



# Ensure Alliance Commitments Advance Vital U.S. Interests

**America's alliance relationships must be a means for advancing U.S. interests, not simply ends in themselves. The United States should maintain friendly relations and cooperate with partners and allies alike, while recognizing where U.S. interests overlap and where they do not.**

## THE ISSUE

The United States has treaty commitments to defend a [quarter](#) of the world's nations—over 1.4 billion people and more than four times America's population. Growing constraints will leave the United States dangerously overextended if it attempts to maintain its current military footprints across the Middle East, Europe, and Asia simultaneously instead of prioritizing threats. America should not weaken its position through new security commitments.

## POLICY SOLUTIONS

**CLEAR BENCHMARKS FOR UKRAINE AID** Russia's aggression against Ukraine is immoral and has been deservedly punished. America has interests in preventing the conflict from hurting its readiness in higher-priority regions like the Indo-Pacific or allowing it to escalate to regional war involving NATO. Open-ended, conditions-free aid to Ukraine is not sustainable and endangers these priorities.

- Any future U.S. aid should be [tied](#) to the president articulating a clearer Ukraine strategy, subject to offsets and European matching efforts, and accompanied by certifications about its readiness impacts on other theaters and communication about limits on acceptable uses.

**BURDEN SHIFTING IN EUROPE** Europe is capable of taking the lead in its own security. The substantial U.S. military footprint in Europe saps our allies' political will to do so. Instead, too many wealthy allies like Germany underinvest in their defense and free ride on U.S. troops and taxpayers. NATO burden-shifting would benefit both European and U.S. security interests, leaving NATO less reliant on U.S. forces and leaving America freer to concentrate on its top strategic priority in the Indo-Pacific.

- Congress should not fund further increases in American deployments to Europe in FY 2025, which would encourage allies to delay or even reverse reinvestment in their security.
- Policymakers should redeploy most U.S. forces from Europe, starting with a return to pre-2022 troop levels. America can then work with allies to safely implement a gradual larger drawdown.
- The post of Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), the commander of NATO forces, has been filled by 20 successive Americans since NATO formed. The U.S. should back a European general officer as the next SACEUR to encourage an expanded European role in the alliance.

**AVOID THE RISKS OF PERMANENT NEW SECURITY COMMITMENTS** American overstretch and the depletion of critical munitions stockpiles in Ukraine and the Middle East requires clear-headed choices about future security commitments. The United States should ensure its existing commitments are sustainable and therefore credible. America should avoid permanent, new security commitments, especially those that increase the risk of conflict with nuclear-armed adversaries.

- Congress should reject new, risky European commitments - such as admitting Ukraine or Georgia to NATO - that bring a heightened risk of war with a nuclear-armed adversary.
- Policymakers should reject attempts by Saudi Arabia or the United Arab Emirates to extract U.S. security guarantees in return for normalization of relations with Israel.