



## Doug Bandow: NATO Should Be 'Pensioned Off, Replaced'

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On NATO's 70th birthday, it is time for burden shedding to replace burden sharing, according to Doug Bandow, former special assistant to President Ronald Reagan.

In a commentary for Foreign Policy, Bandow, a senior fellow at the Cato Institute, says the organization "should be pensioned off and replaced with security architecture developed to meet current challenges."

Bandow wrote that President Donald Trump has "spent years inveighing against NATO" — and now "finally has the power to do something about it."

"[H]e should insist that Europe take over responsibility for its own security," Bandow wrote.

According to Bandow, Europeans expect the United States to "ride to the rescue in any crisis," so they see little reason to spend much on their own militaries.

"Yet the same U.S. officials who complain about lagging European defense efforts routinely reassure those allies of America's enduring commitment," he lamented.

Bandow decries a process that "endlessly repeats, teaching each generation of European leaders that no matter how little they do, Washington will defend the continent."

He also argued NATO's survival was in doubt after the collapse of the Soviet Union but "decided to stay relevant in two ways" — by expanding membership and by opting "to undertake activities in nonmember nations."

The first move riled Russia, and the second "transformed NATO into an offensive force," he wrote.

"Expansion grows ever more far-fetched, with the alliance most recently adding Montenegro and North Macedonia, small states that face no obvious threat and can make no serious contribution to Europe's defense," he wrote.

"Against significant European opposition, moreover, the United States even supports bringing Georgia and Ukraine into the body."

But as NATO becomes a "global alliance," Washington remains responsible for "the vast majority of its combat capabilities in Europe and beyond," Bandow wrote.