

The cover features a solid blue background. At the top, there are four vertical bars of varying heights and widths, with the leftmost one being a thick, curved shape. A wide, light blue curved band sweeps across the lower half of the cover from the bottom left towards the right.

Danish Foreign Policy Review 2022

Edited by
Kristian Fischer and Hans Mouritzen

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A new Atlanticism? Transatlantic relations in an era of persistent confrontation and ongoing disruption

*Daniel S. Hamilton*¹

Introduction

The Atlantic Alliance stands today at an historic inflection point – its fourth since World War II.

The first came at the end of that terrible conflict, when Europeans and North Americans responded to a new Cold War by creating the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and a host of other mechanisms to provide for their common defence, institutionalise the transatlantic link, and provide an umbrella of reassurance under which West Europeans could focus their security concerns on common challenges rather than on each other. A second came in the late 1960s and early 1970s when, based on the Harmel Report, Allies retooled their common defence while working out arrangements with their adversaries to regulate the most dangerous aspects of Cold War competition and to render more permeable the human divisions that separated the European continent. The third moment came when the Cold War ended, peacefully and surprisingly, and as the Soviet empire, and ultimately the Soviet Union itself, dissolved.

For the next quarter century, a new paradigm took hold across much of Europe. The continent's divisions would be overcome by a magnetic, largely unchallenged, and gradually expanding democratic order, in which Eastern Europe and eventually Russia could potentially find a place, the United States would continue as an affirmative European power, China was comfortably remote and would emerge as a 'responsible stakeholder' in the international system, military tensions and military forces would be reduced, and growing

interdependencies and open borders would lower conflict and generate greater security and prosperity.

Much was achieved during this period. A Euro-Atlantic architecture of cooperative, overlapping and interlocking institutions enabled a host of countries to walk through the doors of NATO, the European Union (EU), the Council of Europe, the OECD and other organisations in ways that were not at the expense of other states or institutions. Europe was not fully whole, but it was no longer divided. It was not fully free, but vast parts of the continent were no longer under the thumb of domestic autocrats or foreign overseers. The Balkan wars were a brutal reminder that Europe was not fully at peace. Nonetheless, when those wars ended and a new millennium began, Europe seemed more secure than at any time in the previous century.

That era is now a paradigm lost. Vladimir Putin's decision to wage war on Ukraine is the most vivid and horrific evidence that Europe and the world have entered a new era that is likely to be characterised by persistent confrontation between democratic states and Russia, amidst a host of broader challenges that threaten to disrupt and potentially unravel core principles and structures underpinning world order.

Putin wants to undo the post-Cold War settlement, control his neighbourhood, and disrupt the influence of open democratic societies, not because of what they do but because of who they are. It is useful to recall that the pretext for Russia's 2014 invasion of Ukraine was not NATO's open door, it was a trade agreement between Ukraine and the European Union. Putin understands the challenge a successful Ukrainian democracy would pose to authoritarianism in Russia. In his current war and his earlier military interventions in Georgia and Ukraine, he has demonstrated his determination to use military force and coercion to change Europe's map.²

These dangers are amplified by Russia's entente with China, which includes arms cooperation and maritime exercises in the Mediterranean and Baltic seas, as well as by Beijing's challenges to the global commons and Indo-Pacific regional order, its investments in and purchases of strategic European industries and ports, and its efforts to disrupt basic principles and arrangements critical to the security and prosperity of the North Atlantic region.

The age of disruption is not limited to major power competition. Emerging technologies are changing the nature of competition and conflict. Digital transformations are upending the foundations of diplomacy and defence. The scale and complexity of critical economic, environmental, technological and human flows, as well as the dependency of many societies on such flows, have increased dramatically. Destructive capabilities unthinkable a decade ago are now in the hands not only of big powers, but also smaller state and non-state actors, some of which serve as puppets and proxies in increased grey zone competition. Critical societal functions are increasingly susceptible to disturbances, interruptions, and shutdowns. Revisionists have grown their influence. Terrorists threaten societies. The dangers of military accidents and miscalculations have risen as confidence-building measures and arms control arrangements have fallen. Climate change and the transition to clean energies pose new security dilemmas and amplify ongoing crises. Millions have been killed by an unanticipated and unpredictable virus. Democracies are in retreat. Independent media and judicial authorities are being suppressed. Autocratic and democratic leaders alike have politicised refugees to preserve their power and disorient their opponents. Racial, religious and ethnic hatreds are alive and well. Europe's periphery has turned from a ring of friends to a ring of fire.³

From Trump to Biden

Both sides of the Atlantic are better positioned to tackle this daunting array of challenges because of important steps they have taken to reinvigorate their partnership after a tumultuous four years. By 2021 US relations with Europe had become largely dysfunctional, threatening the prosperity, the security, and the wellbeing of North Americans and Europeans alike. Donald Trump bullied Allies like Angela Merkel and embraced autocrats like Putin, Erdoğan and Orbán. He blew hot and cold on NATO, first declaring it 'obsolete' and then calling it a 'fine-tuned machine'. He treated the alliance as a protection racket by tying US support for other Allies to their defence spending levels. He imposed 'national security' tariffs on steel and aluminium imports from European Allies. He called the EU a 'foe' and 'worse than China, just smaller'. He celebrated Brexit and encouraged other EU member states to leave the Union. He was disdainful of European priorities, whether climate change, the Middle East peace process, or efforts to improve global health, human rights and development assistance. His withdrawal from the Iran nuclear

deal, the Paris climate deal, the Intermediate Nuclear Forces treaty, the Open Skies agreement and the WHO, as well as his attacks on the WTO, rocked Europeans' belief that they shared common ground with their most important ally. Trump's own former national security advisor, John Bolton, thought it 'highly questionable' that Trump would have kept the United States in NATO, had he been re-elected to another four years in office (Swan 2020).

Joe Biden, in contrast, is a passionate transatlanticist. When he was vice-president, he emphasised that 'Europe is the cornerstone of our engagement with the world' and 'our catalyst for global cooperation'. As President, Biden's first instinct was to turn to Europe as America's indispensable partner of 'first resort' to address international challenges. He instructed his administration to reset the transatlantic partnership. In 2021, the two sides quickly agreed to provide vaccines to two-thirds of the world's population. They agreed to rewrite global tax rules. They agreed to again join forces to tackle climate change, including through the Global Methane Pledge. They agreed to suspend for five years mutual tariffs related to the ongoing Boeing-Airbus dispute, as they seek an ultimate resolution to the matter. They also agreed to lift US tariffs on European steel and aluminium and countervailing European tariffs on US goods. And they created a US-EU Trade and Technology Council (TTC) to grow the bilateral trade, investment, and technology relationship; avoid new unnecessary technical barriers to trade; facilitate regulatory cooperation; and cooperate on international standards development.

To the surprise of many pundits, Washington and Brussels have also come together more closely on how to deal with China. There is general agreement that both sides want to work with China where it is in their interest, for instance on climate change, non-proliferation, and in many areas of trade. There is also agreement to address areas where both sides view China as a competitor, such as forced technology transfers, massive subsidisation of domestic industries, and Beijing's failure to meet its WTO commitments. And there is greater alignment that China seeks to be a systemic rival, for instance by contesting democratic norms and adherence to standards of human rights and rule-of-law norms. Debates continue on each side of the Atlantic over the proper balance that might be struck among these different approaches. There are as many differences on these issues within the European Union as there are between Europe and America. Yet there is now a transatlantic frame through which both sides can address the China question.

This newfound sense of transatlantic unity has spurred the two parties to clear away lingering irritants in their own relationship. A prominent US concern was the collapse of the US-EU Privacy Shield governing transfers of personal data, which was invalidated by the European Court of Justice in July 2020. The Court determined that US provisions enabling intelligence agencies to collect and use the personal data of individuals and conduct digital surveillance activities both inside and outside the United States violated standards set by the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and did not provide EU citizens with effective judicial redress. In March 2022 the two parties announced a successor arrangement had been agreed. However, since the European Court's decision rested in difference in law rather than policy, the successor arrangement is likely to face further judicial tests.

Continuing US concerns revolve around potential protectionist impulses behind the EU's Digital Markets Act, industrial strategies intended to promote 'European champion' companies, and the EU proposal for a carbon border adjustment mechanism, which could disadvantage non-EU companies. The EU, in turn, worries about the Biden administration's efforts to strengthen 'Buy America' rules, its proposals for electric vehicle tax credits, and its decision to postpone but not resolve transatlantic disputes on US steel and aluminium tariffs. Unless coordinated, each party's efforts to subsidise its semiconductor sector and other digital industries could lead to subsidy wars that would only benefit China.

The Biden administration also drew lessons from clearly inadequate coordination and consultation related to the debacle of withdrawing from Afghanistan and the sudden announcement of the Australia-US-UK (AUKUS) defence cooperation that sidelined France and prompted a major rift in relations. As Putin's intentions became clearer in late 2021, the Biden administration undertook an extensive campaign to share intelligence and consult intensively with Allies, even prompting at least one major European country to complain that there was now in fact too much consultation.

The United States and European Allies clearly do not agree on all issues. What distinguishes the current situation, however, is that these policy differences, while quite real, are now playing out in a context of transatlantic unity rather than division. Despite Vladimir Putin's disruptive war, the macroeconomic and policy backdrops for the transatlantic economy are generally quite positive for

2022. There are bumps on the road to recovery, yet transatlantic partnership rebounded in 2021, is proving itself to be resilient in the face of new challenges, and all indications are that it will forge ahead again in 2022.

Ukraine's meaning and importance

Ukraine is now the crucible of change for Europe and the transatlantic community, not just because of its size and location, but because of its meaning. Ukraine has always been a critical strategic factor for European and Eurasian security, but today it presents the transatlantic community with a choice. Will North America and most of Europe help Ukraine survive its war, help it to rebuild, and then work with it to create conditions by which it can be integrated into the European mainstream and serve as an alternative model to that of Putin for the post-Soviet region? Or will it become a failed, fractured land of grey, absorbed into a Russian sphere and mired in the stagnation and turbulence historically characteristic of Europe's borderlands?

Putin's aggression is more than an attack on Ukraine; it is an assault on basic principles and structures underpinning European and transatlantic security – no forceful change of borders, the right of countries to choose their allegiances, equal security for all countries. These principles go to the heart of what the transatlantic community stands for. Putin's war also tests the ability of democracies to refute his efforts to establish contrary principles, such as his claim that Russia has an inherent right to defend ethnic Russians and Russian speakers, regardless of their citizenship or of territorial boundaries. Such a generalised right would wreak havoc in a world where most states are multi-ethnic.⁴

Whatever the ultimate outcome of Putin's war, the immediate consequences for Ukrainians are horrific, in terms of lives lost, cities destroyed, and families uprooted. In the medium term, the war could result in one of several outcomes: there might be regime change in Moscow as the magnitude of Putin's miscalculation becomes clear – though that appears unlikely; the conflict could escalate to engulf NATO, by accident or miscalculation; it could end in a ceasefire and a tenuous political process to define future relations between Ukraine and Russia; or it could morph into a protracted guerrilla conflict.

In all but the first and unlikeliest outcome, the Atlantic Alliance faces a future of persistent confrontation with Russia. Win, lose or draw, Putin's war means that Europe's vast eastern spaces are likely to be turbulent, uncertain and sporadically violent for the foreseeable future. Ukraine, unfortunately, is not an isolated example of Putin's intent. Russia has essentially assumed authority over Belarus and it continues to question Georgia's and Moldova's territorial integrity.

Charting NATO's future

However uncertain Ukraine's fate may be, what is certain is that Vladimir Putin has succeeded in uniting the transatlantic community in ways unknown since Europeans and Americans closed ranks in the wake of the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States. The response has been tough and decisive. NATO countries have provided defensive arms, cyber and intelligence support to Kyiv, unleashed a barrage of economic sanctions on Moscow while isolating it diplomatically, taken steps to reduce their own reliance on Russian energy and economic ties, warned China against efforts to help Russia evade sanctions, and reinforced the Alliance's immediate deterrence posture, all the while avoiding a slip into a wider war.

Putin's war poses short-, medium- and long-term challenges for the Alliance. NATO's short-term focus is rightly on its immediate response to the conflict. Sanctions are likely to bite over the medium-term. Longer-term planning is difficult in the current unhinged and uncertain security environment. However, NATO has been working on a new Strategic Concept during the past year, outlining the Alliance's mission for the coming decade. Those plans are now in need of a substantial revamp.⁵

The most important lesson to draw is that NATO needs to adapt its primary task of collective defence. Of NATO's core tasks, collective defence is *primus inter pares* – first among equals. It is the only core task mentioned explicitly in the North Atlantic Treaty.

On the ground, currently, the Alliance depends on tripwire forces deployed in eastern allied states, plus places ultimate reliance on reinforcement by ready

forces now deployed to the rear, including in the United States. Essentially, this means giving up ground upon attack and then reoccupying it after reinforcements are sent forward. However, the horrific destruction of Ukrainian cities makes clear that such deterrence by reinforcement is no longer credible nor desirable.

NATO must instead move to forward defence and deterrence by denial – the operational implication when Allied leaders say they will ‘defend every inch’ of NATO territory. And such a change will require more American and European troops deployed to NATO’s eastern flanks, as well as a revised concept for military operations. In the 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Act, NATO reiterated ‘that in the current and foreseeable security environment, the Alliance will carry out its collective defence and other missions by ensuring the necessary interoperability, integration, and capability for reinforcement rather than by additional permanent stationing of substantial combat forces’.⁶ The key phrase is ‘in the current and foreseeable security environment’, which has now fundamentally changed. Russia has violated many of its commitments under the Founding Act, which unfortunately must now be viewed as a document from another era. The Alliance is likely to create permanent bases for rotational forces that are limited to soldiers, rather than their families and the related infrastructure that would be associated with such an expanded footprint.

The Alliance must be able to dissuade and deter threats to its members, from whatever source and across all domains, while being prepared to defend all parts of NATO territory and to protect the critical functions of Allied societies. That means countering challenges from Russia, as well as addressing pressures emanating from NATO’s south and southeast. The Alliance needs to bridge gaps in its ability to better integrate its political, military and technological capacities across all five operational domains: land, sea, air, cyberspace and outer space. NATO has been good at addressing each domain on its own. Being good at multi-domain operations is exponentially harder.

Such operations extend far beyond the military dimension, incorporating political, economic, technological, social, and psychological considerations. They require the Alliance to better relate deterrence and defence to resilience and to crisis management, to work more effectively with other partners, and to become more nimble, flexible, mobile, and innovative – qualities that have

challenged NATO in the past. And they mean national security agencies and the Alliance as a whole will need to change their organisational cultures – perhaps the toughest challenge of all.

The Alliance's maritime strategy, which was set in 2011, is out of date. Some adjustments have been made, but they are inadequate to the current situation. In 2016, for instance, the Alliance replaced its 15-year-old Article 5 Operation Allied Endeavor in the Mediterranean with the much broader non-Article 5 mission set of Operation Sea Guardian. In 2022 Operation Neptune Strike conducted vigilance operations in the eastern Mediterranean in response to heightened tensions with Russia. NATO maritime forces have increased operations in the Black Sea within the limits of the 1936 Montreux Convention. NATO's Maritime Strategy must be updated, and its maritime posture upgraded, to address current and likely future contingencies.

The Alliance must also fill critical capability gaps to deal with Russia's anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) capabilities. This would include counter A2/AD capabilities such as suppression of adversarial air defences, availability of long-range precision strike conventional missiles, improved Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (C4ISR), and additional electromagnetic warfare assets.

Other adjustments are also needed. NATO's Special Operations Forces should be strengthened, and NATO interoperability improved. The US should take a more visible, active role in the NATO Response Force. NATO must maintain its technological edge, including through its strategic plan to foster and protect Emerging and Disruptive Technologies (EDT) and its civil-military Defense Innovation Accelerator for the North Atlantic (DIANA), which is designed to help develop innovative technological solutions to address allied military needs and promote interoperability.

NATO's new Strategic Concept, to be unveiled in June 2022, is an opportunity to connect these efforts with the implementation of the Alliance's Comprehensive Concept for Deterrence and Defence in the Euro-Atlantic Area (DDA) that undergirds NATO's overall strategic posture. It must be implemented in full and without delay. This requires ongoing assessments of emerging and developing technologies and national progress and NATO standards in adopting prioritised military-technological capabilities; aligning on a set

of NATO principles for the use of EDT in warfare; and establishing vibrant connections with industry partners and with EU institutions.

Advancing the Alliance's ability to deter and defend also means prioritising ways to deal with unconventional conflicts that might hover below the Alliance's Article 5 mutual defence threshold. These include some types of cyberattacks, energy intimidation, financial destabilisation, election interference, and dis- and misinformation campaigns. NATO's Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence Command (CoE STRATCOM) needs creative new steps to detect and counter false information, including real time alerts to Allies on emerging threats and recommended countermeasures. Many relevant competences in Europe fall to national civilian authorities, to the private sector, or to the EU. While NATO can lead in developing and adapting cyber-deterrence and counter-disinformation guidelines and capabilities, better EU-NATO coordination and planning will be needed. There is greater need to align and intensify action via the Helsinki-based European Centre for Countering Hybrid Threats, ensuring there are operational feed-in loops to NATO and EU decision making.

NATO and the defence establishments of its members are under constant attack from cyber hackers seeking to penetrate their information systems, extract data and plant viruses that could be used against Allies. Digital disruptors target NATO systems, the operational cyber networks needed to execute military missions, and an extensive number of civilian networks that are essential to critical societal functions. Allies have determined that some types of cyberattacks could trigger Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty. In the 2016 Cyber Defence Pledge, Allies affirmed their individual responsibilities under Article 3 of the treaty to enhance their cyber defences. The 2030 Reflection Group highlighted the need to develop both greater collective defence capacity in cyberspace and a more robust consultation framework to facilitate collective defence, crisis management, and cooperative security in the cyber domain. These concerns were largely echoed by Allies in the 2021 Brussels Summit Communiqué (NATO 2021).

Nonetheless, Allies have been reluctant to organise operational capabilities via NATO, and only five member states have announced that they will make sovereign cyber effects available to the Alliance.⁷ Limited measures thus far undertaken include deployment of cyber defence elements with NATO response forces, where continuous coordination and planning of cyber

operations is essential. NATO has also gained initial experience through the SHAPE Cyber Operations Centre (CyOC).

The United States might offer to be the framework nation in the next evolution of NATO cyber operations planning and coordination. A full NATO Cyber Defence Forces Headquarters (NCHQ) should be agreed, based on the proven NATO Special Operations Forces Headquarters (NSHQ) model. An NCHQ would improve cooperation among Allies and protect NATO's freedom of action in cyberspace, strengthening deterrence. Such a headquarters should generate the necessary arrangements and readiness to allow nations to plug in their capabilities and produce cyber effects should there be a collective decision to do so. It should act to achieve consensus on issues of cyber deterrence, particularly whether individual Alliance cyber defence capabilities alone are adequate or whether capabilities are needed to effectively deter major strikes against NATO networks, the networks of individual nations, or against the critical infrastructures of Allied societies. It should be linked to the EU's broader cyber toolbox.⁸

The war has also highlighted the importance of shared resilience – the ability to anticipate, prevent and, if necessary, protect against and recover quickly from disruptions to the energy, digital, goods, services, financial, food and transportation flows that power our societies. Each NATO country bears primary responsibility for ensuring its own resilience. However, few of these critical flows are limited to national borders. Europe, but also the North Atlantic, is so interconnected that no nation is likely to fully resilient if its neighbours are weak. Allies accustomed to defending territory must also defend their interconnectedness: that is why European efforts to wean themselves off Russian energy dependencies is so important. And Allied efforts to support Ukraine underscore why NATO must also project resilience forward, beyond Allied territory, to help more fragile and vulnerable partners.

Given Putin's consistent nuclear sabre-rattling, NATO's nuclear deterrent posture will also need to be revamped, as it has no nuclear doctrine to counter Moscow's 'escalate to deescalate' strategy and its theatre nuclear forces are small. NATO should be forthright about why nuclear deterrence remains critical to Alliance security. Modern, safe and survivable US weapons and allied dual-capable delivery systems should be maintained. A clear nuclear

doctrine is needed to deter Russia's 'escalate to deescalate strategy'. NATO should press hard for a return to nuclear and other arms control agreements.

Enhanced measures of deterrence and defence should be reinforced by NATO offers to engage with Moscow. Engagement is not a favour to Russia; it is in NATO's own interests. Efforts could include minimising escalation risks, avoiding inadvertent incidents or miscalculations in all five domains, improving transparency, confidence-building measures, and returning to nuclear and other arms control agreements.

Finally, another major determinant that will shape NATO's future is how China will choose to deal with Russia's aggression. President Xi Jinping has a choice to make: distance himself from Putin and help end the war, or side with Moscow and sharpen confrontation with NATO Allies and a host of other nations. Xi's choice will go far to determine NATO's views toward the interrelated strategic challenges of the North Atlantic and the Indo-Pacific. At minimum, it should bolster protection of defence-related supply chains and critical infrastructure, while enhancing partnerships with like-minded democracies such as Australia, Japan and South Korea. NATO's ability to address traditional and unconventional threats in Europe is becoming intertwined with related challenges to Alliance security interests posed by China.

In this regard, the Alliance should explore deeper coordination under Article 2 of the North Atlantic Treaty, which commits Allies to promote 'conditions of stability and well-being' and to 'encourage economic collaboration'. Article 2 offers a frame through which Allies could work to enhance investment screening of foreign investment in security-related infrastructures, companies and technologies, as well as other steps to protect individual Allied nations from security-related dependencies on China. Article 2 also offers a framework for enhanced cooperation with the European Union on these issues, including common or complementary principles of action with regard to economic-security contingencies.

Additional steps the Alliance might consider include bolstering protection of defence-critical infrastructures and defence-related supply chains; creating new North Atlantic-Indo-Pacific partnerships; and consider the creation of a NATO-China council to maintain diplomatic dialogue, explore potential areas of cooperation, and design crisis mitigation measures.

New Allies and new commitments

Putin's invasion underscores the need for Europe to take greater strategic responsibility for its own defence. Many European Allies are now ramping up their defence budgets. Germany's about-face has been particularly notable, with Chancellor Olaf Scholz pledging to increase the defence budget to 2% of gross domestic product (GDP), including a 'special fund' of 100 billion euros solely for armaments projects. This would finally put Germany on a par with other NATO Allies who have increased their defence spending to the level of NATO's defence investment pledge, including 20% for procurement. Projected to the year 2031, a defence spending level of 2% of Germany's GDP amounts to a whopping 770 billion euros (Mölling & Schütz 2022). In 2021 Germany's entire defence budget was 47 billion euros. Berlin intends to purchase US F-35 fighter jets to replace its ageing Tornados, to enable Germany to continue its role in NATO's nuclear-sharing arrangements. It reversed its reluctance to send weapons to conflict zones by supplying Ukraine with tanks, anti-tank weapons, surface-to-air missiles and ammunition. Perhaps most significantly, it is looking to Israel's Arrow-3 system to erect a 'German Iron Shield' that could also extend protection to vulnerable eastern Allies such as the Baltic states, Poland and Romania.

Equally momentous is the complete transformation of Northern Europe's security landscape. Denmark has embarked on an ambitious new course, pledging to increase its defence spending to reach 2% of GDP by 2033, equivalent to an increase in annual defence spending of around 18 billion Danish crowns (USD 2.65 billion), and to set aside 7 billion crowns over the next two years to strengthen Danish defence, diplomacy and humanitarian efforts. A 1 June 2022 referendum on whether Copenhagen should abandon its current opt-out from the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) could enable Denmark to take part in joint EU military operations and to cooperate on development and acquisition of military capabilities within the EU framework.

Even more stunning is the decision by Finland and Sweden to cast aside their long traditions of military non-alignment and join NATO, which will strengthen Allied deterrence and defence across the Arctic, Nordic and Baltic regions.

Sweden and Finland are already very close partners to NATO. They are militarily advanced and technologically savvy. Despite its relatively small population, Finland can mobilise 280,000 troops in thirty days. Its air force is among Europe's best. Sweden has re-emphasised territorial defence and bolstered its air, land and sea capabilities. Each country's regional expertise on Russia and traditions of 'total defence' will also add to NATO's understanding of Northern European security challenges and ways in which Allied societies can build resilience against disruptive threats. The addition of Sweden and Finland would connect the entire High North outside of Russia in a NATO strategic space, raising the threshold of risk for Russia should it contemplate any further aggression. Their inclusion as Allies would also facilitate NATO support to the Baltic states, which is currently constrained through the sliver of territory along the Polish-Lithuanian border known as the Suwalki Gap. Supply and support of the Baltic states by new NATO Baltic Sea Allies would enhance those countries' ability to defend themselves.

Each country has submitted its membership application for Allies to consider and most likely accept at NATO's June 2022 Madrid Summit. NATO membership is not complete, however until all 30 NATO nations ratify their accession to the North Atlantic Treaty. Theoretically, this could leave both countries vulnerable to Russian pressure. NATO will need to expedite the membership process, possibly with interim security commitments, to avoid the halfway house that caught Kyiv. The United Kingdom, France, Germany and Poland have already issued such commitments. EU members could strengthen these commitments by reinforcing their common obligation under the Lisbon Treaty's Article 42.7 to 'aid and assist by all means' in the case of armed aggression. In the United States, such an interim commitment could be made through a statement by President Biden or via a joint resolution of Congress, pending summer or autumn 2022 support for accession in the US Senate.

Europe: from strategic 'autonomy' to strategic responsibility

These new European commitments, while welcome, need to be sustained and directed toward specific strategic goals. NATO must transform itself into a more balanced transatlantic partnership in which European Allies assume greater strategic responsibility in two ways.

First, Europe should be able to provide half of the forces, capabilities and enablers required for deterrence and collective defence against Russian aggression. Should a conflict simultaneously break out with China in Asia and Russia in Europe, the United States may not be able to deploy adequate reinforcements to Europe. European Allies need to be able to pick up the slack.

Second, Europeans should be the 'first responders' to crises in and around their southern periphery. That means developing European capabilities to conduct crisis management operations without today's heavy reliance on US enablers such as strategic lift, refuelling, command, control and reconnaissance. The withdrawal from Afghanistan was just the latest demonstration of Europe's continued dependence on such enablers. European Allies might take the lead for cooperative security missions such as training with NATO partners around the Black Sea or in the Western Balkans.

In each area, this means developing capabilities that lessen heavy reliance on the United States. The United States would continue to lead collective defence operations against a major adversary in Europe in combination with more robust European forces. To reassure Allies that there would be no diminution in the US commitment to deter Russia, the United States could move additional ground forces to Europe. Yet overall, more robust European strategic responsibility would permit the United States to focus on the Indo-Pacific region without any significant reduction in the capabilities needed to deter Russia.

To achieve these goals, Allies could agree within the NATO Defence Planning Process to a military level of ambition for European strategic responsibility. European Allies and Canada could commit to investing sufficient resources to ensure that, by the end of the decade, they can meet 50% of NATO's Minimum Capability Requirements. This would mean fully usable forces required to cover the whole spectrum of operations and missions, as well as the strategic enablers needed to conduct multiple large- and small-scale missions – if necessary, without US support.

Meeting this standard will take time, given Europe's current lack of enablers, its relatively low readiness rates, and its fragmented military industrial complex. Building European strategic responsibility will be a process, not a one-time

event. The new Strategic Concept should launch that process, reinforced by complementary efforts via the EU's Strategic Compass.

Greater European strategic responsibility will require more, not less, transatlantic consultation on political-military matters. When Europe acquires the military capabilities needed to exercise real strategic responsibility, its political voice will be amplified. Diplomatic differences may still arise, but a dialogue among equals is more likely to overcome areas of disagreement. That said, new mechanisms for NATO-EU coordination will be needed.

Greater strategic responsibility for Europe also requires improved defence industrial cooperation and efficiencies across Europe. The European Defence Agency (EDA), European Defence Fund (EDF), and Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) have aimed to make Europe's defence industry more efficient and effective. A transatlantic understanding on European strategic responsibility could encourage streamlining of Europe's defence industry without excluding US technologies that could improve their output and ensure interoperability.

Underpinning all of these considerations is the need to maintain transatlantic cohesion and coordination during these difficult times, as Russia's aggression against Ukraine continues. Thus far, North America and Europe have offered an impressive display of unity in response to Putin's invasion. Nonetheless, that unity will continue to come under pressure.

Ties with Europe are America's geo-economic base

Despite ongoing challenges, Putin's war has uncovered the impressive strength of the transatlantic economy. The two sides of the North Atlantic entered 2022 in a strong position. In a remarkable demonstration of resilience and dynamism, the key drivers of the transatlantic economy – investment, income and trade – staged a robust rebound in 2021. Indeed, 2021 was record-breaking on many fronts. US–EU trade in goods and services is estimated to have hit an all-time high of USD 1.3 trillion – 42% more than the EU's trade with

China. US foreign direct investment (FDI) flows to Europe surged to an all-time high of USD 253 billion, and US companies based in Europe are estimated to have earned a record-breaking USD 300 billion. European firms in the United States earned a record USD 162 billion, and European FDI flows into the United States surged to the highest levels since 2017, hitting an estimated USD 235 billion (Hamilton & Quinlan 2022).

Robust transatlantic commercial links extend to bilateral ties between Denmark and the United States. US-related jobs in Denmark are estimated at over 100,000, taking into account direct employment of over 40,000 people by US companies based in Denmark, together with jobs created by trade flows, and indirect employment effects via distributors, suppliers, and joint ventures. A similar number of US jobs are dependent on vibrant US–Danish commercial ties. In 2020 Denmark's FDI stock in the United States on a historic cost basis totalled USD 30.7 billion and US FDI stock amounted to USD 9.9 billion. Danish firms' affiliate sales in the US market were an estimated USD 27 billion while US foreign affiliate sales in Denmark were USD 20 billion. Bilateral trade in goods and services totalled USD 28 billion, with US customers buying a quarter of all Danish exports outside the EU (ibid).

These figures underscore how the deep commercial ties that bind the two sides of the North Atlantic have become the resilient geo-economic base from which the United States and its Allies can address Russian threats, Chinese competition, and disruptive challenges generated by the pandemic, congested supply chains, and energy price spikes.

The North American and European economies will be far better able to withstand the pain of sanctions than will the Russian economy. Apart from Europe's significant dependence on Russian energy, Western economies overall have limited exposure to the Russian economy and are relatively insulated from the impact of Russia's growing economic isolation. Western banks had already reduced their exposure to Russian financial institutions by 80% following Putin's 2014 intervention in Ukraine, and their claims on the rest of Russia's private sector have halved since then (Ferozhar 2022). JPMorgan estimates that the total exposure of foreign banks to Russian banks, companies and the state only amounted to about USD 89 billion (Wigglesworth et al. 2022). US-Russia trade is negligible; Russia accounts for roughly 0.55% of total US trade in goods and services. And while the European

Union is Russia's largest trading partner, accounting for 37% of Russia's global trade in 2020, Russia represents only around 5% of the EU's trade with the world (Alderman & Eddy 2022). Russia is a relatively minor player in the global economy, accounting for just 1.7% of the world's total output – a figure that has surely already shrunk since Putin initiated his latest invasion (Tran 2022).

In March 2022 President Biden and EU leaders signalled their determination to reduce Europe's reliance on Russian energy and to deploy clean technologies. The United States will work with other nations to increase liquefied natural gas (LNG) exports to Europe by at least 15 billion cubic metres in 2022, which will completely replace Russian LNG supplies to Europe, and to provide Europe with 50 billion cubic metres of LNG annually through at least 2030 (The White House 2022). Germany's parallel announcement that it will cut its dependency on Russian oil by half by this summer, be independent of Russian coal by the autumn and be nearly free of Russian gas by 2024 (Niesner 2022), is perhaps an even more revolutionary turnaround for a country that had built up dangerous links to Russian energy and, until just recently, was actively building more.

These initiatives underscore a new reality: the United States has stepped in to become Europe's major partner as the continent weans itself off of its energy dependence on Russia. In February 2022, US LNG supplies to Europe even outpaced Russia's natural gas pipeline deliveries (De Luna 2022).

The United States may not fully replace other suppliers for energy-starved Europe, but transatlantic energy connections are growing in importance – and they flow both ways. For instance, European companies, led by German firms, are the largest foreign investors in the US energy economy. Companies on both sides of the North Atlantic are leading the transition to competitive clean technologies. US companies in Europe have become a driving force for Europe's green revolution, accounting for more than half of the long-term renewable energy purchase agreements in Europe since 2007. In the largest auction of offshore wind sites in US history in February 2022, eight of the nine winning companies were European.

The two parties have also signalled their intention to harness the deeply intertwined, USD 6 trillion transatlantic economy as the basis from which they can address challenges emanating from China. US companies in 2021 earned an estimated USD 300 billion from their operations in Europe – 23 times what

they earned from operations in China. America's asset base in Germany is more than double its assets in China. The total stock of US FDI in Europe is four times more than US investment in the entire Asia-Pacific, and Europe's FDI stock in the US is three times more than that of Asia. US companies based in Ireland export five times more to the rest of the world than do US companies based in China, and about 3.5 times more than US firms based in Mexico. Transatlantic flows in R&D are the most intense between any two international partners. In 2019 US companies in Europe spent USD 32.5 billion on R&D, 56% of total R&D conducted globally by US firms abroad. European enterprises account for two-thirds of all R&D expenditures by foreign companies in the United States. US and European government budgets for energy research, development and demonstration of USD 19.1 billion in 2020 amount to more than double the amount spent in China. Transatlantic data flows are 55% greater than transpacific flows (Hamilton & Quinlan).

Making the US-EU relationship truly strategic

Robust transatlantic military and economic links offer a strong basis for the United States and the European Union to finally make their relationship truly strategic. For decades, NATO has been the institutional expression of the transatlantic link. Yet NATO only encompasses the political-military aspects of transatlantic partnership. There is no equivalent bond between the United States and the EU, even though the EU will be America's essential partner on a wide range of issues that are beyond NATO's purview – as current efforts to thwart Putin attest.

Despite the travails of the Trump years, the US-EU relationship remains close. But it is not strategic in the sense that partners share assessments about issues vital to both on a continuous and interactive basis; are able to deal with the daily grind of immediate policy demands while identifying longer-term challenges to their security, prosperity and values; and are able to prioritise those challenges and harness the full range of resources at their disposal to advance common or complementary responses. Priorities are often mismatched, as the US looks for efficiency and concrete outcomes, European institutions seek legitimacy and symbolic US and global validation of the ongoing process of European integration, and EU member states oscillate

between scrambling to secure US favour for their own particular national interests and banding together to resist American influence.

Given these realities, the first and most important step toward a more effective and strategic US-EU relationship is to rebuild a sense of common cause by reconciling Europe's integration with a strategic transformation of transatlantic relations. The goal should be a resilient Atlantic partnership that is more effective at enhancing our prosperity; protecting our societies; advancing our values and working with others to forge global responses to global challenges.

Making the US-EU Trade and Technology Council effective

In this context, the US-EU Trade and Technology Council (TTC) takes on additional meaning.

The TTC has a wide-ranging agenda, with working groups in ten areas: technology standards in emerging technologies; climate and clean tech; secure and resilient supply chains; security and competitiveness of information and communication technologies (ICT); data governance and technology platforms; the misuse of technology threatening security and human rights; export controls; investment screening; promoting access to and use of digital technologies by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs); and global trade challenges.

Until now, the two parties have been careful to define the Council more in terms of what it isn't rather than what it could be. First, both sides were quick to state that the work of the Council would not intrude on the regulatory autonomy of each party. Second, they declared that it was not a lighter version of the highly ambitious Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), which was nearly completed at the end of the Obama administration but then put in the deep freeze. By doing so, they effectively shelved contentious debates over investor-state dispute settlement, agricultural subsidies and market access, sanitary and phyto-sanitary concerns, and government procurement. They view the TTC as a means to generate a stream of discrete deliverables, rather

than as a grandiose effort to harmonise US and EU practices, regulations and legislation. Third, they do not want to characterise the TTC as an anti-China initiative and dare not speak its name in official TTC documents, even though many TTC issues will affect each party's relations with Beijing. And fourth, they have signalled that the TTC is not the vehicle for negotiations to address bilateral trade irritants or ongoing differences over data protection arrangements.

These four 'nos' are an effort to lower expectations about what the TTC might accomplish. They are an understandable reaction to past battles over trade and regulatory issues and earlier failures to make the US-EU partnership strategic. Nonetheless, if the two parties are truly to harness the potential of their partnership and win domestic constituencies to their cause, they need to offer a more proactive, affirmative agenda. Instead of saying four times 'no', they need to say four times 'yes', by forging a norm-defining, values-based, innovative and resilient partnership.

Russia's war on Ukraine has added additional urgency to US-EU efforts to affirm a positive bilateral agenda and to demonstrate unity and cohesion in the face of Putin's efforts to upend the international order. Western sanctions on Russia have been impressive, but together with the destruction of the war they will generate shocks and surprises along regional and global supply chains. The United States and the EU can use the TTC to anticipate and mitigate those disruptions where possible, while underscoring the tremendous resilience of the transatlantic partnership.

The TTC and related initiatives are an opportunity for the United States and the European Union to position themselves for a world of greater competition, more diffuse power, and ongoing disruption. First, aligned action through TTC working groups on technology standards, trade norms, and data governance procedures can ensure that the two parties remain global rule-makers, rather than become rule-takers. Second, closer cooperation to address the misuse of technology and to establish norms that respect democracy, human rights, the rule of law, non-discrimination and mutual consultation can underscore the values-based foundations of transatlantic partnership. Third, common efforts through TTC working groups on facilitating SME digitalisation, clean technology innovation and ICT competitiveness can reinforce each party's role as leading innovation economies. And fourth, TTC work on export controls,

investment screening and supply chain security can ensure that the United States and the EU are vigilant and resilient in the face of growing competitive and disruptive challenges.

Over past decades the United States and the EU have allowed bilateral squabbles to define their relationship. Being less defensive about the TTC, and framing it as part of an ambitious, affirmative US-EU agenda, does not mean ignoring those challenges. Rather, it would embed them within a broader narrative of what unites, rather than what divides, the two sides of the North Atlantic. It is more likely to win domestic constituencies to solve problems than is a negatively defined agenda that has tended to pit constituencies against each other.

Reinventing Atlanticism

After years of transatlantic dysfunction, Europeans and Americans must do more than simply restore their partnership. They must reinvent it – by positioning themselves for persistent confrontation with Russia over the vast turbulent and unsettled spaces of eastern Europe, and for a much broader sweep of health, economic, energy and climate challenges, dizzying technological changes, and intensified global competition. Putin's war has generated an important moment of transatlantic unity – to use or to lose.

Notes

- 1 Dan Hamilton, Ph.D., is a Senior non-resident Fellow, Brookings Institution and a Senior Fellow, Foreign Policy Institute of Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies, Washington, D.C.
- 2 See Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Ben Hodges, Janusz Bugajski, Col. (Ret.) Ray Wojcik, Carsten Schmiedl, 'One Flank, One Threat, One Presence: A Strategy for NATO's Eastern Flank,' Center for European Policy Analysis, May 2020, https://cepa.org/cepa_files/2020-CEPA-report-one_flank_one_threat_one_presence.pdf; Michael Kofman, 'It's Time to Talk About A2/AD: Rethinking the Russian Military Challenge,' War on the Rocks, 5 September 2019, <https://warontherocks.com/2019/09/its-time-to-talk-about-a2-ad-rethinking-the-russian-military-challenge/>
- 3 See Tim Sweijs, Rob Johnson & Martijn Kitzen, 'Conclusion: Assessing change and continuity in the character of war,' in Rob Johnson, Martijn Kitzen & Tim Sweijs, eds., *The Conduct of War in the 21st Century: Kinetic, Connected and Synthetic* (London: Routledge, 2021), https://tandfbis.s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/rt-files/docs/Open+Access+Chapters/9780367515249_oachapter19.pdf; Benedikt Franke, 'Are We Witnessing a 'Zeitenwende' in European Security?' in Daniel S. Hamilton, Gregor Kirchhof, & Andreas Rödder, eds., *Paradigm Lost? The European Union and the Challenges of a New World* (Washington, DC: Johns Hopkins SAIS/Brookings Institution Press/Mohr Siebeck, 2021), <https://sais.jhu.edu/kissinger/paradigm-lost-the-european-union-and-the-challenges-of-a-new-world>.
- 4 See Daniel S. Hamilton & Stefan Meister, *The Eastern Question: Russia, the West and Europe's Grey Zone* (Washington, DC/Berlin: Johns Hopkins University Center for Transatlantic Relations/German Council on Foreign Relations, 2016).
- 5 For more, see the NATO Task Force Report by nine US and European research institutions, edited by Daniel S. Hamilton & Hans Binnendijk, *One Plus Four: Charting NATO's Future in an Age of Disruption*, February 2022, <https://www.transatlantic.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/NATO-TF-SC-final-feb-16-2022.pdf>; Hans Binnendijk & Daniel S. Hamilton, 'Lessons for NATO from war in Ukraine,' *Politico*, 23 March 2022, <https://www.politico.eu/article/nato-summit-europe-brussels-war-in-ukraine/>
- 6 Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between NATO and the Russian Federation, signed in Paris, France, 27 May 1997, https://www.nato.int/cps/su/natohq/official_texts_25468.htm
- 7 These are: Denmark, Estonia, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and the United States. See Wiesław Goździewicz, 'Sovereign Cyber Effects Provided Voluntarily by Allies (SCEPVA),' *Cyber Defense*, 11 November 2019, [https:// www.cyberdefensemagazine.com/sovereign-cyber/](https://www.cyberdefensemagazine.com/sovereign-cyber/)
- 8 For more, see NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence, 'European Union Equipping Itself against Cyber Attacks with the Help of Cyber Diplomacy Toolbox,' <https://ccdcoe.org/incyber-articles/european-union-equipping-itself-against-cyber-attacks-with-the-help-of-cyber-diplomacy-toolbox/>

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