

UNISMUNC XII



Committee: Council of Europe
Topic(s): The growing threat and/or presence of Russia and Belarus and the disalliance of the United States

Committee Type:
Specialized
Date:
December 7, 2026



Chair: Itan Ohad

Director: Sheana Kurukulasuriya

Dias: Eva Van de Velden

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Conference Schedule

Registration

8:00 am - 9:00 am

Opening Ceremonies

9:00 am - 10:00 am

<i>Committee Session I</i>	<i>10:00 am - 12:00 pm</i>
<i>Lunch Break I</i>	<i>12:00 pm - 1:15 pm</i>
<i>Lunch Break II</i>	<i>1:15 pm - 2:30 pm</i>
<i>Committee Session II</i>	<i>2:30 pm - 5:30 pm</i>
<i>Closing Ceremonies</i>	<i>5:30 pm - 6:30 pm</i>

Conference Policies

UNISMUNC XII aims to foster debate, bringing students the opportunity to explore a range of topics and encouraging collaboration and teamwork between delegates. Be that as it may, UNIS stresses the importance of respectful language, as UNISMUNC XII will see delegates debating topics that, at times, may be heated or passionate. MUNEX encourages you to remember to stay respectful and mindful of the other students around you. We are so excited about this conference and trust that no issues will arise. The following expectations and policies are designed so that every delegate gets the most out of UNISMUNC.

Attire:

The Dress Code for UNISMUNC is formal Western business attire, and all delegates are expected to comply with this. Exceptions can be made for character purposes in crisis committees at the discretion of the chair. If you have an idea for an outfit for a crisis committee

that does not fall into the parameters of traditional Western business attire, please ask your chair for permission before wearing the outfit.

Committee Assignments:

Committee assignments will be made on a first-come, first-served basis based on preference as communicated by the delegation's advisors (or individual delegates in the case of independent delegates), in order of receipt of preference. Before being assigned to a committee, payment must be received. If payment is not submitted in a timely manner, delegations face the risk of not receiving committee assignments of their choice.

Expectations in Committee:

As you engage in debates, we ask that delegates maintain politeness and respect at all times. While we recognize that you are representing your country's views, it is essential to express these perspectives without crossing the line into disrespectful or confrontational behavior.

Please respect one another when delegates are giving speeches. Only one delegate may speak at a time during moderated caucuses. To speak during a moderated caucus, you must raise your placard and wait to be recognized by the chair. During speeches, no ad hominem attacks will be allowed, should they occur, the subject will have the right to reply. Remember to be cognizant of your words and actions, and to listen to everyone's views and positions.

The Committee Chairs and Secretariat members are responsible for determining disruptive behavior.

Examples of disrespectful behavior may include, but are not limited to:

- Speaking without being recognized,
- Use of cell phones,
- Note-passing unrelated to the committee,
- Use of technology when not allowed,
- Verbal, physical, or sexual harassment of other delegates.

The pre-writing of any resolution/directive clauses, crisis notes, or speeches is strictly forbidden and will be penalized. This does not include opening remarks. This does not include any writing during the lunch break, as UNISMUNC committees standardly operate with ‘working lunches’.

UNISMUNC has a zero-tolerance policy for any plagiarism. This includes position papers, speeches, and resolutions. Improper citation of quotes and references may result in disqualification from awards or further disciplinary action at the discretion of the chairs.

Pricing:

Please see the registration section for more information. Details on committee assignments are below.

Spectators:

Please be aware that UNISMUNC XII does not allow unregistered spectators. Student spectators are strictly prohibited. All advisors and delegates must be registered and pay the required fee(s). Non-compliance with this policy will result in exclusion from future invitations. We expect all participating delegations to respect this policy. The Secretariat reserves the right to have any unregistered spectators removed from committee chambers and escorted off the premises if necessary, as they see fit.

Technology:

All crisis committees are strictly no-tech. Neither laptops nor cell phones will be permitted during committee sessions in crisis committees.

General Assembly (GA) committees allow technology exclusively for resolution writing. Delegates will be permitted to use their laptops to work on resolutions during unmoderated caucuses and outside of the committee chamber when allowed by the chair. It is, however, not permitted to use technology when a fellow delegate is speaking or in the committee chambers during moderated caucuses. This includes your own speeches, so please write any notes by hand or have your opening remarks printed before the conference.

Awards Criteria:

UNISMUNC Chairs, Daisies, and, in the case of crisis committees, Crisis Directors will work together to holistically evaluate delegates based on their performance throughout the entire day of debate. This includes:

- speeches given during moderated caucuses,
- performance during unmoderated caucuses (not only making one's voice heard but also including everyone in the discussion),
- writing/presenting resolutions/directions, especially those that pass,
- In crisis committees, as well as the detail and sophistication of crisis arcs.

Letter from the Chair

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to UNISMUNC XII! I'm honored that you have chosen The Council of Europe as your UNISMUNC conference. My name is Itan Ohad. I am a sophomore at UNIS, and I will be your chair throughout this conference. As someone from Sweden, European politics have always been a part of my life. I have grown up surrounded by people of all cultures and heritages, and gained a variety of perspectives I wouldn't have found anywhere else. Other than MUN, I love playing club volleyball, hanging out with my friends, and watching Eurovision! I also serve as one of the ASGs of the MUNEX Logistics team.

Your crisis director for this conference will be Sheana Kurukulasuriya, who is also a sophomore. Sheana is Sri Lankan and has lived in New York for 7 years and in Bangkok for 8 years before. She serves as one of the ASGs of the External Affairs team in MUNEX, enjoys discussing current politics, and plays for the Varsity basketball and soccer teams at UNIS. In her free time, she loves exploring New York with her friends and binge-watching shows.

For the twelfth edition of UNISMUNC, alongside Sheana, we decided to create a committee in which delegates represent countries all over Europe to discuss the growing threat from Russia and Belarus. During this committee, we hope for delegates to explore nuanced solutions rather than the obvious, short-term ones lying in front of them!

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to email me at 29iohad@unis.org or Sheana at 29skurukulasuriya@unis.org. We look forward to seeing you at UNISMUNCXII!

Best,

Itan Ohad

Chair

29iohad@unis.org

Sheana Kurukulasuriya

Director

29skurukulasuriya@unis.org

A Brief Overview of the Committee:

The threat of Russia and Belarus has been an emerging issue for the nations of Europe. More specifically, the COE(Council of Europe) has been concerned about the human rights violations that Belarus and Russia aim to commit in their (hypothetical) conquest of Europe. The Council of Europe(not to be confused with the European Council(EUCO) or the European Union(EU)) was founded on 5 May 1949 through the Treaty of London. Member states are bound by the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR), as the COE primarily targets human rights violations across Europe.

The Council consists of 46 nations across Europe as well as 5 observer states, which include the United States of America, Mexico, Japan, the Holy See, and Canada. Each nation is represented in PACE, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. It is a body that consists of 306 parliamentarians appointed by the national parliaments of all 46 nations. The key difference between the Council of Europe and the European Union is that the COE aims to promote democracy, human rights, and the rule of law, while the EU facilitates the general political direction and defines Europe's priorities as a whole.

Despite not having as much power and authority as the EU, the COE has passed multiple treaties in the human rights field. Three significant treaties the council passed include the European Convention on Extradition, the European Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters, and the Convention on Laundering, Search, Seizure and Confiscation of the Proceeds from Crime and on the Financing of Terrorism. The three committees show that European countries can pool their security capabilities and cooperate across borders when faced with international-level threats.

Committee Procedure

Moderated Caucuses are structured discussions in which delegates sign up to give short, regulated speeches. The speaking time and topic of discussion are set when the motion is proposed, and delegates take turns to speak.

Unmoderated Caucuses are divided between a regular unmoderated caucus and a gentleman's unmoderated caucus, where everybody remains seated. A regular unmoderated caucus is a period free of structured, regulated debate, during which delegates can mill about the committee and work with their blocs.

Some actions that are carried over from the usual committee procedure:

- Point of Order
- Point of Information
- Appeal to the Chair
- Suspension of Debate
- Adjournment of Debate
- Closure of Debate
- Roll Call Vote
- Set the Speaker's Time
- Call a guest speaker

Instead of resolutions, the crisis will debate and pass **directives**. Directives are actions or communications undertaken by the entire committee as a group and are passed by a simple majority. Unlike resolutions, which may only be entertained at the end of a session, directives should be created and debated as much as possible. The different types of papers used in crisis committees are explained in detail in the next section.

The Committee may call for external speakers to address the body. To do so, a committee member must move to invite the guest; that motion requires a majority vote to pass.

The goal of the crisis committee has two aspects: firstly, to work as a group to solve or influence the crisis in the interest of the group, and secondly, to act in one's character's best interests. In this committee, many of the characters are driven by different motives and have their individual goals; for instance, the patricians will have vastly different goals from those of Brutus.

Written Papers

Crisis Notes: Crisis notes are notes used in order to take personal action from a delegate, without the need for committee approval. Crisis notes are therefore bound by a character's individual portfolio power. There are a myriad of ways to write Crisis notes, but be sure to sign your character's name at the end and address it to CRISIS on the front of your folded note.

Directives: A directive is a formal written instruction or order given by a delegate or a group of delegates to the chair or to other delegates. Directives are used to propose specific actions or solutions to address the crisis at hand. They can range from proposing specific policies or strategies to calling for specific actions by other delegates or bodies within the simulation. Directives are passed frequently throughout debate and are a lot shorter than most resolutions. They are not restrained by a specific format, and while they do need signatories and sponsors, they do not require a distinction between preambulatory and operative clauses.

Communiqués: Communiqués are committee documents used to communicate with people outside of the committee. For example, Communiqués could be used when surrender terms or ultimatums are sent to the opponent or when the committee requests aid, advice, or arms from their allies. Similar to Directives, they will require a minimum of four people on the document, with two sponsors and two signatories.

Press Releases: As the name suggests, press releases are committee documents addressed to the public. They can be used to inform or even misinform the public according to the desires of the

committee. Similar to Directives and Communiqués, Press Releases will require a minimum of three people on the document, with one sponsor and two signatories.

Topic Background

Established in May of 1949, the Council of Europe, in reference to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), has developed over 200 legally binding international treaties, intending to maintain social protection against acts of torture, sexual abuse, etc. Furthermore, the Council of Europe takes the initiative to exclude nations that act out of accordance with the ECHR. In fact, in 2022, the Council removed Russia due to its “blatant violations” of the Council's values, described by the Council of Europe itself, against Ukraine. The bold act by the Council shows its true virtue in the face of aggression by a nation, and the consequences any member state could face if they went against the morals of the Council of Europe.

Furthermore, the treaties passed by the COE show its efficiency when it comes to bordering threats. More specifically, the European Convention on Extradition, which was adopted in Paris in 1957, allowed European countries to call for the extradition of individuals from other nations who misaligned with the common morals and values of the Council of Europe and who committed or were accused of crimes. The treaty allowed member states of Europe to reach a mutual understanding about criminals, so they could not escape punishment by fleeing to another country.

Secondly, the treaty, the European Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters, required judicial cooperation across Europe, so when a nation or individual committed a broader-level crime, countries could collect evidence from one another to build a case. This treaty built a strong foundation for the Council of Europe because it made them work together for cases that sometimes had and sometimes did not have an impact on their respective countries.

Thirdly, the Convention on Laundering, Search, Seizure and Confiscation of the Proceeds from Crime and on the Financing of Terrorism, which entered into force in May of 2008, targeted money laundering and funding of terrorism. The treaty gave European authorities support to trace money laundering and criminal funding through widespread access to financial records and the stronger ability to freeze, track, and confiscate criminals' assets. At a larger scale, the treaty strengthened the financial security of the nations of Europe.

Russia and Belarus have been inconsistent and disloyal partners to the Council of Europe, especially in recent years. In fact, the COE completely cut ties with Russia after 26 years of partnership and suspended all relations with Belarusian authorities in March 2022 following the invasion of Ukraine.

The United States of America is also involved in the COE, as they play a key role in the European military program. The U.S. provides a nuclear shield through NATO and also has bases in Europe. Additionally, the nation supports many programs created by the COE voluntarily, as well as attends meetings of the Committee of Ministers and intergovernmental committees to foster dialogue on democratic values. The observer states overall extend the Council of Europe's intentions on a wider level, more specifically through North America.

Current Situation

Due to recent presidential events, the United States has been officially deemed an unreliable ally to Europe, fundamentally undermining the continent's security. The impact of the disalliance is treacherous, and Europe has found itself in a vulnerable state. The US was a stable source of funding for nations for decades, and now, as conflicts arise, the Council has found it more difficult to maintain itself. Furthermore, the threat from Russia and Belarus has been bold,

and the Council of Europe must find a way to flourish despite all odds against the continent. More specifically, it is essential for there to be a shift in global alliances, and nations must collaborate to amend policies, aiming to protect Europe from the threats of Belarus and Russia, who wish to expand and spread their influence on a wider spectrum.

The withdrawal of the US from the Council of Europe caused a catastrophic decline not only in funding, but also in the knowledge the council once had as an advantage. The US had nuclear power, cyber intelligence, satellites, and more, once putting Europe in the upper hand in the eyes of the world. However, due to the results of the recent election in the United States, which was followed by the detachment of the nation from the COE, the union was deprived of its eyes and ears on the rest of the world, placing Europe in a vulnerable state.

The threat of Russia and Belarus has been growing, especially in recent years. Belarus continues to weaponise migration and trade pathways along its borders. Additionally, Russia denounced the ECHR, which showed a true disallowance with the COE.

List of Roles (Countries):

Albania

Albania is a staunchly pro-Western and pro-American NATO ally, which firmly rejects any dissonance with the U.S. and has condemned the Russian and Belarusian aggression. Tirana views Moscow and Minsk as existential threats to Europe and has aligned its foreign policy with the West, as well as reinforced its military capabilities to secure NATO's southeastern flank. Albania sees the U.S. as its historical and strategic guarantor of security, with which it coordinates matters of defense and cybersecurity, as well as counters Moscow's and Minsk's influence. Albania acts as a primary Western diplomatic and military bridge in the Balkans, countering the hedging policies of the region's states. Albania is also one of Kyiv's strongest supporters in the Western Balkans, providing political, humanitarian, and diplomatic backing in international organizations. The Albanian government views Russia as the key driver of hybrid warfare and geopolitical instability in Europe and has repeatedly raised this issue in international arenas, criticizing Moscow's intimidation of Tirana. Albanian officials have acknowledged the risks of a direct conventional military conflict with Russia but deemed them low, due to NATO's collective defense mechanism.

Andorra

Andorra's foreign policy is firmly centered on the European Union, to which the microstate has turned in its search for a reliable strategic partner. Breaking with the country's long-standing policy of neutrality, Andorra has imposed sanctions on Russia and Belarus, responding to Moscow's aggression against Ukraine. Due to its limited role on the international stage, Andorra prefers to rely on the European powers rather than adopt standalone positions on both the U.S. and the Third World. Andorra's official stance is informed by the EU-sanctioning lists targeting Russian and Belarusian elites, which local authorities have broadly endorsed. At the same time, Andorra's pro-Russian domestic constituency has voiced concerns about their loyalty to the EU, questioning Andorra's commitments in favor of Moscow. Andorra maintains status quo diplomatic and economic relations with the U.S., cooperating with Washington on anti-money laundering issues, as well as participating in the visa waiver program. Due to Andorra's limited leverage on the international stage, its foreign policy is to a great extent dictated by larger powers. Thus, Andorra does not have a strategic doctrine in relation to the U.S., viewing its national security as intrinsically linked to European stability and adopting foreign policy positions dictated by the EU.

Armenia

Armenia views its foreign policy hedging between the U.S., the EU, and Russia as a matter of strategic virtue rather than dependence, as the country seeks to balance its deep historical ties with Moscow with an equally – if not more – enduring partnership with Washington. Yerevan regards Russia and Belarus as existential security threats due to their military and geopolitical dominance in the region, as well as Armenia's unresolved CSTO membership and European integration prospects. Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan has repeatedly asserted that Armenia is determined to pursue strategic partnerships with all parties of the international system in order to prevent its national security from being placed “in the hands of one power.” Armenia has signed a strategic partnership framework with the U.S. while simultaneously securing economic resilience and trade agreements with the EU. However, Yerevan has acknowledged the limits of its economic and strategic partnerships with the West, which has prompted Moscow to exploit Armenia's vulnerabilities. Russia has imposed temporary trade restrictions on Armenia, banning the import of Armenian agricultural products and curtailing natural gas supplies to Yerevan, in response to Armenia's strategic pivot towards the West. Armenia has frozen its CSTO membership due to the alliance's inability to protect Armenia against Azerbaijani aggression, as well as its unwillingness to intervene in the Russia-Azerbaijan energy disputes. Armenia has also terminated its political and military ties with Belarus, returning the favor after Minsk's support of Baku in the Second Karabakh War, with both countries recalling their ambassadors in protest. Russia has warned Armenia that its pursuit of EU integration is incompatible with its CSTO membership, with Moscow's leadership explicitly citing the “Ukrainian scenario” as a possible outcome of Yerevan's policies.

Austria

Austria has adopted a pragmatic and self-assured approach to the geopolitical status quo, as the country seeks to balance its traditional neutrality with an increasingly assertive foreign policy

towards Moscow and Minsk. While Vienna remains formally unaligned, Austria has recognized the threat posed by Russia and Belarus to the continent's security, as well as the limitations of the U.S.'s reliability as a strategic partner. Austria has imposed sanctions on Russia and Belarus, restricting trade with Moscow, while simultaneously cracking down on illicit trade networks supplying high-tech goods to Russia. Austria has also reiterated its commitment to strategic partnerships with the U.S., particularly with regard to security matters, engaging in high-level diplomatic consultations with Washington. As the U.S. has distanced itself from its NATO allies, Austria has bolstered its own defense capabilities, while also promoting European security autonomy. Thus, Austria has called for the establishment of a European Sky Shield, while also reserving its right to national sovereignty with regard to military affairs in Europe. The country has acknowledged the national security risks posed by the U.S.'s unreliable foreign policy, as well as the shifting strategic priorities of Washington, which have prompted Vienna to promote European defense integration and reconsider its strategic partnership with the U.S.

Azerbaijan

Azerbaijan has pursued a carefully calibrated foreign policy, which sought to avoid confrontation with both the U.S. and Russia while simultaneously asserting Baku's sovereignty and strategic independence. While Azerbaijan has engaged in robust energy cooperation with Russia, it has simultaneously resisted Moscow's attempts to dictate terms to Baku on regional political matters. Azerbaijan has adopted a similarly pragmatic approach to its strategic partnerships with the U.S. and the EU, seeking to benefit from Washington's and Brussels' support without becoming excessively dependent on either power. Azerbaijan has leveraged Russia's preoccupation with Ukraine to advance its own geopolitical objectives, counteracting Moscow's attempts to influence regional affairs. Baku has actively countered Russia's efforts to gain greater military presence in the South Caucasus, responding to Minsk's pressure with a show of force. Azerbaijan views Belarus as an extension of Russia, limiting Baku-Minsk interactions to economic and diplomatic ties. Thus, Azerbaijan has generally avoided confrontation with either Moscow or Minsk, pursuing a policy of strategic ambiguity which favored neither power.

Belgium

Belgium recognizes the danger posed by hybrid warfare and the military build-up conducted by Russia and Belarus, which have significantly increased the strategic risks for Europe. Belgium's official security strategy is to ensure the continent's military self-sufficiency to guarantee collective defense against hybrid and conventional aggression. Belgium's defense chiefs have specifically warned that Europe has only a limited window to bolster its military capabilities, as NATO's integrated command structure is ill-prepared to deter Moscow's growing revisionist ambitions. Belgium's foreign policy is increasingly informed by a perceived shift in the reliability of the U.S. as a strategic ally, which has contributed to a growing sense of insecurity among the Belgian populace. Polls suggest that a considerable portion of the Belgian public views the U.S. as either an international security threat or as having geopolitical ambitions against Europe. Belgium has pledged to increase its defense spending in line with NATO guidelines, while also investing in military infrastructure and purchasing cutting-edge defense equipment. Belgium's strategic position in Europe makes it a target for confrontation with Russia, which has prompted several security incidents in the country. The presence of

international organizations and financial hubs in Belgium makes the country particularly vulnerable to economic coercion, with Moscow seeking to leverage the frozen Russian assets held in the country. While Belgium has voiced its support for Ukraine, it has also opposed the prospect of Ukraine using the frozen assets as collateral for loans, arguing that it would impose unacceptable financial and political costs on the Euroclear clearing house. Thus, Belgium views Belarus as a tool of hybrid warfare conducted by Russia. In line with the broader EU strategy, Belgium has imposed sanctions on Moscow and has invested in comprehensive defense and economic deterrence measures against further Russian aggression.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Bosnia and Herzegovina is characterized by a divided government, which makes it challenging to formulate an official foreign policy position on the conflict in Ukraine and the broader geopolitical confrontation between the U.S., Western Europe, and Russia. The Bosnian government is split between the Bosniak-Croat coalition and the Republic of Srpska, which has adopted a distinctly pro-Moscow stance. The rotating presidential duty in Bosnia allows the Republic of Srpska to dictate the country's foreign policy in certain periods, advancing its pro-Russian agenda at the expense of the Bosniak-Croat coalition. Washington's shifting strategic priorities and its ambiguous approach to regional nationalist sentiments have created domestic divisions in Bosnia, which fear the loss of the U.S.'s reliability as a strategic ally. The pro-Western Bosniak-Croat coalition views any attempt to revise the U.S.'s foreign policy as a revision of the Dayton Accords, which is detrimental to Bosnia's sovereignty and strategic autonomy. The Republic of Srpska, on the other hand, has welcomed the opportunity to loosen the institutional control over it by the U.S. and pursue closer diplomatic and economic ties with Russia. Bosnia's pro-Western domestic faction has adopted a formal policy of support for Ukraine, endorsing the EU sanctions imposed on Russia and Belarus. Despite the Republic of Srpska's pro-Moscow inclinations, Bosnia's foreign policy remains formally aligned with the EU and the U.S. In practice, however, the Republic of Srpska promotes its own foreign policy, which is explicitly hostile to the EU and NATO. Sarajevo's national security officials have repeatedly warned that Moscow is capitalizing on Bosnia's domestic divisions to advance its geopolitical objectives, as well as conducting hybrid warfare in the region.

Bulgaria

Bulgaria is a NATO and EU member-state, which has adopted a foreign policy of strategic ambiguity concerning the U.S. and Russia. Sofia views the U.S. as a reliable ally, but at the same time, Bulgaria has been reluctant to embrace NATO's military doctrines, which has complicated Sofia's strategic partnerships with both the U.S. and Russia. Bulgaria's foreign policy is largely dictated by a combination of regional strategic considerations and domestic political circumstances, which have limited Sofia's ability to pursue a consistent geopolitical course. Bulgaria's national security establishment has expressed concerns about the deteriorating strategic balance in Europe, particularly with regard to the growing military and geopolitical confrontation between the U.S., NATO, and Russia. Bulgaria's defense chiefs have warned that Europe has grown excessively reliant on the U.S. due to NATO's expansion, which has failed to account for the continent's military needs and vulnerabilities. Sofia has acknowledged its own regional security challenges, which have been exacerbated by Moscow's expansionist policies.

At the same time, Bulgaria has avoided becoming excessively dependent on the U.S. and NATO. Sofia has adopted a pragmatic approach to both strategic partnerships, limiting its economic and military reliance on either power. Bulgaria's national security and intelligence communities have identified Russia as the primary security threat, which has resulted in Sofia implementing a series of measures to counter Russian hybrid aggression. While Bulgaria has largely supported the EU's strategic autonomy and deterrence policies, it has also opposed several measures targeting Russia. Thus, Sofia has opted to maintain strategic ambiguity with regard to NATO's military doctrine, avoiding any commitments to collective defense against hybrid warfare. Bulgaria has also opposed the EU sanctions against the Russian Orthodox Church, as well as the economic impact of delisting Russian energy firms from Sofia's stock exchange. At the same time, Sofia has pursued policies to reduce Russia's energy dominance in Bulgaria. The nationalization of Russian oil companies in Bulgaria has increased domestic energy security, although it has also created additional sources of political and economic tension.

Croatia

Croatia views Russia and Belarus as significant security threats, which has prompted Zagreb to pursue an energetic foreign policy concerning the ongoing war in Ukraine. Croatia has ended its energy dependence on Russia, supporting Ukraine both diplomatically and economically. Croatia has also reintroduced conscription, bolstered its military capacities, and reiterated its NATO obligations in light of the growing regional security concerns. Croatia has formally endorsed the EU sanctions imposed on Russia and Belarus, as well as the EU's military support for Ukraine. Croatia has promoted a foreign policy of strategic autonomy, which has generated controversy in relation to the U.S. Croatia's President Zoran Milanović has repeatedly criticized the U.S. and NATO's military interventions on the international stage, viewing them as security challenges rather than assets. At the same time, Croatia has recognized the limitations of strategic autonomy and has promoted a pragmatic approach to its foreign policy with regard to the U.S. and EU. While Zagreb has criticized the EU's approach to the war in Ukraine, Croatia has reaffirmed its commitment to the alliance's strategic, economic, and diplomatic support for Ukraine. Croatia has promoted a foreign policy of military deterrence, which has created tensions with both the EU and the U.S. President Milanovic has argued that NATO's approach to hybrid warfare has failed, as well as criticized the excessive militarization of the alliance. He has also warned against the use of regional alliances as tools of economic coercion and political pressure against other states.

Cyprus

Cyprus has shifted its foreign policy from being a Russian ally and economic partner to a firm supporter of the U.S. and the EU. Contrary to the discourse of "unreliability" with regard to the U.S., Nicosia has pursued a policy of strengthening its strategic partnerships with Washington. Cyprus has imposed strict sanctions on Russia and Belarus, responding to Moscow's aggression against Ukraine. In addition, Cyprus has taken a firm stand against Russian disinformation and pressure campaigns, which has resulted in several confrontations between Nicosia and Moscow. Cyprus has viewed the U.S. as a reliable strategic partner, deepening its military cooperation with Washington. Cyprus has particularly benefited from the U.S. lifting its arms embargo against the country, which has enabled further military cooperation between Nicosia and

Washington. In response to Russia's aggression against Ukraine and the EU, Cyprus has implemented comprehensive economic and military measures to counter Moscow's influence. Cypriot authorities have taken steps to ensure the national security of the country in light of the deteriorating strategic environment in the Eastern Mediterranean. In line with EU policy, Cyprus has purged the local banking system of illicit Russian capital, restricting the access of Russian citizens to essential goods and services. Nicosia has also endorsed the EU sanctions imposed on Russia and Belarus, which have severely limited Moscow's economic and military presence in Cyprus. The EU's support for Ukraine has been largely welcomed by Cyprus, which has promoted a firm stance against further Russian aggression. In particular, Nicosia has opposed several disinformation campaigns launched by Russia against Ukraine and the EU. In a similar vein, Cyprus has also countered Russian attempts to undermine the territorial integrity of EU member-states. Thus, Nicosia has actively opposed Moscow's hybrid warfare in the Eastern Mediterranean and the EU's strategic buffer zone.

Czechia

Czechia views Russia and its ally Belarus as direct security threats, while at the same time expressing concerns about the potential unreliability of the U.S. as a strategic ally. Prague's strategic assessments recognize the expansion of Moscow's hybrid and military capabilities, as well as its aggressive intentions towards NATO. Czech officials have expressed concerns about the growing military potential of Belarus, which has been pursuing a more assertive foreign policy in recent months. The Czech public opinion has become increasingly skeptical of the U.S.'s reliability as a strategic partner, particularly in light of Washington's ambiguous stance on Ukraine and its shifting strategic priorities. Czechia has promoted a foreign policy of military deterrence and strategic autonomy, which has prompted several confrontations with both the U.S. and Russia. Czech officials have criticized the U.S. for presenting an unreliable security guarantee to NATO allies, which has fueled domestic concerns about Prague's own national security. At the same time, Czechia has adopted a pragmatic approach to its relationships with both strategic partners. Prague has promoted a foreign policy of burden-sharing, which requires the U.S. to take on greater security responsibilities in light of its growing strategic ambitions. However, Czechia has also voiced concerns about the unreliability of the U.S. and has urged Washington to reconsider its approach to NATO. The Czech intelligence community has accused Belarus of pursuing expansionist policies and subordinating its national interests to those of Russia. Thus, Minsk has been instrumental in advancing Moscow's geopolitical objectives in the region, including fueling hybrid and military confrontations with NATO. Czech officials have particularly accused Belarus of promoting irregular migration and hybrid aggression against the Czech Republic. At the same time, Czechia has acknowledged the limits of its strategic autonomy, as well as its reliance on the U.S. as a security guarantor. Czech military leaders have expressed concerns about the national security implications of an unrestrained U.S. foreign policy, particularly in light of Washington's "America First" doctrine. Czech public opinion has viewed the U.S.'s foreign policy as both strategically unreliable and dangerously aggressive. Thus, Prague has promoted a policy of strategic and military burden-sharing, which has exacerbated tensions with both the U.S. and Russia. Czech military officials have cautioned that the U.S.'s unreliability as a strategic ally has placed European NATO members in an intolerable strategic position. Czech defense chiefs have also warned of the risks posed by Russia's military buildup, as well as its increasing aggression towards NATO.

Denmark

Denmark views the unpredictable nature of U.S. foreign policy, as demonstrated by the Trump administration, as a source of strategic uncertainty, which has complicated Copenhagen's strategic calculus. At the same time, Denmark perceives an imminent military threat from Russia and Belarus, which has prompted several security upgrades in recent months. Denmark has expressed concerns about the U.S.'s reliability as a strategic ally, which has prompted Copenhagen to increase its defense spending and adopt a more assertive foreign policy. The Danish Defense Intelligence Service has identified several risks emanating from the U.S.'s "America First" doctrine, which has been threatening to revise NATO's strategic concepts. Denmark has warned that the shifting priorities of the U.S. have created strategic unpredictability, which has reduced the confidence of Denmark and other NATO allies in Washington's commitments to the alliance. Denmark has engaged in diplomatic consultations with the U.S. on several strategic matters, including the potential sale of Greenland to private defense companies. Thus, Copenhagen has expressed concerns about the U.S.'s long-term strategic intentions, particularly in relation to the Arctic region. Despite Copenhagen's misgivings, Denmark has continued to pursue its strategic partnership with the U.S., engaging in high-level diplomatic consultations with Washington. Denmark views Russia and Belarus as existential security threats, which has prompted several defense upgrades. The Danish defense chiefs have identified several hybrid and military challenges posed by Moscow and Minsk. In particular, Russia has been accused of pursuing an expansionist policy in the Arctic region, as well as conducting disinformation campaigns against Denmark. National security officials in Copenhagen have warned that Russia has significantly upgraded its military capabilities, including its artillery potential. Thus, Moscow has been identified as a regional security threat by Denmark, which has prompted several defense upgrades. Likewise, Belarus has been accused of facilitating Russia's hybrid aggression in the region, as well as pursuing expansionist policies in Eastern Europe. National security officials in Copenhagen have warned that increased tensions with Russia and Belarus have placed Denmark in an intolerable strategic position.

Estonia

Estonia views the expanding military potential of Russia and Belarus as an existential threat to the country's national security. In response to the growing strategic challenges, Tallinn has been increasing its defense spending and pursuing a more assertive foreign policy. Estonia has emphasized the need for enhanced military deterrence, including the development of retaliatory strike capabilities against potential aggressors. Estonia has adopted a policy of regional resilience and strategic autonomy, which has generated controversy in both NATO and the EU. In particular, Tallinn has promoted military build-up, including the development of strategic depth and retaliatory military capabilities. Thus, Estonia has committed to dedicating 5 percent of GDP to national defense spending and has prioritized the development of deep-strike capabilities. National security officials in Tallinn have warned that future U.S. administrations may opt to revise NATO's strategic concepts and reduce the alliance's defense commitments to Europe. Estonia has sought to bolster its military capabilities, including the acquisition of cutting-edge defense technology and the expansion of domestic defense manufacturing. National defense officials have emphasized the need for deterrence, including conventional and nuclear retaliation

options against potential aggressors. Estonia has been advocating for stronger NATO defense commitments, including the stationing of U.S. troops on Estonian territory. In addition, national security officials have warned that hybrid and military aggression from Russia and Belarus would trigger an uncompromising response from Estonia. Thus, Tallinn has promoted a forward defense strategy, which involves meeting any form of aggression with a swift and powerful response.

Finland

Finland perceives an existential security threat from Russia and Belarus, which has prompted a significant strategic shift in Helsinki's foreign policy. In particular, Finland has been pursuing a more assertive defense and diplomatic policy with regard to Moscow and Minsk. Finland has agreed with the U.S. to allow for the establishment of U.S. military infrastructure on Finnish territory, including the storage of nuclear weapons. Meanwhile, Finland has promoted its military integration with NATO, including the development of strategic depth and retaliatory strike capabilities against potential aggressors. Finland's defense spending has been increased, including the procurement of cutting-edge military equipment. Helsinki has viewed Russia's aggressive rhetoric and military build-up as a direct threat to Finland's national security. Thus, Finland has joined the U.S. and NATO in countering Russia's revisionist intentions in the region. In addition to strengthening its own defense capabilities, Finland has engaged in diplomatic and military consultations with the U.S. and NATO allies. National Security officials in Helsinki have expressed concerns about the reliability of the U.S. as a strategic ally, which has prompted Finland to pursue greater security assurances from NATO. At the same time, Finland has promoted strategic autonomy with regard to its military doctrine. Finland has been advocating for NATO's enhanced defense commitments to Europe, including the stationing of U.S. troops on Finnish territory. Thus, national security officials in Helsinki have identified Russia and Belarus as serious security threats, which has resulted in a significant defense upgrade. The growing strategic challenges from Moscow and Minsk have prompted Finland to review its national security strategy, including the reassessment of the country's defense capabilities.

France

France views the U.S. as an unreliable strategic ally, which has prompted Paris to embark on a process of strategic autonomy with regard to its military and security needs. France has identified Russia and Belarus as major security challenges, which has resulted in a significant defense upgrade. National security officials in Paris have warned that the U.S. is pursuing a more assertive foreign policy, which has limited Washington's reliability as a strategic partner. In particular, French officials have expressed concerns about the U.S.'s unpredictable behavior with regard to NATO allies and Moscow. Paris has sought to reduce its dependence on the U.S. in favor of greater strategic autonomy, including military and economic independence. In addition, France has promoted diplomatic initiatives aimed at countering Russia's hybrid and military aggression in Europe. The growing security challenges in Europe have prompted France to increase its defense spending and bolster its military infrastructure. National defense officials have identified Russia and Belarus as major security threats, which has resulted in a significant defense upgrade. France has joined other NATO allies in increasing its defense spending and enhancing its military capabilities. Thus, Paris has participated in diplomatic and military

consultations with the U.S. and NATO allies regarding the growing strategic challenges posed by Russia and Belarus. In addition, France has engaged in strategic dialogues with third parties, including Iran and China. National security officials in Paris have warned that increased tensions with Moscow and Minsk could result in additional defense commitments by France. In particular, Paris has called for enhanced NATO defense readiness, including the stationing of U.S. troops in France.

Georgia

Georgia's ruling Georgian Dream party has tempered traditional dependence on the U.S. in favor of a pragmatic approach towards the region's longtime rival, Russia. Critics and pro-Western proponents claim this policy enables a dangerous drift towards the Russian Bear, and away from Euro-Atlantic engagement, separating domestic official positions from popular Western support. Ties with Washington, D.C and the European Union have stalled over democratic backsliding, the passage of Russian-style foreign agent laws, and crackdowns on civil society. The Georgian Dream government has eschewed Western conditionalities or demands for domestic policy reforms as a price for improving diplomatic relations. Attempts by Tbilisi to force a diplomatic reset with Washington, D.C have stalled as U.S. officials maintain pressure and scrutiny over intelligence and financial transparency. Tbilisi refuses to join international sanctions against Moscow, resulting in surging trade, open transport links, and a massive influx of Russian capital and migration. The ruling party promotes its foreign policy as non-aligned "strategic neutrality", which critics view as a soft accommodation of Russian leverage, allowing Chinese-led consortiums to handle critical infrastructure like the Anaklia deep-water port has further reduced Western economic leverage. Civil society groups, independent media, and pro-Western opposition factions face systemic pressure, legislative constraints, and arrests. Opinion polls and large-scale street protests show that a substantial portion of the Georgian public remains firmly pro-Western and anti-Russian, directly opposing the government's de facto alignment.

Germany

German leaders view the shifting U.S. commitment and the deepening military axis of Russia and Belarus as an existential security crisis. Berlin is actively building national and European military independence, increasing defense budgets, and taking on a posture of active deterrence against Eastern threats. Shifts in U.S. foreign policy and a perceived abandonment of traditional multilateral guarantees have led to the lowest German confidence in Washington, D.C as a reliable security anchor in years. Berlin is promoting strategic sovereignty and a "buy German/European where possible" procurement strategy to reduce heavy reliance on American military hardware and munitions. German leadership has openly rebuked differing U.S. national security assessments that downplay the European security crisis or criticize EU democratic frameworks. German defense officials have warned that a re-tooled Russian military machine could have the capacity to test or invade a NATO partner by the end of the decade. Berlin and EU partners view Belarus under Alexander Lukashenko not as a separate entity, but as an extension of the Russian military space, supplying dual-use industrial goods, hosting missile assets, and staging hybrid threats. Germany has moved to build the strongest conventional army in Europe, planned massive defense borrowing, initiated long-range strike weapon programs, and

committed to permanently stationing a combat brigade of roughly 5,000 troops in Lithuania by 2027 to consolidate NATO's eastern flank.

Greece

Greece firmly aligns with Western security architectures such as NATO and the EU, serving as a key U.S. strategic partner in the Eastern Mediterranean. While Athens views Russia's actions in Ukraine as a threat, its foreign policy decisions primarily balance broader Western sanctions with the protection of vital domestic shipping and energy economic interests. Greece has upgraded its defense cooperation with Washington, D.C, granting open-ended access to military bases and functioning as a crucial U.S. liquefied natural gas (LNG) gateway to Eastern Europe. Athens meets high defense spending benchmarks and partners actively with the U.S., Israel, and Cyprus in regional security frameworks. While societal factions and historical ties persist, state strategy firmly treats the U.S. and the EU as primary security anchors. Greece actively supports Ukraine, including signing defense and sea-drone co-production agreements, which has attracted sharp diplomatic retaliation and threats from Moscow. Athens generally implements EU-wide sanctions against Moscow and Minsk, though it occasionally pushes back on specific restrictive measures, such as transport bans on liquefied natural gas, to shield its massive merchant shipping fleet from disproportionate economic harm. Belarus is viewed from the broader European perspective as a co-belligerent and regional security risk due to its deep military integration with Russia.

Hungary

After the April 2026 parliamentary election victory of Prime Minister Péter Magyar and the Tisza Party over long-standing leader Viktor Orbán, Hungary has shifted from its previous posture of accommodating Moscow and expressing skepticism towards Western security architectures. The new government has explicitly recognized Russia as the aggressor in Ukraine, initiated reviews of previously bilateral deals with Russian state entities, and realigned Budapest with a clear pro-Western and NATO-dependable stance, reversing years of friction over regional security threats. Prime Minister Péter Magyar's administration has explicitly stated that Russia bears responsibility for the war in Ukraine, breaking sharply with the past Fidesz policy of minimizing Moscow's culpability. Budapest has launched formal investigations into the Russian-backed Paks II nuclear power plant expansion and is reassessing long-term exposure to Russian intelligence penetration within domestic institutions. While pragmatic economic realities surrounding regional oil and gas supplies persist, the current leadership views aggressive postures by Moscow and its alignment with Minsk as security challenges, demanding a stronger, tech-advanced Hungarian Defense Forces within the NATO framework. Unlike the previous administration, which often hedged its bets, criticized Western consensus, and openly bet on alternative geopolitical arrangements, the current leadership treats the U.S. and European partners as core security anchors. Magyar's government has prioritized rebuilding deep trust with Brussels and Washington, D.C, moving to unblock delayed European assistance packages for Ukraine, and positioning Hungary as a predictable, cooperative member of Western defense and economic pacts.

Iceland

Facing a more aggressive Russia and unpredictable shifts in U.S. foreign policy, Iceland has actively re-examined its national security. While maintaining its foundational NATO membership and the historic 1951 U.S. Defense Agreement, Reykjavik has hedged against transatlantic unreliability by tightening security alignment with Europe, adopting tougher joint sanctions against Belarus, and formulating its first independent defense strategies. Iceland fully adopts European Union restrictive measures targeting Moscow and Minsk, actively implementing expanded trade and technology bans to choke off Belarusian and Russian military-industrial capabilities. Viewing Russia's Northern Fleet and submarine movements as direct threats across the Greenland-Iceland-UK (GIUK) gap, Iceland uses its Council of the Baltic Sea States presidency to champion societal resilience and critical infrastructure safety against hybrid warfare. Iceland continues direct financial and material contributions to multilateral packages for Ukraine, prioritizing demining, munitions procurement, and humanitarian aid. Erratic U.S. political rhetoric regarding alliances and territorial claims in the Arctic region has forced Iceland to question the permanence of long-standing American security guarantees. Lacking its own standing army, Reykjavik has moved to deepen defense cooperation within Nordic frameworks and explore closer security integration with European partners to ensure it is not left strategically isolated. The growing geopolitical friction has driven domestic momentum towards re-examining institutional frameworks, such as renewed public and political debates about European and security cooperation, to safeguard national sovereignty and critical digital/undersea infrastructure.

Ireland

Ireland has the policy of military neutrality, but is actively changing its security strategy to address growing hybrid threats coming from Russia and Belarus while managing deep political anxiety over the reliability of the United States. For decades, Ireland felt protected by its geographical position on Europe's western edge, relying on informal European safety nets and a strong transatlantic bond with Washington, D.C. However, fears of a volatile U.S. political landscape, coupled with explicit Russian probing of critical infrastructure, have driven Dublin to step up its independent defense capabilities dramatically. Historically, Ireland relied on the implicit security umbrella provided by its Western allies, particularly the U.S. and the UK. In recent years, Dublin's perspective has changed substantially. A volatile political climate in Washington has signaled to the Irish leaders that the U.S. may no longer remain a guaranteed, stabilizing presence for European security. While high-profile U.S. visits maintain cultural ties, Irish policymakers recognize that the transatlantic security architecture is fracturing. Because of potential U.S. isolationism, Ireland has agreed with other EU member states to the idea that it must do more to maintain its own defense independently. Ireland has officially recognized that its neutrality does not offer immunity from Russia's "gray-zone" warfare. Nearly 75% of transatlantic subsea data cables pass through or near Ireland's exclusive economic zone. Russian naval and "shadow fleet" intelligence vessels have repeatedly loitered near these networks, presenting an existential threat to global communications. Dublin aggressively supports all EU sanctions packages against the Putin and Lukashenko regimes. Following major cyberattacks and unidentified drone incursions over Irish airspace, Dublin considers itself to be locked in a persistent hybrid conflict with Moscow.

Italy

Italy's foreign policy firmly positions Russia and Belarus as top national and continental security threats, while navigating a delicate, increasingly transactional alliance with the United States. Led by Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, Rome advocates for a major boost in autonomous European defense capabilities to counter potential U.S. strategic disengagement, while resisting full reliance on a shifting Washington, D.C agenda. Meloni has openly opposed the U.S. administration's plans to withdraw American military forces from Italian bases, such as Sigonella and Aviano, calling the U.S. presence essential to broader Western deterrence. Rome has resisted being pulled blindly into non-European U.S. conflicts. For example, Italy explicitly restricted U.S. combat access to its airbases during escalation against Iran to assert its own national sovereignty. Citing the rising "unreliability" or reluctance of the U.S. to guarantee the continent's safety indefinitely, Italy has called for a new European defense alliance. Defense Minister Guido Crosetto has urged EU nations to bridge severe capability gaps in air defense, cybersecurity, and logistics. Italian intelligence warns that the Russian threat extends far beyond Ukraine. Moscow is aggressively using cyber warfare, DDoS attacks against Italian public infrastructure, and disinformation campaigns to exploit internal European political divisions. Italy supports synchronized EU sanctions designed to treat Belarus as an extension of the Russian military apparatus, condemning Minsk's role in facilitating logistics, hosting tactical assets, and weaponizing migrant smuggling to destabilize NATO's eastern flank. Meloni has maintained a strict "red line" ruling out the deployment of Italian boots on the ground in Ukraine under any eventual peace settlement. Italy has criticized informal negotiating circles led strictly by Washington, D.C, London, or Paris. Meloni insists that any lasting peace blueprint must be brokered through a unified, formally authorized EU framework rather than splintered coalitions. The Italian government argues that while pressure via sanctions and defense spending must remain high, Europe must actively maintain diplomatic channels open with Russia, stating that long-term stability cannot be achieved by "Speaking to only one side".

Latvia

Latvia has pursued a two-track approach to deal with the unpredictability of the world's largest superpower while still preparing for a multifaceted threat from Russia and Belarus. After the return of Donald Trump to the White House and his talk of abandoning the alliance, Latvia has moved from unilateral reliance on the United States to accelerating its own military development and regional partnerships. Moreover, the government and military of Latvia are calibrated to the rhetorical line of their local leaders, who do not want to oppose the United States directly. They are quick to sing the praises of the broader NATO alliance, so that practical working relationships through bureaucratic channels can continue. Latvia has invested a record-breaking 4.91 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) in national defense. The shift has been triggered by the awareness of limited strategic hedging time against possible U.S. security guarantees in the region. Riga is looking to its regional partnerships, including the Nordic-Baltic Eight (NB8) and the EU, to provide a cross-border military backup that does not rely on the United States. The Baltic region is countering hybrid operations, including arson, cyberattacks on critical infrastructure, and disinformation campaigns through gaming platforms and other Telegram channels. Belarus is flooding the border of Latvia with irregular migrants to overwhelm the border guards and create internal security issues. In response to the frequent incursions of stray

and jamming military drones, Latvia has stationed classified mobile anti-drone batteries on its borders. Latvia is spending multi-million euro packages on erecting concrete fortifications, minefields, and anti-tank trenches along the borders with Russia and Belarus.

Liechtenstein

Liechtenstein's geopolitical culture is characterized by loyalty to the Western security umbrella, with a simultaneously strong emphasis of domestic opinion on the need to reduce Europe's dependence on the unpredictable US military capabilities. Being a country without an army, the principality's foreign policy is largely determined by adherence to international law, economic dependence on Switzerland, and close ties with the EU. Prince Michael of Liechtenstein has repeatedly criticized the "grotesque" nature of the European dependence on the US military for security, calling on Washington to abandon its role as the "gendarme" of Europe. He has argued that it would be irrational for the population of 500 million people to rely on the defense capabilities of 340 million citizens. Thus, following the lead of many European countries, Liechtenstein is ready to take steps to ensure military security for itself and other European nations, reducing the risks associated with possible NATO expansion. At the same time, the foreign policy of this country is not devoid of traditional anti-American sentiment. As one of the few European countries to have an embassy in Washington, Liechtenstein maintains good relations with the US, regularly coordinating efforts to impose secondary sanctions on Russia. In recent years, in response to massive diplomatic and economic pressure from Washington, Vaduz has tightened rules for financial market participants. Liechtenstein fully complies with EU sanctions against Belarus, introducing its own measures targeting the Belarusian regime's aggression against Ukraine. The principality's Foreign Ministry has imposed strict export restrictions on crypto assets, dual-use technologies, and military equipment. In order to mitigate the negative consequences for democracies of the illegitimacy of the UN Security Council decisions adopted at Russia's initiative, Liechtenstein actively promotes the "Veto Initiative" resolution in the General Assembly.

Lithuania

Lithuania sees the prospect of growing Russian-Belarusian aggression and Washington's potential unreliability as its primary security concerns. To deal with the perceived threats of a looming hybrid and military attack on its borders and abandonment by NATO, Lithuania has resorted to strengthening its military, preparing its society for mobilization, and pursuing a strategy of autonomy from the United States. By beefing up its defense capabilities to the maximum, Lithuania seeks to prove to Washington that it deserves the protection provided by the U.S. military presence on its territory. At the same time, Lithuania is trying to persuade the European Union to adopt a firm stance against Moscow and Minsk. In turn, by showcasing its efforts, Lithuania wants to alleviate the pressure from Washington, which accused Lithuania of being a "free-rider." Lithuania has embarked on a major military buildup to meet NATO guidelines and is set to exceed the alliance's spending target of 2 percent of GDP by 2026. In 2026, the U.S. military removed its rotational armored battalion from Lithuania for the first time since 2020. In addition to lobbying the Pentagon to maintain a permanent U.S. presence in Lithuania, the Lithuanian government is now focusing on securing a permanent combat brigade from Germany. However, tensions are ongoing between Minsk and Washington, where the latter is trying to convince Lithuania to allow transit of Belarusian potash fertilizer through its territory.

The request has been denied by Lithuania, calling any relaxation of sanctions “morally unacceptable” and damaging to the integrity of the EU. In addition to dedicating more than 1.1 billion euros to national defense, Lithuania is preparing for the challenges posed by Russia. Anti-tank mines, ditches, and barriers will be deployed to strengthen national security and slow down any potential Russian armored advance. President Gitanas Nausėda warned that Russia is considering “false-flag” attacks on Lithuania’s energy infrastructure and critical communications infrastructure. This comes in the wake of attacks on GPS navigation systems in the Baltic States, including Kaliningrad Oblast, and sabotage of undersea cables. As the Russia-Belarus coalition is targeting Lithuania with non-military means, Lithuania has initiated a “Total Defense” concept. This concept provides for the preparation of all societal groups, including civilians, for immediate independent action at the earliest stages of the war.

Luxembourg

To meet the new challenges posed by the United States, Luxembourg takes a political and defensive “wake-up call.” Europe must ensure direct and unrestrained responsibility for its security now more than ever before. As tensions with Russia and a growing military presence within Belarus continue to unfold, the Grand Duchy has transformed its defensive policies. Luxembourg will substantially amplify its military spending while remaining steadfast in its support of Ukraine, the European Union, and NATO. Luxembourg Foreign Minister Xavier Bettel has claimed that new political realities and America’s defense pressure are integral to a necessary catalyst for Europe. Increased defense spending is completely unavoidable, he added. Domestic polling suggests that most Luxembourgers have ceased to consider the U.S. as a reliable security provider. An 80% local survey by the Ilres showed that the U.S. is regarded as an unreliable partner by the majority of the local population. Such public opinion is a vital catalyst for the government’s motivation for European defense autonomy. Luxembourg believes that Russia poses a chronic threat to the European Union. Prime Minister Luc Frieden has stressed that peace cannot be purchased through Russian aggression. Instead of being a passive player due to its geographic location, Luxembourg participates in troop deployments to Lithuania, and they fortify the eastern flank of Europe as part of the NATO Forward Land Forces to confront Russia and Belarus militarily and directly. The government views Belarus as a critical threat to EU security since it hosts Russian weapons production facilities and sophisticated missile systems. While being completely pro-NATO and the EU, Luxembourg leadership has adopted a pragmatic approach to the new geopolitical realities. Foreign Minister Bettel has warned against alienating political adversaries.

Malta

Malta strengthened its geopolitical position through neutrality, withstanding the pressure of Russian and Belarusian aggression, and engaging in diplomatic activities. While considering the new challenges to European security, Malta continues to practice political multipolarity and adheres to its strategy of looking to the United States as an equal strategic ally. At the same time, Malta considers the EU as its primary security actor. The islands focus on preserving peace and stability in Europe as pillars of its foreign policy. In Malta’s foreign policy concept, there is a pronounced tendency to adopt a conciliatory position in international affairs. The most evident example of this approach was the reluctance of the Maltese authorities to comment on the controversial statements made by Washington on the territorial integrity of Denmark in

Greenland. The government considers itself the European Union's neutral territory and is committed to maintaining this role as a mediator and guarantor of mutual security. Consequently, according to the constitution, Malta is prohibited from joining military alliances and from providing its territory for the establishment of foreign military bases. Malta has repeatedly shown in practice that it regards neutrality as a fundamental principle of its foreign policy, which does not detract from its national interests. Malta actively calls for bringing Russian President Vladimir Putin to trial at the International Criminal Court and Malta fully complies with EU sanctions against Russia. In particular, Malta has suspended the processing of Russian applications for citizenship and residency. In turn, in accordance with the EU Military Assistance Mission, Malta provides administrative, technical, and logistical support to Ukraine within the framework of non-military aid. Malta adheres to the position of openness and transparency, using its reputation as a mediator. In this vein, in 2023, as the chair of the OSCE in 2024, Malta hosted a meeting of foreign ministers of Western countries and Russia, where both sides clashed. Subsequently, Belarus was prohibited from using the Maltese fast-track process for migration and investment, and in addition, Malta has initiated a resolution at the UN Human Rights Council calling for an immediate cessation of Belarus's military and logistical support for the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Republic of Moldova

The Republic of Moldova, under the pro-European Union leadership of President Maia Sandu, considers the Russian Federation and its ally Belarus to be the Republic of Moldova's primary security and sovereignty threat. To counter this perceived threat and deter unpredictable U.S. government pivots, the Republic of Moldova has turned to the European geopolitical sphere for its national security needs. With international politics witnessing a deepening shift in power tectonic plates, the Republic of Moldova now finds itself prioritizing European integration above all else. Not seeking NATO membership due to the military neutrality wording in its constitution, Chișinău turned to the EU enlargement process to secure its survival and growth. According to President Sandu, it is becoming impossible for a small country such as Moldova to exist as a democracy and resist Russian pressure without outside support. Thus, she envisions a unified Romania as a valuable security asset to host Moldova inside the EU and NATO borders in case of anarchy in the capital. Despite the Republic of Moldova's heavy emphasis on its European options, it continues to participate in the U.S.-Moldova Strategic Dialogue to gain intelligence sharing, help counter disinformation, and increase defense spending. The Kremlin has invested close to 1% of the Republic of Moldova's GDP in vote-buying schemes, cyberwarfare, and disinformation to tilt the 2024 elections in favor of its preferred candidates. Moscow has also retained an illegal military presence in the breakaway Transnistria region to use it as a bargaining chip or reignite the frozen conflict. Moldovan security services fear a "Georgian scenario" that would see Russia occupying government buildings and hosting a puppet parliament in Chișinău with tacit approval from local pro-Russian separatists. The war in neighboring Ukraine has made the people of Moldova feel unsafe for the first time since gaining independence. With Russian aircraft and drones frequently trespassing Moldovan airspace and missiles hitting the capital, multiple drone crashes in the region have already occurred. In a historic turnaround, the Parliament of Moldova has removed Russia and its ally Belarus from the "friendship groups" with a vote, ending three decades of diplomatic ties. This marked the first-ever public declaration from the Republic of Moldova that it considers both states to be hostile actors that do not respect its territorial integrity. Moldovan security services frequently warn their counterparts about the

dangers posed by another “Belarus scenario” taking place on the Republic of Moldova’s territory. The current government fears that a pro-Russian regime in Chişinău would seek to create a union state with Romania and use its position to host hybrid attacks against Ukraine and the EU.

Monaco

Monaco does not have its own foreign and defense policy in the sense of a policy of “irrelevance” in relation to the United States; rather, it is subordinate to France and follows the general lines of the foreign policy of the European Union. Monaco, in accordance with the defense alliance agreement with France, is entirely dependent on the French military. For this reason, Monaco is guided by France and follows the defense policy of Europe, which is opposed to Russia and Belarus. Under the pressure of Prince Albert II, Monaco adopted economic sanctions and asset freezes of the same level as those adopted by the EU member states. In addition, Monaco has embarked on a policy of banning luxury real estate purchases, financial assets, and yachts owned by Russian oligarchs in the Principality’s ports. The Russian Federation has responded by placing Monaco on a list of “unfriendly countries.” Prince Albert II has repeatedly stated at official UN speeches that Russia is engaging in a policy of aggression against Ukraine, supporting the territorial integrity of Ukraine, and condemning Russia. Thus, by virtue of the Franco-Monégasque treaty of 1918, Monaco has become a party to the defense alliance with France. Consequently, if the European powers revise their military doctrines in response to a perceived revisionist challenge to the status quo, Monaco will inevitably be drawn into the military confrontation. However, despite being fully supportive of Ukraine, Monaco is under pressure from European partners about weaknesses in its financial surveillance system. The EU has placed Monaco on a list of countries with weak anti-money laundering regimes, and the city is constantly adjusting its policies to show the world that it is not a haven for Russian oligarchs who evade sanctions.

Montenegro

Montenegro views Russia and Belarus as acute security threats, and it has pledged to remain committed to the U.S. and the Euro-Atlantic alliance to guarantee its national defense. Despite domestic political polarization and the Kremlin’s efforts to destabilize the Balkan country, Podgorica has tied its security and foreign policy to the West. In August 2026, Montenegro formally aligned itself with the U.S. by adopting the U.S.-Montenegro Intergovernmental Agreement on Strategic Projects. Montenegrin officials have sought to make the choices made at the Washington Summit a priority. Podgorica has demonstrated its commitment to the transatlantic alliance, despite any external criticism of NATO's value. To reduce security risks and to conform to the EU’s foreign policy, the Montenegrin government decided that, effective November 1, 2026, visa-free travel for citizens of Russia and Belarus will end. For the first time since Montenegro’s independence, Russian and Belarusian citizens will not be able to travel to Montenegro without a visa. Prime Minister Milojko Spajić and NATO leaders have warned of “consistent hybrid threats” to Montenegro from Russian actors. This campaign of pressure includes severe hacking and other cyberattacks, state-sponsored disinformation, and political meddling designed to undermine Montenegro’s NATO accession and EU membership. Montenegro has pledged full support for the sanctions imposed by the West on Russia. The Balkan state has provided economic and military assistance to Ukraine and has contributed to its NATO membership. Some members of the ruling coalition in Podgorica are “pro-Serbian and

pro-Russia,” and they were initially opposed to NATO membership and favored closer ties to Moscow. Nevertheless, the government in Podgorica has made Montenegro a committed ally of the West, despite the Kremlin’s efforts to undermine its sovereignty. Montenegro has relied on NATO’s Counter-Hybrid Support Teams to protect its digital and political infrastructure from Russian interference.

Netherlands

The Netherlands believes that Europe cannot depend solely on America for its security, so it must develop its defensive capabilities to protect itself from the long-term threat from Russia and its satellite state, Belarus. As per the International Security Strategy, the Netherlands has declared that it has changed its policy of reliance on the United States for the time being, at least until 2030. Tom Berendsen, the foreign minister, stated that the European defense industry should be completely self-sufficient in producing conventional weapons, large-caliber ammunition, and rockets within four years. The Netherlands is calling for the re-establishment of European investments in sovereign strategic enablers that the United States previously provided, including intelligence, early-warning systems, and ballistic missile defense capabilities. The foreign minister stated that increased defense spending is not a reaction to pressure from the United States but rather a recognition of the need to reduce Europe’s susceptibility to blackmail by eastern neighbors. Military intelligence warned that Russia is investing heavily in its military-industrial complex. According to the MIVD, if the current trends continue, Russia will be able to rebuild its combat potential for waging war with one of the NATO countries at the level of the Republic of Belarus after the end of the war in Ukraine within just one year. The current strategy of Russia’s military-industrial complex, according to Dutch intelligence, is to wage hybrid warfare against the Netherlands. Russian cyber-infiltration attempts were made against government servers, obstructing the supply of military goods to Ukraine, and targeting critical infrastructure in the North Sea, including gas and fiber-optic networks. However, Dutch authorities have concluded that hybrid defense measures are no longer sufficient to counter hybrid aggression. Therefore, they have called on the parliament to take offensive measures in cyberspace and the realm of strategic intelligence to confront Moscow with hybrid warfare. In addition to imposing strict economic and transport sanctions on Belarus, the Netherlands also enforces sanctions on the Republic of Belarus, which has allied itself with Russia. Minsk is explicitly targeted for its role in building up Russia’s nuclear and missile potential. By the terms of the Collective Defense Agreement, the Netherlands has troops ready to repel any Russian attack on the eastern front. Dutch troops are deployed to Lithuania near the Suwalki Corridor and the border with Belarus, where they will serve as a tripwire in case of a Russian attack.

North Macedonia

North Macedonia pursues a pro-Western foreign policy, considering the United States its key strategic partner and bolstering its NATO membership to counter the growing security threats from Russia and Belarus. The country has turned to the U.S. as the preferred alternative to the stalled prospect of joining the European Union. North Macedonia’s prime minister-designate parliamentary group VMRO-DPMNE and the government it is set to lead have adopted a more pro-U.S. posture. It considers strong U.S. leadership a central pillar in the current NATO strategy to meet a range of emerging security challenges. The U.S. and North Macedonia have a Framework for Reciprocal, Fair, and Balanced Trade, which includes significant tariff reductions

and serves as a basis for deepening economic ties, in addition to the defense alliance. North Macedonia has increased its defense budget, exceeding 2 percent of gross domestic product for the first time in years. The government has pledged to follow the alliance's collective guidelines to raise spending to five percent by 2035 to help ease longstanding NATO transatlantic tensions over burden-sharing. The close strategic cooperation with the U.S. has caused some pushback within the country, with critics arguing that North Macedonia risks undermining its European Union aspirations by being too accommodating to the United States. North Macedonia sees Russia's assertive policies in the region as a challenge to international peace and security, and has joined NATO allies in sending troops to the east of Bulgaria and Latvia to help secure the alliance's borders. North Macedonia participates heavily in the KFOR multinational peacekeeping mission in Kosovo, in order to try to prevent destabilization of that region. North Macedonia has strengthened its commitments to the European Union Common Foreign and Security Policy by adopting more restrictive measures against Belarus than any other EU member state, in an effort to curtail the acquisition and transfer of technology to Minsk, which might enhance Moscow and Minsk's military capabilities. The Western Balkans is a key battleground for Russian disinformation campaigns. Russia engages in hybrid campaigns using structural and narrative tools, often through Serbian outlets, to influence public opinion in the region. They seek to exploit frustration with the EU accession process and stoke nationalist sentiments. The government of North Macedonia has warned the EU that leaving the Western Balkans in uncertainty about their EU prospects will play into the hands of Russia's disinformation campaigns.

Norway

Norway has turned away from the United States and is now focusing on securing relationships with European and Nordic allies due to the increasing unpredictability of the transatlantic relationship. At the same time, Norway's intelligence agencies have identified Russia (and its dependent Belarus) as the primary long-term threat to its security, which has led to an unprecedented surge in national defense. In its National Security Strategy, Norway noted that an extensive U.S. military presence in Europe is no longer guaranteed, given the confrontational trade and foreign policy choices the Trump administration has made. Norway is now looking to strengthen strategic defense partnerships with European powers and Nordic neighbors (Sweden and Finland). In mid-2026, Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Støre signed a major defense agreement with France to join President Macron's European nuclear deterrent program. Domestic Norwegian opinion polls suggest a growing loss of confidence in the reliability of the U.S. government, and the U.S. is now seen as one of the key geopolitical sources of anxiety, just behind Russia. Norway shares a direct border with Russia's Kola Peninsula, where the Kremlin has its massive Arctic nuclear submarine fleet. Norwegian Foreign Minister Espen Barth Eide warned that this poses an existential threat to Norway, capable of targeting Western cities. Norway's Chief of Defense, Gen. Eirik Kristoffersen, has warned that although Russia does not seek to conquer Norway completely, Oslo cannot rule out the possibility of a limited Russian land invasion or "land grab" to secure its northern nuclear bastions. The Norwegian Police Security Service (PST) and intelligence agencies have warned of intensified Russian cyberattacks, espionage through civilian fishing crews, and an increased risk of sabotage of Norway's oil and gas infrastructure, which is crucial to the European energy supply. Norway views Belarus as deeply involved in this security crisis, as it is part of a larger authoritarian alliance that serves as a critical staging post for Russian regional escalation management.

Poland

Poland's response to the burgeoning security threat from Russia and Belarus and the erosion of America's assurance of Poland's security have made it the European bastion and the vanguard of NATO's eastern front. As the war in Ukraine rages on, and the U.S. rethinks its European troop presence, Warsaw has pursued an assertive strategy of military self-sufficiency as a hedge against a possible conflict with Moscow. Warsaw believes that a direct military confrontation with Russia is no longer an unthinkable proposition. It has therefore positioned itself to deter aggression from NATO's north and east, and to resist it, should it come, both with NATO's and its own military might. Polish officials have declared that they are "at war" on their eastern front. Belarus and Russia have escalated efforts to exploit a faux migrant emergency to provoke a larger confrontation with NATO by provoking a wave of migrants to cross Poland's borders. Warsaw has suffered an unprecedented surge in Russian cyber-attacks on its transportation infrastructure, GPS spoofing, attacks, arson, and espionage. Russia has launched numerous incursions into Poland's airspace with drones, and Belarus has used balloons to enter Poland's airspace. Warsaw has allocated billions of zlotys to the East Shield program to reinforce its border with Belarus and the Russian exclave of Kaliningrad, and to secure the strategically vital, but vulnerable, Suwałki Gap. In a major policy reversal, Poland has withdrawn from the international landmine ban treaty and authorized its military to lay mines on its eastern borders within 48 hours of a security crisis. It has also deployed cutting-edge K2 Black Panther tanks to its northeastern border to prepare for possible incursions by Russia. Despite the alliance with Washington as a critical pillar of Poland's security, shifting tides in America's political winds and deliberations by the U.S. about withdrawing some of its troops from Europe have raised alarm signals in Warsaw. Poland believes it must build a military of sufficient size and strength to make a Russian attack on it completely unviable regardless of the mood of the moment in Washington.

Portugal

Portugal is firmly opposed to the idea of creating an independent European army, believing that its defense structure should be fully integrated into the US-led NATO alliance. At the same time, the country's leadership has expressed historic doubts about the reliability of Washington, prompting the population of Portugal to demand a rise in local defense spending to offset potential shortcomings of the American security guarantee. Meanwhile, Lisbon assesses Russia and its ally Belarus as serious threats to the security of Europe and the country itself. Unlike its European neighbors, including Spain, the Portuguese Defence Minister Nuno Melo has explicitly rejected the idea of creating an independent EU military force. Portugal views the United States as a key transatlantic partner and is committed to developing its military capabilities to meet specific NATO missions. Despite its pro-Atlantic rhetoric, the Portuguese political elite has openly criticized the predictability of the Trump administration, with former President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa arguing that the White House policy line on Ukraine strategically favored the Russian Federation. In the eyes of many, such interference in bilateral EU-Russia relations undermines the reputation of the United States as a sincere security guarantor for Europe. A poll conducted by the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR) shows that the number of Portuguese citizens who support allocating defense spending to reduce the country's dependence on the US has grown exponentially, from 26 percent to 42 percent. Thus, Portugal has become the most eager EU member state to increase the military budget to withstand possible domestic political turns in Washington. The National Internal Security Report (RASI) of Portugal

explicitly names Russia as a serious threat to the country's strategic security. Portuguese intelligence services have identified several concrete risks, including the possibility of Russian espionage against local companies supplying arms to Ukraine, as well as Russian sabotage of Atlantic communication cables. Meanwhile, Lisbon monitors with concern the growing use of Belarus as a launchpad for Russia's military-strategic actions. The transfer of Russian tactical nuclear missiles to Minsk, as well as joint Russian-Belarusian military exercises, has provoked strong criticism among the military leadership of Portugal. In response to the continuous war in Ukraine and the resulting risks to national security, Portugal is experiencing the most significant defense-sector growth since joining the EU in 1986.

Romania

Romania is not seeking "unreliance" or strategic decoupling from the United States. Instead, Romania views its Strategic Partnership with Washington as an "overwhelmingly important" pillar of its national security. Yet, Romania is bolstering its own domestic defense capabilities, Black Sea alliances, and regional integration against the backdrop of partial shifts in U.S. troop rotations, a surge in Russian hybrid warfare, and the looming regional threat of a Belarus-style autocratic absorption of neighboring countries. When the U.S. changed some of its rotational force levels, Romania did not pull back but launched talks with other NATO members to fill in the gaps while upgrading the 71st Air Base to permanently host Western deterrence assets. Bucharest has accelerated its procurement programs directly from U.S. defense suppliers in order to acquire key military components like Merops interceptors to protect its borders. The threat takes the form of constant cross-border incursions by Russian combat drones. Romania's updated defense posture singles out Moscow as the primary, multi-faceted hostile actor. The state has introduced stiff criminal penalties for people trying to bypass anti-Russian sanctions. For Romanian policymakers, a critical geopolitical priority is to avert the Republic of Moldova from descending into a subverted puppet state or a "second Belarus." A Russian-dominated regime in Chisinau would instantly make Romania's eastern frontier an active, destabilized flashpoint. Romania has begun to grab regional format chairmanships as part of the European Union to fast-track Moldova's Western integration. Bucharest acquired the operational company controlling Moldova's vital Giurgiulești Port on the Danube. This strategic infrastructure node will ensure that Western logistics are opened up, blocking off Russian efforts to exploit the Moscow-sponsored breakaway region of Transnistria. With major deepwater development like the Neptun Deep offshore project set to make Romania the EU's top natural gas producer, Bucharest is directly using its energy network to feed and secure the baseline grids of both Moldova and Ukraine.

San Marino

Unlike its unofficial counterparts, San Marino's official foreign policy is completely aligned with that of the European Union and the United States. The microstate formally condemns the growing military threats of Russia and Belarus, but because San Marino is a landlocked state trying to finalize an EU Association Agreement, its diplomatic positioning is quite tactical, balanced, and sometimes questioned by Western intelligence agencies. San Marino always votes for the UN General Assembly resolutions calling for Russia to withdraw its forces from Ukraine. The state is one of the few to join the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) declarations, which impose large-scale anti-Russian sanctions. Russia has blacklisted San Marino

as an “unfriendly country.” In the UN General Debate, the Sammarinese Minister for Foreign Affairs Luca Beccari expressed concerns over an “unprecedented rise in global military expenditure,” and an “increase in dangerous nuclear rhetoric” fueled by Russia’s deployment of nuclear capabilities into Belarus. San Marino maintains a strong relationship with Washington. According to the U.S. Department of State, the microstate “consistently supports U.S. foreign policy positions, as well as U.S. candidates to international organizations.” Rather than taking a stand on the debates about the unreliability of the U.S. umbrella, San Marino emphasizes its European integration. Its main geopolitical priority is the pending ratification of its EU Association Agreement. That is intended to tie San Marino’s economic and security orbits to the EU, reducing its exposure to wider transatlantic fragmentation. EU regulators have raised concerns that “San Marino’s financial services sector could provide a back door into the EU trade bloc for illegal money from Russia.” Western intelligence analysts note that while San Marino is a “like-minded partner” on paper, its historically lax border controls with Italy have sometimes been exploited by Russian operatives trying to cycle back into the Schengen zone after being expelled from major EU capitals. Ultimately, San Marino maintains a strict, legally compliant, pro-Western foreign policy that denounces Russia and Belarus, but it has to constantly manage its internal economic vulnerabilities to preserve the institutional trust of the EU and the United States.

Serbia

Serbia does not consider the United States to be “unreliable” or Russia and Belarus to be “growing threats.” Instead, it uses the doctrine of ‘strategic ambiguity’ with the EU and the United States, ensuring its dependence on Russia and Belarus in energy and historical ties while presenting itself as a military neutral. Serbia takes advantage of both sides to maximize its benefits, mainly the EU’s non-recognition of Kosovo. Instead of seeing the U.S. as unreliable, Belgrade is trying to establish closer ties with the U.S. and has signed a deal to increase trade, defense, and green energy cooperation. Serbia’s government values preferential access to trade deals and economic integration with the West. Therefore, Belgrade is working closely with Western entities to avoid the impact of U.S. sanctions on Russian entities. Despite Belgrade’s efforts, U.S. Congress members have been pressuring the Serbian government to cut its ties with Moscow. They have repeatedly introduced the Western Balkans Democracy and Prosperity Act, which would cut strategic partnerships with Serbia if it does not sever its connections with Russia. Besides NATO membership, Serbia is one of the few European countries willing to resist imposing sanctions on Russia due to the war with Ukraine. It has a strong domestic pro-Russian public and a vital need for Russian gas. Moscow has been blocking all resolutions in the U.N. Security Council concerning the recognition of Kosovo. In a public letter, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Serbia thanked Moscow for its “principled stance regarding the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Serbia.” At the same time, the two countries have had growing tensions, as Moscow accused Belgrade of “betrayal” for supplying nearly \$1 billion of armored vehicles to Ukraine through third-party Western companies. Moreover, U.S. sanctions have forced Serbia to sell the Russian state oil company’s shares in its refining sector. Belarus occupies a similar position for Serbia in its foreign policy. Belgrade carefully conducts its foreign policy with Minsk, using its support on the Kosovo issue. Still, unlike with Russia, Serbia supported EU sanctions against Belarus due to its role in invading Ukraine. To show the West that it has no military intentions, Serbia suspended its trilateral exercises with Russia and Belarus, called Slavic Brotherhood, that have been held annually.

Slovak Republic

Slovakia's foreign policy position is two-sided, as the country officially adheres to a pragmatic approach and at the same time is heavily reliant on its strategic partners. Prime Minister Robert Fico has repeatedly denied that Russia and Belarus pose any serious military threat to Slovakia. However, the government has resisted US and Western pressure to limit economic ties with Russia and Belarus. Slovakia has consistently fulfilled its NATO and EU defense obligations as a frontline state. Robert Fico advocates for Slovakia's strategic partnerships with Moscow and Minsk, saying that they should not be subordinate to transatlantic interests. The government has accused the US and the EU of pursuing a costly and unsustainable energy policy, vulnerable to American corporate interests. Slovakia has established a strategic dialogue with the US, which is also a nuclear state, on issues of investment, including Westinghouse nuclear fuel. Slovakia has resisted American pressure to reduce its economic and political ties with Russia and Belarus. Fico warned the EU not to isolate Russia because, he argued, despite possible mistakes, it cannot be "demonised and pushed out of Europe." Slovakia repeatedly blocked EU measures to impose sanctions. Cessation of pipeline gas and oil imports will have a much more significant impact on the Slovakian economy than on Russia's ability to fund its war efforts. Unlike other EU states, Slovakia has initiated a rapprochement with Belarus. The foreign minister has emphasized the development of pragmatic ties with Belarus in the fields of agriculture and culture. Juraj Blanár has argued that rapprochement with Belarus would give "space for diplomacy" to contribute to peace talks. The Slovak government has ended direct military assistance to Ukraine. Slovakia has also refused to support Ukraine's membership in NATO and has called for an immediate ceasefire. While officially pursuing a policy of rapprochement with Russia, Slovakia has strengthened its defense capabilities by participating in the NATO multinational air policing mission over the Baltic States together with Poland, Estonia, and Latvia. Slovakia's experts note that such a policy of conciliation with Russia does not take into account the active work of hybrid Russian military intelligence against Slovakia.

Slovenia

Slovenia's position is based on the belief that it needs to maintain steady support for the transatlantic alliance via NATO while advancing defense autonomy to counter hybrid and conventional threats from Russia and Belarus. As the Trump administration's policies threaten European security and the credibility of American commitments, Slovenia has had to balance its geopolitical alliance with the US with the need to guarantee its own defense. While Slovenia values the close bilateral defense cooperation with the US, including the EU-US defense programs like the U.S. European Command coordination and the Artemis Accords with NASA, it has also realized the risks of being too dependent on one strategic partner. After the change in the U.S. government, the Slovenian prime minister, Robert Golob, has redirected the national defense budget to invest more in dual-use technologies, cyber defenses, and infrastructure. Instead of depending on foreign suppliers, Slovenia now tries to develop its own defense market to reduce exposure and vulnerabilities stemming from possible logistical disruptions. Slovenia's defense policymakers acknowledge that the nation "cannot be an island of its own" and that it must meet NATO's military standards. Still, they face domestic backlash, as right-wing and populist opposition parties have tabled a referendum initiative to leave NATO and criticized Slovenia's decision to channel millions of EUR of military aid to Ukraine. Having abandoned its traditional pragmatic approach to bilateral relations with Moscow after the full-scale invasion of

Ukraine, Slovenia is now officially labeled “hostile” by the Kremlin. The Slovenian government consistently expresses its concerns about the aggressiveness of the Kremlin in international organizations and highlights drone strikes on civil aviation routes and the unauthorized intrusion of Russian aircraft into Polish airspace as acts of state-sponsored terrorism. Slovenia views Belarus as a hotbed and a springboard for attacks on NATO countries. It has successfully promoted a strong diplomatic campaign to isolate Belarus regionally, blocking its participation in the UN Security Council elections (153 votes vs. 38 in favor of Minsk). Slovenia’s biggest hybrid security challenge comes from the Kremlin’s influence in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia. Slovenian officials have assessed that Russian-inspired unrest and sabotage activities have the potential to cut off transportation routes in Bosnia and Herzegovina by as much as 78%. This has prompted Ljubljana to invest more in modernizing its armored and mechanized vehicle fleet.

Spain

Spain’s position is based on promoting European strategic autonomy to counter Russian and Belarusian aggression while resisting U.S. hegemony in the Atlantic alliance. Madrid believes that the growing threat from Moscow and Minsk will undermine Euro-Atlantic security, and Europe needs an autonomous deterrent to avoid becoming “too dependent” on a “capricious” Washington. Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez refused the United States permission to use jointly owned Spanish airspaces and military bases (Rota and Morón) for American-led operations beyond NATO’s core framework. Madrid revolted when the U.S. pressured Spain to increase military spending to 5% of GDP. Foreign Minister José Manuel Albares brushed off the U.S.’s threats of expelling Spain from NATO, claiming that they were “irresponsible” and that they reserved the right to “have other priorities” in balancing their military budgets with welfare-state spending. Rather than rely on the capricious U.S., Albares pushed for a unified European army as a guarantor for collective security. To deal with the immediate security threat, Spain initiated a “structural” change in its defense policy, which boosted its defense budget by three times since 2018 to meet NATO’s 2% of GDP threshold. The allocated 10.5 billion euros is expected to fund cybersecurity, telecommunications, and high-tech military equipment to counter hybrid Russian tactics. Spain rejects the view that it wants to be a “free rider” in NATO by keeping large-scale troops near Russia’s borders. They contribute the largest number of personnel to the NATO Rapid Reaction Force and provide the second-largest contingent of aircraft for the Baltic Air Policing mission, constantly monitoring the movements of Russian and Belarusian planes. They have also been vocal about imposing stricter economic isolation on Russia during the war and removing “obstructive veto threats” by some member states to expedite foreign policy responses and sanctions against Moscow.

Sweden

Sweden’s security policy is based on the perception of Moscow as the primary direct military threat while pursuing strategic autonomy in favor of the European Union to limit uncertainty about the reliability of the U.S. as an ally. After joining NATO, Stockholm rapidly scaled up defense spending and launched an upgrade of the total civil defense capabilities. The latter is said to be a result of the “pressure” from Moscow and Minsk, not from the White House. The Swedish government explicitly opposes transatlantic security arrangements as it sees Europe’s military build-up as a response to Russian aggression, not a signal of Washington’s changing

strategic intentions toward Europe. In its foreign policy statement, Sweden also notes a change in its strategy of reliance on the U.S. in favor of growing European geopolitical power. Sweden's foreign policy statement foresees a more "geopolitical and resolute EU" that would step up its defense spending, research and development activities, civil defense preparations, and military readiness. The Swedish Defense Minister, Pål Jonson, has warned that regardless of the new government in Washington, Europe must transform its economic power into hard power to maintain military deterrence. MUST (Swedish Military Intelligence and Security Service) has warned that Russia is already preparing to wage war against a third country after the Ukrainian conflict, and it could do so within twelve months. Russia has stepped up its airspace violations over Sweden as well as GPS attacks and provocative naval activity along its borders. After Russia's cyber-assaults targeting critical infrastructure, Sweden's civil defense ministry has openly accused the Russian intelligence services of targeting the civil infrastructure with malware. Sweden is set to acquire long-range missiles for its Gripen jets to achieve a strategic nuclear deterrence reach in case of an immediate attack from Moscow. Sweden is also one of the largest contributors to the EU's comprehensive economic and political sanctions against Belarus, meant to penalize Minsk for its internal crackdown on political and economic freedoms and its support of the war in Ukraine. Together with Poland and Finland, Sweden's intelligence services hold Belarus responsible for the hybrid illegal migrant pushbacks designed to test the democratic European Union countries. While Stockholm recognizes the illegitimacy of Alexander Lukashenko's regime, it prefers to fund the Belarusian democratic opposition on its way to a free market economy. Sweden has reversed its longstanding policy of neutrality and military non-alignment to become a forward-looking NATO bulwark facing Russia.

Switzerland

Switzerland has adjusted its security strategy to perceived threats from Russia, Belarus, and a possible unreliability of the United States' defense timeline. It has abandoned its post-Cold War security policy, embraced Western sanctions, and drawn up unprecedented military cooperation with other European states. The FIS has identified Russia as the main threat to Europe's stability, prosperity, and peace. Switzerland had relied largely on U.S. military equipment. The war in Ukraine has resulted in significant delays to U.S. production chains, which has pushed back the delivery of Switzerland's ordered Patriot missiles by four to five years. As a result, the defense ministry has sought to diversify its defense spending by starting contract talks with France, Israel, and South Korea for a "parallel air defense system," filling the immediate capability gap. Switzerland has built several subsequent measures of the EU's restrictive measures into its own laws. The blocking of more than 2600 persons and entities in Switzerland, which corresponds roughly to the number of blocked entities in the EU, has resulted in a comprehensive freeze of assets. A recent update to the Swiss Ukraine Ordinance, on the other hand, seeks to constrain Belarusian intermediaries and tighten rules governing third-country trade in key inputs to Russia's defense sector. The Swiss government has implemented a complete Russian liquefied natural gas (LNG) import ban and published a list of more than 100 ghost tankers carrying Russian oil through Europe to evade oil price caps. A heated domestic debate has erupted over these policies. The SVP right-wing populist party has filed a popular initiative that would change the constitution to prohibit the government from imposing sanctions on foreigners or participating in peacetime NATO exercises. Meanwhile, Foreign Minister Ignazio Cassis warned that excessively restrictive Swiss policies "would jeopardize national security and deprive it of a

chance to carry out NATO training.” However, polls suggest that most Swiss voters favor current sanctions while looking to strengthen ties with Europe’s military security.

Türkiye

Turkey manages its foreign policy in a way that allows it to base its decisions on the doctrine of “strategic autonomy” and “balanced neutrality.” In other words, Ankara strives to avoid relying on an unpredictable and unreliable ally, the United States, to hedge against the growing pressure from Russia and Belarus. Turkey’s foreign policy course is based on a careful balancing act between three powers: the US, Ukraine, and Russia. Ankara has taken advantage of the changed approach of the Trump administration, which has adopted a transactional method toward its traditional allies, to expand its influence in the Middle East, South Caucasus, and Central Asia. Turkish leaders believe that, given the US’s reduced interest in global security affairs, Europe will turn to Turkey for collective defense against Russia and Belarus, which will be in demand for the country’s vast conventional military potential. Turkey has opened up new trade, energy, and strategic partnership opportunities with Russia. However, Ankara understands that Russia’s growing influence in the Black Sea and Eurasia will have a direct impact on its national interests and security. Turkey is taking measures to counter Russian and Belarusian expansionism, both in terms of military potential and diplomatic tools. Turkey has blocked the passage of Russian ships through the Bosphorus Strait, taking advantage of its leverage over maritime traffic through the Bosphorus and Dardanelles Straits, significantly limiting the ability of the Russian navy to intervene in the conflict. Ankara has diplomatic relations with Minsk, including the participation of Turkey’s Foreign Minister in the Minsk International Conference on Security. Turkey carefully monitors Belarus’s potential to exploit the crisis to advance its interests. Ankara serves as a go-between for other countries, being ready to help deter threats to regional security. Turkey does not support economic sanctions against Russia, serving as a mediator between Washington and Moscow. Ankara’s foreign policy of balancing between great powers is based on realism, and therefore it is necessary to base its security policy on a policy of autonomy from both Washington and Moscow. Turkey uses the alliance with the US as a backup against a potential expansion of Russia’s and Belarus’s influence. At the same time, Ankara strives to develop an independent foreign policy within the framework of NATO to consolidate its national interests against the background of Trump’s transactional policy toward Turkey and the transformation of US interests in the region.

Ukraine

Ukraine’s approach is based on reinforcing the regional coalition’s self-sufficiency and transitioning to a more aggressive stance due to the inconsistent reliability of the U.S. political leadership and the growing military partnership between Russia and Belarus. Kyiv views the defense of Eastern Europe as its exclusive responsibility and has adopted a firm position against the countries to its north. The changes in the political stance of the U.S. have impacted Ukraine’s national security strategy. With promises of defense support, such as Patriot missile system manufacturing permissions being broken, and pressure exerted on Ukraine to cede territorial integrity, the country has abandoned its dependence on the global superpower. Ukraine presents its drone technologies and innovations on the battlefield as proof of its indispensable role in the collective security of the region. Taking into account the limitations of the U.S., Ukraine’s president has positioned his country to take a responsible and independent approach to regional

affairs without waiting for signals from Washington. Ukraine's intelligence has revealed that Moscow is using the Alexander Lukashenko regime to establish a "Russian balcony" to involve Belarus more closely in the war and test the reactions of the West. Kyiv has developed a list of threats and responses to this initiative. According to the latest statements of Ukraine's UN special envoy, Belarus has already surrendered its sovereignty to Russia. Ukraine considers the deployment of Russian Oreshnik and nuclear tactical missiles in Belarusian territory as a significant threat to itself and the EU. Ukraine has revised its approach to the management of the Minsk dilemma, replacing careful balancing with coercion. This time, Kyiv has used its own military potential of drones to long for new positions. Ukraine's Unmanned Systems Forces published a list of 500 targets in Belarus, including those that could be immediately struck by the Ukrainian armed forces in case of a border crossing by the Belarusian military.

United Kingdom

The United Kingdom is no longer willing to depend on the United States as its military umbrella and seeks to quickly transform into a strategic autonomous player alongside its European NATO allies to counter Moscow's immediate and growing threat. The UK's defense sector and government have openly admitted that decades of relying on America have been upended by the new direction in Washington, and they are now preparing to deal with the coming crisis in Europe with a different approach. Top officials and defense committees in the UK have warned that they can no longer count on the US to come to their aid at the first sign of trouble. Former NATO Chief Lord Robertson warned that "Our reliance on the United States, based on the naïve belief that it will always be there to support us in times of conflict, has undermined our own capacity." The new US doctrines in the region mean that Britain's defense planners do not believe that Washington will do anything to help them in a crisis. It is feared that Washington would sacrifice Europe to meet a deal with Moscow. Decades of depending on Washington for everything from software upgrades to nuclear missiles are now being reconsidered as London seeks to reduce its reliance on Washington. The UK's military leaders have warned that they are now in the most dangerous period in the country's history. The Chief of the Defence Staff, Sir Richard Knighton, warned that "The risks and threats to this country are greater than I have known since the Cold War," he said, referring to the increase in Russian aircraft patrols near UK airspace. Intelligence agencies in the UK and the US have warned that Russia has already begun a campaign of non-conventional warfare against the UK. This has included targeting critical infrastructure, sowing discord through social media, hacking, and spying on defense contractors. US and UK intelligence agencies have warned that Russia could soon cross into the gray zone and launch limited military strikes against NATO allies in Europe. The placement of Russian nuclear missiles in Belarus threatens to destabilize NATO's eastern flank. Tensions between London and Moscow reached a fever pitch after the UK decided to share information about elements of long-range cruise missiles with Kyiv.

Questions to Consider:

- How much did the United States provide to Europe compared to how European countries provided to Europe?
- How does the relationship between European countries change the perspective of the U.S., Europe, and Russia?
- Does the history of the European country affect the relationship it has with the U.S. and Russia?

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