



On Wednesday, February 2nd 2022, the United States ordered the deployment of 3,000 troops to NATO-allied countries Poland, Germany, and Romania in response to Russia's increased aggression along their border with Ukraine.

Today's post-9/11 military families are rightfully wary of the U.S. nearing another endless, unwinnable war. It is therefore crucial that we scrutinize every U.S. commitment of forces abroad with questions such as: "What is the end goal of this deployment? How will we know when the mission is won, and our troops are able to come home?" Establishing clear, measurable standards for success can help us prevent conflicts from becoming perpetual.

Early signals from this administration sound promising. President Biden has repeatedly ruled out any combat deployment to Ukraine itself, which is a necessary bright line that we intend to hold him to. Pentagon spokesman John Kirby has characterized these deployments as "[intended to be temporary](#)," with the purpose of shoring up our NATO allies who feel threatened by Russian aggression. It is certainly appropriate for the U.S. to follow through on our Article 5 obligations to defend NATO allies who come under threat.

What remains unclear is how U.S. troop presence within these NATO countries will functionally provide that assurance. Are they there "just in case?" If so, it seems doubtful that we will reach consensus about when the danger has passed. Will U.S. troops be conducting any over-the-horizon operations in support of Ukraine if Russia does invade? If so, it is unclear how those operations would directly relate to defending U.S. national security.

Some reporting has indicated that U.S. troops could help evacuate American citizens and diplomats from nearby Ukraine if Russian forces invade — that would certainly constitute a clear, measurable, and important mission that we would commend.

This administration has rightly pledged to end endless wars. We eagerly await further clarity about what guardrails they plan to implement in this scenario.

To close: our hearts go out to the families of those deploying. This situation is scary and evolving, and we want to make sure they know they're not alone – our community stands ready to support.