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WARS WITHOUT END

Hobbes, Kant and realism: is a world without wars even possible?

Strip away the vocabulary of “international community,” “rules,” and “stability,” and a different picture emerges—less flattering, more coherent. The wars in Iran, Gaza, and Ukraine are not failures of the system. They are its operating mode.

The dominant narrative presents these conflicts as disruptions: crises to be resolved, deviations from an otherwise functional order. But this assumes something that no longer exists, if it ever did: a neutral framework capable of containing power. In reality, what we are witnessing is not the breakdown of order, but the exposure of how it actually works.

Take Ukraine. It is described as a defense of sovereignty, of territorial integrity, of international law. But it is also, unmistakably, a proxy war embedded in a broader strategic contest between great powers. The language of principles overlays a struggle over influence, security architecture, and geopolitical positioning. The war continues not because no solution exists, but because no acceptable balance of power has yet been achieved.

Now look at Gaza. Here the rhetoric shifts: security, counterterrorism, self-defense. Yet the underlying reality is one of asymmetric domination sustained over decades, punctuated by cycles of violence that are periodically rebranded as wars.

Iran introduces a third layer: indirect confrontation. No formal declaration, no clear battlefield, yet a dense network of strikes, proxies, cyber operations, and economic pressure.

These three theaters are not separate. They are structurally linked. Weapons, tactics, and personnel circulate between them. Energy markets connect Iran to Europe’s vulnerability exposed by Ukraine.

This is where the Hobbesian framework helps. The international system remains anarchic—not chaotic, but without a sovereign authority capable of imposing binding rules. In such a system, states do not pursue morality; they pursue survival, advantage, and, where possible, dominance. Norms exist, but they are instruments, not constraints. They are invoked when useful and ignored when necessary. The so-called “rules-based order” is not false—it is selective. It functions where power allows it to function. It collapses where power contests it. Smaller states appeal to it because they lack alternatives; larger states reinterpret it because they can.

Kant had a vision of a world beyond war—based on law, interdependence, and republican governance. It assumed that cooperation could become more rational than conflict. For a time, this seemed plausible. Global trade expanded, institutions multiplied, and direct great-power war receded.

Interdependence has not pacified relations; it has weaponized them. Sanctions replace blockades. Financial systems become pressure tools. Supply chains turn into strategic vulnerabilities. War moves into the infrastructure of everyday life. The Kantian system did not fail. It was absorbed into a Hobbesian reality.

Ukraine again illustrates this. After years of attritional warfare, it is no longer just a battlefield but a laboratory. Drone tactics, electronic warfare, logistical improvisation—these do not remain local. They are exported, adapted, redeployed elsewhere, including in the Middle East. War produces knowledge, and knowledge circulates faster than any peace process. Ukraine is no longer just a site of destruction; it is a mechanism of redistribution. Not only of weapons or tactics, but of risk. The longer the conflict endures, the more it externalizes its consequences—into European economies, into alliance structures, into military doctrines being rewritten in real time. Its significance lies less in territory than in its capacity to reorganize priorities far beyond its borders.

Gaza functions as a space where time itself is compressed. Political decisions that would be contested elsewhere are executed there with immediacy. The enclave becomes a zone where the threshold of what is internationally tolerable is constantly tested, adjusted, and, more often than not, expanded.

Seen together, the wars in Ukraine, Gaza and Iran are not variations of the same war, but different functions within a single system. The issue is not whether the system can escape the logic of power, but whether it has already adapted that logic into a more sustainable form. War, in this configuration, is no longer an uncontrolled eruption. It is modulated—intensified here, frozen there, displaced elsewhere.

A world beyond permanent war would require mechanisms—economic, technological, even informational—that collapse the distance between decision and consequence. A system in which those who choose escalation cannot offload its costs onto others: not onto peripheral regions, not onto future generations, not onto invisible supply chains.

Such a system does not yet exist. In fact, the current global structure is designed to prevent it.

Which brings us back to the present. The persistence of war is not a failure of imagination. It is a failure of limitation. Power remains too capable of insulating itself from the consequences of its own decisions.

Until that changes, the pattern will hold—no matter what language is used to describe it.

The point, then, is not to accept endless war.

It is to understand precisely why it continues—and where, if anywhere, it can be made to break.

NYT COVERS IRAN WITH NO REPORTERS IN IRAN

Report: FAIR Critiques New York Times Coverage of Iran War

A recent media analysis by Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR), authored by Drew Favakeh and published on March 30, 2026, argues that The New York Times has provided structurally imbalanced coverage of the ongoing war involving Iran, Israel, and the United States.

According to the author, the imbalance stems primarily from the newspaper's lack of on-the-ground reporting in Iran, contrasted with extensive in-person coverage from Israel.

"Up-Close" in Israel, "Distant" in Iran

Favakeh writes that the Times has maintained a large reporting presence inside Israel, where journalists have been able to document events in real time. He cites multiple correspondents based in the country and describes their reporting as focused on Israeli civilian experiences, including missile alerts, sheltering, and public reactions to the conflict.

By contrast, Favakeh notes that the Times has no reporters based in Iran, a fact acknowledged by the newspaper's own editors in internal Q&A articles published in March.

He summarizes the disparity as follows: Israeli coverage is "up-close and personal," while Iran is covered from a distance.

"We Can't Be There"

In one of the Q&A pieces cited by FAIR, Adrienne Carter, a senior international editor at the Times, explains that Iran is "very restrictive in terms of access for journalists."

Carter states that the newspaper has only received "two or three visas" in recent years and none during the current phase of the war. She adds that communications inside Iran are heavily limited, making reporting slower and more difficult.

In a separate response quoted by FAIR, Marc Lacey similarly emphasizes that Times reporters "do not have free access" in Iran and would otherwise report directly from affected areas if possible.

Lack of Access Led to Delayed Reporting

Favakeh argues that this absence of reporters has concrete consequences. He points to the example of a strike on a school in Minab that reportedly killed more than 170 civilians.

According to FAIR, it took the Times five days to report that the United States was "most likely" responsible for the attack. Favakeh presents this delay as evidence that remote reporting weakens both speed and clarity in attributing responsibility.

Access to Iran, while difficult, is not impossible, and that major outlets could pursue it more actively.

CNN Reporter Granted Access

FAIR contrasts the Times' position with that of Frederik Pleitgen of CNN.

Citing an interview published by The Guardian, Favakeh notes that Pleitgen successfully obtained a visa and reported from inside Iran shortly after the conflict began. Although Pleitgen acknowledged some restrictions—such as informing authorities before traveling—he stated that "by and large, we could do everything that we wanted to do."

Israeli Media Restrictions Underreported

A central argument in Favakeh's report is that Western media, including the Times, highlight Iranian press restrictions while giving less attention to Israeli censorship.

He cites data from the Committee to Protect Journalists indicating that Israel has killed significantly more journalists than Iran in recent years, particularly in Gaza.

Favakeh also references reporting from +972 Magazine, which documents Israel's military censorship system. According to that reporting, journalists are required to submit security-related content for review before publication, and thousands of articles have been fully or partially censored.

During the current war, additional restrictions were imposed, including bans on reporting precise missile impact locations.

Selective Framing

FAIR further criticizes how media outlets frame restrictions differently depending on the country.

Favakeh points to coverage by Bloomberg, which described Iran's media environment under the label "Repressive Regime," while referring to Israeli restrictions more neutrally as "War Guidelines."

Such language contributes to a double standard in how press freedom issues are presented.

Alternative Approach: Local Journalists

Favakeh suggests that if the Times cannot deploy its own reporters to Iran, it could rely more on local journalists.

He notes that other outlets—including El País and Drop Site News—have used networks such as Egab to publish reports from inside Iran.

These accounts, according to FAIR, provide more immediate and detailed descriptions of the impact of US and Israeli strikes on Iranian civilians.

The New York Times' current approach results in a significant informational imbalance. By relying on remote reporting for Iran while maintaining direct access in Israel, the newspaper produces coverage that differs not only in depth but also in immediacy and human detail.

This disparity ultimately limits readers' understanding of the war—particularly its impact on Iranian civilians—and calls for greater efforts to obtain on-the-ground reporting or collaborate with local journalists.

NATO OUT OF GERMANY?

Is Donald Trump really going to pull US troops out of Germany?

The possibility is no longer theoretical. Within the orbit of Donald Trump, discussions are reportedly underway that could end one of the most enduring pillars of postwar Europe: the permanent stationing of American troops in Germany. If carried through, it would not be a routine redeployment or a symbolic adjustment—it would mark the first deliberate dismantling of the U.S. military architecture that has underwritten European security for nearly eighty years. What once seemed structurally permanent now looks contingent, negotiable, and—crucially—revocable.

For decades, the American military presence in Germany has been more than a relic of the Cold War. It has functioned as a central node in U.S. global operations, from the Middle East to Africa, anchored by installations such as Ramstein Air Base. Roughly 38,000 troops remain stationed across the country, forming not only a theoretical security guarantee for Europe but also a projection platform for American power abroad. To remove them would not simply be a symbolic gesture—it would alter the geography of U.S. strategy.

Yet symbolism matters. Trump's reported consideration of a "pay-to-play" model for NATO reflects a worldview in which alliances are transactional rather than structural. In this framework, countries that do not meet significantly higher defense spending thresholds—figures as high as five percent of GDP have been floated—would lose influence over collective decisions. The principle of consensus, long central to NATO, would be weakened or bypassed. Influence would follow money, not membership.

This approach is not entirely new. During his previous term, Trump repeatedly criticized European allies for what he saw as free-riding under the American security umbrella. But the current proposals go further. They suggest not just pressure, but conditionality: a restructuring of the alliance itself. In such a system, smaller or less militarized states could find themselves marginalized, even in decisions involving collective defense.

The immediate trigger for this renewed tension appears to be disagreement over operations in the Strait of Hormuz. When Washington pushed for a naval deployment to secure shipping lanes, European allies reportedly declined to follow. For Trump, this refusal seems to have reinforced a long-standing frustration: that the United States bears disproportionate risks while others retain equal say. The result is a push to recalibrate not just contributions, but authority.

Trump's approach is less about Germany specifically than about redefining the architecture of Western security.

European leaders, however, are unlikely to accept such changes easily. The consensus model within NATO is not a procedural detail; it is a political foundation. It ensures that even smaller member states retain sovereignty within the alliance framework. Any attempt to replace it with a weighted system would face resistance—not only from governments, but from the institutional culture of NATO itself. Mark Rutte has already emphasized the need for member states to present credible plans for increased defense spending, but that is a different proposition from rewriting the rules of decision-making.

A full U.S. troop withdrawal from Germany would add another layer of complexity. Militarily, it would force a redistribution of American forces, likely toward Eastern Europe or back to the continental United States. Politically, it would send a message that Washington is willing to decouple its security commitments from its historical partnerships. For Germany, the implications would be immediate: economic, strategic, and psychological. U.S. bases are not only military installations; they are embedded in local economies and serve as visible markers of transatlantic ties.

For Europe as a whole, the question is more existential. If American guarantees become conditional, or even reversible, the logic of European defense must change. This could accelerate efforts toward strategic autonomy—a concept often discussed but rarely implemented. It could also deepen divisions within Europe, as countries closer to Russia may seek stronger bilateral ties with Washington, while others push for a more independent path.

Trump's approach, in this sense, is less about Germany specifically than about redefining the architecture of Western security. It challenges assumptions that have held since 1945: that alliances are durable, that commitments are stable, and that leadership comes with obligations that transcend immediate cost-benefit calculations.

Whether these ideas will translate into concrete policy remains uncertain. NATO's internal resistance, congressional constraints in the United States, and the practical difficulties of relocating tens of thousands of troops all act as brakes on rapid change. But even as proposals, they have already achieved something significant: they have introduced doubt into a system that long relied on predictability.

In geopolitics, doubt is rarely neutral. It forces actors to hedge, to prepare, to reconsider what once seemed given. If the American presence in Germany becomes negotiable, then so too does the broader structure of transatlantic relations. And once that structure begins to shift, it is unlikely to return to its previous form.

A NEW DIPLOMATIC ARCHITECTURE IN THE MIDDLE EAST?

How Islamabad's Four-Nation Talks Could Redraw Regional Power Structures

In late March, a gathering of foreign ministers in Islamabad drew global attention not simply for its stated aim of curbing the ongoing war involving Iran and Israel, but for what it suggests about a broader transformation in Middle Eastern geopolitics. Representatives from Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Turkey convened to discuss avenues for de-escalation and cooperation, generating debate among diplomats and analysts about the possible emergence of a new regional bloc capable of influencing the trajectory of the current conflict.

This quadrilateral meeting was not conceived in a vacuum. It comes amid one of the most dangerous escalations in the region in recent decades, a conflict triggered in late February 2026 by a coordinated offensive involving United States and Israeli forces against Iranian targets, and followed by an extensive Iranian military response. The confrontation has already expanded to involve missiles and drones launched at various regional fronts, stirring fears of a larger conflagration that could draw in multiple states with direct stakes in Gulf security.

In this context, Islamabad's efforts represent a deliberate attempt by regional powers to assert greater agency over diplomatic processes that, until now, have largely been shaped by external actors — particularly Washington and, to a lesser extent, Beijing. Pakistan's growing role as an intermediary in the conflict reflects both its own shifting foreign policy posture and the broader fragmentation of traditional power structures in the Middle East.

At the heart of the Islamabad talks was an attempt to produce a diplomatic channel between the United States and Iran — perhaps the most consequential development of the entire episode. Pakistan has publicly offered to host direct negotiations between the two governments and has already relayed elements of Washington's peace proposal to Tehran. While Iran has shown hesitation about some aspects of the plan, the very willingness of both sides to engage indirectly through Islamabad signals a departure from the polarized diplomacy that has defined the war so far.

Islamabad's efforts represent a deliberate attempt by regional powers to assert greater agency over diplomatic processes that, until now, have largely been shaped by external actors

The meeting also underscored a shared, if not entirely unified, recognition among the four countries of the immense regional repercussions of continued conflict. The Gulf's vital energy corridors, global shipping lanes like the Strait of Hormuz, and the economic interdependence of oil markets have all been disrupted by the fighting, prompting capitals from Riyadh to Ankara to rethink how they manage regional security. An initial confidence-building measure negotiated during the talks involved Iranian approval for limited passage of Pakistani-flagged vessels through the strait, a small but symbolically significant breakthrough. Despite this common ground, the potential bloc is not a monolith. Saudi Arabia's participation, for example, reflects a complex strategic calculation. Riyadh has historically balanced between confronting Iranian ambitions and avoiding direct entanglement in major wars that could undermine its own stability and economic interests. By entering the Islamabad dialogue, Saudi policymakers appear to be keeping multiple options open — signaling willingness to de-escalate without ruling out coercive measures if Tehran's behavior is judged unacceptable.

Turkey, for its part, has vocally championed a broader, regional approach to conflict resolution, arguing that issues such as ballistic missile programs and proxy networks cannot be addressed through bilateral negotiations alone. Turkish officials have portrayed the war not merely as a confrontation between Tehran and Tel Aviv but as a strategic moment that could reshape the balance of power across the wider Middle East.

Egypt's role, though less prominent in global headlines, reflects similar strategic concerns. Cairo faces economic pressures and security challenges tied to regional instability, from threats to global trade routes passing through the Suez Canal to the economic fallout of prolonged energy market volatility. This combination of external pressures and internal priorities explains why Egypt has engaged more actively in diplomatic coordination in recent weeks, including outreach efforts alongside Qatar, Bahrain, and other states aimed at broadening the dialogue on de-escalation.

Pakistan's role in this configuration is perhaps the most striking. Historically ostracized from major Middle Eastern diplomacy outside of its ties to Gulf states, Islamabad has, within a matter of months, positioned itself at the center of one of the region's most consequential diplomatic initiatives. This shift has been fueled by Pakistan's strategic recalibration — rebuilding ties with Washington, maintaining strong relations with China, and leveraging its unique connectivity to both Western and Eastern powers for diplomatic influence.

The immediate objectives of the Islamabad talks are clear: to halt the escalation of hostilities and lay groundwork for direct negotiations between Iran and the United States. But the longer-term implications could be more profound if the initiative endures. Regional blocs have historically been forged less through formal treaties than through shared crises and pragmatic cooperation. If the four-nation framework continues to meet, develops institutional mechanisms, and expands its remit beyond the immediate conflict — for example into collective security, economic cooperation, or diplomatic coordination — it could represent a novel third pole alongside existing alignments in the Middle East.

The immediate objectives of the Islamabad talks are clear: to halt the escalation of hostilities and lay groundwork for direct negotiations between Iran and the United States. But the longer-term implications could be more profound if the initiative endures.

Nevertheless, significant challenges remain. The absence of some key regional players from the initial talks — notably Qatar, which has been critical of certain Iranian actions while advocating for an end to the war — highlights lingering distrust and divergent threat perceptions that could limit the bloc's cohesion. More fundamentally, the asymmetrical power relationship between Israel and its adversaries, and the deep mistrust between Washington and Tehran, present structural obstacles that a regional coalition alone may struggle to overcome.

The Islamabad talks are better understood as the beginning of a possible rebalancing of diplomatic influence in a region long dominated by external powers. Whether this four-nation group evolves into a durable strategic bloc capable of shaping peace and security in the Middle East — or fades as the conflict changes shape — will depend on both how the war unfolds and how successfully these countries can reconcile their competing interests.

What the talks have already made clear is that regional diplomacy, long overshadowed by superpower involvement, is asserting itself with unprecedented force. In a Middle East wracked by conflict and uncertainty, this represents both a significant challenge and a rare opportunity for local actors to reshape their own geopolitical destiny.

PLAYING WITH FIRE?

Ukraine attacks Russian Baltic ports

In the quiet hours of early March 31, residents across Estonia awoke to the piercing wail of emergency alerts on their phones. The EE-ALARM system, Estonia's national hazard notification app, lit up with warnings of an "air threat" near the borders with Russia. Drones—linked to Ukraine's ongoing counteroffensive—had entered Estonian airspace, prompting widespread alerts that stretched from the northeast to central and southern regions. By dawn, the all-clear sounded, but the incident was far from isolated.

Russia accuses the Baltic states of complicity, claiming Ukrainian drones are overflying their airspace with impunity. Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania firmly deny any involvement, attributing the incursions to "stray" Ukrainian drones knocked off course—possibly by Russian electronic warfare. "I have no reason to doubt the official version of the Estonian Ministry of Defense", says Aleksandr Tšaplõgin, an Estonian MP interviewed by East and West.

Ust-Luga and Primorsk, located in Russia's Leningrad Oblast on the southern and northern shores of the Gulf of Finland respectively, are no ordinary ports. Together, they handle roughly half of Russia's seaborne oil exports—millions of barrels of crude and refined products daily, generating billions in revenue that funds Moscow's military efforts in Ukraine.

From Moscow's viewpoint, the story is one of direct provocation—and potential NATO entanglement. Russian officials and state media have repeatedly claimed that Ukrainian drones are not simply "drifting" but are traversing Baltic airspace en route to their targets. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov stated explicitly on March 31 that if foreign countries allow their airspace to be used for "hostile, terrorist activity" against Russia, Moscow would "draw the appropriate conclusions and take corresponding measures." Russia portrays the Baltic states as active participants in a hybrid war, accusing them of opening their skies to Ukrainian operations. Russian air defenses, including electronic warfare (EW) systems, are depicted as successfully intercepting most threats, but any incursions are framed as evidence of Baltic collusion rather than technical failure. For Russia, these events justify heightened vigilance—and potential retaliation—against what it sees as an expanding theater of conflict.

The evidence supports the Baltic and Ukrainian account. But some Russian analysts sound indeed chilling. Stanislav Tkachenko, professor of international relations at Sankt Peterburg State University, commented to East and West: "For the time being, the prevailing view in Russia is that the primary objective is the successful conclusion of the special military operation and the dismantling of the Nazi regime in Ukraine. This is to be followed by a comprehensive diplomatic and economic distancing from Europe. In other words, Russia will in the near future strengthen its anti-missile and air defence capabilities, and develop other means of protecting its port facilities in the North-West, which play a vital role in the export of hydrocarbons and mineral fertilisers. At the same time, Russia will gather intelligence on the defence capabilities of the Baltic states with the aim of neutralising them in the medium term. In Moscow, the view is gaining ground that the three Baltic states have failed the test of sovereignty, preferring to exchange it for the status of 'junior partners' in the West's struggle against Russia. Therefore, a military-technical response to the current hostile actions of Tallinn, Riga and Vilnius is bound to follow; it will not be long before it comes."

THE END OF ENCRYPTION?

As quantum computing advances faster than expected, the cryptographic foundations of the digital world face a silent but irreversible countdown

The phrase “quantum apocalypse” sounds like a marketing exaggeration, the kind of apocalyptic metaphor that circulates easily in tech journalism. Yet behind the rhetoric lies a far more unsettling reality: a slow, almost invisible erosion of the assumptions that sustain the digital world. What companies like Google are now signaling is not the imminent collapse of civilization, but the approaching expiration date of one of its most fundamental protections—encryption.

For decades, modern life has relied on a quiet pact between mathematics and computing power. Encryption works not because it is theoretically unbreakable, but because it is practically unbreakable. The algorithms that secure banking transactions, confidential communications, and state secrets are built on problems that classical computers cannot solve within any meaningful timeframe. Factorizing large numbers or computing discrete logarithms is not impossible; it is simply infeasible. The difference has always been enough.

Quantum computing threatens to erase that difference.

Unlike classical machines, which process information in bits that exist as either zero or one, quantum computers operate on qubits that can exist in multiple states simultaneously. This is not merely a quantitative improvement in speed; it is a qualitative shift in how computation itself is performed. When combined with algorithms such as Shor's algorithm, quantum systems gain the ability to solve precisely those mathematical problems that underpin today’s encryption standards. What was once computationally impractical becomes efficient. What was once secure becomes transparent.

The shock, however, is not just technological. It is temporal. For years, the consensus held that quantum computers capable of breaking encryption were a distant prospect, safely confined to the 2040s or beyond. That comfortable horizon has begun to collapse. Internal projections and recent research suggest that the threshold for cryptographically relevant quantum machines may be far lower than previously assumed. Instead of millions of stable qubits, it may take tens of thousands—still an immense engineering challenge, but no longer an abstract one. The timeline has shifted from speculative to strategic. The date that now circulates in security circles—sometimes explicitly, sometimes cautiously implied—is the end of this decade.

This compression of time creates a paradox. The threat is not fully realized, yet it is already operational in a latent form. Intelligence agencies and sophisticated actors do not need quantum computers today to benefit from them tomorrow. Encrypted data can be harvested now, stored indefinitely, and decrypted later when the necessary computational power becomes available. This strategy, often described as “harvest now, decrypt later,” transforms the quantum threat from a future event into a present condition. Information with long-term sensitivity—diplomatic cables, industrial secrets, personal archives—may already be compromised in principle, even if the breach cannot yet be executed.

Nowhere is this vulnerability more tangible than in the realm of cryptocurrencies. Systems like Bitcoin rely on elliptic-curve cryptography to secure ownership and transactions. Under classical assumptions, deriving a private key from a public one is effectively impossible. Under quantum assumptions, it becomes feasible. The scenario is not purely theoretical. In certain transaction windows, public keys are exposed, creating opportunities for a sufficiently powerful quantum attacker to reconstruct the corresponding private key and seize assets. The implications extend beyond financial loss; they challenge the foundational premise of decentralized trust on which such systems are built.

Yet the real scope of the problem is much broader than any single application. Encryption is not a layer that can be peeled away and replaced at will. It is embedded in the architecture of the internet, in communication protocols, in hardware, in legacy systems that cannot be easily upgraded. The migration to quantum-resistant cryptography is therefore not a simple technical update but a systemic transformation. It requires new standards, new implementations, and above all, time. This is precisely what makes the current moment precarious. The transition must occur before the threat fully materializes, not after.

Efforts to address this challenge are already underway. Post-quantum cryptography seeks to develop algorithms that remain secure even in the presence of quantum adversaries. These systems are based on mathematical problems for which no efficient quantum solutions are known, such as lattice-based constructions. Institutions like National Institute of Standards and Technology have begun the process of evaluating and standardizing such algorithms, marking the first concrete steps toward a new cryptographic infrastructure. But standardization is only the beginning. Implementation across global networks, devices, and institutions is a task measured not in months, but in years.

The same technology that threatens encryption promises breakthroughs in fields ranging from materials science to pharmacology. It is not an external danger, but an internal development—a product of the same scientific and industrial systems that now seek to defend against it. This creates a peculiar form of technological self-subversion, in which progress in one domain destabilizes the foundations of another.

Encryption is not merely a technical tool; it is an instrument of power. It secures military communications, financial systems, and diplomatic channels. A state that achieves quantum decryption capabilities ahead of others would gain unprecedented access to global information flows, altering the balance of intelligence and influence. At the same time, the shift to quantum-safe systems requires a level of coordination that is difficult to achieve in an increasingly fragmented international landscape. Vulnerabilities in one region can propagate across interconnected networks, creating asymmetries that are as much political as they are technical.

Quantum hardware is still constrained by error rates, instability, and scaling challenges. Predictions about timelines are inherently fragile, subject to both overestimation and sudden acceleration. It is entirely possible that the most dramatic scenarios will be delayed. It is equally possible that they will arrive sooner than expected. The real danger is not that quantum computers will arrive. It is that they will arrive before the world is ready.

AI AND JOURNALISM

AI is not killing journalism — it is forcing it to choose what it really wants to be

Artificial intelligence has moved from the margins of journalism to its core infrastructure. What used to be assistance now shapes how news is written, distributed, and consumed. Inside newsrooms, AI is already embedded in daily routines. It drafts short articles, summarizes documents, and processes data at a speed no human team can match. Local news in particular has become a testing ground: in the United States, fully AI-generated outlets are appearing to fill gaps left by collapsing regional media. Established newspapers are moving more cautiously but in the same direction. The journalist becomes less a writer in the traditional sense and more an editor of machine output. This is not necessarily degradation. It is a redefinition. But it also raises a blunt question: if the first version of reality is written by an algorithm, who is actually framing the story?

Readers no longer need to visit a newspaper's website to "consume" journalism; they receive processed fragments of it elsewhere. This breaks the historical link between publisher and audience. Journalism risks becoming raw material rather than a finished product.

AI is destabilizing the basic evidence on which journalism depends. Images, videos, even audio can now be generated at scale with minimal friction. In conflict reporting, verification has become slower, more technical, and more uncertain.

Economically, the contradiction sharpens. Media companies fear being replaced by AI systems that summarize their work, yet they increasingly license their content to those same systems.

What survives in this environment is not speed or volume—machines dominate both—but credibility. Not the abstract kind invoked in mission statements, but the concrete ability to say: this was checked, this was seen, this matters. In a landscape saturated with synthetic text, verification becomes more valuable than production.

The result is a forced clarification. Journalism can continue as a high-volume content industry, indistinguishable from automated output. Or it can narrow itself, becoming slower, more selective, and more grounded in reporting that cannot be easily replicated.

This Week in History: April 4–17

On 4 April 1968, **Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated in Memphis**, Tennessee. His death triggered riots across the United States and marked a devastating blow to the civil rights movement, even as his legacy accelerated the passage of reforms.

On 5 April 1951, **Julius Rosenberg and Ethel Rosenberg were sentenced to death** in the United States for passing atomic secrets to the Soviet Union. Their trial became one of the most controversial espionage cases of the Cold War.

On 6 April 1994, the **plane carrying Juvénal Habyarimana was shot down over Kigali, triggering the Rwandan Genocide**. Within days, systematic massacres began, resulting in the deaths of around 800,000 people in one of the late 20th century's most horrific atrocities.

On 7 April 2003, **U.S. forces entered Baghdad during the Iraq War**, signaling the imminent fall of Saddam Hussein's regime. The rapid military victory would soon give way to a prolonged and destabilizing occupation.

On 9 April 1940, **Nazi Germany launched Operation Weserübung**, occupying Denmark and invading Norway. The operation secured strategic access to iron ore and extended German control over the North Sea.

On 10 April 1998, the **Good Friday Agreement was signed**, largely ending decades of sectarian conflict known as "The Troubles" in Northern Ireland. The agreement established a power-sharing government and remains a cornerstone of regional stability.

On 11 April 1961, the **trial of Adolf Eichmann began in Jerusalem**. As one of the principal architects of the Holocaust, his prosecution brought global attention to Nazi crimes and raised enduring questions about justice and responsibility.

On 12 April 1961, **Yuri Gagarin became the first human in space aboard Vostok 1**. The flight marked a decisive Soviet victory in the early Space Race and transformed humanity's sense of its place in the universe.

On 13 April 1975, the **Lebanese Civil War** began after a deadly bus attack in Beirut. The conflict would draw in regional and international powers and devastate Lebanon for fifteen years.

On 14 April 1986, the **United States launched airstrikes against Libya in Operation El Dorado Canyon**, targeting sites linked to Muammar Gaddafi. The attack was presented as retaliation for terrorism and intensified tensions in the region.

On 15 April 1912, the **RMS Titanic sank in the North Atlantic** after striking an iceberg, killing more than 1,500 people. The disaster became one of the most famous maritime tragedies in history and led to major reforms in maritime safety.

On 17 April 1961, the **Bay of Pigs Invasion** began as Cuban exiles, backed by the United States, attempted to overthrow Fidel Castro. The failure humiliated Washington and strengthened Cuba's alignment with the Soviet Union.

The NATO Secretary General's Annual Report: PR gloss for an alliance on the edge

On 26 March 2026, NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte released his Annual Report for 2025. While NATO has existed since 1949, the tradition of a formal, publicly released Secretary General's Annual Report began only in 2011. Prior to that date, NATO released a periodically updated NATO Handbook. To date, 16 annual reports have been issued by 3 different Secretaries General: Anders Fogh Rasmussen (4 reports); Jens Stoltenberg (10 reports); and Mark Rutte (2 reports).

The current report says NATO became stronger in 2025 by boosting deterrence, increasing defence spending and industrial capacity, expanding exercises and command structures, and sustaining major support to Ukraine. The main headline achievements outlined in the report are:

At the 2025 Hague Summit, allies adopted a new Defence Investment Plan targeting 5% of GDP by 2035, with 3.5% for core defence and 1.5% for wider security, resilience, innovation and industrial capacity (pp. 7-8 and 23).

NATO responded to a more dangerous security environment, especially Russia's aggression against Ukraine, with new deterrence measures such as Baltic Sentry and Eastern Sentry (pp.4-6).

The alliance strengthened its military posture through new command arrangements, air operations capabilities in the High North, and a large exercise programme across all domains (pp. 5 and 54).

Support to Ukraine remained central, including NATO Security and Assistance Training, the Comprehensive Assistance Package, the Joint Analysis, Training and Education Centre, and the new PURL mechanism for US weapons funded by allies and partners (pp.36-38).

NATO also deepened cooperation with partners in the southern neighbourhood and Indo-Pacific, while advancing cyber defence, resilience and innovation initiatives (pp. 16 and 45).

Overall, the report presents 2025 as a year of major adaptation: more spending, more readiness, more industrial output and stronger collective defence. An alternative reading of the year might well have highlighted increased transatlantic insecurity from a crisis of predictability and reliability, as the 'America First' posture collided with Europe's deep-seated military and economic dependencies. This created a fundamental divergence in strategic priorities, creating what experts termed a "transatlantic reckoning".

The report does not discuss intra-NATO tensions in 2025 or the US threat to annex Greenland. What it does say is the opposite: it stresses allied unity, a "strong transatlantic bond," and that "North America and Europe have always been stronger together in NATO" (pp. 4-5). It also frames the Hague Defence Investment Plan as making NATO "fairer" by rebalancing the burden of security (p.4).

Threat perceptions

The report identifies these main threats to NATO:

Russia — the "most significant and direct threat" to allied security, with its war against Ukraine, airspace violations, sabotage, cyber activity and hybrid actions (pp. 4 and 8).

Terrorism — described as the "most direct asymmetric threat" to allied citizens and international peace and prosperity (p.8).

Cyber threats — malicious cyber campaigns targeting NATO networks, critical infrastructure and democratic institutions (pp.16 and 46).

Hybrid threats / sub-threshold actions— including sabotage, disinformation, interference, and attacks below Article 5 (pp. 4, 8 and 22).

China's coercive policies and cyber activity — treated as a challenge to allied interests and security, especially through its support for Russia and malicious cyber behaviour (p.46).

Instability in the southern neighbourhood — in the understatement of the year the report says the southern neighbourhood is "volatile" (p.4).

The report also highlights risks to critical infrastructure, energy security, maritime security, space and air and missile defence as important areas of vulnerability (pp. 13, 16 and 22).

The future of Ukraine

Ukraine is the country that is mentioned most in the report (131 times). However, the report does not describe a negotiated end-state or timeline. It says NATO's aim is to help bring the war to an end and achieve "a just and lasting peace". It also says NATO's support is meant to help Ukraine defend itself today, be ready to deter future Russian aggression, and be in a strong position to secure an enduring peace (pp.5 and 36).

Annual reports are one of the key mechanisms used by government agencies, private companies and civil society groups alike to impart knowledge about their organisation in an informative, structured and cost-effective manner. Annual reports should be seen as part of a larger accountability framework, co-existing with and complementary to other sources of information. Other sources of information come from pro-active public release, the internet and other open sources, including (in the case of government entities) responses to freedom of information requests. Yet despite improving certain aspects of its public diplomacy outreach, NATO remains the only major intergovernmental body not to have even a basic information disclosure policy. An annual report, however edifying, does little to fill this crucial accountability vacuum, even if it does help increase understanding of the 'NATO brand' among some stakeholders. One key omission from the annual report is the continuing absence of any proposals for public disclosure reform.

Each year the Annual Report contains a few paragraphs on improving transparency, usually found towards the end of the report. This year's report has very little to say about transparency and nothing to say about accountability.

The report also says major exercises are publicly announced in advance and, where appropriate, observers from international institutions and non-NATO countries are invited, in line with transparency and confidence and security-building obligations (p.54). In the broader governance sense, the report points to consensus-based decision-making and regular consultation as part of NATO's institutional oversight culture (p.49).

NATO Watch

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