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LITHUANIA'S FOREIGN MINISTER GABRIELIUS LANDSBERGIS
Avoiding the Pitfalls of Temporary Peace

AMBASSADOR TO NATO JULIANNE SMITH
US is fully committed to Lithuania's security

NICOLAS TENZER
France is not complacent about Russia anymore

NICO LANGE
We need Russia policy, not Putin policy

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Note from the Editor

Vilnius Takes Center Stage: NATO Summit 2023 Marks a Critical Turning Point

Linas Kojala



NATO Summit 2023 not only places a tremendous responsibility on Lithuania's shoulders but also serves as a testament to its status as a fully-fledged NATO member capable of organizing and executing events of this magnitude and significance.

Since its inception in 1949, NATO has held 32 Summits, making it a non-annual occurrence. While the Alliance operates continuously through the regular North Atlantic Council meetings at its Brussels headquarters, the Summit stands as a unique forum for Heads of State and Government to reach a consensus on strategic issues.

One of the most pivotal Summits occurred in 2002, when NATO leaders invited seven countries, including Lithuania, to start accession talks. Subsequently, Lithuania became a member of NATO two years later. Furthermore, decisions made in 2014 and 2016 led to the deployment of a battalion-level NATO Forward Presence in Lithuania. Before that, apart from the

very-capable Lithuanian Armed Forces, no allied forces were stationed in our region. It was not an ideal situation considering the threatening neighborhood of Russia and its close ally Belarus.

In the face of a brutal war initiated by Russia, we can unequivocally admit that the steps taken by NATO over the last two decades were essential in keeping the Baltic states safe and secure. Our security is intrinsically linked to the most successful defense alliance in history, which will commemorate its 75th anniversary next year. As proud members of NATO, we must strive to uphold unity and ensure that our collective efforts yield effective solutions.

Yet more needs to be done. The Vilnius meeting assumes particular importance at a time when NATO is responding to Russia's aggression. The Alliance is undertaking a transformation to bolster deterrence and defense. Moreover, military and financial support must be extended to Ukraine to ensure its security and stability.

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Last year, Madrid laid the groundwork for NATO's transformation back to a Cold War-era level of readiness. In essence, the belief that the triumph of liberal democracy following the collapse of the Soviet Union would bring



By successfully defending itself against Russian aggression, Ukraine safeguards the eastern countries of NATO (© rawpixel)

an end to armed conflicts, at least in Europe, has been shattered. Consequently, NATO has initiated the process of expanding the NATO Response Force, scaling up the allied presence on NATO's eastern flank to a brigade level, and laying the foundations for renewed defense plans that directly affect Lithuania.

However, Madrid merely marked the beginning. The decisions made by the leaders in Vilnius can – and must – become another historic step forward in advancing these efforts to a new level. Tangible progress toward Ukraine's integration with NATO must also be made.

NATO allies already reaffirmed that Ukraine would not receive a formal invitation to join the Alliance in Vilnius. Nonetheless, we must strive to convey a strong message to the people of Ukraine, assuring them that NATO membership will be achieved soon. Merely repeating the statements made in Bucharest in 2008 will not suffice to address the present-day reality. Russia must not be permitted to believe that it possesses veto power over the process.

Our responsibility is to commend the bravery of the Ukrainians, who are shielding Europe from the threat posed

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Given its desperate need, the practical focus will be on providing long-term military support to Ukraine. Additionally, we hope for progress at the political level, such as the transition of the NATO-Ukraine Commission into the NATO-Ukraine Council format. Although this may seem bureaucratic, the

Council will allow Ukraine to sit at the table alongside its allies in alphabetical order, and collaboratively address security challenges. This step will demonstrate Ukraine's ongoing integration into NATO and its readiness to become a full member when the window of opportunity opens.

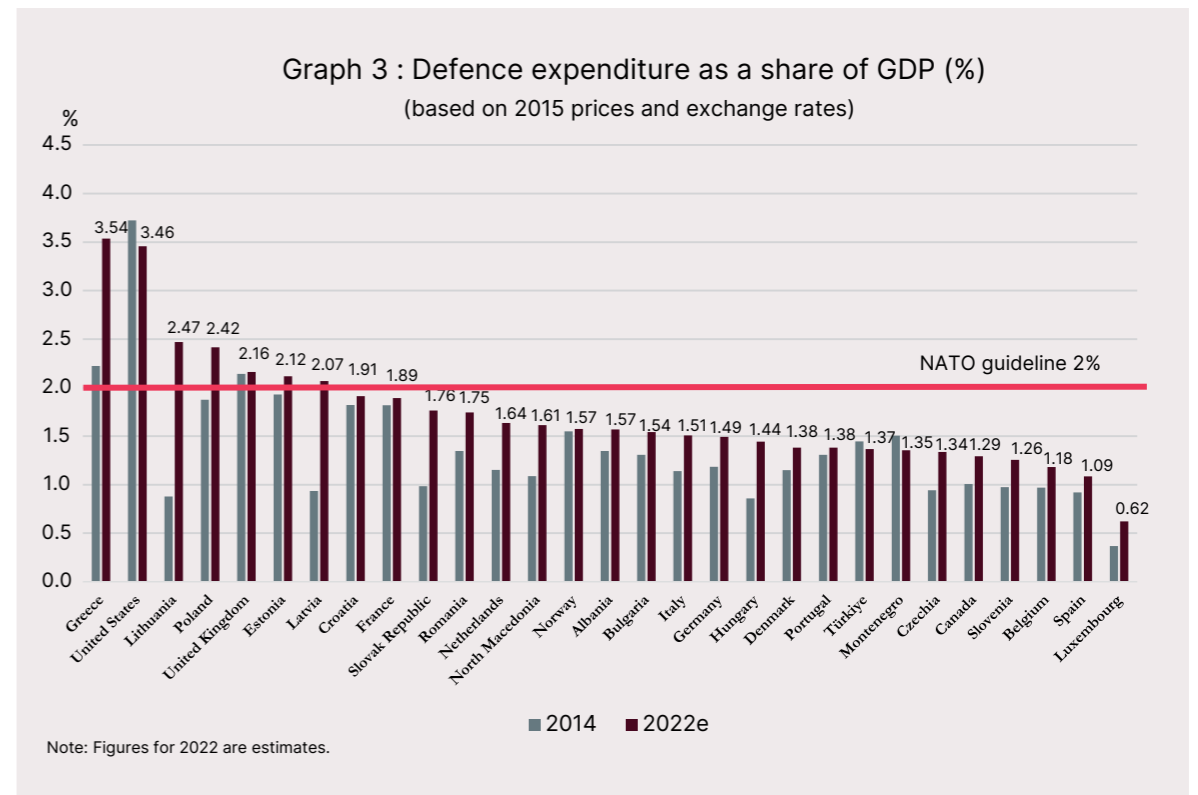
Prompt action is needed in welcoming Sweden as an ally, as this Baltic Sea state plays a pivotal role in enhancing regional security. With Finland's accession already

accomplished, addressing any remaining obstacles concerning Sweden is essential.

Finally, NATO must bolster its defense and deterrence capabilities on the eastern flank. While the Alliance has increased its presence in the region since the full-scale Russian invasion, it is imperative to leave no room for doubt regarding NATO's preparedness to defend every inch of its territory. Encouragingly, positive developments are



☒ The German government has expressed its willingness to deploy a brigade-sized unit to Lithuania once the necessary infrastructure is in place (© NATO)



☒ In 2022, only a few NATO countries managed to meet the agreed-upon defense expenditure level of 2% of GDP (© NATO)

underway, with new regional defense plans aligning with the expectations of the Baltic countries. German Defense Minister Boris Pistorius recently expressed readiness to deploy a brigade-sized unit in Lithuania once the necessary infrastructure is in place. Progress is being made in the air defense domain.

Achieving tangible and long-lasting changes requires allies to reach a consensus on the essential defense spending levels. Merely expressing support or solidarity is insufficient without a commitment to adequate resources. It is

widely recognized that spending at least 2 percent of GDP on defense is a bare minimum requirement for maintaining adequate security measures. Therefore, leaders must show commitment to long-lasting change in this regard.

NATO's response to the deteriorating security situation is evident. The *Stronger Together* slogan resonates more powerfully than ever, reaffirming the Alliance's commitment to collective defense and collaborative efforts in addressing emerging challenges. Yet, we should not rest on our laurels; homework must still be done. ●

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Gabrielius Landsbergis: Avoiding the Pitfalls of Temporary Peace



Gabrielius Landsbergis

Gabrielius Landsbergis is serving as the Minister of Foreign Affairs in the 18th Government of the Republic of Lithuania since 2020, under the leadership of Prime Minister Ingrida Šimonytė. Landsbergis has been the Chairman of the Homeland Union – Lithuanian Christian Democrats since 2015.

Landsbergis has also served as a Member of the European Parliament from 2014 to 2016. Prior to his political career, Landsbergis worked as a diplomat, representing the Republic of Lithuania at the Embassy to the Kingdom of Belgium and to the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. He also held a position at the Office of the Government of Lithuania.

An ongoing war in Europe's heart is today's grim reality. Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine starkly demonstrated that the future of security in Eastern and Northern Europe, and the broader transatlantic community, hangs in the balance.

We Must Act Now

It has been wisely said that those who fail to learn from history are condemned to repeat it. Despite Russia's longstanding pattern of destructive and disruptive behavior, the necessary lessons have not been learned.

Recognizing the many signs that have emerged throughout the years yet were disregarded is essential. The early indication was the Bronze Soldier case in Estonia in 2007 and the subsequent large-scale cyber-attacks. It was followed by the direct military assault and occupation of parts of Georgia, succeeded by Russia's annexation of Crimea and aggression in Donbas. Other countries were targeted as well. Electoral interferences in France, Germany, the United

Kingdom, and the US were well documented; Salisbury Poisonings was a shock, and what about the attempted coup in Montenegro?

Nevertheless, we ignored the obvious. It culminated in the unprovoked aggression against Ukraine in February 2022, which has already claimed hundreds of thousands of lives, devastated the Ukrainian economy, caused a global food crisis, and put the world on the brink of nuclear, ecological, and migration catastrophes. War crimes were committed in Bucha, Mariupol, or Nova Kakhovka.

The current moment calls for more than a mere rhetorical response. It is now crucial to implement tangible and substantial changes. Otherwise, Europe's already fragile security framework could collapse entirely. Moreover, the transatlantic community's response to Russia's war will also determine the fate of the global rules-based order.

That is why the NATO Summit in Vilnius is so essential. The survival of the liberal

That is why the NATO Summit in Vilnius is so essential. The survival of the liberal democratic world and the rights of Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, and all Eastern European countries to a secure and sovereign existence are at stake.

democratic world and the rights of Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, and all Eastern European countries to a secure and sovereign existence are at stake. These nations stand on the front line, facing the imminent threat of aggression unless decisive action is taken to deter the Kremlin.

A Three-Step Approach

Our proposal for adjusting the European security architecture is straightforward. The formula can be summarized as follows: maintain transatlantic strength, keep Russia at bay, and ensure Ukraine's inclusion. While it may not be an ideal solution, it has already proven effective in practice.

First and foremost, the security of Europe hinges upon the political determination and capacity of the Euro-Atlantic community to exert its power. Regrettably, we have been placing excessive reliance on soft power for years. Focusing on engagements, fostering



✉ Ukraine's president, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, awarded Landsbergis the Order of Prince Yaroslav the Wise, third class, in recognition of Lithuania's unwavering support for Ukraine (© MFA of Lithuania)

dialogues, and emphasizing trade relationships have inadvertently deepened our dependencies. But it failed to compel Russia to abandon its imperialistic ambitions. Quite the contrary, diplomatic efforts from Europe have been perceived as a weakness by the Kremlin. While we were talking, Russia continued to bolster its military and hybrid capabilities.

Authoritarian regimes, such as the Kremlin, respond only to the language of power. The Kremlin demonstrates little regard for international commitments or trade

Authoritarian regimes, such as the Kremlin, respond only to the language of power. The Kremlin demonstrates little regard for international commitments or trade agreements when they impede the realization of its imperialistic ambitions.

agreements when they impede the realization of its imperialistic ambitions. Therefore, the Euro-Atlantic community must be robust militarily and willing to respond to any eventuality.

Strengthening Europe's border with Russia requires the deployment of combat-ready brigades with pre-positioned equipment. It is crucial to establish effective air defense systems and maintain heightened vigilance. Accomplishing these goals necessitates increased defense spending. The 2% of GDP should be considered a minimum requirement rather than a maximum threshold. Even if there will be potential talks with Russia at some point, they must be reinforced by

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The only viable alternative is to deter Russia from aggression and limit its capacity to cause harm.

a readiness to employ hard power. Without such resolve, Russia will not listen.

Secondly, it is imperative to exclude Russia from any security arrangements in Europe as long as it remains an authoritarian, corrupt, lawless, and aggressive actor. Russia's used its participation in security agreements and mechanisms to maintain influence rather

than pursue genuine peace; it sought to advance its own goals, rendering such formats ineffective. The only viable alternative is to deter Russia from aggression and limit its capacity to cause harm. While Russia will remain a country spanning two continents, yet it has no right to disregard the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and right to self-determination of other nations.

Lastly, the ongoing conflict and its underlying factors emphasize the importance of integrating Ukraine fully into the institutions of the European security architecture, namely the European Union (EU) and NATO. Russia's aggressive actions against Georgia and Ukraine were driven by the recognition that if these



☒ In June 2023, Lithuania's Foreign Minister, along with the Foreign Ministers of Latvia and Estonia, embarked on a diplomatic mission to Paris with the objective of garnering support for strengthening NATO's eastern flank (© MFA of Lithuania)

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Granting Ukraine NATO's Article 5 security guarantees is not only justified but also strategic, as Ukraine has proven itself to be a security provider rather than merely a consumer.

states ever joined the EU and NATO, they would escape the instability and insecurity of the "grey zone." It is essential not to leave Ukraine in the same ambiguous position again.

Undoubtedly, the Kremlin would threaten escalation and even the potential use of nuclear weaponry if Ukraine integrated fully into the West. However, the undeniable truth is that the Kremlin has been escalating conflicts and undermining the foundations of European security for the past two decades. It is imperative to put an end to this pattern.

Granting Ukraine NATO's Article 5 security guarantees is not only justified but also strategic, as Ukraine has proven itself to be a security provider rather than merely a consumer. Ukraine, having withstood direct aggression from Russia, is a testament to its resilience. Integrating Ukraine into the world's most powerful military alliance would be a strong deterrent, causing the Kremlin to think twice before launching new aggression against any NATO member.



☒ Landsbergis spoke on behalf of the Baltic States at the United Nations Security Council meeting on the situation in Ukraine on 22 September 2022 (© MFA of Lithuania)

Beyond Temporary Truce

Temporary peace with Russia has never turned into a permanent one. Instead, peace settlements with Russia would lead to a frozen conflict that would be reignited at the time of the Kremlin's choosing. This pattern has been evident in Ossetia, Donbas, and Crimea. We must avoid falling into the same trap once again.

The motivations for seeking peace as soon as possible may vary, including factors like access to affordable fertilizers, energy resources, or broader geostrategic interests in the Indo-Pacific region. However, engaging in negotiations while Russian troops remain on Ukrainian sovereign territory is a path that leads to chaos rather

than peace. The only way to restore genuine European security is through Ukraine's victory and holding the aggressor fully accountable for its actions. Those with firsthand experience living under the Kremlin's imperialistic regime are well aware of this principle.

The experiences of Northern and Eastern Europe should serve as the foundation for security against aggressors and authoritarians. Europe's east and north countries must take up leadership in this crucial time. It is our direct security interest and also an opportunity to awaken those who still cling to outdated security approaches. A renewed push to upgrade the European security architecture must originate from us. ●

Ambassador to NATO Julianne Smith: US is fully committed to Lithuania's security



Days before the NATO Summit in Vilnius, LFPR's Linas Kojala had an opportunity to converse with Julianne Smith, the US Ambassador to NATO, regarding the most pressing security issues. The conversation revolved around the Alliance's adaptation to Russia's aggression, Western assistance to Ukraine, and the relationship with China.

– *Ambassador, how would you evaluate the progress of NATO since the Madrid Summit in strengthening defense and deterrence in the face of Russia's aggression?*

Since last year's Madrid Summit, NATO has significantly bolstered its defense and deterrence capabilities. The Alliance is committed to preserving peace and preparing for the increasingly unpredictable security environment of the future. We have strengthened our forward defenses and have enhanced our battlegroups in the eastern part of the Alliance. NATO is upgrading its plans to defend Allied territory, increasing its forces, and aligning those forces to the defense of

specific geographical areas. These plans will enable NATO to respond to crises with more forces, more pre-positioned equipment, and more forward-deployed capabilities at shorter notice. We are also transforming the NATO Response Force and increasing the number of our high-readiness forces.

The Alliance is focused on fortifying resilience in the realms of critical infrastructure, hybrid threats, and cybersecurity. NATO has been working on the protection of critical infrastructure for years and recently created an undersea infrastructure cell to map vulnerabilities and coordinate efforts between NATO Allies, partners, and the private sector. To help preserve its technological edge, NATO has agreed to an implementation strategy for emerging and disruptive technologies and will play an important role as a forum for engagement on various security-related aspects of these emerging technologies.

NATO Allies have also made significant progress towards the Defense Investment

Julianne Smith

Ambassador Julianne Smith assumed her position as the U.S. Permanent Representative to NATO in November 2021. Prior to her current position, she served as a Senior Advisor to Secretary Blinken at the Department of State. Previously, she served as the Director of the Asia and Geopolitics Programs at the German Marshall Fund of the United States.

From 2014–2018, she served as the Director of the Transatlantic Security Program at the Center for a New American Security (CNAS). From 2012–2013, she served as the Acting National Security Advisor and Deputy National Security Advisor to the Vice President of the United States. Before her post at the White House, she served for three years as the Principal Director for European and NATO Policy in the Office of the Secretary of Defense in the Pentagon. In January 2012, she was awarded the Office of the Secretary of Defense Medal for Exceptional Public Service.

Prior to her government service, Ambassador Smith held a variety of positions at research institutions including the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), the German Marshall Fund, the American Academy in Berlin, and the Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik in Berlin. She has written extensively on transatlantic relations and European security.



US sees the need to strengthen NATO's eastern flank (© Vanessa Manca, US NATO)

Pledge: last year was the eighth consecutive year of increased defense spending by European Allies and Canada, with a cumulative investment of almost USD 350 billion since 2014.

Finally, the Alliance has made important steps towards engaging with NATO's partners, particularly in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. Conflict, fragility, and instability abroad directly affect our security and the security of our partners. We have taken the crucial step of engaging with these partners in order to build relationships that will strengthen the security of the Alliance.

– *What are the key priorities for the US going into the Vilnius Summit? How confident are you that they will be accomplished?*

As the Summit draws near, the US has several key priorities: supporting Ukraine as it defends its sovereignty and territorial integrity; strengthening the Alliance's deterrence and defense, including through proper resourcing; and continuing to work with our network of global partners.

At the Summit, the Allies will announce more practical and political support for Ukraine. NATO will endorse a set of military plans key to enhancing our deterrence and defense

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capabilities across the Alliance. We expect Allies to uphold their commitment to investing in our own security by setting a floor of defense spending of at least 2% of the gross domestic product.

New hybrid and emerging threats also necessitate NATO's continuous adaptation to an evolving threat landscape. Cyberspace is contested at all times as malign actors target our critical infrastructure, impede our military activities, and interfere with our government services. We will continue to enhance our ability to operate effectively in cyberspace to prevent, detect, counter, and respond to the full spectrum of threats.

Finally, Allies will step up cooperation with NATO's Indo-Pacific partners, including on cyber defense, new technologies, maritime security, climate change, and countering disinformation.

I am confident the Vilnius Summit will see Allies come together to address these key priorities. Today's Alliance is more united than ever, and today's challenges are too great for any nation or organization to face alone. We will work together to achieve these priorities because together we are stronger and safer.

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Holding the 2023 NATO Summit in Vilnius is especially meaningful given this moment in history, as Ukraine continues to defend itself against Russia's full-scale invasion.



☒ US Ambassador Smith emphasizes support for Lithuania as it faces China's pressure
(© Vanessa Manca, US NATO)

– *The relationship between the US and Lithuania has been strong in security and many other domains. Almost three-quarters of Lithuanians have a positive or very positive view of the US. How would you describe the relationship, and what could be the role of the US militarily in Lithuania in the future?*

The US is fully committed to Lithuania's security as a NATO Ally. Holding the 2023 NATO Summit in Vilnius is especially meaningful given this moment in history, as Ukraine continues to defend itself against Russia's full-scale invasion. The US applauds Lithuania's commitment to standing up to authoritarian regimes in Moscow and Minsk through its commitment to sanctions and by providing refuge to a growing number of Belarusian and Russian civil society leaders.

The strength of the U.S.-Lithuania relationship can be seen by our significant military cooperation over many years. The persistent, rotational U.S. force presence in Lithuania is evidence of our enduring commitment to our NATO Ally and part of our ongoing effort to strengthen our deterrence and defense posture on NATO's eastern flank. The US will continue to work closely with Lithuania and our other Baltic Allies to ensure our posture is commensurate to the threats and challenges we face across all domains. The US remains ready, postured, and well-prepared to work with Lithuania to deter threats and defend the Alliance.

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... the US stands with our Ally, Lithuania, which has endured economic and political coercion from Beijing for its deepening relationship with Taiwan – a decision we support.

– *NATO has recently singled out China as a systemic challenge for the first time. Lithuania is among the countries that felt direct diplomatic and economic pressure from China recently. However, some experts argue that issues with China should not be dealt with at NATO, as it does not come directly under the umbrella of transatlantic defense and security. How would you respond?*

First and foremost, the US stands with our Ally, Lithuania, which has endured economic and political coercion from Beijing for its deepening relationship with Taiwan – a decision we support.

Russia's war on Ukraine has demonstrated that regional security has global implications, as illustrated by the war's effects on food security, energy prices, and geopolitics writ large. Similarly, what happens in the Indo-Pacific has reverberations in the Euro-Atlantic and indeed the world. In NATO's 2022 Strategic Concept, all NATO Allies

recognized direct implications on Euro-Atlantic security posed by PRC activities in a wide variety of areas including: the PRC's malicious cyber and hybrid operations; its disinformation; its efforts to control key technological and industrial sectors, critical infrastructure, strategic materials, and supply chains; its economic coercion; and its efforts to reshape the rules-based international order all deeply affect Euro-Atlantic security. It would be irresponsible for NATO to not address these issues.

The reality is that the PRC is a global strategic competitor and therefore has a vested interest in dividing Europe with the goal of driving a wedge between Allies and partners. Therefore, we deeply value and encourage a united Euro-Atlantic approach to dealing with the PRC. NATO is engaged and will continue to engage in countering PRC influence across Allied nations. We remain open to constructive dialogue with the PRC, and we welcome opportunities to work together on common challenges. As Secretary Blinken has said, we seek competition, not conflict.

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✂ A US Army Abrams M1A2 Main Battle Tank leads the charge during a battle demonstration along with two Lithuanian Land Forces M113 Armored Personnel Carriers during the final day of Saber Strike 2015 (© James Avery)

– *The US will host the next NATO Summit in 2024 as the Alliance commemorates its 75th anniversary. Just a few years ago, there was talk of NATO being 'brain dead.' Now it seems NATO is stronger and more united than ever. How confident are you about NATO's resilience to multiple sets of challenges in the future?*

Russia's unprovoked invasion of Ukraine has only strengthened the Alliance. In the face of significant worldwide challenges, NATO is refocusing on its core task of collective defense while also modernizing the Alliance to face future challenges.

Today, NATO is stronger and more united than ever. We are working on addressing cross-regional challenges and shared security interests including 21st-century threats like climate change and pandemics, hybrid warfare and resilience, new domains such as outer space and cyberspace, and more traditional security areas like proliferation and maritime security. NATO shares information about cyber threats and vulnerabilities, which helps us to respond more quickly, and identify those responsible. We are also developing and protecting critical technologies in a way that reflects our shared

values. Finally, as we continue to strengthen our capabilities and increase our resilience, every member has stepped up their commitment to strengthening our collective defense, which bodes well for the future of NATO. ●



We are also developing and protecting critical technologies in a way that reflects our shared values.

We must show that Putin is not NATO's doorman

Anders Fogh Rasmussen

The war in Ukraine has sparked a paradigm shift across Europe and the Atlantic. Long-standing taboos have been shattered. We are journeying to adapt and respond to challenges, akin to building a plane while in flight.

However, the awakening was delayed. Despite the successful enlargement of the European Union (EU) and NATO in the early 2000s, a regrettable geopolitical blunder was made in 2008. We unwittingly gave Putin an opening by relegating Ukraine and Georgia to NATO's waiting room and appeasing Kremlin's demands. Our naive belief in appeasing dictators for peace was shattered when the war exposed Putin's imperialistic ambitions.

Thus, we must make the proper steps forward. NATO Vilnius summit must make history by showing that Putin is not NATO's doorman.

The Seven-Step Plan for Sustainable Peace

To ensure Ukraine's victory and sustainable peace, strengthen Europe's defense capabilities, and advance freedom, peace, and democracy globally, we must undertake seven steps.

Firstly, international partners must provide Ukraine with the necessary military support to retake its territory from Russia. There needs to be more than the current level of support to achieve victory. Additionally, robust security guarantees must be extended to Ukraine. Make no mistake – security guarantees are not the final destination. Yet they can provide the bridge to Ukraine's NATO membership.

Secondly, fully restoring Ukraine's territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders, including Crimea, is vital. The continued Russian control of Crimea would pose an immediate threat to Ukraine's security.

Thirdly, NATO allies, especially those in the core group providing security guarantees, should explicitly declare that there are no territorial claims against Russia. This will send a signal to Moscow and counter its efforts to misconstrue reality.

Fourthly, establishing mechanisms for reparations and accountability for war crimes is essential.



Anders Fogh Rasmussen

Founding Chairman of Rasmussen Global and Founder of Alliance of Democracies. Former NATO Secretary General (2009–2014) and Prime Minister of Denmark (2001–2009). Anders Fogh Rasmussen has served as Secretary General of NATO, Prime Minister of Denmark, Danish Minister of Economic Affairs, Danish Minister for Taxation and a leading Danish parliamentarian.

During the Danish Presidency of the European Union in 2002, he played a key role in concluding accession negotiations with 10 candidates for EU membership. In 2009 Anders Fogh Rasmussen was appointed NATO's 12th Secretary General between 1 August 2009 and 30 September 2014.

On 1 October 2014, Anders Fogh Rasmussen established Rasmussen Global. The firm advises clients on a wide range of issues such as international security, transatlantic relations, the European Union, and emerging markets. In 2017, Mr. Rasmussen founded the Alliance of Democracies Foundation, a non-profit organization dedicated to the advancement of democracy and free markets across the globe. In this role, he hosts the annual Copenhagen Democracy Summit, and chairs the Transatlantic Commission on Election Integrity, which, among others, include Joe Biden, Michael Chertoff, and Felipe Calderon.



✘ The Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS Chancellorsville (CG 62) transits the Taiwan Strait (© U.S. Pacific Fleet)

The extensive physical destruction and human suffering caused by Russia's aggression necessitate justice and compensation for the victims.

Fifthly, a comprehensive plan for the reconstruction of

Ukraine should be formulated. Ukraine's recovery should be partly financed by more than €300 billion of frozen Russian central bank assets. The private sector can lead the market-oriented implementation of these efforts. However, security

guarantees are imperative to create a safe investment climate.

Sixthly, a new Ukraine will emerge from the war, and international partners should intensify their support for Ukraine's reforms. In particular,

the emphasis should be placed on eradicating corruption, establishing an independent judiciary, and reinforcing the rule of law.

Lastly, a firm commitment must be made to Ukraine regarding its membership in NATO and the EU. The NATO summit in Vilnius is crucial, emphasizing the imperative of steadfast support for Ukraine's integration into these organizations.

Ukraine's Invitation to NATO: No Need for Delay

While inviting a country at war into NATO would be unprecedented, I favor doing so at the NATO Vilnius Summit. Three compelling reasons support the feasibility of this decision.

Firstly, in 2008, we decided that Ukraine would become a member of NATO. Yet, with no roadmap, Ukraine has been in the waiting room for 15 years. It is time to move Ukraine to a safe place.

Secondly, it is often argued that the prospect of NATO enlargement incited Putin. The truth is the opposite. It was the failure to extend security guarantees for Ukraine that provoked Putin. Neutrality provides no security, as Finland and Sweden realized. The same goes for Ukraine.

Lastly, it is often said that Ukraine cannot be granted security guarantees or NATO membership while the war continues. That is an extremely dangerous argument. Suppose you make NATO membership dependent on the cessation



Secondly, fully restoring Ukraine's territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders, including Crimea, is vital. The continued Russian control of Crimea would pose an immediate threat to Ukraine's security.

of hostilities. In that case, you are de facto giving Putin an incentive to continue the war. By extending an invitation now, we would tell Putin that Ukraine will become a member of NATO and that he cannot stop the process.

Undoubtedly, we must address the practical implications concerning NATO's Article 5, the core principle that an attack on one member is an attack on all. If Russia continues occupying parts of Ukraine, determining which territories are covered by Article 5 would be a complex challenge with no straightforward solution.

But the purpose of the Security Compact I co-authored with President Zelensky's Chief of Staff, Andriy Yermak, in September 2022 gives a pathway. We must commit to providing Ukraine with weaponry and assist it in developing a formidable military force capable of deterring or repelling further Russian aggression. Additionally, we should prioritize enhancing

intelligence sharing between NATO allies and Ukraine, as well as maintaining joint training and exercises of Ukrainian forces under the EU and NATO flags. Finally, supporting the development of a robust and efficient defense industry in Ukraine is essential.

Standing up to Autocracies

At my last summit as NATO's Secretary General in 2014, allies committed to allocate a minimum of 2% of GDP towards defense spending by 2024. While some progress was made, the target was not reached. In 2022, only seven allies met the 2% goal. Most of NATO's defense spending, approximately 70%, continues to rely on the US. Hopefully, allies will agree that the 2% threshold is a bare minimum and accelerate efforts to reach the target in a timely manner.

Yet strengthening the European pillar within NATO is not just about defense spending. A new security architecture must have the industrial and technological base to support Europe's claim as a geopolitical player.



... it is often argued that the prospect of NATO enlargement incited Putin. The truth is the opposite. It was the failure to extend security guarantees for Ukraine that provoked Putin.



✘ Moldova's President Maia Sandu actively pursues the integration of her country into the European Union (EU) (© The Office of the President of Ukraine)

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Europe's security architecture should extend beyond defending its territory as it has to unite democratic forces against the rise of autocracies.

This means focusing on artificial intelligence and cyber domains. Yet drastically reducing our strategic dependence on auto autocracies is also vital. We've significantly reduced Europe's reliance on Russian oil and gas but remain dangerously dependent on other

autocracies. We risk replacing Russian energy with rare earth minerals, 90% of which China controls. So Europe must urgently develop its sources and improve circularity. For instance, Greenland offers an opportunity to create a sustainable and green rare earth value chain.

And this brings me to the third element. Europe's security architecture should extend beyond defending its territory as it has to unite democratic forces against the rise of autocracies. For this reason, I established the Alliance of Democracies Foundation in 2017, partnering with the Lithuanian government as part of President Biden's summit for democracy.

As the existential struggle between democracy and dictatorship is taking place, remaining neutral or indifferent is not an option. United Kingdom's Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher once warned that standing in the middle of the road is perilous, as you risk being hit by traffic from both sides. Lithuania's courageous leadership against autocratic forces exemplifies this. Lithuania set a remarkable example by rejecting China's 17+1 initiative, now down to 14+1, and standing steadfastly with Taiwan despite economic coercion from China. Lithuania's unwavering stance deserves the support of the free world, as it safeguards both your freedom and ours.

To make us more resilient, I proposed an economic Article 5 to mirror that of NATO in the economy. The premise is straightforward. A country that comes under economic coercion should be able to ask for support from other free nations, for example, by accessing credit lines. Economic coercion only works because we allow it to. China's days of economic divide and conquer should be ended.

Focus on Global Partnerships

We should also look again at how we approach some critical regions, notably Africa and the Indo-Pacific. Tackling gross national security threats, from illicit trafficking to extremist groups such as Boko Haram and al-Shabab, should not be the only focus. Across Africa, we have allowed Russia and China to create economic and political beachheads. China is now Africa's largest two-way trading partner.

Many African countries should be extremely wealthy in a world run by critical raw materials. Yet China's debt trap diplomacy has turned them into economic colonies of Beijing. We can show that Africa has the possibilities for a better future built on mutual respect, equal partnership, and fair cooperation. A free and democratic Africa, with its potential for innovation, growth, and critical resources, is in our best interest.

In the Indo-Pacific, a unified European strategy is crucial to tackle China's challenges.

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To make us more resilient, I proposed an economic Article 5 to mirror that of NATO in the economy. A country that comes under economic coercion should be able to ask for support from other free nations.

We must refrain from mixed messaging. Instead, we must firmly warn China of severe consequences for any attempt to seize Taiwan forcibly. Additionally, we should enhance our collaboration with Taiwan. Progressing with an EU-Taiwan bilateral investment agreement that stalled for a decade would be a good start. Strengthening major democracies such as Japan, South Korea, and Australia is also a great bulwark against an assertive China.

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To make us more resilient, I proposed an economic Article 5 to mirror that of NATO in the economy. A country that comes under economic coercion should be able to ask for support from other free nations.

However, the swing state in the Indo-Pacific is India. We have seen this with its reaction to aggression in Ukraine. Thus, strengthening our political and economic ties with India should be prioritized.

Let's not forget our immediate neighborhood. The best antidote to Russia's efforts to quietly destabilize the Balkans and Moldova is to ensure their European path is unobstructed. The Western Balkans must be brought into the EU. For too long, we have allowed a bureaucratic malaise to set into the EU's enlargement strategy. We need a much more geopolitical approach.

Above all, our security policy should be built on one premise – freedom brings peace, so we must stand tall in defending it. Conflict and servitude will follow if our weakness and inaction allow autocracy to advance. From Donbas to the Taiwan Strait, to the democracy defenders and freedom fighters worldwide, Europe has to send a message that it will support them in words and deeds.

After all, Europe has often progressed through crises. Russia's invasion of Ukraine is undoubtedly a great challenge for our continent, and Europe has responded well. Our unity has held, and we are breaking old taboos. Now we must take the next step. Europe with the capacity, ability, and political will to act to drive forward the cause of freedom and democracy at home and around the world. ●

After the *Zeitenwende*: The German Military's Path Forward

Amelie Stelzner-Doğan



Until February 24th, 2022, Germany's foreign policy approach towards Russia centered on a constant principle of change through trade. Over the past two decades, signs of the bellicose foreign policy of Putin's Russia were largely overlooked. That includes Chechnya, Georgia, Syria, and hybrid attacks involving disruptions to public services. Lithuania faced similar experiences before the annexation of Crimea.

Germany's perception of Russia remained essentially unchanged until the full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Since then, the German Armed Forces, the *Bundeswehr*, have faced unprecedented challenges in fulfilling its responsibilities for national defense and those of their allies.

The *Bundeswehr* currently operates under difficult conditions, navigating the fulfillment of NATO commitments while grappling with procurement processes, administrative structures, and personnel recruitment challenges. This raises the question: more than one year after Russia's full-scale

attack on Ukraine and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz's declaration of Germany's new era of defense and diplomacy, known as the *Zeitenwende*, where does the *Bundeswehr* stand? How does it contribute to the deterrence and defense of NATO's eastern flank, and what is its current capability?

Bundeswehr and *Zeitenwende*: What has been achieved

Shortly after Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine started, Chancellor Scholz gave a landmark speech in a special session of the German Bundestag. He declared the turning point in Germany's foreign policy and announced a special fund of 100 billion euros for *Bundeswehr* procurements. He also reaffirmed his commitment to finally achieve the 2% GDP target for the defense spending promised to NATO.

However, the current reality presents a different picture. In the 2023 budget, the *Bundeswehr* has been allocated 50.1 billion euros, slightly less than the previous year. Combined with the special fund's share, the total

Amelie Stelzner-Doğan

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Despite Germany's commitment to the NATO 2% target since 2014, it will only be achieved in 2024 through the utilization of the special fund, which, due to its nature, lacks stability as a fixed contribution.

planned amount for this year is 58.5 billion euros, which accounts for 1.62% of GDP. Unfortunately, funds for research and technology have been neglected, indicating insufficient investment in long-term planning.

Despite Germany's commitment to the NATO 2% target since 2014, it will only be achieved in 2024 through the utilization

of the special fund, which, due to its nature, lacks stability as a fixed contribution. Moreover, the special fund is diminishing in value due to inflation, and several projects have already been canceled. As a result, some argue that the *Bundeswehr* is currently facing its most challenging material conditions ever.

Nonetheless, the *Zeitenwende* has initiated a crucial process of introspection and restructuring concerning national and collective defense priorities within politics and society. Top of Form

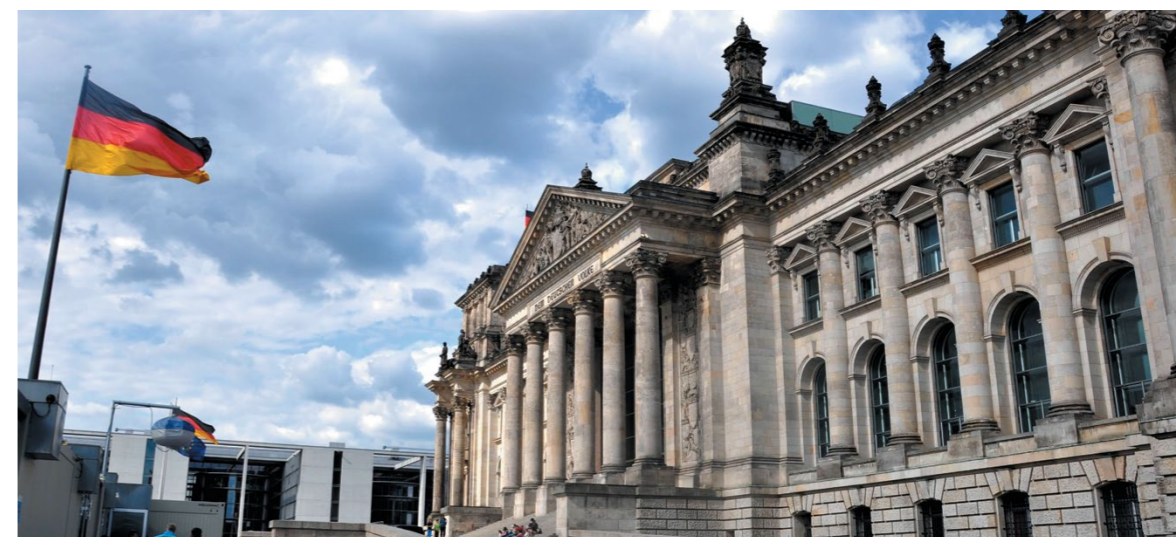
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Germany's commitments within the framework of NATO's alliance defense have rightly been expanded. Notably, it has undertaken initiatives such as Baltic Air Policing, enhanced Air Policing South in Romania, and establishing the enhanced Vigilance Activities Battlegroup in Slovakia. As the leading nation within the framework of

enhanced Forward Presence since 2017, the *Bundeswehr* provides the largest share of the multinational battlegroup with around 1,000 soldiers in Lithuania. Since last summer, the *Bundeswehr* has also stationed an additional Forward Command Element of a combat brigade in Lithuania and rotates training with one battalion on-site to deploy rapidly.

The difficulties within the entire debate are evident in the contrasting perceptions of threat between Poland and the Baltic States, compared to Germany. Moreover, the German government's communication regarding the brigade stationed in Lithuania proved inadequate. Germany is often seen as an ambivalent partner that promises much but often fails to deliver.

There is a need for improved communication on two fronts. Firstly, many positive aspects of German policymaking, such as the extent of arms deliveries



The *Zeitenwende* policy was approved by the German Parliament (© Kur Kerdirichi)

There is a need for improved communication on two fronts. Firstly, many positive aspects of German policymaking, such as the extent of arms deliveries and humanitarian aid provided to Ukraine, should be better communicated. Secondly, while the Bundeswehr's transparency about its weaknesses initially appears commendable, it diminishes the Bundeswehr's momentum in public.

and humanitarian aid provided to Ukraine, should be better communicated. Secondly, while the *Bundeswehr's* transparency about its weaknesses initially appears commendable, it diminishes the *Bundeswehr's* momentum in public.

Furthermore, there are still limitations on the deployment options for the brigade, leading to bureaucratic and cumbersome transport operations due to reasons such as nature conservation or simply due to the lack of adequate equipment, which is often needed elsewhere, particularly in NATO's Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF). The *Bundeswehr's* involvement in the VJTF means that German troops are the first to be deployed within seven days of activation in the event of an attack on NATO

territory. Starting from 2025, NATO's Rapid Reaction Force will be expanded. Germany has committed to contributing 30,000 soldiers out of the total of 300,000, who can be deployed to potential crisis locations within 30 days at varying readiness levels.

Additionally, the Ministry of Defence is currently undergoing structural adaptations. This includes the introduction of a planning and leadership staff in the ministry to reduce duplicate structures, communicating decisions by management better, and implementing them efficiently and quickly.

For years, the Bundeswehr has faced challenges with its procurement system, which is excessively bureaucratic and hindered by diffuse responsibility and self-imposed regulations.

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Furthermore, new procurement projects often aim for overly complex systems that can do everything. However, this approach is not always practical or necessary on the battlefield and significantly increases project costs. In a recent shift in procurement strategy, the *Bundeswehr* has focused on off-the-shelf procurement, which involves acquiring weapon systems that are readily available in the market rather than developing new systems. The Procurement Acceleration Act aims to alleviate these issues by simplifying procurement processes for military equipment and enhancing European defense cooperation.

What is evident is that despite significant progress since the declaration of the *Zeitenwende*, there is still a considerable distance to cover, and time is of the essence. There is an urgent need to raise political and societal awareness about the imminent threats Germany and its partners face.

Going forward

The government must thoroughly evaluate its role in national security provision and conduct a comprehensive assessment of its current defensive capabilities, with the *Bundeswehr* as a key player. This evaluation should be continuously updated to reflect the evolving situation.

Specifically, the following steps should be taken:

1. Politics must demonstrate strategic foresight and engage in comprehensive planning for all relevant actors. The federal government should clearly define Germany's objectives and priorities in defense and foreign policy and, most importantly, secure funding for them and effectively communicate them to partners and society.
2. The procurement system needs improvement. Time can be saved by adopting pragmatic solutions and procuring readily available products from the market. However, shorter procurement procedures require a strong political signal to the relevant authorities and industry. During the development and production phase, the industry and the *Bundeswehr* must work closely together and optimize equipment through continuous practical tests.
3. Interoperability is vital. Germany must be a reliable partner for its allies in NATO and the EU. However, the concept of being a "Framework Nation" should extend beyond alliance

The Bundeswehr currently faces a shortage of active soldiers within the reserve.

commitments. Germany should also act as a framework nation regarding the defense industry.

4. The Bundeswehr currently faces a shortage of active soldiers within the reserve. The recruitment problem should be addressed through a well-designed concept of mandatory community service for a year, which would help alleviate personnel shortages in civilian and military areas.

It is now time to draw conclusions that will enable the Bundeswehr to fulfill its commitments within NATO. Politicians must communicate this more effectively to the public while also acknowledging and responding to the threats faced by our partners. Although profound reforms are necessary, much could be achieved by setting more explicit goals for the existing structures, rules, and laws. Long-term, goal-oriented thinking is crucial for a capable *Bundeswehr* and a resilient society, and this mindset should be embraced by politicians, administrators, and society at large. Given the current level of public support, there has never been a better time to begin this important work. ●



☒ In 2022, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said the Alliance will transform the NATO Response Force and increase the number of high readiness forces to well over 300,000 (© NATO)

Daniel Fata: Ukraine does not only seek security guarantees; it can also enhance NATO's strength



LFP's Linas Kojala engages in a thought-provoking conversation with Daniel Fata, a renowned national security consultant, and strategic adviser. With a remarkable career spanning over 25 years, Fata has held positions in Congress, the Department of Defense, the aerospace and defense industry, and the consulting arena. He currently serves as the president of Fata Advisory LLC and a senior non-resident advisor at CSIS.

Notably, Daniel was handpicked by the U.S. Senate leadership to be one of the 16 commissioners on the congressionally mandated Afghanistan War Commission in February 2022. Tasked with studying the US 20-year involvement in the war in Afghanistan, the commission aims to extract lessons for future conflicts. Moreover, as one of the leading experts on NATO, he has conducted in-depth analyses of the security of the Alliance's Eastern flank and the repercussions of Russia's aggression in Ukraine.

The conversation focuses on NATO's transformation since

the summit in Madrid and expectations for the summit in Vilnius. Fata also shares his insights on the future of US foreign policy, considering potential changes in the upcoming year of presidential elections. Finally, he discusses ensuring Ukraine has a viable path to NATO membership.

– *How would you evaluate NATO's transformation since the Madrid Summit in 2022? Significant decisions were made in Spain in response to Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Nevertheless, do you believe that NATO's efforts thus far have been adequate?*

It is significant that NATO, for the first time since the end of the Cold War, has declared Russia as the primary threat. This declaration is symbolic as the alliance, formed to counter the Soviet Union, has to come back to its roots just before its 75th anniversary next year.

Decisions made in Madrid were necessary for strengthening NATO's eastern flank. Establishing new battle groups in Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia was a significant step forward.

Daniel Fata,

president of Fata Advisory LLC, is a public policy expert, national security consultant, and strategic adviser. His expertise spans U.S. national security, government relations, strategic risk, European foreign policy, global aerospace and defense industry, technology, and third-party advocacy campaigns. Dan is actively involved in technology start-up efforts and was appointed by the U.S. Senate leadership as one of 16 commissioners on the congressionally mandated Afghanistan War Commission in February 2022. Dan is associated with leading think tanks, non-governmental organizations, and regularly serves as a guest lecturer at prominent U.S. colleges and universities.



☒ The NATO Summit in Madrid extended a welcome to Asia-Pacific partners (© kantei.go.jp)

However, the picture is somewhat mixed when assessing the progress made so far. There are still lingering aspects of legacy NATO. Differing security pressures experienced across different regions remain an issue. It still matters where you sit geographically.

While some countries are relatively content with the outcomes, others have expressed concern. For instance, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia had expected a physical presence of a brigade-sized unit from Germany, Canada, and the UK, respectively, which has yet to materialize.

I believe a more enduring commitment to NATO's eastern



Ukraine is a battle-tested ally that has defended itself against Russian aggression. It does not only seek security guarantees; it can also enhance the alliance's strength.

flank from Germany, the UK, Canada, France, Spain, and other nations would provide reassurance. It may not necessarily require a full brigade but a presence comprising several battalions with enablers.

Nonetheless, I believe that NATO's deterrent capabilities remain effective. I don't think Moscow considers an attack on NATO a viable option. Therefore, NATO's unity and resilience remain strong.

– *What outcomes would be considered successful for the NATO summit in Vilnius? The transformation of NATO is a gradual process, and maintaining the pace can be challenging.*

A significant measure of success would be providing Ukraine with a clear path to NATO membership, even if the invitation is not extended at the Vilnius summit.

During the 2008 Bucharest summit, where I was present, it was stated that Ukraine and

Georgia would eventually become NATO members. Unfortunately, this has led to strategic ambiguity. Addressing this ambiguity is crucial as Ukraine has demonstrated its capability, commitment, and ability to cooperate with allies effectively. Ukraine is a battle-tested ally that has defended itself against Russian aggression. It does not only seek security guarantees; it can also enhance the alliance's strength.

The allies should also aim to raise the defense expenditure to 2 percent of GDP as a minimum, not the goal. Additionally, at least 20 percent of defense spending should be allocated for equipment spending, even if absorptive capacity remains a factor.

Moreover, NATO needs to revitalize partnerships. The upcoming 30th anniversary of the Partnership for Peace initiative presents an opportunity to address global partnerships at the Vilnius summit. Several European countries still aspire to partner with NATO, and there is evident interest from Asia-Pacific nations.

It is also necessary to explore how the European Union could complement the goals of NATO. As resources are finite, it is crucial to find efficient and politically viable ways to allocate them. We need creativity and determination.

Finally, while it may be premature to determine what NATO's future relationship with Russia will entail, the Vilnius summit could provide an opportunity to initiate this conversation.

– *Let's delve into the significant transition of Germany's Russia, energy, and defense policies. Can we have confidence that Germany will maintain the momentum for change in the foreseeable future?*

I applaud what Chancellor Scholz said in 2022 about increasing the defense budget. I think it was long overdue.

Nevertheless, we've been disappointed that it hasn't materialized into something more concrete yet. The German Defense Ministry was unprepared for the sudden influx of funds as bureaucracy takes time trying to figure out how to spend additional hundreds of millions of euros.

I also sense Berlin is still aware of some uneasiness on the European continent about Germany's leading military role. France and other countries were rather content that former Chancellor Angel Merkel led Europe's economy but was not much engaged in military matters. That is rapidly changing, but getting used to the new reality will take some time.

I know the US regularly converses with its European allies to address and align perceptions. Still, it is essential to acknowledge that the desired outcomes may take time to materialize and may not align precisely with our initial expectations.

– *The US considers Germany a key partner and a significant contributor to the future security of Europe. As the US aims to focus on addressing challenges posed by China, its*

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leaders emphasize the importance of European allies taking on more responsibility. Germany, a large and economically powerful European country, seems like a natural candidate to lead the way.

I am unsure if Germany is a natural fit to take up the role of guarantor of European security if or when the US is preoccupied elsewhere. It is not the dominant view in the US. American military planners and even the general public believe the US can multitask. We can simultaneously engage in Europe and Asia.

Naturally, we do anticipate that Europeans will assume more duties. However, it does not mean that the US would abandon Europe.

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The US needs multiple partners with diverse capabilities. The United Kingdom, Poland, Turkey, Romania, and other allies will remain significant in our strategic partnerships.

– *Once again, the US has proven itself indispensable to Europe. Any doubts about the strength of the transatlantic bond were effectively dispelled since Russia's full-scale invasion. Would you agree that these actions demonstrated*

the US's crucial role and dedication to the core tenants of international security?

I would say yes. The Biden administration deserves credit for its efforts leading up to the war, ensuring that Ukraine and NATO allies were aware of the imminent threat. Initially, some European countries hesitated to acknowledge the danger, likely influenced by historical issues concerning US intelligence assessments. Also, many experts were skeptical regarding Ukraine's ability to withstand the attack. Nonetheless, the US administration remained steadfast.

This demonstration of US leadership took place merely a few months after the Afghanistan withdrawal, a situation that had instigated concerns about the US as a trustworthy and dependable ally.



📷 French President Macron and US President Biden reiterated unwavering commitment to NATO's collective defense (© RawPixel)

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The Biden administration deserves credit for its efforts before the full-scale invasion began, ensuring that Ukraine and NATO allies were aware of the imminent threat.

Consequently, the administration has successfully reaffirmed American leadership throughout the transatlantic area.

Regardless, I believe it would have been helpful if President Biden, before the onset of the war, had supplemented his statements about defending every square inch of NATO territory with an explicit declaration that all options would be on the table if any aggression were directed towards Ukraine.

Since the invasion started, the US administration has had strong concerns about the risk of escalation when evaluating military support for Ukraine. This cautious approach may have contributed to the prolongation of the war. Once Ukraine demonstrated its ability to utilize Western weaponry, it should have received more advanced weapon systems quicker. Such a decision could have prompted Putin to reconsider the feasibility of continuing attrition warfare.

– *Nevertheless, there is concern about the long-term support of the US for Ukraine, especially considering the necessity of Congressional approval in fund allocation. Additionally,*

presidential elections are approaching in 2024, and some candidates openly express skepticism regarding ongoing aid. Is there a sense of fatigue among US decision-makers, and what sentiment could potentially dominate next year?

The question of fatigue is indeed concerning. While I worry less about the Biden administration, I have concerns about Congress and the American public.

As we progress through this year, the sense of urgency in Congress on Ukraine may start to diminish. Even the Biden administration has yet to request additional funds in Spring 2023 and is utilizing allocations from the end of 2022.

Unfortunately, there have been voices from both parties in Congress challenging the continued funding and relevance of support for Ukraine. They ask, "Why should we continue to invest in Ukraine? Why does it matter?" The more extreme factions of both parties will question why the US is involved in Europe and argue that Germany, Poland, and other European countries should take on the responsibility instead of expecting Americans to spend money on it.

Ukraine will likely receive significant attention if the war continues into 2024 when the US enters a year of intense presidential campaigning. And it may not be a positive one. It is not something I endorse, of course, but 2024 could become a contentious period for all matters concerning Europe.

However, responsible voices will remind us that the cost of

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Unfortunately, there have been voices from both parties in Congress challenging the continued funding and relevance of support for Ukraine. They ask, "Why should we continue to invest in Ukraine? Why does it matter?"

supporting Ukraine should be weighed against the potential costs of Russia's victory. We should also consider the signal China could get if we abandoned Ukraine.

– *If the war does not conclude in a manner that demonstrates Ukraine's decisive victory, could it also imply a potential wavering of the American commitment to NATO?*

If Biden is reelected, I have no doubt that he will remain committed to NATO. In the event of Donald Trump's victory, I still believe his administration would not make radical moves. The majority of the Republican candidates also generally support the Alliance.

During political campaigns, candidates often make provocative statements or attempt to appeal to specific segments of the electorate. Politicians can clarify or modify their positions afterward. However, observers in Europe and elsewhere who closely follow the debates may feel concerned.



☒ Fata expresses hope for continued US support towards Ukraine, regardless of the outcome of the upcoming elections (© Lukas Johnns, pixabay)

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If Biden is reelected, I have no doubt that he will remain committed to NATO. In the event of Donald Trump's victory, I still believe his administration would not make radical moves. The majority of the Republican candidates also generally support the Alliance.

In my view, it is crucial for US political leadership to unequivocally convey to Europe that it is America's most important ally. Assurances must be given that the US remains fully dedicated to its alliances and to continued support of Ukraine. European countries ought to know that the U.S. stands by them.

– *China recently became a part of NATO's agenda. How do you see that unfolding in the future?*

China presents a genuine challenge to both the US and Europe. We have witnessed China's growing influence on Western economies, the many instances of intellectual property theft, and its coercive

actions in Latin America, Africa, and parts of Asia.

However, I believe that NATO may not be the most suitable framework to address China unless the issues directly impact the core aspects of transatlantic security, such as China's weapon sales. Economic or trade problems should be addressed through international organizations specifically designed for those purposes.

Therefore, I do not advocate for the establishment of a NATO-China Commission. Once a body like the NATO-China Commission is created, it becomes challenging to reverse its formation. I see no need for that at the moment. ●

Nicolas Tenzer: France is not complacent about Russia anymore



Nicolas Tenzer, a renowned French international affairs and security expert and a blogger at Tenzer Strategics, highlights France's significant shift in foreign policy, particularly concerning Russia and China. He also expresses his hope that Lithuania and other Baltic states' steadfast adherence to principled and values-based foreign policy positions will amplify their voices within international organizations in the future.

Tenzer currently holds the position of guest professor at Sciences Po Paris (Paris School of International Affairs), serves as a non-resident senior fellow at the Center for European Policy Analysis (CEPA), and boasts an extensive background, authoring three official reports for the French government and writing 22 books.

Linus Kojala, LFPR's editor, interviewed Tenzer in late June.

– *Some observers assume the West will be keen for Ukraine to start negotiations with Russia after the counterattack. Is that the case, in your view?*

To be blunt, I still have this fear. But it's not as strong as the one

I had a year ago when, in my view, some leaders pushed for a territorial compromise in Ukraine and showed reluctance in fully prosecuting war crimes.

There have been reassuring developments recently. Both [French President] Emmanuel Macron and [US Secretary of State] Anthony Blinken have made it unequivocally clear that any frozen conflict is unacceptable and dangerous. They have shifted their stance from discussing "negotiations" at Ukraine's discretion, which could imply hidden agendas, to emphasizing that talks must occur on Ukraine's terms. This is conditioned to the return of all territories, punishment for unpardonable crimes, repatriation of deported children, payment of war damages, and security guarantees.

There can be no push for negotiations with a power whose leader has been indicted by the International Criminal Court for war crimes. As long as there is a single Russian soldier on Ukrainian territory, including, of course, Crimea, this will mean more torture, enforced disappearances,

Nicolas Tenzer

Nicolas Tenzer is a Non-resident Senior Fellow at the Center for European Policy Analysis (CEPA) and Chairman of the Center for Studies and Research on Political Decision (CERAP).

Nicolas is currently a guest professor at Paris School of International Affairs (PSIA, Sciences-Po), ENA Paris, and France's Institute for Advanced Studies on National Defence. His current interests and writings are heavily focused on political risk analysis, European issues, Russia and Ukraine, disinformation warfare, the Middle East, US foreign policy, human rights, and corruption. Since May 2021, Nicolas has been the editor of Desk Russie, a newsletter on Russia and the countries of the post-Soviet space and the chair of the connected NGO A l'Est de Brest-Litovsk.

A senior civil servant, Nicolas is a former adviser to the French Minister of Economy and Finance. He was investigator at the Court of Auditors and Head of Department in Strategic Planning Commissariat (Prime Minister's Office). He served as head of a special mission on international issues for the French government. He has led several missions for international organizations in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Algeria, Ukraine, Montenegro, Egypt, Serbia, Haiti, Morocco, and Jordan.



☒ Lithuania's President Gitanas Nausėda receives President Macron on his visit to Vilnius (© Robertas Dačkus, Irp.lt)

deportations, and crimes of all kinds. Macron spoke of full respect for international law in his speech in Bratislava at GLOBSEC on May 31, 2023.

The temptation to return to this issue will, however, remain. If Ukraine proves unable to recover all its territories during the counter-offensive – and this depends on us and the weapons we provide to Kyiv – there is a genuine risk, particularly in the context of an American election year, that some might pressure President Zelenskyy to consider a compromise. This would be legally unacceptable and strategically inept.

– **What is the outlook for Ukraine's relationship with NATO? Can you envision a feasible path for Ukraine to join the Alliance in the near future? If yes, what is a realistic timeline?**

First, I would like to reiterate that I have long supported Ukraine's membership in both NATO and the European Union (EU). It seems clear that the refusal to grant Kyiv a Membership Action Plan (MAP) at the Bucharest summit in April 2008 was a serious mistake, the results of which we have seen in Ukraine and Georgia. We have been "buying" Moscow's so-called red lines for



Yet there is also a potential risk in conveying to Ukraine before it has fully regained control over all its territories, that it can join NATO without a firm commitment from member nations to provide military assistance in restoring its territorial integrity.

too long. There are moments when I worry that Western democracies might still engage in similar behavior. We need to smash such ideas one by one. It is not up to Russia to say who should or should not be a member of the Alliance.

It's also true that, as Macron mentioned in Bratislava's speech, there is no unanimity on the issue of Ukraine's NATO membership. I feel he would personally favor it, but it seems that the US and Germany are not. At least as long as Russia's war against Ukraine continues.

In this scenario, I have reservations regarding the

notion that a country engaged in a war cannot join NATO. The precedent was set by the Federal Republic of Germany in 1955. West Germany's membership in NATO was not hindered despite being a divided country then.

Yet there is also a potential risk in conveying to Ukraine before it has fully regained control over all its territories, that it can join NATO without a firm commitment from member nations to provide military assistance in restoring its territorial integrity. It could be argued that a more prudent approach would involve granting Kyiv a MAP

at the Vilnius summit while simultaneously significantly increasing military aid.

This is where security guarantees come in. Yes, only NATO can provide them, even if, as I have often argued, we must provide for Article 5 + as Article 5 does not apply automatically. It is advisable to reinforce the security guarantees with other bilateral or multilateral treaties - Macron also alluded to this in the speech I mentioned.

As of now, I have consistently advocated for the following proposal: deploying Western troops into the liberated regions of Ukraine and gradually expanding their presence into the areas that are yet to be liberated to safeguard these territorial gains. If the US is reluctant to commit the whole NATO, why shouldn't we do it under the aegis of the EU? At a time when several governments, including Macron's, aim to reinforce the significance of European defense, such a step would demonstrate a resolute commitment and extend beyond mere symbolism.

- What is your perspective on France's role in supporting Ukraine and strengthening NATO's Eastern flank? Previously, there were doubts in Central and Eastern Europe about the willingness of Paris to stand up to Russia's pressure.

France's commitment to supporting the Eastern flank does not date from Russia's all-out war against Ukraine. We have seen it before in Estonia and Romania, for example.

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Macron not only unequivocally emphasized the irreplaceable role of NATO, implying that the reinforcement of European defense he advocates for would never serve as a substitute for it; he also acknowledged that there had been insufficient listening to the concerns expressed by Central and Eastern European countries...

While Macron once spoke of NATO being "brain-dead," his actions have, in some ways, contradicted this assertion.

Support for Ukraine, meanwhile, has grown considerably in recent months. The Bratislava speech marks a step that could lead to a transformation of French foreign policy. Macron not only unequivocally emphasized the irreplaceable role of NATO, implying that the reinforcement of European defense he advocates for would never serve as a substitute for it; he also acknowledged that there had been insufficient listening to the concerns expressed by Central and Eastern European countries, which he had previously labeled as "warmongering."

He also clarified that European countries must not give in to Russia, accepting its power grabs and undermining of international law. I can only welcome this, knowing he previously declared the need to offer Russia security guarantees and envisaged an architecture of security and trust with this country. Admittedly, Macron maintains that geographical factors necessitate coexistence with Russia, and he, like our American allies, does not explicitly outline a long-term strategy with Moscow. Nevertheless, he has moved away from complacency. In recent months, he has understood the nature of the Russian regime better and realized that it cannot be amended.

- Germany has launched the *Zeitenwende* process. Has Berlin done enough over the last year to prove there is no going back to the previous situation of seeking cooperation with Russia and underspending on defense?

Reflecting on the past year and a half, it is undeniably impressive to observe the progress made by Germany. I recall having candid conversations with German officials two years ago, during which their primary focus was justifying Nord Stream 2, advocating for accommodations with Russia, and suggesting compromises that Ukraine would have to accept. They have also criticized Western policies for their parallel shortcomings and flaws.

Even in the early days of the war, we observed Germany's hesitancy in providing Ukraine with heavy weaponry and

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It must also be acknowledged that the recently released German national security strategy still appears somewhat lacking in assertiveness and not entirely aligned with the ambitions envisioned by the *Zeitenwende*.

their cautious approach to condemning Putin's egregious acts against humanity. However, this stage has now been surpassed. This transformation is particularly noticeable in defense spending, as previous doubts have been overcome, although it is still possible to aspire for a more robust collective endeavor.

It must also be acknowledged that the recently released German national security strategy still appears somewhat lacking in assertiveness and not entirely aligned with the ambitions envisioned by the *Zeitenwende*.

Germany's reticence towards Ukraine's accession to NATO, its challenges in explicitly stating defeating Russia as an objective (though it is not the only country facing such difficulties), and its complacency towards Beijing has also been evident. While Germany has undoubtedly become a more reliable partner



☒ The main street of Bucha after the Russian invasion
(© Oleksandr Ratushnia)



☒ Ukraine seeks to join NATO as soon as possible (© The Presidential Administration of Ukraine)

again - a few years ago, it was a weak link - it is not a leading country regarding foreign and security policy.

– *China is gaining increased attention on NATO's agenda. Macron's statements regarding European interests related to Taiwan have stirred controversy, as they may not align with US policies. Is there a transatlantic split on China?*

Macron's speech on his return from China was indeed ill-advised. As I have stated [earlier](#), it had the paradoxical advantage of encouraging almost all European leaders to distance themselves from it.

He also later partially contradicted the statement.

Additionally, when Beijing conducted military exercises simulating an attack on Taiwan, France sent a frigate to patrol the area. Macron reiterated the longstanding Allies' position, which advocates maintaining the status quo.

It is indeed true that there exists a regrettable lack of unity between the US and the EU regarding their approach to China, and significant divisions are evident among European countries as well. Arguably more so than France, Germany is pursuing an independent course of action.

However, the US has its contradictions too. Despite Ursula von der Leyen's emphasis on "de-risking"

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and Macron's consistent call for reduced technological dependence on Beijing as part of European "strategic

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... if Europeans were to assume the responsibility for collective security currently held by the US, it would require a substantial increase in defense spending, potentially up to 6 to 7% of GDP. There is still uncertainty regarding whether public opinion would accept such a large allocation of resources.

autonomy," the importance of China-US trade has reached unprecedented levels.

Various motivations drive American positions on China. Some rightfully perceive the significant risk to Taiwan's existence and express concerns over Beijing's violations of fundamental rights in Hong Kong, Xinjiang, and Tibet. On the other hand, there are those primarily focused on economic competition between the two superpowers, emphasizing security and human rights issues much less.

Nevertheless, I have long advocated a more substantial dialogue between Europe and the US on China. As with Russia, achieving convergence is a strategic necessity, and we know that Moscow and

Beijing take advantage of our divisions. Yet, addressing these challenges would necessitate a willingness to engage in discussions and, more importantly, greater policy coherence. Europe has demonstrated remarkable efficiency in significantly reducing its reliance on Russian oil and gas. In the event of a major conflict, both Europe and the US would find themselves vulnerable to the consequences of their dependence on critical Chinese products and technologies.

– *Looking beyond the Vilnius Summit, what are your primary concerns regarding European defense? Are you more worried about still insufficient spending levels? Especially considering the upcoming elections in some Western countries, including the US.*

Intuitively, I'm not too worried about the level of defense spending of the European NATO members. They seem to be on the right track, even if this effort will have to be sustained over time. It's true that if Europeans were to assume the responsibility for collective security currently held by the US, it would require a substantial increase in defense spending, potentially up to 6 to 7% of GDP. There is still uncertainty regarding whether public opinion would accept such a large allocation of resources.

However, it is essential to acknowledge that European defense efforts are not solely about financial contributions but also about enhancing operational capabilities. We must invest more in cooperative

actions for defense research and development, pooling resources together. Unfortunately, we still have a considerable distance to cover in this regard.

One of the significant challenges European leaders face is the ability to think in terms of both Europe and NATO simultaneously. While I recognize the long-term risks, particularly the potential for policy reversals, no country is entirely immune to these challenges.

A notable source of uncertainty lies in the possibility of a Republican candidate winning the 2024 presidential election, potentially leading to a reduced focus on supporting Ukraine and a Congress aligning with that direction. Consider the hypothetical scenario of Trump being in power on February 24, 2022 – it raises doubts about whether the Biden administration's level of Ukraine's support would have been replicated.

Assuming that by the end of 2024, Ukraine had yet to achieve its desired objectives – a situation that would be disastrous for Ukraine – the question arises as to what would happen if an American administration cut all support. Could Europe replace the US? I'm afraid the answer is all too familiar.

In Europe, the Hungarian Trojan horse is already present. A few other countries have dubious practices regarding applying and monitoring sanctions. What would happen if we were to add two or three more? Consensus-building within the European Council would face growing challenges, raising the risk of dangerous



☒ According to Lithuania's Prime Minister Ingrida Šimonytė, only the unity of the democratic powers of the whole world can ensure victory over the aggressors (© Irv.lt)

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The contribution of the Baltic States, especially Lithuania, to European security holds immense significance. Although their populations may be relatively small, it cannot be discounted that they have demonstrated remarkable leadership and served as an inspiring example.

compromises. All the more reason to take advantage of transatlantic and European unity to step up our support for Ukraine and enable it to defeat Russia quickly.

– *How do you assess the contribution of Lithuania and other Baltic states to the future European security framework?*

The contribution of the Baltic States, especially Lithuania, to European security holds immense significance. Although their populations may be relatively small, it cannot be discounted that they have demonstrated remarkable leadership and served as an inspiring example. Their

unwavering support for Ukraine and consistent, direct, clear positions have set them apart. The Baltic States have firsthand experience with oppression and firmly stand alongside free nations.

Lithuania, in particular, has displayed commendable support for Taiwan. It also has actively welcomed and supported the opposition to the Belarusian dictator. It would be fitting to see one of the leaders from these countries play a pivotal role in shaping the future of the EU or NATO. Their perspectives should inspire and influence Russian policy within these organizations in the years to come. ●

We need Russia policy, not Putin policy

Nico Lange

Good morning, my name is Prigozhin, my armed colleagues, and I am taking control here now." This or something similar can be heard on the morning of June 24 at the headquarters of Russia's war against Ukraine in Rostov-on-Don. Prigozhin and his armed mercenaries stroll into Russia's main war HQ without anyone even trying to stop them. The "Wagner" boss talks condescendingly with the deputy defense minister and other generals in a relaxed-looking company. He eventually sends his troops toward Moscow, realizing that his arch-enemy Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu will not confront him.

By now, everyone in Russia and the entire world is looking spellbound at the "Wagner" revolt, wondering, "What the hell is this?" Nobody stops the "orchestra," nobody defends Mother Russia, and nobody resolutely throws himself into the breach for Putin. On the contrary, they all keep their heads down, turn off their cell phones, crawl under their office desks, and appear ready to cheer on other rulers if necessary.

Putin finally breaks the momentum with a mysterious "deal." However, it remains open to this day how the situation can be permanently resolved. Nevertheless, Vladimir Vladimirovich thanks the authorities, churches, and citizens for their great support and hands out medals. He then lets himself be cheered in Dagestan and thus glides smoothly from his frightened "1917" civil war speech into a summer tour for the "election campaign" kick-off for the coming year. But Putin's facade is hollow, and that is palpable.

And on our side? The prevailing perception of Putin is still that of a brilliant strategist who unshakably holds the reins of power in his country. Many think Putin is still fighting with one hand tied behind his back, even in his war of aggression against Ukraine. But once he

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But Putin's facade is hollow, and that is palpable.



Nico Lange

is a Senior Fellow at the Munich Security Conference, Senior Advisor to GLOBSEC, and former Chief of Executive Staff at the German Federal Ministry of Defence. From 2018-2019 Lange was deputy general manager and director for strategy, planning, and international politics of the CDU.

Before joining CDU HQ, Nico Lange served in Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauers state government in Saarland as state commissioner for innovation and strategy. Lange served as Director of the USA office in Washington D.C., Deputy Director for Political Consulting in Berlin, and Director of the Ukraine office in Kyiv for the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung between 2006-2017. He was awarded a Robert Bosch Fellowship in St. Petersburg, Russia, from 2004-2006. Lange studied political science, computer science, and communications. Prior, he served as a career soldier and went on missions in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo.

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The “Wagner” boss Prigozhin now exposes Putin’s reasons for war as cynical lies and demonstrates to all the world live on TV that Putin’s power stands on feet of clay.

really gets going, things will get really bad. So, for God’s sake, just don’t escalate.

Putin scares us. Because if Putin is “backed into a corner,” he will detonate a nuclear bomb. At the same time, we are afraid of someone other than Putin coming to power because nuclear bombs will end up in irresponsible hands. The equation of fear of Putin’s policy is unsolvable.

But the brief “Wagner” revolt shows us that Putin respects strength and yields to it. The supposedly brilliant strategist is a shrewd tactician and opportunist. On key strategic issues, he is blind. He has felons mobilized from prisons who now directly challenge his power, heavily armed. Under the historically transfigured illusion that Ukrainians are Russians, he is waging a war

of aggression that he cannot win because Ukrainians are not Russians, are defending their homeland and identity with their entire society, and are dragging their Western partners along with them. Putin is bringing about historic unity in the West, which he always wanted to divide.

The “Wagner” boss Prigozhin now exposes Putin’s reasons for war as cynical lies and demonstrates to all the world live on TV that Putin’s power stands on feet of clay. The mercenary boss forces Putin to admit weakness to the point of losing face, and yet Putin reaches a businesslike agreement with him.

The logical conclusion from this is to now finally support Ukraine with full force, and without self-detering oneself, that either Putin “escalates” or that this could lead to Putin’s end.

Many Western leaders say that an overthrow of Putin is not in our interest. In any case, the “Wagner” revolt shows us how little understanding and influence we have for the peculiar logic of the processes in the foreground and background within Russia. However, Putin’s clear defeat in the war of aggression could open up opportunities for positive change and the abandonment of imperial ambitions that are dangerous for all of us.

A non-Putin at the helm of Russia, by the way, would

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immediately have the chance to end the war of aggression and withdraw Russian troops from Ukraine.

Since taking office, Putin’s legitimacy has been based on the propaganda that any alternative to him is crazy or chaotic or an ultranationalist lunatic who throws nuclear bombs around. The alternative to a non-Putin, however, we really know enough of now at the latest: war of aggression, war crimes, nuclear threats, contempt for humanity, cynical lies, and even support for extremists and attempts to divide us.

Those who are afraid, as we know, cannot think clearly. Those who are not afraid – neither of Putin nor of non-Putin, on the other hand, can finally see clearly: we need Russia policy, not Putin policy. ●

The Supporters of Prigozhin in Russia



Vladimiras Laučius

The interpretations of the march on Moscow by the Wagner troops, under Yevgeny Prigozhin’s leadership, vary. Some view it as a staged performance orchestrated in coordination with Vladimir Putin, while others see it as an unsuccessful rebellion. Another interpretation suggests it reflects a clash of business interests in Africa.

Ukrainian analysts provide their own interpretation of Prigozhin’s march.

Anton Gerashchenko, Adviser to the Ukrainian Minister of the Interior

This was a classic military coup attempt, reminiscent of those observed in some Latin American juntas. For reasons unknown, Prigozhin made the unexpected decision to halt, despite his forces seemingly having the freedom to enter Moscow. With just a few hours remaining to reach the city, no obstacle could impede the advance of a contingent comprising a couple of thousands of battle-hardened mercenaries, fully armed and prepared. The potential consequences were immense – they could have seized control of both the Kremlin and the Russian Ministry of Defence, potentially toppling Putin and enabling Prigozhin to establish himself as the dictator of Russia. Why this did not happen, I do not yet understand.

Prigozhin risked his own life and the lives of his comrades. He was therefore faced with a challenge not of survival but of ambition to become the new leader of Russia. Observing signs of Putin’s waning authority, he drew upon his personal

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experiences witnessing the downfall of numerous dictatorships in Africa. This prompted a question in his mind: “Why not seize the power?” In pursuit of this goal, he ordered the killing of Russian soldiers and special services personnel.

What prompted his change of heart? Speculations surrounding his potential pardon by the regime are unfounded. In Russia, where there is no rule of law, the presence or absence of a formal criminal case holds little significance. Prigozhin cannot expect forgiveness. The survival of the government hinges upon its ability to maintain a monopoly on the use of force. Once this monopoly is lost, those willing to employ violence can assume control and establish themselves as the new governing authority. Prigozhin’s actions have clearly showcased his readiness to utilize violence at his own discretion.

Sociologist Alexander Shulga, CEO and Founder of the Institute for Conflict Studies and Analysis of Russia

The results of opinion polling

Survey results indicate a significant increase in the percentage of people holding a positive view of Prigozhin in Russia from December of the previous year until the eve of the revolt. Over this period, the figure steadily rose from approximately 40% in December to around 61% in the first half of June. Furthermore, the number of respondents who were unfamiliar with Prigozhin experienced a notable decline, reducing by half since December of the previous year. Currently, this figure has decreased even further, likely falling below 10%.

Who supports Prigozhin?

Prigozhin employed four key narratives to appeal to the Russian public, targeting four distinct societal groups in an attempt to expand his influence.

The first group comprises the belligerent segment of Russian society, openly demonstrating their support for the war either through actions or vociferous speeches. This faction, referred to as the “Z society,” formed the initial target of Prigozhin’s charm offensive.

The second significant category consisted of those who, while not necessarily ardent patriots like the Z society, were affected by the mobilization, including the soldiers themselves and their families, which numbered in the hundreds of thousands or even millions. Prigozhin capitalized on the discontent of these individuals by highlighting issues such as inadequate military equipment, poor leadership, and the perceived indifference of the Ministry of Defence. This narrative aligned with the information the families received from their loved ones in the army. This provided alternative source of information that diverged from the narrative of the state-controlled media channels.

The third group targeted by Prigozhin’s activities comprised individuals sensitive to left-leaning



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social justice concerns. Prigozhin amplified the rhetoric that portrayed a fat elite class pitted against the struggles of ordinary working people. Similarly to Navalny’s narrative, Prigozhin denounced not only the heads of the defense ministry but the entire Russian elite as a network of corrupt individuals.

The fourth major group encompassed individuals who did not belong to any particular social class – referred to as the lumpen – and predominantly consisted of residents from villages and small towns. Prigozhin recognized them as a potentially significant support base, especially if they had not yet faced imprisonment.

What happened?

There was an unexpected setback in Prigozhin’s plans. He had initially intended to commence his march at a later time. Ideally, he wanted to initiate his action following significant setbacks faced by Russia on the front lines, such as the collapse of entire sections of the front, as witnessed in Kharkiv the previous year or during the liberation of Kherson.

However, it seems that Prigozhin received information regarding the Ministry of Defence’s intentions to strip him of his most vital asset – the Wagner units, his experienced and well-trained



📷 The Wagner mercenaries were in relatively close proximity to Moscow (© Pixabay)



... it is evident that Prigozhin would have preferred to delay his plans further.

personal army. This revelation forced him to make a difficult decision: act now or abandon the endeavor entirely. Faced with this dilemma, he ultimately chose to take that desperate step.

Prigozhin took necessary measures to prepare and safeguard his best-trained Wagner units, relocating them to the rear. However, it is evident that Prigozhin would have preferred to delay his plans further. Many argue that the original audacious and decisive plan itself held the potential for success. The initial strategy involved the expectation that entire units of the regular army, including battalions and possibly

regiments, would align with Prigozhin and gradually merge with the core march. Several army units did declare their support for Prigozhin, with a list of statements documenting their allegiance. Unfortunately, these expressions of support fell short.

Estimates that Prigozhin’s 10-15,000 troops (while the rest remained in Rostov, airports, and elsewhere) would successfully breach the hastily-established defense line around Moscow and cross the Oka River did not come to fruition. The three bridges spanning the river could be easily destroyed, necessitating additional forces and resources to overcome such obstacles.

Why was there a lack of widespread support? Simply put, the army’s discontent had not reached a level of maturity. It had not been fueled by significant losses and failures. The army failed to see a compelling reason for this uprising. ●

