*With great power comes great responsibility*.

It is because we agree with Benjamin Parker that Tim and I affirm the resolution,

**Resolved: NATO should strengthen its relationship with Ukraine in order to deter further Russian aggression.**

Contention 1: Deterring Russia’s guerilla warfare

Russia’s actions threaten the stability of Ukraine.

As John Herbst of the National Interest explains, Russia desires to create a weak and compliant Ukraine that will defer to Russia rather than Europe. This has caused Russia to provide training, military weapons, and personnel to armed rebel groups in eastern Ukraine.

Does Vladimir Putin want war with Ukraine? Given Moscow’s failure to help implement the April 17 Geneva statement and its bellicose tone, it is increasingly difficult to escape that conclusion. The United States and Europe need to apply sterner sanctions immediately if they hope to have any chance of dissuading Mr. Putin from more aggressive action.

Russia illegally occupied Crimea by force in March. The Kremlin, however, wants more than that peninsula. **It seeks a weak and compliant Ukrainian neighbor, a state that will defer to Moscow and not develop a significant relationship with the European Union.**

Since annexing Crimea, Moscow has done nothing to defuse tensions. It has instead sought to destabilize the interim government in Kyiv, piling on economic pressure and keeping tens of thousands of troops on Ukraine’s border. The Kremlin has supported—by all appearances, with Russian special forces personnel—armed seizures of government buildings in eastern Ukraine. In these operations, local politicians and reporters have disappeared, and at least one was murdered.[[1]](#footnote-1)

This support has caused massive suffering in the region.

Peter Zalmayev of Al Jazeera explains that the pro-Russian militants in Eastern Ukraine have kept whole cities in terror and have brought the entire region to the precipice of a civil war.

With their calls for Russian President Vladimir Putin to send tanks to "defend" the people from the "fascist" government in Kiev, the pro-Russia protesters do not seem to represent the majority of the population in the east, which, though not enthusiastically pro-Kiev, would be content to be allowed to use Russian at work and to have their children taught in the language, to enjoy an increased regional autonomy, and simply to live in peace. Yet, despite their obvious minority status, **the pro-Russian thugs have been able to take advantage of the power vacuum, relying on the apparently Moscow-supplied weaponry and logistical support to keep whole cities in terror and to have brought the entire region to the precipice of a civil war.**[[2]](#footnote-2)

The UN furthers, the armed groups are perpetrating the beatings, abductions, and killings of innocent Ukrainian citizens.

GENEVA — **Armed groups are increasingly undermining the rights and basic freedoms of people in eastern Ukraine, the United Nations said Friday, expressing concern at the rising number of killings, abductions, beatings and detentions of journalists, politicians and local activists.** “Primarily as a result of the actions of organized armed groups, the continuation of the rhetoric of hatred and propaganda fuels the escalation of the crisis in Ukraine, with a potential of spiraling out of control,” the United Nations said in its second report on the issue in a month, which was released simultaneously in the Ukrainian capital, Kiev, and in Geneva. The actions of and impunity enjoyed by armed groups remain the major factors worsening the situation for the protection of individual rights, the United Nations said. “The report describes the deeply disturbing deterioration of the human rights situation in the east and south of the country,” the assistant secretary general for human rights, Ivan Simonovic, said at a news conference in Kiev. [[3]](#footnote-3)

NATO could provide support to deter this aggression in two ways.

**First, is intelligence.**

Ian Brezeinski of the Washington Post furthers that NATO should give the technology and expertise to Ukraine so that they can deploy intelligence capabilities. This is not *sharing* intel, but rather gives Ukraine the capacity to conduct its own intelligence operations.

Second, the alliance or a U.S.-led coalition should back that assistance with the deployment of intelligence and surveillance capabilities and military trainers to Ukraine. This would provide not only needed situational awareness and help the Ukrainian military maximize its defensive capacities, but it would also force Moscow to consider the potential political and military repercussions of any actions that affect that presence. The deployment of military trainers to Georgia was one of the more effective elements of the U.S. effort to bolster Georgia’s security after it was invaded by Russia in 2008.[[4]](#footnote-4)

By creating additional situational awareness, it becomes more difficult for Russia to get away with undetected aggression. By raising the cost of sending weapons and undercover operatives NATO would deter Russia from taking aggressive actions.

**Second, is border security.**

William Taylor of the Brookings institution explains that NATO has the capacity to provide border control equipment to prevent Russian agitators and weapons, which are the real cause of the instability, from entering Ukraine’s borders.

First, the West should help Ukraine guard itself from Russian subversion. It should provide border control equipment and training to help Kiev keep Russian agitators and provocateurs from entering the country. Second, the West should also share intelligence with Ukraine about Russian efforts to destabilize the country and Russian military plans threatening Ukraine. Third, NATO should conduct regularly scheduled joint exercises in Ukraine. Finally, should the Russian military continue its threatening stance, NATO should provide anti-tank and anti-aircraft weapons, and appropriate training, that would raise the costs of any further aggression against Ukraine.[[5]](#footnote-5)

This would effectively allow Ukraine to guard itself from further Russian subversion by denying rebels access to a stream of weaponry and tactical support.

Additionally, Ukrainian president Petro Poroshenko stated on June 16 that a ceasefire would *only* be possible after the border is secure, showing the need for NATO’s help.

But the president said that a cease fire could only happen after Ukraine regains full control of its border with Russia, of which the separatists now control wide stretches in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. Ukraine has accused Russia of allowing arms and fighters to cross the boundary unhindered and last week Kiev and the U.S. said there was evidence the Kremlin had armed fighters with tanks and heavy weapons.[[6]](#footnote-6)

The impact is immediate deterrence. Steven Pifer of the Brookings Institution explains that these steps would bolster NATO security, strengthen Ukraine's ability to resist aggression, and discourage Putin from more territorial expansion.

These steps would bolster NATO security, strengthen Ukraine's ability to resist aggression, and offer political support to other countries made nervous by Putin's recent actions. More pointedly, such a show of strength could discourage the Russian leader from more Crimeas. [[7]](#footnote-7)

Contention 2: Deterring conventional Russian aggression

Markus Kaim of the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists explains that as long as Ukraine lacks NATO’s full support, it is in a constant danger of losing even more territory to Russia. This would have security implications for Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, and Romania, all of which are NATO members.

Exporting stability. Ukraine does face the danger of losing more territory to Russia through secession or annexation, with Kiev’s control over the countryside’s armed forces eroding further, or the country spiralling into civil war. Such scenarios would have immediate unhappy security implications for Ukraine’s four NATO neighbors: Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, and Romania. And indirectly, such destabilizing would affect all the alliance’s members, not just Ukraine’s immediate neighbors. [[8]](#footnote-8)

The April 17 meeting of the U.S., Russian, Ukrainian and European Union foreign ministers offered a chance for a diplomatic solution. Little appears to have come of it. One week later, Russia has done nothing to get illegal armed groups in cities such as Donetsk or Slavyansk to disarm or evacuate the buildings that they occupy. Indeed, the Kremlin’s agreement to the statement seems to have been to delay further sanctions from the West while continuing to run an insurgency in Ukraine’s east.

Mr. Putin last week denied Russian soldiers are present in the buildings. His denial must be dismissed. It came in the same telethon in which he admitted that Russian troops had seized Crimea—in contrast to his March 4 press conference, in which he attributed that seizure to “local militia” and denied the involvement of Russian soldiers.

**If Moscow wanted to deescalate the crisis in Ukraine’s east, it clearly could have done so. Instead, Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov threatens military action if the Ukrainian government moves to secure its own cities. It almost appears that Russia wants a pretext to use force.**

A Russian military invasion of eastern Ukraine would differ greatly from the Crimea operation. The Ukrainian military may be under-resourced and out-gunned, but it would fight. Some civilians would take up arms. Recent polls show that an overwhelming number of people in eastern Ukraine do not want the Russian army. It could be ugly and bloody. [[9]](#footnote-9)

This leads Mario Loyola of Foreign Policy Magazine to explain that NATO does have an interest in the stability of states beyond its immediate frontier, and as such, NATO has *every reason* to protect Ukraine.

NATO membership should only extend to other strong democracies with which existing alliance members share vital interests within a defensible geographic area. While this augurs for keeping NATO smaller rather than larger, it does not mean that its interests -- and need to project force -- are confined to the territory of member states. On the contrary, the alliance has an interest in the stability and viability of the states beyond its immediate frontier. NATO may have little reason to admit Ukraine as a member, but it has every reason to defend it now. [[10]](#footnote-10)

Fortunately, NATO has various policy options that it could take.

For example, Kiam explains that NATO could create a strengthened NATO-Ukraine council. This new strengthening of relations should allow Ukraine to have the ability to call NATO meetings, in the event that Ukraine feels that there is a threat of further Russian Aggression. This would be very similar to how current members call meetings.

Politically, the alliance should upgrade the NATO-Ukraine Commission. Article 4 of the NATO Treaty provides for consultations if a member believes its territorial integrity, political independence, or security are threatened. Even without full membership, an analogous arrangement for Ukraine would be an important sign of NATO’s willingness to secure security and stability on its eastern periphery. [[11]](#footnote-11)

This would be an important sign of NATO’s willingness to secure Ukraine in the event of further subversion. Moreover, by allowing direct diplomatic discussions between Ukraine and NATO the cost of further aggression for Russia would rise dramatically, as it now knows that no offensive action will go unpunished.

Another option, as Kurt Volker of Foreign Policy explains, is that NATO could issue a defensive security guarantee. This would commit NATO members to defend Ukraine in the event of further Russian aggression.

Determine that any further assaults on Ukraine's territorial integrity beyond Crimea represent a direct threat to NATO security and, accordingly, issue a statement saying that any such efforts to break off more territory will be met with a NATO response. [[12]](#footnote-12)

Given the potential for escalation, the United States should secure a commitment from NATO to fight and win in the event of a Russian attack on alliance forces before any troops are deployed to Ukraine. This point may seem moot given the administration's pronouncements. But reality has a way of imposing policy. The partial collapse of Ukraine in the context of a Russian incursion would create an extremely dangerous situation, and one that NATO may not be able to avoid getting embroiled in. [[13]](#footnote-13)

Note that a security guarantee is not NATO membership and can be signed quickly behind closed doors, but still guarantees NATO support to Ukraine.

Barbara Walter defines security guarantees as "an implicit or explicit promise given by an outside power to protect adversaries during the treaty implementation period."[1] A security guarantee can be positive or negative in nature, containing either an obligation to provide assistance or a promise to not use specific weapons or other destructive instruments. [[14]](#footnote-14)

Because it merely requires signatures rather than troop deployments, a security guarantee would give Russia no opportunity for preemptive military action, effectively putting Putin in an inescapable check-mate.

The World News Report writes on June 11 that such an option appears to be increasingly likely to be used by NATO to counter further Russian subversion.

If Poroshenko replaces the Budapest Memorandum with a security guarantee from NATO, then Ukraine will be placed under the West's nuclear umbrella and de-facto become a shadow member of the alliance.

This is extremely likely, especially considering that the organization has already demonstrated its military resolve (the Baltic war games) and intent (the US and NATO's statements) to do so.[[15]](#footnote-15)

Overall, Brett Leeds of Rice University explains that defensive security guarantees decrease the likelihood of conflict by 30%.

This is easiest to see by examining the bar graph pictured in Figure 1. This figure shows the percentage change in the probability of dispute initiation that can be attributed to outside allies when all other variables are held at their mean values. The first bar shows that **when a target state has an ally committed to its defense, the probability of dispute initiation is 28% lower** than the probability of dispute initiation in a dyad with the mean characteristics in the dataset but no outside allies. [[16]](#footnote-16)

The benefit is long-term deterrence.

Vladimir Dvorkin of the Institute of World Economy and International Relations explains that because of NATO’s strength, Russia will never decide to attack a country that has a NATO defense commitment.

Pravda.Ru talked about the issues of reforming the Russian army and the current state of the armed forces with the **chief scientist of the Institute of World Economy and International Relations, retired Major General Vladimir Dvorkin.**

…

On the possibility of an armed conflict with NATO:

"It's all fantasy. **Russia has a powerful nuclear deterrent.** NATO will never attack nuclear Russia, and **Russia will never launch any military action against NATO.** Therefore, conflict scenarios are made up and alarmist. I think it's wrong to consider them, it is not the right time." [[17]](#footnote-17)

First, NATO members in Central Europe do not need any reassurances. The armed forces of states on the borders with Russia and Ukraine (Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, Romania, Baltic States) plus the American forces in Europe make up approximately 270,000 active personnel; more than one-third of the whole Russian military. In case of a military conflict, this will be enough for a successful defence, although this scenario is very unlikely. **Russia will never decide to attack a NATO member primarily because of the Article 5 collective defence commitments as well as the fact that three allies (the United States, the United Kingdom and France) are nuclear powers.** An increased military presence in Central Europe, hence, may signal offensive intentions against Russia, and trigger a responsive military build-up on its western borders. Thereby, an over assurance of the allies in Europe could mean entrapment into a deeper and more dangerous confrontation with Moscow. [[18]](#footnote-18)

But the benefits don’t stop at Ukraine’s borders. Loyola further explains that if Russia is not stopped in Ukraine, then Moldova, Belarus, and other countries in the region could *also* be infiltrated by rebel groups, leading to overall regional instability.

NATO should rethink its position, and fast. A risk-averse approach now could prove reckless in the long run. The viability of Ukraine as an independent state is a vital interest for NATO. If the Russians invade Ukraine the resulting instability will not be contained there, but could spread quickly across the region. Moldova, Belarus, Latvia, Estonia -- each of these countries was traditionally part of Russia and still contains a large Russian population. All could be infiltrated by irregulars or see separatist regions hold referenda and break away -- only to be quickly recognized by Moscow. [[19]](#footnote-19)

As The Economist concludes, if the West does not face up to Putin now, it may find him at its door.

FIRST Vladimir Putin mauled Georgia, but the world forgave him—because Russia was too important to be cut adrift. Then he gobbled up Crimea, but the world accepted it—because Crimea should have been Russian all along. Now he has infiltrated eastern Ukraine, but the world is hesitating—because infiltration is not quite invasion. But if the West does not face up to Mr Putin now, it may find him at its door. [[20]](#footnote-20)

Because firmness today avoids confrontation tomorrow, we affirm.

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