region. For the first time in its history, NATO invited the leaders of Japan, South Korea, Australia, and New Zealand to participate in its July 2022 NATO Summit in Madrid to discuss the China challenge. In its NATO 2022 Strategic Concept endorsed at the Summit, the importance of the Indo-Pacific was stressed. Meanwhile, Japan has been actively seeking to join NATO as a full member. In January 2023, Secretary General Stoltenberg visited Tokyo and issued a joint statement with Prime Minister Kishida, which announced the formation of an Individually Tailored Partnership Program (ITPP) between NATO and Japan, elevating Japan into a de facto quasi-NATO member. The Joint Japan-NATO statement is a good indication of an unstoppable trend in Asia: toward the ultimate formation of a North Atlantic Indo-Pacific Treaty Organization, NAIPTO.

The war in Ukraine has not altered the nature and membership of NATO. On the contrary, it has greatly strengthened the mission and glorified its nature as a highly effective multilateral collective defense alliance, with a growing global appeal as the only meaningful defense force for good.



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Additional Related Commentary

- Bruce Thornton, "Has the NATO Turning Point Stopped Turning?" *Front Page Magazine*, April 19, 2023, <https://www.frontpagemag.com/has-the-nato-turning-point-stopped-turning/>.

Discussion Questions

1. Will NATO likely lose or gain members after the Ukraine War?
2. Is NATO assuming much of the foreign policy role of a weakening European Union?
3. Would NATO really rally against Russia should one of its members be attacked by Moscow?
4. What will NATO do if members Turkey and Greece go to war?
5. Is the NATO alliance becoming stronger or weaker?



IN THE NEXT ISSUE

The Tactical and Strategic Value of Tanks

Military History in Contemporary Conflict

As the very name of Hoover Institution attests, military history lies at the very core of our dedication to the study of “War, Revolution, and Peace.” Indeed, the precise mission statement of the Hoover Institution includes the following promise: “The overall mission of this Institution is, from its records, to recall the voice of experience against the making of war, and by the study of these records and their publication, to recall man’s endeavors to make and preserve peace, and to sustain for America the safeguards of the American way of life.” From its origins as a library and archive, the Hoover Institution has evolved into one of the foremost research centers in the world for policy formation and pragmatic analysis. It is with this tradition in mind, that the “Working Group on the Role of Military History in Contemporary Conflict” has set its agenda—reaffirming the Hoover Institution’s dedication to historical research in light of contemporary challenges, and in particular, reinvigorating the national study of military history as an asset to foster and enhance our national security. By bringing together a diverse group of distinguished military historians, security analysts, and military veterans and practitioners, the working group seeks to examine the conflicts of the past as critical lessons for the present.

Working Group on the Role of Military History in Contemporary Conflict

The Working Group on the Role of Military History in Contemporary Conflict examines how knowledge of past military operations can influence contemporary public policy decisions concerning current conflicts. The careful study of military history offers a way of analyzing modern war and peace that is often underappreciated in this age of technological determinism. Yet the result leads to a more in-depth and dispassionate understanding of contemporary wars, one that explains how particular military successes and failures of the past can be often germane, sometimes misunderstood, or occasionally irrelevant in the context of the present.

Strategika

Strategika is a journal that analyzes ongoing issues of national security in light of conflicts of the past—the efforts of the Military History Working Group of historians, analysts, and military personnel focusing on military history and contemporary conflict. Our board of scholars shares no ideological consensus other than a general acknowledgment that human nature is largely unchanging. Consequently, the study of past wars can offer us tragic guidance about present conflicts—a preferable approach to the more popular therapeutic assumption that contemporary efforts to ensure the perfectibility of mankind eventually will lead to eternal peace. New technologies, methodologies, and protocols come and go; the larger tactical and strategic assumptions that guide them remain mostly the same—a fact discernable only through the study of history.



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