**I negate the resolution**

**Brackets for Clarity**

**First,**

**People own their own bodies and as a result have rights to use their bodies.**

**Feser,** Edward. "Robert Nozick." *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, iep.utm.edu/nozick/. Accessed 12 June 2021. ICW NW

Nozick takes his position to follow from a basic moral principle associated with Immanuel Kant and enshrined in Kant’s second formulation of his famous Categorical Imperative: “Act so that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in that of another, always as an end and never as a means only.” The idea here is that **a human being, as a rational agent endowed with self-awareness, free will, and the possibility of formulating a plan of life, has an inherent dignity and cannot** properly **be treated as a mere *thing*, or *used* against his will** as an instrument or resource in the way an inanimate object might be. In line with this, Nozick also describes individual human beings as *self-owners* (though it isn’t clear whether he regards this as a restatement of Kant’s principle, a consequence of it, or an entirely independent idea). The thesis of self-ownership, a notion that goes back in political philosophy at least to John Locke, is just the claim that **individuals own themselves – their bodies, talents and abilities, labor, and by extension the** fruits or **products of their exercise of their talents, abilities and labor.** They have all the prerogatives with respect to themselves that a slaveholder claims with respect to his slaves. But the thesis of self-ownership would in fact rule out slavery as illegitimate, since each individual, as a self-owner, cannot properly be owned by anyone else. (Indeed, many libertarians would argue that unless one accepts the thesis of self-ownership, one has no way of explaining *why* slavery is evil. After all, it cannot be merely because slaveholders often treat their slaves badly, since a kind-hearted slaveholder would still be a slaveholder, and thus morally blameworthy, for that. The reason slavery is immoral must be because it involves a kind of stealing – the stealing of a person from himself.) But **if individuals are inviolable ends-in-themselves** (as Kant describes them) **and self-owners, it follows**, Nozick says, **that they have certain *rights*, in particular** (and here again following Locke) **rights to their lives, liberty, and the fruits of their labor. To own something,** after all, just **is to have a right to it,** or, more accurately, to possess the bundle of rights – **rights to possess something, to dispose of it, to determine what may be done with it,** etc. – that constitute ownership; and **thus to own oneself is to have such rights to the various elements that make up one’s self. These rights function, Nozick says, as *side-constraints* on the actions of others; they set limits on how others may, morally speaking, treat a person.** So, for example, **since you** own yourself, and thus **have a right to yourself, others are constrained morally not to kill or maim you** (since this would involve destroying or damaging your property), or to kidnap you or forcibly remove one of your bodily organs for transplantation in someone else (since this would involve stealing your property). They are also constrained not to force you against your will to work for another’s purposes, even if those purposes are good ones. For **if you own yourself, it follows that you have a right to determine whether and how you will use your self-owned body and its powers,** e.g. either to work or to refrain from working.

**Thus, the state ought not interfere with people since that would violate their rights.**

**Feser 2,** Edward. "Robert Nozick." *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, iep.utm.edu/nozick/. Accessed 12 June 2021.

So far this all might seem fairly uncontroversial. But what follows from it, in Nozick’s view, is the surprising and radical conclusion that ***taxation*,** of the redistributive sort in which modern states engage in order to fund the various programs of the bureaucratic welfare state, **is morally illegitimate. It amounts to a kind of *forced labor*, for the state so structures the tax system that any time you labor at all, a certain amount of your labor time – the amount that produces the wealth taken away from you forcibly via taxation – is time you involuntarily work, in effect, for the state.** Indeed, such taxation amounts to partial *slavery*, for in giving every citizen an entitlement to certain benefits (welfare, social security, or whatever), the state in effect gives them an entitlement, a *right*, to a part of the proceeds of your labor, which produces the taxes that fund the benefits; every citizen, that is, becomes in such a system *a partial owner of you* (since they have a partial property right in part of you, i.e. in your labor). But **this is** flatly **inconsistent with the principle of self-ownership.**

The various programs of the modern liberal welfare state are thus immoral, not only because they are inefficient and incompetently administered, but because they make slaves of the citizens of such a state. Indeed, **the only sort of state that can be morally justified is** what Nozick calls **a *minimal state***or “night-watchman” state, **a government which protects individuals**, via police and military forces, **from force, fraud, and theft, and administers courts of law, but does nothing else.** In particular, **such a state cannot regulate what citizens eat, drink, or smoke** (**since this would interfere with their right to use their self-owned bodies as they see fit), cannot control what they publish or read** (since this would interfere with their right to use the property they’ve acquired with their self-owned labor – e.g. printing presses and paper – as they wish), cannot administer mandatory social insurance schemes or public education (since this would interfere with citizens’ rights to use the fruits of their labor as they desire, in that some citizens might decide that they would rather put their money into private education and private retirement plans), and cannot regulate economic life in general via minimum wage and rent control laws and the like (since such actions are not only economically suspect – tending to produce bad unintended consequences like unemployment and housing shortages – but violate citizens’ rights to charge whatever they want to for the use of their own property).

**The criterion is consistency with libertarianism. This is the idea that the only moral state is one that protects people’s rights but is *never* morally justified in coercing its citizens. Prefer:**

**1. Culpability: If people didn’t freely will an action they can’t be said to be responsible for it because they couldn’t have done otherwise. I.e. if I’m forced to slap a person, no one would say I’m culpable because I had no choice in the matter. This means ethics can’t exist without freedom because we wouldn’t be able to assign agents culpability.**

**2. Freedom is a prerequisite to the use of other frameworks, because if we can’t choose our actions we can’t make them consistent with the aff framework. This means I hijack the aff framework because even if they win it's true, we have to have freedom to pursue it in the first place.**

**Third,** self-ownership is the entire basis for a just society. When we talk about a society being just, the only sense-making language we can use refers to the autonomy of the governed. **John Christman** explains:

**“The** conception of the **autonomous person** plays a variety of roles in various constructions of liberal political theory. Principally, it **serves as the model** of the person **whose perspective is used to formulate** and justify **political principles**, as in social contract models of principles of justice Also (and correspondingly) it serves as the model of the citizen **[and] whose basic interests are reflected in those principles,** such as in [through] the claim that basic liberties, opportunities, and other primary goods are fundamental to flourishing lives no matter what moral commitments, life plans, or other particulars of the person might obtain.  **Moreover, autonomy is ascribed to persons** (or projected as an ideal) **in order to** delineate and **critique oppressive social conditions, liberation from which is considered a fundamental goal of justice.”**

Christman, John. “Autonomy in moral and political philosophy.” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy,* online, 2003.

The very concept of justice is based in the idea of the self-owning individual and the rules that govern how they ought be treated; thus, self-ownership is the best criterion for justice.

**AND under Libertarianism we care about the structure of discourse and action, not its consequences. Therefore, intentions outweigh consequences.**

**1) Action theory: Actions are defined by their intents, so you can’t evaluate the action before the intent. For example if I drink I must raise the glass to my lips and swallow, having infinite constituent parts. The only way to judge the topical action is by looking to intent.**

**Now Negate,**

**Private businesses have a right to pursue space exploration and it is coercive for the government to interfere with that.**

**Under libertarianism, government interference in economic endeavors like the privatization of space are coercive.**

"Libertarianism." ***Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy***, 5 Sept. 20**02**, plato.stanford.edu/entries/libertarianism/. Accessed 16 Dec. 2021.

Libertarian positions are most controversial in the realm of distributive justice. In this context, **libertarians** typically **endorse** something like **a free-market economy: an economic order based on private property and voluntary market relationships** among agents. Libertarians usually see the kind of large-scale, coercive wealth redistribution in which contemporary welfare states engage as involving unjustified coercion. The same is true of many forms of economic regulation, including licensing laws. **Just as people have strong rights to individual freedom in their personal and social affairs,** libertarians argue, **they also have strong rights to freedom in their economic affairs. Thus, rights of freedom of contract and exchange, freedom of occupation, and private property are taken very seriously.**

**This impacts back to my framework because interference with private appropriation of space is unjustified, thus one has a right to appropriate outer space, i.e. the appropriation of outer space is *justified*.**

**Contention 2)**

**Libertarianism would allow the ownership of space by private companies.**

**Broker,** Tyler. "Space Law Can Only Be Libertarian Minded." *Above the Law*, 14 Jan. 20**20**, abovethelaw.com/2020/01/space-law-can-only-be-libertarian-minded/. Accessed 16 Dec. 2021.

The impact on human daily life from a transition to the virtually unlimited resource reality of space cannot be overstated. However, when it comes to the law, a minimalist, dare I say libertarian, approach appears as the only applicable system. In the words of [NASA](https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=840632333037679), “2020 promises to be a big year for space exploration.” Yet, as Rand Simberg [points out](https://reason.com/2020/01/12/socialists-in-space-2/) in Reason magazine, **it is** actually **private American investment that is currently moving space exploration to “a pace unseen since the 1960s.”** According to Simberg, due to this increase in private investment **“We are now on the verge of getting affordable private access to orbit for large masses of payload and people.”** The impact of that type of affordable travel into space might sound sensational to some, but in reality [the benefits](https://abovethelaw.com/2019/10/automation-ubi-and-the-future-of-human-labor/) that space can offer are far greater than any benefit currently attributed to any major policy proposal being discussed at the national level. The sheer amount of [resources available](https://cneos.jpl.nasa.gov/about/nea_resource.html) within our [current reach/capabilities](https://www.asteroidmission.org/) simply speaks for itself. However, although those new realities will, as Simberg says, “bring to the fore a lot of ideological issues that up to now were just theoretical,” I believe it will also eliminate many economic and legal distinctions we currently utilize today. For example, **the sheer number of resources we can already obtain in space means that in the rapidly near future, the distinction between a nonpublic good or a public good will be rendered meaningless.** In other words**, because the resources available within our solar system exist in such quantities, all goods will become nonrivalrous in their consumption and nonexcludable in their distribution. This would mean government engagement in the public provision of a nonpublic good,** even at the trivial level, or [what Kevin Williamson defines as socialism](https://www.nationalreview.com/2011/01/socialism-back-kevin-d-williamson/), is rendered meaningless or impossible. In fact, **in space, I fail to see how any government could even *try* to legally compel collectivism** in the way Simberg fears. Similar to many economic distinctions, however, it appears that many laws, both the good and the bad, will also be rendered meaningless as soon as we begin to utilize the resources within our solar system. For example, **if every human being is given access to the resources that allows them to replicate anything anyone else has, or replace anything “taken” from them instantly, what would be the point of theft laws? If you had virtually infinite space in which you can build what we would now call luxurious livable quarters, all without exploiting human labor or fragile Earth ecosystems when you do it, what sense would most property, employment, or commercial law make?** Again, this is not a pipe dream, no matter how much our population grows for the next several millennia, the amount of resources within our solar system can sustain such an existence for every human being. Rather than panicking about the future, we should try embracing it, or at least meaningfully preparing for it. Currently, the [Outer Space Treaty](http://www.unoosa.org/oosa/en/ourwork/spacelaw/treaties/introouterspacetreaty.html), or as some call it [“the Magna Carta of Space,”](https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2019/08/31/space-final-legal-frontier/) is silent on the issue of whether private individuals or corporate entities can own territory in space. Regardless of whether governments allow it, however, private citizens are currently obtaining the ability to travel there, and if human history is any indicator, private homesteading will follow, flag or no flag. We Americans know this is how a Wild West starts, where most regulation becomes the impractical pipe dream. But again, this would be a Wild West where the exploitation of human labor and fragile Earth ecosystem makes no economic sense, where every single human can be granted access to resources that even the wealthiest among us now would envy, and where innovation and imagination become the only things we would recognize as currency. **Only a libertarian-type system, that guarantees basic individual rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness could be valued** and therefore human fidelity to a set of laws made possible, in such an existence.

**This impacts back to my framework because private corporations are justified in appropriating space.**

**The plan is perceived as a claim to sovereignty that violates international space law – scares Russia**

**1AC Fessl 19** – Sophie Fessl, PhD King’s College London, BA Oxford, 7/10/19 [JSTOR Daily, “Should the Moon Landing Site Be a National Historic Landmark?”<https://daily.jstor.org/should-the-moon-landing-site-be-a-national-historic-landmark/>] Justin

But how to **preserve** and **protect** human **artifacts** on the **moon**? In 1999, the anthropologist Beth O’Leary, with the Lunar Legacy Project, proposed that **Tranquility Base** become a **National Historic Landmark**. As a first step, the group of **archaeologists**, **curators**, and **physicists** documented **artifacts** in Tranquility Base for a **preliminary archaeological site plan**. However, when O’Leary **approached NASA**, she was rebuffed: “taking steps to preserve it would be perceived as a **U.S. claim of sovereignty** over the Moon,” according to Roger Launius, a former NASA chief historian.

**All** attempts to protect sites on the moon have to **grapple** with **space** **law**. At the height of the Space Race, in 1967, the Outer Space Treaty was drafted, ratified, and came into force. “Both the **United States and** the **Soviet Union** feared that the other **nation** would **claim sovereignty** over a **celestial body such as the moon**, place weapons there, and **exclude** the other from those **same privileges by virtue of being first**,” Kyle Ellis writes in the Fordham Environmental Law Review. The treaty prohibits states from **owning territory** on the moon. “**Space junk**,” however, continues to **belong to the state that sent the craft or equipment** into space.

This leaves space custodians with a **conundrum**, writes Capelotti (the anthropologist). “If the U.S. owns the **archaeological remains** of Apollo 11 but **not** the **ground underneath** it, how to **protect** the former without **disturbing** the latter? Does America own Neil Armstrong’s **famous first footprints** on the Moon but not the lunar dust in which they were recorded?”

Artifacts in Orbit

In 2011, NASA issued guidelines for how missions to the moon should avoid crashing into artifacts or spraying rocket exhaust onto historic sites. These guidelines include no-fly zones over the landing sites of Apollo 11 and Apollo 17, and boundaries to how close rovers approach landers.

But these are, for the moment, just recommendations. In 2010, efforts by O’Leary led to the listing of objects and structures at Tranquility Base on the California and New Mexico State Registers of Cultural Properties. In 2013, a bill introduced to the House of Representatives, The Apollo Lunar Landing Legacy Act, proposed to preserve all six Apollo landing sites as National Historical Parks, seeking World Heritage Site status for the Apollo 11 landing area.

But this bill also stood in contradiction with existing space law, and failed. “Although the bill acknowledges treaty obligations of the United States, it would create, in effect, a **unilateral** U.S. action to **control parts** of the Moon. …It is legally **flawed**, **unenforceable**, and **contradictory** to our **national space policy** and our **international relations** in space,” wrote Henry Hertzfeld and Scott Pace in an article in Science. A new bill, the One Small Step to Protect Human Heritage in Space Act, introduced in the Senate in May, tries a different approach, requiring all U.S.-licensed missions to adhere to NASA’s guidelines from 2011.

**Putin has banked his prestige off of appropriation of the moon – the plan’s unilateral claim to sovereignty is a shock to dreams of hegemony.**

**Whittington 20** – Mark, Published a political study of space exploration entitled Why is It So Hard to Go Back to the Moon? as well as The Moon, Mars and Beyond. He blogs at Curmudgeons

Corner.  He is published in the Wall Street Journal, Forbes, The Hill, USA Today, the LA Times, and the Washington Post, among other venues, 9/6/20 [The Hill, “Russia makes bid to become a space power with Luna-25 mission to the moon,”<https://thehill.com/opinion/technology/515117-russia-makes-bid-to-become-a-space-power-with-luna-25-mission-to-the-moon>] Justin

Scientific American recently reported that Russia is making progress on its **long-planned-for Luna-25 moon lander**. The slight is set to take place in October 2021.

Luna-25 will be the first Russian lunar lander since the mid-1970s. The lander is a joint project with the European space agency. The mission is **planned** as the **beginning of a Russian attempt** to **jumpstart its space program** by **joining the rush to the moon**.

The fact that Luna-25 is **scheduled** to launch in **about a year** proves that Russian leader Vladimir Putin recognizes one **essential truth of the 21st century**. The world is divided into countries that explore space and countries that don’t matter. Putin, whose reason for living is to **restore Russia as a superpower**, means for the country that he **rules** over with the **power of a Czar** to matter.

Russia has a couple of problems to overcome if it means to use a return to the moon as part of its bid to claw its way back to power and respect.

First, many other countries are **shooting for the moon**. China has already landed two Chang’e landers on the lunar surface and is planning a sample return mission for later in 2020. China intends to land humans on the moon and establish a base.

Israel and India have attempted moon landings and, even though they have failed, are going to mount second attempts. Israel’s second attempt is a private venture in partnership with a German company.

A private company in Japan called ispace is planning a moon landing with a probe called Hakuto-R in 2022. Hakuto-R will weigh 750 pounds and will have a payload capacity of 66 pounds.

Russia’s **main rival remains, as it was during the cold war space race, the United States**. President Donald Trump has started the Artemis Project, a plan to expand American power and influence into deep space, starting with a return to the moon with human astronauts in 2024. NASA is sponsoring private moon landings starting next year under the Commercial Lunar Payload Systems program. Probes built by Intuitive Machines and Astrobotic are scheduled to launch in 2021. Masten Space Systems will launch a probe in 2022. All of the landers will carry NASA and commercial payloads and instruments.

**That triggers lashout – extinction.**

**Gressel 16** [Gustav Acting Director and a senior policy fellow with the Wider Europe Programme at the European Council on Foreign Relations' Berlin office, European Council on Foreign Relations, “The dangerous decade: Russia-NATO relations 2014 to 2024”, July 2016, https://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary\_the\_dangerous\_decade\_russia\_nato\_relations\_2014\_to\_2024]

The domestic logic of confrontation The Russian economy hit a structural crisis in 2011, so the “power swap” between Putin and Dmitry Medvedev was not sufficiently appreciated by the Russian urban middle class, and later, when oil prices plummeted, the regime looked to its foreign policy to distract people from the worsening domestic situation. But it would be an oversimplification to consider Russia’s policy of escalation as merely a short-term domestic diversion effort. For over a decade, the Russian leadership has tried to define Russia both ideologically and politically as the counter model to Europe, putting it in conflict with Europe. The struggle to reshape the European order will not lessen in the next decade. **Structural factors play a role in Russia’s foreign policy.** The Russian state is more de-institutionalised and personalised than ever before. The president and a small closed circle of advisers make decisions – sometimes behind closed doors – on crucial foreign policy issues, such as the interventions in Crimea, Donbas, and Syria. Formal government structures and institutions are increasingly irrelevant, while informal ties to the president are pivotal. This system depends **solely on** the president as post, and to a very large extent on **Putin as a person**. Any change to the position of the president – such as may come in the 2018 and 2024 elections – **will lead to extreme danger for the regime**. A highly de-institutionalised system depending on one person will by nature be less effective and **more prone to erratic behaviour** over time, as the leader ages. The longer this

personalised authoritarianism lasts, the less flexible, open, and creative the system will become. It would not be surprising, therefore, if the system collapsed or came close to collapse. In that situation, those holding power might see an escalation to unite the country as a lesser evil. The risk of a succession crisis is amplified by the fact that Putin cannot give up power easily. Putin has a great deal to cover up: he has waged a war in the Donbas outside his constitutional competences, which has caused the deaths of 220 to 2,000 regular Russian servicemen so far, as well as 298 international civilian casualties after Russian air-defence crews shot down Malaysia Airlines flight MH17. Putin cannot be sure of indefinite protection under a new president, nor that any new Russian leadership might not consider extraditing him as part of some political deal. There is no way out save exile in Vienna or Zurich. So, Putin needs to create conditions to **allow him to rule** beyond 2024. It would be difficult, and very unlikely, to create a protégé who is both unconditionally loyal and no threat, but also capable of managing intra-elite battles. Therefore, Putin has to make elites and society accept that he will lead Russia until his death. The narrative for this move needs to be shaped before 2024, most likely from re-shaping the political order in “Eurasia”. Putin needs a major project that reshapes Russia to allow him stay on, and because of Russia’s political context, the de-institutionalisation of the state, and the concentration of power with a few decision-makers, it will likely need to involve foreign policy rather than domestic modernisation. Thus, the Russian elites’ desire to rewrite the European order will coincide with Putin searching for institutional arrangements to prolong his power. The positioning of different wings of the elite to benefit from the succession could also cause instability. In old age, Putin would pick a successor who shares his thinking about Russia’s future, meaning any potential successor will have to accept the current “Eurasian” ideological framework. Rival security services are key pillars of power, and their loyalty must be secured through policies that appease their interests. All this means that the Kremlin will **most likely use its rivalry with the West to stabilise the regime**. Russia cannot compete with the West as an economic bloc, so **military might and the use of force will be the Kremlin’s main tools** to shape its foreign policy and influence its neighbourhood. Contingencies such as domestic insecurity, insurgencies, riots, or terrorist incidents would also be interpreted in an anti-Western context. Russian military endeavours in the post-Soviet space, such as putting down a “Maidan” in Minsk or dealing with jihadist insurgencies in Central Asia, would not threaten NATO directly, but they would increase tensions with the West. Russian security forces usually blame domestic unrest or their own failures on Western interference, and the West is usually critical of Russia’s response to such events. The Kremlin’s paranoia **could** also **trigger escalation**, as Russian security forces might seek to pre-emptively destroy “foreign interventionist” forces seen as instigating unrest. The Russian Baltic Navy’s war game of the occupation of Gotland, Aaland, and Bonholm, citing “Scandinavian instigation of public unrest in Moscow”, should show Western policymakers the arbitrariness of Russian accusations. The military balance Militarily, Moscow has repeatedly surprised the West. The West, and particularly Washington, was sure that US military might would deter Russia from acting militarily against the West’s interests. But they failed to recognise the many grey zones where a full US military reaction would not be expected and where Russia could create facts on the ground. Even worse: while Russia could not sustain a war with NATO, especially if the US fully engaged in Europe, **Russia could start a war,** hoping to deter any major reaction to Russian initial aggression through its **nuclear arsenal**. The fact that Russia can start a war against NATO, but not sustain it, will remain the **prevailing paradigm** throughout the “dangerous decade” to come. It means that Russian behaviour inclines towards confrontation, hoping that the West will blink. **Such games can easily spiral out of control**. **Miscalc**ulation, unprofessional behaviour, and inter-agency rivalry for political leadership **could cause escalation that Russia could not control.** The main cause of Western difficulties in countering an initial Russian military escalation is that European armies in particular need to implement several structural adaptations that will take time to mature. Meanwhile, Russian defence reform is progressing. Russia’s defence reform has been largely successful. Russian armed forces are more combat-ready, flexible, and effective than ever before. The wars in Ukraine and Syria provided a testing ground for new Russian procedures, formations, and equipment. Ukraine in particular, where Russia has rotated battalions from almost every brigade, was an invaluable test. New leadership techniques and increased joint officer training introduced in the early 2010s will have increasing effect as more and more officers go through the new training. Profiting from patriotism and nationalistic hysteria after Crimea, the Russian armed forces could again afford to expand and came closer to fulfilling their recruitment goals than in previous years. On the equipment side, economic troubles derailed the 2011-2020 armament plan, and a decision on the subsequent plan was postponed until 2018. Ukrainian and Western sanctions on the defence sector forced the Russian defence industry to substitute 190 items (from Ukraine) and 860 items (from the West). Russia will not reach its goal of fielding 70 percent new weapons platforms until 2020. But it will upgrade existing weapons platforms, and continue to introduce specialised weapons and combat systems that target weaknesses in Western arsenals. As a result, any Western reaction to a Russian assault would face considerable difficulties, and Russia could at least delay a reaction. The West, and particularly Europe, also has problems producing new weapons systems. Neither Europe nor the US will produce a post-Cold War main battle tank until 2030. For infantry-fighting vehicles and artillery systems, the situation is similar. Additionally, legacy US and European equipment is suffering from wear and tear. Since the end of the Cold War, the West has engaged in expeditionary warfare operations and developed equipment specifically for this kind of mission, most of which is unsuitable for the new context. While the US, Germany, Poland, and Sweden have set out new development and procurement priorities, it will take years or decades to develop new systems. Hence, until 2024, many NATO armies will not be best equipped to engage a Russian enemy. In organisational terms, NATO is trying to react to the readiness and geographic challenge Russia poses. At the Wales Summit, the Alliance set up a small spearhead force to react within days to a hybrid incursion on a limited scale. NATO also began to retrain its forces for Article 5 operations. And the US wants to re-invest in European defence. But as long as NATO relies on “deterrence from a distance”, it will need time to effectively deploy to the eastern frontier or the Black Sea, and deployment will be vulnerable to disruption. Small forces rotating in exposed areas such as the Baltic states are capable of dealing with limited hybrid incursions, but are too small to deter larger invasions. Until NATO places more substantial troops closer to exposed borders, Russia will have a time gap of around a week to range free. But while testing NATO will always be a risky move for Russia, projecting military power into the post-Soviet periphery is not. Georgia, Kazakhstan, Belarus, and Ukraine will remain militarily vulnerable. The West Balkans, where Russia has deep roots in nationalist circles, is a theatre where destabilising action could prepare the ground for another conflict. **Any domestic conflict** could be used or abused by Russia **to create a reason for a pre-emptive military strike** to “prevent NATO expansion”. The West has so far neither come up with a credible policy for vulnerable periphery states, nor defined a clear policy for integrating states that have made a democratic transition, nor provided an assistance programme to enable those states to resist a conventional Russian incursion. For the time being, Russia’s expansionism is held back more by its own lack of resources and skills to govern (or finance) larger conquered territories than by neighbouring states’ military capacity. During the Cold War, most neutral states could check a Soviet onslaught, at least enough to allow Western counter-moves, but the existence of many weak and semi-penetrated non-aligned states is a feature of the “dangerous decade”. A succession crisis could easily result in aggression towards that region, and the West should be prepared. Conclusion Russia has ideologically and politically positioned itself as a counter model to Europe, and its leadership claims the right to fight for this model and its recognition in the post-Soviet space and on the world stage. **Domestically**, the struggle for prestige and international recognition **is** also a struggle for the current ruling elite’s **survival**. Putin has created a structure that relies on him as sole permanent political centre and decision

maker, and **he is dependent on the survival of this system**. In the possible succession crises of 2018 and particularly 2024, the regime will fight for the continuation of his power, and **confrontation with the West is likely to be used as a unifying force**. In the same timeframe, Russia will still enjoy some military advantages over its neighbours, particularly in the post-Soviet space. The situation will remain tense unless the force-structure of the Alliance is greatly altered – and the Russia-NATO founding act revoked. The eastern periphery of the alliance and the Western Balkans will remain especially vulnerable. European-Russian relations are entering **a very dangerous decade**. Russian domestic instability coincides with a weak neighbourhood, **low crisis stability**, and military advantages for the party **that initiates military operations**. The West, and particularly Europe, needs to prepare for these contingencies.