

# NATO and the war in Ukraine

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# A precarious situation...

- In Ukraine:
  - Ukrainian success, Russian exhaustion and desperation...
  - Nuclear threats and 'annexation' x 4...
  - Kerch bridge attack, revenge strikes...
- Elsewhere:
  - Popular unrest in Russia
  - US (NATO?) response to annexation and nuc threats: conventional (Sullivan); nuclear (Biden)
  - Energy blackmail and sabotage in Europe...

*Are we entering the end game, or the end of times...?*

# “Recommended reading for studious NSFers and guests:”

1. By Sean Monaghan (09 Feb 2022), “To Change Putin’s Behavior, the West Needs a New Strategy at: <https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/for-nato-deterring-a-ukraine-russia-war-isn-t-enough/>”
2. By Sean Monaghan (25 May 2022), “Reviving the Prospects for Coercive Diplomacy in Ukraine at: <https://www.fpri.org/article/2022/05/reviving-the-prospects-for-coercive-diplomacy-in-ukraine/>”
3. By Sean Monaghan (28 Jun 2022), “Resetting NATO’s Defense and Deterrence: The Sword and the Shield Redux at: <https://www.csis.org/analysis/resetting-natos-defense-and-deterrence-sword-and-shield-redux>”
4. By Sean Monaghan (23 Aug 2022), “The Sword, The Shield, and The Hedgehog: Strengthening Deterrence in NATO’s New Strategic Concept” at: <https://warontherocks.com/2022/08/the-sword-the-shield-and-the-hedgehog-strengthening-deterrence-in-natos-new-strategic-concept/>”
5. NEW: By Sean Monaghan (6 Oct 2022), “Five Steps NATO Should Take after the Nord Stream Pipeline Attack” <https://www.csis.org/analysis/five-steps-nato-should-take-after-nord-stream-pipeline-attack>”

# 1. To Change Putin's Behavior, the West Needs a New Strategy

*“Russia’s recent actions are the latest in an extended campaign of determined revisionism. Changing this trajectory requires compellence, not deterrence.”*

*This will be more difficult and riskier, but diplomacy stands a better chance of success if the strategy behind it is aligned with the desired outcome.”*



## 2. Reviving the Prospects for Coercive Diplomacy in Ukraine

*“Thomas Schelling, in *Arms and Influence*, distinguished between brute force and coercion as the difference “between action and threats.” In these terms, the West’s strategy has been all action and no threats—or all coercion and no diplomacy”*

*“Of most concern, though, is the risk of escalating the conflict through cornering and threatening an increasingly desperate and precarious nuclear armed dictator. This could have unpredictable and significant consequences—especially given Putin’s talent for miscalculation.”*



### 3. Resetting NATO's Defense and Deterrence: The Sword and the Shield Redux



*“Putin’s invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24, 2022 sealed the fate of NATO’s post-Cold War strategy.”*

*“Just as during the Cold War, NATO’s challenge will increasingly be to deter all forms of aggression at once: sub-threshold, conventional, and nuclear.*

*To meet the level of ambition agreed in its new strategic concept, NATO should revitalize deterrence by sharpening its sword, boosting its shield and bringing back its hedgehog defense.*

*Madrid was an important point of departure for NATO, but the alliance’s journey toward stronger defense and deterrence has only just begun.”*

Note: *“The key question now is therefore whether heavy losses in Ukraine will lead Moscow to become more reckless with its own nuclear saber — to both manage escalation in Ukraine, and deter NATO intervention.”*

### 4. The Sword, The Shield, and The Hedgehog: Strengthening Deterrence in NATO’s New Strategic Concept



# 5. Five Steps NATO Should Take after the Nord Stream Pipeline Attack

*“The attack on the Nord Stream pipelines, for which it appears Russia is likely responsible, is a wake-up call for NATO and Europe.*

*It vividly demonstrates the vulnerability of critical infrastructure, the damage hybrid attacks can wreak, and the difficulty of preventing and responding to them.”*



## SEE ALSO:

- Sean Monaghan (31 March 2022), "[Deterring hybrid threats: Towards a fifth wave of deterrence theory and practice](#)", Hybrid COE,
- Sean Monaghan (17 Dec 2021), "[Bad Idea: Winning the Gray Zone](#)", CSIS
- MCDC (2019), [Countering Hybrid Warfare](#) (a handbook)

# Further thoughts

- Regarding the **war in Ukraine**:
  - NATO's main aim is to contain the war and prevent horizontal escalation
  - NATO allies also have a clear interest in helping Ukraine win (and Russia lose) – hence their proxy war (and direct diplo, econ, info etc efforts) campaign
    - *Wash my fur, but don't get me wet*
  - Pathways to escalation on NATO territory exist where they did not before
  - The battlefield situation drives everything else
- Regarding **nuclear war**:
  - NATO is treating Ukraine as if it is under the alliance's nuclear umbrella
  - Pathways to nuclear escalation exist where they did not before
  - A new flexible response – meet nuclear threats with conventional?
- Regarding **hybrid war**:
  - The modern 'Fulda Gap' – Russia's most likely axis of attack
  - Assert 'Hybrid Art V' – but don't undermine conventional deterrence

# So what for NATO? Stay in the sweetspot...

## End the conflict

- ✓ Help Ukraine win (military assistance etc)
- ✓ Help Russia lose (sanctions, isolation etc)
- ✓ Deter vertical escalation in Ukraine (nuclear)

## Contain the conflict

- ✓ Deter horizontal escalation to NATO territory
- ✗ Prevent hybrid attacks on NATO members
- ✗ Minimize the wider Russia-West conflict

