

Exploring NATO's Impact on the War in Ukraine: An Investigation into the Alliance's Role and Potential Strategies for Intervention

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ABSTRACT

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has gained increasing importance, particularly in light of Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 and subsequent military actions in the war in Ukraine. Despite Ukraine's official request to join NATO, it remains a partner rather than a member, prompting criticism and calls for more assertive actions. NATO's growing engagement in Eastern Europe has generated issues regarding whether Ukraine should be recognized as a member and whether current internal policies should be reframed to align with potential future establishments.

Ukraine's official request to join NATO was as early as 2008, though only grew to draw relevance during the war, which resulted in substantial discussion about NATO's role in the conflict, including a significant increase in criticism of the alliance. Many have deemed their engagement as too risky, while others have advocated for even more direct measures. In order to evaluate these scenarios, a policy review as well as literature review was conducted. Several matrices were utilized to present the positives and negatives of the existing status quo, as well as other alternatives that would fit the vision of safeguarding the international relations of Ukraine. The following paper will discuss the possibility of seeking a middle ground, an alternative approach in which Ukraine and NATO maintain global security while simultaneously ensuring Ukrainian stability.

INTRODUCTION

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization, or NATO, was founded after the second world war in 1949. The main objective of the organization at the time was influenced by the context of the Soviet Union, particularly in Eastern Europe and the growing threat of communism. The alliance's founding treaty was signed in the United States of America in Washington D.C on the 4th of April 1949, by a dozen North American and European countries (NATO, 1949). The pact

was and still is made up of 14 articles (NATO, 1949). Article 1 encourages the countries' peaceful cooperation—establishing the principle of collaboration in the case of resolving a conflict, in which all member countries work towards a joint resolution (NATO, 1949). Article 2 of the treaty establishes the idea of constant economic cooperation, and legally binds the countries to the thought of strengthening their institutions—jointly and individually (NATO, 1949). Articles 3 through 6 describe NATO's main commitment, collective defense, which legally obliges member countries to engage in separate and joint military development, open consideration, and discourse of any ongoing or future international disputes (NATO, 1949). Most crucially, Article 5 states that any armed assault on a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in Europe or North America is considered an attack on all alliance members (NATO, 1949). The articles 7-14 describe NATO's guidelines for member countries' coordination and decision-making on defense plans and common security. These establish the principle of regular consultations, the importance of national implementation measures, address expansion and accession of new members, and cover administrative and procedural matters, including the establishment of NATO's governing bodies, like the Security Council. The following articles also underline that in the need of establishing a specific council to aid any ongoing, future conflict, a council like that shall be created (NATO, 1949). Among those, Article 10 is of special importance. It outlines the need for unanimity of all existing member countries in order for a nation to be accepted into the alliance, a provision that may currently stand as a boundary for the future membership of many nations, including Ukraine.

NATO, like with any global organization that focuses on military and security provision, has been a substantial part of the war in Ukraine, which began in February 2022. Its involvement has been a serious topic of agitation in terms of where Ukraine stands on the spectrum of alliance members and partner countries.

The conflict between Ukraine and Russia has been ongoing since Russia's historical and territorial control over Ukraine and more recently in 2014 when Russia annexed Crimea (NATO, 2019). NATO's role in the Ukraine conflict has been substantial. However, there are differing opinions on whether more assertive measures were required, with some individuals basing their views on Ukraine's potential future membership in NATO. (Wade, 2022). For instance, NATO could have adopted a more assertive stance in response to Russia's actions in Ukraine as early as February 2022 (Wade, 2022). Additionally, some argue that although providing assistance to Ukraine is crucial, granting it NATO membership would not be the right course of action. Opponents contend that Ukraine should have been allowed to join NATO, where it would have received stronger military support and security (Wade, 2022). Nevertheless, given the prevailing circumstances, NATO's direct intervention might have precipitated a more catastrophic conflict, which some could even perceive as the start of World War III (Wade, 2022).

CONTEXT & IMPORTANCE

Problem Statement:

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), established in 1949 after World War II, has been a critical alliance for ensuring peace and security in Europe (Haglund, 2019). However, the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine, which began in March 2022, has posed significant challenges for NATO, and has raised concerns about its response to the conflict (NATO, 2023).

As stated in Article 5 of the NATO treaty, member countries are bound to the principle of collective defense (NATO, 1949). Ukraine has been long considered a partner country to the alliance, though not a full member. Despite that fact, it has still received support from the organization. Russian President Vladimir Putin has characterized this support as a 'proxy war' between NATO and Russia, a war between the East and West (Wade, 2022).

The issue at hand is the relationship between NATO and Ukraine and the war that the country is currently experiencing. Ukraine, seeking security assurances and protection against Russian aggression, has indicated interest in joining NATO. However, NATO's enlargement policy has generated tensions within the alliance, as the timing and terms of Ukrainian membership have become contentious issues (NATO's response to Russia's attack on Ukraine, 2023). The unanimity required for new member admissions, as stated in Article 10 of the North Atlantic Treaty, has further complicated the process (NATO, 1949). Moreover, NATO's involvement in the conflict raises questions about the alliance's effectiveness of its deterrent capabilities, and its ability to address security challenges in the Ukrainian region (NATO, 1949).

The support Ukraine received, what many consider to be "limited," has left a lack of a clear stance on Ukrainian membership—a factor that has since led to divisions within the alliance (NATO's response to Russia's attack on Ukraine, 2023). These divisions not only affect the response to the current conflict but also raise concerns about the alliance's future cohesion and its ability to navigate security threats. NATO lacks admission conditions that assess a nation's state, such as whether it is at war or at conflict with another nation, and whether such factors might be a deterrent to membership – making the issue of admitting Ukraine into the alliance even more complex.

On the other hand, Ukraine has been accepted as a future candidate to the European Union on the 23rd of June 2022 (European Council, 2023), and neither the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) nor the Treaty on European Union (TEU) indicate the status of the nation, whether at peace or at war when applying for membership and whether that can act as a determining factor in their acceptance to the organization. This has demonstrated the European Union's position on Ukraine's membership clearly. The EU (European Union) continues to

demand that Ukraine meet the broadly speaking standard "Copenhagen criteria" of having a healthy market economy, a functioning democracy, and adhering to all EU regulations, including those pertaining to the euro. Hence, while not clearly a member of the European Union, the act of recognizing Ukraine as a future potential candidate to the organization, when at War with Russia can somewhat present a precedent to NATO - where the state is recognized as a future potential member of the alliance.

If the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's official document does not specify whether a country at war being admitted to the alliance are sufficient conditions for Article 5 to be enacted, it can be suggested that that also does not explicitly prohibit Ukraine's involvement in a conflict as a condition for its membership in the alliance, it may be argued that such a restriction is not legally enforceable, as no such boundaries are outlined in the official document itself. However, this may also be attributed to personal biases of nations, even some who would have voted against it, particularly considering the unanimity required for a nation to be admitted. Furthermore, the Ukrainian war has implications for regional stability in the post - Soviet sphere and worldwide security. The potential for conflict escalation and the possibility of a larger-scale war demand a thorough examination of NATO's strategy and objectives. Balancing peacekeeping, member-state safety, and avoiding further destabilization is a difficult challenge that demands a thorough assessment of NATO's stance in the region and assess their tactics for greater or lesser intervention.

Historical Background:

With the end of World War II, the European nations were struggling both militarily and economically. They lacked adequate supplies in case of another military clash and were experiencing economic crises, facing unemployment and homelessness. In contrast, the Soviet Union had just begun to emerge and was growing as an increasingly strong military and political power, which posed the need for greater protection in the western areas of Europe. What began as an Iron Curtain, a term popularized by Winston Churchill, quickly grew to dominate over Central and Eastern Europe.

However, apart from worries coming from Western Europe, the threat of Stalin quickly reached the United States of America as well. Hence, in 1948, the United States launched the Marshall Plan to provide the Western European states with vast amounts of economic funding, on the condition that they cooperate with the US and engage in joint planning to hasten their mutual post-war recovery. President Harry Truman provided European nations, including the United Kingdom and the region of the Federal Republic of Germany, with over \$13.3 billion (History.com, 2009).

Moreover, the United States of America feared that the post-World War II period, and the economic struggles that accompanied it, would strengthen the appeal of communist parties to voters in Western Europe, as well as Stalinist ideas of radical Marxism, which developed historically in Bolshevik Russia and has since become known as Marxism-Leninism.

Along with the American stance against Joseph Stalin's expansionist ambitions, the UK foreign secretary at the time, Ernst Bevin, was committed to constituting an alliance as well. In 1948, the United Kingdom, Belgium, France, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg successfully committed to the Brussels Treaty, through which they practiced the principle of collective defense which would also be outlined in Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, formed just a year later. The treaty served as an expansion to the Treaty of Dunkirk, which had been signed the previous year on the 4th of March 1947, between Britain and France, for the purpose of greater protection against German aggression after World War II ended. The Brussels treaty's purpose was to demonstrate that Western European governments could cooperate, urging the United States of America to engage in Western Europe's security.

Simultaneously with the talks about the Brussels Treaty, the USA, Canada, and Britain were engaged in talks to create yet another alliance, one that could have a military advantage over the Soviet Union. The countries wanted to create an organization that could act as an alternative to the United Nations (UN), which was paralyzed by the mounting Cold War. Subsequently, joined by the countries which signed the Brussels Treaty, as well as Norway, the states collectively signed the North Atlantic Treaty Organization on the 4th of April 1949 in Washington D.C and officially created what is now known as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO, 2022).

Policy Implications:

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has played a crucial role in maintaining peace and stability in Europe since its establishment in 1949 (NATO, 1949). However, the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine has raised concerns about NATO's response and its commitment to collective defense. Ukraine, although not a member of NATO, has received support from the organization in its conflict with Russia. While their actions should not be mistaken with the principle of collective defense, but rather perceived as help in the general principle of maintaining peace and world stability, NATO's involvement remains perceived as a "proxy war" between NATO and Russia, which Russian President Vladimir Putin views as a war between the Western European powers and their hatred toward Russia (Wade, 2022). The lack of a clear stance on Ukrainian membership and what many considered limited support provided by NATO raises questions about the alliance's effectiveness of its deterrent capabilities.

One policy implication is the need for NATO to carefully evaluate its enlargement policy. While Ukraine has expressed interest in joining NATO for security assurances and protection against Russian aggression, the timing and terms of Ukrainian membership have caused divisions within the alliance (NATO's response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, 2023). The decision to allow new members into NATO requires a unanimous vote of member countries, as stated in Article 10 of the North Atlantic Treaty (NATO, 1949). This process should involve comprehensive assessments of the country's readiness to align with NATO's principles and fulfill its obligations.

Furthermore, the admission of new member states, including Ukraine, should be considered in the broader context of NATO's values and principles. It is crucial to evaluate the democratic norms and tendencies of existing member countries, such as Turkey and Hungary, as their deviations from democratic principles may undermine the integrity of the alliance and hinder collective decision-making processes, including Article 10, in which the unanimity of votes may be interrupted by close connections of the Hungarian president, Viktor Orbán, to Russia, as well as the fact that Hungary opted from implementing economic sanctions on Russia (European Council, 2023). A more comprehensive assessment of Hungary may be required, taking into account its interconnectedness with Russia, both economically and diplomatically, in light of existing principles. NATO's involvement in Ukraine also raised concerns about the potential escalation of the conflict and the risk of a larger-scale war. While some argue for more aggressive actions, such as direct military intervention against Russia's aggression (NATO's response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, 2023), such measures carry significant risks and may lead to further destabilization. Historical alliances and other NATO implications, such as the Warsaw Pact, may offer insights into the future of the alliance considering the war in Ukraine. These may include Russian responses to NATO's enlargement policies and financial support for Ukraine, like the strengthening of already existing alliances (like BRICS) or new, emerging ones. As a result, NATO must carefully negotiate the region's geopolitical dynamics and rising challenges to maintain security, and tranquility, while avoiding an escalating conflict in any of their future intervention strategies.

CRITIQUE OF POLICY AND ALTERNATIVES

Alternative 1:

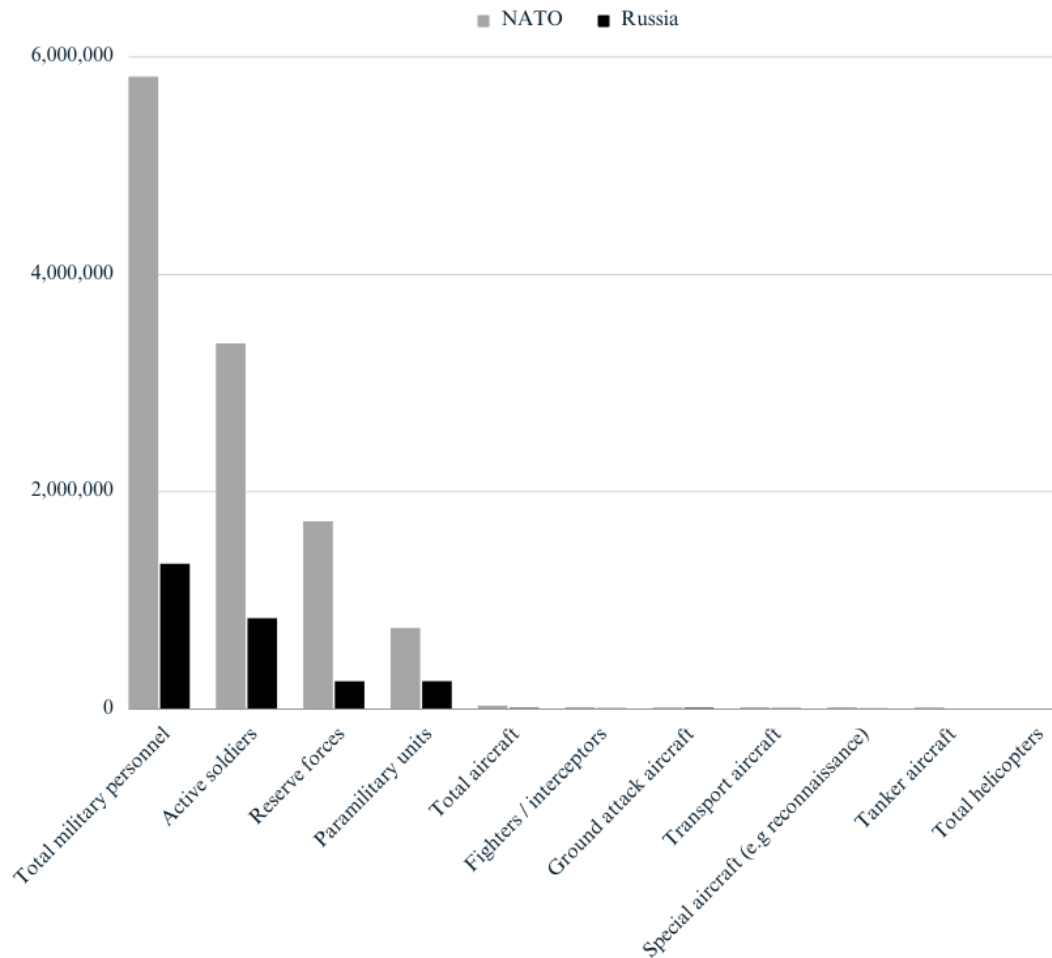
As NATO continues to navigate the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, it is imperative that the organization reevaluates Ukraine's entry, existing exit protocols, and ensures that all member countries are following their principles. There are serious concerns about the participation of certain member countries, namely Hungary and Turkey, which have been found to violate NATO's principles regarding cooperation and, most importantly, Article 11. Article 11 requires member nations to follow their internal constitutional processes, which both countries have

violated in recent years. Ukraine has been granted preferential treatment in some circumstances. This prejudice can be confirmed by asking if the same preferential circumstances would have been applied if a different nation was involved. As is evident, Ukraine's participation in a conflict is at stake for NATO's guiding principle of global security, but it does not make the treatment any less preferential. However, this complex issue still requires thorough consideration. Any changes to NATO protocols must be made consistent with the organization's underlying values and protocols, in order to avoid any deviations from legal standpoints of the organization established in 1949, in Washington D.C. All countries should be reevaluated considering Article 11 and their domestic application of their respective processes, whether judicial, democratic, constitutional, or electoral. Considering recent events, it is important to note that NATO's principles must be upheld without exception, unless these are appealed upon the wish of any of the member countries and an ultimate unanimous decision, which can be an ultimate solution to the problem. This means that if internal policies dictate that Ukraine should not receive special treatment within the organization, then these policies must be followed. Any deviation from this could potentially lead to conflict on a greater and more global scale.

Alternative 2:

On the contrary, many people have proposed that Ukraine join the organization as quickly as feasible. This derives from the notion that Ukraine should be treated differently considering its circumstances, particularly considering Russia's invasion. A practice that *ALTERNATIVE 1* counters. Apart from receiving support from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, many have suggested Ukraine's membership in the organization. NATO has long participated in conflicts all around the globe; however, since 2014 and the annexation of Crimea, they have been increasingly active in the Eastern European region, particularly Ukraine. NATO's direct invasion of Russia, demonstrating a stronger stance, could lead to a greater conflict. However, it is important to understand that if a direct attack between Russia and NATO were to take place, the odds of Russia winning in a strictly military conflict are low, especially compared to the strength of NATO.

Figure 1



(Statista, 2023)

Note: This bar chart compares the military capabilities of Russia and NATO

Considering the above-mentioned factors and statistics into consideration, NATO would have a military advantage in the case of a direct conflict between the two organizations. However, this is without the knowledge of nuclear capabilities of both parties in question. These, while partially disclosed publicly, cannot be confirmed in every circumstance; though nuclear capabilities of Russia are in fact claimed to be greater than that of NATO's. In the event of validated statistics, such as those generated by Statista, one may claim that none of the parties concerned (Russia and NATO) have a nuclear edge over one another. Only in the category of non-defensive and strategic nuclear powers, where NATO possesses 250 and Russia owns as

many as 1912, did NATO demonstrate a significant superiority in nuclear power. While this is a benefit, it most certainly would not be employed at the start of a contract. Both parties may be wary of relying on nuclear powers to protect their territory since it not only wastes their scarce resources, but it can also harm them with a nuclear reaction from the other side.

However, to ensure Ukraine’s steady and swift entry, NATO should expand and partially amend Article 10 to take into consideration the country joining and its main motives. Introducing provisions for phased membership, allowing Ukraine to gradually integrate into the alliance while fulfilling specific requirements, would be an option given the ongoing war dynamics, which might make it harder for the country to integrate into the environment and fulfill all the expectations of the alliance.

Ukraine’s phased membership could be considered as a steady but cautious way of implementing Ukraine into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. By fulfilling specific, set requirements under the unanimity of Article 10, Ukraine could start small and grow their contributions in the alliance. For example, starting from small contributions to the financial fund and increasing it adequately from there. This could ensure that Ukraine remains integrated while not being considered a final member, specifically from Russia’s viewpoint. Furthermore, NATO could explore the possibility of establishing provisions similar to the already established Ukraine-NATO Council. This council serves the purpose of delineating the alliance's core principles, particularly Article 5, from its specific application to Ukraine.

Policy Matrix:

Alternative 1:	Advantage:	Disadvantage:	Cost:
Reevaluating existing members considering Article 11 and not allowing for Ukraine to receive special treatment unless specified in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization document. (NATO, 1949)	Allowing for the alliance to function under their self-proclaimed principles and be able to reevaluate membership of certain countries, including Hungary and Turkey and look for further cooperation with Ukraine under the idea of their future membership coming after the war.	Reevaluating countries, particularly considering NATO’s principles can lead to intrinsic conflicts in the organization and hence, to strained diplomatic relations, which can lead to disagreements and in long term result in the underlying of alliance's principles.	NATO having to conduct internal investigations may lead to financial costs. The cost could include funding for experts, diplomatic efforts, and administrative expenses associated with the evaluation process.

<p>Alternative 2: Considering the circumstance of ongoing war dynamics in Ukraine and admitting it into the alliance under the unanimity of Article 10 through phased membership that remains considerable of the military actions in Ukraine and the associated disruption with it (NATO, 1949).</p>	<p>Advantage: Greater protection for Ukraine, social and military union against the threat that is coming from Russia. Adverse chances for Russia in a military conflict between the alliance and the country.</p>	<p>Disadvantage: The risk for Russia attacking NATO countries, which can be of profound impact to the citizens of those countries and escalate the ongoing war, particularly regarding the use of nuclear weapons.</p>	<p>Cost: Given that NATO will need to enlist new troops, move current military divisions, and equip the alliance with new military hardware, in the case of such a fight this can have a large financial cost. On the other hand, Ukraine might contribute financially to a fund that all member countries contribute to since it is a part of the alliance and allows for its greater prosperity, unlike the current status quo.</p>
<p>Status Quo: NATO helps Ukraine militarily, but not considering it a member, rather a partner who under the representation of Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky is only part of the NATO – Ukraine council.</p>	<p>Advantage: Reducing the risk of a greater conflict or it escalating into the Western European countries and the Americas.</p>	<p>Disadvantage: Ukraine continues to seek membership which can trigger chaos within the organization that continues to oppose the idea of the country joining.</p>	<p>Cost: NATO being of help to Ukraine while Ukraine not being a member and not contributing to donations and military help to the rest of the member countries. The financial drain that Ukraine has on NATO is of great financial cost to the alliance, particularly given the amount of attention and aid that NATO has given to Ukraine.</p>

Note: This table demonstrates the policy options (advantages, disadvantages, and financial cost) relating to the War in Ukraine and strategies that NATO could implement in the region. (Karasińska, 2023)

ANALYSIS OF EVALUATIVE CRITERIA

Evaluative Criterion Policy Matrix

Criteria/Alternative	Alternative 1: Reevaluate existing members and refuse to give Ukraine special treatment unless specified or changed in the NATO text.	Alternative 2: Accept Ukraine as a member considering its difficulties with the war and permit phased membership based on the precedent of Ukraine being granted the status of a candidate to join the European Union while continuing to be exempt from any laws pertaining to its state and whether it is at war or at peace with other states.	Status Quo: Ukraine exists as a partner country to NATO, and the organization providing it with a tremendous amount of military equipment Ukraine is on the NATO-Ukraine Security Council.
Immediate Effectiveness	2 – It would improve the efficiency of NATO and its ability to provide for Ukraine but would not improve the situation in Ukraine.	4 - This alternative is ideal in the context of immediate success – enabling direct engagement from NATO and resulting in an ending treaty to the war, providing the most incredible amount of protection from an individualistic perspective of Ukraine alone.	3 – This alternative is not beneficial immediately and has shown its partial immediate effectiveness in the past. While supporting the Ukrainian cause, it does not support its long term membership in NATO.

<p>long-term Efficiency</p>	<p>5 - Long-term, this alternative would allow for the organization to prosper on a global scale while continuing to help Ukraine and allow for its future in the organization.</p>	<p>4 - This alternative is ideal long-term. The significance of Ukraine being protected under Article 5 of NATO will reduce the conflict between Russia and Ukraine and hence, reduce conflicts of such kind in the future, but most importantly display even greater efforts from the West.</p>	<p>3 - While this alternative is not precisely aimed at benefiting Ukraine long-term, NATO's ability to provide military equipment and look for a middle ground in strategy is most undoubtedly efficient on a shorter scale.</p>
<p>Public Opinion and Domestic Politics</p>	<p>2 – This notion does not appear popular among the general people. As indicated in social studies, this may meet opposition from European citizens because of an official declaration not to allow Ukraine into the alliance until the alliance can reevaluate existing members and act on it.</p>	<p>5 – This alternative is supported by the public, especially in Ukraine. Accepting the country into the alliance could significantly deepen Ukrainian ties to other European unions and coalitions, which is supported by the current government of Ukraine and other liberally ruled countries.</p>	<p>4 – Despite the current status quo facing significant opposition and being called out for its passiveness, it continues contributing to Ukraine's victory in the war and shows signs of future collaboration.</p>
<p>Least Amount of Risk (lowest score = the least amount of risk)</p>	<p>2 – This option carries minimal danger because it does not engage NATO forces in the war and adheres to the alliance's safety procedures.</p>	<p>3 - While a moderate risk is involved due to ongoing conflicts, a carefully managed integration process could mitigate potential pitfalls in the long-term.</p>	<p>2 – This alternative does not show outstanding amounts of risk. However, it has significant impacts on the financial aspects of the alliance, including the budget, which may result in significant drainage, with Ukraine absorbing a lot of</p>

			those for military resources and its allocation.
Gradual Integration into Alliance	2 – This alternative does not explicitly consider this integration technique. On the other hand, it considers its long-term effectiveness. It does not progressively integrate the alliance since it claims it will not accept Ukraine as a member country unless the official document allows for such treatment.	5 – Alternative 2's phased approach to Ukraine's membership could facilitate adaptation and alignment with alliance standards, minimizing disruptions and allowing Ukraine to join while fulfilling specific requirements.	2 – While showing signs of future cooperation, the current status quo does not explicitly indicate integration into the alliance, though it has shown efforts of such kind in forming the NATO-Ukraine Council.
Consistency with Organization	5 – This approach takes the utmost caution in the framework of current protocols and publications. By not providing Ukraine preferential treatment and letting the nation into the alliance, the alliance can continue to look at existing members and reflect on the existing bias, especially considering the unanimity required for a country to join under Article 10 why and how that can act as an obstacle to Ukraine's membership.	3 - Accepting Ukraine might require protocol adjustments, but aligning their practices with the alliance's principles could enhance cohesion.	3 – By helping Ukraine militarily, NATO upholds its standard of spreading prosperity globally.

Budgetary Impact	3 – Compared to the other options, this choice remains financially unfavorable. Adequate funds would be required to conduct internal investigations into the alliance while also supporting Ukraine, with it not being a member and not contributing to a shared fund in the organization.	5 - Integrating Ukraine could strain resources and require financial investments, potentially affecting the organization's budgetary priorities – However, the alliance would then receive budgetary contributions from Ukraine, which in contrast to other alternatives, adds to the alliance financially.	– Allowing Ukraine to have such a significant piece of NATO's finances only to uphold the principle of global security has significantly impacted the alliance, risking future significant budget implications.
Total:	23	27	19

Note: The Table above represents the alternatives and strategies that should be commended in the context of NATO's engagement in the war in Ukraine. (Karasinska, 2023)

Results of the Criterion Matrix:

The results of the Criterion Matrix highlight a significant advantage for Alternative 2, which involves accepting Ukraine as a member in accordance with a precedent set by the EU when setting its status as a future candidate to join the EU (European Union). Alternative 2 received 27 points, surpassing the current Status Quo and Alternative 1, which scored 19 and 23 points, respectively.

Risk Assessment Matrix:

Likelihood, Consequence	Insignificant: No military or war-related action necessary.	Minor: Some military action necessary but to an extent that is unnoticeable	Moderate: Noticeable military action, but if so manageable to citizens.	Major: Significant military action, including significant effects on local citizens.	Severe: Catastrophic military action, including effects on citizens who must migrate or relocate.
Almost certain to occur					

Likely to occur					
Likely to occur at some point		STATUS QUO			
Unlikely to occur, but could happen	ALTERNATIVE 1		ALTERNATIVE 2		
May only occur in rare circumstances					

Note: This assessment matrix represents the risk of war regarding alternatives provided and the current status quo. (Karasińska, 2023)

AGENDA:

- minimal risk
 - moderate risk
 - elevated risk
 - critical risk

Results of the Risk Assessment Matrix:

As noted above, Alternative 1 had the lowest possibility of a larger military clash, posing the least risk overall, while the current status quo has a slightly higher probability of a military outcome, being considered moderate risk. Alternative 2, which received the greatest scores on the Disadvantages and Advantages Matrices as well as the Evaluative Criterion Matrix, offered a war risk with little influence on the Risk Assessment Matrix. Despite being the riskiest, this is important in deciding how valuable it is from its side of effectiveness. In that scenario, it is critical to evaluate Alternative 2 and imply it as a means of a solution to the current crisis in Ukraine.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Policy Conclusion:

NATO's policy on Ukraine has been a source of controversy and much debate since the beginning of the war, with many favoring greater, direct engagement and some opposing such beliefs, promoting balance and what can be perceived as less risky alternatives. Since the start of the war, or even prior in 2014, NATO has increased its activity in the Ukrainian region.

NATO's status in Ukraine, though not wrong, could have been of more assertive aims. As presented above in the Policy Criterion Matrix, both alternatives to the status quo presented a more focused and practical approach. That said, the scope and point of view of the war in Ukraine are the most crucial aspects of this debate. As shown in the Policy Criterion Matrix, all alternatives scored differently in different criteria, some showing greater effectiveness in the long term, and some presenting short-term efficiency.

While NATO's role in Ukraine continues to increase, it is crucial to acknowledge its interconnection with the European Union. Of the 27 EU member states, 22 were also members of NATO. Ukraine reached the status of a candidate, and while there is a long way for the country to reach its membership, having completed the so-called Copenhagen Criteria, this has been considered a significant move in favor of Ukraine, one that can be considered as preceding the path for NATO to follow.

Looking ahead, it is only a matter of time until NATO accepts Ukraine as a member, whether after the war or in the context of reframed or appealed articles regarding membership or phased membership in the alliance. Ukraine has a long-standing history with both organizations and is a strong partner. Although NATO's Ukraine stance has called into doubt the alliance's integrity, Ukraine's defeat could be considered a foregone conclusion without its assistance.

Recommendations:

Based on the Policy Matrix and the Criterion Matrix presented above, Alternative 2 has the most tremendous flexibility and meaningful results. Its advantages are clear and ensure steadiness and safety for both the parties included in the current debate: NATO and Ukraine.

Ukraine's entry has been deemed a matter of time, and its future membership can only be considered inevitable. Therefore, as presented in Alternative 2, it is crucial that NATO's central security council considers Ukraine's entry considering existing articles and investigates their limitations, specifically Article 10, which briefly discusses the process of a country's membership. While Article 10's requirement for unanimity upon a country's admission is more than fair, the articles or any of the 14 that describe a country's state and whether being at war with one can be a decisive factor. While Ukraine is not currently considered a candidate, it is not entirely clear why that is. If the North Atlantic Treaty does not describe whether that can be a decisive factor, it is more apparent that it should not act as one. Yet when discussions of this kind arise, Ukraine's involvement in a military conflict has been deemed as a counter to its membership.

Apart from implementing legal regulations, which would not only help with the admission of Ukraine but also act as a legal precedent for future similar cases, it is crucial to acknowledge the

importance of the current and potential financial standing of both parties: Ukraine and NATO. The current status quo is costly for both sides. Ukraine is draining its national resources towards the war, and NATO is providing military equipment to Ukraine as a safety provision, which they are obliged to do under the North Atlantic Treaty Organization document. With that being said, the existing funding procedures exclude Ukraine since the country is not a member. When becoming one, NATO would benefit financially – having Ukraine contribute to their fund, and Ukraine would benefit from having access to even greater resources while receiving financial assistance from the alliance as a member.

However, the greatest defiance to this alternative is its risk of an even greater conflict. Nuclear weapons have been growing as an emerging military equipment field, and their usage may pose a huge risk to all global citizens. However, it is important to acknowledge the limited intersection that exists between Ukraine's immediate membership in NATO and Russia is at war with Ukraine.

In conclusion, it is paramount for Ukraine to become a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. This chase has to be implemented gradually, as any radical moves can be considered as the start of World War Three, an event which NATO is bound to avoid. Adoption phased membership would be a move not only pivotal for the financial well-being of both NATO and Ukraine, but it also has the potential to set a crucial legal precedent for addressing similar situations in the future, where a nation is engaged in conflict and no explicit guidelines exist within the organization.

By joining NATO, Ukraine's involvement would go beyond current circumstances, carrying implications that extend into the broader international context. This step would not only address immediate financial challenges faced by both parties but could also shape the way conflicts are considered within the framework of the organization.

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