



## PF Nationals 2014 Con Analysis

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The Public Forum resolution for this year's National competition is **Resolved: NATO should strengthen its relationship with Ukraine in order to deter further Russian aggression**. Because of the large size and extremely timely nature of this topic, many debaters are finding it unusually challenging. Today, we're going to demystify and go over the basics of building a Nationals-caliber con case.

If you have already read the [pro analysis](#), you can safely skip to the top of page 6. There, we begin our discussion of the resolution's terms from the con's point of view.

It should be obvious to you that this resolution is ripped directly from world news headlines. This makes the debate current and exciting, but it also complicates preparation to a significant degree, because the situation you are discussing is still in the process of developing. That means conclusions can be proven wrong at any given moment. The very first thing you should understand as you prep for this topic is there is a real chance that circumstances will change dramatically between now and when you debate. In fact, there's a real chance that circumstances will change *mid-tournament*. It is critical that you keep your eyes on the news. I recommend setting Google News alerts for keywords from the topic, as well as any other countries/actors/concepts you plan to discuss, and checking on them regularly. You should also get comfortable with the idea that you might have to conduct last-minute "surgery" on any cases you write. But you can handle it; you're a top-notch debater. That's why you're going to Nationals!



Simply knowing what's happening in the status quo, however, won't be enough. You will also need to understand how we got there, based on a significant amount of **history**. I truly cannot emphasize enough how important it will be for you to gain a strong grounding in this topic's historical and political context. Unless you understand how and why we arrived at the current situation, as well as all relevant actors' motivations and interests, there is absolutely no way you will be able to discuss the topic intelligently and persuasively. *Please* do not skimp on this part of the research process.

I will give you an abbreviated rundown, but I *strongly* encourage you to do further [background reading](#), using this as a jumping-off point for your search.

[Victor Yanukovich](#) had been the president of Ukraine since 2010. His administration prioritized Ukraine's relationship to Russia over forging stronger ties with the West, withdrawing from numerous potential agreements, under pressure from Moscow. During his presidency, he was also repeatedly accused of corruption, cronyism, and embezzlement. These factors created widespread dissent, which galvanized into large-scale protests. After 3 months of protests, Yanukovich's government cracked down, and the situation became extremely violent. In February of 2014, extended protests finally culminated [Yanukovich's decision to flee](#).

Despite fleeing, Yanukovich did not resign. Several regions, including [Crimea](#), continued to support him, due to the largely pro-Russian make-up of their citizenry. Meanwhile, the leadership of the rest of the country acted to limit presidential powers, and called for a special, early presidential election in May. They also named Oleksandr Turchynov interim president. The election was held on May 25, and [Petro Poroshenko](#) was elected.



On February 28, armed units, [identified by experts as Russian special units](#), and Ukrainian separatists moved to take over Crimea. [Vladimir Putin denied that these forces were Russian troops](#) or that Russia had demanded surrender from Crimea. Putin maintains these people are acting alone, without orders from Moscow. Their actions have been explained as required to protect ethnic Russians living in Crimea (an estimated 59% of the Crimean population), who tended to support ousted president Yanukovich and favor a strong relationship with Moscow.

(Russia does, however, admit that the forces currently built up around the Ukrainian border are Russian troops, although they maintain the troops are only conducting routine military training exercises. Putin has publically stated that these troops are in the process of withdrawing, although evidence of withdrawal has been very limited. This is an ongoing question you should plan to monitor in the lead-up to Nationals.)

On March 16, a referendum was held to determine whether Crimea would remain a territory of Ukraine, or become [annexed](#) by Russia. The reported results were that 97% of Crimeans voted to secede from Ukraine and join Russia. However, this referendum was widely criticized across the globe, because it was seen as occurring under the threat of a Russian military occupation. Therefore, people may not have had a real choice. Many nations spoke out, and the UN passed a resolution (although not unanimously) to declare the referendum invalid. Nevertheless, the annexation proceeded. Crimea is currently subject to Russian, rather than Ukrainian, law. Russian legislators set the date of January 2015 for Crimea's total integration into Russia.



The United States, the European Union, and Canada responded by levying sanctions against certain Russian officials and companies. [Cooperation](#) on a number of issues [has dropped off](#), and West-Russia relations are low, while tensions run high.

Currently, the Ukraine faces continued instability and violent conflict. Separatists have seized control of buildings and territories. Although Russia has claimed that it plans to withdraw its troops from the Ukrainian border, at the time of publishing [tens of thousands](#) of Russian troops reportedly remain encamped along the border. It is widely believed that some of the armed fighters seizing territory for separatists in Ukraine are Russian forces. The United States, Europe, and their allies remain concerned about the possibility of further Russian encroachments on Ukraine and other nations in Eastern Europe. That is where we find ourselves as we approach debates on this resolution.

[Here is a useful timeline](#) of the crisis in Ukraine, which might help to further clarify things for you.

Now that we understand what it is we're debating about generally, let's investigate some of the specific key terms in the resolution.

"NATO" stands for [North Atlantic Treaty Organization](#). It is a multilateral military alliance made up of 28 countries from across North America and Europe. NATO was founded in 1949 for the purpose of mutual defense in the event of an attack on any member state. Article 5 of the North Atlantic treaty mandates that member states treat any attack on one state as an attack on all member states.



During the Cold War, NATO was largely used to counterbalance the Soviet Union. Since the [fall of the Berlin Wall](#) in 1989, it has extended membership to numerous former Soviet states. Because of this, Russia continues to see the expansion of NATO as a threat to its national interest.

**“Strengthen its relationship with Ukraine”** is an interesting phrase, because it leaves open so many possibilities. First, let’s establish the current state of the relationship, so we may determine what possible methods might “strengthen” it.

The 1994 [Partnership for Peace Framework Document](#) affirmed mutual interests and established an informal pact of cooperation between NATO and 22 states throughout Eastern Europe, including Ukraine. However, Ukraine is not a member of NATO. In 2008, the nation signed the documents requesting membership, but they were stalled by European opposition. In 2010, after becoming president, Yanukovich rescinded Ukraine’s request to join NATO in order to strengthen ties with Russia.

As you can see, the existing relationship between Ukraine and NATO is tenuous. That means there are a number of possible routes to “strengthening” it. Some of the most talked-about options are:

- Offer NATO membership to Ukraine.
- Provide Ukraine with a [security guarantee](#) (a promise to defend them in the event of any further aggression).
- Provide Ukraine with troops/air support/other physical military support.
- Supply Ukrainian forces with weapons and/or non-lethal military assistance (such as body armor).
- Provide Ukraine with financial assistance, such as grants or loans.
- Assist Ukraine with intelligence, military training, or other non-physical support.



Of course, this is PF, so pro teams don't have to advocate a plan. However, it is reasonable for them to argue that they are not required to defend every conceivable method for strengthening relations, because that would be an impossible burden. So, you should not plan to pin your entire strategy on indicting the solvency of one particular method, unless the pro team has already clearly established their commitment to defending that method. For example, if you say "Ukraine joining NATO causes Russian backlash," they could say "we don't defend that Ukraine should join NATO, just that they should provide military assistance," and so on. For this reason, it may be valuable for you to dedicate some cross-x time to trying to pin them down to which forms of NATO support they will defend, and which they won't. This will allow you to more specifically tailor your offense to respond to their case.

If the pro team attempts to undercut your offense by defending only very modest increases in NATO involvement, you can also potentially use the phrase "strengthen its relationship" to argue that the pro is not defending any meaningful strengthening. However, do not expect to win the debate on this argument alone; it should only be one small piece of your strategy.

The resolitional phrase "**in order to deter**" is more complex than you might initially think. To break it down: "in order to" means ["as a means to"](#) or ["with the purpose of"](#) and "deter" means ["discourage."](#) Notice the difference in meaning between "with the purpose of discouraging" and "preventing." According to this interpretation, the pro is not necessarily required to win that any relationship-strengthening that occurs will actually *succeed* in preventing further Russian aggression. In order to meet their burden, pros only need to win that the relationship-strengthening "should" occur-- for whatever reason. The resolution does not say "NATO should prevent Russian aggression by strengthening its relationship with Ukraine," it says "in order to deter," meaning deterrence only needs to be the *intent*, not the ultimate *effect*. In most debates, this won't matter, because the pro will choose



to attempt to win the debate by winning that Russian aggression is bad and NATO prevents it. However, it is important for you to recognize that this is not strictly required by the resolution. For example, the pro could technically concede a con argument that NATO cannot ultimately stop continued Russian aggression, but win that stronger NATO-Ukraine ties would still be net beneficial for other reasons (say, strengthening the credibility of international law). As the con, this means it is crucial that you diversify your strategic options beyond reasons why NATO cannot contain Russia.

As the con, you can also challenge this interpretation of the topic by claiming that “in order to deter” means the primary purpose of the relationship-building must be deterring Russia, so impacts stemming from other concerns (such as the credibility of international law or non-proliferation deals) are untopical and irrelevant. If the justification for strengthening the Ukraine-NATO relationship is anything other than deterring Russia, according to this argument, the pro has not met their burden to prove that NATO should strengthen its relationship with Ukraine *IN ORDER TO DETER FURTHER RUSSIAN AGGRESSION*. This can help you take out some key pro impacts. However, not all judges will buy this argument, and will still consider extra-topical benefits in their decision calculus.

Which of these two interpretations of “in order to deter” will be perceived as correct depends entirely on how tight your resolutional analysis game is. Of course, it may not matter at all for plenty of cases. Make sure that, as you build your cases, you are thinking critically about what interpretations of the resolution are most likely to lead the judge to evaluate the debate in a way that is favorable to you.

“**Further Russian aggression**” is yet another phrase that is more complicated than it might appear. “Further” implies that some degree of “Russian aggression” has already taken place. However,



“aggression” has a very precise, specific meaning in international law. You can see the lengthy legal definition of “aggression” used by the United Nations [here](#).

As the con, you may choose to employ a somewhat tricky strategy claiming that the resolution is false because Russia has not yet committed any acts that qualify as “aggression.” Therefore, NATO cannot deter “FURTHER Russian aggression.” This argument would borrow from Putin’s narrative that separatist forces in Ukraine are acting on their own, without orders from Moscow, and that the annexation referendum was legal and democratic. You can then claim that, if you win this argument, it proves that the resolution is an untrue statement, which is a reason to vote negative. This argument also pairs nicely with indicts like “NATO is imperialist,” as well as encroachment/Russia backlash scenarios (more on this later).

Another important general note, which hopefully goes without saying, is that any evidence you cite in your cases needs to be really, *really* recent. Cards speaking to the situation on the ground in Ukraine need to be from 2014. Anything older will be too outdated to be relevant. It is ok, however, to use older cards for more general, theoretical questions (for example, we provide a card below that is from 2010 and provides historical examples of the failure of deterrence to prevent conflict), but newer is usually better.

Now, let’s consider some arguments the con might want to build their cases around.

One obvious argument you can make is **no further Russian aggression is coming**. If Russia is not going to attempt to grab any further territory, then many common pro impacts (such as those about the need to





check Russian global power/prevent expansionism/etc) are neutralized. Similarly, you may want to argue that if you win that there is no “further Russian aggression,” then the pro cannot win that NATO must strengthen its relationship with Ukraine *to prevent further Russian aggression*, and therefore the resolution is invalid and the judge must vote for the con.

Here is **evidence** that Russia will not invade the rest of Ukraine, because it would be too difficult and not within their interests:

*(Claude Salhanl, political analyst based in Beirut, specializing in the Middle East, politicized Islam and terrorism & former editor of the Middle East Times, The Blaze, “How Russia Can Hit NATO’s Soft Underbelly,” <http://www.theblaze.com/contributions/how-russia-can-hit-natos-soft-underbelly-2/>, April 3 2014)*

There are numerous reasons why Putin does not need to send his forces into Ukraine. Putin is well aware that while Ukraine counts many Russian supporters, there are equally, if not more supporters of a free Ukraine, and unlike in Crimea where Moscow could count on the support of the ethnic Russian population, in invading Ukraine, Russian troops would have to engage in real battles with Ukrainians who would oppose Russian domination.

Additionally, unlike the Crimean peninsula, Ukraine does not have natural delimitations – natural frontiers – making a military campaign somewhat dangerous as there are no “guard rails,” or as Eyal puts it, “there are no obvious limits to this territory.” In case the campaign does not unfold as planned, it leaves no obvious exit strategy for Moscow. Also Eastern Ukraine is a much larger territory and would require a substantial military force to effectively occupy it.



Here is **evidence** stating that the Baltic states are not at risk:

*(Wulf Wilde, Deutsche Welle (Germany's international broadcaster), "Blueprint for Russian expansionism," <http://www.dw.de/blueprint-for-russian-expansionism/a-17487876>, March 11 2014)*

The situation in the Baltic states differs, however, from that in Crimea.

"The Russian speaking population [in Latvia] clearly says, 'We're Russian.' But they also say, 'We want to stay in Latvia, we don't want to go back to Russia!'" said Beckmann-Dierkes. More than anything, they don't want give up the advantages Latvia offers them as an EU member, he says.

For Sabine Fischer at the German Institute for International and Security Affairs, a Crimea-like development in the Baltic states is unlikely.

"The Baltic states have been NATO members since 1999 and EU members since 2004," the political scientist told DW. "Here, there are facts which have been established which make it too dangerous for Russia to escalate the situation in the Baltic states.

Perhaps the con's strongest argument on this topic is the risk of **Russian backlash**. The idea is that Russia sees Ukraine as intimately tied up in its national identity, history, and security interests. Moreover, as we have already discussed, Russia always sees NATO advances as a security risk, because of the organization's historical purpose. So, increased NATO involvement in Ukraine will be perceived as a dangerous encroachment that requires a strong response. If NATO stays out, however, Russia is unlikely to make further aggressive moves. NATO action thus creates the heated conflict it is attempting to prevent.



If you want to make this argument, it is helpful to know a couple of things. First, after the breakup of the Soviet Union, President George H.W. Bush made a deal with Soviet President [Mikhail Gorbachev](#) that, if the Soviets dissolved the [Warsaw Pact](#), NATO would not expand any further. This promise was swiftly broken, and NATO absorbed numerous Warsaw Pact nations. Russia sees this as evidence that the West is still attempting to surround and contain Russia in continuation of Cold War power politics. Second, the Russia-Ukraine border is vast, and Russia sees Ukraine as a key geographic “buffer zone” between itself and Western Europe. For this reason, keeping Ukraine out of NATO’s grasp is seen as critical to Moscow’s security. When you consider both of these factors together, you can begin to understand why Russia would react so negatively to a strengthening of the NATO-Ukraine relationship.

The good thing about this argument for the con is that you are probably on the correct side of the question. In general, the evidence supporting the notion of a Russian backlash is strong. Several Russian officials have publically stated that Moscow views NATO encroachment on Ukraine as unacceptable and necessitating a response. Moreover, history supports this argument: experts say the cause of the [2008 Russo-Georgian war](#) was a push for Georgia to receive NATO membership.

The strongest way to construct the backlash argument is to combine it with claims that Russia is not planning further acts of aggression in the status quo (which we discussed earlier). But, NATO action threatens Russia and causes them to lash out. Therefore, you can claim that NATO intervention would be the cause of further conflicts, rather than the solution. The evidence supplied below supports this analysis.



Here is **evidence** saying Russia sees NATO encroachment into Ukraine as an existential risk- history proves they will respond with aggression:

*(Jeffrey Sommers, associate professor at the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee, senior fellow at UWM Institute of World Affairs, and visiting faculty at the Stockholm School of Economics, New York Times, “Understanding Russia and History,” <http://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2014/02/25/how-the-west-can-shape-ukraine/us-engagement-in-ukraine-requires-understanding-russian-history>, February 25 2014)*

For Russia, the main terrain on which World War II was fought was Ukraine. The best way for the United States to constructively engage both Ukraine and Russia is through acknowledging this history. This should have been done when the U.S.S.R. collapsed, but it wasn't.

President George H.W. Bush promised Mikhail Gorbachev that if the Soviets let the Warsaw Pact go, Russia would not have to worry about NATO expansion. The U.S. responded to this deal by immediately taking the former Warsaw Pact states into NATO and then moving into former Soviet territory in the Baltics. Nobody could blame new entrants for wanting NATO entry, given their past of Soviet occupation. But, neither could anyone blame Russians for feeling betrayed by the U.S. breaking its word.

Russia sees the U.S. State Department as pursuing the "great game," wishing to break up Russia and its "near abroad" and remaking it as a "neoliberal periphery." For Russia, the game has an existential character. Russians saw NATO's moves toward Georgia as cutting too close to the bone, and they responded. The prospects of NATO assimilating Ukraine represents taking Russia's "heart": the very ancestral home where Russia was founded and on which it repelled the fascist invasion in the Great Patriotic War.

Thus, the United States and the European Union must make clear NATO's expansion is done. Do this, and perhaps the U.S., the E.U. and Russia can cooperate in Ukraine.



More **evidence** that NATO presence in Ukraine causes Russian pushback and increases violence:

*(Stephen Walt, professor of international affairs at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government, interview with Mark Colvin, ABC (Australian Broadcast Corp) News, "Obama 'weak' on Syria and Ukraine?," <http://www.abc.net.au/pm/content/2014/s3991659.htm>, April 24 2014)*

And the crisis in Ukraine has many origins, but one of them is the fact that NATO has been expanding eastward ever since 1992, and the United States has been doing things like putting missile defences in Eastern Europe while pretending that they were really about Iran.

And after the decision, back in 2008, to maybe move a little bit closer to Ukraine, and also Georgia, we got the Russo-Georgian war, which was Russia's way of saying that they were going to draw a line. That we were not going to move NATO any further to the east, in particular to Ukraine, which is, from a Russian point of view, a vital security interest.

So, the key to understanding what's happened in Ukraine now is that this is actually much more important to Russia than it is to us. What the United States and the West should be doing is trying to damp this conflict down and reaffirm Ukrainian neutrality, not trying to bring NATO into the West, or rather, bring Ukraine into a Western embrace, because that's, I think, going to increase the likelihood of a civil war there.



Here is **evidence** directly making the claim that Russia will not pursue further expansion unless NATO moves closer to Ukraine:

*(Sergei Karpukhin, Reuters, RT Network, "Dragging Ukraine into NATO negative for European security – Lavrov," <http://rt.com/news/158908-lavrov-russia-ukraine-nato/>, May 14 2014)*

The seeds of the ongoing turmoil in Ukraine were sown back in April 2008, when NATO suggested that Ukraine and Georgia should move closer to the alliance, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said.

"The seeds for the current crisis were sown in 2008 in April during the NATO summit in Bucharest, when NATO leaders stated in a declaration that Georgia and Ukraine would be in NATO," the senior Russian diplomat told Bloomberg in an interview.

He said that the Georgian president at the time, Mikhail Saakashvili, thought the statement gave him a license to resolve the problem of Georgia's breakaway region, South Ossetia, by force and he launched an invasion.

"He was certainly motivated by this NATO promise," Lavrov stressed.

Georgia or Ukraine becoming part of NATO would be a critical threat to Russia's national security, Lavrov explained, and something that Russia would simply not accept.

"The attempts to draw Ukraine into NATO would be negative for the entire system of European security and we would be categorically against it," he said.

While Russia would not object to Ukraine joining the EU, provided that Ukrainians comprehend and accept fully the economic repercussions this would bring, changing Ukraine's neutral military status is out of the question for Moscow.

This is especially true considering NATO's record of breaking its promises not to advance its military assets towards Russian borders, Lavrov said.



Russia sees that Washington is playing a large part in the Ukrainian conflict and is concerned with reports that the US impact of the events may be quite sinister.

There are reports of US private military companies operating in Ukraine and even of a senior member of the radical nationalist Right Sector movement visiting America for consultations with US State Department's top diplomat for Europe, Victoria Nuland. Lavrov said Moscow asked for official comments of such serious allegations from Washington, but none came so far.

Overall, the US is apparently content with its global position, the minister suggested.

"The real aim of the United States is not to let Europeans to go on their own, not to let NATO lose the purpose of its existence and to keep Europe on a short leash," Lavrov said.

Ukraine 'as close to civil war as it can get'

Russia sees the ongoing Ukrainian turmoil in gloom colors.

"Ukrainians are killing Ukrainians. I believe it is as close to a civil war as it can get," Lavrov explained, referring to Kiev's military operation being conducted in the Donetsk Region.

The violence and Kiev's refusal to stop it are against the Geneva agreement, which Ukraine signed together with Russia, the EU and US. It casts doubt over the legitimacy of the presidential election scheduled for May 25, the Russian minister believes.

"In the east of Ukraine there is a real war with heavy weapons shot. If this is something conducive to free and fair elections, then I don't understand something in freedom and fairness," he commented.

The use of force by Kiev or pro-Kiev militias against Ukrainians defying its rule is what Russia was concerned with in the first place. Fears of such violence prompted President Vladimir Putin to ask the Russian parliament for a mandate to use Russian troops to prevent possible bloodshed.

Russian troops assisted the Crimean self-defense force, when residents of the peninsula rebelled against Kiev and took up arms to defend themselves, Lavrov said. But Moscow hopes a similar move will not be necessary to protect other Ukrainian regions opposing the post-coup government.

"We don't have any intention to send any troops anywhere," the minister stressed.

Iran-style sanctions against Russia could damage US

Lavrov said that unilateral Western sanctions, if Washington and its allies chose to act against Russia the way they did with Iran, would hurt the Russian economy to a degree, but it would also hurt the West as well. And not only Europe, which has strong trade ties with Russia, but possibly the US as well.





"If the West for the sake of revenge is ready to sacrifice its reputation as a reliable partner for the entire world economy and for the entire world financial system, if the United States is prepared to sacrifice its reputation as the holder of the key reserve currency, then it's up to them to decide," he said.

This path would lead to other nations seeking ways to limit America's leverage on them, Lavrov believes.

*"If the next morning somebody in Washington woke up in a bad mood and decided to start a coup elsewhere – not in Ukraine, but in Latin America, in their own backyard as they perceive it – those people must be prepared for this situation," he said.*

The above evidence also contains the warrant that Western intervention would upset the global economy and erode confidence in American leadership. These arguments may also be useful to you.

More **evidence** that Russia will cooperate and not act aggressively, unless they are provoked by NATO:

*(Fyodor Lukyanov, editor in chief of the Russia in Global Affairs journal, New York Times, "Don't Antagonize Russia," <http://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2014/02/25/how-the-west-can-shape-ukraine/in-dealing-with-ukraine-dont-mess-with-russia>, February 25 2014)*

Ukraine is a divided country. Part of the country favors the European Union and NATO, but a big part of the population sides with Russia. Ukraine is deeply dependent on the Russian market, and any move from Moscow to limit access to it will be disastrous for the Ukrainian economy.

Widespread views in the West that Russian President Vladimir Putin is looking for any excuse to intervene in Ukraine are wrong. Putin had a very bad experience with Ukraine 10 years ago, when he tried to help Viktor Yanukovich win elections. Indeed, Putin knows that in Ukraine nothing happens as planned, something the E.U. has also learned.

Moscow is being cautious, Russian leadership will wait to see what happens next, and assumes that the rebels will encounter troubles ahead and eventually need Russian assistance. Any attempt to introduce an anti-Russian agenda, including denouncing the Black Sea Fleet agreement, renewing a bid for NATO membership and imposing





Ukrainian nationalism on the whole country, will lead Russia to engage in a trade embargo and remind everyone that Ukraine is a fragile state. If not provoked, Russia most likely work with the West on resolving the crisis together, or at least not escalating the situation.

Without Russia, Ukraine's problems are unresolvable, and ignoring Russian interest will be a disaster. Either Russia, the United States and the E.U. will realize the importance of working together in Ukraine, or a full-scale cold war will break out in Europe again, beginning with a divided Ukraine.

Here is **evidence** from a Russian political scientist describing Russia's take on the current situation. The intensity of the rhetoric in this card should help to illustrate just how seriously Russia would take NATO intervention on this matter (they see it as an attempt to literally destroy their government):

*(Sergei Markov, director of the Institute of Political Studies, The Moscow Times, "Russia Must Stop U.S. Expansion in Ukraine," <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/opinion/article/russia-must-stop-us-expansion-in-ukraine/496137.html>, March 19 2014)*

This conflict has the potential of sparking a new Cold War — something I never thought could happen in modern times since I believed it would have to be rooted in ideological differences. Instead, Moscow and Washington have billions of dollars of economic interests at stake, making this a geopolitical rather than an ideological Cold War.

Moscow does not see the revolution in Ukraine as an attempt to create a more democratic or law-based society. Instead, it sees the events in Kiev as an attempt to make Ukraine as anti-Russian as possible. The new government represents a minority of the Ukrainian population. It wants to suppress the Russian-speaking majority and violate their right to representation by holding unfair elections on May 25.

Moreover, U.S. President Barack Obama and German Chancellor Angela Merkel deceived President Vladimir Putin when they persuaded him to convince Yanukovich to refrain from using force to quell the Maidan, and then to sign the Feb. 21 agreement — which they refused to uphold. Instead, they



told Russia to accept the new reality in Ukraine. But why should Moscow accept that reality when it is directed against Russia, democracy and human rights?

What did Russia do to become the focus of so much animosity? Is it because it prevented the West from bombing Syria? Because it persuaded Yanukovich not to sign the Association Agreement — a treaty of little real importance to the EU? Those are trivial reasons for starting a new Cold War.

It seems that the West simply does not like Putin. He is a huge obstacle who prevents them from achieving global hegemony. For this reason alone he must be broken. Nobody in Moscow has any doubt that what happened in Ukraine will be repeated in Moscow in two or three years. Without Putin, there will be few world leaders left who have the power or courage to stand up to Washington. When this happens, the entire world will have to quickly accept the new reality.

Russia is not in Crimea to expand its territory but to oppose the immense power of West and its financial institutions in New York and London. Washington wants to characterize this as a conflict between Moscow and Kiev, thereby forcing Russia to negotiate with an illegitimate regime determined to destroy everything Russian in Ukraine.

However, everyone understands that this is a conflict between Moscow and Washington and that these countries should negotiate a solution. The question here is not Crimea but which reality the two sides are prepared to accept.

Should Moscow allow Washington to force it into humiliating submission and accept the possibility of a violent overthrow of the Putin regime? Or should Washington acknowledge that it can no longer impose its will on others? Both sides are unwilling to admit their weakness, thus making a geopolitical Cold War likely.

The West will hit Russia with economic sanctions to pressure Russian oligarchs into forming a fifth column, just as it did in Ukraine. To avoid this, Moscow will have to force oligarchs to bring their overseas assets back to Russia.

If Washington wins this geopolitical Cold War, it will install a pro-Western government in Moscow which could lead to the breakup of Russia. Siberia, the Caucasus and the Far East will demand



autonomy, and the country's oil and gas resources will be transferred from the government to multinational corporations.

However, it is possible that Russia can resist, thereby fulfilling its historical mission of foiling the designs of those who long for world domination. Just as Russia stopped Hitler in the 20th century, Napoleon in the 19th century and Frederick the Great in the 18th century, it will stop Washington in the 21st century. This is nothing personal, just business. Russia has its historical mission to fulfill.

Finally, here is **evidence** that says Western intrusion into Russia's sphere of influence risks a great power war (be aware—this evidence is speaking generally, not about the current situation in Ukraine):

*(Ivan Eland, Senior Fellow & Director of the Center on Peace & Liberty at The Independent Institute, Ph.D. in Public Policy from George Washington University, former Director of Defense Policy Studies at the Cato Institute, investigator for the House Foreign Affairs Committee, and Principal Defense Analyst at the Congressional Budget Office, "Is a "Resurgent" Russia a Threat to the United States?", <http://www.independent.org/newsroom/article.asp?id=2363>, November 3 2008)*

The Russian military was clearly superior to that of a small country in its "near abroad"—Georgia—but is a "resurgent" Russia a threat to the United States? If the United States insists on expanding its informal empire into Russia's nearby sphere of influence, it has to expect some pushback from a Russia that is no longer as weak as it once was and is resentful at having been trampled on during the 1990s and early 2000s. At the end of the Cold War, the United States pledged verbally to Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev that if the U.S.S.R. allowed Germany to reunite and embed in NATO, the U.S. would not expand the alliance, which the bear perceives as hostile. The United States, however, violated this promise and repeatedly expanded NATO—inducting former Soviet Warsaw Pact allies in Eastern Europe and even former Soviet republics (the Baltic states). (Incredibly, even after the U.S. and NATO were proved impotent in helping Georgia during its recent war with Russia, the Bush administration is still pressuring its reluctant European allies to admit Georgia and the Ukraine, an even more important former Soviet republic on Russia's border). Further showing that the U.S. foreign policy elite never ended the Cold War have been repeated acts by both



Democratic and Republican presidents to thumb their nose at a weakened Russia—for example, winning U.S. access to military bases in former Soviet Central Asia, rerouting energy pipelines from the oil-rich Caspian Sea around Russian territory, and planning to build missile defense installations in the territories of former Soviet allies Poland and the Czech Republic. But the bear is now coming out of a long hibernation a bit rejuvenated. Using increased petroleum revenues from the oil price spike, the Russians will hike defense spending 26 percent next year to about \$50 billion—the highest level since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Yet as the oil price declines from this historic high, Russia will have fewer revenues to increase defense spending and rebuild its military. Even the \$50 billion a year has to be put in perspective. The United States is spending about \$700 billion per year on defense and starting from a much higher plain of capability. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Russian military fell apart and was equivalent to that of a developing country. Even the traditionally hawkish U.S. military and defense leaders and analysts are not worried about Russia’s plans to buy modern arms, improve military living standards to attract better senior enlisted personnel, enhance training, and cut back the size of the bloated forces and officer corps. For example, Eugene B. Rumer of the U.S. National Defense University was quoted in the *Washington Post* as saying that Russian actions are “not a sign, really, of the Russian military being reborn, but more of a Russia being able to flex what relatively little muscle it has on the global scale, and to show that it actually matters.”[1] In addition, the Russian military is very corrupt—with an estimated 40 percent of the money for some weapons and pay for personnel being stolen or wasted. This makes the amount of real defense spending far below the nominal \$50 billion per year. U.S. analysts say, however, that increased military spending would allow Russia to have more influence over nations in its near abroad and Eastern Europe. Of course, throughout history, small countries living in the shadow of larger powers have had to make political, diplomatic, and economic adjustments to suit the larger power. Increased Russian influence in this sphere, however, should not necessarily threaten the security of the faraway United States. It does only because the United States has defined its security as requiring intrusions into Russia’s traditional sphere of influence. By expanding NATO into Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, the United States has guaranteed the security of these allied countries against a nuclear-armed power, in the worst case, by sacrificing its cities in a nuclear war. Providing this kind of guarantee for these non-strategic countries is not in the U.S. vital interest. Denying Russia the sphere of influence in nearby areas traditionally enjoyed by great powers (for example, the U.S. uses the Monroe Doctrine to police the Western Hemisphere) will only lead to unnecessary U.S.-Russian tension and possibly even cataclysmic war.

Another good strategy for the con is **indicting [deterrence theory](#)**. Since this resolution is intended to “deter” Russian aggression, if you can invalidate the concept of deterrence, you will be in good shape.

Deterrence, as I’m sure you know, is the idea that nations can be persuaded to act (or not act) in particular ways by imposing consequences for disfavored behavior. In this case, NATO is attempting to “raise the stakes” for Russia in order to make the costs of aggression appear to outweigh the benefits,



thus preventing aggressive action. However, as we have already discussed, Russia is likely to see this as more akin to an outright attack than simple deterrence. Moreover, though, there are lots of authors who write cards arguing that deterrence in general almost never works.

Here is **evidence** that, throughout history, deterrence efforts cause or accelerate war more often than they prevent it (this card also specifically criticizes the concept of security guarantees, which is something some pros may choose to defend):

*(Stanley Kober, research fellow in foreign policy studies at the Cato Institute, Cato Institute, "The Deterrence Illusion," <http://www.cato.org/publications/commentary/deterrence-illusion>, June 13 2010)*

The first world war was the product of a mode of rational thinking that went badly off course.

The peace of Europe was based on security assurances. Germany was the protector of Austria-Hungary, and Russia was the protector of Serbia.

The prospect of escalation was supposed to prevent war, and it did — until, finally, it didn't. The Russians, who should have been deterred — they had suffered a terrible defeat at the hands of Japan just a few years before — decided they had to come to the support of their fellow Slavs.

As countries honoured their commitments, a system that was designed to prevent war instead widened it.

We have also been living in an age of globalisation, especially since the end of the cold war, but it too is increasingly being challenged.

And just like the situation at the beginning of the last century, deterrence is not working. Much is made, for example, of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) invoking Article V — the famous "three musketeers" pledge that an attack on one member is to be considered as an attack on all — following the terrorist attacks of September 11.

But the United States is the most powerful member of NATO by far. Indeed, in 2001, it was widely considered to be a hegemon, a hyperpower. Other countries wanted to be in NATO because they felt an American guarantee would provide security.

And yet it was the US that was attacked.



This failure of deterrence has not received the attention it deserves. It is, after all, not unique. The North Vietnamese were not deterred by the American guarantee to South Vietnam. Similarly, Hezbollah was not deterred in Lebanon in the 1980s, and American forces were assaulted in Somalia. What has been going wrong?

The successful deterrence of the superpowers during the cold war led to the belief that if such powerful countries could be deterred, then lesser powers should fall into line when confronted with an overwhelmingly powerful adversary.

It is plausible, but it may be too rational. For all their ideological differences, the US and the Soviet Union observed red lines during the cold war. There were crises — Berlin, Cuba, to name a couple — but these did not touch on emotional issues or vital interests, so that compromise and retreat were possible.

Indeed, what we may have missed in the west is the importance of retreat in Soviet ideology. “Victory is impossible unless [the revolutionary parties] have learned both how to attack and how to retreat properly,” Lenin wrote in *Left-Wing Communism: An Infantile Disorder*. When the Soviets retreated, the US took the credit. Deterrence worked. But what if retreat was part of the plan all along?

What if, in other words, the Soviet Union was the exception rather than the rule?

That question is more urgent because, in the post-cold war world, the US has expanded its security guarantees, even as its enemies show they are not impressed.

The Iraqi insurgents were not intimidated by President Bush’s challenge to “bring ‘em on”. The Taliban have made an extraordinary comeback from oblivion and show no respect for American power. North Korea is demonstrating increasing belligerence.

And yet the US keeps emphasising security through alliances. “We believe that there are certain commitments, as we saw in a bipartisan basis to NATO, that need to be embedded in the DNA of American foreign policy.” secretary of state Hillary Clinton affirmed in introducing the new National Security Strategy.

But that was the reason the US was in Vietnam. It had a bipartisan commitment to South Vietnam under the Southeast Asia Treaty Organisation, reaffirmed through the Tonkin Gulf Resolution, which passed Congress with only two dissenting votes. It didn’t work, and found its commitments were not embedded in its DNA. Americans turned against the war, Secretary Clinton among them.



The great powers could not guarantee peace in Europe a century ago, and the US could not guarantee it in Asia a half-century ago.

Before the US makes further guarantees, it needs to understand the reasons for these failures, lest new promises lead to tragedy both for the US and those who would put their trust in it.

If you like this argument, you should be able to easily find vast amounts of academic literature criticizing deterrence theory. You may want to continue your research and cut further cards on this question.

Another good argument is **NATO involvement is against American interests**. The United States has no legitimate interests in the Ukraine, the current situation does not directly affect Americans, and the West is unlikely to suffer any real harm as a result of a decision to stay out of the conflict. On the other hand, becoming enmeshed in the Ukraine conflict is likely to be expensive and time-consuming, and the majority of the funding burden falls on the (already heavily indebted) United States. Involvement may also create new security threats and draw the United States/NATO into even more difficult situations.

Here is **evidence** claiming that NATO involvement will be expensive and make the United States less secure:

*(Doug Bandow, senior fellow at the Cato Institute specializing in foreign policy & civil liberties and former special assistant to President Reagan and editor of Inquiry (political magazine), Cato Institute, "Washington Should Not Risk War over Ukraine," <http://www.cato.org/blog/washington-should-not-risk-war-over-ukraine-instead-shift-defense-responsibility-europe>, April 8 2014)*

Russia's brazen annexation of Crimea has generated a flood of proposals to reinvigorate NATO. Doing so would make America less secure.





For most of its history, the United States avoided what George Washington termed “entangling alliances.” In World War II and the Cold War, the United States aided friendly states to prevent hostile powers from dominating Eurasia.

The collapse of communism eliminated the prospect of any nation controlling Europe and Asia. But NATO developed new roles to stay in business, expanding into a region highly sensitive to Russia.

The invasion of Crimea has triggered a cascade of demands for NATO, mostly meaning America, to act. President Barack Obama responded: “Today NATO planes patrol the skies over the Baltics, and we’ve reinforced our presence in Poland, and we’re prepared to do more.”

The Eastern Europeans desired much more. An unnamed former Latvian minister told the *Economist*: “We would like to see a few American squadrons here, boots on the round, maybe even an aircraft carrier.” A gaggle of American policy advocates agreed.

Moreover, Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen said alliance members would “intensify our military cooperation with Ukraine,” including assisting in modernizing its military. A number of analysts would make Ukraine an ally in everything but name.

For instance, wrote Kurt Volker of the McCain Institute, NATO should “[d]etermine that any further assaults on Ukraine’s territorial integrity beyond Crimea represent a direct threat to NATO security and ... will be met with a NATO response.” Charles Krauthammer suggested creating “a thin tripwire of NATO trainer/advisers” to “establish a ring of protection at least around the core of western Ukraine.”

AEI’s Thomas Donnelly proposed “putting one brigade astride each of the two main roads” connecting Crimea to the Ukrainian mainland, “backed by U.S. aircraft.” Robert Spalding of the Council on Foreign Relations advocated deploying F-22 fighters along “with an American promise to defend Ukrainian skies from attack.”

Senators John McCain and Lindsey Graham urged increasing “cooperation with, and support for, Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova, and other non-NATO partners.” John Bolton suggested putting “both Georgia and Ukraine on a clear path to NATO membership.”

Of course, more must be spent on the military. Ilan Berman of the American Foreign Policy Council complained that “The past half-decade has seen the U.S. defense budget fall victim to the budgetary axe.”

Yet America’s military spending is up 37 percent over the last two decades, while collective expenditures by NATO’s other 27 members are down by 3.4 percent. Overall, the Europeans spend 1.6 percent of GDP on the military, compared to America’s 4.4 percent. Today most NATO members, including the Eastern Europeans—with the exception of Poland—continue to cut outlays.

Of course, U.S. officials insist that Europe should do more. But the Europeans have no reason to change so long as Washington guarantees their security.

Despite Europe’s anemic military efforts, it still far outranges Russia. And with a collective GDP more than eight times that of Russia, the Europeans could do far more if they desired.





The basic problem, noted Stephen Walt, is that “president after president simply assumed the pledges they were making would never have to be honored.” Obviously, an American threat to go to war may deter. But history is replete with alliances that failed to prevent conflict and became transmission belts of war instead.

In fact, in 2008 Georgia appeared to believe that Washington would back it against Russia. Offering military support to Ukraine could have a similar effect.

Washington should bar further NATO expansion. Over the longer term the United States should turn responsibility for Europe’s defense back to Europe.

As I point out in my latest *Forbes* column: “Americans should sympathize with the Ukrainian people, who have been ill-served by their own government as well as victimized by Moscow. But that does not warrant extending military support or security guarantees to Kiev. Doing so would defeat the original purpose of the alliance: enhancing U.S. security.”

Today Washington could best protect itself outside of the transatlantic alliance.

This card also hints at another subject some cons may want to address: the risk of **NATO overstretch**. How many conflicts can NATO involve itself in before it suffers a paralyzing resource crunch? There is a finite amount of time and energy that NATO can spend on its various efforts. An overstretch argument could suggest that there are more important situations (or potential situations) demanding attention, and devoting resources to Ukraine trades off. If you want to develop this point, you will want to do some research on current NATO funding and personnel levels, as well as other circumstances that may demand a NATO response.



Back to deterrence. Here is further **evidence** claiming that deterrence fails, because Putin will call NATO's bluff, and we will be trapped into an escalating great power war with no relevance to our national interests:

*(Steve Chapman, columnist, Reason, "Boots on the Ground in Ukraine?,"  
<http://reason.com/archives/2014/04/03/boots-on-the-ground-in-ukraine>, April 3 2014)*

The United States government has a dangerous penchant for military intervention, so after Vladimir Putin invaded Crimea, it was a relief that no one talked about sending troops deploying bombers. Sen. John McCain scotched any such notion by acknowledging glumly that "there is not a military option."

Silly him. For the most bellicose hawks, there is *always* a military option. After a brief lull

, some of the people who beat the drums for war in Iraq—and have done likewise for Iran—now propose that we put American lives at risk on behalf of Ukraine.

This comes as a bit of a surprise because we have never made a commitment to fight for Ukraine. We have made such commitments to the 27 other countries that belong to NATO. The alliance charter obligates every member to treat an attack on one as an attack on all.

But Ukraine has not been included in the club, and judging from polls, Ukrainians actually didn't want to be included. To some commentators, it doesn't matter: We should use our military might to protect Ukraine anyway.

Leslie Gelb, president emeritus of the Council on Foreign Relations and a veteran of Jimmy Carter's administration, urges President Barack Obama to send F-22 fighters to Poland and make it clear he will use them if Putin advances farther into Ukraine.

Thomas Donnelly, a defense analyst at the conservative American Enterprise Institute, views the failure of American politicians to endorse "boots on the ground" in Ukraine as "a crippling weakness." Writing in *The Weekly Standard*, he says, "Preserving the peace on the Eurasian landmass demands land forces."

Fox News' Charles Krauthammer, who exhibited calm indifference to the Russian invasion of Georgia under President George W. Bush, now wants NATO to dispatch military trainers and advisers. He favors a "tripwire" strategy that would "establish a ring of protection at least around the core of western Ukraine."

This notion brings to mind the response when a French defense official was asked the smallest British force that would be of use to France in case of war with Germany. The answer: "One single private soldier—and we would take good care that he was killed."



What these proposals have in common is that they would interpose our soldiers as hostages, virtually forcing the U.S. to go to war should Putin advance. The assumption of the advocates is that by shackling ourselves to Ukraine, we will stop him in his tracks. The risks of fighting NATO, they argue, deterred the Soviet Union and would undoubtedly deter Putin.

But how can they be so sure? These critics accuse Obama of inviting aggression by failing to make good on his threats regarding Syria. Yet they somehow assume Putin would take this sort of gesture by the president as an unbreakable commitment.

What they omit is what happens if they are wrong. In that case, Americans would find ourselves fighting a war against Russia over a place that matters a great deal to Russia's security and none at all to ours. That, or Obama would have to slink away and admit he was bluffing, inviting doubts about every other U.S. defense commitment.

Contrary to myth, our 1994 deal getting Ukraine to surrender its nuclear weapons doesn't obligate us to use force to protect it. In case of trouble, the agreement promises nothing but consultations.

The idea that a few advisers or planes would check the Russians is based on hope, not history. During the Cold War, the U.S. deterred Moscow by drawing bright red lines and backing them up with massive forces and willing allies.

It also relied on our nuclear weapons in Europe. The ultimate guarantee against invasion was the possibility that we would turn Russia into a charred wasteland of radioactive debris. That threat is far less credible than it was then.

Committing ourselves to the defense of Ukraine is risky enough by itself. But it also means putting our fate in the hands of Ukrainian politicians who have longstanding grudges against Russia and may be emboldened by our presence. Once we put forces in Ukraine, we have no assurance our allies will act in our interest.

Sending NATO forces to Ukraine is like walking into a biker bar with an acquaintance who has a real grudge against bikers. Maybe things will go fine, and maybe not. If not, we'll wonder why we didn't stay out when we had the chance.



The above card also answers the pro's claim that NATO must act in order to ensure the survival of nuclear nonproliferation efforts. In the pro analysis, I pointed out that I believe nonproliferation is one of the pro's best options, so make sure you are ready to respond to it.

If you use all of the arguments we have discussed today together, you arrive at a pretty persuasive cohesive story: Russia will not act aggressively in the status quo, and no American interests are currently at stake. *BUT*, NATO involvement threatens and provokes them, sparking conflict that has the potential to become a great power war. These arguments should prepare you to respond to the majority of common pro claims.

In some rounds, you may also find it helpful to say that **there is no risk of great power war**. In general, I would stay away from making this argument, because usually you will be in a good position to turn war impacts using your Russian backlash evidence. Nevertheless, it can't hurt to have "no great power war" cards in case you need them.

Here is that **evidence**:

*(Bob Dreyfus, investigative journalist specializing in politics and national security, The Nation, "Capitalism Will Prevent a Cold War Over Ukraine,"*

*<http://www.thenation.com/blog/178761/capitalism-will-prevent-cold-war-over-ukraine#>, March 10 2014)*

Plain, old-fashioned capitalism will prevent a new cold war between the United States and Russia over Ukraine and Russia's gobbling up of the Crimean region. Capitalism, plus the fact that probably not one American in a thousand could locate Crimea on a map, and even the most



hard-headed US political analysts have trouble coming up with a decent definition of what US interests in Ukraine might be.

Helping to contain the crisis is the fact that Russia, Europe and to a lesser extent the United States are tied together in a powerful web of financial and economic ties that didn't exist, say, during the real Cold War. Their influence runs counter to the many, many cries from hawks to impose tough economic sanctions on Russia, as if the giant Eurasian power were a small "rogue state." *The Washington Post*, for instance, said in an editorial:

Some argue that the West lacks the means to damage the Putin regime or that the United States cannot act without Europe, but neither claim is true. Banking sanctions—denying Russians and their banks access to the U.S. financial system—could deal a powerful blow. Mr. Obama must respond to Mr. Putin with measures that force the Russian ruler to rethink his options.

But, as CNN reports:

Russia is the European Union's third-biggest trading partner after the United States and China, with goods and services worth more than \$500 billion exchanged in 2012. About 75% of all foreign direct investment in Russia originates in EU member states, according to the European Commission.

In addition, Russia is the single biggest supplier of energy to the European Union. British energy firm BP is the second-largest shareholder in Russia's leading oil producer Rosneft, and some of the biggest energy companies in Germany, the Netherlands and France are invested in a joint venture with Russian gas giant Gazprom.



You should now be ready to write a high-quality pro case. Don't forget to thank Debate Central when you win Nationals! ;)

Of course, it is important to remember that this topic is huge and likely to change in the weeks leading up to the tournament. This guide is only meant as an introduction to help you get started. If you want to do well, you absolutely should keep your eyes on the news, stay up-to-date, and get creative with your strategizing!

Don't forget that you can always email completed cases to **Rachel.Stevens@NCPA.org** for a free, confidential case critique.

Good luck!