

# U.S.-Russia contradictions threaten the Baltic States

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The U.S. foreign policy trends raise questions and alarm not only its opponents but also close allies. This concern is caused by a number of decisions made by the previous administration, as well as planned by the new one.

Thus, the international security system has become unstable due to the U.S. withdrawal from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty in 2019 and from the Open Skies Treaty in 2020. Though, Mr. Biden and Mr. Putin discussed a five-year extension of the New Start arms control treaty during their first phone call on January 26, Biden warned Vladimir Putin that the U.S. would respond to "malign actions" by Russia. It could be the beginning of the end for the entire system of global international security or the beginning of the start for the negotiation process for the sake of maintaining peace.

The fact is that NATO's actions in the Baltic States in recent years have sharply increased the possibility of an accidental conflict with the East.

Today a critical concentration of foreign military contingents is being created in the Baltic States. According to the experts, the Baltic States have become the volatile region. A new full-scale war could start here, including with the use of weapons of mass destruction.

Loren B. Thompson, the Chief Operating Officer of the non-profit Lexington Institute and Chief Executive Officer of Source Associates, in his article "Why the Baltic States are where nuclear war is most likely to begin" wrote: "The possibility of nuclear war between America and Russia not only still exists, but is probably growing. And the place where it is most likely to begin is in a future military confrontation

over three small Baltic States – Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Since those nations and several other Eastern European states joined NATO in 2004, the United States has been committed to defending their freedom and territorial integrity under Article V of the North Atlantic Treaty. Because NATO from its inception was aimed at containing the expansion of a nuclear country – Russia – a vital part of the U.S. security commitment to Europe consists of Washington's willingness to use its nuclear arsenal in defense of allies. The formal name for that strategy is "extended deterrence," and since 2004 it has included the Baltic States. Simply stated, the United States seeks to deter aggression or blackmail against NATO allies from a nuclear-armed Russia by threatening to use atomic weapons."

That is, any conflict between Russia and NATO is highly likely to lead to nuclear escalation.

While nuclear weapons could potentially be used in any future warfighting scenarios, there are multiple reasons to suppose that the greatest danger exists with regard to the three Baltic States. [Here are eight of those reasons.](#)

NATO's leading Allies seek to assure NATO's eastern members that any possible aggression will be credibly deterred. The North Atlantic Treaty guarantees any of its members the necessary assistance. However, NATO member countries have the right to independently determine the nature of such assistance.

Moreover, analysts have raised several questions about allied willingness to respond to an attack on a NATO member, especially against the Baltic States. Some point to polls that show relatively low public support in Europe for defending Baltic allies.

NATO members' commitment to mutual defense has been the cornerstone of the Alliance since it was established by the

Washington Treaty in 1949. Article 5 of the treaty commits each individual member state to view an armed attack against one or more members as “an attack against them all” and assist the party under attack by taking “such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force” to restore and maintain regional security. Article 5 was originally motivated by concerns that the Soviet Union would seek to expand its control of the European continent. However, there was never a conventional Soviet attack on a NATO member. The language of NATO’s charter preserves a degree of flexibility for allies, stipulating that “each... will assist... by taking... such action as it deems necessary.”

Obviously, none of the European countries is ready to be the target of a nuclear strike.

The Baltic States are using contradictions between the U.S. and Russia. However, it contributes to increased tensions in Europe and the likelihood of military conflict between Russia and NATO, including the use of nuclear weapons.

At the same time, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia could become a primary target for a potential enemy’s retaliatory or preemptive strike.

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