# Marist SV – Quarters Negative

#### Sophie and I negate Resolved: The European Union should join the Belt and Road Initiative.

Framework – whichever side proves their side saves the most lives should win the round.

## Contention 1 is Connectivity

#### The EU is currently effectively battling drug trafficking now as it only seems to be using one port – the UN indicates that:

United Nations Regional Information Centre for Western Europe (UNRIC), , "Fighting drug trafficking before it reaches Europe’s main gateway to cocaine," https://www.unric.org/en/latest-un-buzz/31132-fighting-drug-trafficking-before-it-reaches-europes-main-gateway-to-cocaine, Date Accessed 10-12-2019 // JM

On Monday 10 September 2018, UNRIC hosted a press briefing to present the latest [World Drug Report 2018](https://www.unodc.org/wdr2018/) with Bob Van Den Berghe, Regional Coordinator of the Container Control Programme (CCP) for Latin America and the Caribbean at the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). The Report highlights, among other things, the various drug use patterns and vulnerabilities among different age and gender groups as well as shifts in the global drug market. Belgium remains a top destination for drug exports, especially for those coming out of Latin America and the Caribbean, due to direct connections. Last year for example, more than 44 tonnes of cocaine were seized in the ports of Latin America and the Caribbean, of which more than half were destined for Belgium. So far in 2018 alone, 33 tonnes have already been intercepted with more than 10 tonnes destined for Belgium through the port of Antwerp. As a result, as part of his expert meetings on cooperation programs against drug trafficking with the European Commission on 11 and 12 September, Bob Van den Berghe, [the commission] helped shed light into the many possible reasons as to why the port of Antwerp, the second largest port of Europe, continues to be a leading port of call for international cocaine trade. In terms of the CCP, more than 750 million maritime containers are shipped each year with less than 2% being inspected. This means that such a large volume of containers travelling the seas from country to country goes uninspected providing the perfect opportunity for illicit drug trading. This helps explain further why Belgium remains a main transit country for cocaine. In effect, the cocaine that enters through the port of Antwerp is picked up and further smuggled due to a lack of appropriate verification tools and security. The port of Antwerp is less secure than the port of Rotterdam for example and therefore invites the supply of one third of the world's turnover of cocaine. Van den Berghe explained the practicalities "in Rotterdam you have a closed circuit. If you want to send the containers to the scanner terminal, then these containers cannot leave the container terminal. Whereas in Antwerp, you must leave the container terminal to reach the scanner terminal which is a 10 minutes’ drive away. This increases the risk of contamination." Additionally, there is more container port automation in Rotterdam with fewer goods being traded by people unlike in Antwerp.

#### Unfortunatley, generating more regional connectivity generates new modes for drug trafficking in the EU – this overloads their system and makes trafficking rampant. Carla Freeman wrote on Thursday that:

Carla P. Freeman, Mie ŌBa, 10-10-2019, "Bridging the Belt and Road Divide," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, https://carnegieendowment.org/2019/10/10/bridging-belt-and-road-divide-pub-80019, Date Accessed 10-11-2019 // JM

Regional connectivity also creates new opportunities for transnational crime in the region. In particular, the BRI could create new modalities for trafficking in drugs, wildlife, and people, with potentially destabilizing effects. Washington can also reinforce its role as the preferred provider of regional public goods by sustaining its prominent role in combating the region’s numerous nontraditional security threats. Through high-level participation in regional summits, the United States can underscore its commitment to the region and to ASEAN, which has been so critical to fostering regional independence and cohesion. Although Trump did not attend the East Asia Summit or the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum in November 2018, he did go to the 2019 G20 summit in Osaka, Japan, and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo attended an August 2019 ASEAN summit.

#### An illegal drug market wrecks the EU economy and absorbs all benefits – the EMCD indicates that:

European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction and Europol (2016), EU Drug Markets Report: In-Depth Analysis, EMCDDA–Europol Joint publications, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg. Date Accessed 10-12-2019 // JM

The drug trade has both direct and indirect impacts on businesses, many of which are easy to overlook. For example, open or street drug markets can negatively affect local businesses by reducing the attractiveness of the area to customers and the general public and lowering property values. A more specific example is the large amounts of electricity required for indoor cannabis plantations, which may be illegally diverted from electricity suppliers, reducing revenues and tax payments, and potentially increasing costs to legitimate customers (Ofgem, 2013). The illicit drug market also absorbs resources from the legal economy. Money spent on illicit drugs is denied to governments in taxes and to producers of other consumer goods. The large proportion of illegal proceeds from the drug trade that is not reinvested in illegal activities but channelled back into the legal economy can also have negative impact (Unger, 2007). For example, the market for products or services can be distorted when business and investment decisions are made not on a commercial basis but to reduce the risk of detection or facilitate drug-related activities, thus undercutting legitimate businesses operating in the same field and effectively pricing them out of the market. Moreover, those involved in the drug trade may bring their criminal tactics into the legal businesses area, for example by rigging tendering processes (see Case study 3), or by using violence to obtain competitive advantage or discourage competition. There can also be an increase in corruption, especially when OCGs seek to use legitimate business to facilitate their activities, for example to get access to containers for drug shipments, and this has a knock-on effect on legitimate business as well as undermining the credibility of legal institutions (UNODC, 2011a). The application of controls on illicit drugs that also have pharmaceutical uses and on precursor chemicals also poses a financial burden on legitimate businesses as well as the state. The diversion and thefts of these substances is another source of financial loss while counterfeiting and the illegal production of substances that are then sold on the black market may lead to reputational damage for legal producers.

## Contention 2 is NATO

#### The EU joining the BRI will destroy the North Atlantic Treaty Organization or NATO in three ways

#### First is cyber surveillance as Erik Brattberg writes in March that

Erik Brattberg, 3-26-2019, "Time for NATO to Talk About China," Carnegie Europe, https://carnegieeurope.eu/strategiceurope/78684, Date Accessed 9-12-2019 // WS

Don’t rule out the possibility that certain Chinese-controlled infrastructure could even eventually restrict U.S. military operations in Europe, as seen recently [in Israel](https://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/US-Navy-may-stop-docking-in-Haifa-after-Chinese-take-over-port-574414), or complicate efforts to enhance military mobility. What’s more, Chinese-funded infrastructure projects may in some cases expose vulnerable economies to potentially [unsustainable debt levels](https://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-silkroad-europe-montenegro-insi/chinese-highway-to-nowhere-haunts-montenegro-idUSKBN1K60QX), thus adding more instability in places like the Western Balkans. China’s growing economic influence can also be channeled into [political leverage](https://carnegieendowment.org/publications/77462) in European countries. As Sino-American competition intensifies, so will Beijing’s attempts to divide the United States from its European partners. Beijing’s efforts to cultivate ties with Central and Eastern European states using the 16+1 framework, a group of sixteen regional states, is viewed by many in Brussels and Washington as fueling fragmentation inside Europe. [Hungary has previously sought to block](https://www.wsj.com/articles/eu-issues-south-china-sea-statement-after-failing-to-agree-common-stance-1468583961) common EU decisions on issues like the South China Sea dispute. But the challenge is particularly acute for the five non-EU members of the initiative in the Western Balkans, where [Chinese influence is even more significant](https://carnegieendowment.org/2019/01/01/serbia-china-s-open-door-to-balkans-pub-78054) than in the EU. The Italian government’s willingness [to strengthen ties with China](https://www.ft.com/content/17f91d24-3f60-11e9-b896-fe36ec32aece) is another concern. It will further exacerbate internal splits within Europe. Although the European Commission is currently promoting a common [EU strategy toward China](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/communication-eu-china-a-strategic-outlook.pdf), expect these tensions to be at the forefront during next month’s EU-China summit in Brussels. So much for a coherent EU policy vis-à-vis Beijing. The EU has repeatedly failed to react strategically to China’s ability to divide and rule Europe. The [debate on Huawei and 5G in Europe](https://carnegieendowment.org/2018/12/27/huawei-and-europe-s-5g-conundrum-pub-78045) illustrates precisely these dangers. A major worry is that backdoors in Chinese-manufactured infrastructure could make European countries vulnerable to Chinese spying, [and] cyberattacks delivered through the network infrastructure, and overall national security threats. But to date there is no common European approach toward Huawei, with each capital making its own decisions. This has implications for NATO. Sensitive issues like [information-sharing](https://www.wsj.com/articles/drop-huawei-or-see-intelligence-sharing-pared-back-u-s-tells-germany-11552314827) and interoperability of troops on the ground could be affected. China’s espionage activities in Europe are already considered to be on the rise—as seen recently in, for example, [Poland](https://www.euractiv.com/section/eu-china/news/eu-seeks-information-as-chinese-espionage-scandal-hits-poland/), [Czech Republic](https://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/analyses/2019-01-17/czech-chinese-dispute-over-huawei-and-zte), [Germany](https://www.reuters.com/article/us-germany-security-china/german-intelligence-unmasks-alleged-covert-chinese-social-media-profiles-idUSKBN1E40CA) and [Belgium](https://www.euractiv.com/section/cybersecurity/news/brussels-teeming-with-russian-and-chinese-spies-eu-officials-claim/).

#### Second is military mobility. Robbie Gramer writes in March that

Robbie Gramer, 3-20-2019, Trump Wants NATO’s Eyes on China, Foreign Policy, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/03/20/us-wants-nato-to-focus-on-china-threat-critical-infrastructure-political-military-huawei-transatlantic-tensions/>, Date Accessed 9-12-2019 // JM

“The United States has been very clear that we are concerned with certain foreign investment in and control over critical infrastructure, including telecommunications and transportation elements,” the spokeswoman said. “These investments represent a challenge to transatlantic security, including to institutions like NATO.” U.S. officials also worry that China is gaining too many commercial footholds in some of Europe’s largest and most important ports, including Rotterdam, Antwerp, Hamburg, and Piraeus, that it could use to wield political influence over European governments. In its 2018 National Security Strategy, the Trump administration identified Russia and China as top threats to global order, marking a new shift away from the yearslong fight against terrorism as Washington’s top national security priority. In a tour of Central Europe last month, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo warned countries against forging closer ties with Moscow and Beijing, citing Huawei as an example of China’s tactic of masking geopolitical aims in commercial ventures. “Beijing’s handshake sometimes comes with strings, strings that will leave Hungary indebted both politically and economically,” he said during a stop in Budapest. The United States has also threatened to curb intelligence cooperation with allies that allowed Huawei to build up new mobile internet infrastructure. But the warnings may have fallen on deaf ears, as Germany, Britain, and other European countries signal they have no intention of banning Huawei from their 5G networks. European officials said U.S. intelligence briefings with allies on Huawei did not offer enough proof that Beijing would use the company to steal information, according to the [New York Times](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/17/us/politics/huawei-ban.html). Some European countries, bristling from Trump’s repeated public broadsides against them on trade and defense issues, seem determined to resist U.S. pressure on the China issue. On Tuesday, Italy became the first European country to sign on to China’s Belt and Road Initiative, an ambitious trillion-dollar infrastructure investment project to connect China with Europe, Eurasia, and Africa. Growing U.S. concerns come as the EU, coordinating with NATO, is pushing its member states to boost infrastructure projects across Europe for military means. It aims to minimize logistical roadblocks for militaries to quickly deploy and confront a Russian invasion. Though the possibility of a full-fledged conflict with Russia remains remote, defense planners worry NATO members aren’t equipped to support quickly moving military columns in any worst-case scenario. The projects include upgrading roads and bridges to support the weight of tanks and other heavy military equipment, preparing ports to handle a surge in military supplies, and ensuring each member country has permission to move its military through its neighbors’ roads and airspace. The so-called military mobility initiatives center around the potential threat posed by Russia, but Western defense officials want policymakers to assess how Chinese investments in ports and infrastructure could hamper their plans in the event of a conflict.

#### Shannon O’Neal furthers in April that

Shannon K. O'Neil, 4-3-2019, "Why Europe Is Getting Tough on China," Foreign Affairs, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2019-04-03/why-europe-getting-tough-china, Date Accessed 9-18-2019 // WS

Working with Europe not only increases U.S. leverage but helps ensure that U.S. policy won’t be undermined by lack of consensus among allies. The United States can, for instance, unilaterally limit the access that Chinese investors, companies, and researchers have to U.S. advanced technologies—through the 2018 Foreign Investment Risk Review Modernization Act, say, revised export controls, or other new regulations. But the measure would have diminished effect if China could still access similar technologies from Germany or the United Kingdom. Meanwhile, any role that Europe decides to grant Chinese firms in 5G networks and other critical infrastructure such as ports will directly affect transatlantic intelligence and security cooperation, from information transfers to NATO’s mobilization capacity. China has long been an afterthought for all but a handful of U.S. Atlanticists, and Europe has long been an afterthought for most U.S. China experts. Predictably, this gap has produced a corresponding gap in analysis, as well as a reactive approach to many critical policy decisions, with U.S. interventions sometimes coming unhelpfully late in European debates and with mixed success.

#### Third is American backlash. Specifically, this retaliation comes in the form of the US decreasing contributions toward NATO as Stephan Walt writes in 2016 that as a result of the EU turning their back on the US

Stephan Walt, 2016, https://www.iss.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EUISSFiles/EUGS\_Opinion\_1\_Walt\_0.pdf, Date Accessed 9-12-2019 // WS

A growing proportion of US military power will be assigned to Asia, while American officials will devote more time and attention to managing strategic partnerships there. Having once focused on preventing Germany and the Soviet Union from dominating Europe, the US will now strive to keep China from dominating Asia. Europe will play little or no role in this effort. China is not a threat to Europe, meaning European states have no incentive to balance against it. On the contrary, they will be eager to invest in China and some may be happy to sell Beijing whatever it might desire, perhaps even sophisticated weaponry. Consequently, US leaders will be increasingly reluctant to subsidise Europe’s defence or guarantee its security, especially if European companies are helping China grow stronger.

#### These three reasons are problematic as The Economist reports in March that as a result there would be gaps in military capabilities and the EU would be forced to

The Economist, 3-14-19, https://www.economist.com/technology-quarterly/2019/03/14/what-would-happen-if-america-left-europe-to-fend-for-itself, Date Accessed 9-13-2019 // WS

There would be gaps in capabilities, too. How bad these were would depend on the mission, and how many operations were under way at the same time. The European-led interventions in Libya and Mali exposed dependence on America in vital areas such as air-to-air refuelling and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance. A detailed look at the sort of scenarios Europe might face would help to identify other gaps, and what it would take to fill them. Bastian Giegerich of the iiss, who is starting to work on such assessments, reckons that realistically the gap-filling could take 15 years or so. That is a long time for places like Poland and the Baltic countries that feel under threat. Fear and mistrust could quickly conspire to make narrow national interests trump efforts to maintain European unity. Hence a second, perhaps likelier, version of what might follow an American withdrawal: Europe Divided. It is these games of mistrust that the American security guarantee has largely helped to avoid. They could all too easily resurface. “Establishing a purely European defence”, warns Michael Rühle, a long-time nato official, “[which] would overwhelm the Europeans politically, financially and militarily.”

#### There are two impacts

#### The first is a welfare spending tradeoff. Since The EU would be forced to fill the new defense gap and increase their own defense spending it would directly trade off with their welfare expenditures as Ted Galen writes that the EU is

Ted Galen, 7-12-2010, "U.S. Defense Spending Subsidizes European Free-Riding Welfare States," Cato Institute, https://www.cato.org/publications/commentary/us-defense-spending-subsidizes-european-freeriding-welfare-states, Date Accessed 9-13-2019 // WS

Most other NATO governments appear to have implicitly made similar calculations. They are reducing their militaries to skeletal size and increasingly rely[ing] on the U.S. to protect their security. But it gets worse. Instead of being grateful to [the] U.S. taxpayers for [is]enabling European welfare states to persist without the drag of more military spending, European elites miss no opportunity to castigate "American conditions" — a caricature of "cut-throat capitalism."

#### These welfare systems are critical to reducing poverty as the European Commission writes that on average

European Commission, "Poverty and social exclusion," No Publication, https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=751&amp;langId=en, Date Accessed 9-26-2019 // WS

This is still above the target set out in the [Europe 2020 strategy](http://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/european-semester/framework/europe-2020-strategy_en), but several indicators have improved, as shown by 2017 statistics: 22.4% of the EU population are at risk of poverty or social exclusion – this includes 24.9% of all children in Europe, 23.3% of women, 18.2% of those over 65 6.7% of all Europeans still live in severe material deprivation, though their number has significantly decreased 17% of Europeans live on less than 60% of their country's median household income 9.3% of Europeans live in households where no one has a job However, EU citizens have not benefitted from the economic recovery equally. On average, the richest 20% EU households earn five times more than the poorest 20% households Fewer people live in jobless households, but their poverty level remains high or is increasing, reaching around 60% in the EU The share of working poor is increasing in a number of Member States, reaching 9.6% in the EU 30.1% of people with disabilities in the EU were at risk of poverty or social exclusion, compared to 20.9% of people without disabilities Welfare systems in different EU countries are not equally effective. The best system reduced the risk of poverty by 57%, the least effective by 16% (the EU average is 34%)

#### The second impact is war. Heidi Hardt writes in 2018 that currently NATO deters Russian aggression through its Article 5 agreement which states

Heidi Hardt, 7-16-2018, HuffPost, <span class="skimlinks-unlinked">https://www.huffpost.com/entry/opinion-hardt-trump-nato\_n\_5b4c9dfde4b022fdcc5b89d6</span>, Date Accessed 9-12-2019 // WS

Simply put, withdrawing from NATO would make the world less safe. It would likely increase the risk of attacks on allies and reopen the possibility of conflict among them. As part of the original [North Atlantic Treaty](https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/stock_publications/20120822_nato_treaty_en_light_2009.pdf), NATO’s critical Article 5 binds together the security of 29 member states; an attack on one state is considered an attack on all of them. The article was intended to act as a deterrent to the Soviet Union, and recent history suggests that it still serves this purpose against Vladimir Putin’s Russia. For example, Estonia, Lithuania and other former Soviet states that are now NATO allies have so far found themselves to be immune to a Russian incursion of ground troops. However, Russia did intervene in Georgia and in Ukraine ― two states seeking NATO membership. These actions suggest that Putin perceives Article 5 as a credible commitment by allies to defend its eastern border. In addition to providing collective defense for its member states, NATO has two other core [tasks](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_56626.htm): crisis management and cooperative security. The organization intervenes in crises around the globe on a scale that no one state has preferred to handle alone. The alliance is engaged in military operations around the world, from Kosovo to Afghanistan, with a renewed commitment to extend the latter operation till 2024. In addition to training Afghan security forces, NATO has committed to a new training mission in Iraq. The alliance also provides a forum for states to work together and teach one another in domains of common interest, such as arms control, counterterrorism and cybersecurity. After Russia’s internationally disputed annexation of Crimea, NATO reprioritized collective defense. The [declaration](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_156624.htm) that came out of this year’s NATO summit labels Russia as an aggressor that has undermined the “rules-based world order.” The alliance also disincentivizes conflict among its member states. Wars begin for many reasons, from leaders’ misperceptions to miscommunications and information gaps about capabilities and intentions. By regularly engaging in dialogue, NATO diplomats and military leaders ensure that disagreements among allies do not become conflicts ― all while working together to address common security problems. Importantly, the organization provides infrastructure, in the form of political and military headquarters in Belgium, where representatives of the member states communicate every day about security issues. Past studies in international relations have shown that providing such institutionalized cooperation can be an effective means of preventing conflicts. For the U.S. to leave NATO, or for the organization to disband, would bring significant risks to the internal and external security of its member states ― including the U.S. Although the U.S. spends significantly more of its gross domestic product on defense than any other country, it is not exempt from threats to its national security. After the tragic events of Sept. 11, 2001, NATO invoked Article 5 for the first and only time. The alliance has been key in supporting reductions in nuclear stockpiles. Without the security of NATO’s nuclear umbrella, European states without nuclear weapons might be more likely to consider acquiring them, increasing the risk of an intentional or accidental nuclear attack. Additional security risks could result from the end of NATO. Russia could be more willing to intervene in allied member states to reclaim former Soviet territory ― increasing the spread of authoritarianism and leading to more human rights violations like those observed in Russia. Eliminating allies’ existing cooperation on counterterrorism could increase the risk of terrorist attacks. Similarly, ending cooperation on cyberdefense could make more states susceptible to cyberattacks by Russia, China and non-state actors, including terrorist organizations.

#### This has empirically deterred Russian aggression, however, if NATO were to disband or the US reduce contributions, Hardt continues it

Heidi Hardt, 7-16-2018, HuffPost, <span class="skimlinks-unlinked">https://www.huffpost.com/entry/opinion-hardt-trump-nato\_n\_5b4c9dfde4b022fdcc5b89d6</span>, Date Accessed 9-12-2019 // WS

Simply put, withdrawing from NATO would make the world less safe. It would likely increase the risk of attacks on allies and reopen the possibility of conflict among them. As part of the original [North Atlantic Treaty](https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/stock_publications/20120822_nato_treaty_en_light_2009.pdf), NATO’s critical Article 5 binds together the security of 29 member states; an attack on one state is considered an attack on all of them. The article was intended to act as a deterrent to the Soviet Union, and recent history suggests that it still serves this purpose against Vladimir Putin’s Russia. For example, Estonia, Lithuania and other former Soviet states that are now NATO allies have so far found themselves to be immune to a Russian incursion of ground troops. However, Russia did intervene in Georgia and in Ukraine ― two states seeking NATO membership. These actions suggest that Putin perceives Article 5 as a credible commitment by allies to defend its eastern border. In addition to providing collective defense for its member states, NATO has two other core [tasks](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_56626.htm): crisis management and cooperative security. The organization intervenes in crises around the globe on a scale that no one state has preferred to handle alone. The alliance is engaged in military operations around the world, from Kosovo to Afghanistan, with a renewed commitment to extend the latter operation till 2024. In addition to training Afghan security forces, NATO has committed to a new training mission in Iraq. The alliance also provides a forum for states to work together and teach one another in domains of common interest, such as arms control, counterterrorism and cybersecurity. After Russia’s internationally disputed annexation of Crimea, NATO reprioritized collective defense. The [declaration](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_156624.htm) that came out of this year’s NATO summit labels Russia as an aggressor that has undermined the “rules-based world order.” The alliance also disincentivizes conflict among its member states. Wars begin for many reasons, from leaders’ misperceptions to miscommunications and information gaps about capabilities and intentions. By regularly engaging in dialogue, NATO diplomats and military leaders ensure that disagreements among allies do not become conflicts ― all while working together to address common security problems. Importantly, the organization provides infrastructure, in the form of political and military headquarters in Belgium, where representatives of the member states communicate every day about security issues. Past studies in international relations have shown that providing such institutionalized cooperation can be an effective means of preventing conflicts. For the U.S. to leave NATO, or for the organization to disband, would bring significant risks to the internal and external security of its member states ― including the U.S. Although the U.S. spends significantly more of its gross domestic product on defense than any other country, it is not exempt from threats to its national security. After the tragic events of Sept. 11, 2001, NATO invoked Article 5 for the first and only time. The alliance has been key in supporting reductions in nuclear stockpiles. Without the security of NATO’s nuclear umbrella, European states without nuclear weapons might be more likely to consider acquiring them, increasing the risk of an intentional or accidental nuclear attack. Additional security risks could result from the end of NATO. Russia could be more willing to intervene in allied member states to reclaim former Soviet territory ― increasing the spread of authoritarianism and leading to more human rights violations like those observed in Russia. Eliminating allies’ existing cooperation on counterterrorism could increase the risk of terrorist attacks. Similarly, ending cooperation on cyberdefense could make more states susceptible to cyberattacks by Russia, China and non-state actors, including terrorist organizations.

#### Specifically, due to NATO’s perceived weakness and inability to respond to an invasion, Moscow would invade the Balticss as Jack Beauchamp writes in 2016 that

Zack Beauchamp, 7-21-2016, "Donald Trump needs to clarify his position on NATO before something scary happens," Vox, https://www.vox.com/2016/7/21/12247074/donald-trump-nato-war, Date Accessed 9-12-2019 // WS

According to [some Russia experts](http://www.interpretermag.com/putin-believes-he-can-win-a-war-with-nato-piontkovsky-says/), Vladimir Putin’s ultimate wish in Europe is to break NATO. The way to do that, according to these scholars, is to expose the Article 5 guarantee as hollow: to show that when push comes to shove, the United States or other large NATO powers wouldn’t actually defend the weaker states. The Baltic states would be the most likely scenario for this to happen. They are very small, they’re right on Russia’s borders, and they aren't really all that important to Western countries' own security. By threatening these states, Russia would force a question: Are the United States, Britain, and France really willing to sacrifice their own soldiers in defense of a tiny state?

#### The impact is death. The Baltic states would force their civilians to fight in a ‘total defense’ strategy if Russia invades. Michael Peck writes that

Michael Peck, 10-21-2017, "If Russia Ever Invades the Baltics, This Is the Plan to Make It as Painful as Possible," National Interest, <a class="vglnk" href="https://nationalinterest.org/blog/the-buzz/if-russia-ever-invades-the-baltics-the-plan-make-it-painful-22807" Date Accessed 9-12-2019 // WS

The Baltic states have a plan to defend themselves against Russian invasion: mobilize their societies for the struggle. Should Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania go to war, their civilian populations will play a large part in the struggle, according to two RAND Corporation researchers. However, it’s not by choice. “As small countries with little strategic depth and limited human and economic resources, they are increasingly adopting a ‘total defense’ approach to national security, which includes enabling civilians to be able to protect themselves and to also support their nation’s professional armed forces in case of a conflict,” write Marta Kepe and Jan Osburg in [Small Wars Journal](http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/total-defense-how-the-baltic-states-are-integrating-citizenry-into-their-national-security-). The three nations only have a combined population of 6.2 million people, with about twenty-two thousand troops and 450 artillery pieces, but no tanks or jets. Russia can muster 845,000 troops—three hundred thousand in western Russia alone—backed by 2,600 tanks, 5,500 artillery pieces and almost 1,400 warplanes. Planning for a conventional conflict with Russia would be pointless. Despite popular resistance, an authoritarian nation like Russia might simply choose to absorb the costs of occupying all or parts of the Baltic states. Russia’s hybrid-warfare strategy, using a low-cost mixture of local irregulars backed by special forces and some regular troops, would be a relatively low cost way of seizing Baltic territory. In the end, no clever strategy can change the fact that Russia is big and the Baltic states are small. Nonetheless, as in any situation where there is bullying, simply declaring your readiness to stand up to a bigger aggressor just might deter attack—or at least not leave you feeling so helpless.