

Commentary

Russia's Thorn in Europe's Side: Kaliningrad, NATO, and the EU

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After Russia's annexation of Crimea, and the West's introduction of economic sanctions, the Kaliningrad region has become a source of tension between Russia, NATO, and the EU. The region has staged tit-for-tat military displays by both Russia and neighboring EU and NATO members Poland and Lithuania. But while Russia is eager to project the image of Kaliningrad as a military stronghold and buffer against NATO expansionism, Kaliningrad's real threat to European stability stems from its vulnerable exclave status and unclear economic relationship with the EU. This talk outlined the region's curious history, focusing on recent years when Kaliningrad has served both as a military outpost and a cultural bridge between Russia and Europe.

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