

Noah and I affirm. Resolved: The benefits of the United States federal government's use of offensive cyber operations outweigh the harms.

Contention 1 is Russian Aggression

Russian aggression is increasing right now. [Imeson](#) of the **Financial Times** reports in October 2019, that Russian government backed cyber aggression is heightening concerns from the west, prompting threats of countermeasures from NATO. The [Nato Secretary general](#) declares that cyber threats to the security of [NATO] are becoming more frequent, more complex and more destructive.

Unfortunately, NATO cannot protect itself because it does not have a cyber command.

Luckily, The United States can protect the alliance. [Tucker of Defense One reports in 2019](#), NATO is building a cyber command that is scheduled to be fully operational in 2023 and will coordinate and conduct all offensive cyber operations. Until then, whatever NATO does offensively will rely heavily on the United States and the discretion of U.S. commanders.

The US protecting NATO is important to prevent populism.

[Gricius of the Global Security Review contextualizes in 2019](#), Despite mostly positive support for NATO amongst the citizens of its member states, Russia seizes upon existing dissatisfaction felt by a minority of citizens and amplifies it further through the use of Kremlin-controlled media outlets, fringe websites and social media accounts.

Indeed, [South of Army Times corroborates in July](#), Russian disinformation campaigns and support to fringe, anti-government and anti-NATO factions within some Balkan nations has "stepped up" over the past six to eight months.

[Grady of the USNI warns in 2019](#), Among NATO Members, the rise of populist authoritarian governments eschewing democratic values poses **more** of a threat to the alliance than an aggressive Russia on its borders.

This is why [MacAskill of The Guardian writes in 2017](#), NATO must begin to compete on the cyber-battlefield to counter Russian hacking, which is weaponizing misinformation to create a post-truth age.

The United States is equipped to respond. [Corrigan of NextGov writes in 2019](#), On election night, U.S. Cyber Command took down the networks of the Russian troll farm that led misinformation campaigns in 2016. The attack marked the first use of offensive cyber capabilities against a Russian entity.

The impact is preventing a NATO collapse.

[Moniz of Foreign Affairs warns in 2019](#), transatlantic discord has damaged the perception of NATO as a strong alliance. Moreover, NATO members are divided over how to balance engagement and confrontation with Russia. In a crisis, NATO disunity could undermine U.S. credibility and exacerbate the risk of military confrontation with Russia.

Conflict would be devastating, as [Axe of the National Interest warns in 2019](#) that even a limited nuclear conflict between the US and Russia would kill 90 million people within hours.

Contention 2 is Countering Terrorism

Terrorists are inherently vulnerable. [Price of the Harvard Belfer Center in 2012](#) finds that terrorist groups are susceptible to leadership decapitation because their organizational characteristics amplify the difficulties of leadership succession.

The best way to remove terrorist leaders is through special operations. According to [Johnston of Harvard in 2012](#), that is because decapitation efforts include attempts to remove leaders through assassination plots and raids or sweeps of leaders' compounds or camp areas.

Fortunately, [Schmitt of the New York Times in 2017](#) reports that the Trump administration is relying on special operations forces to continue its fight against terrorists.

Offensive cyber operations enhance the effectiveness of special operations. [Tebedo of the Naval Postgraduate School in 2016](#) finds that cyber operations build intelligence infrastructures without putting boots on the ground. This collection of information enables special operations forces to conduct core activities from afar.

For example, [Rogers of the US Cyber Command in 2018](#) explains that ISIS lost 98% of their territory in Iraq and Syria, enabling millions to begin to rebuild their cities and lives. [Rogers](#) furthers that offensive cyber operations played a crucial role in this progress, with the US Cyber Command supporting the successful offensive operation conducted by US special operations.

In fact, [Haberman of the New York Times](#) reports this week that special operations forces were responsible for killing the leader of ISIS.

Given that terrorists groups are vulnerable and inherently difficult to replace, [Jordan of Georgia Tech in 2012](#) quantifies that decapitated organizations were 670% more likely to end than those that have not undergone decapitation.

In Israel, [Byman of Foreign Affairs in 2006](#) quantifies that targeted killings have shattered Palestinian terrorists, with the lethality of these terrorists groups dropping from 540%, its highest point, to a mere 11%.

Countering terrorism is crucial to the stability of surrounding countries. [The UN in 2015](#) writes the spread of violent extremism has further aggravated an already unprecedented humanitarian crisis which surpasses the boundaries of any one region. Millions of people have fled the territory controlled by terrorist and violent extremist groups..

Please affirm.