**[The causes and consequences of the Ukraine war](https://www.eui.eu/news-hub?id=john-mearsheimers-lecture-on-the-causes-and-consequences-of-the-ukraine-war)**

John Mearsheimer, 2022

“The tragic truth is, that if the West had not pursued NATO expansion, into Ukraine, it is unlikely there would be a war in Ukraine today and Crimea would still be part of Ukraine.

In essence, Washington played the central role in leading Ukraine down the path to destruction.

History will judge the United-States, and its Allies, with abundant harshness for its remarkably foolish policy on Ukraine.”

John Mearsheimer, 17 June 2022.

Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies

European University Institute

<https://www.eui.eu/news-hub?id=john-mearsheimers-lecture-on-the-causes-and-consequences-of-the-ukraine-war>

“Was it an expansionist aim that led Putin to invade Ukraine or was it the perception of Ukraine as a Western bulwark threatening Russia?

On 16 June, University of Chicago [Prof. John J. Mearsheimer](https://www.mearsheimer.com/) visited Villa Schifanoia in Florence to discuss the current Russian invasion on Ukraine whilst exploring the potential causes and consequences of the crisis.

The event, that was organized by the Robert Schuman Centre and the Department of History, gathered almost 200 attendees in person and online.

The political scientist, well known for his realist approach, argued that the United States was principally responsible for causing the Ukraine crisis, even if Putin was the one starting the war and the person responsible for Russia’s conduct on the battlefield: "My key point is that the United States pushed forward policies towards Ukraine that Putin and his colleagues see as existential threat to their country […] specifically I am talking about America’s obsession with bringing Ukraine into NATO and making it a Western bulwark on Russia’s border"

Professor Mearsheimer insisted that Moscow was not interested in making Ukraine part of Russia, but in making sure it would not become a springboard from Western aggression; and that Russia could not feel safe, develop and exist while facing a permanent threat from the territory of today’s Ukraine. He insisted that despite the Western narrative about NATO, the determinant aspect to understand the root causes of this conflict is how Moscow sees the alliance’s actions.”

Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies

[European University Institute](https://www.eui.eu/news-hub?id=john-mearsheimers-lecture-on-the-causes-and-consequences-of-the-ukraine-war), 17 June 2022.