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THE FUTURE OF NATO: WHERE DO GERMANY AND CANADA FIT?

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ATLANTIK-BRÜCKE CANADA

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This briefing paper raises a series of questions and, where possible, draws distinctions between the Canadian and German outlooks. The Russian invasion of Ukraine has shifted expectations and altered domestic political calculations. Much is in flux, so this paper addresses a series of central issues, raising questions, but not providing definitive answers. The first question raises the challenge of how does NATO provide security for its members while not encouraging Russia (and others) to attack non-members. This naturally leads to the question of enlargement—whether and which countries should join NATO. The paper then considers the greatest threat to NATO: a hostile American president. I then consider the limits of expanding NATO’s competence to non-military issues and to addressing the threat posted by China. This leads to a key theme here—that NATO is a military alliance, and asking it to do more than that may be problematic. I outline what NATO cannot do, including constraints on being an alliance of democracies. Finally, I consider whether Canada and Germany are on the same page or not, and mostly conclude that these two countries do not differ that much on NATO’s future.

L'AVENIR DE L'OTAN : QUELLE EST LA PLACE DE L'ALLEMAGNE ET DU CANADA?

Stephen M. Saideman

RÉSUMÉ

Ce document soulève une série de questions et, lorsque c'est possible, établit une distinction entre les points de vue canadiens et allemands. L'invasion russe de l'Ukraine a changé les attentes et modifié les calculs de politique intérieure. Une grande partie est en pleine mutation; ce document porte donc sur une série d'enjeux centraux, qui soulèvent des questions, mais sans apporter de réponses définitives. La première question porte sur la façon dont l'OTAN peut protéger ses membres sans pour autant inciter la Russie (et d'autres) à attaquer les États non-membres. Cela mène naturellement à la question de l'élargissement : quels pays peuvent adhérer à l'OTAN, le cas échéant? L'article se penche ensuite sur la plus grande menace à l'OTAN, soit un président américain hostile. J'aborde ensuite la question des limites d'un élargissement des compétences de l'OTAN aux questions non militaires et à la lutte contre la menace affichée par la Chine. Cela conduit à un thème principal, à savoir que l'OTAN est une alliance militaire et qu'il peut être problématique de lui demander de s'occuper de questions autres que militaires. Je décris ce que l'OTAN ne peut pas faire, y compris les contraintes liées au fait d'être une alliance de démocraties. Enfin, j'évalue dans quelle mesure le Canada et l'Allemagne sont sur la même page, pour en conclure que les deux pays ne diffèrent pas beaucoup quant à l'avenir de l'OTAN.

DIE ZUKUNFT DER NATO: WO PASSEN DEUTSCHLAND UND KANADA HINEIN?

Stephen M. Saideman

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Dieses Informationspapier wirft eine Reihe von Fragen auf und, wo möglich, differenziert der kanadischen und der deutschen Perspektive. Die russische Invasion in der Ukraine hat die Erwartungen verschoben und die innenpolitischen Kalkulationen verändert. Vieles ist im Fluss, daher befasst sich dieses Papier mit einer Reihe zentraler Themen, die Fragen aufwerfen, aber keine endgültigen Antworten liefern. Die erste Frage wirft die Herausforderung auf, wie die NATO ihren Mitgliedern Sicherheit bietet, ohne Russland (und andere) dazu zu ermutigen, Nichtmitglieder anzugreifen. Dies führt natürlich zur Frage der Erweiterung – ob und welche Länder der NATO beitreten sollten. Das Papier betrachtet dann die größte Bedrohung für die NATO: einen feindseligen amerikanischen Präsidenten. Anschließend betrachte ich die Grenzen der Ausweitung der NATO-Kompetenz auf nichtmilitärische Fragen und auf die Bewältigung der von China ausgehenden Bedrohung. Dies führt hier zu einem Schlüsselthema – dass die NATO ein Militärbündnis ist, und von ihr zu verlangen, mehr als sie zu tun, kann problematisch sein. Ich skizziere, was die NATO nicht kann, einschließlich der Beschränkungen, ein Bündnis von Demokratien zu sein. Abschließend überlege ich, ob Kanada und Deutschland auf derselben Seite stehen oder nicht, und komme größtenteils zu dem Schluss, dass sich diese beiden Länder in Bezug auf die Zukunft der NATO nicht so sehr unterscheiden..

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization [NATO], in a rare moment, does not have to worry about its continued existence or whether it is brain dead. Russia's invasion of Ukraine has shifted the entire conversation about the future of NATO,¹ and each member is now considering what more it will be doing in decades ahead. Indeed, Russia has helped resolve the intra-NATO debate concerning priorities of the Eastern Front versus the Southern Front. While we now have increased clarity about the importance of the organization and the need to contribute more, it is not so clear what those contributions will be or other major questions. This briefing paper will focus on a set of questions to orient a discussion about Canada's and Germany's role in the alliance. These questions are:

- 1) How can NATO address Russia's threats to both NATO and non-NATO countries?
- 2) Is enlargement on the table again?
- 3) Can NATO survive another Trump term or a Republican like Trump?
- 4) What is NATO's role in the gray zone?
- 5) China?
- 6) What Can't NATO Do? Should NATO be more focused on political rather than military roles?
- 7) Can NATO be an alliance of democracies?
- 8) Are Canada and Germany far apart on NATO's future?

Before going forward, I must note that the discussion below will be more speculative about Germany's stances in the future as the war in Ukraine is shaking up our assumptions in that case far more than in the Canadian case. Why is this the case? Russia's invasion undermined the basic assumptions of German foreign policy in ways that it did not really challenge those shaping Canada. This is partly due to distance but mostly due to the attitudes of the elites in each country. German leaders either believed in or felt compelled to follow 21st century Ostpolitik as I discuss further below. Canada's beliefs have been far less shaken by Russian belligerence as the bedrock assumptions of Canadian foreign policy and defence are all focused on its southern border, not the threat across the Arctic.

¹ The Intelligence from The Economist, "Action pact: NATO's Ukraine role," *The Economist*, February 2, 2022. <https://podcasts.google.com/feed/aHR0cHM6Ly9yc3MuYWVhcnVhc3QuY29tL3RoZWVjb25vbWlzdHRoZXdlZW-thaGVhZA/episode/ODJmNWM0ZDYtZjg4OC00Nzc0LWFiMjAtODVjOTM2YzVIMDM3?sa=X&ved=0CAUQk-fYCahcKEwigj82s7p32AhUAAAAAHQAAAAAQbQ>.

THE RUSSIAN CHALLENGE

Writing this in early April 2022 (so much can change before mid May), it appears as if the bright, shiny line of NATO/non-NATO membership matters greatly. The war has been contained within Ukraine, a non-NATO country. Putin's Russia has engaged in a variety of transgressive behavior in NATO countries: election interference, pandemic conspiracy theory spreading, assassination via polonium, cyber attacks, and more. However, Russia has not used its military directly against any NATO country. This seems obvious but can be overlooked. Compare that record to Russia's behavior towards not just Ukraine but also Georgia, Moldova, and Kazakhstan. This is good news, but it presents NATO with a very difficult challenge—how to deter Russia from attacking non-NATO countries. The obvious answer is to provide them with membership, but enlargement has a variety of complications and consequences, which I address further below.

Here is the key question: is NATO inviting Russia to attack or otherwise coerce any country if it is not in NATO? By repeatedly telling Russia and the world that Ukraine might be a member of NATO some day but not today, did NATO give a green light to Russia to invade? No, because its members sent many other signals about the costs that Russia would incur. However, those costs did not include war with NATO, so Putin and his inner circle could calculate that they could invade Ukraine without a major military response from NATO. Of the few things that Putin has gotten right lately, this is one of them. The war with Ukraine is a debacle, whether he wins or loses, but he was correct that NATO would be deterred by the threat of escalation. Putin made this quite explicit at the start, rattling his nuclear sabres to make clear where the line was. Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg has made many statements that identify the line—NATO/non-NATO: “we will protect and defend every inch of Allied territory.”² He went so far as to make it clear that the convoys of war material headed towards Ukraine are fair game once they are in Ukrainian territory but not before that.

Deterring attacks against non-NATO countries is very difficult. It is not clear that Putin was deterrable in this case as wishful thinking, groupthink, and the like caused Putin to underestimate Ukrainian resistance and overestimate the capabilities of his own forces. Still, NATO countries must develop more tools to raise the costs of attacking or coercing those near Russia that are not NATO members. The effort by Canada and some other NATO members to train and arm the Ukrainians has paid off, as Ukrainian resilience has been most impressive. Obviously, most of the credit goes to Ukraine, its reforms of its political system (including better civilian control of its armed forces), and its improvements to its armed forces, but the lesson here may be that NATO should arm and train more of Russia's neighbors.

²

Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, speech at the Ottawa Conference on Defence and Security, Ottawa, Canada, March 9th, 2022.

CANADA VS. GERMANY

In the aftermath of Crimea, Canada was quick to train and assist Ukraine with Op Unifier one of the most consistent elements of Canadian foreign policy. This mission has had a prominent place in the mandate letters the Prime Minister has given to the Ministers of National Defence. Germany was reluctant to support an enduring presence in the Baltics as its leaders wanted to hold onto as much of the NATO-Russia Founding Act as possible.³

This speaks to a few key dynamics distinguishing the Canadian approach from the German approach not just to Russia but to foreign policy in general. First, diasporic politics is central to Canadian foreign policy as the world is generally seen from the prism of domestic politics. Canada is home to the third largest concentration of Ukrainians, which has made the plight of Ukraine far more important in Canadian politics than in most other places. Second, Canada has not been dependent on trade with Russia. Instead, it is a competitor in oil and grain so sanctions on Russia are good for key sectors. Third, except for the imperatives of playing to segments of the home audience, the Trudeau government has not been very focused on foreign and defence policy in general. Canada has had five foreign ministers in seven years and no foreign review in a very long time. This constant shuffling has not helped to promote a consistent outlook or improved implementation. On the other hand, having the same Defence Minister for six years was not that helpful either because he was largely disengaged. Simply put, there has not been much leadership in Canada on foreign and defence policy, although the new Defence Minister, Anita Anand, may change that.

In the case of Germany, dedication to Ostpolitik, economic dependence discouraging sacrifices and encouraging wishful thinking about Russian restraint, and coalition politics are the key forces shaping policies towards Russia.⁴ Whether it was nostalgia for the role Ostpolitik played in calming the Cold War or a deep desire to keep the stretched fibers of the NATO Russia Founding Act (1997) intact, something to build upon in the future, until February of this year, the focus of German foreign policy towards the east was to try to avoid antagonizing Russia. Germany resisted the permanent basing of troops in the Baltics in the aftermath of Russia's seizure of Crimea because that was seen as a violation of the 1997 agreement. Because of this opposition and similar pressure from other countries, the deterrence/reassurance mission had to be called Enhanced Forward Presence rather than something more enduring. One of the most important statements out of the extraordinary summit of NATO leaders at the end of March was the admission by several participants that the NATO Russia Founding Act is now dead. This, along with the new stance by the German government should facilitate a greater German role in deterring Russia.

³

In previous trips to Berlin, I asked experts at SWP and members of the Bundestag about the adherence to the NATO-Russia Founding Act, which I had considered dead after Crimea's annexation in 2014, and kept hearing about the desire/need to keep it alive for when Russia became less aggressive and more reasonable.

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I am not an expert on German politics so please correct me on all that follows.

Speaking of the new stance, the statements and promises by Chancellor Olaf Scholz have been met with a major shift in German public opinion. Arming Ukraine is quite popular as is the promise to spend 2% or more of GDP on defence (Gzero 2022). This was all quite unimaginable in January of 2022. It is not clear how a Germany that is no longer averse to offending Russia will act differently except agreeing to make the forward deployments larger and more permanent and, yes, the end of Nordstream 2. Yet energy imports have yet to be embargoed, and advanced weaponry still has not been delivered. Dependence still constrains Germany. Another complication: if we apply all the possible sanctions, there may be few tools left to discourage Russia in other areas.

Are there innovative ways to raise the costs for Russian aggression against non-NATO countries?

ENLARGEMENT: IS IT IN PLAY?

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has dramatized the consequences of being outside of NATO, shifting public opinion in Finland and Sweden on membership in the alliance and raising the question of whether leaving Georgia and others (Moldova?) outside the alliance creates more insecurity and uncertainty than bringing them in. The domestic politics in many of these aspirants is shifting just as the dynamics within NATO and within each member is changing. While Ukraine and Georgia were invited to eventually apply, it was clear to most that neither would get into the alliance. Three things stood in their way:

- A key condition for membership is not having border disputes, and both countries have disputes with Russia.
- Other conditions regarding domestic stability, democracy, corruption, and the like also fell short of NATO requirements.
- Division within NATO on priorities and threats.

The first two obstacles remain, as admitting either Georgia or Ukraine almost automatically brings Article V into play, AND both countries generally do not meet the rest of the conditions. The last may be most subject to change but is still unlikely to move much. Canada has consistently been pro-Ukraine membership, but has the movement in German domestic politics regarding arms sales and sanctions also moved its leadership from veto-player to supporter on the issue of membership? This may all be moot as an agreement to end the war might include Ukraine agreeing not to join NATO.

On the other hand, conditions are changing that make it far more imaginable that Sweden and Finland will become members of NATO. Public opinion in both countries has shifted considerably (Bildt 2022). Sweden has taken it quite seriously that Russian war plans aimed at NATO in the Baltics implicate Swedish territory in the opening shots, not to mention Russian exercises that have included mock bombing of Stockholm.

Adding two very capable militaries and two very stable democracies would seem to be an easy decision. However, it resurrects the whole question of enlargement, which then brings Ukraine and Georgia back into play. The other challenge is that Russia has threatened both Finland and Sweden about their moves towards membership. Given Russian military performance in Ukraine, it is not clear how concerned Finland and Sweden (and NATO) should be about such threats. Given that NATO never pulled back its offer of membership to Ukraine in the face of Russian threats before the invasion, it seems unlikely that such threats would deter NATO from admitting two very capable countries on NATO's northern flank.

Is there opposition in Germany to these potential new members? What are the downsides of admitting Finland and Sweden?

CAN NATO SURVIVE ANOTHER TRUMP TERM OR A REPUBLICAN LIKE TRUMP?

The greatest existential threat facing NATO as an alliance is another Trump administration. Some might believe that a bigger threat is American retrenchment, that Obama's pivot was somehow a threat to the U.S. commitment to Europe, but that fear was always overplayed. Obama reinforced the American presence after Crimea, and Biden has not wavered in his support for NATO. In contrast, The four years of Trump presented the organization with a challenge that the alliance had never faced before: a hostile American president (Schuette 2021). Little progress was made on most NATO initiatives as each summit focused on trying not to antagonize the already angry Trump and on his misconceived ideas about the two percent aspiration. It is true that the US did not pull its forces out of Europe—indeed, the US continued to reinforce its positions. Would Trump repeat this again in a second term, criticizing NATO but not following through? Even if Trump were not to pull out, the contrast between the absence of American leadership at the outset of the pandemic with the vital role the Biden Administration has played during the Russian invasion of Ukraine is quite striking. Biden, by sharing intelligence and speaking out, was able to foster a wide coalition of countries, NATO and beyond, to help Ukraine and sanction Russia. What would have Trump done had he been in office this winter? It is simply hard to imagine that the US response and thus the NATO response would have been this united, this coherent, and this strong.

The hope that Trump was just a blip has faded as he pulled the Republican Party away from its traditional pro-NATO Atlanticist stances (Blake 2022). While we could imagine a more traditional Republican winning the nomination, it seems more likely that whoever wins, if it is not Trump, will follow his strategies of demonizing NATO and focusing on competition with the allies rather than collaboration.

The big question here is what Canada and Germany can do to prepare for the day that the US is led again by an anti-NATO president. If the Trump experience is any indication, Canada will be largely consumed with trying to protect the trade

relationship, making it hard to dedicate time and political capital to keeping the alliance together. The gravity of NATO may shift to Germany with Brexit dysfunction making the United Kingdom less able to replace lost American leadership. Is Germany willing to play a greater role in leading NATO? Can the European Union develop its military capacity enough and develop enough of a common outlook to supplant NATO if the alliance breaks down due to a hostile US president?

WHAT IS NATO'S ROLE IN THE GRAY ZONE?

Until Russia's invasion of Ukraine, much of the focus of late has been on attacks that fall short of conventional assaults: hybrid or gray zone attacks (Dolan 2022). This category includes a variety of less kinetic attacks: cyber attacks, disinformation, supply chain leverage, and other forms of coercion. Russia's interference in the Brexit campaign, in the US election of 2016, and cyber attacks on Estonia are just some examples that have been quite difficult for NATO. One pathway for future NATO innovation is to develop capacities to engage in defense against such activities and to be able to engage in offensive gray campaigns. The challenge is that this moves NATO from more conventionally military domains to areas that NATO has less competency and more rivals. While investments in related centres of excellence indicate that NATO is taking these threats seriously, these do not radically change NATO's abilities to address these non-conventional threats. In most NATO members, there are agencies other than defence departments that share responsibility in these areas that have not spent decades training with NATO countries and seeking interoperability. Instead, we have agencies that have seen their own militaries as bureaucratic competition, making national responses difficult, not to mention multilateral ones. Moreover, each country has its own regulatory infrastructures and cultures that will make cooperating on information operations (offensive and defensive) very challenging.

Most problematic, it is hard to see how NATO will reach consensus on responses to gray zone threats given that countries vary quite widely in how they see these threats and in how their domestic politics is implicated. Because Russia has been focused on manipulating the far right in many democracies, these gray zone attacks can widen gaps within countries. Right wing parties can be reluctant to confront those who are vectors for Russian disinformation because they worry about alienating the furthest right wing in their base. For example, in the winter of 2022, the Conservative Party of Canada became divided over how to respond to the convoy of far-right extremists that descended on Ottawa and elsewhere (Taylor 2022). Several leaders of the party met with the convoy leaders whose extremism was fed by and amplified by Russian outlets. Conservative provincial leaders were reluctant to use the tools at their disposal to address the occupations of Ottawa and border posts, so ultimately the federal government had to invoke the Emergency Act.

To be sure, not all gray zone attacks find traction in the schisms in the domestic politics of NATO countries, but this vulnerability will get more attention from NATO's adversaries in the future. Thus far, it is not clear that Canada will respond any better

the next time. The point here is that multilateral cooperation will be hard to achieve when there are political actors in many NATO members that see Russian interference as either not so problematic or perhaps quite useful. On the bright side, the Ukraine war has demonstrated that largely unilateral efforts can make a big difference. The American effort before the war to release much intelligence to pre-empt Russian false flag efforts did much to weaken the inevitable information operation (Dilianian, Kube, Lee, and De Luce 2022). Likewise, the daily UK intelligence summary on the state of the conflict provided a clear and convincing narrative that again deflected Russian claims. It is not clear that the alliance can do the same—provide alternative information operations in a timely manner. Rather than focusing on coordinating on a single response, perhaps the best NATO can do and should is encourage the sharing of best practices.

What steps can NATO countries do in common to limit the amplification of disinformation? Can NATO countries be protected under an American cyber umbrella kin to its nuclear umbrella?

CHINA

The Russian invasion of Ukraine makes clear that China is the long-term threat to NATO's members. First, Russia will be weakened by this conflict, and this war has taught NATO that Russia's military is not as mighty as previously imagined. Second, just as Russian leaders had irredentist designs on Ukraine, China's leaders and their domestic political strategies have focused on the "lost territory" of Taiwan. While NATO's strong but limited response against Russia's aggression will make an impression on China's leaders and their calculations, it is not clear which lessons will they learn. They could learn that aggression will be met by well-coordinated sanctions and support to the target of the attack. Or they could learn that those countries that are outside of NATO's membership are fair game—that the democracies fear escalation.

While all in NATO agree that the rise of China is a challenge, the failure to reach consensus has meant that the Secretary General has not been able to call China a threat (CDA Institute 2022). Perhaps the new Strategic Concept will make it clearer what the alliance can do in the Indo-Pacific as that is far from NATO's strengths. Most importantly, just as the Ukraine war has made clearer the consequences of interdependence with Russia, the alliance must consider how to address China's economic strategies towards Europe and its allies (Jones 2021). Again, this runs into the NATO consensus requirement—it is hard to see how all members would agree to forgo economic opportunities to make sure that they are not vulnerable to China's economic coercion.

CANADA VS. GERMANY

Because of the two Michaels and other frictions in the China-Canada relationship, Canada is far more likely to go along with restrictions in trade with China. While the reigning Liberal Party might be more positively disposed than the others, that attitude is very much a vulnerability on Canada's domestic politics. With the opposition primed to focus on any accommodation with China, it is going to be very difficult for the government to reach any new agreements with China. German parties do not face the same kind of constraints although perhaps the lessons of Nordstream 2 will breed some caution in Germany's relations with autocracies in the future.

How will the two countries navigate the conflicting imperatives of economic opportunity and vulnerability to China's coercion? Can either country deploy more than a token force to the Indo-Pacific region? Are there creative ways to make a difference in the Indo-Pacific despite the limited size of their navies?

WHAT CAN'T NATO DO?

Because NATO is the most effective multilateral military organization, there is a temptation to ask it to do more and more. Afghanistan and Libya should have taught that there are significant limits to what NATO can do as an institution and as an alliance. But then again, there is a lot of blame to go around for failure in Afghanistan, so we may continue to consider asking the alliance to expand what it might do. For much of the 2010's, there was a debate about whether to focus on the eastern front or the southern front (Borsani 2016). As a military alliance that was formed to deter the threat from the east, the former was quite within NATO's capabilities. However, given that the threat from the south was in the form of refugees and instability in Africa and the Mideast, NATO was less well-equipped as an alliance to address those challenges. While individual countries could and did engage in capacity building and NATO eventually took over the training mission in Iraq, NATO as an alliance is not adept at building political stability where little exists. While NATO, despite many divisions within, was able to stave off the Taliban for almost two decades, it could not build a self-sustaining Afghan government. In the prior missions, the political and economic reconstruction were in the hands of non-NATO organizations. The OPLANs focused almost entirely on key military tasks and the requirements to fulfill them with other actors coordinating the more overtly political responsibilities. It is important to note this limitation as we consider what else NATO has been asked to do or might be asked to do in the future.

For instance, could NATO deal with the rising challenge of populism (Shrank 2017)? No, it cannot. While populism may be a threat to many members of the alliance, the institution cannot intervene in the domestic politics of its members. Indeed, since populists target NATO as a group of out of touch elites, any NATO effort would be giving the populists fodder for their arguments. The pattern for NATO since it was formed has been quite clear on this: the alliance has stayed out of the internal conflicts

of its members. NATO did not play a role in the troubles in Northern Ireland, nor did it help Spain fight Basque separatists or any of the other groups fighting NATO members. It is hard enough to get consensus on external threats, and, as discussed above, NATO does not have the tools or expertise to influence internal conflicts.

Can NATO address democratic backsliding? Yes and no. A very underestimated dynamic has been the absence of military coups in newer NATO countries. While there are many factors shaping this invisible outcome, NATO's efforts to foster democratic control of the armed forces of new members may have paid off (Epstein 2005). However, the democratic backsliding in Turkey, Hungary, and now Poland is not via the military but through incumbent politicians changing the rules of competition, restricting the media, and altering the courts in ways that subvert rule of law. These dynamics are largely or entirely outside of NATO's purview. The European Union has a greater role here both because it has funding that could be suspended or re-directed. While it is true that all things military are political (war is politics by other means), it is not true that all political dynamics are shaped by military policies and resources. So, while NATO's military alliance does involve a great deal of politics, we must keep in mind that its strengths are not as fungible as some would like. Moreover, the need to get consensus serves as a key barrier for many political issues.

Should NATO try to expand its competency to focus more on political cooperation? Is consensus possible on political issues? How can consensus be finessed on hotter political issues?

CAN NATO BE AN ALLIANCE OF DEMOCRACIES?

Having authoritarian regimes inside NATO is not new as Greece and Turkey both have had military regimes at various points in time since they joined the alliance. However, the enlargement processes of the 1990s and early 2000s revised expectations as democracy, rule of law, and other standards were part of the conditions to join. These rules had not been applied to members—just those seeking to join. However, because of these conditions and the larger discussions about the community of democracies not fighting with each other, much has been made of NATO as an alliance of democracies. With Hungary already sliding into electoral authoritarianism or, as Viktor Orban has called it, illiberal democracy, Turkey losing its democratic credentials as Erdogan consolidated his power after the coup attempt of 2016, and Poland's government undermining its courts, NATO has fallen short of this aspiration of a democratic alliance. The invasion of Ukraine has displaced this concern, but the contradiction between membership criteria and the current situation are stark and will provide for some friction and uncomfortable summits in the years ahead.

Besides discomfort, the important implication is that the existence of autocratic countries in the alliance will undermine NATO messaging. It cannot be part of the larger effort to confront authoritarian regimes (Russia, China, North Korea, Iran, etc.)

if the alliance includes a few. The first question is whether NATO can do anything to stop the bleeding—how to stabilize the democracies inside? Again, the consensus procedure and NATO’s own weakness on political dynamics limits what it can do to encourage Poland to move back towards democracy. And some humility is required as NATO could not and did not prevent Fidesz and Viktor Orban from winning again. The European Union has more tools and pressure in these matters.

Should NATO drop the rhetoric about being an alliance of democracies? Are there any tools NATO can deploy to stabilize the democracies that remain? Should NATO push out those members that are committed to an authoritarian path?

ARE CANADA AND GERMANY FAR APART ON NATO’S FUTURE?

No. Both countries have long based their foreign policies on supporting multilateral institutions and cooperative solutions, and NATO remains the most institutionalized multilateral military organization. While other members have sought to build substitutes to NATO, and both have other security partnerships, Canada and Germany have continued to invest much time and effort supporting NATO. Both want the U.S. to act within the alliance than beyond it. Both have been reluctant to spend more on their militaries, but that attitude is changing due to Russia’s invasion of Ukraine shifting both threat perceptions and domestic resistance. Some of the differences have faded, again largely due to the impact Russia’s aggression has made on each country. Canada was more supportive of Ukraine and of basing troops in the nearby members, whereas Germany favored softer stances based on Ostpolitik, driven perhaps by dependence on Russia fuel exports. Domestic politics and broken procurement processes will challenge both countries’ abilities to keep their promises to spend more money on defence and acquire new systems.

One potential difference is that of European defence—that Germany has an alternative that Canada does not.⁵ Germany will always have to consider balancing and managing the competing demands of NATO and the European Union. However, this crisis has reminded Europe that NATO remains the premiere multilateral security arrangement. Finland and Sweden are moving to join NATO, not seeking to make European defence via the EU stronger. The countries closest to Russia are focused on NATO rather than thinking about CDSP. Perhaps after this war, the Europeanists will try to recover whatever momentum they had, but the lesson from this conflict seems to be that NATO remains the focal point for the provision of security in Europe.

What issues divide between Germany and Canada on NATO?

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I do not go into the Common Security and Defence Policy in any depth as this paper is about NATO’s future, not CSDP’s.

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About the Author

Stephen Saideman has written four books: *The Ties That Divide: Ethnic Politics, Foreign Policy and International Conflict*; *For Kin or Country: Xenophobia, Nationalism and War* (with R. William Ayres); *NATO in Afghanistan: Fighting Together, Fighting Alone* (with David Auerswald); and *Adapting in the Dust: Lessons Learned from Canada's War in Afghanistan*, edited two others, and published papers on nationalism, ethnic conflict, civil war, alliance dynamics, and civil-military relations. Prof. Saideman has received fellowships from the Council on Foreign Relations and the Social Sciences Research Council. He taught previously at the University of Vermont, Texas Tech University, and McGill University. He has won awards for teaching, for mentoring other faculty, for public engagement, and for his blogging on international studies. He is currently working on the role of legislatures in civil-military relations in democracies around the world. He tweets at @smsaideman and co-hosts the *Battle Rhythm* podcast with Stéfanie von Hlatky..



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