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NATO's Enlargement: An Opportunity to Enhance Collective Resilience

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Resilience—the capacity of an actor or system to remain functional while enduring shocks—is essential to NATO's collective security mission. A wide variety of shocks may compromise alliance effectiveness, including but not limited to pandemics, military invasions, climate-related natural disasters, terrorism, and cyberattacks. NATO has approached resilience largely by emphasizing civil preparedness at the domestic level, but resilience also entails political and military elements at both the domestic and collective levels.

The relationship between NATO enlargement and resilience is multifaceted, and it is rare for a candidate for membership to see all elements align toward either enhancing or degrading alliance resilience. The policymakers who led the process of NATO enlargement after the Cold War prioritized political resilience, using enlargement to stabilize security relations within Central and Eastern Europe and reinforce allied support for collective security. They did so despite recognizing that most new members lagged in terms of liberal democracy, military capabilities, and civil infrastructure, anticipating that regional stability, domestic reform, and economic integration (including the parallel enlargement of the European Union) would boost other dimensions of resilience over time.

Current prospective candidates for NATO membership vary widely in the likely impact of their potential admission on specific elements of resilience:

- Finland[1] and Sweden's impending membership will substantially bolster collective security in the Baltic Sea region with their strategic geography, strong liberal democracies, developed economies, and robust infrastructures.

- Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine face potential candidacies complicated by Russian-backed territorial conflicts. Georgia and Ukraine offer strategic geography in the Black Sea region along with strong public support for NATO and military investments, but with lagging civil infrastructures. Moldova faces challenges in the political, military, and civil dimensions, and its public has strongly opposed NATO membership.

- Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia face currently-insurmountable domestic opposition to joining NATO (from the latter's overall population and the former's sizable Serb minority). Their membership would help consolidate the collective security sphere in the Balkans, but both lag on indicators of democracy and civil infrastructure.

- Austria, Ireland, and Switzerland could each contribute to NATO's resilience, with strong democracies, developed economies, and robust infrastructures, though their militaries are relatively small and they are located within NATO's existing collective security sphere.

Overall, alliance resilience is a matter for ongoing domestic and collective maintenance rather than a goal to be conclusively achieved. NATO enlargement has contributed to the alliance's resilience, though not as thoroughly as some anticipated after the Cold War.

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[1] At the time of writing, Finland and Sweden had begun the accession process and were awaiting approval to join the alliance. Finland subsequently became a NATO member state on April 4, 2023.

RESILIENCE

INTRODUCTION

Resilience is important to NATO for several reasons. A wide variety of shocks may compromise alliance effectiveness; some of these have been dramatically illustrated by recent events—for example, pandemics and military invasions—while others have grown more likely and/or destructive in recent decades—for example, climate-related natural disasters, terrorism, and cyberattacks.[2] Although their timing remains uncertain, prudence counsels measures to prevent such shocks from undermining the alliance's collective security mission.

Resilience is a central aspect of deterrence by denial (persuading an adversary that any attack would be counterproductive), which itself is central to collective security.[3] Enhancing resilience helps minimize the possibility that shocks might open sudden windows of opportunity for an adversary to attack.[4] Beyond conventional threats, moreover, alliance members' efforts to develop redundancies and adaptability within their societies, governments, and militaries can also help deter salami tactics, faits accomplis, and hybrid forms of aggression.[5] Measures designed to enhance resilience thus contribute to each ally's own ability to endure crises as well as to collective security throughout the alliance.

What is Resilience?

The concept of resilience refers to the capacity of an actor or system to endure shocks while remaining functional.[6] Its relevance to alliance politics derives from the uncertainty of international relations and recognition that governments face "a world of risks rather than threats… not all disasters can be averted, and security can never be fully achieved."[7] In its 2022 Strategic Concept, NATO defined its three core tasks as "deterrence and defence; crisis prevention and management; and cooperative security."[8] Enhancing resilience means decreasing the likelihood that shocks will disrupt its ability to perform these tasks.

[2]Ganesh Sitaraman, "A Grand Strategy of Resilience: American Power in the Age of Fragility," Foreign Affairs 99, no. 5 (September/October 2020): 165-74; Giovanna De Maio, "NATO's Response to COVID-19: Lessons for Resilience and Readiness," Brookings Institution (October 2020), 10: https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/FP_20201028_nato_covid_demaio-1.pdf.

[3]Guillaume Lasconjarias, "Deterrence through Resilience: NATO, the Nations and the Challenges of Being Prepared," Eisenhower Paper 7 (May 2017): https://www.ndc.nato.int/news/news.php?icode=1060; Wolf-Diether Roepke and Hasit Thankey, "Resilience: The First Line of Defense," NATO Review (February 27, 2019): https://www.nato.int/docu/review/articles/2019/02/27/resilience-the-first-line-of-defence/index.html

[4]Stephen Van Evera, Causes of War: Power and the Roots of Conflict (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999), ch. 4.

[5]Richard W. Maass, "Salami Tactics: Faits Accomplis and International Expansion in the Shadow of Major War," Texas National Security Review 5, no. 1 (Winter 2021/2022): 33-54; Dan Altman, "By Fait Accompli, Not Coercion: How States Wrest Territory from Their Adversaries," International Studies Quarterly 61, no. 4 (December 2017): 881-91.

[6]This definition consolidates a range of conceptual variance across resilience literatures at the community, national, and international levels; cf. David Chandler, "Resilience," in Routledge Handbook of Security Studies, ed. Myriam Dunn Cavelty and Thierry Balzacq (New York: Routledge, 2017): 436-46; Hoang Long Nguyen and Rajendra Akerkar, "Modelling, Measuring, and Visualising Community Resilience: A Systematic Review," Sustainability 12, no. 19 (2020): 7896; Bernard Manyena, Fortunate Machingura, and Phil O'Keefe, "Disaster Resilience Integrated Framework for Transformation (DRIFT): A New Approach to Theorising and Operationalising Resilience," World Development 123 (November 2019): 104587; Jan Hodicky, Gökhan Özkan, Hilmi Özdemir, Petr Stodola, Jan Drozd, and Wayne Buck, "Dynamic Modeling for Resilience Measurement: NATO Resilience Decision Support Model," Applied Sciences 10, no. 8 (2020): 2639.

[7]Corinne Bara and Gabriel Brönnimann, "Resilience - Trends in Policy and Research," Crisis and Risk Network, Center for Security Studies, ETH Zürich (April 2011): 6.

[8]NATO, "NATO 2022 Strategic Concept" (June 29, 2022): https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2022/6/pdf/290622-strategic-concept.pdf.

The priority of resilience for NATO is rooted in Article 3 of the North Atlantic Treaty: "In order more effectively to achieve the objectives of this Treaty, the Parties, separately and jointly, by means of continuous and effective self-help and mutual aid, will maintain and develop their individual and collective capacity to resist armed attack."[9] The alliance committed to enhancing resilience in 2016 at the Warsaw North Atlantic Council meeting, noting, "Resilience is an essential basis for credible deterrence and defence and effective fulfilment of the Alliance's core tasks."[10] Recognizing the contemporary risk of shocks including "a natural disaster, failure of critical infrastructure, or a hybrid or armed attack," NATO's approach to resilience currently emphasizes seven baseline requirements (Figure 1).[11]

These seven baseline requirements represent an important but not exhaustive list of elements bearing on the overall resilience of the alliance. Whereas NATO has emphasized that resilience ultimately "remains a national responsibility," we see the concept of alliance resilience as necessarily including many collective dimensions.[12] In order to best assess the impact of enlargement on NATO resilience, therefore, we expand the baseline requirements into a broader framework for thinking about alliance resilience structured in two levels (domestic and collective resilience), each of which contains various civil, military, and political elements (Figure 2).

Figure 1. NATO's Seven Baseline Requirements for Resilience

1) Assured **continuity of government** and critical government services: for instance the ability to make decisions, communicate them and enforce them in a crisis;

2) Resilient **energy supplies**: back-up plans and power grids, internally and across borders;

3) Ability to deal effectively with **uncontrolled movement of people**, and to de-conflict these movements from NATO's military deployments;

4) Resilient **food and water resources**: ensuring these supplies are safe from disruption or sabotage;

5) Ability to deal with **mass casualties and disruptive health crises**: ensuring that civilian health systems can cope and that sufficient medical supplies are stocked and secure;

6) Resilient **civil communications** systems: ensuring that telecommunications and cyber networks function even under crisis conditions, with sufficient back-up capacity. This requirement was updated in November 2019 by NATO Defence Ministers, who stressed the need for reliable communications systems including 5G, robust options to restore these systems, priority access to national authorities in times of crisis, and the thorough assessment of all risks to communications systems;

7) Resilient **transport systems**: ensuring that NATO forces can move across Alliance territory rapidly and that civilian services can rely on transportation networks, even in a crisis.

Figure 2. Resilience Framework

	Civil	Military	Political
Domestic	• Energy • Food and water • Health system • Communications • Transport	• Command and control • Communications • Basing • Provisions • Transport	• Continuity of government • Crisis services • Movement of people • Public support
Collective	• Energy interdependence • Food and water interdependence • Health interdependence • Communication interdependence • Transport interdependence	• Command and control • International composition • Provisioning • Positioning • Geography • Intelligence	• Security cohesion • Normative cohesion • Economic cohesion • Intra-alliance disputes • Public support

[9]NATO, "The North Atlantic Treaty" (April 4, 1949): https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_17120.htm.

[10]NATO, "Commitment to Enhance Resilience" (July 8, 2016): https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_133180.htm.

[11]NATO, "Resilience, Civil Preparedness, and Article 3" (September 20, 2022): https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_132722.htm?selectedLocale=en.

[12]NATO, "Warsaw Summit Communique" (July 9, 2016), Art. 73: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_133169.htm; cf. Sitaraman, "A Grand Strategy of Resilience."

NATO's current approach to resilience emphasizes civil preparedness: "a central pillar of Allies' resilience and a critical enabler for Alliance collective defence."[13] The ability to ensure continued provision of energy, food and water, healthcare, communications, and transport affects member countries' ability to fulfill alliance obligations amid a crisis, both by constraining the functionality of its own military forces and by diverting governmental attention (and often military resources) toward domestic relief. Externalities from Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine strained domestic energy resilience in many NATO members, for example, heightening the need for domestic reserves, energy self-sufficiency, and/or integrated networks for energy supply within the alliance.[14]

Beyond civil preparedness, the resilience of each NATO member's military similarly bears on that of the alliance as a whole. Anticipated shocks such as natural disasters or cyberattacks may disrupt critical military capacities including command and control, communications, and transport systems, counseling appropriate planning and institutional and technological redundancies. These risks continue to evolve with the development of military technologies such as unmanned vehicles, artificial intelligence, and anti-satellite weapons.[15] Domestic basing decisions and provisioning networks can similarly shape the vulnerability of member countries' militaries to infrastructural shocks or armed attack.

Domestic political resilience represents another important component. NATO's baseline requirements reflect this to an extent, emphasizing continuity of government and critical services as well as the ability to deal effectively with uncontrolled movement of people. Beyond a government's decision-making capacities, domestic political institutions also inform its ability to maintain alliance commitments while responding to a crisis. For instance, domestic planning for natural disaster response (increasingly likely due to climate change) can help ensure that such circumstances do not unduly tax civil and military resources.[16] Political stability, election integrity, public confidence in governmental institutions, and peaceful transitions of power similarly bear on each member country's capacity to endure unforeseen shocks.

Alliance resilience is ultimately a collective concept. As such, it depends on not only domestic elements but also collective ones. In terms of civil preparedness, allies' interdependence in energy, food and water, communication, and transport can represent either a source of vulnerability or resilience. Where ample capacity and delivery paths exist, such networks can enable some member countries to help compensate for reduced access to these vital resources in others. That said, interdependent networks that lack oversight from a collective perspective can become overstretched, causing a crisis within one member country to ripple into others. Similarly, excessive dependence on potential adversaries for vital assets or supply chains can undermine alliance resilience, as recently illustrated in many member countries' reliance on Russian energy.[17]

Collective military elements also impact alliance resilience. Planning for efficient command and control and the provisioning and positioning of alliance resources can reduce vulnerability to anticipated shocks. Controlling strategic geographic locations may help insulate the alliance from certain threats, while overextension into indefensible positions may introduce new vulnerabilities. Efficient interoperability across NATO members, for example within the Baltic

[13]NATO, "Warsaw Summit Communique." Broader analyses often include other dimensions; cf. Nicole J. Jackson, "Deterrence, Resilience and Hybrid Wars: The Case of Canada and NATO," Journal of Military and Strategic Studies 19, no. 4 (2019): 112; Tim Prior, "Resilience: The 'Fifth Wave' in the Evolution of Deterrence," in Strategic Trends 2018: Key Developments in Global Affairs, ed. Oliver Thränert and Martin Zapfe (Zurich: Center for Security Stud ies, 2018): 63-80.

[14]Camilla Hodgson, "EU to Step Up Push for Clean Power as Ukraine Conflict Escalates," Financial Times (March 7, 2022): https://www.ft.com/content/9e9e4710-cf90-41dd-8370-b2949ca2d2e2.

[15]Michael C. Horowitz, Sarah E. Kreps, and Matthew Fuhrmann, "Separating Fact from Fiction in the Debate over Drone Proliferation," International Security 41, no. 2 (Fall 2016): 7-42; Keir A. Lieber and Daryl G. Press, "The New Era of Counterforce: Technological Change and the Future of Nuclear Deterrence," International Security 41, no. 4 (Spring 2017): 9-49; James M. Acton, "Escalation through Entanglement: How the Vulnerability of Command-and-Control Systems Raises the Risks of an Inadvertent Nuclear War," International Security 43, no. 1 (Summer 2018): 56-99; James Johnson, "Artificial Intelligence & Future Warfare: Implications for International Security," Defense & Security Analysis 35, no. 2 (2019): 147-69.

[16]Mark E. Keim, "Building Human Resilience: The Role of Public Health Preparedness and Response as an Adaptation to Climate Change," American Journal of Preventive Medicine 35, no. 5 (2008): 508-16.

[17]Bryan Frizzelle, Julie Garey, and Isak Kulalic, "NATO's National Resilience Mandate: Challenges and Opportunities," Defence Studies 22, no. 3 (2022): 525-32; Elisabeth Braw, "Boosting Transatlantic Resilience through Secure Supply," German Marshall Fund Policy Paper (June 2021): 12-16: https://www.gmfus.org/sites/default/files/Keil%2520et%2520al%2520-%2520NATO%2520resilience.pdf.

and Black Sea regions, can translate into greater endurance in unforeseen circumstances, and the international composition of NATO forces may influence their readiness to respond to various contingencies.[18] Intelligence collaboration and diversification can help the alliance detect potential shocks early enough to respond effectively whereas overreliance on certain forms or sources of intelligence may compromise such detection.

Finally, the alliance should also be concerned with collective political resilience. Public support for NATO among its member countries shapes expenditures, troop deployments, basing locations, etc., and the ongoing willingness of each member country to defend the others is crucial to the alliance's functionality. Although NATO's political resilience after the Cold War surprised some observers, the experience of Brexit, disinformation campaigns, populist movements, and foreign election interference continue to advise caution.[19] The cohesiveness of perspectives among the member countries regarding alliance objectives and threats has been tested before and will remain a relevant concern for as long as the alliance exists.[20] Intra-alliance disputes have impaired NATO's ability to act collectively in affected areas and prevented it from adding new members in the past.[21] NATO may face growing strains in this regard if publics distant from Russia determine that its poorer-than-anticipated military performance in Ukraine indicates that major investments in the alliance are no longer necessary for their own security. Finally, economic cohesion and normative cohesion regarding the principles of democracy, individual liberty, and the rule of law are identified as objectives in the North Atlantic Treaty but unevenly realized, and they face pressing threats within several member countries today.[22]

Alliances can reduce the probability of shocks

compromising their effectiveness in three basic ways: (1) reducing the likelihood of shocks, (2) mitigating the impact of shocks, (3) cultivating adaptability in the face of shocks. First, alliance members may shape themselves and their strategic environment in ways that render foreseeable shocks less likely. Maintaining economic stability, political integrity, and social equity on the domestic front contributes toward this objective, as do sound climate policy, public health measures, and stability-oriented diplomatic and other foreign policies. NATO has pursued these to a degree, emphasizing domestic resilience to its member states and undertaking periodic diplomatic and military missions intended to shape its security environment, though often without prioritizing resilience and with mixed results.

Second, allies can seek to mitigate the impact of potential shocks both individually and collectively by assessing and redressing vulnerabilities as well as developing and maintaining network redundancies (for example, in infrastructure and chains of command). NATO has begun prioritizing this area by devoting attention to cybersecurity, mitigating hybrid threats, and continued access to civilian infrastructure via "a whole-of-society approach."[23] As the alliance notes, the latter is critical given its dependence on civilian infrastructure for 90% of military transport for large military operations, 70% of satellite communications for defense purposes, 90% of transatlantic internet traffic, and 75% of host nation support to NATO operations.[24]

Third, resilience often depends on adaptability in the face of unforeseen events. In this sense, "resilience is not the antonym of vulnerability"— it includes the ability to effectively respond when previously-unidentified vulnerabilities are revealed.[25] Accordingly, NATO has embraced crisis planning and training at both the domestic

[18]Heinrich Brauß, "Deterrence and Resilience on NATO's Eastern Flank," German Marshall Fund Policy Paper (June 2021): 9: https://www.gmfus.org/sites/default/files/Keil%2520et%2520al%2520-%2520NATO%2520resilience.pdf.

[19]Zoltan Barany and Robert Rauchhaus, "Explaining NATO's Resilience: Is International Relations Theory Useful?" Contemporary Security Policy, 32, no. 2 (2011): 286-307; Linda Sanchez, "Bolstering the Democratic Resilience of the Alliance Against Disinformation and Propaganda," NATO Parliamentary Assembly Committee on Democracy and Security (2021): https://www.nato-pa.int/download-file?filename=/sites/default/files/2021-09/013%20CDS%2021%20E%20rev.%201%20-%20DEMOCRATIC%20RESILIENCE%20-%20SANCHEZ_3.pdf

[20]Marina E. Henke, Constructing Allied Cooperation: Diplomacy, Payments, and Power in Multilateral Military Coalitions (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2019); Paul Poast, Arguing About Alliances: The Art of Agreement in Military-Pact Negotiations (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2019); Brett Ashley Leeds and Burcu Savun, "Terminating Alliances: Why Do States Abrogate Agreements?" Journal of Politics 69, no. 4 (November 2007): 1118-32.

[21]Timothy A. Sayle, Enduring Alliance: A History of NATO and the Postwar Global Order (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2019); Mira Rapp-Hooper, Shields of the Republic: The Triumph and Peril of America's Alliances (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2020).

[22]Frizzelle, Garey, and Kulalic, "NATO's National Resilience Mandate"; Andrew Kydd, "Trust Building, Trust Breaking: The Dilemma of NATO Enlargement," International Organization 55, no. 4 (Autumn 2001): 801-28; cf. Michel Fortmann and Stéfanie von Hlatky, "NATO Enlargement 20 Years On: Some Thoughts," Network for Strategic Analysis 10 (April 2021): 1-5.

[23]NATO, "Resilience, Civil Preparedness, and Article 3."

[24]NATO, "Resilience, Civil Preparedness, and Article 3" (September 20, 2022): https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_132722.htm?selectedLocale=en.

[25]Tim Prior, "NATO: Pushing Boundaries for Resilience," CSS Analyses in Security Policy 213 (September 2017): 4.

and collective levels. Shocks are likely to strain allies' willingness to prioritize collective goods, as exemplified by vaccine nationalism in the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, so maintaining strong relationships among alliance members is crucial. Just as some allies can help others recover more quickly from a crisis with asymmetric effects, aid may also come through relationships with other international organizations and non-NATO governments, which NATO currently cultivates through initiatives such as the Partnership for Peace and the Mediterranean Dialogue.

RECENT NATO ENLARGEMENT AND RESILIENCE

NATO's membership has nearly doubled since the end of the Cold War, adding the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland in 1999; Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia in 2004; Albania and Croatia in 2009; Montenegro in 2017; and North Macedonia in 2020. Most scholars agree that this enlargement process was politically driven, guided by a broad view of European security.[27] Facing substantial uncertainty regarding the continent's future after the collapse of the Soviet Union, policymakers saw enlargement as useful to solidify security relationships in Eastern Europe while encouraging peace, democratization, and economic reform, which they judged the surest path to long-term regional stability.[28] As General Klaus Naumann wrote in 1997, "NATO wishes to give the new members security so that they can concentrate on rebuilding their societies and economies which are the elements which stabilise democracies."[29] In terms of alliance resilience, NATO enlargement thus prioritized the political dimension, anticipating

that regional stability, domestic reform, and economic integration (including the parallel enlargement of the European Union) would boost other dimensions of resilience over time.[30]

NATO's post-Cold War enlargement has enhanced its political resilience, though not as much as some of its architects envisioned. Most prominently, the process helped stabilize security relations within Central and Eastern Europe. Many states made NATO membership a core goal, working to align their foreign policies and domestic institutions to facilitate it. This process gave candidates for membership a strong incentive to resolve lingering disputes, removing sources of future insecurity.[32] The most inexorable risk to any alliance is its members' own diverging interests, and calls for the United States or Western European countries to abandon NATO have recurred throughout its history.[33] The membership of Eastern European countries introduced new potential fault lines within the alliance, but it also ensured that the

[27]James Goldgeier and Joshua R. Itzkowitz Shifrinson, "Evaluating NATO Enlargement: Scholarly Debates, Policy Implications, and Roads Not Taken," *International Politics* 57 (2020): 291-321.

[28]James M. Goldgeier, *Not Whether But When: The U.S. Decision to Enlarge NATO* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 1999); Steven Weber, "A Modest Proposal for NATO Expansion," *Contemporary Security Policy* 21, no. 2 (2000): 91-106; James Goldgeier, "NATO Enlargement and the Problem of Value Complexity," *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 22, no. 4 (2020): 146-74.

[29]General Klaus Naumann, "The Reshaping of NATO from a Military Perspective," *RUSI Journal* 142, no. 3 (June 1997): 9. Scholars have argued that "NATO enlargement made the alliance weaker," especially given its disconnect from ongoing strategic planning during the mid-1990s; Kimberley Marten, "NATO Enlargement: Evaluating its Consequences in Russia," *International Politics* 57 (2018): 401-26; cf. Sarah Bjerg Moller, "Twenty Years After: Assessing the Consequences of Enlargement for the NATO Military Alliance," *International Politics* 57 (2020): 509-29.

[30]Paul Poast and Alexandra Chinchilla, "Good for Democracy? Evidence from the 2004 NATO Expansion," *International Politics* 57 (2020): 480; cf. Sayle, *Enduring Alliance*, 238-39.

[31]NATO, "NATO Audience Research: Pre-Summit Polling Results 2022," https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2022/6/pdf/220622-pre-summit-research-2022.pdf.

[32]Gale Mattox, "NATO Enlargement: A Step in the Process of Alliance Reform," *Contemporary Security Policy* 21, no. 2 (2000): 107-24.

[33]Sayle, *Enduring Alliance*; Kenneth Waltz, "NATO Expansion: A Realist's View," *Contemporary Security Policy* 21, no. 2 (2000): 32; Joshua R. Shifrinson, "NATO Enlargement and US Foreign Policy: The Origins, Durability, and Impact of an Idea" *International Politics* 57 (2020): 342-70; Stéfanie Von Hlatky and Michel Fortmann, "NATO Enlargement and the Failure of the Cooperative Security Mindset," *International Politics* 57 (2020): 554-72.

Table 1. Public Support for NATO Membership (2022)[31]	
Czech Republic	72%
Hungary	84%
Poland	**90%**
Bulgaria	*56%*
Estonia	85%
Latvia	76%
Lithuania	**89%**
Romania	**87%**
Slovakia	*63%*
Slovenia	*62%*
Albania	74%
Croatia	74%
Montenegro	*51%*
North Macedonia	*65%*
NATO average, 1991 members (Standard Deviation)	77% (8%)
>1 Standard Deviation better than NATO average	
>1 Standard Deviation worse than NATO average	

Table 2. V-DEM Liberal Democracy Index[34]	(10 years before joining NATO)	(when joining NATO)	(2021)
Czech Republic	*0.05*	0.81	0.71
Hungary	*0.15*	0.76	*0.36*
Poland	*0.28*	0.81	*0.41*
Bulgaria	0.61	0.63	*0.55*
Estonia	0.79	0.81	0.84
Latvia	0.68	0.72	0.73
Lithuania	0.77	0.77	0.74
Romania	0.40	0.45	0.64
Slovakia	0.57	0.76	0.77
Slovenia	0.77	0.74	0.60
Albania	*0.33*	0.44	*0.40*
Croatia	*0.28*	0.65	0.63
Montenegro	0.37	*0.35*	*0.39*
North Macedonia	0.38	0.42	*0.40*
NATO average, 1991 members (Standard Deviation)		0.59 (0.22)	0.75 (0.18)
>1 Standard Deviation worse than NATO Average			

threat of invasion and hence the urgency of collective defense would remain central within allied deliberations. Some recent members like Poland, Lithuania, and Romania continue to see public support for NATO membership far higher than the average among pre-1991 members, though others like Bulgaria and Montenegro see much slimmer majorities (see Table 1).

The record of NATO enlargement and domestic reform has been mixed. Scholars credit NATO with fostering civilian control of the military, rule of law, and public support for collective security, but its democratizing role is difficult to disentangle from those of domestic movements for democracy within the Eastern European states and the parallel process of EU enlargement.[35] NATO encouraged reforms through its Partnership for Peace program, offering various forms of aid and encouraging socialization dynamics. NATO officials pressured their counterparts in candidates like Latvia and Croatia to expand civil liberty protections, especially for ethnic minorities.[36] NATO helped implement civilian control of the military in new members such as Bulgaria, Romania, and Albania, but it proved willing to relax some anti-corruption and other democratic requirements in more recent rounds of enlargement.[37] As Table 2 shows, there has been relatively wide variation in liberal democracy among NATO members that have joined since 1991, as there was among prior NATO members at the time of their joining the alliance. Democratic backsliding has also been a recent challenge in several post-Cold War members (as in some pre-1991 allies), yet even countries struggling with democratic norms have seen their NATO membership as central to a stable European future.[38]

[34]Michael Coppedge, John Gerring, Carl Henrik Knutsen, Staffan I. Lindberg, Jan Teorell, Nazifa Alizada, David Altman, Michael Bernhard, Agnes Cornell, M. Steven Fish, Lisa Gastaldi, Haakon Gjerløw, Adam Glynn, Sandra Grahn, Allen Hicken, Garry Hindle, Nina Ilchenko, Katrin Kinzelbach, Joshua Krusell, Kyle L. Marquardt, Kelly McMann, Valeriya Mechkova, Juraj Medzihorsky, Pamela Paxton, Daniel Pemstein, Josefine Pernes, Oskar Rydén, Johannes von Römer, Brigitte Seim, Rachel Sigman, Svend-Erik Skaaning, Jeffrey Staton, Aksel Sundström, Eitan Tzelgov, Yi-ting Wang, Tore Wig, Steven Wilson and Daniel Ziblatt, "VDem [Country–Year/Country–Date] Dataset v12," Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Project (2022): https://doi.org/10.23696/vdemds22.
[35]Rachel A. Epstein, "Nato Enlargement and the Spread of Democracy: Evidence and Expectations," Security Studies 14, no. 1 (2005): 63-105; Zoltan Barany, "Europe Moves Eastward: NATO's Peaceful Advance," Journal of Democracy 15, no. 1 (2004): 63-76; Paul Poast and Johannes Urpelainen, Organizing Democracy: How International Organizations Assist New Democracies (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2018).
[36]Wallace J. Thies, Dorle Helmuth, and Ray Millen, "Does NATO Enlargement Spread Democracy? Evidence from Three Cases," Democracy and Security 2 (2006): 201-30.
[37]Barany, "Europe Moves Eastward"; Zdeněk Kříž and Markéta Stixová, "Does NATO Enlargement Spread Democracy? The Democratic Stabilization of Western Balkan Countries," Central European Political Studies Review 14, no. 1 (2012): 1-33; Tomasz Gergelewicz, "Poland's Accession to NATO Considering 'Partnership for Peace' and the US Perspective," Safety & Defense 6, no. 2 (2020): 12-20; von Hlatky and Fortmann, "NATO Enlargement and the Failure of the Cooperative Security Mindset"; Eyal Rubinson, "Flexible Democratic Conditionality? The Role of Democracy and Human Rights Adherence in NATO Enlargement Decisions," Journal of International Relations and Development 24 (2021): 696-725.
[38]Danijela Dudley, "The Price of European Integration: Montenegro's NATO Membership on the Path of EU Accession," Mediterranean Quarterly 28, no. 4 (2017): 14-31; Miloš Bešic and Dušan Spasojević, "Montenegro, NATO, and the Divided Society," Communist and Post-Communist Studies 51, no. 2 (2018): 139-50.

Analysis of NATO enlargement and military resilience after the Cold War centers less on new members' military capabilities than on broader strategic implications of their membership. Indeed, NATO leaders recognized prior to enlargement that the new allies "would bring little significant military capability to NATO," but, with Moscow acquiescent, that proved less important than the opportunity to widen the zone of European stability.[39] Beyond deterring potential attacks on NATO allies, policymakers recognized that instability and conflict in nearby areas are a key source of potential shocks (illustrated by the more than 1 million Syrians and more than 4 million Ukrainians who recently sought refuge in Europe).[40] While keeping the United States invested in European security and suppressing

potential security competition among alliance members, NATO's enlargement further extended deterrence across potential targets of Russian aggression closer to Moscow.[42] Some observers particularly criticized the admission of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania for stretching the alliance into potentially indefensible positions.[43] Although political obstacles complicated the eastward extension of joint military capacities, significant progress has been made since Russia's 2014 annexation of Crimea.[44]

Some have argued that NATO enlargement deteriorated the alliance's security environment by unnecessarily antagonizing Russia.[46] As with NATO's democratizing role, however, Russia's recent revanchism is likely overdetermined and difficult to disentangle from its own declining global role and internal politics.[47] Even if enlarging NATO helped sour Russian perspectives on its geopolitical position, doing so also hedged against an already-likely revival of its imperial ambitions in Eastern Europe.[48] Another critique that bears on resilience holds that enlargement burdened existing NATO members with expanded security guarantees while also encouraging "cheap-riding" as allies depend on those guarantees yet invest relatively little in their own militaries.[49] Burden-sharing questions are inherent to any alliance, but it is worth noting that post-Cold War NATO members are currently outperforming pre-1991 members in relative terms on both military spending and troop counts (see Table 3). While this does not mean that those countries are net

Table 3. Military Investments[41]			
	Military Spending, % of GDP (2020)	Troops (2019)	Troops (2019), % of Population
Czech Republic	1.4%	25,000	0.23%
Hungary	1.6%	40,000	0.41%
Poland	2.2%	189,000	0.50%
Bulgaria	1.8%	37,000	**0.53%**
Estonia	2.3%	7,000	**0.53%**
Latvia	2.3%	6,000	0.31%
Lithuania	2.1%	37,000	**1.32%**
Romania	2.3%	126,000	**0.65%**
Slovakia	1.8%	16,000	0.29%
Slovenia	1.1%	7,000	0.34%
Albania	1.5%	8,000	0.28%
Croatia	1.8%	18,000	0.44%
Montenegro	2.1%	12,000	**1.93%**
North Macedonia	1.3%	16,000	**0.77%**
NATO average, 1991 members (Standard Deviation)	1.63%* (0.73%)*	137,800* (149,990)*	0.33%^ (0.17%)^

>1 Standard Deviation better than NATO average
* excluding outlier: the United States (3.7%; 1,388,000 troops)
^ excluding outlier: Greece (1.37%)

[40]Deena Zaru, "Europe's Unified Welcome of Ukrainian Refugees Exposes 'Double Standard' for Nonwhite Asylum Seekers: Experts," ABC News (March 8, 2022): https://abcnews.go.com/International/europes-unified-ukrainian-refugees-exposes-double-standard-nonwhite/story?id=83251970#:~:text=European%20countries%20host%20over%201,High%20Commission%20on%20Refugees%20data; Omer Karasapan, "Ukrainian Refugees: Challenges in a Welcoming Europe," Brookings (October 14, 2022): https://www.brookings.edu/blog/future-development/2022/10/14/ukrainian-refugees-challenges-in-a-welcoming-europe/.

[41]Data accessed via the World Bank—military spending data from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute: https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/MS.MIL.XPND.GD.ZS; troop counts from the International Institute for Strategic Studies: https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/MS.MIL.TOTL.P1; population data from the United Nations and national sources: https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?locations=.

[42]Alexander Lanoszka, "Thank Goodness for NATO Enlargement," International Politics 57 (2020): 451-70.

[43]Andres Kasekamp, "An Uncertain Journey to the Promised Land: The Baltic States' Road to NATO Membership" Journal of Strategic Studies, 43, no. 6-7 (2020): 869-96.

[44]Moller, "Twenty Years After."

[45]Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, "2013-2018 Food Spending Update April 2019," (April 2019): https://www.ers.usda.gov/media/10271/2013-2018-food-spending_update-april-2019.xls; Max Roser, Esteban Ortiz-Ospina, and Hannah Ritchie, "Life Expectancy," Our World in Data (October 2019): https://ourworldindata.org/life-expectancy; World Bank, Logistic Performance Index dataset (2018): https://lpi.worldbank.org/international/global?sort=asc&order=Infrastructure; International Energy Agency data on energy imports accessed via the World Bank: https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/EG.IMP.CONS.ZS.

[47]Marten, "NATO Enlargement"; Vinod K. Aggarwal, "Analysing NATO Expansion: An Institutional Bargaining Approach," Contemporary Security Policy 21, no. 2 (2000): 63-82.

[48]Eteri Tsintsadze-Maass, "Nationalism, Weak States, and Unrealistic Realism," Duck of Minerva (April 12, 2022): https://www.duckofminerva.com/2022/04/nationalism-weak-states-and-unrealistic-realism.html; Lanoszka, "Thank Goodness for NATO Enlargement."

[49]Shifrinson, "NATO Enlargement and US Foreign Policy"; Waltz, "NATO Expansion," 33; Menon and Ruger, "NATO Enlargement and U.S. Grand Strategy."

[50]Nathan M. Polak, Ryan C. Hendrickson, and Nathan G. D. Garrett, "NATO Membership for Albania and Croatia: Military Modernization,

	Food Spending (2018)	Life Expectancy (2019)	Infrastructure (2018)	Energy Imports (2014)
Czech Republic	16%	79.4	3.46	29%
Hungary	18%	76.9	3.27	56%
Poland	17%	78.7	3.21	28%
Bulgaria	19%	75.0	2.76	37%
Estonia	20%	78.7	3.10	3%
Latvia	17%	75.3	2.98	45%
Lithuania	21%	75.9	2.73	75%
Romania	27%	76.1	2.91	17%
Slovakia	18%	77.5	3.00	59%
Slovenia	15%	81.3	3.26	44%
Albania	-	78.6	2.29	14%
Croatia	23%	78.5	3.01	46%
Montenegro	28%	76.9	2.57	28%
North Macedonia	31%	75.8	2.47	52%
NATO average, 1991 members (Standard Deviation)	12% (4%)	82.0 (1.6)	3.77 (0.38)	51%* (30%)*

>1 Standard Deviation better than NATO average
>1 Standard Deviation worse than NATO average
* excluding outliers: Norway and Canada (-583% and -68% respectively)

supplies, all post-Cold War NATO members appear less resilient than the average among countries that were members by 1991, some significantly so. Proxying for vulnerability in healthcare, life expectancy in all post-Cold War members except Slovenia is significantly shorter than among pre-1991 members. Newer allies similarly lag in the World Bank's infrastructure score, proxying for transportation and communication resilience. Interestingly, the pattern is reversed when it comes to energy interdependence: whereas many pre-1991 NATO allies rely relatively heavily on energy imports, many of the newer NATO members enjoy greater energy independence. This dimension of resilience is unlikely to continue to go underestimated given Russia's use of energy coercion in the context of its full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

Overall, post-Cold War NATO enlargement has had mixed effects on alliance resilience across the political, military, and civil dimensions. Policymakers were well aware of these tradeoffs, notably prioritizing political dimensions of resilience, regional stability, and long-term development over narrower calculations regarding each new member's military contributions to the alliance or contemporary economic development. While critiques of NATO enlargement often depend on the assumption that Russia's imperial ambitions within its near-abroad would otherwise have remained dormant, its architects prioritized expanding the zone of internal peace and external deterrence.

security providers to the alliance (in terms of troop counts, technology, modernized weapons systems, etc.), the same is true of many pre-1991 allies. Moreover, participation in NATO-led operations and other joint programs have aided many of the post-Cold War allies in modernizing their militaries.[50]

Many civil dimensions of resilience are tied closely to broader patterns of economic development and resource availability. As a result, most of the post-Cold War NATO members continue to lag behind the pre-1991 allies in these areas (see Table 4).

Taking the percent of consumer spending used on food as a proxy for vulnerability to shortages in vital

Geo-Strategic Opportunities and Force Projection" Journal of Slavic Military Studies 22, no. 4 (2009): 502-14; Ryan C. Hendrickson, and Ryan P. Smith, "Croatia and NATO: Moving Toward Alliance Membership," Comparative Strategy 25, no. 4 (2006): 297-306.

POTENTIAL FUTURE NATO
ENLARGEMENT AND RESILIENCE

NATO continues to attract potential new members, and at least ten European countries are feasible candidates for membership in the decades to come.[52] At the time of writing, Finland and Sweden had begun the accession process and were awaiting approval to join the alliance.[53] NATO leaders agreed at the 2008 Bucharest Summit that Georgia and Ukraine would also become members, though Russia's aggression slowed their progress. Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia are potential candidates given their locations in Europe, as are Ireland, Switzerland, and Austria, though among those six only Bosnia and Herzegovina has seen much popular support for membership. This section examines these countries' potential membership from a perspective of resilience.[54]

Finland and Sweden

There is no doubt that the Enlargement of NATO is a dynamic procedure. During the publication of this paper, Finland became the 31st member of NATO and the NATO Parliamentary Assembly (PA). In addition, as it has done with past accessions, the NATO PA is monitoring and encouraging prompt ratification of Sweden's accession in Allied parliaments[55].

NATO membership for Finland and Sweden will enhance the alliance's resilience in several ways.[56]

Their strategic geography reinforces NATO's ability to operate in the Baltic Sea, providing logistical and surveillance capacities and helping to relieve geopolitical vulnerabilities stemming from the alliance's 2004 enlargement. Although some fear that admitting these countries will further antagonize Russia, its ongoing aggression in Ukraine has rendered the point somewhat moot while also increasing security in the Baltic region by diverting Russian resources southward.[57] Both Finland and Sweden exceed the NATO average in liberal democracy and enjoy public majority support for NATO membership in the wake of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine (see Table 5). With that invasion underscoring the value of allied deterrence for each and its memory unlikely to fade anytime soon, their NATO membership will likely reinforce political cohesion within the alliance.

Militarily, both Finland and Sweden maintain modernized capabilities under strong democratic control. Their defense spending remains relatively low but has increased by roughly 25% amid enhanced cooperation with NATO since Russia's 2014 annexation of Crimea.[59] Although their active-duty forces remain smaller than the NATO average, they are capable of quickly mobilizing 1 million or more soldiers in a crisis. Moreover, those forces are technologically advanced, with

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[52]For the sake of a focused analysis, we examine the twelve European countries we see as most likely to be considered for NATO membership in the near future. This of course does not preclude the alliance from potentially considering others, for example following a resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan or policy realignments in Belarus or Russia.

[53]Finland subsequently became a NATO member state on April 4, 2023.

[54]While several other entities may also pursue NATO membership in the future, they are excluded from this analysis as not all NATO Allies recognize them or because they fall outside of the region listed in Article 10 of the Washington Treaty.

[55]NATO Parliamentary Assembly, https://www.nato-pa.int/content/finland-sweden-accession

[56]Andrew T. Wolff, "The Future of NATO Enlargement after the Ukraine Crisis," International Affairs 91, no. 5 (2015): 1103-21; Greg Simons, Andrey Monoylo, and Philipp Trunov, "Sweden and the NATO Debate: Views from Sweden and Russia," Global Affairs 5, no. 4-5 (2019): 335-45; William Alberque and Benjamin Schreer, "Finland, Sweden and NATO Membership," Survival 64, no. 3 (2022): 67-72.

[57]David Arter, "From Finlandisation and Post-Finlandisation to the end of Finlandisation? Finland's Road to a NATO Application," European Security (published online September 1, 2022): https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09662839.2022.2113062.

[58]Data for all indicators in Table 5 has the same sources as the respective data in Tables 1-4 (see footnotes above) except public support for NATO membership: "YLE Poll: Support for NATO Membership Soars to 76%," YLE (May 9, 2022): https://yle.fi/news/3-12437506; Statista, "Survey on Perception of NATO Membership in Sweden

Table 5. Finland and Sweden[58]

	Public Support for NATO Membership (2022)	V-DEM Liberal Democracy Score (2021)	Military Spending, % of GDP (2020)	Troops (2019)	Troops, % of Population (2019)	Food Spending (2018)	Energy Imports (2014)	Life Expectancy (2019)	Infrastructure (2018)
Finland	76%	0.83	1.50%	27,000	0.49%	11.5%	46%	81.9	4.00
Sweden	*64%*	0.88	1.20%	15,000	*0.15%*	12.4%	28%	82.8	4.24
NATO average, 2022 members (Standard Deviation)	75% (10%)	0.67 (0.19)	1.72%* (0.59%)*	90,034* (122,831)*	0.46%^ (0.17%)^	16.6% (6.0%)	44%ˣ (26%)ˣ	79.8 (2.7)	3.37 (0.55)

>1 Standard Deviation better than NATO Average
>1 Standard Deviation worse than NATO Average
* excluding outlier: the United States (3.7%; 1,388,000 troops)
^ excluding outliers: Greece, Lithuania, and Montenegro (1.37%, 1.32%, and 1.93% respectively)
ˣ excluding outliers: net energy exporters Norway and Canada (-583% and -68% respectively)

a combined 220 Leopard tanks (comparable to Germany) and over 150 fighter aircraft (and Finland plans to acquire 64 F-35's within the decade).[60] Given Russia's military struggles in Ukraine, their ability to deter and defend against potential aggression once within NATO should not be underestimated, contributing significantly to the military resilience of the alliance.

Turning to civil resilience, Finland and Sweden have relied on energy imports from Russia at comparable levels to several other NATO members.[61] Both are working to redress this vulnerability, including by pursuing clean energy programs in cooperation with European partners.[61] Finland and Sweden also enjoy some of the best infrastructure in the European Union, rating far above the NATO average, and their relatively high life expectancies and low rates of consumer spending on food suggest substantial resilience in healthcare and vital necessities. The swiftness of the NATO accession process for Finland and Sweden reflects current members' high esteem for the contributions of their institutions, infrastructures, geopolitical positions, and militaries to the alliance.

Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine

The central factor shaping the relationship between alliance resilience and NATO membership for Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine is Russia's persistent imperial perspective toward these countries.[62] Admission with their internationally-recognized borders would involve NATO directly in Russia's ongoing military occupations of southeastern Ukraine, Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Transnistria, a source of considerable intra-alliance concern.[63] Each of these countries is seeking economic integration with the EU and has pursued domestic political reforms, with varying degrees of success.[64] Public support for NATO membership has been consistently high in Georgia and has surged in Ukraine since 2014 (see Table 6), implying that their membership would further bolster NATO's political cohesion and collective security focus.[65] In contrast, Moldova's constitution commits it to neutrality, and only a minority of its population supports NATO membership, though its current leaders have increasingly stressed the "serious security threat from Russia."[66]

[59]Joel Hickman, "Why Finland and Sweden's Accession is a Game-Changer for NATO," *Center for European Policy Analysis* (June 28, 2022): https://cepa.org/article/why-finland-and-swedens-accession-is-a-game-changer-for-nato/.

[60]Bradley Bowman, Ryan Brobst, Jack Sullivan, and John Hardie, "Finland and Sweden in NATO are Strategic Assets, Not Liabilities," *Defense News* (July 20, 2022): https://www.defensenews.com/opinion/commentary/2022/07/20/finland-and-sweden-in-nato-are-strategic-assets-not-liabilities/.

[61]Jaakko J. Jääskeläinen, Sakari Höysniemi, Sanna Syri, and Veli-Pekka Tynkkynen, "Finland's Dependence on Russian Energy–Mutually Beneficial Trade Relations or an Energy Security Threat?" *Sustainability* 10 (2018): 3445.

[62]Sean Fleming, "Finland is a World Leader in Clean Energy. Here's What's Driving Its Success," *World Economic Forum* (November 21, 2018): https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2018/11/finland-world-leader-clean-energy-this-is-why/.

[63]Zack Beauchamp, "Why is Putin Attacking Ukraine? He Told Us," *Vox* (February 23, 2022): https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2022/2/23/22945781/russia-ukraine-putin-speech-transcript-february-22; Tsintsadze-Maass, "Nationalism, Weak States, and Unrealistic Realism."

[64]Tracey German, "NATO and the Enlargement Debate: Enhancing Euro-Atlantic Security or Inciting Confrontation?" *International Affairs* 93, no. 2 (2017): 291-308; Wolff, "The Future of NATO Enlargement After the Ukraine Crisis."

[65]Dima Kortukov, "The Politics of Electoral Reform in Ukraine," *Problems of Post-Communism* (November 2019): 1-12; Vsevolod Samokhvalov and Alexander Strelkov, "Cross-dimensional Network of Democracy Promotion: Public Administration Reform in Post-Euromaidan Ukraine," *Journal of European Integration* 43, no. 7 (2021): 799-814.

[66]James Sperling and Mark Webber, "NATO and the Ukraine Crisis: Collective Securitisation," *European Journal of International Security* 2, no. 1 (2016): 19-46.

Table 6. Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine[68]									
	Public Support for NATO Membership (2022)	V-DEM Liberal Democracy Score (2021)	Military Spending, % of GDP (2020)	Troops (2019)	Troops, % of Population (2019)	Food Spending (2018)	Energy Imports (2014)	Life Expectancy (2019)	Infrastructure (2018)
Georgia	69%	0.49	1.80%	26,000	0.70%	32.30%	69%	73.8	2.38
Moldova	27%	0.62	0.40%	6,000	0.23%	no data	90%	71.9	2.02
Ukraine	83%	0.32	4.10%	311,000	0.70%	42.20%	27%	72.1	2.22
NATO average, 2022 members (Standard Deviation)	75% (10%)	0.67 (0.19)	1.72%* (0.59%)*	90,034* (122,831%)*	0.46%^ (0.17%)^	16.6% (6.0%)	44%^X (26%)^X	79.8 (2.7)	3.37 (0.55)

>1 Standard Deviation better than NATO Average
>1 Standard Deviation worse than NATO Average
* excluding outlier: the United States (3.7%; 1,388,000 troops)
^ excluding outliers: Greece, Lithuania, and Montenegro (1.37%, 1.32%, and 1.93% respectively)
X excluding outliers: net energy exporters Norway and Canada (-583% and -68% respectively)

In geopolitical terms, NATO membership for these countries would help stabilize the region, especially if Ukraine retakes Crimea.[67] Georgia's position in the Caucasus would further contribute to the long-term stabilization of growing trade and energy connections between Europe and Central Asia.[69] The consequences of Russia's invasion will have far-reaching effects on Ukraine's postwar military strength, but it has already demonstrated considerable resilience in repelling the early assault on Kyiv and retaking occupied territories in Kharkiv and Kherson.[70] Georgia and Ukraine both maintain military investments that match or exceed most current NATO members relative to their size. Although smaller in absolute terms, Georgia's military was the largest non-NATO contributor to the ISAF mission in Afghanistan and has been very active in NATO-led exercises. Moldova invests relatively little in its military, with only 6,000 active-duty soldiers equipped largely with outdated weapons, though its leadership is working toward modernization.[71]

In the civil dimension, these three countries currently lag behind most other NATO members, with significantly lower infrastructure scores, lower life expectancies, and higher consumer spending on food. This implies heightened risks associated with disruptive shocks that require mitigation over time through further economic development and targeted investments. For example, Georgia continues to improve its highways and railways as part of cooperative international transit corridors.[72] Energy dependence remains a risk area for all three countries as well: Georgia and Moldova rely heavily on energy imports, and Ukraine's critical infrastructure continues to be deliberately targeted by Russian strikes during the ongoing war.[73] Those strikes also affect Moldova; as its foreign minister recently highlighted: "Every bomb that falls on a Ukrainian power plant is a bomb that falls on the Moldovan electricity supply as well."[75] The war has incentivized all three countries to pursue greater energy security, and its result will shape regional outcomes.[76]

[67]"Neutrality Status Under Constitution Does Not Protect Moldova, But May Be Changed With Nationwide Support," Interfax (November 2, 2022): https://interfax.com/newsroom/top-stories/84569/.

[67]"Neutrality Status Under Constitution Does Not Protect Moldova, But May Be Changed With Nationwide Support," Interfax (November 2, 2022): https://interfax.com/newsroom/top-stories/84569/.

[68]Data for all indicators in Table 6 has the same sources as the respective data in Tables 1-4 (see footnotes above) except public support for NATO membership: "NDI Poll: EU Remains Destination of Choice for Vast Majority of Georgians; Disenchantment with Institutions Continues," National Democratic Institute (September 16, 2022): https://www.ndi.org/publications/ndi-poll-eu-remains-destination-choice-vast-majority-georgians-disenchantment; "Opinion Poll: Most of RM Citizens Keep Standing Against Moldova's Joining NATO," Infotag (May 11, 2022): https://www.infotag.md/politics-en/299234/; "Record 83% of Ukrainians Want NATO Membership -Poll," Reuters (October 3, 2022): https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/record-83-ukrainians-want-nato-membership-poll-2022-10-03/.

[69]Dušica Lazarović, "NATO Enlargement to Ukraine and Georgia: Old Wine in New Bottle?" Connections 9, no. 1 (2009): 29-66.

[70]Vusala Abbasova, "Kazakhstan Voices Readiness to Help Ease Global Energy Crisis," Caspian News (July 6, 2022): https://caspiannews.com/news-detail/kazakhstan-voices-readiness-to-help-ease-global-energy-crisis-2022-7-5-14/.

[71]Andrew Kendall-Taylor and Michael Kofman, "Russia's Dangerous Decline," Foreign Affairs (November/December 2022): https://www.foreignaffairs.com/ukraine/russia-dangerous-decline.

[72]Madalin Necsutu, "Moldova Weighs Mobility and Firepower in Military Overhaul," Balkan Insight (July 13, 2022): https://balkaninsight.com/2022/07/13/moldova-weighs-mobility-and-firepower-in-military-overhaul/.

[73]World Bank, "Improving Freight Transit and Logistics Performance of the Trans-Caucasus Transit Corridor: Strategy and Action Plan," https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/0d3170fa-en/index.html?itemId=/content/component/0d3170fa-en; "Georgia Joins Declaration on Trans-Caspian East-West Middle Corridor," Agenda.GE (March 31, 2022): https://agenda.ge/en/news/2022/1012.

[74]Michael Schwirtz and Matthe Mpoke Bigg, "Russia Hits Ukraine's Power Infrastructure With Some of the Biggest Strikes in Recent Weeks," New York Times (October 22, 2022): https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/22/world/europe/russia-ukraine-war-strikes.html.

[75]Catherine Belton, "Russia's Security Service Works to Subvert Moldova's pro-Western Government," Washington Post (October 28, 2022): https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/10/28/russia-fsb-moldova-manipulation/.

[76]Aura Sabadus, "Ukraine and Moldova Move to Disarm Vladimir Putin's Energy Weapon," Atlantic Council (October 9, 2022): https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/ukraine-and-moldova-move-to-disarm-vladimir-putins-energy-weapon/.

Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia

The European locations of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia qualify both for NATO consideration, but their candidacy is complicated by domestic politics. Despite joining NATO's Membership Action Plan in 2010, the former faces a unique challenge in Republika Srpska, the internal political entity controlled by its ethnic Serbian population.[77] Largely autonomous under the institutions created by the Dayton Accords, it aligns with Serbia and Russia in contrast to the rest of the country, creating a fault line exacerbated by Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine.[78] Although 90% of Bosnia and Herzegovina's Bosniak population and 92% of its Croat population support NATO membership, only 12% of its Serb population does.[79] These internal tensions, heightened by Russia's political influence in Republika Srpska despite its economic dependence on the EU, currently undercut Bosnia and Herzegovina's political resilience.[80] Serbia's own population overwhelmingly rejects NATO membership even as it pursues EU membership, and its pro-Russian foreign policy has drawn increasing criticism amid the current war in Ukraine.[81] Both Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia currently lag behind the NATO average in liberal democracy (see Table 7).

Bosnia and Herzegovina has worked to develop military interoperability with NATO, but the presence of Russian-backed paramilitary forces in Republika Srpska poses a significant obstacle.[83] Its military investments also lag behind NATO averages. Serbia has recently increased its military spending, overtaking Croatia as the top military spender in the Balkans, and its expenditures and relative troop counts are both in line with NATO averages. However, Serbia's military remains dependent on Russia and increasingly on China

Table 7. Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia [82]	Public Support for NATO Membership	V-DEM Liberal Democracy Score (2021)	Military Spending, % of GDP (2020)	Troops (2019)	Troops, % of Population (2019)	Food Spending (2018)	Energy Imports (2014)	Life Expectancy (2019)	Infrastructure (2018)
Bosnia and Herzegovina	66% (2021)	*0.35*	*0.90%*	11,000	0.33%	*30.7%*	23%	77.4	*2.42*
Serbia	*10% (2022)*	*0.24*	2.10%	32,000	0.46%	*25.6%*	29%	*76.0*	*2.60*
NATO average, 2022 members (Standard Deviation)	75% (10%)	0.67 (0.19)	1.72%* (0.59%)*	90,034* (122,831)*	0.46%^ (0.17%)^	16.6% (6.0%)	44%ˣ (26%)ˣ	79.8 (2.7)	3.37 (0.55)

>1 Standard Deviation **better** than NATO Average
>1 Standard Deviation *worse* than NATO Average
* excluding outlier: the United States (3.7%; 1,388,000 troops)
^ excluding outliers: Greece, Lithuania, and Montenegro (1.37%, 1.32%, and 1.93% respectively)
ˣ excluding outliers: net energy exporters Norway and Canada (-583% and -68% respectively)

[77]Hamza Preljević, "UNsatisfied? The Rocky Path to NATO Membership - Bosnia and Herzegovina: A New Approach in Understanding the Challenges," Croatian International Relations Review 23, no. 80 (2017): 33-59; Julian Borger, "Bosnia's Bitter, Flawed Peace Deal, 20 Years On," The Guardian (November 10, 2015): https://www.theguardian.com/global/2015/nov/10/bosnia-bitter-flawed-peace-deal-dayton-agreement-20-years-on.

[78]Leon Hartwell, Hikmet Karčić, and Josephine Mintel, "Send NATO Troops to Help Stabilize Bosnia and Herzegovina," War on the Rocks (August 12, 2022): https://warontherocks.com/2022/08/send-nato-troops-to-help-stabilize-bosnia-and-herzegovina/.

[79]NDI, "What Matters to Bosnia and Herzegovina's Citizens? Public Opinion Poll," National Democratic Institute (December 2021): https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/BiHpoll_DC%20Presentation.pdf.

[80]Majda Ruge, "The Past and the Furious: How Russia's Revisionism Threatens Bosnia," European Council on Foreign Relations (September 13, 2022): https://ecfr.eu/publication/the-past-and-the-furious-how-russias-revisionism-threatens-bosnia/.

[81]"Germany Tells Serbia: You Have to Choose Between EU and Russia," Reuters (November 1, 2022): https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/germany-tells-serbia-you-have-choose-between-eu-russia-2022-11-01/; Sasa Dragojlo, "Serbia, Bosnian Serb Entity, Salute Russia on Victory Day," Balkan Insight (May 9, 2022): https://balkaninsight.com/2022/05/09/serbia-bosnian-serb-entity-salute-russia-on-victory-day/; European Western Balkans, "Survey: 80% of Serbian Citizens Against NATO Membership, But Only 33% Against Cooperation," (November 17, 2020): https://europeanwesternbalkans.com/2020/11/17/survey-80-of-serbian-citizens-against-nato-membership-but-only-33-against-cooperation/.

[82]Data for all indicators in Table 7 has the same sources as the respective data in Tables 1-4 (see footnotes above) except public support for NATO membership: NDI, "What Matters to Bosnia and Herzegovina's Citizens? Public Opinion Poll," National Democratic Institute (December 2021): https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/BiHpoll_DC%20Presentation.pdf; N1, "Institute for European Affairs: Record Low Support of Serbia-NATO Cooperation," N1 (March 24, 2022): https://rs.n1info.com/english/news/institute-for-european-affairs-record-low-support-of-serbia-nato-cooperation/.

[83]NATO, "Relations with Bosnia and Herzegovina," (July 12, 2022): https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_49127.htm; Vera Mironova, "Put is Building a Bosnian Paramilitary Force," Foreign Policy (August 8, 2018): https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/08/08/putin-is-building-a-bosnian-paramilitary-force/.

for its weapons systems.[84] The chief geostrategic benefit of both countries' potential membership would be the consolidation of NATO's collective security sphere in the Balkans, where Serbia has previously represented the local actor most antagonistic to that mission.

Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia each lag behind NATO averages in infrastructure, life expectancy, and consumer spending on food, implying they would face similar challenges to civil resilience as many others in the region. The political divisions discussed above have particularly stymied the former's economy, infrastructure, and healthcare. Although neither country is too dependent on foreign energy, both have relied on Russian oil and natural gas, a particular point of tension in Serbia's relations with the EU as it pursues a new pipeline from Hungary.[85] Both countries occupy important trans-Balkan transit corridors, but greater investment in transportation infrastructure is needed, and Chinese investment has created new dependencies.[86] While both would face significant challenges in terms of civil resilience, political factors remain the greatest obstacles to NATO membership for these countries.

Austria, Ireland, and Switzerland

Austria, Ireland, and Switzerland could each contribute to NATO resilience, yet each currently follow deeply-ingrained policies of neutrality.[87] All three easily meet NATO's liberal democratic standards, but public support for their NATO membership remains low despite calls from some leaders to reconsider that preference (and modest increases amid Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine).[88] Unlike some others discussed above, these countries have been cautious about participating in joint exercises with NATO and invest relatively little in their military capabilities.[89] Geographically surrounded by NATO's collective security sphere, all three benefit from the resulting regional stability and generally remain on good terms with NATO allies. Aside from further consolidating that sphere, their membership would add relatively little to the alliance's resilience in geopolitical terms.

Austria, Ireland, and Switzerland also enjoy relatively strong civil resilience as wealthy countries that have solid infrastructure, enjoy high life expectancies, and spend relatively little on

	Public Support for NATO Membership (2022)	V-DEM Liberal Democracy Score (2021)	Military Spending, % of GDP (2020)	Troops (2019)	Troops, % of Population (2019)	Food Spending (2018)	Energy Imports (2014)	Life Expectancy (2019)	Infrastructure (2018)
Austria	*14%*	0.75	*0.80%*	22,000	*0.25%*	**9.8%**	62%	81.5	**4.18**
Ireland	*48%*	0.82	*0.30%*	9,000	*0.18%*	**9.0%**	*84%*	82.3	3.29
Switzerland	*33%*	0.84	*0.80%*	20,000	*0.23%*	**9.2%**	47%	**83.8**	**4.02**
NATO average, 2022 members (Standard Deviation)	75% (10%)	0.67 (0.19)	1.72%* (0.59%)*	90,034* (122,831)*	0.46%^ (0.17%)^	16.6% (6.0%)	44%ˣ (26%)ˣ	79.8 (2.7)	3.37 (0.55)

Table 8. Austria, Ireland, and Switzerland[90]

>1 Standard Deviation **better** than NATO Average
>1 Standard Deviation *worse* than NATO Average
* excluding outlier: the United States (3.7%; 1,388,000 troops)
^ excluding outliers: Greece, Lithuania, and Montenegro (1.37%, 1.32%, and 1.93% respectively)
ˣ excluding outliers: net energy exporters Norway and Canada (-583% and -68% respectively)

[84] Vuk Vuksanovic, "Serbia's Arms Deals Show It's Tilting Away from Russia and Toward China," *Foreign Policy* (May 11, 2022): https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/05/11/serbias-arms-deals-show-its-tilting-away-from-russia-and-toward-china/.

[85] Majda Ruge, "The Past and the Furious: How Russia's Revisionism Threatens Bosnia," *European Council on Foreign Relations* (September 13, 2022): https://ecfr.eu/publication/the-past-and-the-furious-how-russias-revisionism-threatens-bosnia-; Milica Stojanovic, "Serbia-Hungary Pipeline Deal a Big Political Gamble," *Balkan Insight* (October 17, 2022): https://balkaninsight.com/2022/10/17/serbia-hungary-pipeline-deal-a-big-political-gamble/.

[86] Henrik Larsen, "The Western Balkans Between the EU, NATO, Russia and China," *CSS Analyses in Security Policy* 263 (May 2020): 1-4.

[87] Andrew A. Michta, "NATO Enlargement Post-1989: Successful Adaptation or Decline?" *Contemporary European History* 18, no. 3 (2009): 363-76.

[88] Shawn Pogatchnik, "Poll: More Irish Want to Join NATO in Wake of Ukraine Invasion," *Politico* (March 27, 2022): https://www.politico.eu/article/poll-more-irish-want-to-join-nato/.

[89] Andrew Cottey, "The European Neutrals and NATO: Ambiguous Partnership," *Contemporary Security Policy* 34, no. 3 (2013): 446-72.

[90] Data for all indicators in Table 8 has the same sources as the respective data in Tables 1-4 (see footnotes above) except public support for NATO membership: "Majority of Austrians Reject Joining NATO," *The Local* (May 6, 2022): https://www.thelocal.at/20220506/majority-of-austrians-reject-joining-nato/; Shawn Pogatchnik, "Poll: More Irish Want to Join NATO in Wake of Ukraine Invasion," *Politico* (March 27, 2022): https://www.politico.eu/article/poll-more-irish-want-to-join-nato/; John Revill, "Analysis: Neutral Switzerland Leans Closer to NATO in Response to Russia," *Reuters* (May 16, 2022): https://www.reuters.com/markets/europe/neutral-switzerland-leans-closer-nato-response-russia-2022-05-15/.

food. Like many NATO members they each rely heavily on energy imports (see Table 8). Beyond reducing their energy dependence and increasing their military investments to match NATO targets, little would stand in the way of these countries enhancing alliance resilience should their populations come to favor NATO membership.

CONCLUSION

NATO's first secretary general, Lord Ismay, famously remarked that the alliance was formed "to keep the Russians out, the Germans down, and the Americans in."[91] On balance, its enlargement after the Cold War has contributed to each of those three goals: extending deterrence against potential Russian aggression to greater portions of Eastern Europe, relieving potential security concerns and competition among alliance members, and harnessing "a dynamism that would help ensure public support in the USA."[92] That said, its recent enlargement has entailed tradeoffs among the various dimensions of resilience, with policymakers notably prioritizing political resilience to stabilize Central and Eastern Europe after the Cold War and content to work toward greater military and civil resilience over time.

Most candidates for future NATO enlargement bring a similar mix of tradeoffs in terms of resilience. Finland and Sweden offer substantial improvements to the alliance's resilience in the Baltic region. Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine could offer political and geopolitical contributions to alliance resilience as significant as any post-1991 members, but their candidacies are complicated by Russian foreign policy. Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia face daunting domestic political obstacles in the short term. Austria, Ireland, and Switzerland could offer modest contributions to alliance resilience if their publics come to favor NATO membership, but so far they have preferred neutrality. With NATO members' ample military and civil resources and ongoing efforts to enhance resilience within the alliance, the political dimension is likely to remain the focal point of NATO's resilience during the next three decades, as it was during the last three decades.

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[91] Sayle, *Enduring Alliance*, 3.
[92] Timothy Andrews Sayle, "Patterns of Continuity in NATO's Long History," *International Politics* 57 (2020): 336.

KEY RESULTS AND
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NATO

NATO has proved more resilient than some expected after the Cold War. That is due largely to the political dimension, which policymakers consciously emphasized when choosing to expand the alliance. NATO enlargement has helped stabilize security relations in Central and Eastern Europe, reducing the risk of some forms of shocks and hence enhancing alliance resilience. However, its contributions to democratization and development have been more limited than some anticipated, and those remain challenging areas for many current potential candidates.

Pursuant to NATO's goals of deterrence and defense, crisis prevention and management, and cooperative security, its leaders should continue working to promote civil, military, and political resilience at both the domestic and collective levels. Enlargement can reinforce resilience by helping to mitigate the risk of shocks in areas formerly outside the alliance, expanding allied operational capacities, and facilitating crisis-mitigating cooperation. Enlargement alone cannot guarantee the democratic and economic foundations of civil resilience, but it can help shape the strategic environment and relieve pressures that would otherwise remain sources of potential threat.

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