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## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS | RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Ironclad US commitment to NATO? From NATO expansion to the Ukraine crisis

Yanan Song<sup>1\*</sup>

**Abstract:** Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in 2022 is not an accident but an inevitable consequence of how the West, especially the US, has utilised NATO in the post-Cold War period. This encompasses the activities which the US has supported NATO to pursue in the last 30 years: transformation, expansion, and participation in “out of area” actions. However, the US has never found it easy to help NATO remain the leading security organisation in Europe, not only because of threats posed by outside actors like Russia but also the mounting internal challenges, especially the long-standing issue of a “two-tiered” alliance. Washington has already shown reluctance to utilise NATO in Afghanistan, Libya, Syria, and now Ukraine to varying degrees. This paper seeks to understand why the US has remained committed to NATO and how the future US-NATO relationship will likely fare, including whether the Ukraine crisis can inject new life into the Alliance. It is believed that in the current context of uncertainty posed by NATO’s “Smart Defence” and the US “Pivot to Asia”, it seems highly likely that unless something changes, NATO will end up just doing less with less.

**Subjects:** International Relations; Security Studies - Pol & Intl Relns; Politics

**Keywords:** NATO; US foreign policy; transatlantic relations; Ukraine; Russia

### 1. Introduction

“For almost 73 years, NATO has remained the strongest military alliance in the world through its ability to adapt, expect the unexpected and prepare for it”, said Admiral Rob Bauer, Chair of the NATO Military Committee at NATO headquarters on 13 January 2022. It is evident that to those working on the inside, “NATO has never seemed in more robust shape: engaged in more places than ever before, churning out initiatives at a faster pace than ever and in ever-longer Summit declarations”; however, this is not true to most commentators and pundits on the outside<sup>1</sup> – to them, NATO seems to be in constant crisis and has long ceased to exist, which could date back as early as the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 when the geopolitical conditions that led to the creation of NATO disappeared (Shea, 2019).

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Yanan Song is a Lecturer in Global Politics at SOAS University of London. Her research has a strong focus on US foreign policy, with a particular interest in the US commitment to NATO in the post-Cold War period. Her work extensively explores the operations in Kosovo, Afghanistan, Libya, and Ukraine, applying a ‘foreign policy analysis’ approach, with a particular emphasis on intraadministration bureaucratic politics.

However, following significant debates about the appropriate direction for post-Cold War American internationalism, the US not only committed itself to the continuation of NATO but also began to sponsor a major programme of NATO renewal and enlargement. By 2023, the admission of new member states has increased the Alliance from the original 12 countries to 31, making NATO “the world’s strongest and most powerful alliance” (NATO Member Countries, 2023). It also extended its missions to participate in “out of area” actions in Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan and Libya. It further developed a doctrine regarding “new threats” and broadened the function of NATO to include effective mechanisms for solving disputes and coordinating foreign and political policies instead of strictly focusing on military responses (Stuart, 1993). All these interesting phenomena have raised a question: why has the US remained committed to NATO in the post-Cold War period, given that “almost all alliances dissolved once the original threat faded”? (Hellmann & Wolf, 1993) No wonder there was a heated debate over the purpose of NATO immediately after the collapse of the Soviet Union, but is that debate still relevant today? Since NATO has remained for 30 of the most eventful and challenging years in the post-Cold War history, is NATO’s persistence still a question nowadays? The answer is “Yes”.

In February 2022, when Russia launched a land, air and sea invasion of Ukraine, a clear violation that has created the gravest security crisis for the European security order since WWII, there was a high expectation that NATO would do something militarily (Chatham House, 2022; Krastev & Leonard, 2022). However, the US appears reluctant to utilise NATO (e.g., Washington has pushed back against requests for NATO to enforce a no-fly zone in Ukraine over worries that such direct combat could escalate into a broader war), bringing the question of its commitment to the Alliance to the spotlight again (Bennett, 2022).

In short, the debate over NATO’s persistence is ongoing today, as is the discussion about the US commitment to NATO. This paper argues that although the US shows reluctance to mobilise NATO on many occasions due to debates about expansion over interventions, two-tier troubles, and today’s new strategic environment with Russia, its commitment to the transatlantic alliance has remained ironclad. This is due to the US recognition of NATO as the “symbol of credibility”, a unique feature of the Alliance, and its utilisation of NATO both to achieve realist interests for security and defence, and to exercise liberal multilateralism and coordination with its allies, especially in the context of “the new Cold War” which is on in earnest now. To understand the decision-making of US policy on NATO, this paper draws on interactions between different international relations theories, particularly realism and liberal internationalism, as an overarching framework to explain Washington’s overall foreign policy preference. First, it looks at the US-NATO relationship from the end of the Cold War to NATO’s engagement in Afghanistan and Libya, and then to the US responses to Syria and Ukraine. It then provides an overview of the contemporary debate over the US commitment to NATO, especially whether the Ukraine crisis can inject new life into the Alliance. Lastly, it explores how the future US-NATO relationship will likely fare in the context of uncertainty posed by NATO’s “Smart Defence” and the US “Pivot to Asia”. In addition to secondary sources, this paper also draws on primary sources especially interviews with both government officials and academic experts conducted by the author in Washington D.C.

## 2. The US commitment to NATO in the post-Cold War period

### 2.1. Alliance theory

According to neorealists, “states facing an external threat will align with others to oppose the states posing the threat” (Walt, 1987, p. 32). The other side of the coin is that if the alignment were formed because of a threat, it would falter without a threat. Scholars like Waltz and Mearsheimer predicted that without the Soviet threat, NATO would cease to be a durable alliance (Hellmann & Wolf, 1993; Mearsheimer, 1990). The ending of the Cold War unlocked a period of profound soul-searching within the Alliance. However, NATO enjoys some unique features that no other alliance can display: its member states share common values in addition to common interests. With a belief in the natural affinity of democracies, members of NATO view each other as inherently

good states that have no intention to pose a threat to one another. This enables NATO members to develop a high level of both organisational and institutional cooperation, making NATO a “symbol of credibility”, which, according to Walt, is more likely to persist (Walt, 1997).

To clarify further, those who predicted an end to NATO after the Cold War took too narrow a perspective of the Alliance’s function. NATO started transforming as early as the security environment changed, quickly increasing its relevance to the post-Cold War world. With the constant evolution of “New Strategic Concepts”, NATO was no longer a pure regional defensive organisation; instead, it became a diplomatic and political alliance capable of dealing with issues “out-of-area”. In addition, as the fundamental idea of institutionalism implies, once a regime is set up, internal and external incentives exist to perpetuate it rather than starting anew when problems arise (McCalla, 1996). NATO members have already spent a long time learning how to “work as one”; thus, there was no reason for them to abandon the existing structures and form an alternative, not to mention that creating a new regime would be more costly than maintaining the current one. NATO would persist as long as its members continue to treat the Alliance as the “symbol of credibility” and wish to transform NATO promptly to deal with new problems.

From the perspective of Alliance Theory, NATO is still relevant to the post-Cold War world, as it has successfully adapted to the new security environment. NATO’s high degree of organisational and institutional development set NATO off from traditional alliances, whereas it does not mean the Alliance’s record cannot be duplicated or even approached. In other words, although NATO’s superiority could explain why NATO persisted in the post-Cold War period, it is not enough to explain why the US was willing to remain committed to the Alliance. To understand US foreign policy-making on NATO, it is necessary to figure out what would influence its general direction, the grand strategy and the overall foreign policy preference.

## **2.2. US foreign policy on NATO: the realist perspective**

The realist approach has guided the US foreign policy throughout the Cold War. Both defensive and offensive realists provided explicit explanations for why the US chose to engage in global affairs through NATO. According to Waltz, NATO was set up due to defensive purposes: collective defense rather than aggregate power, was the key driver for the alliance formation in the face of an imminent threat from the Soviet Union. However, Mearsheimer argues the opposite that alliances form because of power-oriented motivations: states who are unsatisfied with a given amount of power seek opportunities to increase power at the expense of competitors. (Mearsheimer, 2001, p. 35) Offensive realists further stress that the US planned to use NATO to achieve “regional hegemony” that would enable the US to act as an offshore balancer to intervene in other regions when states within those regions were unable to prevent the rise of a hegemon. Both defensive and offensive realism agree that great powers’ participation in world affairs is vital to the making of international order, however, the former is apparently more convincing in explaining the US continued commitment to NATO given the fact that the Soviet/Russian threat has never truly disappeared or reduced.

One of the most obvious reasons that NATO persisted after the Cold War was the need to contain Russia. Although NATO’s door is claimed to be open to any European country, including Russia, the likelihood of granting membership to Russia is always remote because “Russia’s membership would constitute a significant counterweight to American influence and dilute the alliance’s cohesion, complicating decision-making procedures” (Ratti, 2009). Washington has established a strategic partnership with Moscow. Still, utilising this interest-based partnership remains unpractical as “all partnerships entail prior acceptance of the different positions and are dependent on both sides having something to gain” (Flockhart, 2014). Worse, the Ukrainian crisis reaffirmed that “there can be no return to a ‘strategic partnership’ between NATO and Russia so long as Russia’s actions threaten European security” (Butora, 2014). Put it, the US as the leader of the transatlantic alliance, would never treat Russia as a partner in the same way as the other NATO allies. Mutual trust never exists between them: for example, even nowadays, Russia

continues to spend resources monitoring the Americans, British and others as if the Cold War never ended, and as if “personal or political enemies were a threat to President Vladimir Putin and the oligarchy through which he rules still-imperial Russia” (Andelman, 2014).

NATO has been a constant source of tension between Russia and the West. The unpleasant interaction has repeated in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, including Russia’s opposition to Georgian and Ukrainian membership in NATO and its suspicion of almost all NATO operations. Russia regarded US action in the Middle East as reckless and irresponsible and believed it should not be involved in the US-led “War on Terror”. In the case of Libya, although Russia did not prevent the UN Security Council resolutions, it opposed the intervention and criticised the “disproportionate use of force”. (Security Council 6528<sup>th</sup> Meeting, 2011) While Washington favoured sanctions and resolutions calling Assad to quit in Syria, Moscow refused to support such moves. The “preventive” strikes against Serbia, Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya reinforced in the minds of many Russians the image of Washington that it became predatory and aggressive. Without a doubt, “America is seen as Russia’s enemy because it tries to dominate globally” (Shlapentokh, 2012). Hence, even nowadays, Russia has continued to spend resources monitoring the Americans, British and others as if the Cold War never ended and as if “personal or political enemies were a threat to President Vladimir Putin and the oligarchy through which he rules still-imperial Russia” (Andelman, 2014).

With the growing fear of escalating Russia-West tensions, it seems necessary and even imperative for Washington to prepare for a possible confrontation with Moscow, which might flare up at any time. To this, NATO is seen as the best ready-made tool to achieve that end. In other words, realism did not bring the transatlantic alliance any new purpose, and NATO remained an anti-Russia organisation in the post-Cold War period.

### **2.3. US foreign policy on NATO: the liberal internationalist perspective**

#### *2.3.1. Post-cold war*

In the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union, the understanding of national interests based on Cold War mentality suffered much criticism for its negligence of emerging realities. The explanatory power of realism, which provided “a narrow and incomplete description and explanation of world affairs”, was eroding due to its exclusive focus on military matters (Mansbach & Vasquez, 1981). According to Keohane and Nye, states would therefore try to use international organisations, which have become “a normal part of foreign as well as domestic relations”, as instruments other than military forces for obtaining power (Keohane & Nye, 1977). This “alternative, pluralistic perspective to that of power and security” has increasingly influenced US foreign policy in the post-Cold War era (Geeraerts, 1995).

NATO was the first to benefit from changing US foreign policy preference for liberal internationalism. For example, NATO became a valuable tool for the US to achieve the order it wished—The world order during the Cold War was characterised as a US-led liberal international order, which was a result of the weakness of postwar Europe and rising tensions with the Soviet Union (Ikenberry, 2009). This US-led order has functioned well even after the end of the Cold War. For instance, one significant development of liberal internationalism was the elaboration of the universal rights of man, which legally permitted the international community to intervene in the affairs of sovereign states due to the “Responsibility to Protect”. Concerning this global political commitment, in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Washington has more than once called for the US-led NATO to participate in “out of area” missions where human rights were unprotected. This quickly signalled that the US was keen on liberal multilateralism and coordination in venues like NATO.

#### *2.3.2. Post-9/11*

However, when the 9/11 attacks shocked the world, although member states of NATO required the US to invoke Article Five immediately, the Bush Administration declared its response unilaterally,

causing heated debates over the appropriate direction for post-9/11 American internationalism. President Bush decided to bypass NATO, “choosing instead to adopt a more flexible approach based upon forming an ad-hoc coalition”, which directly led to the marginalisation of the Alliance at the very heart of transatlantic relations for more than 50 years by then (Hallams, 2010). As NATO leaders gathered for the Prague Summit in 2002, one headline declared “The last days of the Atlantic Alliance” (Kupchan, 2002, p. 23). This period witnessed a severe crisis in NATO’s continuation, as the US turned to fight the “War on Terror” through a coalition of the willing which allowed any member to opt-in and opt-out at any time replacing NATO’s institutional structures. But gradually, “with the US and NATO engaged in critical operations in Afghanistan and an ongoing transformation agenda” (e.g. the US supported NATO to assume the overall control of ISAF by 2003), it appeared that the US remained firmly committed to NATO (Hallams, 2010). The Afghanistan mission became a “groundbreaking operation” representing a landmark in NATO’s history, as it was NATO’s first ground combat, and more significantly, the first time for NATO to conduct an operation outside Europe.

In this situation, the new US National Strategy was revealed, highlighting the American foreign policy to be “as much multilateral as possible, as much unilateral as necessary” (Author conducted an interview with Lieber, 2012). Concerning this, in dealing with Iran, the Bush Administration subcontracted to the “EU Three” including Britain, France and Germany; on the issue of the North Korean nuclear programme, it was deeply involved in the six-party talks, which was not unilateral at all. Then we may wonder, which approach—realism or liberal internationalism- did Bush prefer? Did he select one and abandon the other? If Bush were a pure unilateralist, NATO’s validity would have been damaged considerably, leaving no room for his successor to utilise the Alliance. But in hindsight, President Obama found NATO capable of accomplishing assigned tasks. For example, the case of Libya again underscored NATO’s advantages in providing a high level of legitimacy and in accumulating sufficient resources. More importantly, the US decided to transfer the Libyan mission to NATO, which further demonstrated its preference for multilateral cooperation and strengthened the faith that “When the US needs help in the world, there is no better place to go than Europe” (Author conducted an interview with Kupchan, 2012).

### 2.3.3. *Post-Libya*

However, when the Libyan crisis subsided, American leaders began re-evaluating the relationship with European allies under the framework of NATO. It was generally agreed that the US had no direct, first-order interests in Libya. However, the US also understood that its allies had immense interests in peril. For example, France and Britain were concerned about the potential instability and the increasing violent extremism, and Italy was particularly concerned about the potential refugees (Moisi, 2011). Therefore, one of the primary reasons the US finally decided to join the campaign was the need to help its European allies win the war. Robert Gates, then-Secretary of Defense, even complained that the mightiest military alliance in history is only 11 weeks into an operation against a poorly armed regime in a sparsely populated country. Yet many allies are beginning to run short of munitions, requiring the US, once more, to make up the difference. In his speech on the future of the transatlantic alliance when he left office, Gates warned that NATO risked “military irrelevance” unless spending would be increased by members other than the US. (Traynor, 2011) There was a prominent concern that the US would not stand for the imbalanced share of burdens much longer, leading to an urgent request for Europe to invest in more capabilities.

This became even more obvious when President Obama was reluctant to remain an Atlanticist in his second term. For instance, his second inaugural speech did not mention anything about Europe (Obama, 2013). Moreover, when the war loomed in Mali, the US acquiesced in French intervention, showing even less interest than in Libya. Obama, who once committed more than 30,000 troops to the allied fight against the Taliban, even planned to withdraw almost all American troops from Afghanistan by the end of 2014. In this regard, questions arose about whether Obama retreated to be an isolationist (Gray, 2013). The truth is that Obama remained on the liberal multilateral track;

however, he re-orientated the US to face up to the rise of Asia rather than abandoning foreign commitments. His shift of focus from Europe to Asia was evident in his trip to Australia in November 2011 when he said, "the Asia Pacific is critical to achieving my highest priority ... As President, I have, therefore, made a deliberate and strategic decision—as a Pacific nation, the United States will play a larger and long-term role in shaping this region and its future by upholding core principles and in close partnership with our allies and friends" (Obama, 2011). This was not empty rhetoric. He further declared a massive transfer of naval hardware toward the Pacific region. In June 2012, Leon Panetta, then-Secretary of Defense, claimed at the annual Shangri-La Dialogue conference that "By 2020, the (US) navy will reposture its forces from today's roughly 50–50% split between the Pacific and Atlantic to about a 60–40% between those oceans" (Panetta, 2012). In addition, though Obama's first trips as president were to Canada, Britain, France and Germany, he, after re-election, paid his first visit to Thailand, making himself the first serving US president to visit Burma and Cambodia. He also visited Japan and Indonesia twice and South Korea three times, reflecting an accelerated shift to the Pacific and a weakened tie with Europe.

Although the US foreign policy has tended to focus more on Asia, it did not ignore Europe completely. On 16 February 2013, Obama gave the annual state-of-the-union message to Congress, announcing that America and the EU would begin talks to create a transatlantic free-trade zone. This proposal was familiar but reemphasised how high Europe ranked on the list of American foreign policy. The debate about whether the US has styled itself more like a Pacific than a European power strengthens the US attachment to the multilateralist approach. On the one hand, the Obama Doctrine encouraged US cooperation with Europe, though it also asked for more European contributions to NATO. Understandably, the transaction costs of regime creation are much higher than regime maintenance's; thus, abandoning NATO or creating another institution to replace it would not be a wise choice. On the other hand, considering US national interests at all levels, Obama expanded the traditional multilateral framework to include one more coordinate besides Europe, resulting in his "Pivot to Asia" strategy. This of course sent a clear signal that the US was determined to strengthen multilateral cooperation with other countries not only in Europe but also around the world. As a global power, the US relied on "a worldwide network of alliance arrangements", and NATO was thus "one of the many moving parts of US global strategy" (Webber et al., 2014). All these reaffirmed the importance of liberal multilateralism in US policymaking.

#### 2.3.4. Syria

In the post-Cold War period, the US supported NATO to participate in many "out of area" actions, including Kosovo, Afghanistan and Libya, which were accomplished as NATO operations. Hence when the Syrian crisis broke out, there was a high expectation of seeing the US and NATO taking action, particularly when taking into account that Syria was of greater strategic importance to the US than Libya in terms of the chain reaction that resolving the Syrian crisis would also deal a severe setback to Iran's grandiose Middle East ambitions. However, this time the US and its allies were reluctant to issue coercive measures in the same way as they did in Libya, insisting that "the Assad regime, backed by Russia and Iran, is incommensurably more resilient than its Libyan counterpart" (Hoyle, 2014). Although it was already obvious that the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), which "stands with Al-Qaeda as one of the most dangerous jihadist groups", was posing "a threat to the entire region" and might become "the most cash-rich militant group in the world", Syria could not justify a US intervention because, according to realist evaluation, Washington had no immense interests in peril (BBC, 2014). It was not surprising when the Gallup poll showed 51% of Americans opposed military action "to attempt to end the conflict" if "all economic and diplomatic efforts fail to end the civil war in Syria" (Dugan, 2013). Another apparent reason why Washington hesitated to intervene was that it had limited tools available to affect the change in Syria, given "the capabilities of the Syrian army, its alliance with Hezbollah and Iran, and the fact that the US forces were now engaged in three wars in the Middle East already". (Indyk et al., 2012) Ideally, the operation might become possible if Washington could generate military support from

its allies. However, the lesson of the previous cooperation, including the just-concluded Libyan mission, suggested the US should carefully consider the adoption of NATO, for the task literally assigned to all members, would mainly fall on the shoulders of the US in the end.

After the chemical attack on Ghouta in August 2013, a US-led military intervention seemed to be in the offing. However, “no sooner had Obama declared his intention to respond to the chemical attack with the use of force than a powerful constituency within and beyond the West mobilised against the imminent war” (Tocci, 2014). More ironically, the US and European countries were relieved when Russia proposed a plan to place Syria’s chemical weapons under international supervision. Yet the destruction of chemical weapons would be only marginally consequential to resolving the crisis. The Geneva negotiations in early 2014, which aimed to call for unfettered humanitarian access, also failed due to the objection from the Syrian regime and Russia. However, Russia was not seen as “the main block to progress in Syria” until it announced an intervention in Syria, making the Syrian war “a major potential flashpoint in the increasingly adversarial US-Russian relationship” (Hoyle, 2014; Weiss & NG, 2019). To mitigate the risk, the US and its allies started to seriously reconsider the need to issue coercive measures (Tocci, 2014). The questions remain: how willing was the US to work with its allies to solve the regional crisis, and how confident was the US to utilise NATO for the operation? In hindsight, it is clear the US consideration over multilateral cooperation and humanitarian emergency outweighed its realist calculation of self-interest—if it were the interest to deconflict US-Russian military activities and to limit the threat of inadvertent confrontation that drove the US decision, the US would “take unilateral action against Syria without the support of one of its staunchest allies”, yet the Obama administration constantly stressed it remained the goal that any decision be “an international collaboration” (Smith et al., 2013). The US eventually supported to form and lead a counter-ISIS “global coalition” in 2014. However, whether it was wise to choose this multilateral approach is still debatable, given that even though all NATO members were part of the counter-ISIS coalition, not all took a substantial part in the airstrikes against ISIS. More ironically, the Syrian war has lasted 12 years by far, leaving half a million people dead, devastated cities and drawn in other countries (BBC, 2022). Today, it still does not look like the war will end anytime soon, though everyone agrees “a military solution is an illusion” (Pedersen, 2022).

### 2.3.5. *Ukraine (2014, 2022)*

If Syria were a case where costs outweighed benefits, which led to US “indifference” to the crisis, Ukraine would conversely attract significant US attention in the first place, given that it was a mission of greater strategic importance and benefits. However, when the armed conflict in eastern Ukraine erupted in early 2014 following Russia’s annexation of Crimea, the US did very little to solve the crisis, despite imposing sanctions on Russian firms and individuals close to President Putin and suspending military cooperation with Russia. With the Russian troops moving forward, the Ukraine crisis has “created the most significant crisis in US-Russia relations since the end of the Cold War” (Goldgeier, 2014). If Syrian use of chemical weapons did not cross a “red line” to urge the US to strike the Assad regime, this time, Russia’s unprovoked action in Ukraine seemed very likely to enrage Obama to seek military means. The Ukraine crisis made for fretful times in the Baltic states, which joined NATO in 2004 – these two ex-Soviet republics worried about being the next target of Putin’s irredentism. Considering that today’s Baltics “are all small and have undergone a deep economic slump” and “depend entirely on NATO for air defence”, the US as the leader of NATO, was expected to do something to stop Russia’s aggressive action (The Economist, 2014). In other words, Ukraine gave the US a chance to reconsider how far it was willing to tolerate the Russian president, who saw the establishment of a Eurasian Union as his ultimate goal (Michel, 2014). The domestic appeal to Obama became increasingly severe as many felt it was time to stop Putin from pursuing a foreign policy firmly at odds with Western interests, firstly in Syria and now in Ukraine.

However, according to George Friedman (2014), the US did not have interests in Ukraine that justified war, and neither Washington nor Moscow was in a position militarily to fight a war. But it was also agreed that whether Russia’s annexation of Crimea and its military deployments in

Ukraine went beyond the US “bottom line”, the transatlantic alliance had a vital role to play (Pishchikova, 2014). Apparently, the Ukraine crisis helped revive NATO’s central role as a counterweight to Moscow and “persuade NATO to move forces closer to the frontier” (Erlanger, 2014). The Alliance was designed, as the old phrase went, “to keep the Russians out, the Americans in, and the Germans down” (Reynolds, 1994). Putin acted more like a Cold War antagonist, arguing that “Russia has the right to defend Russians everywhere” (Erlanger, 2014). He set a new mission for Russia—“to restore the country’s greatness, which he says was surrendered by weak leaders who were tricked by the West”, thereby regarding Ukraine as an opportunity to “change status” (Hoyle & Peck, 2014). To be more specific, Putin hoped to seize this opportunity to keep Ukraine out of NATO and guarantee long-term Russian influence in the east of the country; however, the 2014 Russian-Ukrainian war did not stop Ukraine from pursuing NATO membership, instead, since then “cooperation between NATO and Ukraine has been intensified in critical areas”. (NATO, 2022)

Since the NATO Summit in Warsaw in 2016, NATO’s practical support for Ukraine has been set out in the Comprehensive Assistance Package for Ukraine. The following year witnessed the Ukrainian Parliament adopting legislation reinstating membership in NATO as a strategic foreign and security policy objective. Later a corresponding amendment to Ukraine’s Constitution entered into force in 2019. Moreover, in 2020 Ukraine further approved its new National Security Strategy, which “provides for the development of the distinctive partnership with NATO with the aim of membership in NATO” (Getmanchuk, 2020). Ukraine’s continued ambitions to align itself more with Western countries, particularly with its publicly stated interest in joining NATO, has been met with aggression from Russia again—tensions came to a head in 2022 when Russia launched a “full-scale invasion” of Ukraine, setting off “the biggest military mobilisation in Europe since WWII” and “the most dangerous struggle between Moscow and NATO allies since the Cold War” (Bilefsky, 2022; Donahue, 2022).

Russia’s invasion of Ukraine was not an accident but an inevitable consequence of how the West, especially the US, utilised NATO in the post-Cold War period. Most profoundly, the US has supported NATO expansion ever since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the breakup of the Warsaw Pact, adding new members through eight rounds of enlargement which undoubtedly brought the West to Russia’s doorstep. Initially, Russia’s military doctrine did not identify NATO as its primary threat, but Moscow was disturbed by the Alliance’s “endless enlargement”. To this, Russia has long made future NATO membership for Ukraine and Georgia, two former Soviet republics, a “red line” in its relations with the West (Sweeney, 2010). However, the West did not treat the warning seriously; instead, it criticised Russia as returning to the thinking of the Cold War when NATO was the Soviet Union’s most prominent foe. Russia’s patience with NATO’s ever-more intrusive behaviour was wearing thin. The last reasonably friendly warning from Moscow that NATO needed to back off came in 2007 when Putin complained at the annual Munich security conference that NATO expansion “represents a serious provocation that reduces the level of mutual trust. And we have the right to ask: against whom is this expansion intended?” (Putin, 2014) He made it clear that Moscow felt the West tricked the former Soviet Union by breaking promises made at the end of the Cold War that NATO would not expand to the east. Although many predicted NATO expansion would lead to war, the warning was ignored (Carpenter, 2022a). The Alliance’s eastward expansion to Russia’s borders together with NATO members’ little enthusiasm for Russia’s call to create a new European umbrella security treaty, eventually led to Russia’s belief in NATO’s “betrayal” hence triggering confrontations between Russia and the West (Wintour, 2022).

Putin’s current actions should be easy to comprehend. No Russian leader would tolerate “a military alliance that was Moscow’s mortal enemy” moving into Ukraine, which serves as a buffer state of enormous strategic importance to Russia (Mearsheimer, 2014). On many occasions, it has been emphasised to their western counterparts that they consider NATO expansion into Ukraine (and Georgia) inappropriate—a message that the 2008 Russian-Georgian war and the 2014 Russian-Ukrainian war already made crystal clear. But one may also wonder why the confrontation

between Russia and Ukraine did not move towards “uncontrolled escalation” until 2022. Some argue that Putin invaded Ukraine because he always had designs on Ukraine, which he believed, Ukraine and Russia were “one people” as Ukrainian nationality was always “an integral part of a triune nationality: Russian, Belorussian, and Ukrainian” (University of Rochester, 2022). More importantly, Putin believed he was strong enough now to take it. That is why the Ukrainian war was described as a war of aggression. However, it is also worth noting that the timing of Putin’s launch of his devastating, full-scale war was when the West failed to provide the security guarantees he has demanded since late 2021 that “not only would Kyiv never receive a membership invitation, but NATO weapons and troops would never be deployed on Ukrainian soil”, which was a response to the West’s long-lasting “intolerable provocation” to Russia through NATO expansion (Carpenter, 2022b).

Russia’s invasion of Ukraine has abruptly transformed the world. A new Iron Curtain is grinding into place (Davidson et al., 2022). Russia’s cruel overaction deserves emphatic condemnation, but the culpability of the US and its NATO allies is also sizable. According to Carpenter, “moving an alliance that one great power dominates to the border of another major power is inherently destabilising and provocative” (Carpenter, 2022a). Therefore, NATO, especially NATO expansion, seems to blame for the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine (Friedman, 2022; Sachs, 2022). To this, many begin to argue that NATO should be dissolved to solve future Ukraines. For instance, calling NATO a “product of the Cold War”, China has believed the Alliance “should have become history long ago” and urged non-NATO countries to practice caution in their attempts to develop relations with the military alliance (Zhao, 2022). Whether Russia can seize this opportunity to keep Ukraine out of NATO and guarantee long-term Russian influence in the east of the country is unclear; nonetheless, Russia’s aggression undoubtedly offers a chance to enhance the cohesion of the transatlantic alliance.

After all these years of debate over the relevance of NATO to the post-Cold War world, NATO at least has a purpose today: to contain Russia. Since the 2014 Russian-Ukrainian war, a prediction has already been widely spread that the US and Russia were heading back toward a Cold War. For instance, 50% of Americans believed the US was returning to Cold War, and Russia would be the most challenging foreign policy issue facing the US even if US-Russian tensions did not escalate to the point they had been during the Cold War (Riffkin, 2014). This prediction was further reaffirmed when Russia invaded Ukraine again in 2022 – today, 52% of Americans believe the conflict between Russia and Ukraine in 2022 is a “critical” threat to the vital interests of the US in the next 10 years (Gallup, 2022). In this sense, the Alliance seems to have circled back to where it started. With regard to NATO’s “new” purpose, the Ukraine crisis helps bring the US and European members together again. Over the past two decades, most European countries have been less interested in the former Soviet states than the US, which “maintained a more pro-active and explicitly political stance on the region” (Pishchikova, 2014). Yet as the crisis in Ukraine has unfolded, the Europeans realise it is now imperative to clarify their strategic position in the region and strengthen their coordination with the US on ways forward. For example, the brutal manner in which Putin has tried to foreclose Ukraine’s security options has led Finland and Sweden, two Nordic countries that have historically avoided NATO membership, to reverse decades of military neutrality. On 4 April 2023, Finland became NATO’s newest member, which, as NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said, shows the world that Putin failed to “slam NATO’s door shut” (NATO, 2023). If later Sweden also joins the Alliance, the accession would dramatically expand NATO’s border with Russia and make a further entrenchment of the geopolitical rivalry (Masters, 2022). It is unsurprising that “Putin’s attack on Ukraine, intended to push NATO back from Russia’s borders, has brought it closer” (The Economist, 2022). In other words, instead of stopping NATO from expanding, Russia is likely to see the Ukraine crisis helping accelerate NATO enlargement. On the US side, as President Biden emphasised, America’s commitment to the transatlantic alliance is unshakeable, and the US and its allies will collectively defend and protect every inch of NATO territory (Biden, 2021, 2022). Ukraine allows the US to reflect on its recent retreat towards a policy of putting its weight behind the Europeans’ efforts, increasing the possibility of more intimate transatlantic cooperation.

In short, considering that the US and its NATO allies have been going out of their way to help Ukraine despite it not being a NATO member, the Ukraine crisis “is a complete reminder of why NATO is useful” (Erlanger, 2014). As previous NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen stated at the 2014 GLOBSEC forum, “no one should doubt NATO’s resolve” and the Alliance should stand up “for a Europe that is truly whole, free and at peace” firmly grounded in the European Union and firmly connected with North American Allies through NATO (Stoltenberg, 2022). The Ukraine crisis may help forge a new transatlantic reset, given that NATO members and partners are spontaneously motivated to send Putin a signal that there will be a great price to pay for his aggressive actions in the region. For example, Western countries have introduced increasingly widespread sanctions targeting individuals, banks, businesses and major state-owned enterprises, and exports, among others. The US is banning all Russian oil and gas imports, and the European Union and the UK have also announced to phase out Russian oil imports by the end of 2022 (BBC, 2022). Instead of embarrassing the US and the international community, Putin’s aggression is likely to be more damaging to himself. The Ukraine crisis helps “reunite” the US and its allies, who have been frustrated with the friction between each other for a long time. It seems that the NATO members are experiencing an existential threat as they did during the Cold War, which helps divert their attention from whether they should cooperate to how best they can cooperate. Now, by giving NATO the old but new purpose of attacking a common enemy, Ukraine is likely to inject new life into the transatlantic alliance. The fast-evolving crisis in Ukraine may undoubtedly become a point of no return, and NATO with “an updated Strategic Concept” is likely to emerge to “meet any challenge in the new and more dangerous security environment”. (Biden, 2022)

### 3. The future US commitment to NATO

#### 3.1. Contemporary debate and ‘smart defence’

Clearly, NATO still applies to the US after the Cold War—“the Alliance might not be perfect, but it is still the best thing going (for transatlantic relations)” (Author conducted an interview with Kupchan, 2012). It could serve as a hedge against Russian aggression and help anchor the US in Europe and provide an entry point into Eurasia. In the US, these arguments play in various ways allowing those who want NATO to continue to fight off isolationist tendencies in Washington and make the continuing case for NATO. Additionally, given that NATO has also effectively transformed and successfully participated in “out of area” operations, there is good reason to see the US feeling happy and confident to utilise this professional organisation when needed. Connecting to these debates are those about the different trajectories of the US and Europe: the former has increasingly called upon a global role after 1991 in what people then spoke about as a *pax Americana*, and then the global “War on Terror”; while Europe has looked increasingly inwards in its creation of a zone of peace and stability in Europe while the world outside Europe was left to the US (Kagan, 2003). Further, these debates connected burden-sharing and Europe’s de facto defence reliance on the US; thus, the US-European relationship is centred around the genuine difference in defence capability. And this becomes the core issue of the transatlantic alliance, which remains largely unaddressed.

Previous NATO operations have repeatedly shown US concerns over the “two-tiered” alliance. For instance, the Libyan mission, as the most recent NATO operation, not only underlined the unforeseeable nature of conflicts but also demonstrated the need for less reliance on the US for costly advanced capabilities. Although Washington was still the largest contributor to the operation, its strategy of “leading from behind” in Libya at least sent a message to its allies that “rebalancing defence spending between the European nations and the US is more than ever necessary” (G7 Leaders Statement, 2014). European members of NATO have long been required to reduce the gap with the US by equipping themselves with more capabilities, yet not until Libya did they realise the seriousness of the problem which might terminate the continuation of the transatlantic alliance: they were more or less surprised by the US first-ever apparent retreat. In fact, maintaining NATO requires the European states to “share the United States” conception of a stable, sustainable international order, and be willing to devote resources to maintaining that order, even in situations where their immediate territorial security is not at risk” (Becker & Malesky, 2014). Therefore, to ensure equitable sharing of the defence burden, NATO

introduced “Smart Defence” at the 2012 Chicago Summit, which advocated “pooling and sharing resources, setting better priorities and encouraging countries to specialise in things they are best at” (Xinhua, 2012). The “Smart Defence” aimed to renew the culture of cooperation by adopting “a new way of thinking about generating the modern defence capabilities the Alliance needs for the coming decade and beyond” (NATO., 2012).

The “Smart Defence” initiative was inspired by the remarks of Gates, who believed that NATO faced “the real possibility (of) a dim, if not dismal future” (Shanker, 2011). His prediction was based on the fact that European members were chronically underfunded in their defence apparatuses and that Washington had to cut down its contribution to NATO’s operating budget because of the economic pressure and the need for rebalancing military commitments to the Pacific. At that time, whether the US would reduce its defence budget by a wide margin was uncertain, but as the Libyan operation showed, it would probably “do what it must—playing roles and providing surge capabilities that only it can provide” while asking Europe to “bear the rest of the burden for operations that are more in its interests than those of the United States” (Pavel & Lightfoot, 2012). To this, “Smart Defence” was intended to make European countries more responsible for their security as the US withdrew from the continent. It was expected to see this new approach well-suited to capitalise on increasing near-term consensus on fiscal constraints and the long-term convergence in strategic policy orientation. Ideally, “Smart Defence” would help solve or at least ease the tensions between Washington and European capitals over burden-sharing, but it has not brought visible change so far. European governments remained committed to deficit reduction, having their military spending slighted due to Europe’s financial crisis.

The function of “Smart Defence” is highly dependent on whether “the European share of operational expenditures is actually increasing” and when “the United States begins shifting expenditures away from the defence in general” (Becker & Malesky, 2014). Above all, it demands natural strategic elaboration. In this sense, “Smart Defence” is seen as “a top-down approach, a sort of moral obligation” and “strictly not mandatory”, which leads to a problem that “it touches deep engrained sentiments and procedures, rooted in strategic cultures based on sovereignty, thus affecting states’ freedom to choose capabilities though to better serve national strategy’ (Eugenio, 2013). Worry and scepticism of “Smart Defence” abound, as one could even envision creating an intermediate level of decision-making by supporting sub-groups that could eventually lead to the alliance’s dissolution in the future. Francois Heibourg, chairman of the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) and the Geneva Centre for Security Policy, said that governments all too often chose jobs in defence companies at home over military logic. In addition to this structural trouble facing NATO, the idea of “Smart Defence” was uncomfortably hung over by Germany’s noncooperation: “the voters of the biggest and richest country in European NATO—Germany – are resistant to the use of force in almost any context” (The Economist, 2012). This raises questions of how seriously can the “Smart Defence” be taken and how to support NATO members best to invest in interoperable, cutting-edge and cost-effective equipment to carry out missions and tasks.

The current Ukraine crisis provides another opportunity to test the function of the “Smart Defence”, yet the result seems unsatisfactory. Putin’s aggression on NATO’s doorstep in Ukraine has triggered the Alliance’s mission to protect Europe from invasion. The US wants to see NATO allies follow their commitments to boost military spending and deploy troops and equipment in Eastern Europe. However, for example, while the US banned its purchases of Russian oil and gas, Germany and other European countries that rely more heavily on Russian energy imports have largely kept Russian fuel flowing. Washington believes Europe can do more to wean itself off from Russian energy, and it also helps by delivering liquified natural gas to Europe. Still, European allies are not content and want “more assistance for investing in alternatives to Russian supplies” (Bennett, 2022). Europe has the capacity to provide modern capabilities and forces necessary for collective security efforts, however, big EU powers still fall short of a common goal of spending 2% of economic output on defence set in 2014. They have initiated various platforms such as the European Defense Agency, the EU Battlegroups, the European Intervention Initiative, etc, which

unfortunately still fail to encourage European countries to spend substantial extra money on defence. Instead, numerous bottlenecks are reemphasised including “inefficient defense planning, a shortage of raw materials for production of weapons and ammunition, long procurement processes and limited production capability that could take years to expand” (Bayer, 2023). The European reluctance, cautious approach, and limited contribution once again remind the US of the long-standing problem of a “two-tiered” alliance “between those willing and able to pay the price and bear the burdens of alliance commitments and those who enjoy the benefits of NATO membership—be they security guarantees or headquarters billets—but don’t want to share the risks and the costs” (Gates, 2011a, 2022b). So far, it has not been promising to see the “Smart Defence” make a real difference in transatlantic cooperation, and its future also looks gloomy, particularly when taking into account that the US seems more eager to “pivot” toward the Asia-Pacific region, which “is throwing Europe off balance” (Erlanger, 2021).

### 3.2. ‘Pivot to Asia’

At the EU-US Summit in November 2011, the transatlantic partners discussed ideas of a joint pivot to Asia. They agreed to increase their “dialogue on Asia-Pacific issues and coordinate activities” (Kortewer, 2013). This, together with the “Smart Defence”, ideally would have helped strengthen transatlantic relations, especially NATO, in terms of “strategic elaboration”. However, given their declining defence budgets, many European countries regarded Asia as a “region too far” and preferred concentrating on their own backyard (Lin, 2014). European allies’ unwillingness to follow US footsteps did not affect the US determination to increase its security focus on Asia. The US military and diplomatic “pivot” or “rebalance” toward Asia became particularly popular among Americans after Hillary Clinton authored “America’s Pacific Century” in *Foreign Policy*. She coded the approach “forward-deployed diplomacy”, calling for “continuing to dispatch the full range of our diplomatic assets—including our highest-ranking officials, development experts, interagency teams, and permanent assets—to every country and corner of the Asia-Pacific region” (Clinton, 2011). Further, President Obama more than once expressed his will to change budget allocations, labelling himself as the “Pacific President” who would take a decisive turn away from Europe (Obama, 2012). All these made it clear that Washington was attempting to reconceptualise the role of the US as to whether it should be a Pacific rather than a European power.

The US “Pivot to Asia” strategy came at a time when the US was over-committed internationally. Afghanistan and Iraq drew strong domestic opposition against US international military engagement, which was further consolidated after Libya. Libertarian Republicans, who worried about the growing budget deficit, criticised costly military engagement. Traditional Democrats were concerned that too many international missions would drain resources for domestic social purposes (Braml, 2012). In response to these “misguided impulses” that sought to scale down US international commitments in favour of domestic priorities, Hillary Clinton proposed a compelling answer: “We cannot afford not to” (Clinton, 2011). But it was worth noting that her argument was based on the necessity of increasing American preoccupation with the Pacific rather than European security. Therefore, even though it seems inevitable that the US would not downsize its foreign engagement, it remains unclear whether the US would retain its commitment to the European security architecture. Concerning the fact that the US is overstretched around the world and frustrated with the economic crisis and that European countries remain interested in decreasing their defence budgets and nurturing sceptical public opinion unfavourable to military participation in conflict management if the US has to retreat, it will of course retreat from Europe.

Another motivation behind the US formulation of “Pivot to Asia” was the necessity to contain China’s growing assertiveness in the region. Obama first articulated that the US should “pivot” resources and attention to Asia as part of its rivalry with China, emphasising the importance of showing China that the US “would compete economically, diplomatically, and militarily on its own turf” (Birgbauer, 2022). Trump came into power with an even more challenging approach to China, sharply raising the temperature with Beijing with tariffs and other trade barriers. All these made the following years witness the US “Pivot to Asia” becoming more of a threat than a reality for

Europe. However, this changed when Biden announced a new defence alliance against China, known as AUKUS, which aims to integrate Britain and Australia into a broader US effort to counter China (BBC, 2021). The launch of such a historic security pact left Europe facing an implicit question: which side are you on? (Erlanger, 2021) The European allies have long preferred that the relationship between the two superpowers could remain stable so that they could balance their interests between the two and hence achieve the so-called “strategic autonomy” as French president Macron often proposed. Many of them do not share Washington’s enthusiasm for going against Beijing, but the US is determined to portray it as “an important next step for the Alliance” (Stokols & Wilkinson, 2021). As a result, the current sharp US pivot to Asia under the Biden administration is provoking the moment of choice, requiring the European allies to choose whether they are willing to follow the US steps in the Pacific, which simultaneously raises questions about the cohesion of NATO as well as the necessity for the US to remain committed to the Alliance.

However, this does not mean Europe is no longer essential to the US. Washington and European capitals do share a perception of economic and security threats and, more importantly, “the perception of a need to safeguard their leading position as trading states in the international system”, and they continue “to share liberal values and to work closely together in a densely institutionalised manner” (Flockhart, 2014). The US responses to the Ukraine crisis both in 2014 and 2022 are prominent examples of the US determination to refocus its attention on Europe. For instance, Obama developed the “European reassurance initiative” in his foreign policy vision outlined on 28 May 2014: in addition to the remarkable claim that “America must always lead on the world stage”, Obama emphasised the importance of mobilising allies and partners to take collective action, sending a message to European countries in particular that the US would strengthen its cooperation with them in dealing with the Syrian and Ukrainian crises (Cohen, 2014; The Economist, 2014). Moreover, Obama also pledged a billion-dollar military programme of reinforcements in Europe in the wake of the Ukraine crisis, reaffirming US commitment to Eastern Europe and showing US determination to “review its force presence in Europe in the light of the new security challenges on the continent” (Traynor, 2014). Similarly, in dealing with the second Ukraine crisis in 2022, Washington again stressed its dedication to the collective defence with European allies as “ironclad” according to US Vice President Kamala Harris. She further emphasised the US willingness to “reaffirm our commitment . . . to the NATO alliance as a whole”. (Harris, 2022) President Biden sent a similar message during his visits to G7, EU and NATO summits in March 2022 that “after the disinterested, often EU-antagonistic Trump-years, the US is back with bells on when it comes to involvement in European security” (Adler, 2022). All these were borne out of the shadows of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, and the aims were consistent: a determined show of Western unity in the face of Moscow’s attack on Ukraine and liberal values. In October 2022, the Biden administration declared in the National Security Strategy that “a strong and unified NATO” plays an important role in deterring further Russian aggression, addressing systemic challenges from China and dealing with other security risks. (National Security Strategy, 2022, pp. 11, 26) Washington now sees it as a mandate to shore up old alliances, specifically NATO, and to reinvigorate the transatlantic relationship as a means of organising against the threats to the global world order (Birgbauer, 2022). In other words, although the US is keen on implementing the “Pivot to Asia” strategy, it is also determined to return to transatlanticism particularly amid the Ukraine crisis.

#### 4. Conclusion

It is always challenging to assure a positive outcome for a reinvigorated transatlantic relationship based on the future rather than the past. As Mark Webber *et al.* point out, the challenge to NATO’s persistence nowadays is whether it can repair its twin motors: the principles of purpose and principles of function (Webber *et al.*, 2014). The Ukraine crisis has at least given NATO a sense. But the good functioning of NATO has not been improved, particularly considering that “NATO is becoming solely dependent on the US nuclear guarantee” due to the Alliance’s operations (Dorman, 2012). Such a dilemma has once again highlighted the inherent NATO problem of burden-sharing that should be tackled more urgently. In other words, to a large extent, what NATO operations have suggested to the US are consistent: the most likely factor that might terminate US commitment to the Alliance comes

from the perennial challenge of burden-sharing, which has unfortunately increased rather than reduced since the establishment of NATO. And this problem is highly possible to be repeated in Ukraine again if NATO ultimately gets involved, given that some European members have already shown “willingness” to be sidelined as the US tries to stop the war. For example, Germany and France, the two EU and NATO heavyweights, on the one hand, contributed little to help produce an effective united EU front on the crisis, and on the other, took a rather dovish stance, approaching Russia with a more conciliatory tone than the US (Ellyatt, 2022; Shankar, 2022). In particular, Germany hoped to maintain the Russia-Germany energy link, Nord Stream, which President Zelenskyy accused as “a geopolitical weapon”; and France was still interested in “pushing for more strategic autonomy from the US and NATO” although others, especially those in Eastern Europe and the Baltics were more comfortable with remaining under the aegis of the military alliance (Ellyatt, 2022). Germany eventually cut its energy reliance on Russia by autumn 2022, however, it is still true that NATO allies, compared with the US, have failed to show considerable levels of commitment.

The Ukraine crisis has cast a light on many long-standing issues that need to be addressed if the Alliance is to be reinvigorated. Some might argue that the NATO problems existed even before the 1990s, and no devastating consequence has been created thus far. Yet the situation today is unprecedentedly complicated, which will bring an earthshaking change to the transatlantic relationship if the concern is not taken seriously. As the Chatham House report by the NATO Group Policy Experts explicitly indicated, European governments are responsible for ensuring their territorial security, as “no amount of ‘smarter’ defence will compensate for a failure to reverse falling defence spending” (Butora, 2014). This, to a certain degree, explains why Trump mocked NATO as “obsolete” and had a long history of denigrating NATO and removing the US from the Alliance. Although the US is now “back” at NATO as Biden assures European allies that the Alliance’s mutual defence pact is “a sacred obligation”, Europe, which sees the image of US leadership becoming stronger across much of NATO than it has been in years, remains unsettled about the credibility and longevity of US commitment to the Alliance, simply because it also understands that the thorny issue of “two-tiered” alliance has disrupted the organisation’s strategic agility and vitality thus affected the US relationship with NATO. In short, concerning the unsatisfactory and even flawed coordination efforts, as well as the growing US preference for the “Pivot to Asia” strategy, which places more focus on the Pacific over Europe, it seems highly likely that unless something changes, NATO will end up just doing less with less.

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#### Note

1. For example, scholars like John R. Deni, James Sperling, Mark Webber, Derek Chollet, James Goldgeier and Sean Kay argue that NATO in fact proved ill-equipped to operate in the cases like Kosovo, and the US was going to abandon the Alliance. See Deni (2007) *Alliance Management and Maintenance: Restructuring NATO for the 21st Century*, Aldershot: Ashgate. Sperling and Webber (2009) “NATO: from Kosovo to Kabul”, *International Affairs*, 85:3, pp. 491–511. Chollet and Goldgeier (2008) *America Between the Wars: From 11/9 to*

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