PROTECTING THE FUTURE: NATO'S MADRID SUMMIT AND STRATEGIC CONCEPT

In June 2022, Spain hosted one of the most consequential summits in NATO's history. The doors of the Alliance were opened to Finland and Sweden, leaders made clear that they would continue to support Ukraine, outlined the largest reinforcement of Alliance deterrence and defense in decades, and agreed NATO's new Strategic Concept. For the first time, Indo-Pacific partners were invited to join a NATO Summit. These and other key decisions taken at the Summit will ensure NATO continues to adapt and protect its citizens in a more competitive and dangerous world. This article provides an overview of these decisions in the context of the more unpredictable security environment facing the Alliance.

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Summer 2022

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I n June 2022, Spain hosted one of the most consequential summits in NATO's history. The gathering of Allied leaders took place at a crucial moment for our security, and the Allies proved up to the task. They demonstrated unity and resolve to confront current and future security challenges and threats, and opened the doors of the Alliance to two new invitees – Finland and Sweden – which will help enhance their security and strengthen the Alliance.

The summit was particularly impactful for a range of reasons, not least because it took place against the backdrop of the Russian Federation's brutal invasion of Ukraine. Russian aggression, in addition to creating unspeakable human suffering and destruction in Ukraine, has increased global insecurity and instability, openly challenging the mutually agreed principles that underpin European security and seriously undermining the rules-based international order. Leaders made clear that NATO's support to Ukraine will last for as long as it takes. By agreeing to a Comprehensive Assistance Package for Ukraine, Allies reaffirmed that their commitment to Ukraine is unshakeable.

During the Summit, Allies also adopted a new Strategic Concept, NATO's roadmap for the next decade. The Strategic Concept reaffirms NATO's values, its purpose and its core tasks. It provides a collective assessment of the security challenges facing the Alliance and outlines the political and military tasks NATO will carry out to address them.

While NATO's three core tasks– collective defense, crisis prevention and management, and cooperative security– remain, this new Concept is significantly different in scope and tone compared to its 2010 predecessor. Several aspects of the security environment a decade ago informed the 2010 Concept. The ambition of that time was to develop a strategic partnership with the Russian Federation. There was also a belief that the international security order was, overall, more predictable and that most security challenges would come from beyond NATO's area of responsibility. The People's Republic of China (PRC) had not yet reached the transatlantic security agenda. These facts led to a consequent strong focus on crisis management. As we enter the 2020s, the Madrid Concept describes today's more unstable and challenging security environment, and makes clear the need for Allies to be prepared for this volatility.

In light of this changed security environment, the recently adopted Madrid Concept focuses on the future trajectory of NATO-Russia relations, the strengthening of NATO's collective deterrence and defense posture, and on the framing of NATO's

relationship with the PRC. It also makes pronounced reference to space, resilience and cyber as integral elements of our collective deterrence and defense posture and covers NATO's evolving approach to a number of other threats and challenges, including terrorism and hybrid activities.

In the Madrid concept, we also observe a stronger emphasis on collective defense over crisis management and cooperative security. However, all three core tasks persist, recognizing that NATO is the only international organization that can mount and sustain complex, multinational operations; and because working with partners remains key for NATO's security and theirs, including through efforts aimed at enhancing their resilience.

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Together with the Strategic Concept, the decisions taken at the summit have set NATO's strategic direction for the future, ensuring that the Alliance will continue to adapt to a changing world and keep its one billion people safe. Let us review these decisions in greater depth.

NATO-Russia Relations

Perhaps the most notable difference between the Lisbon and the Madrid Strategic Concepts concerns the change in NATO's relations with the Russian Federation. The Russian Federation's illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014, its aggressive pattern of behavior against its neighbors and NATO Allies, and the full-fledged invasion of Ukraine in 2022 have broken the trust that was once at the core of the NATO-Russia relationship, changing it fundamentally for the long-term. In this context, meaningful dialogue with the Russian Federation is no longer possible, precisely because of its blatant violation of international law and use of military force against an independent, sovereign nation.

The new Strategic Concept reflects this reality and considers the Russian Federation the most significant and direct threat to Allies' security.[1] NATO seeks stability and predictability in the Euro-Atlantic area and in NATO-Russia relations, but Allies have made it clear that any change in the relationship will depend on the Russian Federation putting an end to its aggressive behavior and complying with international law. Nevertheless, the Alliance will remain open to keeping channels of communication with Moscow, in order to manage and mitigate risks, prevent escalation, and increase transparency.

This important shift is accompanied by concrete actions. NATO has undertaken the largest reinforcement of its deterrence and defense since the end of the Cold War. In the wake of the Russian Federation's war of aggression in Ukraine, the Alliance has brought 40,000 multi-national troops under direct NATO command, in addition to the 100,000 U.S. troops deployed in Europe. NATO has doubled the number of battle groups along its eastern front, from the four established after the Russian Federation's annexation of Crimea in 2014, to eight today.

At the Madrid Summit, NATO Leaders agreed to further strengthen the Alliance's deterrence and forward defenses. This entails having more forces at higher readiness.

The eight battlegroups on the eastern flank will be scaled up to brigade level. There will also be more pre-positioned equipment and weapons stockpiles, to allow NATO to be even more responsive in times of crisis or conflict. Allies also agreed a new force model, which will strengthen and modernize the NATO Force Structure. It will also resource the Alliance's new generation of military plans, in line with its 360-degree approach, across the land, air, maritime, cyber and space domains and against all threats and challenges. Specifically, the new force model plans for over 100,000 troops at ten day readiness, around 200,000 at 10 to 30 day readiness and at least 500,000 up to 30 to 180 day readiness. Forces will be earmarked to defend specific, pre-assigned NATO countries, thereby ensuring security for the long term.

The People's Republic of China: Challenges and Opportunities

If we read the 2010 Strategic Concept through today's geopolitical lens, we will notice, perhaps with surprise, that it does not mention the PRC, as if the PRC has no impact on the security of the Euro-Atlantic area. There is no denying that the rise of the PRC impacts our security: the PRC has the world's second largest defense budget and is investing heavily in modern military capabilities. It is substantially building up its military forces, including expanding its nuclear arsenal and developing increasingly sophisticated delivery systems. At the same time, it is not party to any

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[1] NATO. "NATO 2022 Strategic Concept," nato.int, https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2022/6/pd-f/290622-strategic-concept.pdf

existing arms control treaties – crucial tools to increase transparency and reduce the risk of misunderstanding or miscalculation around these capabilities.

The PRC is also increasingly assertive in the global arena and together with the Russian Federation, is using multilateral fora to push its autocratic agenda and undermine Western values and the rules-based international order. At the same time, the PRC continues to amplify the Russian Federation's hostile information activities against NATO. The PRC's investment in critical infrastructure in third countries and indeed in NATO Allied nations, is a risk we must also be aware of. The use of technology and artificial intelligence to monitor and control its own citizens is also worrying. All of this has consequences for NATO's security, interests and values.

It is important to stress that the PRC is not NATO's adversary and that is why we will continue to look at both the challenges and the opportunities that it brings. In this context, while we take into account the consequences it presents to security, it is also important to have a dialogue with the PRC to discuss issues such as arms control or climate change.

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Our partners in the Asia-Pacific play a very important role here. NATO will continue to stand with its partners to preserve the rules-based international order, an order based on norms and values rather than on force. We are working together with them on cyber defense, emerging and disruptive technologies, maritime security, climate change, and countering disinformation in order to help resist the PRC's coercive policies.

New – and Not So New – Challenges

While the Russian Federation's invasion of Ukraine has brought military confrontation back to Europe at a scale that we have not seen in many decades, this is not the only threat that NATO faces. Cyber-attacks are becoming more frequent and sophisticated, terrorist threats persist, nuclear weapons are proliferating and climate change is driving instability and fueling crises.

Taking into consideration these new security challenges, strengthening NATO's national and collective resilience is a priority in the Madrid Strategic Concept. Even though the use of the term "resilience" in public discourse may be relatively new, NATO's work on resilience is not. The concept is grounded in Article 3 of 1949's North Atlantic Treaty. Our societies and our institutions must be able to better resist and bounce back from attacks. This includes many different elements to make our societies stronger: our infrastructure must be more resilient, we should diversify our supply chains and make them more secure and of course, properly address hostile information activities seeking to divide us and weaken our democratic institutions. As NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg has said on many occasions, civilian resilience is our first line of defense.

Ensuring resilience also requires a robust technological base. For over 70 years, NATO has stayed at the forefront of technology development to ensure the defense of its Allies and the success of its operations. Emerging and disruptive technologies are also having a profound impact on security. These technologies are providing new opportunities for NATO militaries, helping them become more effective, resilient, cost-efficient and sustainable. However, they also represent new threats from state and non-state actors, both militarily and to society at large. To embrace these opportunities and at the same time counter these threats, NATO has recently established a Defence Innovation Accelerator for the North Atlantic (DIANA), to help develop cutting-edge solutions to security challenges by working closely with start-ups, industry, and academia.

Climate change is a defining challenge of our time, it acts as a crisis multiplier and more extreme weather devastates communities and fuels tensions and conflicts. Climate change matters for our security and we are working to incorporate it into everything we do – from defense planning to capability development and exercises. This calls for a fundamental transformation of NATO's approach to defense and security and sets NATO as the leading international organization in understanding and adapting to the security implications of climate change. In Madrid, Allies agreed to cut emissions by NATO bodies and commands by at least 45 percent by 2030 and to move towards net zero by 2050. NATO will maintain its operational effectiveness and readiness as we continue to adapt.

NATO Allies and Türkiye in particular, have been targets for terrorist groups. These groups have expanded their networks, enhanced their capabilities and invested in new technologies. The new Strategic Concept recognizes that terrorism, in all its forms and manifestations, as the most direct asymmetric threat to the security of our citizens and to international stability and prosperity. In support of national authorities,

NATO ensures shared awareness of the terrorist threat through consultations, enhanced intelligence sharing, including with partners, and continuous strategic analysis and assessment. One example is the work conducted by the Centre of Excellence for Defence Against Terrorism in Ankara, Türkiye, which serves both as a location for meetings and as a catalyst for international dialogue and discussion on terrorism and counter-terrorism. The Centre reaches out to over 50 countries and 40 organizations. NATO's training mission in Iraq is also actively helping to prevent the return of the Islamic State.

At the NATO Summit, Allies reviewed the progress made in the fight against terrorism and reconfirmed their commitment to continue this fight with determination and solidarity. Terrorism remains by nature a global threat. It knows no border, nationality or religion and thus it is a challenge the international community must tackle together. NATO has been contributing to a more holistic approach by strengthening outreach to, and cooperation with, partner countries and international actors.

Protecting Our Future, Together

In today's complex and unpredictable security environment, NATO's relations with partners across the globe are key. Our practical cooperation includes crosscutting global challenges such as cyber defense, maritime security, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, non-proliferation, defense science and technology, and Women, Peace and Security. Some partners participate in NATO's military operations, while many have also benefited from NATO's expertise in areas such as building defense capacity and defense training and education.

The new Strategic Concept takes NATO's partnerships to a new level, adopting a more global outlook to face these threats together. In an era of strategic competition, it is vital that NATO works even more closely with nations and organizations that share its values. A good example of partnership is the work NATO does with the European Union, with whom we share 23 out of 30 members. Indeed, NATO protects 93 percent of the EU population. With the memberships of Finland and Sweden, this would rise to 96 percent. Both, already enjoy a very fruitful partnership, and will continue to deepen their cooperation.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine has also made it clear that NATO needs to step up tailored political and practical support to partners vulnerable to Russian threats and interference, including the Republic of Moldova as well as Bosnia and Herzegovina and Georgia. Supportive measures include strengthening resilience and reinforcing

public diplomacy and strategic communications. Hostile information activities represent a particularly worrying and pervasive threat, and NATO is ready to support partners to combat it.

NATO is also strengthening relations with its Indo-Pacific partners Australia, Japan, the Republic of Korea and New Zealand and they joined NATO Allies at the Madrid Summit to discuss the global implications of the PRC's rise and the Russian Federation's invasion of Ukraine. NATO will continue working together in areas such as cyber defense, emerging and disruptive technologies, maritime security, climate change, and countering hostile information activities.

Jordan and Mauritania also participated in the Madrid Summit, demonstrating NATO's determination to continue to respond to challenges from the South, including the Sahel. Allies agreed a capacity-building package for Mauritania, additional capacity building support for Tunisia and they continue to support Jordan. Support will be focused in a number of key areas, including special operations, maritime security and intelligence, and the Alliance will help these partners deal with security concerns, including border security, irregular migration, and terrorism.

Today's challenges are too great for any one nation or organization to face alone. By standing together with its partners, NATO is stronger and safer and it can better protect its people, its values, and its way of life. NATO's new Strategic Concept provides us with an updated road map that will guide us in an increasingly challenging security environment and will ensure NATO remains ready to address different threats and challenges as they emerge. This roadmap and the historic decisions taken in Madrid will ensure that the Alliance is ready for the future, no matter how uncertain and unpredictable.