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Jul 7, 2025 · 22 tweets · [P_Kallioniemi/status/1942192201733189814](#)

In today's Vatnik Soup, I'll introduce an American national security policy professional and the current under secretary of defense for policy, Elbridge Colby (@ElbridgeColby). He's best-known for fighting with cartoon dogs online and for halting military aid to Ukraine.

1/21



Elbridge "Cheese" Colby earned his bachelor's degree from Yale and a Juris Doctor from Harvard Law School. Before entering government, he worked at top think tanks and in the intelligence community, focusing on nuclear policy and strategic planning.

2/21



Prior to this, Colby was from 2014 to 2017 the Robert M. Gates Senior Fellow at the Center for a New American Security. From 2010 to 2013 he was principal analyst and division lead for global strategic affairs at CNA. Earlier in his career he served for over five years in the U.S. Government working on a range of strategic forces, arms control, WMD, and intelligence reform matters, including service with the Coalition Provisional Authority in Iraq in 2003 and with the Office of the Director of National Intelligence during its stand-up in 2005-2006. Colby has also served on the staff of a number of government commissions, including the 2014 National Defense Panel, the 2008-2009 Strategic Posture Commission, and the 2004-2005 President's WMD Commission.

Cheese quickly became a key voice for a “China First” strategy, arguing the US must prioritize military buildup in Asia over commitments in Europe or the Middle East. He sees (or saw, rather) Taiwan as the core test of US credibility.

3/21

The New Statesman Interview | 2 July 2024

Elbridge Colby: “I am signalling to China that my policy is status quo”

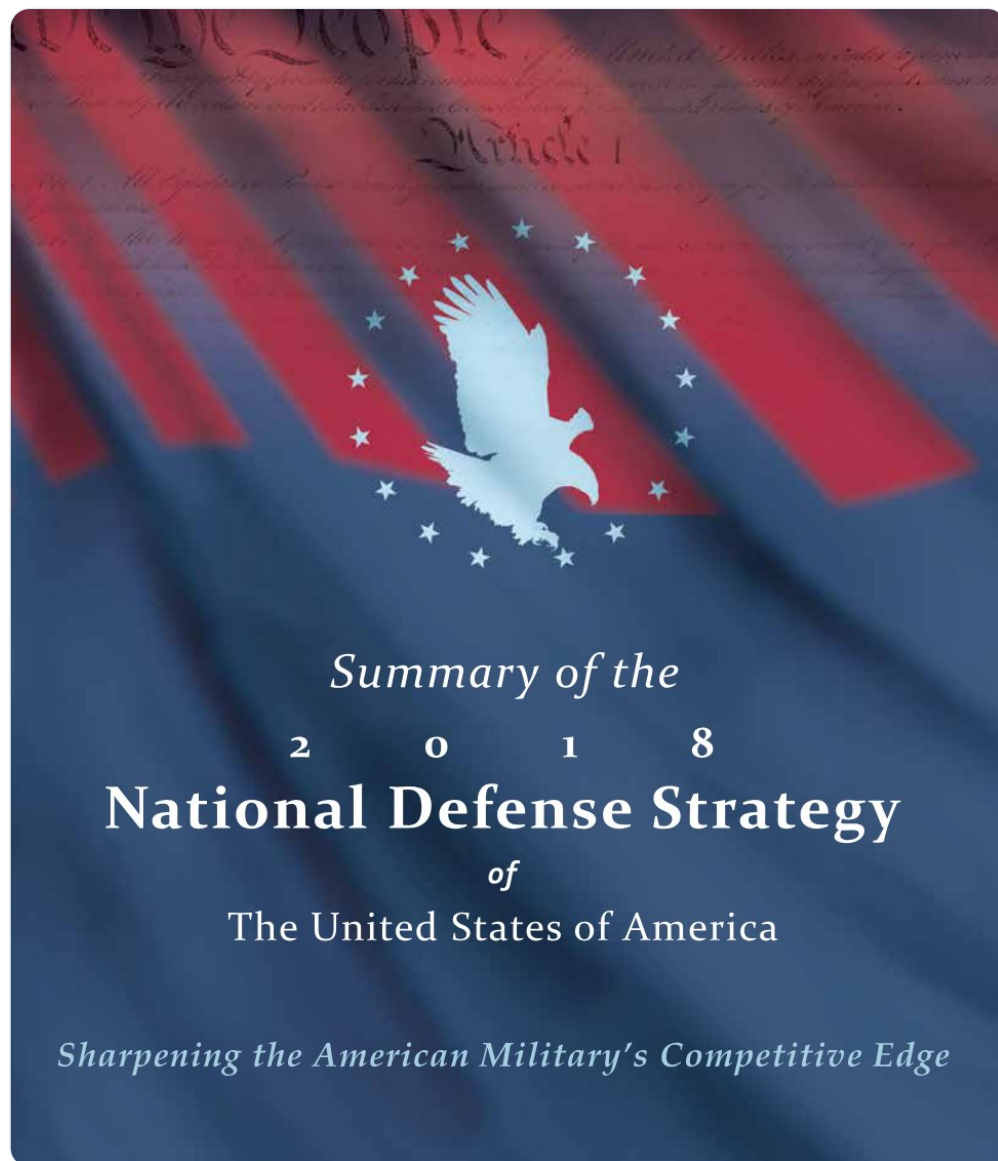
The American strategist, tipped to be Trump’s national security adviser, on the balance of power in Asia.

By Sohrab Ahmari

For about a decade, Elbridge Colby has been making a single argument in and out of government: that America can't afford Chinese hegemony in Asia. He has also been saying that this outcome is narrowly preventable, provided Washington renews its industrial base and stewards its existing military capabilities – rather than waste them on Europe and the Middle East.

Colby served as Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Strategy in Trump's first term. He was the lead architect of the 2018 National Defense Strategy, which shifted US military focus from terrorism to "great power competition" with China and Russia.

4/21



Still in 2018, Colby saw Russia very much as a threat. The NDS report called Russia a revisionist power that seeks to "shatter NATO" and control its neighbors. He framed both China and Russia as top threats to the global order.

National Defense Strategy released with clear priority: Stay ahead of Russia and China

By Aaron Mehta

Jan 19, 2018



The National Defense Strategy, written by Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis, is based off of President Donald Trump's National Security Strategy. (Susan Walsh/AP)

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon's new National Defense Strategy lays out a world where great-power competition, rather than counterterrorism, will drive the department's decision-making and force structure.

The 2018 NDS also emphasized “deterrence by denial”, meaning the U.S. must convince adversaries like Russia that they can't achieve their goals through force. According to Colby at that time, NATO and US alliances were central to this strategy.

- *Fortify the Trans-Atlantic NATO Alliance.* A strong and free Europe, bound by shared principles of democracy, national sovereignty, and commitment to Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty is vital to our security. The alliance will deter Russian adventurism, defeat terrorists who seek to murder innocents, and address the arc of instability building on NATO's periphery. At the same time, NATO must adapt to remain relevant and fit for our time—in purpose, capability, and responsive decision-making. We expect European allies to fulfill their commitments to increase defense and modernization spending to bolster the alliance in the face of our shared security concerns.

Fast forward to 2025: Elbridge, now Trump's under secretary of defense for policy, directed a halt in key US weapons shipments to Ukraine, including Patriots, HIMARS rounds, and F-16 missiles, as Russia intensified attacks on Ukrainian civilians.

POLITICO

Trump allies caught off guard by Pentagon's Ukraine weapons freeze

The decision left officials on both sides of the Atlantic scrambling to find out how long the pause might last.



Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Elbridge Colby (R) and Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth look on during a meeting at the Pentagon on May 5, 2025. | Brendan Smialowski/AFP via Getty Images)

By JACK DETSCH, PAUL MCLEARY, FELICIA SCHWARTZ and ELI STOKOLS

07/02/2025 08:28 PM EDT

Updated: 07/03/2025 08:50 AM EDT



Political games in Washington: How one man's decision jeopardizes the fate of Ukraine

Hlib Ostapenko

Foreign policy expert, founder of OSTAPENKO, Political Consulting

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Vice President J.D. Vance greets Elbridge Colby, currently serving as Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, during a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing on March 4, 2025.

Cheese's justification was that US stockpiles are running low, and that China is the "real" threat. Ukraine, he argued, is a distraction. For US defense, Colby's decision was mostly symbolic: the Congress-approved shipment he halted was already in Poland and contained ...

Ukraine

US halts weapons shipments to Ukraine over fears its stockpiles are too low

Some shipments have been stopped 'to put America's interests first', White House says

● [See all our Ukraine war coverage](#)

Dan Sabbagh *Defence and security editor*

Wed 2 Jul 2025 20.25 CEST

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📷 Volodymyr Zelenskyy standing in front of a US-made Patriot missile system. Ukraine has been coming under increased missile and drone attack from Russia. Photograph: Jens Buttner/Reuters

...only a relatively small batch of munitions. The shipment barely made a dent in U.S. stockpiles, but it would've been critical for Ukraine. The whole episode felt like political theater, and at times, it almost seems like Colby has a personal vendetta against Ukraine.

9/21



Tom Bowman

@TBowmanNPR



Here's the list of US munitions approved for Ukraine but now being held in Poland.

92 AIM missiles

30 Patriots missiles (PAC3MSE)

8496 155mm Howitzer rounds

142 AGM-114 Hellfire missiles

252 GMLRs missiles

25 Stinger missiles

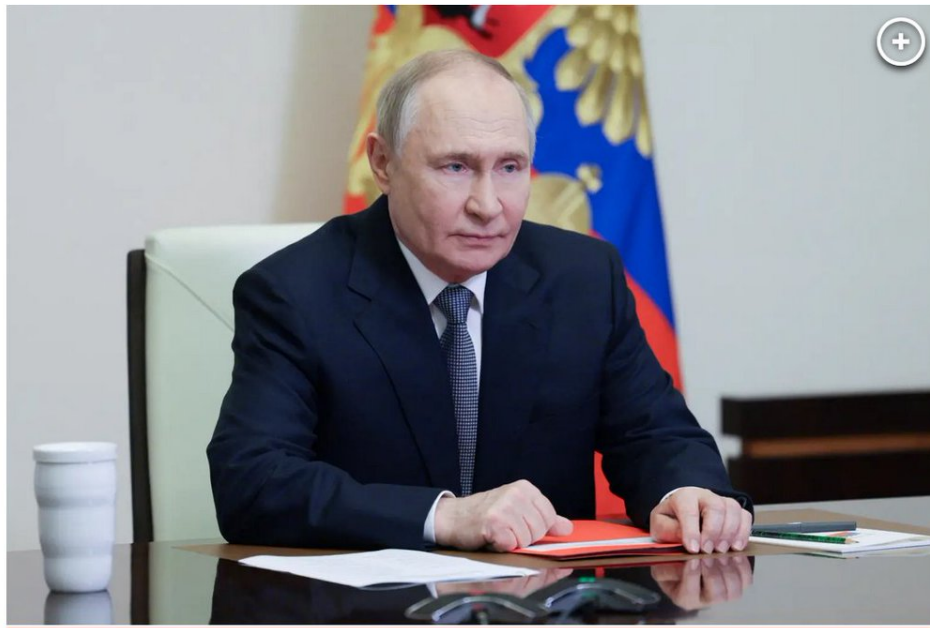
125 AT-4 grenade launchers. [#NPR](#) [#UkraineRussiaWar](#)

OPINION EDITORIAL

Vlad gave his answer to peace, Mr. President: We must re-arm Ukraine

By Post Editorial Board

Published July 4, 2025, 3:40 p.m. ET



Russian President Vladimir Putin chairs a meeting with members of the Security Council via a video link at the Novo-Ogaryovo state residence outside Moscow, Russia July 4, 2025.

Maybe the biggest problem with Cheese's worldview is that he's treating China, Russia, and North Korea as isolated threats, completely ignoring the fact that these countries are coordinating and collaborating together.

Hell, Russia even brought Laos into the equation.



Andrii Sybiha 🇺🇦
@andrii_sybiha



What an irony. Following tonight's massive Russian air attack on Ukraine, we discovered in Kyiv a component of a Russian-Iranian "Shahed-136"/"Geran-2" combat drone, which was made in China and supplied just recently.

And right on the eve, the Chinese Consulate General's building in Odesa suffered minor damage as a result of Russian strikes on the city.

There is no better metaphor for how Putin continues to escalate his war and terror while involving others, including North Korean troops, Iranian weapons, and some Chinese manufacturers.

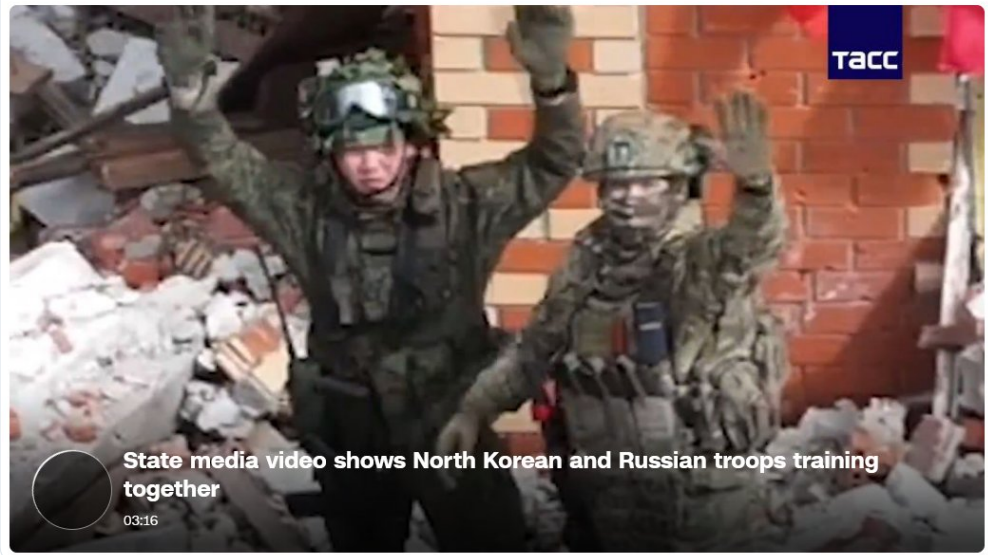
Security in Europe, the Middle East, and the Indo-Pacific is inextricably linked. This is not an attention competition. Countering Russian aggression and terror in Europe directly contributes to enhancing security in the Middle East and the Indo-Pacific.

We urge the United States and the international community to increase pressure on both the regime in Moscow and its war budget, as well as everyone else around the world who supports Russia's war effort and enables Putin to continue killing people in Ukraine. There is no more time to wait.



North Korea to send as many as 30,000 troops to bolster Russia's forces, Ukrainian officials say

By Nick Paton Walsh, Victoria Butenko, Gianluca Mezzofiore, Jo Shelley, Kosta Gak, Daria Tarasova-Markina and Yoonjung Seo, CNN. Video by Julie Zink, Oscar Featherstone and Johnny Fleming, CNN
7 minute read · Updated 12:19 PM EDT, Wed July 2, 2025





The Chinese military is hard pressed to double its nuclear warheads within a decade. Photo: AFP

Home / Asia Pacific / Chinese Troops to Train Anti-NATO Weapon Ops in Russia: Ukrainian Intel

ASIA PACIFIC EUROPE **WAS**

Chinese Troops to Train Anti-NATO Weapon Ops in Russia: Ukrainian Intel



ROJOEF MANUEL JULY 1, 2025

1 MINUTE READ

Artificial
intelligence is
reshaping warfare

Autonomy
Decisions
Domination

Laos set to join North Korea in supporting Russia's invasion, says Ukraine

Like Pyongyang, Vientiane offering engineering unit and recovery aid to Russia, Kyiv says, warning of broader alignment

[Anton Sokolin](#) July 7, 2025

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PRINT



Former defense minister of Laos Chansamone Chanyalath with Russian deputy defense chief Alexander Fomin in Jakarta in Nov. 2023. Fomin is a frequent guest at the DPRK Embassy in Moscow and also traveled to Pyongyang in 2019. | Image: Russian defense ministry

Even though Colby's referred to himself as a "realist," his policy is actually just isolationism. He ignores the fact that China is supplying Russia with equipment and dual-use technology to wage war against Ukraine, and that the two are actually close allies.



U.S. Mission to NATO  
@USNATO



The Chinese are doing their very best to portray themselves as neutral in Russia's war against Ukraine. The reality is that China has taken a side. China is providing very critical dual use components to the Russians.



NATO WASHINGTON SUMMIT DECLARATION

The People's Republic
of China has become
a decisive enabler
of Russia's war
against Ukraine.

The authoritarian bloc is already here: China keeps Russia afloat economically, Iran arms it, and North Korea reinforces it. They're coordinating across continents, while Colby argues the US should only worry about Asia.

12/21



Russia's victory in Ukraine is in alignment with China's strategic goals. As a matter of fact, this was confirmed by Chinese Foreign Minister Wang, who stated that China "can't accept Russia losing its war against Ukraine." But for Cheese, Ukraine is a "distraction".

13/21



For someone holding one of the highest positions in U.S. defense policy, Colby sure has a lot of time to argue with NAFO fellas on X. He's claimed his feed was "inundated" and that their "aggressive, ad hominem" tactics made X unusable.

14/21



Pekka Kallioniemi ✓
@P_Kallioniemi · Follow



For several reasons, [#NAFO](#) is an amazing movement. Lemme elaborate:

1) It's a de-centralized movement without leaders or idols. Leaders and hierarchies are the biggest reason why social media movements die. [@Kama_Kamilia](#) has stated on many occasions that NAFO is what...

1/8



7:06 AM · Jul 12, 2023



2.4K



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IN MAY 2022, just months after Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, a disparate group of people from across the globe decided that they wanted to fight back.

This turned into the North Atlantic Fella Organization (NAFO), a decentralized online activist network designed to combat pro-Kremlin propaganda, primarily focusing on the platform then known as Twitter. The members, identified by cartoon Shiba Inu avatars, mocked Russian government accounts and used meme warfare to disrupt Moscow's propaganda over the invasion.

But in November 2022, Elon Musk took control of the platform, changed its name to X, and effectively allowed Russia's propagandists free rein to do whatever they wanted.

While NAFO members continued to push back, posting memes in response to any posts from official Russian accounts, they knew they had to do something else to alter the course of the war. And so, over the course of the past two years, they have helped to raise tens of millions of dollars for Ukrainian frontline forces, funding weapons, ammunition, medical equipment, and vehicles—many of them branded with the distinctive NAFO livery.



Elbridge Colby 
@ElbridgeColby



Friends and interlocutors,

My account is flooded due to inundation by "NAFO" accounts. This makes it very difficult to apply my usual approach to engage with those who engage with me civilly and without defamation or ad hominem. My apologies if I miss you. 1/

10:43 PM · May 12, 2024 · **282.2K** Views



849



136



528




54



Post your reply

Reply



Elbridge Colby  @ElbridgeColby · May 12, 2024



That said, I'm *definitely* not going to be inhibited from using this incredible platform for engaging constructively with people from all walks.

In that vein, I'm not going to engage further with the "NAFO" group. I've made my points – and indeed my concerns have only grown. 2/


93

17

192

23K



Elbridge Colby  @ElbridgeColby · May 12, 2024



I do think @X should consider some way for people in my situation to manage the consequences of being inundated, especially by memes. I don't block people but it would be helpful to have a muting function that could apply to essentially herd efforts to overwhelm and indeed...3/


153

30

151

32K



Elbridge Colby  @ElbridgeColby · May 12, 2024



browbeat people on this platform into submission or silence. That certainly won't be the result for me, but it would be nice to have some tools to help make the most of the platform while under this kind of inundation. 4/

cc @elonmusk @DavidSacks



Scott Horton  @scotthortonshow · Dec 20, 2024

NAFO tards working hard at selling my book for me today.

That's right, bitch: sit, roll over. Now beg.

Notes suggesting context to be shown with the post



● **Needs more ratings** Dec 20, 2024 · [View details](#)

...

 Not shown on X

NAFO are not actually Shiba Inu dogs. NAFO is a loose network of human volunteers who donate their own time and money to help Ukraine avoid Russian occupation, something which Scott Horton's Ukrainian wife has described as "worse than death".

<https://nafo-ofan.org/>

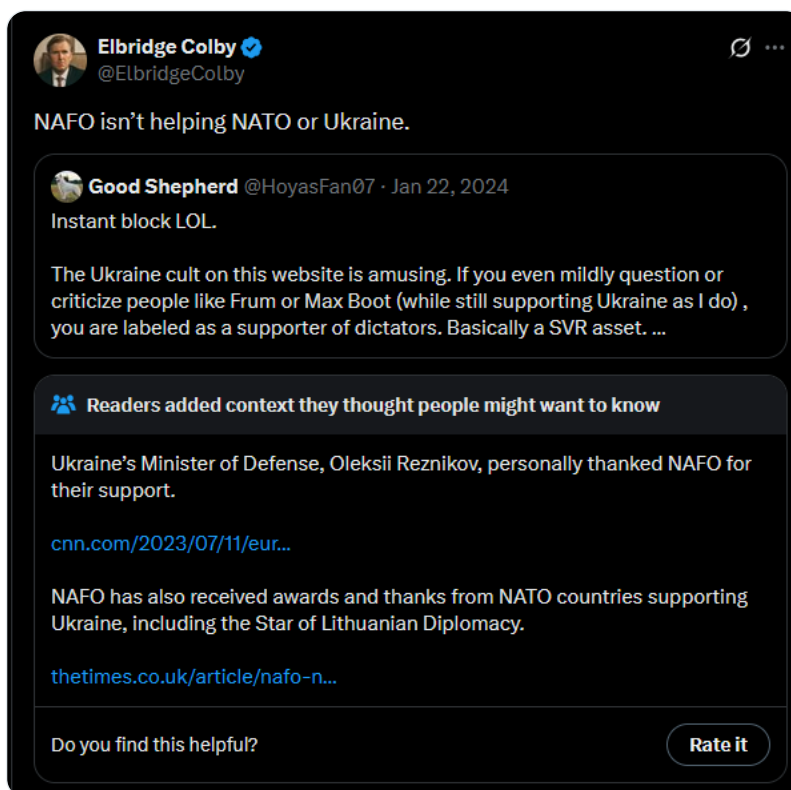
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NAFO_\(group\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NAFO_(group))

https://x.com/P_Kallioniemi/status/1870083889441464782

<https://apnews.com/article/ukraine-russia-prisons-civilians-torture-detainees-88b4abf2efbf383272eed9378be13c72>

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/09/1141417>

He's also claimed that "NAFO isn't helping NATO or Ukraine," even though Ukraine's former Defense Minister Oleksii Reznikov personally thanked them. NAFO has received awards and support from multiple NATO countries backing Ukraine.



Like many before him (including David Sacks), Colby has hinted that NAFO might be backed by “some forms of USG and/or allied support.” In Cheese’s world, ordinary people can’t support a cause without being paid, which makes sense coming from someone deep in



Elbridge Colby ✓
@ElbridgeColby

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Adam,

If you're confident in your arguments, do you need to resort to such invective? I thought you were a spokesman for restoring norms of civil behavior?

Are you saying there's no basis to be concerned that NAFO has received some forms of USG and/or allied support?



Adam Kinzinger (Slava Ukraini) 🇺🇸🇺🇦... ✓ · 27 Aug

This dork also believes that the CIA is funding cartoon dogs.

The insanity runs deep. #NAFO

9:49 AM · 27 Aug 24 · **104K** Views

56 Reposts **52** Quotes **573** Likes **36** Bookmarks



Elbridge Colby 

@ElbridgeColby

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Adam, I think it's worth getting your facts straight:

- I raised the possibility of U.S. or allied government sponsorship of NAFO. I didn't specify it needed to be CIA. Several government and NATO leaders have endorsed NAFO, so it's hardly far-fetched. In any case, my core point is NAFO doesn't help NATO or Ukraine. That has only been validated in my view.

Today, alongside the Heritage Foundation, Colby is one of the most vocal critics of NATO within the Trump admin. Together, they're shaping the US foreign policy shift away from transatlantic alliances, and toward isolationist Asia-first doctrine.



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In today's #vatniksoup, I'll introduce an American conservative think tank, The Heritage Foundation (@Heritage). Heritage is best-known for opposing military aid to Ukraine and for their political initiative called Project 2025, a potential blueprint for a Trump presidency.

1/23



Heritage Foundation President Kevin Roberts with former president Donald Trump on a private plane in April 2022. (Obtained by The Washington Post)

12:07 PM · Oct 7, 2024



6.5K



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In 2018, Colby warned about Russia and championed NATO. Post-Trump term one? Total pivot: Russia downplayed, NATO sidelined, and all eyes on Taiwan. Hard to tell if it's strategy, or just auditioning for MAGA foreign policy chief.

18/21

FEATURE

Trump's Foreign-Policy Influencers

Meet the 11 men whose worldviews are shaping the 2024 Republican ticket.

AUGUST 26, 2024, 2:00 AM

By [FP Staff](#)



ORIANA FENWICK ILLUSTRATION/GETTY IMAGES

With Colby, Trumpism changed everything. NATO became the enemy, Ukraine a distraction, and China the only threat that mattered. He went from realist strategist to MAGA-friendly mouthpiece for isolation in everything but China. At the same time, China is watching Ukraine...



...closely to decide when to invade Taiwan. The most absurd twist? Cheese, the guy who built his brand around defending Taiwan, is now backing away from that too. He says a war over Taiwan might “destroy” the US military, and that it’s not even an “existential interest.”

20/21

“Taiwan is very important to the United States, but as you said it’s not an existential interest.”

Colby also said that the military balance in the Taiwan Strait had deteriorated dramatically and raised the concern of the U.S. engaging in a futile and overly costly effort that would destroy its military.

He again criticized Taiwanese defense spending and said it wasn’t fair that American servicemen and women should suffer if American allies were not pulling their weight.

This has raised fears, again, that Colby wants to abandon Taiwan. But there is a lot more going on here.



But gutting alliances, threatening your friends, and sidelining partners doesn't make America stronger. It isolates the US, and ensures the country will be alone in the next global crisis, facing adversaries who are more coordinated than ever.

NEWS > DEFENSE

Trump ‘weakened’ the West as Russian threat rises, warns former NATO boss

If the U.S. wants to “retire” from leading the free world, a new grouping of democracies should step up, Anders Fogh Rasmussen said.

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POLITICOPRO

Free article usually reserved for subscribers



Despite all those concessions, Russian President Vladimir Putin still appears unwilling to make a deal to end the war. | Chris Kleponis/EPA-EFE

MAY 12, 2025 7:20 PM CET
BY JAN CIENSKI

The 2nd edition of “Vatnik Soup — The Ultimate Guide to Russian Disinformation” is officially out!

You can order your copy here:



The Book | Vatrik Soup

#vatniksoup is a Twitter thread series (and a hashtag!) where I'll introduce pro-Russian actors and propagandists from around the world, be they so-called "independent journalists", politicians, mili...

<https://vatniksoup.com/en/books/>

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