



PROGRAMME
EUROPE,
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NATO

ON HYBRID WARFARE AND “HOW MANY ANGELS CAN DANCE ON THE HEAD OF A PIN” (1/2): Impossible Peace, Imminent War

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Legend has it that, while Sultan Mehmed II's troops were besieging Constantinople, Byzantine theologians became engrossed in a theological debate about 'how many angels can dance on the head of a pin' (translated from the French expression '*discuter du sexe des anges*'), neglecting the city's defence. Constantinople ultimately fell on 29 May 1453. Hence the expression 'to argue about how many angels can dance on the head of a pin': to become lost in futile discussion while an urgent situation grows worse.

The question of whether we Europeans are really at war with Russia is much the same. Denying it and continuing to talk of 'hybrid warfare', just as the Byzantines once debated how many angels can dance on the head of a pin, will do us no good.

The only question that really matters is: how do we prepare for it?

IMPOSSIBLE PEACE, IMMINENT WAR

The two belligerents are locked in a fight to the death that, for the time being, makes peace impossible. If Ukraine stops fighting, it ceases to exist as a State. If Vladimir Putin orders his troops to stop, he risks 'being hanged'¹. For both, it is a matter of survival.

Neither belligerent can stop fighting without ceasing to exist

It seems unlikely that Ukraine, having suffered an unprovoked invasion, the annexation of 20% of its territory, appalling civilian and military losses and the destruction of much of its economy, will agree to sign a peace treaty in the coming months. Only an armistice along the front line appears to be under consideration, on the model of the arrangement that has prevailed between North and South Korea since 1953. Without recognising the annexation of territories lost since 2014, Ukraine could retain the hope of recovering them one day, as France did with Alsace-Lorraine after forty-eight years under German rule. Any other form of surrender would spell the end of Ukraine as an independent, sovereign state. Without an acceptable armistice, Ukraine has no choice but to fight.

For Russia, the conditions for peace have not changed since February 2022. In Vladimir Putin's words, the aim is to eliminate the 'root causes of the war'. In plain language, that means Ukraine must recognise the annexation of the Donbas and Crimea in their entirety, abandon its ambition to join NATO, restrict its armed forces and change its government

¹ 'The Economist: Putin Fears Ending the War without Victory. "They Will Hang Me," He Reportedly Told His Inner Circle', Meduza, 31 August 2026, <https://meduza.io/en/feature/2026/08/31/the-economist-putin-fears-ending-the-war-without-victory-they-will-hang-me-he-reportedly-told-his-inner-circle>.

(‘denazification’). In other words, it must formally capitulate and lay down its arms, leaving itself vulnerable to another invasion. In theory, the Kremlin leader could agree to scale back his war aims. But having tied his fate to victory, he can no longer retreat without losing face, or perhaps his life. All the more so because he may still believe he can force Ukraine to yield. Having won the latest parliamentary elections in September 2026, he has just increased his army's authorised strength by another 15,500 posts and raised the defence budget by 27% compared with the allocation originally envisaged. This leaves little doubt as to his intentions to continue the war.

As winter 2026–27 approaches, the conflict therefore remains mired in a bloody stalemate in which neither side can impose its will on the other and both are suffering heavy losses.

Outside powers cannot, or will not, influence how the conflict ends

Despite his ‘no-limits friendship’ with Russia, Xi Jinping has never really put pressure on Moscow to end the war. There are claims that he restrained his ally's appetite for nuclear escalation, but these remain unproven. In any event, China has done nothing to bring Russia to the negotiating table, something it might perhaps have achieved by ceasing to buy Russian oil and gas. Nor has it provided open military support, apart from allowing North Korea to supply weapons and personnel and providing dual-use equipment, including drones and their engines. Displaying immense strategic patience, China has adopted a form of *benign neglect*² towards a conflict that weakens its ally as well as its rivals.

As for Trump, although he regularly speaks to his Russian counterpart and rolls out the red carpet for him, as he did in Anchorage in August 2025, he has no influence over him whatsoever. All the grotesque posturing of his pseudo-diplomats merely exposes his powerlessness in a conflict he had promised to end within 24 hours. Unable to persuade Putin, he has done everything in his power to force Zelensky's hand and make him accept the unacceptable. Beyond the humiliation he inflicted on him before a worldwide television audience in February 2025, in the Oval Office of the White House, he has halted all financial and military aid to Ukraine since taking office.

² The expression ‘benign neglect’ originated in the United States. Daniel Moynihan, an adviser to President Nixon, coined it in a 1970 memorandum to describe an approach to race relations. The expression subsequently became a general term for a policy of non-intervention in the hope that an issue would resolve itself.

Taking his pro-Russian stance even further, on 9 October³ he decided, in flagrant violation of US law⁴, to allow Russia to export diesel to the United States ‘and the world’. Given that the United States is a net exporter of diesel and that Russia is desperately short of it, it is difficult to understand the rationale behind this sudden decision. Perhaps it is merely a desperate attempt to win over the MAGA electorate ahead of the mid-November elections. Or is it an attempt to rescue Putin? One might indeed speculate that the aim is to avoid, at all costs, drawing the United States into an ‘escalatory spiral in Europe’⁵, while simultaneously seeking to prevent the collapse of the Russian regime and establish commercial ties with it. Whatever the case, the Russians continue to bombard Ukrainian infrastructure, and the Ukrainians continue to fight... Whatever Donald Trump's intentions, his actions have, so far, had little impact on resolving the conflict.

As for the Europeans, following Emmanuel Macron's futile attempts to ‘talk to Putin’ at the beginning of the war, they have exerted pressure on Russia through the harshest possible sanctions regime, which has recently been tightened further. Conversely, they have supported Ukraine as much as they could, both militarily and financially. As a result, with the complete cessation of American aid, Europe has become Ukraine's lifeline and its ultimate centre of gravity – the first being Ukrainian society itself. This is why the Europeans have become a target of the Russian leadership. Severing this vital artery has become a matter of paramount importance for Russia, just as Nazi Germany sought to sever the link between the United States and the United Kingdom.

³ In a post on his Truth Social platform, the US President announced an agreement with his Russian counterpart concerning diesel, involving the lifting of US sanctions. Under this agreement, ‘Russia would immediately supply more than 300,000 tonnes of diesel fuel to the US and global markets, followed by a further 500,000 tonnes during November, and 1,000,000 tonnes immediately thereafter. In addition, depending on the condition of its diesel refineries, Russia would subsequently deliver 3,000,000 tonnes of diesel fuel within a very short period (...)’.

⁴ Ending Importation of Russian Oil Act of 4 August 2022 and Lindsey O. Graham Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act of 18 September 2026.

⁵ See Ate Chuet, ‘Ce que Trump protège vraiment à Moscou’, YouTube, 11 October 2026. The author provides an analysis of US motivations, highlighting various American strategic documents: the policy directive, the National Security Strategy of November 2025, which identifies ‘reestablishing **strategic stability** with Russia’ as a core US interest in Europe (p. 25); the intelligence agencies’ assessment, the Annual Threat Assessment of the U.S. Intelligence Community of March 2026, according to which ‘The most dangerous threat Russia posed by Russia to the U.S. is an **escalatory spiral** in an ongoing conflict, such as Ukraine, or a new conflict that led to direct hostilities, including nuclear exchanges’ (p. 26), while conversely noting that ‘A durable settlement to the war in Ukraine could open the door for a thaw in US-Russia relations and an improved bilateral geostrategic and **commercial relationship**’ (p. 28); and, finally, the military intelligence report, Worldwide Threat Assessment – Defense Intelligence Agency of May 2025, which assesses that ‘Russia is very unlikely to use nuclear weapons in the conflict **unless** Russian leadership judged it faced an **existential threat to the regime**’ (p. 15). This argument appears to be reinforced by the presentation in Warsaw on 12 October of his ‘theory of victory’ in the event of Russian aggression against NATO territory, delivered by SACEUR, US General Alexis Grynkeiwich. In this ‘shared vision’, which does not constitute operational planning, SACEUR was careful to emphasise that the theory does not seek to inflict a ‘strategic defeat’ on the aggressor and that the Alliance remains defensive and ‘**has no intention of entering into a logic of escalation**’ (SACEUR's Remarks at the Warsaw Security Forum – NATO); and Blog B2, 13 October 2026, Olivier Jehin, ‘A Varsovie, le SACEUR dévoile sa Théorie de la victoire. Sans escalade’).

PUTIN IS IN A HURRY TO BRING THE WAR TO AN END

Intensifying the war has failed to break Ukrainian morale

The military front in the Donbas is frozen. Not only have Russian forces failed to capture the ‘fortress belt’ (Sloviansk–Kramatorsk, Druzhkivka, Kostiantynivka and others), but they are retreating in places, including around Lyman (where they have lost 200 km² since July 2026), as a result of Ukraine's Vivaldi offensive, which makes extensive use of killer robots. Losses on both sides are appalling, but heavier for the attacker — 42,000 killed and wounded in August 2026 alone — than for the defender ⁶. Moreover, mobilisation cannot indefinitely spare the inhabitants of major cities such as Moscow and St Petersburg at the expense of the poorer republics of Central Asia.

Unable to make headway on the battlefield, Russian generals have intensified their campaign of deliberate bombardment, targeting not only energy infrastructure but also cities and civilians indiscriminately. This recalls Hitler's Blitz against London in 1940–41. So far, this ‘vertical escalation’ has failed; as long as the home front holds, the battlefront will hold too. Putin may hope that an exhausted Ukrainian society will eventually abandon its leaders. For now, however, that has not happened.

Hybrid attacks have not deterred Europeans from helping Ukraine

Russian hybrid attacks against the West generally, and European States in particular, are nothing new. They seek to spread fear of ‘horizontal escalation’ — escalation beyond Ukraine into Europe — notably through outrageous nuclear threats. They also aim to sow doubt about the legitimacy of Ukraine's leaders, question the value of assistance in financially exhausted countries and, ultimately, use every means available to bring to power governments determined to ‘turn off the tap’.⁷

The ultimate objective of this psychological fragmentation of European societies is to isolate European states from one another, in the knowledge that none could, acting alone, withstand

⁶ Institute for the Study of War, ‘Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, September 1, 2026’, 1 September 2026, <https://understandingwar.org/research/russia-ukraine/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-september-1-2026/>.

⁷ Statement by Louis Aliot, vice-president of the Rassemblement National (RN) and mayor of Perpignan, live on BFMTV, Thursday 3 September. Asked how an RN government would approach assistance to Ukraine, he replied: ‘We would turn off the tap’, explaining: ‘Everyone is stretched to the limit, yet we find money to keep funding weapons to defend Ukraine... But who is paying for all this?’

an outright Russian attack or accept tens of thousands of casualties, especially if the attack took place far from its own territory.

Despite all their efforts, Russia's 'engineers of chaos'⁸ have so far failed to break European unity or Europe's determination to assist Ukraine, even though Trump has decided to stop paying. The moment of truth will come in spring 2027, with parliamentary elections in Italy and the French presidential election, which will be decisive for European nuclear deterrence. Can Putin afford to wait that long?

Putin risks being overtaken by those more radical than himself

One effect of Ukraine's bombing campaign against refineries⁹ and economic and social centres is to encourage state media and their paid agitators, military bloggers and, more broadly, Russia's entire contingent of 'turbo-patriots' to press Putin to bring his 'special military operation' to a definitive conclusion. They demand retaliation, not negotiations. The more the dead pile up, the greater the sacrifices and the more visible the war becomes, the less likely a pause becomes — and the more dangerous it is for anyone proposing one.¹⁰

If he fails to demonstrate unwavering resolve to his population and prove Russian military might to his allies, Putin risks being overthrown by someone even more uncompromising than himself. Hence the precautions he takes for his personal safety. If he wants to leave the mark he aspires to make on his country's history — as a 'gatherer of Russian lands', in the mould of Peter the Great or Catherine II — he must end 'his' war as quickly as possible: through victory, not peace. All the more so because his defence industry is now operating at full capacity, his political legitimacy has been renewed, North Korea has promised him 10,000 fighters and China supplies all the dual-use goods he needs. So why not gamble everything before the Europeans rearm, while Donald Trump is still in power?

⁸ According to Clark Johnson, in a Techtime article published on 17 September 2026, 'EU Counter-Hybrid Playbook Debuts; Same Veto That Froze Russia Sanctions Governs It', European intelligence services reportedly recorded more than 150 Russia-linked hybrid incidents across the continent since February 2022. These included arson attacks on defence facilities in Germany, Denmark and Poland; foiled plots to deploy explosive-laden drones against civilian and military infrastructure; covert surveillance operations; and assassinations or attempted assassinations, including an attempt targeting Rheinmetall chief executive Armin Papperger.

⁹ Title of an essay by Giuliano da Empoli, published by JC Lattès in December 2019.

¹⁰ Ukraine's drone campaign against Russian refineries (intensified since August 2025) has put a substantial share of refining capacity out of action: at least 26 refineries had been hit by late July, up to 60% of capacity was shut down in mid-July, and refining output fell to 3.6 million barrels per day, its lowest level since 2002. Formerly a net exporter of petrol and diesel, Russia now has to import large quantities of both...

RUSSIA IS INTENSIFYING ITS ATTACKS AGAINST EUROPEANS

Increasingly spectacular and potentially lethal hybrid operations

In recent months, Russian ‘hybrid warfare’ operations have increased in both number and intensity, with more serious consequences and a signature that is barely concealed, although still denied, allowing Russia to reverse the burden of proof and portray itself as the victim. The objective remains the same: to trade on fear and make a powerful impression.

But the aim now is not merely to frighten people. Above all, it is to disrupt the physical links and facilities through which Europe supports Ukraine: arms depots, weapons factories and anything else that can contribute to the Ukrainian war effort, all of which are deemed ‘legitimate targets’.¹¹

That is what happened in Estonia on 15 August 2026, when an arson attack targeted a building belonging to Milrem Robotics in Tallinn. The company specialises in unmanned ground vehicles, some of which Ukraine uses at the front. A similar scenario nearly unfolded at Leipzig airport on 3 August 2026: a drone attack targeting Ukrainian cargo aircraft carrying military ammunition from France was attributed to Russia by the German authorities following a month-long investigation.

Consider also the events of 13 September, when a Russian drone struck the locomotive of a passenger train travelling from Kyiv to Warsaw, carrying 206 passengers, at Yahodyn station, 2 km from the Polish border. A diplomatic train carrying Boris Johnson and Carl Bildt had departed earlier than scheduled and had already crossed into Poland at the time of the attack. Former general and CIA director David Petraeus was aboard another train still standing at the station. Limited military impact, maximum media impact.

Finally, according to several sources, US intelligence agencies reportedly warned several European countries of plans for Russian drone attacks in the Mediterranean. According to the Spanish newspaper El Mundo, the CIA fears Russia could launch a drone from a shadow-fleet

¹¹ On 16 April 2026, after the Russian Ministry of Defence published the addresses of 21 European companies manufacturing drones for Ukraine (in Germany, Poland, Czechia, the Netherlands, the Baltic states, Denmark, the United Kingdom and elsewhere), Dmitry Medvedev, deputy chair of the Russian Security Council, said on X that the publication should be taken ‘extremely literally’: European facilities producing drones and military equipment constituted ‘a register of potentially legitimate targets for the Russian armed forces’ (Euronews). He repeated the threat on 2 September 2026, explicitly threatening missile strikes on German arms factories and sites in Berlin, describing them as legitimate targets following the Leipzig booby-trapped drone affair. Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova reiterated and amplified the warning: on 30 September 2026, she said European facilities making weapons for Kyiv were potential Russian military targets (La Nouvelle Tribune; Géopolitique Profonde).

vessel sailing in the Mediterranean Sea. The purported plan would target France, Italy or Spain and could force an airport to close.

By striking targets it considers 'legitimate', while remaining 'below the threshold' of the unacceptable, Russia can discourage states not directly affected, particularly the United States, from responding favourably to the invocation of Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty. Such operations also provide valuable information about where the 'threshold' triggering an armed response lies.¹²

The drawback is that these operations differ little in substance from those that preceded them, except in their intensity and dramatic impact. They may therefore prove equally ineffective, or even counterproductive, if they strengthen European resolve. Hence the risk of Putin going further.

Seizing a small piece of territory to bargain for an end to aid for Ukraine?

Russia might be tempted to seize a limited tract of territory in a Baltic state to demand that Europeans end all assistance to Ukraine. Possible scenarios include Narva in Estonia, Zilupe in Latvia or an operation in Norway's Svalbard archipelago, where Russia holds a private concession in the town of Barentsburg. These scenarios seem more plausible to us than a breakthrough through the Suwałki Gap, whose terrain is highly unfavourable to a ground invasion.

At this stage in relations between Europeans and Russians, we do not believe there would be any need for a 'little green men' operation of the kind seen during the 2014 invasion of Crimea, or even a purported migrant invasion such as the one orchestrated by Belarus in 2021. Russian leaders need only declare that these countries pose a 'threat to Russian security', as they have repeatedly done, and call for the restoration of a 'fair balance of security in Europe' — in other words, for NATO to be pushed back from Russia's borders.¹³

It is also striking that Russia has just conducted a 'strategic exercise' called 'Tsentr-2026' ('Centre-2026'), which ended only recently (28 September–3 October 2026). It simulated the seizure of territory belonging to a neighbouring Central Asian state and the establishment of a 'security zone' within it — in other words, a transition from defensive operations to a

¹² David V. Goe, 'The West Is Sending Russia the Wrong Signals: Europe's Fear of Escalation Is Encouraging Putin', Foreign Policy, 22 September 2026, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2026/09/22/ukraine-putin-russia-signaling-trump-germany/>.

¹³ 'La nouvelle guerre baltique : comment la Russie de Poutine prépare son prochain théâtre d'opérations', Le Grand Continent, 13 September 2025, <https://legrandcontinent.eu/fr/2025/09/13/la-nouvelle-guerre-baltique-comment-la-russie-de-poutine-prepare-son-prochain-theatre-doperations/>.

counter-offensive culminating in invasion and occupation. The exercise's scale (47,000 troops, 2,000 armoured vehicles, 90 aircraft and 77 naval vessels and other ships), its Caspian Sea component and the participation of foreign contingents (Belarus, China, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Pakistan and Tajikistan) are entirely consistent with the hypothesis of a limited territorial seizure.

Provided the area seized did not exceed a few hundred square kilometres, the aggression would remain limited enough to avoid provoking a major European response, let alone an American one: who would want to die for Narva or Zilupe? The question, therefore, is not whether Europeans would do very little, but whether Putin believes they would, and whether he can ensure that Trump would do nothing beyond his usual vacillations.

Such a scenario could enable him to obtain what all the nuclear sabre-rattling has failed to achieve: an end to military and financial assistance for Ukraine. Above all, it would destroy the credibility of the mutual-defence clause in Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty and of Article 42(7) of the Treaty on European Union. What a victory it would be if Americans and Europeans did nothing, or next to nothing. It would spell the end of NATO and of any European ambition in defence. Three birds with one stone.

This is the riskiest scenario and, unfortunately, for that very reason a plausible one, given the Russian dictator's past behaviour. How should we prepare?

TO PREPARE SERIOUSLY FOR WAR, EUROPEANS MUST ABANDON THEIR MISGUIDED IDEAS

'Talking to Putin' is like talking to a brick wall

The first misguided idea, particularly prevalent among political parties that also happen — not coincidentally — to be pro-Russian, is to 'talk to Putin'.

This is, of course, a rhetorical device that fools nobody. Even if Putin deigned to speak to representatives of the European Union, they would have no sufficiently persuasive leverage to convince him to end the war.

What could Marine Le Pen, Alice Weidel or General Vannacci offer if they travelled separately to Moscow? The lifting of economic sanctions? That is not up to them; it now requires a unanimous vote in the European Council. And in return for what? A cessation of hostilities?

That, too, is not for them to decide, but for the Ukrainians. We must stop pretending we can negotiate on Ukraine's behalf. Do we want to repeat the Minsk agreements that led to war?

None of this is serious or deserves to be taken at face value. If there is any doubt, one need only look at the Kremlin's statements: 'For now, the preconditions for peace talks on Ukraine are not in place, even though Russia remains open to such discussions (...) The militarisation of Ukraine is very much continuing. European countries are trying to find ever more funds to purchase weapons. The Kyiv regime continues its activities, which are terrorist in nature.'¹⁴

The 'European pillar of NATO': an old illusion that refuses to fade

The second misguided idea with which Europeans have been deluding themselves for decades is the 'European pillar of NATO', or, in more contemporary terms, 'a strong Europe within a strong NATO'. This is an old idea, put forward by Hubert Védrine in 2012 in a report commissioned by President François Hollande. Repeated endlessly, it has never come to fruition. And with good reason: despite a vast literature on the subject, nobody can define its substance in a way that is both credible and acceptable to all.

For a 'European' pillar to exist, logic dictates that there would have to be two pillars: an American pillar and a European one, the latter headed by — a European command, appointed by one or more European political authorities. Yet there is no mention whatsoever of a European command. The position of Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) has always been held by an American, ever since General Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1951.

There are three main reasons. First, the bulk of the Alliance's forces are American; and even if this were no longer the case, it is fanciful to imagine placing US forces stationed in Europe under European command, especially in a conflict with Russia. Second, the United States remains the principal guarantor of the Alliance's nuclear deterrent, and as long as that is so, the Supreme Commander will be American. Third, this arrangement spares Europeans the need to decide which nationality the postholder should have.

Even if that obstacle were overcome, how would decisions be taken within this European caucus? Today, decisions in NATO's highest decision-making body, the North Atlantic Council, are taken — in theory — by consensus. But after lengthy discussions, when the US representative bangs the table, everyone falls into line. One need only see how meekly Alliance members accepted Donald Trump's proposal at the Hague summit to raise their defence-spending target from 2% to no less than 5%! Yet there is no hegemon among Europe's powers, so decisions would have to be taken by majority vote — something European states

¹⁴ Press briefing by Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov, reported by Interfax, 23 September 2026.

have consistently refused to do within the European Union. Why would they accept it in this heterogeneous caucus, which includes Türkiye, the United Kingdom, Norway, Canada and Montenegro?

Finally, a European pillar of NATO would require European powers to be able to provide and operate the main strategic enablers, starting with the most important of all: the command-and-control (C2) nerve centre. At present, they remain largely unable to do so.

In short, creating a European pillar of NATO would require doing precisely the opposite of what US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright warned against in 1998: distinguishing between European and American defence industries (the principle of European preference), decoupling the two blocs' foreign policies (strategic divergence) and, *horresco referens*, duplicating military capabilities on either side of the Atlantic — something Europeans, oddly enough, have no trouble doing among themselves.

But implementing such a policy would risk prompting the Americans to leave European territory just as Russian threats are growing and Europeans do not consider themselves ready to confront them. It could bring about a sudden rupture, like the one caused by France in 1966. For that reason, the idea has no prospect of advancing in the short term. This explains France's isolation in the battle for European preference. Beyond industrial questions, many states, beginning with Germany, are terrified of losing American protection and are prepared to make any compromise to avoid it.

At most, one might hope in the medium term for the beginnings of a European planning caucus. But that would require at least some European decision-makers to want it and, above all, American decision-makers to accept it. This seems unlikely given the deterioration in relations between certain European states — and even the European Union itself — and NATO's command structure.¹⁵

In June 2026, US Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth launched a review, intended to last six months, of the US military presence in Europe (the European Posture Review), estimated at around 80,000 personnel. This 'review' followed friction with European allies that had refused or restricted access to their bases and airspace during US operations against Iran. Against this backdrop, allies received a questionnaire covering defence spending, strategy, purchases of American weapons, 'unhindered' access to bases and airspace, their conduct during the war

¹⁵ Florentin Collomp, 'Frictions entre l'Union européenne et l'OTAN sur la réponse aux attaques hybrides russes', Le Figaro, 2 October 2026, <https://www.lefigaro.fr/international/frictions-entre-l-union-europeenne-et-l-otan-sur-la-reponse-aux-attaques-hybrides-russes-20261001>.

with Iran and even their public support for the Trump administration's foreign-policy priorities.¹⁶

In late September 2026, US Under Secretary of Defense Elbridge Colby convened a group of five countries (Sweden, Finland, Poland, Germany and the Netherlands), excluding all others — hardly a way to strengthen the cohesion of an Alliance that is supposed to act collectively.¹⁷

In these circumstances, the celebrated 'European pillar of NATO' can still be invoked as an answer to Russian threats. Realism, however, demands that we acknowledge how unlikely it is to materialise in the near future.

¹⁶ Reuters, 'Pentagon Official to Brief NATO Allies as Review Fuels Questions', AOL, 26 August 2026, <https://www.aol.com/articles/pentagon-official-brief-nato-allies-175925000.html>.

¹⁷ 'US Meeting in Poland Excluding France, UK, Baltics Risks Dividing NATO', Euronews, 5 October 2026, <https://www.euronews.com/2026/10/05/us-meeting-in-poland-excluding-france-uk-baltic-risk-dividing-nato>.

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