

Exactly 42 years ago, on September 26th, Lieutenant Colonel Stanislav Petrov was the duty officer at the command center for Russia's Oco nuclear early-warning system when the system reported that missiles had been launched from the United States. Petrov ultimately judged the reports to be a false alarm. Had he reported the "incursion" to his superiors, the Soviet military would likely have launched a retaliatory nuclear attack on the United States and its NATO allies, sparking a massive nuclear war. Many call him the 'man who saved the world.'



Today, it's inarguable that the West and NATO are closer to outright conflict than at any time since the Cold War. In recent weeks Russian jets have crossed into Romania, Poland and Estonian airspace. Drones have buzzed airports in Denmark and Norway, The Financial Times reports that Russian ships are mapping NATO undersea communications links to prepare to sever them should war break out. And Moscow

continues to provide support to extremist European political actors with a view to sowing political discord. The signs could not be clearer.

This is not to say that a Third World War is inevitable, but without vastly greater investment in defense, the West will be hard pressed to stave off continued Russian aggression. The front line of any such aggression is and will continue to be Europe, and while some in Europe take this very seriously (Poland, Finland, the Baltics, and finally Germany), many other countries remain utterly unprepared.

Therefore, I ask my European friends as well as any others with connections to Europe to share this message widely. Ask your friends and relatives to advocate for much greater serious of purpose by their elected officials. Ask them to find ways to support Ukraine — including via “In The Trenches”. As Alexander Stubb, Finland’s President reminded us: “The only thing that President Putin understands is power. The only thing that will bring him to the negotiating table is pressure.”