Tim and I negate the resolution,

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

We observe that based on the wording of the resolution, we can win today’s round in two ways:

First, if we show that strengthening NATO-Ukraine relations will lead to *further* Russian aggression.

Second, if we show that overall, strengthening NATO-Ukraine relations is an unnecessary measure in the status quo.

Contention 1: Strengthening NATO-Ukraine relations is impractical

This is true for two reasons:

First, there has been sufficient international action.

Elise Labott of CNN explains that the US and the EU have imposed hefty sanctions on Russia, and given diplomatic and economic support to Ukraine, which are all working as a deterrent and are crippling Russia’s ability to have further military action.

**Sanctions imposed against Russia are working as a deterrent**, President Barack Obama and other White House senior administration officials said Wednesday in a detailed defense and explanation of the U.S. response to the escalating crisis in Ukraine.

And new sanctions could be imposed as early as Friday, with key Putin allies, institutions and top oligarchs among the targets, other senior administration officials said.

Obama told CBS News Wednesday that the current sanctions are hurting Russia’s economy and will have negative long-term consequences.[[1]](#footnote-1)

**The European Union has formally approved an assistance package for cash-strapped Ukraine and a plan to provide temporary tariff preferences for Ukrainian goods**, as Washington announced the signing of a $1 billion loan guarantee for Ukraine

EU foreign ministers meeting in Luxembourg on April 14 also added four individuals to a list of 18 people subject to asset freezes for their involvement in misappropriating Ukrainian state funds.

U.S. Treasury Secretary Jacob Lew announced the loan-guarantee signing on April 14 after meeting Ukrainian Finance Minister Oleksandr Shlapak in Washington, and said **it demonstrated the United States' commitment to Ukraine.**[[2]](#footnote-2)

**The International Monetary Fund approved a $17 billion emergency rescue package to prevent a collapse of Ukraine's economy**, marking a rare moment of consensus between Russia and Western nations battling over the former Soviet republic.

The signoff on Wednesday also unlocks an additional $15 billion in international financing, including loans and other funding from the U.S., Europe and the World Bank. It lets the new government in Kiev tap more than $3 billion of the IMF funds within days.[[3]](#footnote-3)

Second, the rebels are retreating.

Aleksandar Vasovic of Reuters just last night reported that rebels in Eastern Ukraine are reeling in the face of further defeats to the Ukrainian Military.

A top rebel commander, Igor Strelkov, reported "heavy losses" in equipment and arms among the separatists, faced with a huge superiority in heavy armor on the government side at Yampil.

In fact, Rebel Chief Igor Strelkov bitterly scolded Russia for failing to help the rebellion and issued a desperate plea to Moscow.

Rebel chief Igor Strelkov said in a statement on YouTube that his men were far outnumbered and outgunned and would probably be forced to retreat. The insurgent leader, clad in combat fatigues, bitterly scolded the Kremlin for failing to help the rebellion and issued a desperate plea. "I hope that they have enough conscience left in Moscow to take some measures," he said. There was no immediate response from the Kremlin, which has ignored previous pleas for help from the insurgents.

Most importantly, as the independent reports last night, Moscow has ignored these pleas and seems poised to turn the page.

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In a time when Moscow is no longer supporting the losing rebels, further involving NATO, a military organization, could have the unintended effect of renewing Russian interest in the region, and trigger a response from the kremlin which includes the rearming and support of these rebels.

Contention 2: Poking the bear

While Russia is not planning to be more aggressive, NATO involvement would unnecessarily provoke Russia.

Matthew Rojansky of the Kennan Institute explains, if you look at events over the past 20 years from Russia’s perspective, it’s no wonder why Russia is skeptical of NATO. You see a consistent pattern of Western behavior amounting to a policy of regime change across the world. If Washington can use force to topple regimes in Iraq or Libya, and can sponsor regime change in Ukraine, it’s possible that Russia itself could be next.

If you look at events over the past 20 years from the Kremlin’s perspective, you see a consistent pattern of U.S. and western behavior amounting to a policy of regime change across Eurasia,” says Matthew Rojanksy, director of the Kennan Institute at the Woodrow Wilson Center. “Putin asks, if Washington can use force to topple regimes in Iraq, Afghanistan, or Libya, and can sponsor regime change by other means in Serbia, Georgia, and Ukraine, why wouldn’t Belarus or Kazakhstan or even Russia itself be next? Putin has to draw his own red line, and Syria is a good place to start doing so.[[4]](#footnote-4)

Michael Crowley of TIME explains that while there are numerous motivations behind Putin’s actions, one stands out above the rest: Vladimir Putin believes that NATO is out to get him.

So is Putin just a jerk? Maybe, although there are numerous reasons that might explain his antagonism: the lingering Cold War mentality of a former KGB agent; insecurity about Russia’s post-Soviet global status; his sometimes comical machismo.

There’s likely another, potentially more important factor driving Putin’s animus, however. **He thinks we’re out to get him. And in a sense, he’s right.**[[5]](#footnote-5)

Specifically, the Russian foreign minister explains that NATO has violated the 1997 Founding Act between Russia and NATO, which included promises of no troop deployments in Eastern Europe, and to cease the enlargement of NATO, both of which have been broken.

**Lavrov said U.S. and NATO reneged on a series of commitments: not to enlarge the Alliance; then (after NATO was expanded contrary to that commitment), not to deploy substantial forces on the territories of new NATO members; and then not to move NATO infrastructure to the Russian border.**

**“All these commitments have been, to one degree or another, violated,” said Lavrov**, adding that “attempts to draw Ukraine into NATO would have a negative impact on the entire system of European security.” Lavrov said Russia’s national security interests and 25 years of recent history make this a key problem, not only for Ukraine and NATO, but also “an issue of Russia.”[[6]](#footnote-6)

Richard Haass of the Council on Foreign Relations furthers that increasing NATO involvement now would send the message that Ukraine is on its way to become a NATO member – Russia’s biggest fear.

**There's an argument for not inserting NATO in the middle of this. Obviously, Ukraine is not a member of NATO, and by putting NATO in the middle of this, we would be in some ways reinforcing the notion that that's where this crisis is heading**, and that's in no one's interest. Such mechanisms as the OECD and the Partnership for Peace ought to be used far more prominently than they have been. Thus far, Ukraine is a member of the Partnership for Peace, and there are things that we can and should do with it, without bringing in all the symbolism and the obligations of NATO.There's an argument for not inserting NATO in the middle of this. Obviously, Ukraine is not a member of NATO, and by putting NATO in the middle of this, we would be in some ways reinforcing the notion that that's where this crisis is heading, and that's in no one's interest. Such mechanisms as the OECD and the Partnership for Peace ought to be used far more prominently than they have been. Thus far, Ukraine is a member of the Partnership for Peace, and there are things that we can and should do with it, without bringing in all the symbolism and the obligations of NATO.[[7]](#footnote-7)

All in all, strengthening NATO ties to Ukraine would breed violence.

Internally, U.S. Ambassador to Russia William Burns explains that even the possibility of NATO membership would politically split the country in two, leading to violence, and possibly even civil war.

The IMMEDIATE precedence that the cable bears shows that Ambassador Burns (now Deputy Secretary of State) was addressing a priority issue under active consideration in Washington. Though it was six years ago, Burns interlocutor was the same Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov. **Here is Burns’s introductory summary of his discussions with Lavrov:**

“Summary. Following a muted first reaction to Ukraine’s intent to seek a NATO membership action plan at the [upcoming] Bucharest summit, Foreign Minister Lavrov and other senior officials have reiterated strong opposition, stressing that Russia would view further eastward expansion as a potential military threat. NATO enlargement, particularly to Ukraine, remains ‘an emotional and neuralgic’ issue for Russia, but strategic policy considerations also underlie strong opposition to NATO membership for Ukraine and Georgia.

**“In Ukraine, these include fears that the issue could potentially split the country in two, leading to violence or even, some claim, civil war, which would force Russia to decide whether to intervene.”**

Ambassador Burns continued: “Russia has made it clear that it would have to ‘seriously review’ its entire relationship with Ukraine and Georgia in the event of NATO inviting them to join. This could include major impacts on energy, economic, and political-military engagement, with possible repercussions throughout the region and into Central and Western Europe.”[[8]](#footnote-8)

Externally, the Russian government itself stated in June 2014 that it would *immediately* retaliate militarily against increased NATO activity near its border, as tensions with the western alliance over Ukraine escalate.

**Russia's top general said on Friday that Moscow would retaliate against increased NATO activity near its border as tensions with the western alliance over Ukraine escalate.** Since Russia annexed Ukraine's Crimea region, NATO has moved to reassure its nervous eastern European allies. Ships and planes have been temporarily deployed to their countries and military exercises in the region stepped up. "NATO's military groupings in the Baltic states, Poland and Romania are being built up, as well as the military presence of the bloc in the Baltic, Mediterranean and Black Sea," General Valery Gerasimov, the chief of general staff of the Russian armed forces, told a defense conference in Moscow.[[9]](#footnote-9)

On every front, NATO involvement would transform the current path to peace into a declaration of war.

Contention 3: Overconfidence

While Ukraine has attempted to prevent escalation in the current crisis, further NATO involvement only increases the likelihood for violence by giving Ukraine a false sense of security.

Barry Posen of Foreign Affairs explains that overconfidence often precedes carelessness, and pushes nations to war. When a country believes it has the support of strong international allies, they feel that they are more powerful and that they are more feared by rivals. He finds that such countries are less likely to pursue diplomacy and more likely to go on the offensive, confident that their ally will save them in the end.

**Nations often go to war because of overconfidence.** This makes perfect sense; few leaders choose to start a conflict thinking they will lose. Historians have found that technology can play a big role in feeding overconfidence; new weapons and capabilities breed new perceptions, as well as misperceptions, about what might be possible in a war. Today’s new technologies are particularly liable to feed overconfidence. [[10]](#footnote-10)

**U.S. security guarantees also encourage plucky allies to challenge more powerful states, confident that Washington will save them in the end -- a classic case of moral hazard.** This phenomenon has caused the United States to incur political costs, antagonizing powers great and small for no gain and encouraging them to seek opportunities to provoke the United States in return. So far, the United States has escaped getting sucked into unnecessary wars, although Washington dodged a bullet in Taiwan when the Democratic Progressive Party of Chen Shui-bian governed the island, from 2000 to 2008. His frequent allusions to independence, which ran counter to U.S. policy but which some Bush administration officials reportedly encouraged, unnecessarily provoked the Chinese government; had he proceeded, he would have surely triggered a dangerous crisis. Chen would never have entertained such reckless rhetoric absent the long-standing backing of the U.S. government.[[11]](#footnote-11)

Doug Bandow of Forbes furthers that this type overconfidence is not rare. He points to the 2008 example of Georgia, when it falsely believed that NATO would back it in a confrontation against Russia. This led to Georgia attacking Russian peacekeepers in the South Ossetia region, leading to a full-out war between the two countries.

**An American threat to go to war is supposed to deter. But history is replete with alliances that failed to prevent conflict.** And when deterrence failed, the military pacts became transmission belts of war. In World War II Germany attacked Poland even though both France and Great Britain guaranteed the latter’s security. The opposing Triple Entente and Triple Alliance failed to prevent World War I from occurring.

The Peloponnesian War featured contending Greek blocs. Various opposing confederations did not constrain Rome. The First Punic War between Rome and Carthage grew out of conflict among allies. The Thirty Years’ War featured competing groups. Alliances did not prevent the Anglo-Dutch wars or curb French King Louis XIV’s aggressive empire-building. A kaleidoscope of constantly changing coalitions fought during the 18 century and in the Napoleonic wars.

**In fact, alliances can encourage confrontation by emboldening weaker, sometimes irresponsible partners. In 2008 Georgia appeared to believe that Washington would back it against Russia.** Offering military support to Ukraine could have a similar effect. That would prove especially dangerous in a region that will always remain more important to Russia than to America.[[12]](#footnote-12)

**In fact, Georgia started the war with a large-scale military attack on Russian peacekeeping forces and separatist militias in the breakaway Georgian province of South Ossetia**, according to an European Union-commissioned report on the war (Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on the Conflict in Georgia, 9/30/09). **Georgia's initial attack killed at least 10 Russian peacekeepers and an unrecorded number of South Ossetians.** (Pursuant to a local treaty, Russian peacekeepers were in the two Georgian breakaway provinces, South Ossetia and Abkhazia, as part of the Joint Peacekeeping Task Force, which had Georgian peacekeepers protect other parts of the breakaway regions.) [[13]](#footnote-13)

The impact of further NATO involvement is the increased likelihood for conflict.

Brett Leeds of Rice University calculates that a country is 50% more likely to attack if it has the offensive support of an ally.

The second bar represents **the case in which the challenger has an offensive ally; in this instance, the probability of dispute initiation is 47% higher than it is in the case in which neither the challenger nor the target has any allies committed to intervene.**

Finally, the bar on the right shows that when challengers have obtained promises of neutrality from outside states, the probability of dispute initiation is 57% higher than it is when neither state has any allies. Notably, these substantive effects are similar to those associated with variables like power relations and similarity in alliance portfolios, which scholars of international politics have long considered crucial to predicting and preventing dispute initiation. Given the rare occurrence and severe implications of military conflict, the substantive effects of outside alliance commitments to potential conflict initiators and targets are important enough that they should influence scholarship and policy.[[14]](#footnote-14)

Bandow concludes, based on the parallels between Georgia and Ukraine, offering NATO support would have a similar effect, increasing the likelihood for unnecessary violence or even war.

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For these reasons, we urge you to negate.

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