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An Ongoing and Necessary Renaissance: NATO's Nuclear Posture

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President Putin's nuclear saber-rattling while the war in Ukraine has raged, along with lurid nuclear threats by Russian officials and propagandists, have once again focused attention on NATO's nuclear mission. As the alliance approaches a summit in Washington later this summer, it is an appropriate time to review its nuclear posture.

For decades, NATO's nuclear weapons have played a critical political and military role in underpinning alliance unity and deterring Russian intimidation and aggression. Today, NATO is also in the process of replacing its 1960's-era nuclear bombs with updated weapons, as well as upgrading the 1980's-era F-16 and Tornado aircraft that carry them with modern F-35A fighters.

Nevertheless, given Russia's recent behavior and the prospect that it could become even more reliant on its nuclear forces due to conventional military losses in Ukraine, now is the time to explore other potential changes to NATO's nuclear posture, to include broadening the participation of its members in nuclear sharing and forward-stationing nuclear weapons on the territory of member states that have joined since 1997—notably Poland, which has suggested its willingness to host.