

TOPIC: NATO DEFENSE COMMITMENTS

Resolved: The North Atlantic Treaty Organization should substantially increase its defense commitments to the Baltic states.

BACKGROUND:

Breaking Down the Complicated Relationship Between Russia and NATO,

TIME Magazine, April 4, 2019

<https://time.com/5564207/russia-nato-relationship/>

Since 2014, Russia and NATO's relations have reverted back to their Cold War hostility. But today the threat Russia poses is much more complex, says Rasmussen, the ex-NATO Secretary-General. The security environment has transformed from a "predictable, bipolar confrontation" to a "multilayered, non-transparent picture of threats and challenges." In his view, Russia has become a "geopolitical spoiler" that seeks to undermine trust, confidence, and stability in a democratic society. Russia's war games and regular military exercises have struck fear in its neighbors, including Poland and the Baltics. Even countries that are geographically far from Russia, such as the Balkans, fear Russia's subtler methods of destabilization including disinformation and cyber warfare.

... Rasmussen insists that "NATO has never been more needed." And NATO members have shown some strategic unity in countering the Russian threat. Since 2014, the alliance has said "readiness" has been at the top of its agenda, which has led to security reinforcements of some 4,000 additional troops on its eastern flank. Gustav Gressel, a Senior Policy Advisor at the European Council on Foreign Relations, said these measures amount to reassurance, not deterrence. NATO members have unanimously refused to recognize the annexation of Crimea, and all have maintained economic sanctions despite regular criticism over the measures by Austria, Italy, Hungary, and other member states. "But sanctions alone do not reflect a united strategy on dealing with Russia," Gressel said.

REQUIRED RESEARCH VIDEOS:

Safe Skies: NATO Air Policing – the Baltic States,

NATO, July 8, 2021 [1 min]

<https://shape.nato.int/news-archive/2021/video-nato-air-policing-the-baltic-states>

Note: *This video helps us to visualize how NATO defends its allies.*

Baltic States and Poland – conference summary & Baltic Fund declaration,

Warsaw Institute, December 6, 2019 [3 min]

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mXo0nE5fjY>

Note: *Cooperation among regional partners can be very effective – rather than just relying on NATO.*

Putin's next move won't be a Baltic invasion that could unify NATO,

Ian Bremmer, The Red Pen, March 19, 2021 [4 min]

<https://youtu.be/fkv9L2leTsk>

The Russia Threat is Overblown,

Intelligence Squared, September 27, 2018 [21 min]

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9D2WBCsHJQY>

NOTE: *Important context for the NATO debate topic... these are TOP experts!! Please watch at least 10*

minutes (approximately 90 sec per expert — taking notes!).

[OPTIONAL] *Towards #NATO2030: The Regional Perspective of the Baltic States and Poland,*

International Center for Defense and Security, December 15, 2020 [90 min]

<https://icds.ee/en/towards-nato2030-the-regional-perspective-of-the-baltic-states-and-poland/>

REQUIRED RESEARCH ARTICLES:

Baltic states vow to tighten defense ties with an eye on Russia,

Defense News, May 24, 2021

<https://www.defensenews.com/global/europe/2021/05/24/baltic-states-vow-to-tighten-their-defense-ties-with-an-eye-on-russia/>

US must remain committed to NATO and the Baltic States,

Atlantic Council, September 8, 2020

<https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/us-must-remain-committed-to-nato-and-the-baltic-states/>

The Reset of US-EU Relations and the Baltic States,

Prof. Una Bergmane, London School of Economics, Foreign Policy Research Institute, June 12, 2021

<https://www.fpri.org/article/2021/06/the-reset-of-the-us-eu-relations-and-the-baltic-states/>

NATO Summit 2021: Reinforcing Collective Defense in the Baltics,

Heritage Foundation, June 1, 2021

<https://www.heritage.org/defense/report/nato-summit-2021-reinforcing-collective-defense-the-baltics>

IMPORTANT: It's okay to just read the cover page — skimming the entire article is not required, but may

help you find some really interesting facts for the upcoming debates!

OPTIONAL RESEARCH ARTICLES/VIDEOS:

Breaking Down the Complicated Relationship Between Russia and NATO,

TIME Magazine, April 4, 2019

<https://time.com/5564207/russia-nato-relationship/>

Why NATO Is Essential For World Peace, According to Its Former Commander,

TIME Magazine, April 4, 2019

<https://time.com/5564171/why-nato-is-essential-world-peace/>

NOTE: This is a slightly longer article – pls skim for important details.

Bad News: NATO Isn't Enough to Stop a Russian Invasion of the Baltics,

National Interest, July 19, 2021

<https://nationalinterest.org/blog/reboot/bad-news-nato-isnt-enough-stop-russian-invasion-baltics-189969>

Rocket Artillery Can Keep Russia Out of the Baltics,

War on the Rocks [National Security Blog], May 20, 2021

<https://warontherocks.com/2021/05/rocket-artillery-can-keep-russia-out-of-the-baltics/>

Baltic Security Assurances in Wake of NATO Summit and Biden-Putin Meeting,

Olevs Nikers, Chief Expert, Latvia's Ministry of Defense, Eurasia Daily Monitor, July 6, 2021

<https://jamestown.org/program/baltic-security-assurances-in-wake-of-nato-summit-and-biden-putin-meeting/>

Baltic States Join NATO Allies in Kicking Out Russians for Spying,

US News & World Report, April 23, 2021

<https://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2021-04-23/baltic-states-join-nato-allies-in-kicking-out-russians-for-spying>

U.S. Military Defends Rocket Drills Called 'Extremely Dangerous' by Russia,

Newsweek, September 1, 2020

<https://www.newsweek.com/us-military-defends-rocket-drills-called-extremely-dangerous-russia-1529039>

OPTIONAL RESEARCH ARTICLES/VIDEOS: CONTINUED...

Russia Troops Withdraw From Ukraine Border After NATO F-16s Intercept Jets Over Baltic,
Newsweek, April 22, 2021

<https://www.newsweek.com/russia-troops-withdraw-ukraine-border-nato-f-16s-baltic-1585646>

[VIDEO] *Unresolved: U.S. National Security,*
Intelligence Squared, September 20, 2018 [90 min]

<https://www.intelligencesquaredus.org/debates/unresolved-us-national-security#debaters>

IMPORTANT: *These are top experts debating some of the key issues related to the NATO topic.*

Topics:

- 1.) It's Time to Take a Hard Line on Iran. [←Please ignore this section!]
- 2.) NATO is No Longer Fit for Purpose.
- 3.) The Russia Threat is Overblown.

[VIDEO] *Safe Skies: NATO Air Policing – the Baltic States*

NATO, Jul 7 8, 2021 [1 min]

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QMif68C3KVA>

Across Europe, NATO fighter jets are on duty around the clock, ready to scramble in case of suspicious or unannounced flights near the airspace of our Allies. NATO calls this activity Air Policing, which has been an integral part of NATO Integrated Air and Missile Defence for 60 years. In this series, we'll explore NATO's five special air policing arrangements to ensure the integrity of NATO's airspace and the defense of our almost one billion citizens.

Welcome to the Baltic States of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. Located on NATO's eastern border, these countries don't have fighter jets of their own, so other NATO Allies send rotating detachments of fighters to Šiauliai Air Base in Lithuania and Ämari Air Base in Estonia to keep the Baltic skies secure. Russian military aircraft that operate in the area often don't respect international aviation rules, so Baltic Air Policing aircraft scramble to visually identify this unsafe air traffic.

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When contacting me, please include your name and class information (day/time). Thanks!