HASMUN

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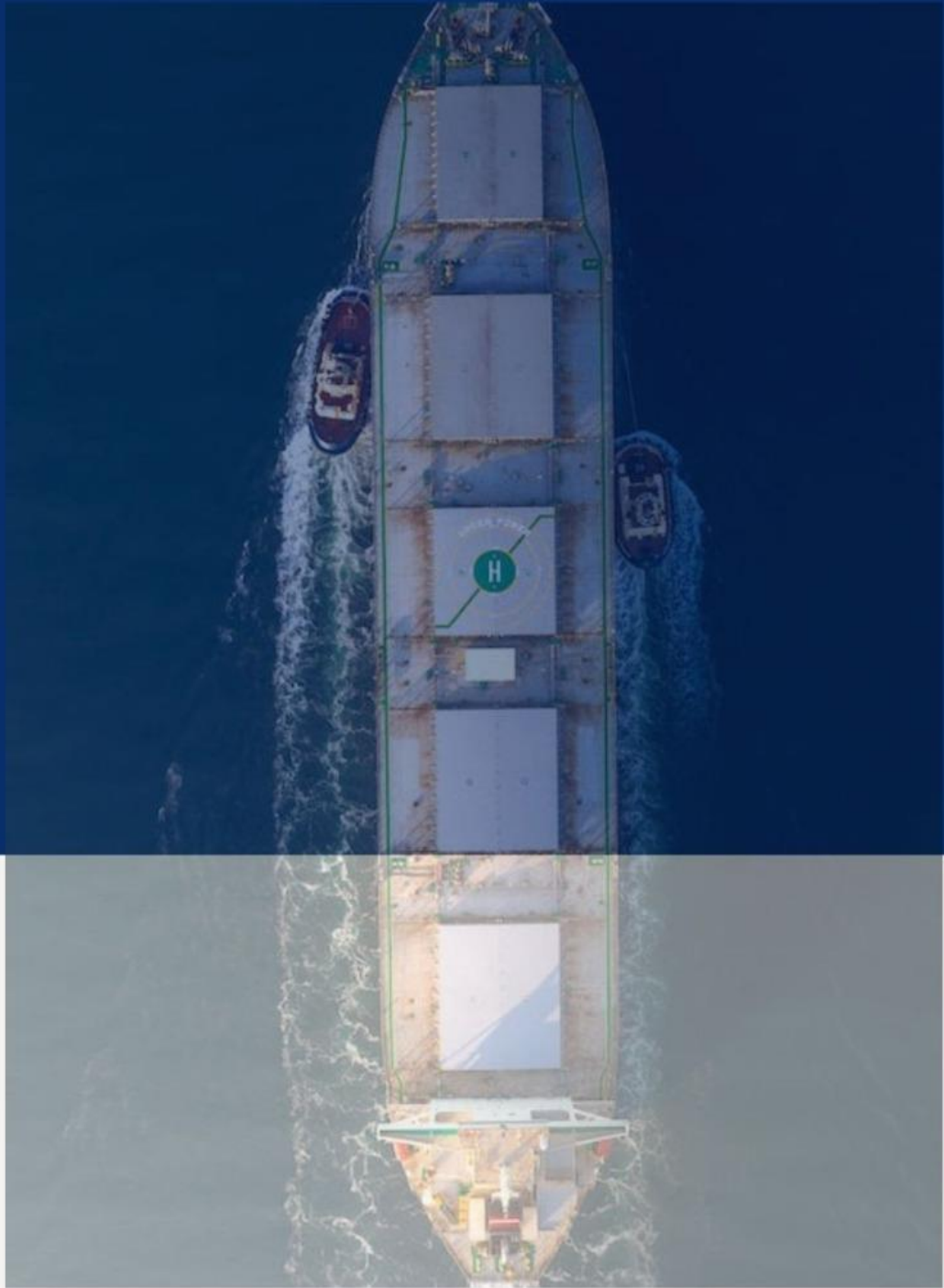MODEL UNITED NATIONS CLUB

NAC

AGENDA ITEM:

- International Energy Security
- Maritime Border Security & Nuclear Peace

UNDER SECRETARY GENERAL:
DOĞUKAN EJDER

ACADEMIC ASSISTANTS:
SARAH NAUMAN&MARIAM NAUMAN

Kadir Has University Model United Nations Club

HASTRAIN' 22

North Atlantic Treaty Organisation

Military Committee

Study Guide

Table of Content

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Letter From Under Secretary General

Letter from the Secretary-General,

Most distinguished participants and dearest guests; It gives me the utmost pleasure and honor to announce that I will be the 8th Kadir Has University Model United Nations Conference Secretary General for the year 2022. In this modernized and corrupted world, a safe place where you can be seen and understood is created and called home. Be the inspiration for enhancing this world and the forerunner in doing so. The HASTRAIN'22 Academic and Organization team has made incredible efforts to provide you, the participants, with one of the best Model UN Conferences for the promises given above.

 #welcomehome Kindest Regards,

Samet Aba Secretary-General HASTRAIN'22

Meritorious participants,

It is my utmost honor to welcome you all to our committee, North Atlantic Council. I, as Doğukan Ejder, serve as Chief Executive Officer of Arcadia, Transatlantic Security and Defence Political Officer and senior year of Political Science and International Relations and English Language and Literature at Yeditepe University. It is a privilege to serve you as your Under-Secretaries-General.

In the 21st century, one thing that is considered a critical framework of International Relations from Academia to Political life, is international security and global energy polieconomics. With the special operation of the Russian Federation over Ukraine, once again the importance of international security highlighted its importance in International Relations while Aegean Region energy source disputes and maritime border conflicts between NATO countries, reflected the crucialness of global energy polieconomics in diplomacy. We will be simulating a meeting of the North Atlantic Council in which the international energy security, Maritime Border Security and Nuclear Peace and will be discussed among alliance members. We're expecting you to talk about economic, social and political aspects of these possibilities as well as security and military studies perspectives. We've provided you with an overview of the NATO to NAC bureaucratic order to NATO's political to military doctrine's through, a brief history of the Enlargement policies, humanitarian interventions, peace operations so far and possible scenarios selected by political and military officers of NATO with its historical background.

Before wrapping up, 1 would like to thank our honorable Secretary-General Mr. Samet Aba and Efe Coştu for offering this honor to me. Hope you have as much fun as 1 had preparing this guide. We, as HASMUN family, are looking forward to meeting you in a week !

If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact with me via : dogukanejderr@gmail.com

I.   What is NATO ?

- Brief History of North Atlantic Treaty Organisation

The North Atlantic Alliance was founded in the aftermath of the Second World War under a purpose which was to secure peace in Europe, to promote cooperation among its members, and to guard their freedom. All of this in the context of countering the threat posed at the time by the Soviet Union.The Alliance's founding treaty was signed in Washington in 1949 by a dozen European and North American countries. It commits the Allies to democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law, as well as to peaceful resolution of disputes. Importantly, the treaty sets out the idea of collective defense, meaning that an attack against one Ally is considered as an attack against all Allies.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation or NATO, ensures that the security of its European member countries is inseparably linked to that of its North American member countries. The organization also provides a unique form for dialogue and cooperation across the Atlantic.

(2022, NATO on the Map, Up to Date Data)

The Alliance started with 12 member countries in 1949. However, the founding treaty allows of other European nations to join the Alliance as long as all existing Allies agree. Any prospective member must share NATO's core values and have the capacity and willingness to contribute to security in the Euro - Atlantic area.

In 2022, Nato has 30 members, who are stronger and safer together. For seven decades, NATO has ensured peace within its territory. While threats, and the way NATO deals with them, have evolved over time, the purpose, values and founding principles of the Alliance do not change. For its four decades, the Cold War defined the Alliance. Collective defense was NATO's main role. When that confrontation ended in 1989 and with the collapse of the soviet union, some said that NATO had fulfilled its purpose, that it was no longer needed and yet the Alliance is still here today.

The end of the Cold War offered hope for progress and peace, but it also ushered in a new era of instability. NATO has responded to changes in the security environment by shifting its focus and taking on new tasks. Beyond ensuring the collective defense of its members, NATO seeks to promote security through partnership and cooperation. Since the early 1990s, the Alliance has developed relations with non - member countries including former Cold War adversaries of the former '' Eastern Bloc '' Some of these partners have since become members of the Alliance.

Today, working with non - member countries and other organizations is considered to be one of NATO's fundamental tasks. It works with 40 partner countries as well as with other international organizations, like the United Nations and the European Union. NATO has taken on a n important role in international crisis management since the end of the Cold War. Working closely with partner countries the Alliance helped to end war and build sustainable peace in the Balkans. In the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the United States, Allies and partners deployed forces to Afganistan to help bring stability.

During the Arab Spring, NATO led an air campaign over Libya, to protect civilians being targeted by the Qadhafi Dictatorship. At sea, NATO and its partners have helped to prevent piracy off the Horn of Africa and are cooperating to fight terrorism in the Mediterranean Sea.NATO has also supported international efforts to stem undocumented/ illegal migration and human trafficking in the Aegean Sea.

Today, NATO faces a much broader range of threats than in the past. To the East, Russian Federation's policies has become more assertive with the illegal annexation of Crimea and special operation over Ukraine and destabilization of eastern Ukraine, as well as its military build up close to NATO's borders. To the South, the security situation in the Middle East and Africa has deteriorated, causing loss of life, fuelling large - scale migration flows nad inspiring terrorist attacks.

NATO is responding by reinforcing its deterrence and defense posture, as well as supporting international efforts to project stability and strengthen security outside NATO territory. NATO alo confronted with the spread of weapons of mass destruction, cyber attacks and threats to energy supplies, as well as environmental challenges with security implications. These challenges are too big for any one country or organization to handle on its own, so NATO is working closely with its network of partners to help tackle them.

While NATO continues to adapt to changes in the security environment, the fundamentals of how it works haven't changed. Consensus and consultation are part of NATO's DNA. All member countries are represented in the **North Atlantic Council**, where decisions are taken by consensus - meaning unanimously - expressing the collective will of all the nations. There is no NATO army. National forces are under national command.

When called upon, Allied nations volunteer their troops, equipment or other capabilities to NATO - led operations and exercises. Each member state pays for its own armed forces, and covers the costs of deploying its forces. But together, the Allies get a lot more security for a lot less cost than they would if they had to do it alone. Each member contributes a small percentage of its national defense budget to NATO. The national contributions pay for running the political and operation headquarters in Belgium, as well as the integrated military command structure across NATO territory. They also cover some of the costs of shared military capabilities. Systems and facilities needed for communication, command and control, or for logistical support to NATO operations. Other multinational capability projects are funded by groups of Allies. Thanks to years of joint planning, exercises and deployments, soldiers from different nations can work well together when the need arises. Working together, the Allies are stronger.

a. NATO Aims and Goals

NATO's essential and enduring purpose is to safeguard the freedom and security of all its members by political and military means. Collective defense is at the heart of the Alliance and creates a spirit of solidarity and cohesion among its members.

NATO strives to secure a lasting peace in Europe, based on common values of individual liberty, democracy, human rights and the rule of law. Since the outbreak of crises and conflicts beyond Allied borders can jeopardize this objective, the Alliance also contributes to peace and stability through crisis prevention and management, and partnerships. Essentially, NATO not only helps to defend the territory of its members, but also engages where possible and when necessary to project its values further afield, prevent and manage crises, stabilize post-conflict situations and support reconstruction.

NATO also embodies the transatlantic link whereby the security of North America is tied to Europe's. It is an intergovernmental organization, which provides a forum where members can consult on any issue they may choose to raise and take decisions on political and military matters affecting their security. No single member country is forced to rely solely on its national capabilities to meet its essential national security objectives. The resulting sense of shared security among members contributes to stability in the Euro-Atlantic area.

NATO's fundamental security tasks are laid down in the Washington Treaty (the Alliance's founding treaty, also known as the North Atlantic Treaty). They are sufficiently general to withstand the test of time and are translated into more detail in the Organization's strategic concepts. Strategic concepts are the authoritative statement of the Alliance's objectives: they provide the highest level of guidance on the political and military means to be used to achieve these goals and remain the basis for the implementation of Alliance policy as a whole.

The North Atlantic Treaty

Washington D.C. - 4 April 1949

Article 1

The Parties undertake, as set forth in the Charter of the United Nations, to settle any international dispute in which they may be involved by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security and justice are not endangered, and to refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force in any manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations.

Article 2

The Parties will contribute toward the further development of peaceful and friendly international relations by strengthening their free institutions, by bringing about a better understanding of the principles upon which these institutions are founded, and by promoting conditions of stability and well-being. They will seek to eliminate conflict in their international economic policies and will encourage economic collaboration between any or all of them.

Article 3

In order more effectively to achieve the objectives of this Treaty, the Parties, separately and jointly, by means of continuous and effective self-help and mutual aid, will maintain and develop their individual and collective capacity to resist armed attack.

Article 4

The Parties will consult together whenever, in the opinion of any of them, the territorial integrity, political independence or security of any of the Parties is threatened.

Article 5

The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all and consequently they agree that, if such an armed attack occurs, each of them, in exercise of the right of individual or collective self-defence recognised by Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, will assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking forthwith, individually and in concert with the other Parties, such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force, to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area.Any such armed attack and all measures taken as a result thereof shall immediately be reported to the Security Council. Such measures shall be terminated when the Security Council has taken the measures necessary to restore and maintain international peace and security .

Article 6

For the purpose of Article 5, an armed attack on one or more of the Parties is deemed to include an armed attack:

- on the territory of any of the Parties in Europe or North America, on the Algerian Departments of France 2, on the territory of Turkey or on the Islands under the jurisdiction of any of the Parties in the North Atlantic area north of the Tropic of Cancer;
- on the forces, vessels, or aircraft of any of the Parties, when in or over these territories or any other area in Europe in which occupation forces of any of the Parties were stationed on the date when the Treaty entered into force or the Mediterranean Sea or the North Atlantic area north of the Tropic of Cancer.

Article 7

This Treaty does not affect, and shall not be interpreted as affecting in any way the rights and obligations under the Charter of the Parties which are members of the United Nations, or the primary responsibility of the Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Article 8

Each Party declares that none of the international engagements now in force between it and any other of the Parties or any third State is in conflict with the provisions of this Treaty, and undertakes not to enter into any international engagement in conflict with this Treaty.

Article 9

The Parties hereby establish a Council, on which each of them shall be represented, to consider matters concerning the implementation of this Treaty. The Council shall be so organised as to be able to meet promptly at any time. The Council shall set up such subsidiary bodies as may be necessary; in particular it shall establish immediately a defence committee which shall recommend measures for the implementation of Articles 3 and 5.

Article 10

The Parties may, by unanimous agreement, invite any other European State in a position to further the principles of this Treaty and to contribute to the security of the North Atlantic area to accede to this Treaty. Any State so invited may become a Party to the Treaty by depositing its instrument of accession with the Government of the United States of America. The Government of the United States of America will inform each of the Parties of the deposit of each such instrument of accession.

Article 11

This Treaty shall be ratified and its provisions carried out by the Parties in accordance with their respective constitutional processes. The instruments of ratification shall be deposited as soon as possible with the Government of the United States of America, which will notify all the other signatories of each deposit. The Treaty shall enter into force between the States which have ratified it as soon as the ratifications of the majority of the signatories, including the ratifications of Belgium, Canada, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the United States, have been deposited and shall come into effect with respect to other States on the date of the deposit of their ratifications. [3]

Article 12

After the Treaty has been in force for ten years, or at any time thereafter, the Parties shall, if any of them so requests, consult together for the purpose of reviewing the Treaty, having regard for the factors then affecting peace and security in the North Atlantic area, including the development of universal as well as regional arrangements under the Charter of the United Nations for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Article 13

After the Treaty has been in force for twenty years, any Party may cease to be a Party one year after its notice of denunciation has been given to the Government of the United States of America, which will inform the Governments of the other Parties of the deposit of each notice of denunciation.

Article 14

This Treaty, of which the English and French texts are equally authentic, shall be deposited in the archives of the Government of the United States of America. Duly certified copies will be transmitted by that Government to the Governments of other signatories.

1. The definition of the territories to which Article 5 applies was revised by Article 2 of the Protocol to the North Atlantic Treaty on the accession of Greece and Turkey signed on 22 October 1951.
2. On January 16, 1963, the North Atlantic Council noted that insofar as the former Algerian Departments of France were concerned, the relevant clauses of this Treaty had become inapplicable as from July 3, 1962.
3. The Treaty came into force on 24 August 1949, after the deposition of the ratifications of all signatory states.

b. NATO Members

At present, NATO has 30 members. In 1949, there were 12 founding members of the Alliance:

Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the United Kingdom and the United States.

The other member countries are: Greece and Türkiye (1952), Germany (1955), Spain (1982), Czechia, Hungary and Poland (1999), Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia (2004), Albania and Croatia (2009), Montenegro (2017) and North Macedonia (2020).

- **Provision for enlargement is given by Article 10 of the North Atlantic Treaty.**
- **Article 10 states that membership is open to any "European State in a position to further the principles of this Treaty and to contribute to the security of the North Atlantic area".**
- **Any decision to invite a country to join the Alliance is taken by the North Atlantic Council, NATO's principal political decision-making body, on the basis of consensus among all Allies.**

The founding members

On 4 April 1949, the foreign ministers from 12 countries signed the North Atlantic Treaty (also known as the Washington Treaty) at the Departmental Auditorium in Washington, D.C.: Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Within the five months following the signing ceremony, the Treaty was ratified by the parliaments of the interested countries, sealing their membership.

The 12 signatories

Flexibility of NATO membership

On signing the Treaty, countries voluntarily commit themselves to participating in the political consultations and military activities of the Organization. Although each and every signatory to the North Atlantic Treaty is subject to the obligations of the Treaty, there remains a certain degree of flexibility which allows members to choose how they participate. The memberships of Iceland and France, for instance, illustrate this point.

- Iceland

When Iceland signed the Treaty in 1949, it did not have – and still does not have – armed forces. There is no legal impediment to forming them, but Iceland has chosen not to have any. However, Iceland has a Coast Guard, national police forces, an air defence system and a voluntary expeditionary peacekeeping force. Since 1951, Iceland has also benefitted from a long-standing bilateral defence agreement with the United States. In 2006, US forces were withdrawn but the defence agreement remains valid. Since 2008, air policing has been conducted on a periodic basis by NATO Allies.

- France

In 1966, President Charles de Gaulle decided to withdraw France from NATO's integrated military structure. This reflected the desire for greater military independence, particularly vis-à-vis the United States, and the refusal to integrate France's nuclear deterrent or accept any form of control over its armed forces.

In practical terms, while France still fully participated in the political instances of the Organization, it was no longer represented on certain committees, for instance, the Defence Planning Committee and the Nuclear Planning Group. This decision also led to the removal of French forces from NATO commands and foreign forces from French territory. The stationing of foreign weapons, including nuclear weapons, was also banned. NATO's political headquarters (based in Paris since 1952), as well as the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe or SHAPE (in Rocquencourt since 1951) moved to Belgium.

Despite France's withdrawal from NATO's integrated military structure, two technical agreements were signed with the Alliance, setting out procedures in the event of Soviet aggression. Since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, France has regularly contributed troops to NATO's military operations, making it one of the largest troop-contributing states. It is also NATO's fourth-biggest contributor to the military budget.

From the early 1990s onwards, France distanced itself from the 1966 decision with, for instance, its participation at the meetings of defense ministers from 1994 (Seville) onwards and the presence of French officers in Allied Command Operations and Allied Command Transformation structures from 2003. At NATO's Strasbourg/Kehl Summit in April 2009, France officially announced its decision to fully participate in NATO structures[1].

The accession of Greece and Türkiye

Three years after the signing of the Washington Treaty, on 18 February 1952, Greece and Türkiye joined NATO. This enabled NATO to reinforce its "southern flank".

At a time when there was a fear of communist expansion throughout Europe and other parts of the world (Soviet support of the North Korean invasion of South Korea in 1950), extending security to southeastern Europe was strategically important. Not only did NATO membership curb communist influence in Greece – a country recovering from civil war – but it also relieved Türkiye from Soviet pressure for access to key strategic maritime routes.

The accession of Germany

Germany became a NATO member on 6 May 1955. This was the result of several years of deliberations among western leaders and Germany, whose population opposed any form of rearmament.

Following the end of the Second World War, ways of integrating the Federal Republic of Germany into west European defense structures was a priority. The Federal Republic of Germany - or West Germany - was created in 1949 and although the new state was anchored to the west, its potential was feared. Initially, France proposed the creation of a European Defence Community – a European solution to the German question. However, the French Senate opposed the plan and the proposal fell through leaving NATO membership as the only viable solution.

Three conditions needed to be fulfilled before this could happen: post-war victors (France, the United Kingdom, the United States and the Soviet Union) had to end the occupation of the Federal Republic of Germany; Italy and West Germany needed to be admitted to the Western Union Defence Organisation (the military agency of the Western Union) and then there was the accession procedure itself.

When Germany joined the Western Union, the latter changed its name to become the Western European Union. This accession, together with the termination of the Federal Republic of Germany's status as an occupied country, was bringing the country closer to NATO membership. The Federal Republic of Germany officially joined the Western Union on 23 October 1954 and its status as an occupied country came to an end when the Bonn-Paris conventions came into effect on 5 May 1955. The next day, it became NATO's 15th member country.

With the reunification of Germany on 3 October 1990, the Länder of the former German Democratic Republic joined the Federal Republic of Germany in its membership of NATO.

The accession of Spain

Spain joined the Alliance on 30 May 1982 despite considerable public opposition. The end of Franco's dictatorship in 1975, the military coup in 1981 and the rise of the Socialist Party (PSOE), the leading opposition party which was initially against NATO accession, made for a difficult social and political context, both nationally and internationally.

Spain fully participated in the political instances of the Organization, but refrained from participating in the integrated military structure - a position it reaffirmed in a referendum held in 1986. With regard to the military aspects, it was present as an observer on the Nuclear Planning Group; reserved its position on participation in the integrated communication system; maintained Spanish forces under Spanish command and did not accept to have troops deployed outside of Spain for long periods of time. Nevertheless, Spanish forces would still be able to operate with other NATO forces in an emergency.

Spain's reservations gradually diminished. The Spanish Parliament endorsed the country's participation in the integrated military command structure in 1996, a decision that coincided with the nomination of Dr Javier Solana as NATO's first Spanish Secretary General (1995-1999).

The first wave of post-Cold War enlargement

The fall of the Berlin Wall and the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact after the end of the Cold War opened up the possibility of further NATO enlargement. Some of the new democracies of Central and Eastern Europe were eager to become integrated into Euro-Atlantic institutions.

In 1995, the Alliance carried out and published the results of a Study on NATO Enlargement that considered the merits of admitting new members and how they should be brought in. It concluded that the end of the Cold War provided a unique opportunity to build improved security in the entire Euro-Atlantic area and that NATO enlargement would contribute to enhanced stability and security for all.

Czechia, Hungary and Poland were invited to begin accession talks at the Alliance's Madrid Summit in 1997 and on 12 March 1999 they became the first former members of the Warsaw Pact to join NATO.

Drawing heavily on the experience gained during this accession process, NATO launched the Membership Action Plan - or MAP - at the Washington Summit in April 1999. The MAP was established to help countries aspiring to NATO membership in their preparations, even if it did not prejudge any decisions.

The second wave of post-Cold War enlargement

Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia were invited to begin accession talks at the Alliance's Prague Summit in 2002. On 29 March 2004, they officially became members of the Alliance, making this the largest wave of enlargement in NATO history.

All seven countries had participated in the MAP before acceding to NATO.

The accession of Albania and Croatia

When they were partners, Albania and Croatia worked with NATO in a wide range of areas, with particular emphasis on defense and security sector reform, as well as support for wider democratic and institutional reform.

Albania had participated in the MAP since its inception in 1999 and Croatia joined in 2002. In July 2008, they both signed Accession Protocols and became official members of the Alliance on 1 April 2009.

Montenegro

Shortly after regaining its independence in June 2006, Montenegro joined the Partnership for Peace in December of the same year and the Membership Action Plan three years later. It actively supported the NATO-led operation in Afghanistan from 2010 and provided support to the follow-on mission. Developing the interoperability of its forces and pursuing defense and security sector reforms were an important part of the country's cooperation with NATO before it became a member country. It worked with NATO in areas such as the development of emergency response capabilities and the destruction of surplus munitions – an area in which a project is still ongoing.

The Accession Protocol was signed in May 2016 and Montenegro became a member of the Alliance on 5 June 2017.

North Macedonia – (The Most Recent Accession)

North Macedonia became independent in 1991 and joined NATO's Partnership for Peace (PfP) programme in 1995 and the Membership Action Plan in 1999. For a short period between 2001 and 2003 and on the request of Skopje, NATO conducted three operations, which helped to quell tensions in the country. Before becoming a member of the Alliance, North Macedonia cooperated with NATO in key areas such as democratic, institutional, security sector and defense reforms. It also reinforced its civil preparedness capabilities through practical cooperation with NATO and actively supported the NATO-led operation in Afghanistan.

The major stumbling block to membership of the Alliance was the issue of the country's name. A historic agreement was struck between Athens and Skopje in 2018, resolving this issue. The Prespa Agreement enabled NATO to invite Skopje to begin accession talks to join the Organization, while encouraging the government to continue implementing reforms. On 15 February 2019, the country which was previously known as the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia was officially recognised as the Republic of North Macedonia. On 27 March 2020, it became NATO's 30th member.

Finland and Sweden in NATO

Finland and Sweden's accession to NATO is occurring at an accelerated pace. In January 2022, neither government was considering NATO membership; in May 2022, they moved decisively into the application process. In response, NATO member states have rushed processed their membership, with most NATO countries ratifying Accession Protocols. In November 2022, they are a mere two ratifications short of membership. Both Finland and Sweden are sending a strong message to Allies and Russia by joining NATO without preconditions as already active contributors and security providers within the Alliance. For its part, NATO would not only gain two new member states but also a new regional subgroup of Nordic countries that have their own perspectives and strategic cultures. Moreover, Finland and Sweden will bring a model for bilateral defense cooperation.

The speed of Finland and Sweden's accession process is due to several factors. First, despite their previously non-aligned position, the two countries were already close to NATO. Mutual knowledge between Finland, Sweden and NATO has accumulated steadily over decades. The two countries joined the Partnership for Peace programme (PfP) in 1994 and the NATO Planning and Review Process (PARP) in 1995. They also became Enhanced Opportunities Partners in 2014, deepening their involvement in NATO military exercises, information exchange and high-level meetings. On 25 February 2022 (the day after Russia invaded Ukraine), they were asked to take part in even deeper information exchange through NATO's Modalities

Second, the fast pace of the accession process is explained by Finland and Sweden's desire to show unity against Russia. Russian aggression against Ukraine in late February pushed Finnish public opinion in favor of joining NATO, which then led not only Finland but also eventually Sweden to quickly apply for membership. Finland and Sweden's cohesion with the Alliance signaled to Russia that it had no say in these countries' security and defense choices nor in NATO's enlargement policy, contrary to what Moscow had claimed in December 2021.

It was also a firm answer to Russia's flagrant breach of the international rules-based order, opting for the defense alliance while abandoning their erstwhile policy of non-alignment. In response, several NATO members quickly demonstrated their political support for these two countries before membership through new bilateral agreements and visible demonstrations of military support – for example, the American warship USS Kearsarge paying visits to Stockholm and Helsinki.1 The intensity of Finland and Sweden's international military exercises also grew, which no doubt helped calm domestic concerns about a potential Russian reaction to their membership application.

Third, to dispel any doubts about their willingness or ability to contribute to Alliance security, officials in Finland and Sweden also formulated arguments outlining the added value that their respective countries would bring to NATO. Just as much as Finland and Sweden would benefit from security guarantees provided by the Alliance, NATO membership, they argued, would strengthen NATO itself and, in turn, be a major contribution to the security of the Baltic and Nordic region.

All parties would thus come out clearly strengthened. As this understanding spread and consolidated, the process of accession further gained speed. Above all, what Finland and Sweden bring to NATO is their deployed military capabilities in the Baltic Sea region, which already boasts strong interoperability with NATO Allies. They operate modern vessels suited for shallow archipelago missions and have strong coastal anti-ship missile batteries. Sweden also has a capable shallow-water submarine fleet, and the two states can close the Gulf of Finland to hostile ships, including movement between Kaliningrad and mainland Russia.

Likewise, they contribute to situational awareness with valuable intelligence, while their air force capability is significant, particularly following the Finnish purchase of 64 F-35A multi-role fighters. Furthermore, Finland and Estonia have agreed to integrate their coastal defense systems as NATO members. Lastly, Finland (in contrast to Sweden) brings to the table a sizeable field army based on a very large reserve force, including one of Europe's strongest artillery corps. Their NATO membership tips the regional balance of power clearly in NATO's favor, turning the Baltic Sea into a so-called "NATO lake" and limiting space for Russian operations.

With respect to longer-term consequences, Finnish and Swedish membership will likely be most consequential in the following three areas: Nordic cooperation inside NATO, bilateral cooperation between Finland and Sweden, and regional territorial defense.

The potential accession of Finland and Sweden to NATO is a landmark historical moment, both for the Alliance and for the two Nordic countries. It is a moment, however, that carries with it as many challenges as opportunities. As we have seen, Finland and Sweden bring to the Alliance military capabilities, their geostrategic location, and their unique viewpoints on the threats facing NATO. Moreover, their shared experience in defense cooperation could act as a model of bilateral and multilateral cooperation within the Alliance for many Allied members

c. NATO's Strategic Concept

The Strategic Concept sets the Alliance's strategy. It outlines NATO's enduring purpose and nature, its fundamental security tasks, and the challenges and opportunities it faces in a changing security environment. It also specifies the elements of the Alliance's approach to security and provides guidelines for its political and military adaptation.

Strategic Concepts equip the Alliance to respond to current security threats and challenges and guide its political and military development so that it is equally prepared to face the threats and challenges of tomorrow.

They reiterate NATO's enduring purpose and nature, and its fundamental security tasks.

They are renewed to address changes in the global security environment and to ensure that NATO can continue to fulfill its key purpose and execute its core tasks, making growth and adaptation permanent features of the Alliance.

The current Strategic Concept (2022) reaffirms that NATO's key purpose is to ensure the collective defense of its members, based on a 360-degree approach, and outlines three essential core tasks – deterrence and defense, crisis prevention and management, and cooperative security.

Over time, the Alliance and the wider world have developed in ways that NATO's founders could not have envisaged, and these changes have been reflected in each and every strategic document that NATO has ever produced.

The 2022 Strategic Concept

The 2022 Strategic Concept clearly lays out NATO's purpose and principles, its core tasks and values, as well as the Alliance's strategic objectives within a radically deteriorated security environment. It reaffirms that NATO's key purpose and greatest responsibility is to ensure the collective defense of Allies, against all threats, from all directions. To do this, the Alliance fulfills three core tasks: deterrence and defense; crisis prevention and management; and cooperative security. The Strategic Concept underscores, in particular, the need to further strengthen deterrence and defense as the backbone of the Alliance's collective defense commitment. It also stresses that resilience is critical to NATO's core tasks, as are cross-cutting issues like technological innovation, climate change, human security and the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda.

The 2022 Strategic Concept gives a realistic assessment of NATO's deteriorated strategic environment. "Strategic competition, pervasive instability and recurrent shocks define our broader security environment. The threats we face are global and interconnected." The Russian Federation, which shattered peace in Europe by waging a war of aggression against Ukraine, is recognised as the most significant threat to Allied security. Other identified threats and challenges include: terrorism; conflict and instability in the Middle East and Africa; pervasive instability and its impact on civilians, cultural property and the environment; China's stated ambitions and coercive policies; cyberspace; emerging and disruptive technologies; the erosion of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation architectures; and the security implications of climate change.

The Strategic Concept reiterates the Alliance's defensive nature and its commitment to unity, cohesion and solidarity, to an enduring transatlantic bond, to shared democratic values and to a shared vision of "a world where sovereignty, territorial integrity, human rights and international law are respected and where each country can choose its own path". It states that Allies will retain a global perspective on peace and security and work closely with partners, other countries and international organizations.

Finally, the Strategic Concept affirms NATO's indispensability to Euro-Atlantic security, as guarantor of peace, freedom and prosperity. Therefore, Allies will continue to stand together in defending their security, values and democratic way of life.

The drafters and decision - makers behind the strategies

Over time and since 1949, the decision-making process with regard to the Strategic Concept has evolved, but a constant feature is their adoption by Allies on the basis of consensus. The North Atlantic Council (NAC) is the authority in charge of adopting the Alliance's strategic documents; the most recent Strategic Concepts have been adopted at NAC meetings at the level of Heads of State and Government during a NATO Summit. Of the eight Strategic Concepts issued by NATO since 1949, all but one were approved by the NAC.

Before reaching the NAC, there are several stages of consultation, engagement, drafting and negotiation that take place. Interestingly, during the Cold War, Strategic Concepts were principally drawn up by the military for approval by the political authorities of the Alliance. They were classified documents with military references (MC). Since the end of the Cold War, the political authorities have been in the lead, drawing on advice from the military. This change stems from the fact that since 1999 NATO has adopted a broader definition of security, where dialogue and cooperation are an integral part of NATO's strategic thinking. Furthermore, all four Strategic Concepts since 1991 bore no classification and were released to the public.

At the 2021 Brussels Summit, NATO Heads of State and Government adopted the NATO 2030 agenda, a set of concrete measures to drive NATO's adaptation and ensure the Alliance can adjust to a new reality of increased global competition. One of the important decisions Allied Leaders took under NATO 2030 was to invite NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg to lead the process of developing the 2022 Strategic Concept. The Secretary General initiated internal and external consultations and activities involving Allied representatives, officials from capitals as well as expert communities, partner countries and other international organizations, but also youth, civil society and the private sector. Afterwards, Allies negotiated a text based on proposals from the Secretary General, and Allied Leaders endorsed the new Strategic Concept at the Madrid Summit in June 2022.
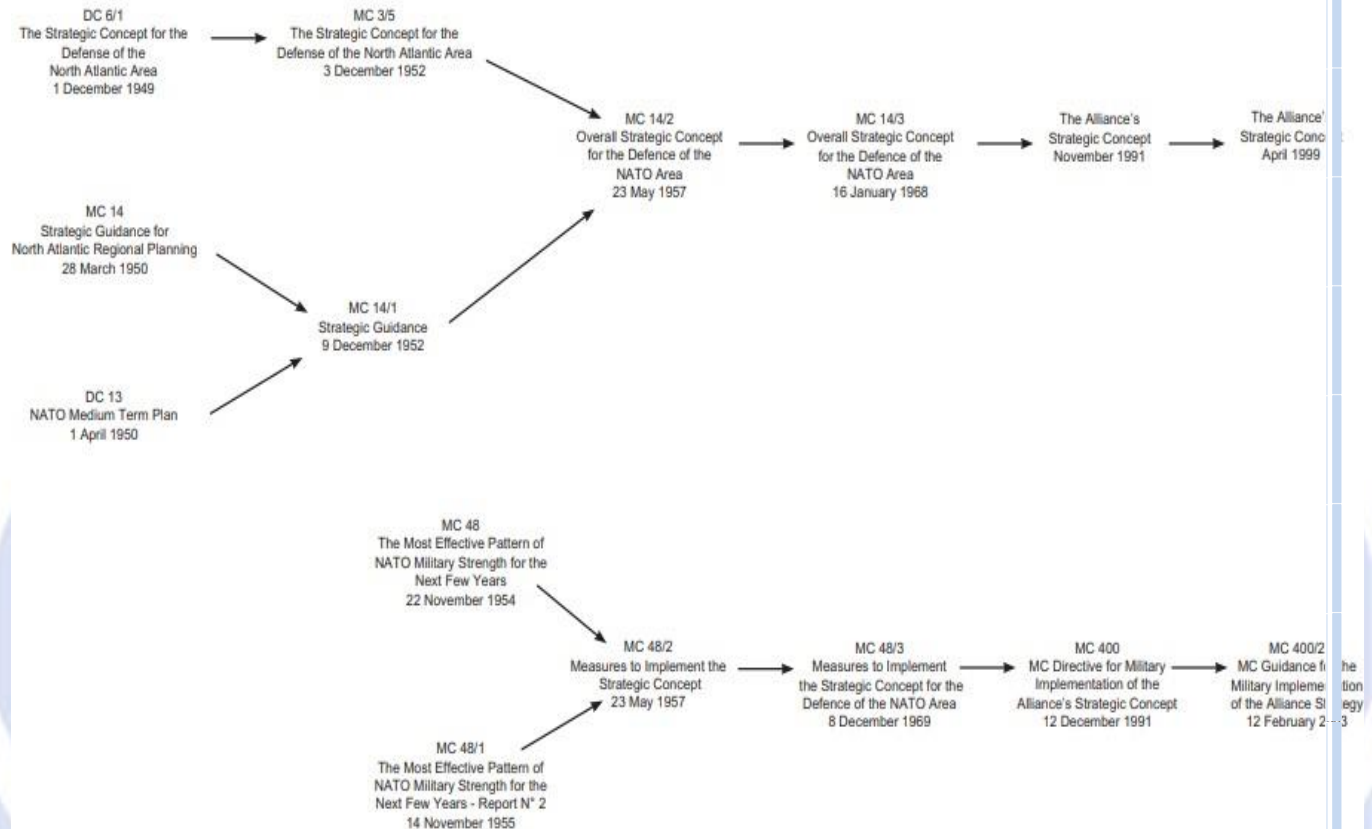
NATO's Strategic Documents Since 1949

Since the birth of NATO, there have been two distinct historical periods within which NATO's strategic thinking has evolved: the Cold War period and the post-Cold War era. With the 2022 Strategic Concept, NATO is adapting to yet another period, characterized by renewed geostrategic competition as a result of Russia's aggressive behavior and the rise of China.

From 1949 to 1991, NATO's strategy was principally characterized by defense and deterrence, although with growing attention to dialogue and détente for the last two decades of this period. There were four Strategic Concepts, accompanied by documents that laid out the measures for the military to implement the Strategic Concept entitled "Strategic Guidance", "The Most Effective Pattern of NATO Military Strength for the Next Few Years" and "Measures to Implement the Strategic Concept".

From 1991, NATO adopted a broader approach where the notions of cooperation and security complemented the basic concepts of deterrence and defense. After the terrorist attacks of 9/11 (2001), NATO stepped up the attention given to the fight against terrorism, the spread of weapons of mass destruction, hybrid warfare, and emerging and disruptive technologies. The Alliance also committed troops beyond the Euro-Atlantic area, in Afghanistan, for 20 years. In this post-Cold War period, three non-classified Strategic Concepts were issued (1991, 1999 and 2010), complemented by classified military documents (MC Directive for Military Implementation of the Alliance's Strategic Concept, MC Guidance for the Military Implementation of the Alliance Strategy and MC Guidance MC 400/3).

Since 2010, and particularly since 2014 when Russia first invaded Ukraine and illegally annexed the Crimean peninsula, the pattern of growing Russian aggression, as well as the rise of China, has ushered in a new geostrategic landscape characterized by renewed strategic competition. NATO started to redeploy troops on its eastern and south-eastern flank in 2017 and, since Russia's unprovoked war against Ukraine in 2022, has agreed to significantly reinforce its deterrence and defense. The 2022 Strategic Concept captures these important developments and charts the way forward in navigating this evolving and challenging security environment.

Evolution of NATO Strategy 1949-1999

DC 6/1
The Strategic Concept for the
Defense of the
North Atlantic Area
1 December 1949

→

MC 3/5
The Strategic Concept for the
Defense of the North Atlantic Area
3 December 1952

→

MC 14/2
Overall Strategic Concept
for the Defence of the
NATO Area
23 May 1957

→

MC 14/3
Overall Strategic Concept
for the Defence of the
NATO Area
16 January 1968

→

The Alliance's
Strategic Concept
November 1991

→

The Alliance'
Strategic Conc
April 1999

MC 14
Strategic Guidance for
North Atlantic Regional Planning
28 March 1950

MC 14/1
Strategic Guidance
9 December 1952

DC 13
NATO Medium Term Plan
1 April 1950

MC 48
The Most Effective Pattern of
NATO Military Strength for the
Next Few Years
22 November 1954

MC 48/2
Measures to Implement the
Strategic Concept
23 May 1957

→

MC 48/3
Measures to Implement
the Strategic Concept for the
Defence of the NATO Area
8 December 1969

→

MC 400
MC Directive for Military
Implementation of the
Alliance's Strategic Concept
12 December 1991

→

MC 400/2
MC Guidance f he
Military Impleme tion
of the Alliance St egy
12 February 2   3

MC 48/1
The Most Effective Pattern of
NATO Military Strength for the
Next Few Years - Report N° 2
14 November 1955

From 1949 until the end of the Cold War

From 1949 to 1991, international geopolitics were dominated by bipolar confrontation between East and West. The emphasis was more on tension and confrontation than it was on dialogue and cooperation. This led to an often dangerous and expensive arms race.

As mentioned above, four Strategic Concepts were issued during this period. In addition, two key reports were also published during those four decades: the Report of the Committee of Three (December 1956) and the Harmel Report (December 1967). Both documents placed the Strategic Concepts in a wider framework by stressing issues that had an impact on the environment within which the Strategic Concepts were interpreted.

NATO's first Strategic Concept

NATO started producing strategic documents as early as October 1949. The first NATO strategy document to be approved by the NAC on 6 January 1950 was "The Strategic Concept for the Defense of the North Atlantic area" (DC 6/1) – the Alliance's first Strategic Concept.

DC 6/1 provided an overall strategic concept for the Alliance. The document stated that the primary function of NATO was to deter aggression and that NATO forces would only be engaged if this primary function failed and an attack was launched. Complementarity between members and standardization were also key elements of this draft. Each member's contribution to defense should be in proportion to its capacity – economic, industrial, geographical, military – and cooperative measures were to be put into place by NATO to ensure optimal use of resources. Numerical inferiority in terms of military resources vis-à-vis the USSR was emphasized, as well as the reliance on US nuclear capabilities. DC 6/1 stated that the Alliance should "insure the ability to carry out strategic bombing promptly by all means possible with all types of weapons, without exception".

Although DC 6/1 was quite detailed, more guidance was needed to develop comprehensive defense plans for use by the five Regional Planning Groups that existed at the time. The Strategic Guidance paper (SG 13/16) entitled "Strategic Guidance for North Atlantic Regional Planning" was formally approved by the Military Committee on 28 March 1950 as MC 14. MC 14 enabled Regional Planning Groups to meet contingencies up to July 1954, a date by which the Alliance aimed to have a credible defense force in place. Its key objectives were to "convince the USSR that war does not pay, and should war occur, to ensure a successful defense" of the NATO area.

In parallel, SG 13/16 was also used by the Regional Planning Groups to develop more comprehensive defense plans that were consolidated into "The North Atlantic Treaty Organization Medium Term Plan" (DC 13). It was approved by the Defence Committee on 1 April 1950, just one year after the signing of the Washington Treaty – the Alliance's founding treaty.

In sum, NATO's strategy was effectively contained in three documents:

- DC 6/1, which set forth the overall strategic concept;
- MC 14, which provided more specific strategic guidance for use in defense planning; and
- DC 13, which included both of these aspects as well as considerable detailed regional planning.

The Korean War and NATO's second Strategic Concept

The invasion of South Korea by North Korean divisions on 25 June 1950 had an immediate impact on NATO and its strategic thinking. It brought home the realization that NATO needed to urgently address two fundamental issues: the effectiveness of NATO's military structures and the strength of NATO forces.

On 26 September 1950, the North Atlantic Council (NAC) approved the establishment of an integrated military force under centralized command. On 19 December 1950, the NAC requested the nomination of General Dwight D. Eisenhower as NATO's first Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR).In January 1951, from their temporary location at Hotel Astoria in Paris, Allies were already working to get the Supreme Headquarters Allied Forces Europe (SHAPE) into place and on 2 April 1951, the newly constructed military headquarters was activated in Rocquencourt. Other structural changes were implemented, including the abolition of the three European Regional Planning Groups, and the replacement in 1952 of the North Atlantic Ocean Regional Planning Group by Allied Command Atlantic (SACLANT), leaving only the Canada-US Regional Planning Group in existence.

These structural changes, together with the accession of Greece and Türkiye, needed to be reflected in the Strategic Concept. This led to the drafting of NATO's second Strategic Concept: "The Strategic Concept for the Defense of the North Atlantic Area", which was approved by the NAC on 3 December 1952 (MC 3/5(Final)). The new Strategic Concept respected the core principles outlined in DC 6/1 and, in this sense, did not differ fundamentally from this document.

The strategic guidance also needed updating. MC 14 was thoroughly revised and reviewed to include the information that had been previously contained in DC 13. MC 14 and DC 13 became one document: _"Strategic Guidance"_ (MC 14/1) approved by the NAC on 15-18 December 1952 at the Ministerial Meeting in Paris. It was a comprehensive document, which stated that NATO's overall strategic aim was "to ensure the defense of the NATO area and to destroy the will and capability of the Soviet Union and her satellites to wage war…". NATO would do this by initially conducting an air offensive and, in parallel, conducting air, ground and sea operations. The Allied air attacks would use "all types of weapons".

There was another issue that the Korean invasion raised, but was only addressed years later: the need for NATO to engage in a "forward strategy", which meant that NATO wanted to place its defenses as far east in Europe as possible, as close to the Iron Curtain as it could. This immediately raised the delicate issue of Germany's role in such a commitment. This issue was not resolved until the Federal Republic of Germany became a member on 6 May 1955.

The "New Look"

In the meantime, while structural issues had moved forward, the level of strength of NATO forces remained a problem. At its meeting in Lisbon, in February 1952, the NAC set very ambitious force goals that proved to be financially and politically unrealistic. Consequently, the United States, under the leadership of NATO's former SACEUR, Dwight D. Eisenhower, decided to shift the emphasis of their defense policy to greater dependency on the use of nuclear weapons. This "New Look" policy offered greater military effectiveness without having to spend more on defense. However, although alluded to in the strategic documents, nuclear weapons had not yet been integrated into NATO's strategy. In August 1953, SACEUR Alfred Gruenther established a "New Approach Group" at SHAPE to examine this question. In the meantime, the United States, together with a number of European members, called for the complete integration of nuclear policy into NATO strategy.

Massive retaliation and NATO's third Strategic Concept

The work of the "New Approach Group" contributed to "The Most Effective Pattern of NATO Military Strength for the Next Few Years" (MC 48), approved by the Military Committee on 22 November 1954 and by the NAC on 17 December 1954. It provided strategic guidance pending the review of MC 14/1 and contained concepts and assumptions that were later included in NATO's third Strategic Concept. MC 48 was the first official NATO document to explicitly discuss the use of nuclear weapons, and it first introduced the concept of massive retaliation. An additional report entitled "The Most Effective Pattern of NATO Military Strength for the Next Few Years – Report 2" was issued on 14 November 1955. It did not supersede MC 14/1 but added that NATO was still committed to its "forward strategy" even if there were delays in German contributions that would push the implementation of the "forward strategy" to 1959 at the earliest.

After considerable discussion, **"Overall Strategic Concept for the Defense of the NATO Area"** (MC 14/2) was issued on 23 May 1957 and was accompanied by **"Measures to Implement the Strategic Concept"** (MC 48/2), on the same day. MC 14/2 was the Alliance's first Strategic Concept that advocated "massive retaliation" as a key element of NATO's new strategy.

While some Allies strongly advocated massive retaliation since it had the advantage of helping to reduce force requirements and, therefore, defense expenditures, not all member countries wanted to go so far. A degree of flexibility was introduced in the sense that recourse to conventional weapons was envisaged to deal with certain, smaller forms of aggression, "without necessarily having recourse to nuclear weapons". This was also reflected in the accompanying strategic guidance. Despite this flexibility, it was nonetheless stated that NATO did not accept the concept of limited war with the USSR: "If the Soviets were involved in a hostile local action and sought to broaden the scope of such an incident or prolong it, the situation would call for the utilization of all weapons and forces at NATO's disposal, since in no case is there a concept of limited war with the Soviets."

In addition to including the doctrine of "massive retaliation", MC 14/2 and MC 48/2 reflected the effects on the Alliance of Soviet political and economic activities outside the NATO area. This was particularly relevant in the context of the Suez Crisis and the crushing of the Hungarian uprising by the Soviet Union in 1956. The importance of out-of-area events was reflected in a political directive, CM(56)138, given from the NAC to NATO's Military Authorities on 13 December 1956: "Although NATO defense planning is limited to the defense of the Treaty area, it is necessary to take account of the dangers which may arise for NATO because of developments outside that area."

The Report of the Committee of Three

While NATO was hardening its military and strategic stance, in parallel, it decided to reinforce the political role of the Alliance. A few months before the adoption of MC 14/2, in December 1956, it published the Report of the Committee of Three on Non-Military Cooperation in NATO.

This report, drafted by three NATO foreign ministers – Lester Pearson (Canada), Gaetano Martino (Italy) and Halvard Lange (Norway) – gave new impetus to political consultation between member countries on all aspects of relations between the East and West.

The Report was adopted in the midst of the Suez Crisis, when internal consultation on security matters affecting the Alliance was particularly low, jeopardizing Alliance solidarity. This was the first time since the signing of the Washington Treaty that NATO had officially recognised the need to reinforce its political role.

The Report put forward several recommendations, including the peaceful settlement of inter-member disputes, economic cooperation, scientific and technical cooperation, cultural cooperation and cooperation in the information field.

Similarly to the Harmel Report, published in 1967, the Report of the Committee of Three contributed to broadening the strategic framework within which the Alliance operated. Both reports could be perceived as NATO's first steps toward a more cooperative approach to security issues.

Massive retaliation put into question

As soon as NATO's third Strategic Concept was adopted, a series of international developments occurred that put into question the Alliance's strategy of massive retaliation.This strategy relied heavily on the United States' nuclear capability and its will to defend European territory in the case of a Soviet nuclear attack. The USSR had developed intercontinental ballistic missile capabilities, leading Europeans to doubt whether a US President would sacrifice an American city for a European city and, more generally, its nuclear capability. As the USSR's nuclear potential increased, NATO's competitive advantage in nuclear deterrence diminished. Terms such as "Mutually Assured Destruction" or "MAD" started to be used.The outbreak of the second Berlin Crisis (1958-1962) reinforced these doubts: how should NATO react to threats that were below the level of an all-out attack? NATO's nuclear deterrent had not stopped the Soviets from threatening the position of Western Allies in Berlin. So what should be done?Coming to office in 1961, US President John F. Kennedy was concerned by the issue of limited warfare and the notion that a nuclear exchange could be started by accident or miscalculation. In the meantime, the Berlin Crisis intensified, leading to the construction of the Berlin Wall, and in October 1962, the Cold War peaked with the Cuban missile crisis.The United States started advocating a stronger non-nuclear posture for NATO and the need for a strategy of "flexible response".

The Athens Guidelines

NATO Secretary General Dirk Stikker presented a special report on NATO Defence Policy (CM(62)48) on 17 April 1962 about the issue of the political control of nuclear weapons. It was basically NATO's first attempt to temper its policy of massive retaliation by submitting the use of nuclear weapons to consultation under varying circumstances.

Other attempts at introducing greater flexibility followed, but these caused resistance from several member countries. This internal resistance, combined with the fact that the US Administration had been shaken by the assassination of President John F. Kennedy and was increasingly concerned by its military involvement in Vietnam, momentarily froze all discussions on a revised Strategic Concept for NATO.

NATO's fourth Strategic Concept and the doctrine of flexible response

The withdrawal of France from NATO's integrated military structure in 1966 reinforced the need for a new, **fourth Strategic Concept: "Overall Strategic Concept for the Defense of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Area"** (MC 14/3) – was adopted by the Defence Planning Committee (DPC) on 12 December 1967 and the final version issued on 16 January 1968. This is the only Strategic Concept in NATO's history that was not decided on in the North Atlantic Council.

There were two key features to the new strategy: flexibility and escalation. "The deterrent concept of the Alliance is based on a flexibility that will prevent the potential aggressor from predicting with confidence NATO's specific response to aggression and which will lead him to conclude that an unacceptable degree of risk would be involved regardless of the nature of his attack". The Strategic Concept identified three types of military responses against aggression to NATO:

1. Direct defense: the aim was to defeat the aggression on the level at which the enemy chose to fight.
2. Deliberate escalation: this added a series of possible steps to defeat aggression by progressively raising the threat of using nuclear power as the crisis escalated.
3. General nuclear response, seen as the ultimate deterrent.

The companion document, "Measures to Implement the Strategic Concept for the Defense of the NATO Area" (MC 48/3), was approved by the Defence Planning Committee (DPC) and issued on 8 December 1969. Both MC 14/3 and MC 48/3 were so inherently flexible, in substance and interpretation, that they remained valid until the end of the Cold War.

- After the withdrawal of France from the integrated military structure in 1966, responsibility for all defense matters in which France did not participate was given to the DPC, of which France was not a member. Shortly after France decided to fully participate in NATO's military structures (April 2009), the DPC was dissolved during a major overhaul of NATO committees in June 2010.

The Harmel Report

As NATO was setting its strategic objectives for the next 20 years, it also decided to draw up a report that provided a dual-track approach to security: political and military. In the context of the questioning, by some, of the relevancy of NATO, the "Harmel Report" or the "Report on the Future Tasks of the Alliance" was drawn up.

It provided a broad analysis of the security environment since the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty in 1949 and advocated the need to maintain adequate defense while seeking a relaxation of tensions in East-West relations and working towards solutions to the underlying political problems dividing Europe.

It defined two specific tasks: political, with the formulation of proposals for balanced force reductions in the East and West; and military, with the defense of exposed areas, especially the Mediterranean.

The Harmel Report introduced the notion of deterrence and *détente*. In that respect, as already stated in the context of the Report of the Committee of Three, it set the tone for NATO's first steps toward a more cooperative approach to security issues that would emerge in 1991.

Tensions increased with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the deployment of Soviet SS-20 missiles. NATO reacted by initiating its Double-Track Decision in December 1979: it offered the Warsaw Pact a mutual limitation of medium and intermediate-range ballistic missiles and, failing a positive reaction from Moscow, threatened to deploy Pershing and cruise missiles, which it eventually did.

Détente increased with the signing of the US-Soviet agreements on Strategic Arms Limitations Talks (SALT I) and anti-ballistic missile systems, and SALT II (although not ratified), as well as the signing of US-Soviet Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START) and the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty.

By the mid- to late 80s, both blocs moved to confidence-building. However, mutual distrust still characterized East-West relations and it was not until the fall of the Berlin Wall, the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and the break-up of the Soviet Union that relations could start on a new basis.

The post-Cold War period

In 1991, a new era commenced. The formidable enemy that the Soviet Union had once been was dissolved. In the decades that followed, Russia and other countries previously under communist control became NATO partners and, in many cases, NATO members. For the Alliance, the period was characterized by dialogue and cooperation, as well as other new ways of contributing to peace and stability such as multinational crisis management operations.

During the post-Cold War period, NATO issued three – non-classified – Strategic Concepts that advocated a broader approach to security than before:

- The Alliance's Strategic Concept, November 1991;
- The Alliance's Strategic Concept, April 1999;
- "Active Engagement, Modern Defence", November 2010.

NATO's fifth Strategic Concept, 1991

The **1991 Strategic Concept** differed dramatically from preceding strategic documents. Firstly, it was a non-confrontational document that was released to the public; and secondly, while maintaining the security of its members as its fundamental purpose (i.e., collective defense), it sought to improve and expand security for Europe as a whole through partnership and cooperation with former adversaries. It also reduced the use of nuclear forces to a minimum level, sufficient to preserve peace and stability:

> "*This Strategic Concept reaffirms the defensive nature of the Alliance and the resolve of its members to safeguard their security, sovereignty and territorial integrity. The Alliance's security policy is based on dialogue; co-operation; and effective collective defense as mutually reinforcing instruments for preserving the peace. Making full use of the new opportunities available, the Alliance will maintain security at the lowest possible level of forces consistent with the requirements of defense. In this way, the Alliance is making an essential contribution to promoting a lasting peaceful order.*"

The 1991 Strategic Concept's accompanying document was – and still is – classified. It is entitled "MC Directive for Military Implementation of the Alliance's Strategic Concept" (MC 400), 12 December 1991.

NATO's sixth Strategic Concept, 1999

In 1999, the year of NATO's 50th anniversary and against the backdrop of wars in the former Yugoslavia that started in the early 1990s, Allied Leaders adopted a new Strategic Concept that committed members to common defense and peace and stability of the wider Euro-Atlantic area. It was based on a broad definition of security, which recognised the importance of political, economic, social and environmental factors in addition to the defense dimension. It identified the new risks that had emerged since the end of the Cold War, which included terrorism, ethnic conflict, human rights abuses, political instability, economic fragility and the spread of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons and their means of delivery.

The document stated that the Alliance's fundamental tasks were security, consultation, and deterrence and defense, adding that crisis management and partnership were also essential to enhancing security and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area. It noted that NATO had managed to adapt and play an important role in the post-Cold War environment, and established guidelines for the Alliance's forces, translating the purposes and tasks of the preceding sections into practical instructions for NATO force and operational planners. The strategy called for the continued development of the military capabilities needed for the full range of the Alliance's missions, from collective defense to peace-support and other crisis-response operations. It also stipulated that the Alliance would maintain for the foreseeable future an appropriate mix of nuclear and conventional forces.

The **1999 Strategic Concept** was complemented by a strategic guidance document that remains classified: "MC Guidance for the Military Implementation of the Alliance Strategy" (MC 400/2), 12 February 2003.

NATO's Seventh Strategic Concept, 2010

The 9/11 terrorist attacks in 2001 against the United States brought the threat of terrorism and weapons of mass destruction to the fore. NATO needed to protect its populations both at home and abroad. It therefore underwent major internal reforms to adapt military structures and capabilities to equip members for new tasks, such as leading the UN-mandated International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan.

NATO also proceeded to deepen and extend its partnerships and, essentially, accelerate its transformation to develop new political relationships and stronger operational capabilities to respond to an increasingly global and more challenging world.

These radical changes needed to be reflected in NATO's strategic documents.

A first step was taken in November 2006 when NATO Leaders endorsed the "Comprehensive Political Guidance", a major policy document that set out the framework and priorities for Alliance capability issues, planning disciplines and intelligence for the next 10 to 15 years. Later, at the Strasbourg-Kehl Summit in April 2009, NATO Leaders endorsed the "Declaration on Alliance Security", which, *inter alia*, called for a new Strategic Concept.

The **2010 Strategic Concept, "Active Engagement, Modern Defence"**, issued at the Lisbon Summit in November 2010, was accompanied by the Military Committee Guidance MC 400/3 of March 2012. It was a very clear and resolute statement on NATO's values and purpose, and revolved around three core tasks: collective defense, crisis management and cooperative security. It provided a collective assessment of the security environment at the time, identifying threats such as the proliferation of ballistic missiles and nuclear weapons, terrorism, cyber attacks and fundamental environmental problems. It also drove NATO's strategic adaptation and guided its political and military development for the short to mid term. The Strategic Concept affirmed NATO's aim to promote international security through cooperation by reinforcing arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation efforts, by emphasizing NATO's Open Door policy for all European countries and by enhancing partnerships in the broad sense of the term. It also emphasized Alliance solidarity, the importance of transatlantic consultation and the need to engage in a continuous process of reform and transformation.

**The current Strategic Concept, 2022**

Since 2010, the world has fundamentally changed. Russia's aggressions against Ukraine since 2014, followed by unprovoked and full-scale war in 2022, has shattered peace in Europe. Renewed strategic competition, authoritarianism and pervasive instability have risen, the threat of terrorism persists and new challenges such as climate change and rapid technological developments demand adaptation. Since 2014, NATO has significantly reinforced its deterrence and defense posture, and enhanced the readiness of its forces, while Allies started to increase defense spending. When, in February 2022, Russia engaged in a brutal and unprovoked war on Ukraine, Allies agreed to reset NATO's deterrence and defense for the longer term. To complement these defensive measures, NATO is maintaining a broad definition of security and is focusing on vital domains such as resilience and countering hybrid threats, climate change and human security.

At the Brussels Summit in 2021, NATO Leaders agreed to the NATO 2030 agenda, which prepared the ground for a new strategic concept and recommended its launch for 2022. **The 2022 Strategic Concept** was endorsed by Allied Heads of State and Government at the Madrid Summit in June of the same year.

II. What are the NATO Branches

The NATO Military Command Structure consists of two strategic commands, directed by the International Military Staff:

The commands under SACEUR - Allied Joint Force Command Brunssum, Allied Joint Force Command Naples and Joint Force Command Norfolk are Operational Level Commands, while Headquarters Allied Air Command, Headquarters Allied Maritime Command and Headquarters Allied Land Command are Tactical Level Commands.SACEUR also has operational command of the Joint Support and Enabling Command.
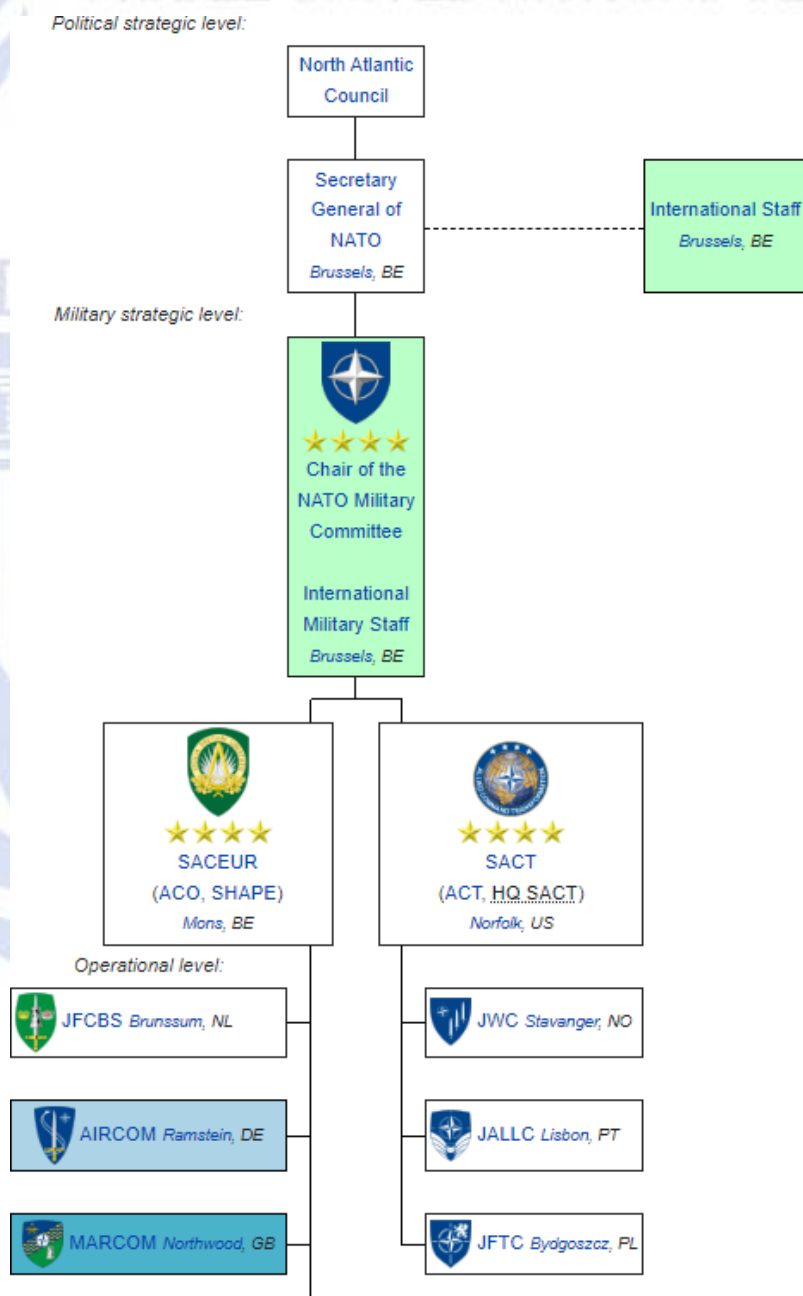
NATO's military operations are directed by the Chairman of the NATO Military Committee and split into two Strategic Commands, both long commanded by U.S. officers, assisted by a staff drawn from across NATO. The Strategic Commanders are responsible to the NATO Military Committee for the overall direction and conduct of all Alliance military matters within their areas of command.

On 12 June 2003 NATO ministers announced an end to the decades-old structure of a command each for the Atlantic and Europe. Allied Command Operations (ACO) was to be established, responsible for the strategic, operational and tactical management of combat and combat support forces of the NATO members, and Allied Command Transformation (ACT) responsible for the induction of the new member states' forces into NATO, and NATO forces' research and training capability. The European allies had become concerned about the possibility of a loosening of U.S. ties to NATO if there were no longer any U.S.-led NATO HQ in the United States, and the refocusing of the Atlantic command into a transformation command was the result. The alliance created several NATO Rapid Deployable Corps and naval High Readiness Forces (HRFs), which all report to Allied Command Operations. In Europe the Regional Commands were replaced by JFC Brunssum and JFC Naples, and the JSRCs disappeared (though the Madrid JSRC became a land command for JFC Naples).

The commander of Allied Command Operations retained the title "Supreme Allied Commander Europe", and remains based at SHAPE at Casteau. He is a U.S. four-star general or admiral with the dual-hatted role of heading United States European Command. ACO includes Joint Force Command Brunssum in the Netherlands, Joint Force Command Naples in Italy, and Joint Force Command Lisbon in Portugal, all multinational headquarters with many nations represented. From 2003, JFC Brunssum had its land component, Allied Land Component Command Headquarters Heidelberg at Heidelberg, Germany, its air component, Allied Air Command Ramstein, at Ramstein in Germany, and its naval component at the Northwood Headquarters in the northwest suburbs of London. JFC Naples has its land component in Madrid, air component at İzmir, Turkey, and its naval component, Allied Maritime Command Naples, in Naples, Italy. It also directed KFOR in Kosovo. Joint Command Lisbon was a smaller HQ with no subordinate commands.

In 2012–2013, the Military Command Structure was reorganized. Allied Force Command Madrid was disestablished on 1 July 2013, the Heidelberg force command also deactivated, the maritime component command at Naples was closed and the air component command at Izmir also shut down. Allied Air Command Izmir was reorganized as Allied Land Command.

A number of NATO Force Structure formations, such as the NATO Rapid Deployable Corps, are answerable ultimately to SACEUR either directly or through the component commands. Directly responsible to SACEUR is the NATO Airborne Early Warning Force at NATO Air Base Geilenkirchen in Germany where a jointly funded fleet of E-3 Sentry AWACS airborne radar aircraft is located. The Boeing C-17 Globemaster IIIs of the Strategic Airlift Capability, which became fully operational in July 2009, are based at Pápa airfield in Hungary.

Allied Command Transformation (ACT) is based in the former Allied Command Atlantic headquarters in Norfolk, Virginia , United States. It is headed by the Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (SACT), a French officer. There is also an ACT command element located at SHAPE in Mons, Belgium. In June 2009 Le Figaro named the French officer who was to take command of ACT following France's return to the NATO Military Command Structure. Subordinate ACT organizations include the Joint Warfare Centre (JWC) located in Stavanger, Norway (in the same site as the former Norwegian Armed Forces National Joint HQ); the Joint Force Training Centre (JFTC) in Bydgoszcz, Poland; and the Joint Analysis and Lessons Learned Centre (JALLC) in Monsanto, Portugal. The NATO Undersea Research Centre (NURC) at La Spezia, Italy, was also part of ACT until it was shifted under the auspices of the NATO Science & Technology Organization.

In early 2015, in the wake of the War in Donbass, meetings of NATO ministers decided that Multinational Corps Northeast would be augmented so as to develop greater capabilities, to, if thought necessary, prepare to defend the Baltic States, and that a new Multinational Division Southeast would be established in Romania. Six NATO Force Integration Units would also be established to coordinate preparations for defense of new Eastern members of NATO.

Multinational Division Southeast was activated on 1 December 2015. Headquarters Multinational Division South – East (HQ MND-SE) is a North Atlantic Council (NAC) activated NATO military body under operational command (OPCOM) of Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) which may be employed and deployed in peacetime, crisis and operations.

On 25 April 2017, the commander-designate of the new Multinational Division Northeast arrived at the headquarters location at Elblag, Poland. On 3 July 2017, the new division reached initial operational capability (IOC). The division is tasked to coordinate the four NATO Enhanced Forward Presence battlegroups and to carry out Article 5 collective defense activities.

In late 2017-early 2018, two new commands were approved, a rear area transit command which was finally announced as the Joint Support and Enabling Command, to be located at Ulm, Germany, and a new command for the Atlantic. In March 2018 Chair of the Military Committee General Petr Pavel announced that the new Atlantic command would become part of the NATO Command Structure at the level of a Joint Force Command, similar to the two that exist at Brunssum and Naples. On 7 June 2018 the Secretary-General said a new JFC will have its headquarters in Norfolk, Virginia, in the United States. The name was confirmed as Joint Force Command Norfolk at the NATO Summit in July. It will be commanded by the Vice Admiral who leads the United States Second Fleet. On 15 July 2021 Joint Force Command Norfolk (JFC-NF) attained Full operational capability (FOC) under the command of Vice Adm. Andrew Lewis

a. Decision Making Process

NATO Military Committee

The Military Committee (MC) is the senior military authority in NATO and the oldest permanent body in NATO after the North Atlantic Council, both having been formed only months after the Alliance came into being. It is the primary source of military advice to the North Atlantic Council and the Nuclear Planning Group, and gives direction to the two Strategic Commanders.

- The Military Committee is the primary source of consensus-based advice to the North Atlantic Council and the Nuclear Planning Group on military policy and strategy, and it provides guidance to the two Strategic Commanders – Supreme Allied Commander Europe and Supreme Allied Commander Transformation.
- As such, it is an essential link between the political decision-making process and the military structure of NATO.
- The Military Committee is responsible for translating political decision and guidance into military direction, and for recommending measures considered necessary for the defense of the NATO area and the implementation of decisions regarding military operations.
- It also develops strategic policy and concepts, and prepares an annual long-term assessment of the strength and capabilities of countries and areas posing a risk to NATO's interests.
- The Military Committee, headed by its Chair, meets frequently at the level of national Military Representatives, and three times a year at the level of Chiefs of Defence.

b. Roles and responsibilities

- Consensus-based advice on military matters

The Committee's principal role is to provide consensus-based advice on military policy and strategy to the North Atlantic Council and direction to NATO's Strategic Commanders. It is responsible for recommending to NATO's political authorities those measures considered necessary for the common defense of the NATO area and for the implementation of decisions regarding NATO's operations and missions.

The Military Committee's advice is sought as a matter of course prior to authorisation by the North Atlantic Council of NATO military activities or operations.

It represents an essential link between the political decision-making process and the military command structure of NATO and is an integral part of the decision-making process of the Alliance.

- Strategic direction

The Military Committee also plays a key role in the development of NATO's military policy and doctrine within the framework of discussions in the Council, the Nuclear Planning Group and other senior bodies. It is responsible for translating political decision and guidance into military direction to NATO's two Strategic Commanders – Supreme Allied Commander Europe and Supreme Allied Commander Transformation.

In this context, the Committee assists in developing overall strategic concepts for the Alliance and prepares an annual long-term assessment of the strength and capabilities of countries and areas posing a risk to NATO's interests.

In times of crises, tension or war, and in relation to military operations undertaken by the Alliance such as its role in Kosovo, its advises the Council of the military situation and its implications, and makes recommendations on the use of military force, the implementation of contingency plans and the development of appropriate rules of engagement. It is also responsible for the efficient operation of agencies subordinate to the Military Committee.

- Committee representatives

The Military Committee is made up of senior military officers (usually three-star Generals or Admirals) from NATO member countries, who serve as their country's Military Representative (MILREP) to NATO, representing their Chief of Defence (CHOD). It represents a tremendous amount of specialized knowledge and experience that helps shape Alliance-wide military policies, strategies and plans.

The MILREPs work in a national capacity, representing the interests of their country while remaining open to negotiation and discussion so that a NATO consensus can be reached.

A civilian official represents Iceland, which has no military forces.

The Committee is headed by its Chair, who is NATO's senior military official. The Chair directs the Military Committee and acts on its behalf, issuing directives and guidance both to the Director General of the International Military Staff and to NATO's Strategic Commanders. He also has an important public role as Committee spokesperson and representative, making him the senior military spokesperson for the Alliance on all military matters. He is nominated for a period of three years.

- Working mechanisms of the Committee

The Committee meets at least once a week in formal or informal sessions to discuss, deliberate and act on matters of military importance.

In practice, meetings are convened whenever necessary and both the Council and the Military Committee normally meet much more frequently than once a week. As a result of the Alliance's role, for instance in Kosovo and the Mediterranean, the need for the Council and Military Committee to meet more frequently to discuss operational matters has increased.

The work of the Military Committee is supported by the International Military Staff (IMS), which effectively acts as its executive body. The IMS is responsible for preparing assessments, studies and other papers on NATO military matters and ensures that the appropriate NATO military bodies implement the decisions and policies on military matters.

- High-level meetings

Like the political decision-making bodies, it also meets regularly at its highest level, namely at the level of Chiefs of Defence (CHODs). Meetings at this level are usually held three times a year. Two of these meetings occur at NATO Headquarters and a NATO member country hosts the third in the form of a Military Committee Conference.

- Cooperation with partners

The Military Committee meets regularly with partner countries at the level of national Military Representatives (once a month) and at the level of CHODs (twice a year) to deal with military cooperation issues. The Military Committee can also meet in different formats, for instance in the framework of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (i.e., in EAPC format) or more specifically to address issues related to an ongoing military operation.

c. Political and Bureaucratic

International Military Staff

The International Military Staff (IMS) is the executive body of the Military Committee (MC), NATO's senior military authority.

The IMS consists of a staff of approximately 500, composed solely of military and civilian personnel from NATO member countries, working from NATO Headquarters in Brussels, Belgium.

- It provides strategic and military advice and staff support for the Military Committee, which advises the North Atlantic Council on military aspects of policy, operations and transformation within the Alliance.
- The IMS also ensures that NATO decisions and policies on military matters are implemented by the appropriate NATO military bodies.
- It is headed by a Director General and is comprised of several divisions.

Role and responsibilities

The IMS is the essential link between the political decision-making bodies of the Alliance and NATO's Strategic Commanders (the Supreme Allied Commander Europe – SACEUR – and the Supreme Allied Commander Transformation – SACT) and their staffs. Its strength lies in exchanging information and views with the staffs of the Military Representatives, the civilian International Staff (IS), the Strategic Commanders, the multinational Working Groups and NATO Agencies, ensuring effective and efficient staff work.

The role of the IMS is to provide the best possible strategic military advice and staff support for the Military Committee (MC). It is responsible for preparing assessments, studies on NATO military issues identifying areas of strategic and operational interest, and proposing courses of action. Its work enables the Military Representatives of the Alliance's 30 member countries to deal with issues rapidly and effectively, ensuring that the MC provides the North Atlantic Council (NAC) – NATO's principal political decision-making body – with consensus-based advice on all military aspects of policy, operations and transformation within the Alliance.

Working mechanism

The IMS is headed by a Director General, at the level of a three star general or flag officer, assisted by 12 general/flag officers who head the divisions and administrative support offices within the IMS. It is able to move swiftly into a 24/7 crisis mode for a limited period of time without additional personnel.

d. Clearance Level

Several key positions are located within or attached to the Office of the Director General of the IMS:

- Office of the Executive Coordinator (EXCO): EXCO manages staff activities and controls the flow of information and communication, both within the IMS as well as between the IMS and other parts of NATO Headquarters. EXCO is the Secretary to the Military Committee , directly answerable to the Chair and also prepares MC visits and provides secretarial support to the MC;
- Office of the Public Affairs and Strategic Communications Advisor (PASCAD): PASCAD advises the Chair and Deputy Chair of the MC, and the Director General of the IMS on strategic communications and public affairs matters. The Advisor works closely with the office of the Chair of the Military Committee, acting as military spokesperson for the Chair, and as the main source of information for all MC matters and activities;
- Office of the Financial Controller (FC): the FC advises key officials on all IMS financial and fiscal matters;
- Office of the Legal Officer (LEGAD): LEGAD provides guidance on all legal issues to the Chair and Deputy Chair of the MC, the Director General of the IMS and all organizations under the authority of this office, and the MC.
- Office of the Gender Advisor (GENAD): GENAD provides advice and support to the IMS on gender issues. It is the permanent focal point for collecting, providing and sharing information regarding national programmes, policies and procedures on these issues, including the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security (UNSCRs 1325 and 1820). It maintains close liaison with the NATO Secretary General's Special Representative for Women, Peace and Security, the Strategic Commands, International Staff and international organizations concerned with the integration of a gender perspective into military operations, as well as with gender-related issues.

The IMS divisions

The IMS' key role is to support the MC, and to do this it is organized into functional divisions responsible for the following:

The **Operations and Planning (O&P)** Division closely monitors NATO operations, manages all Advance Plans, follows exercises and training, and provides advice on all related ongoing and unfolding military operations. It also follows the implementation of decisions taken by the MC with regard to NATO operations. The Division's core activities are: NATO and NATO-led current and unfolding military operations; advance plans and crisis management procedures / arrangements; NATO Education, Training, Exercises and Evaluation (ETEE) events and/or systems; NATO military responsibilities in the fields of Hybrid Warfare, Maritime Warfare, Air Defence, Ballistic Missile Defence, Air Traffic Management, Electronic Warfare, Information Operations as well as Meteorological and Oceanographic (METOC) services.

The **Policy and Capabilities (P&C)** Division has the military lead within the International Military Staff for all matters related to Alliance defense policy and analysis. P&C Division is responsible for transformation issues and strategic military policy of specific interest to the Military Committee (MC). This includes developing, staffing and representing the views of the MC on strategic military policy. This Division provides strategic military advice across three broad areas: Strategic Policy and Concepts; Nuclear Deterrence Policy and Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Defence Policy; and Defence Planning, Capability Development and Delivery including Armaments as well as Science and Technology aspects.

The **Cooperative Security (CS)** Division develops and implements military Cooperative Security policy and is responsible for the military contacts and coordination of NATO's military cooperation with established partners and other non-partner countries interested in conducting military activities with the Alliance. In addition, the Division is also responsible for the coordination of NATO's interactions with international and non-governmental organizations, such as the United Nations, the European Union, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the African Union, the Gulf Cooperation Council, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and others.

The **Logistics and Resources (L&R)** Division develops and defines policies and principles, plans and concepts on all matters concerning logistics, medical, civil preparedness, military personnel and civilian personnel functions, NATO medals and NATO common-funded resources. In addition, the Division is the IMS' focal point for the three resource pillars: NATO infrastructure investment, military budget and personnel. The L&R Division acts as a facilitator with nations in the Logistics, Medical and Resource Committees.

Joint IS/IMS Bodies

The **Joint Intelligence and Security Division (JISD)** provides intelligence support to all NATO Headquarters (HQ) elements, NATO member states and NATO Commands. It also provides strategic warning and situational awareness to all NATO HQ elements. The Division's core activities are: developing a NATO Intelligence framework, architecture and intelligence capabilities; providing customer-oriented policies and NATO Agreed Intelligence Assessments; advising on intelligence-sharing matters and conducting intelligence liaison activities.

The **NATO Headquarters C3 Staff (NHQC3S)** supports the development of policy standards and provides analysis and advice to NATO in the Consultation, Command and Control (C3) domain. This Division has an integrated staff (IS/IMS) and reports to both the Director General of the IMS and the Assistant Secretary General for Defence Investment while advising the NAC through the C3 Board and the MC on C3. The NHQC3S also works closely with the Assistant Secretary General for Emerging Security Challenges and the Cyber Defence Committee in support of the Alliance in all cyber defense matters and provides the MC advice on its military aspects. Additionally, the NHQC3S supports the C3 domain in the coordination and the planning of C3 capabilities.

The **NATO Situation Centre (SITCEN)** is designed to provide situational awareness and alerting to the NAC and the MC in fulfilling their respective functions during peace, in periods of tension and crisis and for high-level exercises. This is achieved through the receipt, exchange and dissemination of information from all available internal and external sources. SITCEN also acts as the link with similar facilities of member countries and the Strategic Commands, including the SHAPE Comprehensive Crisis and Operations Management Centre (CCOMC), as well as selected international organizations, as appropriate.

The **NATO Standardization Office (NSO)** is a single, integrated body, composed of military and civilian staff with the authority to initiate, coordinate, support and administer standardization activities conducted under the authority of the Committee for Standardization. The NSO is the Military Committee's lead agent for the development, coordination and assessment of operational standardization.

III. NATO Politics

NATO was born out as a military alliance with one goal, collective security among its allies against growing military threads around the world. Although this alliance was established over political trust and interest, the main reason was the establishment of military cooperation. After the fall of the USSR, NATO's aim to fight against Soviet threads and expansion expired but never ended. As states are living organizations, they do not have emotions and they can not act upon any individual level system in international politics nor at the North Atlantic alliance. With the rise of new threads in the 21st century starting from 9/11 to the Syrian Civil War, terrorism to the refugee crisis, cybersecurity to international energy security become a major factor where each member of the alliance sought a solution. Hence, NATO developed its position in the global modern world and started to follow military alliance's security as its primary role while in secondary, following up state-interested political actions over some regions and some specific countries.

It should never be forgotten that NATO is an organization that seeks unanimous decision taking but according to budget spending, military participation and power in global politics also affects all members and their needs drastically where state-level conflict may shape international-level foreign policy while some individual decision-making by a state leader may put alliance's security and cooperation at risk for the one's domestic politics.

- How it shaped regions

From UN to EU, NATO's Role

The United Nations (UN), European Union (EU), and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) are the three essential international organizations. In addition to their historical importance, these organizations are currently under the spotlight due to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. This article provides a short introduction to each of these organizations and discusses their evolution in a changing world.

The UN was established to "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war" and one of its main purposes is to maintain international peace and security" (United Nations, n.d.). The organization's existence is based on its commitment to preventing war and protecting human rights. To fulfill this responsibility, the UN carries out various missions authorized by the Security Council or General Assembly.

Although there are many instruments such as negotiation and judicial settlement, recourse to peacekeeping operations became a prevalent measure of the UN, which is not explicitly mentioned in the Charter. The number, size, and scope of peacekeeping missions deployed in the aftermath of civil wars exploded at the end of the Cold War (Fortna, 2010). Before that, the UN was unable to take action due to the ongoing conflict between its two members with veto power: the US and the USSR.

Peacekeeping during the Cold War was mostly used in inter-state conflicts with the aim of containing the conflict and preventing direct superpower intervention, rather than preventing the resumption of war (Fortna, 2010). Upon the collapse of the Soviet Union, the UN Security Council finally appeared to be able to deploy its peacekeepers actively, taking up its primary mandate. While intra-state civil conflicts have escalated, the approach of peacekeeping operations has evolved. The post-Cold War moment witnessed a tremendous flourishing in multilateral cooperation and nations employed multilateral architectures with unprecedented success to manage and reduce real shared global problems (Moreland, 2022). However, UN peacekeeping operations of the 1990s failed to maintain this optimistic atmosphere. Especially Bosnia, Somalia, and Rwanda became examples of peacekeeping operations that left unfavorable memories. Moreover, the passive response to Rwanda being explained by reluctance of the members due to the difficulties in Somalia (Semb, 2000), demonstrates how multilateralism was undermined gradually.

This does not mean that peacekeeping operations were a complete failure, but they remain insufficient. The weakening of multilateralism was escalated with differences over Iraq in 2002 in the U.N. Security Council, when the United States failed to persuade France and Russia—both permanent members—to authorize the invasion of Iraq and created an ad hoc coalition of the willing for the purpose (Dossani, 2022). The United States again failed to gain Security Council approval for military intervention in Syria in 2013, and again created an ad hoc coalition for the purpose (Dossani, 2022). These events signalled the return of rivalry and power contests. While the United States becoming the most noticeable disruptor, authoritarian countries like China and Russia are actively contesting the underpinnings of the multilateral order (Moreland, 2022).

Thus, the failure of UN to act on the Russian invasion of Ukraine should not surprise anyone since this appears to be merely the latest demonstration of a two-decade-long trend of the growing ineffectiveness of global multilateral institutions in addressing the world's diplomatic, security, and socioeconomic challenges (Dossani, 2022).

As an alternative to failure of multilateralism in universal organizations, regional institutions came to the spotlight. The establishment of the European Union is accepted as the symbol of regionalism. Founded after WWII as a result of European cooperation to secure peace, prosperity, and stability, the EU turned into a network of monetary arrangements, political institutions and law. It has evolved from the European Coal and Steel Community of 1951 and new competencies were added through further negotiations and supplementary treaties.The drive toward wider and deeper integration succeeded in breaking down formidable trade barriers, easing the movement of goods, services, labor, and capital across borders, and heightening competition for investment (Downs, 2002).

The development of multilateralism in the EU followed a roughly parallel pattern as a series of treaties, particularly from the Single European Act in 1985 and the Maastricht Treaty in 1991, brought an increasing number of arrangements between member states into the multilateral realm (Taylor, 2014). The organization is designed as a common space that unifies the member states, eliminating the internal borders and reinforcing separation from rest of the world. It sought to create a unified defense structure and foreign policy as well. This has largely failed due to the unwillingness of Europe's major powers to pool their foreign policy decisions (Hurd, 2014). The members having placed defense matters under an unanimity decision rule to protect their national interests (Hurd, 2014), demonstrates the setbacks in integration and multilateralism.

These two concepts were also negatively affected by the economic crisis of the last decade and Brexit. Providing leadership and expertise to EU policy at the UN, the United Kingdom has been a valuable member of EU policy. In this regard, Brexit negatively affected liberal institutionalism which the EU was trying to spread in the UN since this was an act against multilateralism. Brexit had negative impacts on the UK as well, its economy deteriorated after Brexit due to the lack of a EU single market and free trade agreements. However, the country put political interests over the economy, emphasizing its preference for unilateralism.

The existence of NATO was another factor that contributed to the weakening of the European Union's defense integration. Much of what a united EU defense policy might achieve could be said to be done already by NATO, and the US has long stated that it does not want a joint EU military that replaces NATO (Hurd, 2014, p. 320). With the EU's gradual emergence as a security actor, NATO's adjustment to the post-Cold War security landscape and the Eastern enlargement processes of both organizations are increasingly facing overlaps in challenges, resources and tasks, making them partners as well as rivals (Græger & Haugevik, 2012, p. 259). EU-NATO cooperation regarding the Ukrainian war serves as a current example. The war in Ukraine has precipitated significant changes that will most likely serve as foundations for the EU's future defense role, and may even gradually increase the EU's ability to intervene as a military player in complementarity with NATO, a long-held ambition that has largely remained a mere aspiration (Famà & Musiol, 2022).

As a defensive military alliance, NATO was formed against Russian expansion after WWII based on the concept of collective defense with the aim of protecting the freedom and security of its' members through military and political measures . The groundwork for the organization was the North Atlantic Treaty, also known as the Washington Treaty, which was signed in 1949. With the collapse of the USSR, NATO became irrelevant and it was expected to be demolished. Instead, in a declaration agreed upon at NATO's London summit in July 1990, the alliance offered the Central and Eastern European transition countries a formal end to confrontation, permanent diplomatic relations with NATO, and a future relationship based on the principle of common security (Schimmelfennig, 2001).

Finally, and paradoxically at first glance, it was only after the end of the Soviet threat, for which it was established, that NATO became involved in actual warfare, invoked the North Atlantic Treaty (NAT), and sent member state troops outside the North Atlantic region – each for the first time in its history (Schimmelfennig, 2001). Unlike other organizations including the UN and EU, NATO earned a reputation as a peacekeeper due to its successful operations in the Balkans. For instance, the Alliance took on these missions first in Bosnia, then in Kosovo, bringing an end to the horrors taking place there (La Porta, 2003), despite being late.

While the EU focused on expanding its membership by initially incorporating wealthy, previously neutral European countries, NATO opened its doors to the east, inviting the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland to join while stating that membership would remain open to all qualified European countries (Daalder, 2016). In addition to military security, NATO involves environmental security as well, taking measures to reduce the impacts of climate change. Nevertheless, it remained as a different organization in terms of leadership and multilateralism.

As a formal institution, it has through most of its history been distinctly non-multilateral, with the United States commanding most decision-making power, and at the same time, it provided security to its member states in a way that strongly reflected multilateral principles (Weber, 1992, p. 633). Russia's invasion of Ukraine brought NATO to the forefront of the news once again.

With the decision of Sweden and Finland to join NATO by leaving their neutral policy, and the organization's plan to increase the number of forces at its disposal, NATO is turning back to its primary mandate as a deterrent instrument. The organization's collective military power has been growing since 1949. NATO's 29 member countries produce more than half of the world's GDP, have more than 3 million troops on active duty, operate massive combined naval and air forces, and spend more than $1 trillion on defense (Stavridis, 2019), with varying contribution of member states according to their leverage and influence.

These organizations have been both successful, and unsuccessful in fulfilling their mandates. Even though the UN has successfully conducted a number of peacekeeping missions, it failed in Rwanda and Bosnia. This was due to institutional shortcomings as well as the dominance of national interests. Overcoming various obstacles, the EU has been accepted as a success until now. Despite its bureaucratic deficiencies, the organization managed to maintain peace and prosperity in the continent.

However, it started to crack as well due to the reasons explained above. Despite its' general success, NATO has failures as well. Although it achieved its larger goal of stopping Milosevic, the air bombing caused more than 500 civilian deaths, raising questions about whether NATO's actions were humane (Harikumar, 2022). NATO's operational challenges are further complicated by the administrative issues that exist among member countries. For instance, the ongoing conflict between Turkey and Greece, challenges the influence of the organization (Harikumar, 2022),

Currently, these essential international organizations are tested by the situation surrounding the invasion of Ukraine by Russia and the divide over how to handle it. A great deal of pressure is placed on international organizations to fulfill the expectations; however, what they are capable of is restricted in reality. This is mostly because of institutional deficiencies and dominance of national interests over collective action. They still have a profound impact, but the obligation to fit in the changing world by improving multilateral support remains.

NATO's Sub-strategic Role in the Middle East and North Africa

NATO's role in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) is politically and operationally complex.1 That a security and defense organization would play an important role in a contiguous region from which numerous security threats emanate makes intuitive sense. As NATO seeks to adapt to the evolving security environment while revisiting its Strategic Concept, its ambition and role in the MENA need to be factored in.

The security environment on NATO's southern periphery is challenging. From Libya to the Near East and the Persian Gulf, the MENA concentrates a fair number of threats that range from regional conflicts to state fragility, terrorism, and transnational organized crime. These also pose direct and indirect risks to the security of NATO members and their societies, including those related to uncontrolled migration, human insecurity, and climate change. More recently, the reemergence of Russia and the emergence of China in the MENA have made a NATO role there even more pertinent. If Russia is in Libya and Syria, both countries that generate insecurity for the alliance, then there is an additional rationale for some sort of presence in the region.

The reality is, however, different as NATO has for long struggled to assert itself as a security provider on its southern periphery. Not that it has abstained from intervening. From Libya to the Mediterranean Sea and the Gulf of Aden it has been very present, but the coherence and impact of its interventions have been fragile.

Three factors can explain the difficulties that NATO is encountering in the MENA. First, the broad range and diffuse nature of the threats and risks in the region make it difficult to come up with a response that is coherent yet sufficiently targeted. Simply understanding what and where the problems are is daunting. Second, it follows from the nature of the threats that NATO might not be the best-suited institution to tackle them. Many of the risks relate to political or socioeconomic factors for which a military alliance brings little added value. Third, NATO's role is hindered by the diverging agendas of its members. Not only do allies disagree about how central the region should be for NATO but some are also openly confronting one another in some of the sensitive southern theaters.

This brief looks at NATO's agenda in the MENA, the challenges it faces, and the way forward. It analyzes the complexity of the region and how this impacts NATO's positioning, and it presents the mixed record of NATO's involvement there. The brief then offers three sets of recommendations. First, it is difficult to see how NATO could play any meaningful role in the region without developing some sort of strategic framework that would lay out its level of ambition and reflect a certain degree of political cohesion. Second, such a strategy will have to consider the type of division of tasks that NATO should consider with other international actors, starting with the European Union. This should be guided by the comparative advantages of all the security actors involved. Third, any purposeful role for NATO in the region will have to take a fresh look at the type of relationship that the alliance needs to have with its local partners, be it through its traditional partnership programs, or in interaction with other international organizations, such as the African Union, the League of Arab States, or the G5 Sahel.

The Middle East and North Africa is characterized by structural instability: from Libya to the Persian Gulf, from Syria and Iraq to Yemen, not forgetting the long-lasting Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the region has gone through a series of crises and conflicts over the last 20 years that have largely shaped its political, economic, and human development.

Insecurity in the region is driven by three categories of interrelated issues. First, threats that produce direct violence, such as internal or international conflicts, terrorism, or organized crime. The second category consists of issues that relate to the deficiencies of governing bodies such as state fragility, bad governance, or the porosity of borders. In the third category are the more diffuse human-security issues that result from underdevelopment, uncontrolled demographics or migration, or climate change. This typology is useful when looking at NATO's role in the MENA as it helps identify where it could possibly intervene (see below). Another way to look at security dynamics in the region is to distinguish between interstate competition and related foreign military interventions on the one hand, and internal conflicts or violent processes on the other hand, while acknowledging that the two levels are intertwined and often difficult to disentangle.

The US-Iran confrontation, the tensions between Iran and Saudi Arabia, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the conflicts in Iraq, Libya, Syria, and Yemen, as well as the more recent Russian activities in several countries of the region are at the interstate level. At the internal level are phenomena such as terrorism, violent extremism, political violence, and transnational organized crime.

' Another way to look at security dynamics in the region is to distinguish between interstate competition and related foreign military interventions on the one hand, and internal conflicts or violent processes on the other hand, while acknowledging that the two levels are intertwined and often difficult to disentangle. '

This said, all these conflicts or violent processes are at least partially international and to a degree multidimensional. They all have ramifications outside of the territory where most of the violence takes place. The conflicts in Israel-Palestine, Libya, or Yemen, though different from one another, provide examples of the international linkages that make it impossible to analyze them in isolation and they are all multidimensional in the sense that they are driven by a wide range of issues, from the political and socioeconomic to cultural, and beyond. The combination of these two patterns makes it difficult to comprehend the challenges fully, let alone manage them.

Conflicts and Terrorism:

The Middle East and North Africa counts six conflicts currently (in Egypt, Iraq, Israel-Palestine, Libya, Syria, and Yemen) as well as three situations of socioeconomic instability and uprisings (in Algeria, Iran, and Lebanon). Terrorist groups operate in most of the conflict areas, and even more MENA countries are involved in what began as intrastate conflicts (like Iran in Syria, the United Arab Emirates in Libya, or Saudi Arabia in Yemen).Indeed, conflicts in the region have long ceased to be politically and practically confined to a geographically limited area, and most involve international interference. Such interference can be a response to existing conflicts, in particular in the broad domain of multilateral crisis management, but it can also add to existing insecurity or even create new conflicts. This was the case with the US-led intervention in Iraq in 2003, the NATO operation in Libya in 2011, and the Turkish and Russian presence in Libya and Syria over the last few years. Russia's policy in the region has been of particular concern from a NATO perspective. Not only does the recent Russian interference in these spaces—directly or through mercenary groups—contribute to the deterioration of the security environment, it also constrains the Western political agenda by altering the nature of the relationship between the West and local interlocutors, be they governments or non-state actors. The Russian presence in the region further tests NATO's deterrence and defense agenda, and its current focus on its eastern flank.Furthermore, the MENA remains one of the regions most affected by terrorist attacks (although their number has decreased since 2016). Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and its affiliated groups have been instrumental in this since 2014. The group has been weakened in Iraq and Syria, yet it and its affiliates have been resurgent in these two countries in 2020 and 2021. ISIS has also become active in North Africa (in Libya) and sub-Saharan Africa (in Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, and the Lake Chad region), where other jihadist groups (like Boko Haram) operate. Countries such as Egypt and Lebanon are also confronted with internal terrorist groups, some of which act as proxies for third parties (such as Lebanon's Hezbollah being backed by Iran). Beyond their jihadist agendas, many of these groups also attract part of the disillusioned and socially/economically excluded youth who are not necessarily religious. These groups are also linked to criminal activities (cross-border trafficking) and take advantage of ungoverned spaces while contributing to further social disintegration and state collapse.

Human Security and Governance:

Human-security concerns feature prominently in the analysis of the region's evolution. Dysfunctional economies (with the exception of Israel and the Saudi peninsula, bar Yemen), the effect of climate change (regarding access to water in particular), social inequalities, and violations of political rights are systemic sources of insecurity and conflict. These issues triggered the Arab Spring a decade ago and the situation has hardly improved since,6 with the possible exception of Tunisia. More recently, the coronavirus pandemic has challenged the region's health systems and resilience. Nonetheless, between 2011 and 2019, the performance of most MENA countries in the Human Development Index has improved (with progress in particular in Iraq, Mauritania, Morocco, and Oman), while it has stagnated in Lebanon, Qatar, and Yemen, and decreased in Libya and Syria.

> *'The impact on human capital is direct, with indicators not showing much improvement over time.'*

Faced with these multidimensional challenges, states and other governing bodies of the region present manifest deficiencies. Fourteen countries of the MENA (out of 20) are characterized as "not free" (in political rights and civil liberties) by Freedom House, and quite a few are plain authoritarian regimes. High levels of corruption, inefficiency of public policies and bureaucratic abuses, and weak or non-existing accountability mechanisms are rampant. The impact on human capital is direct, with indicators not showing much improvement over time. Most states also lack functioning and legitimate security structures. Overall, this leaves a large part of the region chronically challenged in the public-policy domain, including in terms of security governance. And there appears to be little reason to believe that the situation will significantly improve in the coming years; instead, insecurity will likely continue to be a major issue at all above-described levels.

NATO's Response to Insecurity on Its Southern Periphery:

NATO has been involved in the Middle East and North Africa at different levels over the last decade, in activities that fall within its two core tasks of crisis management and cooperative security. The overall objective has been to address what NATO calls "pervasive instability" on its southern flank through a broad "projection stability" agenda. The June 2021 NATO summit reiterated the alliance's commitment to "enhancing our long-standing engagement in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region" and to "build stronger security and defence institutions and capacities, promote interoperability, and help to counter terrorism."

Cooperative Security:

In the cooperative-security domain, NATO's activities have taken the form of training and defense capacity-building for partner countries, and there has also been a socialization endeavor through the establishment of staff-to-staff relations and including partners' officials in NATO's education programs. In doing so, NATO has mainly operated in the frameworks of the Mediterranean Dialogue and to a lesser degree the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI). It has also developed bilateral activities through the Individual Partnership and Cooperation Program agreements, and more specifically through the Partnership Interoperability Initiative, with agreements with Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia; and through the Defence and Related Security Capacity Building Initiative, with agreements with Iraq, Jordan and Tunisia. These initiatives aim at developing interoperability of partners' forces with NATO's and at strengthening their defense capacities through advising on defense and security-sector reform, institution-building, development of local forces through education and training, or advice and assistance in specialized areas.

In 2016, a Framework for the South was adopted to give some political cohesion to NATO's activities on its southern periphery. The ICI Regional Centre in Kuwait was established in 2017 as an education institution targeting officials of the Gulf Cooperation Council countries. The following year, NATO created its Strategic Direction South ("Hub") within the Joint Force Command in Naples, mandated to produce open-source analysis on various south-related security issues. The NATO Defense College in Rome also offers courses for officials of the MENA. A Package for the south was subsequently adopted at the 2018 NATO summit.

Crisis Management:

In the crisis-management domain, NATO has run six operations in the MENA since 2011, including Operation Unified Protector in Libya (in 2011) and two training missions in Iraq (from 2004 to 2011 and then since 2018). It was also involved in maritime security, with Operation Ocean Shield in the Gulf of Aden (2008–2015) and Operation Sea Guardian in the Mediterranean (since 2016). Finally, NATO provides support, mainly through its AWACS planes, to the Global Coalition against ISIS.All these activities were encapsulated in the concept of Projecting Stability, introduced in the mid-2010s.Projecting Stability operated a merger of crisis management and cooperative security, with a range of military and non-military activities aiming at shaping "the strategic environment in order to make neighboring regions more stable and secure."

Within this broad arena of activities, questions persist about NATO's record and added value there. How much has it contributed to regional security? What are its comparative advantages? How many allies converge on policy in the region and how much they want NATO to be involved there as opposed to the eastern flank or elsewhere? And how much do local actors want or are willing to request NATO's involvement?NATO's record is uneasy to assess holistically as its activities vary from one place to the other and over time. In general, though, it is difficult to see any tangible impact in the various areas where NATO has deployed assets.

'' Most importantly, NATO's overall crisis-management record has been tarnished by the operation in Libya and its medium-term consequences for the region. ''

To start, resources allocated to the operationalization of partnerships in the region have been scarce, and observers often note the mismatch between the ambition of official statements and the reality of implementation. Most importantly, NATO's overall crisis-management record has been tarnished by the operation in Libya and its medium-term consequences for the region. What NATO has achieved in Iraq through its two successive capacity-building operations is also unclear. Paradoxically, it can even be argued that its operation in Libya and the non-NATO-led operation in Iraq have contributed more to the region's insecurity than to its stability. What is more, it is the impact of third-party interventions in general that is dubious, as illustrated by the 20 years of US and NATO presence in Afghanistan.

Second is the issue of prioritization. In general terms, NATO's engagement with the region has been significantly lower than the attention paid to its eastern flank. In the aftermath of the 2014 Ukraine crisis, the alliance's focus turned back to Russia and how to deter it, at the expense of the southern flank. And initiatives such as Projecting Stability or the establishment of the Strategic Direction South "Hub" in Naples were to an extent aimed at covering over the alliance's weak commitment to the south. In fact, even the notion of Projecting Stability seems to have lost relevance in 2021—it is barely mentioned in the June 2021 summit communiqué, partly as a result of the debacle of the withdrawal from Afghanistan. Such prioritization also takes place in the context of the United States' pivot to Asia, which further complicates NATO's involvement in the South. If the United States' disengagement from the region is confirmed in the coming years, the vacuum this will leave is more likely to be filled by other external powers such as Russia or Turkey than by NATO as an organization.

Third, NATO's comparative advantages are at stake. A major issue for the alliance is how it can, as a military organization, respond to problems that are largely of a non-military nature, furthermore in countries where it is not necessarily welcome. The intersecting nature of security in the MENA, as described above, leads to two related considerations. First, there are limits to what a military-focused actor can achieve or solve when the military aspects of the problem are peripheral. This explains NATO's difficulties in countering migration or radicalization, for which social or economic explanatory factors are central. Second, any attempt to address only one aspect of the problem without considering the whole picture is unlikely to produce long-term achievements, and it can even be counterproductive. In other words, the narrow NATO answer to a much larger problem may simply not produce anything tangible or sustainable.

The European Union and the United Nations are confronted with a similar range of challenges in the MENA and their record over the last two decades is not always solid, either. Yet the multifaceted nature of the security issues combined with the general mandate and comparative advantages of these two institutions tend to place them in a better position than NATO in quite a few non-military domains. It may also be the case that the EU and the UN will be better accepted by local actors.

A fourth level of issues relates to political divergences among NATO's member states when it comes to the MENA. Be it in the Mediterranean Sea, in Libya, in Syria, or in relations with countries such as Egypt or Israel, the allies do not present a united front while some diverge in terms of priorities or policy options. For example, in 2019, France and the United States on one hand and Turkey on the other ended up on opposing sides in the fighting in northeastern Syria. The incident between France and Turkey in the Mediterranean Sea in 2020 also illustrated intra-alliance friction, even while both were contributing to the NATO-led Sea Guardian maritime operation. The long-lasting Greek-Turkish tensions provide another example of deleterious dissent. This negatively impacts NATO's ability to come up with a cohesive policy in the region and may even hinder such commitment in the future.

Finally, NATO is confronted with the question of acceptance by local actors. In theory, any NATO security role in the region is conditioned on the consent of the recipient country (Libya in 2011 was an exception in this respect.) Yet the last 30 years of third-party crisis management have shown how this can be resisted by local actors. And NATO is far from being a benevolent intervener. One 2018 study noted that, while "partner attitudes toward NATO [were] not uniformly positive," local resistance was "far less of a constraint than sometimes assumed," with ambivalence being often "overshadowed by security interest." This might well be what is observed on the ground, especially when NATO provides a really needed service or when its long-term commitment allows for some trust to emerge. Yet reconciling the alliance's interests with the needs of the recipient states or societies will remain no easy task.

MENA and African Continent Strategy:

There is a consensus on the fact that the security challenges in the Middle East and North Africa can create instability in NATO member states, which therefore ought to do something about it. Whether there exists a consensus on what to do and whether NATO should be a central component of the response is less obvious. With these reservations in mind, below are three steps that NATO ought to take where it is willing to shape the security environment in the MENA.

The ongoing Ukraine crisis has given NATO a new direction in the sense that it has provided it with a relatively straightforward task: to deter and defend against Russia on the eastern flank. The alliance has adopted doctrinal documents and taken measures aimed at operationalizing this agenda. Nothing like this really exists with regard to the southern flank. Policy documents like the Framework for the South or the Package for the South are not strategic texts nor do they define a level of ambition for NATO in the region. This is partly a sign that the allies want to concentrate on the eastern flank (and maybe then on China) and that the attention and energy that they are ready to dedicate to the MENA is limited as a consequence.If, on the contrary, NATO wishes to upgrade its presence and impact in the MENA, then a significant effort is to be made at the strategic level. The alliance could not by itself address the root causes of instability in the region, which is clearly beyond its remit, but it could at least give more purposefulness to what it has done so far.

This first implies a comprehensive analysis of the security situation in the MENA and of the issues that are likely to spill over into NATO in the near future. This does not need to be carried out by NATO itself. It could rely on national input or a mix of open-source and classified information. On this basis, a strategic reflection and document, as part of the current Strategic Concept process, defining the objectives, methods, and resources of NATO's presence in the region is of the essence. A dedicated document or a section in the Strategic Concept would not only give visibility to a policy that has suffered from a lack of strategy, it would also clarify the level of ambition of the allies. A strategic narrative laying down a "renewed cooperative security" ambition for the region would also help articulate such ambition with NATO's deterrence and defense agenda. Resources and political commitment would have to follow suit and be sustained over time. No quick fix will do.Furthermore, a "renewed cooperative security" plan should be accompanied by strategic communication (in English, French, and Arabic) on what NATO intends to do, how, and why it matters to the recipient entities. Any strategic-communications or public-diplomacy effort should also include a counter-disinformation component. Ideally such communication would be paired with a similar exercise carried out by the EU. Realistically, the chance that such a strategic framework will be adopted is not high; conversely, the chance that NATO would achieve anything meaningful in the region absent a strategic vision is equally low.

Second, any purposeful NATO presence in the MENA will have to be the result of a well thought-through partnership with the EU. The two institutions must capitalize on what they do best and refrain from developing activities that are better covered by the other. This also applies to cooperation with the UN and its development and humanitarian agencies.The typology of security issues in the region presented above is useful in this respect. Distinguishing between conflicts, terrorism, or organized crime; between state fragility, bad governance, or the porosity of borders; and the more diffuse human-security issues makes it possible to identify areas where a military alliance can add value and others where it most likely will not. NATO can play a role in response to open conflicts or terrorism, and it can contribute to the strengthening of military and security institutions, but it is unlikely to be able to bring anything tangible in human-security domains. This prioritization matters to the definition of where the alliance should go, but it also calls for partnerships insofar as any NATO activity on a narrow segment will only produce an effect if complemented by parallel actions on the other (economic, political, etc.) segments, by other entities.

With this logic in mind, if NATO and the EU are engaged in capacity-building and training in the region, NATO must concentrate on the defense segment for which it offers the best know-how or resources. This includes tasks such as defense-sector reform, capacity-building on operations in high-temperature environments, military counterinsurgency and counterterrorism, assisting in building interoperability between allies and partner countries, and handling improvised explosive devices but NATO should probably refrain from investing in security areas where the EU or the UN are better placed or only embrace these tasks in places where the others cannot go.

Focus on the defense segment suggests that NATO alone is unlikely to play a strategic role, in the sense that its limited presence will in most cases be insufficient to be transformative. Hence the importance of inter-institutional cooperation.Beyond cooperative security, NATO must retain the capacity to conduct military operations in a crisis-management mode in the region. This goes against the current post-Afghanistan mood, yet the nature of the environment makes it impossible to rule out a major military operation one day. (There was similar intervention fatigue in 2010 while NATO was drafting its Strategic Concept and a year later it got involved in Libya.) This carries implications for NATO planning and exercises as well as for the projection capabilities of European states, at a time when the collective-defense agenda tends to concentrate on territorial defense.

NATO's Revisiting Partnerships at the region:

When it comes to NATO's partnerships, there is a broad consensus advocating an overhaul so that they better reflect evolving needs and NATO interests, while recognizing the limited appetite of allies to do so. Whether the process leading to the new Strategic Concept will allow for such a revision is uncertain. One consideration here is to move away from the geographical feature of the Mediterranean Dialogue and Istanbul Cooperation Initiative, and to approach partnerships more functionally and/or politically. The connections between North Africa and the Sahel, or between the Near East and the Arabian peninsula, attest to the narrowness of existing partnerships, especially as some of the most problematic countries (such as Lebanon, Libya, or Syria) are not partner countries. The "30+1" or "30+7" Mediterranean Dialogue formats27 can prove ill-adapted in this respect as they do not allow for third countries or organizations like the African Union or the G5 Sahel among others to take part.

> *' Not only would a sustained political dialogue help socialize MENA officials with their NATO counterparts at different levels, it could also be part of broader diplomatic processes in which NATO sits together with some of the allies. '*

NATO's political role could also be improved within and outside formal partnerships. The political dialogue with partners in the region so far has been often criticized as too formal and superficial, and it has not been held sufficiently regularly. At a time when NATO seeks to develop its political profile, engaging MENA partners as well as other countries of the region in a more flexible and strategic dialogue is to be considered; for example, with more regular meetings with various levels of participation. Not only would a sustained political dialogue help socialize MENA officials with their NATO counterparts at different levels, it could also be part of broader diplomatic processes in which NATO sits together with some of the allies.

By doing so NATO would become a more natural interlocutor and therefore a potential partner. In this process, other levels of governance such as international organizations (the African Union, the League of Arab States, the G5 Sahel) will have to be included. In 2019, NATO and the African Union signed a cooperation agreement to enhance their relationship. The alliance has also established contact with the G5 Sahel and started to explore avenues for cooperation. These exchanges are useful insofar as they help establish trust among entities whose cultures and mandates can be very different. Yet the level of ambition has remained low and in practice only few activities have taken place.

NATO's presence and impact in the Middle East and North Africa have so far been constrained by issues that pertain to prioritization and feasibility. Not only have its members diverged on whether the alliance should be engaged in its southern flank, but its ability to bring responses to the broad range of problems in the region has also been restricted. NATO's role in the MENA has remained sub-strategic as a consequence.

Bearing in mind the forthcoming Strategic Concept, a renewed cooperative-security ambition is imperative if NATO wants to weigh on the region's overall stability so that its own security is also preserved. Whether the best moment to do that is when the United States says it pivots to the Indo-Pacific is not sure, but while other external powers seem to have clear ideas about what they want in the MENA, any disengagement or light presence by NATO or Western powers would likely carry enormous risks.

Cooperation with the African Union:

Since 2005, NATO has been supporting the African Union (AU) – a regional organization with 55 members established in 2002. The NATO-AU relationship started modestly with AU requests for logistics and airlift support for its mission in Sudan. The relationship has since evolved based on parity, mutual respect and reciprocity. NATO Allies are committed to expanding the relationship from support to cooperation with the AU in order to make it an integral part of NATO's efforts to work more closely with partners in tackling security challenges emanating from the South.

- NATO and the AU are reinforcing their relationship by increasing practical cooperation in areas of mutual interest.
- Cooperation is being developed in three main areas: operational support; training support; and structural assistance, alongside liaison and coordination activities.
- Operational support includes strategic air- and sealift, as well as planning support for the AU mission in Somalia.
- Training support includes inviting AU officers to attend courses at NATO training and education facilities and delivering courses through NATO's Mobile Education and Training Teams.
- Structural assistance includes focused support to the African Stand-by Force Concept and its associated projects including exercises, early warning and disaster preparedness.
- NATO has also established a liaison office at the AU's headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. It is led by a Senior Military Liaison Officer and provides support from subject matter experts, at the AU's request.
- NATO coordinates its AU-related work with bilateral partners and other international organizations, including the European Union and the United Nations.

NATO-AU cooperation has mainly been pragmatic and driven by requests from the African Union for support in very specific areas. The principal areas of cooperation, as agreed in March 2020, are: operational support, training support and structural assistance. At the Warsaw Summit in 2016, NATO leaders committed to increasing political and practical cooperation with the African Union. At the same time, Allies also approved NATO's Framework for the South, which aims to integrate and streamline NATO's approach to tackle challenges by focusing on improved capabilities, enhanced anticipation and response, as well as boosting NATO's regional partnership and capacity-building efforts. In November 2019, NATO and the AU signed an agreement to strengthen political and practical partnership and, in March 2020, Allies approved additional cooperation initiatives with the aim of progressively maturing the NATO-AU relationship from one of ad-hoc support to substantive practical partnership.

NATO's subordinate commands, in particular Joint Force Command Naples and NATO Strategic Direction South, will play a key role in bringing forward these initiatives alongside their ongoing responsibilities to develop NATO's regional understanding and situational awareness of the African continent. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, NATO and the AU have maintained strong operational ties. In February 2021, AU Commission Chairperson Faki was re-elected for a second term in office. Among his eight main priorities, the emphasis on developing multilateral partnerships is a natural match to NATO's commitment to enhancing practical cooperation.

Following NATO's support to the AU mission in Sudan in 2005, the AU made a general request in January 2007 to all partners, including NATO, for financial and logistical support to its mission in Somalia (AMISOM). It later made a specific request to NATO in May 2007, requesting strategic airlift support for AU member states willing to deploy in Somalia under AMISOM. In June 2007, the North Atlantic Council (NAC) agreed, in principle, to support this request and NATO's support was initially authorized until August 2007. Strategic sealift support was requested at a later stage and agreed in principle by the NAC in September 2009. The AU's strategic airlift and sealift support requests for AMISOM (replaced by the African Union Transition Mission to Somalia – ATMIS – in April 2022) have been renewed on an annual basis. The current NAC agreement to support the AU with strategic air and sealift extends until January 2023.

NATO's Strategic Concept and the High North

Russia's February 2022 invasion of Ukraine not only revived NATO unity, it also bolstered the case for NATO's enduring mission of deterrence and defence. In the High North, NATO's mission objectives are precariously balanced. For the Alliance, the High North is an enduring component of Cold War history, as well as a flank in terms of NATO's 360-degree security thinking. Of course, the High North is also a strategic frontier for renewed NATO-Russia competition. This Policy Brief examines NATO's High North challenges and considers strategic priorities for the Alliance's forthcoming Strategic Concept.

"High North, Low Tensions"

The High North is largely a political definition referring to the Nordic region above the Arctic Circle (see map), whereas the "Arctic" is a geographical definition of the circumpolar region above the Arctic Circle. Allied use of "High North" to define the northernmost region of the North Atlantic Ocean is also a political message to signal more "conservative" polar intentions: NATO is not about to arrive at the North Pole any time soon. The High North has enduring strategic significance for NATO, with four of the five Arctic Ocean littoral states being NATO member states (United States, Canada, Denmark, and Norway). The fifth state, Russia, is technically a Partnership for Peace (PfP) state, yet the current situation precludes any kind of cooperation in this framework. A further three NATO member or PfP states (Iceland as a member, Sweden and Finland as PfP states) have territory on or above the Arctic Circle. By virtue of Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, NATO has a commitment to defend "every inch" of NATO member territory, also in the High North. Beyond NATO membership, the Alliance has enduring strategic interests in the High North across challenges related to climate change, critical infrastructure (in)security, data and sea cable security, fisheries, as well as the security of sea lines of communication. Revived great power competition between NATO and Russia, as well as the rise of China, are also components of the Alliance's High North challenge.

For NATO, the region is a tinderbox of potential conflict, enduring competition and selective (albeit increasingly tenuous) cooperation with Russia. It is therefore no surprise that the maxim of "High North, Low Tension" is rather entrenched in NATO policy. However, with the latest developments in Ukraine, NATO will find it increasingly difficult to secure "low tension" in the High North. Coupled with enhanced Chinese interest in the region, economic

linkages to some states in the High North region and an evident appetite to develop its European links further, Beijing poses a fresh challenge to NATO in the High North. In this context, NATO's lack of clear policy guidelines for the High North is problematic and must be addressed in the new Strategic Concept to adequately navigate revived strategic competition in the region.

Charting the High North in NATO policy:

Since the 2010 NATO Strategic Concept, calls for the Alliance to develop a specific High North presence have resulted in increased exercises and yet overall, a noncommittal approach. NATO's current Strategic Concept makes no mention of the High North, nor the Arctic, due largely to an inability to reach consensus amongst the Alliance on NATO's role in the region. Of interest is the central role the maritime domain plays in the transatlantic relationship, and yet the complete absence of "maritime" references in the 2010 Strategic Concept. Of course, political misalignments within the Alliance are further highlighted by the 2011 Alliance Maritime Strategy which also excludes any mention of the High North.1 This despite the Northern reaches of the North Atlantic quite literally linking North America to Europe. Overall, the absence of any reference to the High North in strategic documents is problematic given NATO's consistent reference to its commitment to "deter [in] and defend" the North Atlantic, a region of which the High North is squarely within. Alliance messaging via formal statements also avoids featuring the High North (and more specifically, the Arctic). This is particularly the case with NATO Summit Communiqués and Declarations. The 2016 Warsaw Summit Communiqué made a general reference to the North Atlantic "sea lines of communication and maritime approaches of NATO territory", stating a commitment to "further strengthen our maritime posture and comprehensive situational awareness" in the region.2 The High North was not specifically referenced; however, it is to be inferred that the North Atlantic maritime space is inclusive of the polar area. NATO's 2018 Brussels Summit Declaration reinforced this collective resolve to improve "overall maritime situational awareness" in the North Atlantic. Again, no specific mention of the High North frontier was included This said, the 2021 Brussels Summit Communiqué introduced the High North into NATO Communiqué lexicon. This was the first time the geostrategic space of the High North was specifically referred to in a NATO Communiqué. However, the Communiqué was carefully crafted to underscore the delicate political environment in the High North (read: Russia legitimately holding the lion share of the region), with Allies aware of the potential implications of any enhanced NATO presence up there.

- Military dimensions: defense of the High North

Besides the strategic interests already mentioned, the High North is squarely of military interest to NATO, simply because a large proportion of Russia's nuclear forces are in this region. Likewise, the High North's GIUK (Greenland-Iceland-United Kingdom) Gap as well as the Bear Gap (between Svalbard and Norway) are maritime chokepoints increasingly under pressure. Congestion of these sea lines of communication is increasing, and with a hostile Russia in eastern Europe, there are expectations of potential spillover of Moscow's military might into its High North and Arctic regions. Indeed, since the 2010 Strategic Concept, the High North has increasingly featured in allied training operations and exercises. Likewise, Norway has enhanced its role and leadership within the Alliance when it comes to securing the High North and delivering situational awareness of its High North neighbor – Russia. But the High North represents a capability gap for NATO. This was not always the case – the Alliance once had significant capacity to defend the North Atlantic region. Indeed, the region once "held a central place in NATO strategy and operations". During the Cold War, the Supreme Allied Commander Atlantic (SACLANT) area of responsibility included the North Atlantic. This clearly delineated operational boundary extended from the North Pole to the Tropic of Cancer, and from the West Coast of Africa to the East Coast of North America. During NATO reforms in 2002, SACLANT became the Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (SACT) and the second post, Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), absorbed SACLANT's responsibilities to cover all NATO operations, regardless of geographical location. This also meant, however, that clear geographical boundaries, inclusive of the High North, were somewhat lost. Today, Norway continues to lead the Alliance's High North effort. Denmark's Greenland is home to another NATO linkage via the Thule US military airbase. Likewise, Iceland hosts NATO's air defense system, the US Keflavik air base and is geographically "a vital bridge between North America and Europe". Indeed, a few NATO member states have formal High North and/or Arctic strategies, namely the UK and France. Arctic Ocean-rim NATO members Canada and the United States diverge somewhat when it comes to what NATO's role in the region ought to be. Canada prefers NATO to stay out of the region, while Washington seems to envision a formal Arctic agenda for the Alliance.

Political dimensions: deterrence in the High North:

Overall, despite the litany of unilateral state interests in the High North theater, consensus within the Alliance as to NATO's role in the region is rather elusive. But it does not need to be. Indeed, the 2022 Strategic Concept has a unique opportunity to articulate and signal NATO's enduring High North interest. Ahead of the tabling of the 2022 Strategic Concept, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg undertook a series of public engagements meeting with subject matter experts and the policy community to craft a clear "2030 vision" for the Alliance. Of interest is the fact that the High North did feature predominately in these discussions. The final report tabled by the NATO 2030 Reflection Group noted that

"NATO should enhance its situational awareness across the High North and the Arctic and, for the High North that falls within SACEUR's Area of Responsibility, should develop a strategy that takes into account broader deterrence and defense plans. This regional strategy should be built in close coordination with, and with sensitivity to the perspectives of, NATO Allies that are Arctic littoral states".

Likewise, the NATO 2030 Young Leaders Expert Group final report grappled with the role of NATO in the High North. As a point of departure however, this group focused on the Arctic in lieu of the political construct of the High North. The report noted:

"NATO [should] focus on measures that will strengthen all domain awareness, conduct extended cold-weather operations among interested Allies and share a common Arctic operating picture […] When the political environment is more favorable, the scope of the NATO-Russia Council could be extended to include an Arctic security working group".

A further point of departure for the next generation of NATO policy makers appears to be the interest in cultivating NATO-Russia dialogue in the region. Whereas, the seasoned expert group recommended a more restrained focus on the High North for NATO – given the sensitivities of High North allied states. A medium between the two must be found. Indeed, it may be time for NATO to return to key lessons of the 1967 Harmel Report: defense and dialogue can coexist, in fact they must. When it comes to the High North, owing to the legitimate territorial and maritime stake Russia holds in the region, the Alliance's new Strategic Concept can include the High North in terms of specifically heeding the Harmel Report's key takeaway that "military security and a policy of détente are not contradictory"

Towards the Madrid Strategic Concept

The High North failed to feature in the 2010 Strategic Concept. This is not a reflection of strategic interest, but a product of transatlantic attention and priorities resting elsewhere, at the time. Of course, the collapse of the Soviet Union resulted in the reorientation of the Alliance away from the High North frontier, and this position was bolstered by the "War on Terror" era following events of September 11, 2001. That said, strategic planning is not static, Brussels was always acutely aware of North Atlantic challenges on the horizon. For Moscow, two decades of Putin have resulted in a modernized Russian military and sustained age of Arctic military industrialization. NATO's northern flank has thus reawakened and this must be reflected in the Alliance's Strategic Concept. While the need for a NATO High North policy is evident, it is politically divisive within the Alliance, and by no means a short-term feat. An apt first step would be to feature the Alliance's High North identity in the 2022 Strategic Concept. This could be framed as an area of overall strategic interest for the Alliance, or as a "special interest zone" in which some member states take the lead. Here, Nordic member states Norway, Iceland and Denmark could spearhead Alliance efforts to maintain situational awareness and bolster regional resilience in the High North. Sweden and Finland, as Partnership for Peace countries, could further enhance the Alliance's High North agenda as articulated in the new Strategic Concept. Second, based on the NATO's Center of Excellence (CoE) concept, the Alliance might consider establishing a robust policy and research group at Maritime Allied Command (MARCOM). Committed to research and advocacy of the High North strategic challenge, including academic research output, a NATO High North CoE would essentially synthesize situational awareness of regional security affairs. The Centre could fund cutting-edge research agendas, host policy round tables, and educate member state personnel on the ever-evolving High North strategic environment. Third, NATO should develop a 2030 Alliance Maritime Strategy. Last updated in 2011, the Alliance Maritime Strategy reflects a different strategic era. NATO's 2017 decision to revive the Cold War-era Atlantic Command is a step in the right direction, but there is now an opportunity to reinvigorate NATO's maritime strategy. Featuring the High North as a key maritime domain in the North Atlantic theater would underscore the centrality of NATO maritime interest in the region to resurgent Russia and rising China. Indeed, recent Russian activity highlights the need for a revised Maritime Strategy for allied maritime areas of interest including the Black Sea, and the Mediterranean, should more than one maritime zone require already quite stretched fleet capabilities.

Re-engage with the Cold War High North strategy

On March 3, 2022, seven of the eight permanent Arctic Council member states (NATO members Canada, Denmark, Iceland, Norway, the United States and PfP members Finland and Sweden) released a joint statement outlining their intention to 'pause' participation in the Arctic Council. Russia's response essentially underscored Moscow's unilateral plans to refocus on domestic Arctic interests in lieu of regional cooperation. While it is not in the economic interest for Russia to draw conflict into the region, it is impossible to rule out further spillover of Russia-West tension into the High North. How NATO navigates this evolving challenge will rely not only on renewed dialogue and deterrence measures, but the Alliance must also return to the history books and re engage with the successes (and failures) of its High North strategy of the Cold War era.

b. How it shaped modern warfare

NATO must "stay strong militarily, be more united politically, and take a broader approach globally".1 When launching the reflection process on NATO's future role, NATO Secretary General Stoltenberg set these three priorities to frame his vision of NATO 2030. At their meeting in London in December 2019, NATO's political leaders mandated a "forward-looking reflection process" on how NATO should further adapt to ensure it was able to successfully cope with a world of competing great powers due to the rise of China and Russia's persistently aggressive posture, together with instability along NATO's southern periphery, new transnational risks emerging from pandemics, climate change and disruptive technologies. Establishing a unified strategic vision is vital for upholding the Alliance's cohesion, credibility and effectiveness. Looking forward, what does this mean for NATO's military dimension?

- **The fast-evolving strategic environment:**

Determining the forces and capabilities that NATO will need in the coming decade requires an analysis of the main strategic factors and risks that are likely to bear most on the security of the transatlantic community, in particular those that could turn into military threats.

- **Russia and China – an opponent and a strategic rival:**

In the coming years, Allies will face a systemic challenge cutting across the domains of security and economics. China's rise to great power status, in political, economic, technological and military terms with its ideological and geopolitical ambitions is the most significant strategic development of our time.2 The US considers China as its primary strategic rival and is shifting its strategic centre of gravity to the Indo-Pacific region. This has significant implications for the security of Europe and thus, for NATO's agenda and posture. China's investments in, and partial control of, critical telecommunications, energy and transport infrastructure in Europe and the cooperation agreements reached with 17 Central and Eastern European countries could pose a risk to NATO's cohesion and freedom of action in a crisis. Allies should carefully monitor and consult each other on China's geo-economic "One Belt One Road" strategy and the resultant security risks, and develop a common approach on how to tackle them.

China will be a defining issue for the transatlantic relationship going forward. Still, NATO will continue to be responsible for the security of the Euro-Atlantic area. Balancing Russia's policy of confrontation, its use of hybrid warfare in peacetime and crisis, and its growing conventional and nuclear potential directed against Europe requires America's enduring military presence in Europe as well as its extended nuclear deterrence. Yet, the US does not have the capacity to deter Russia, contain China and protect the global commons all at the same time. Washington is currently reviewing its global force posture and will likely strengthen its military presence in the Asia-Pacific region. Hence, Europeans need to do much more for transatlantic security – for deterrence and defense in Europe, for crisis management in Europe's South and for supporting the US in protecting freedom of navigation. This is all the more significant as there are growing indications of a Russian-Chinese entente, causing Western democracies to face two concurrent strategic challenges – in the Euro-Atlantic area and in the Indo-Pacific region.

- **Emerging and disruptive technologies (EDTs):**

Adding to the new geopolitical challenges are revolutionary technological developments. As a consequence, NATO can no longer take its technological edge for granted. The challenge is manifold. First, a wave of new technologies is, now and over the next 20 years, entering the global market and will be recast into defense applications, such as big data, Artificial Intelligence, autonomous systems, space-based and hypersonic systems, and quantum biotechnology materials. Disruptive effects will most likely occur through the combination of EDTs and the complex interaction between them. Second, resulting defensive and offensive cyber capabilities, new generations of sensors, space-based capabilities, autonomous weapon systems, much-improved air and missile defense, drones and long-range precision missiles will have a profound impact on security and defense and transform the way armed forces are organized, equipped and operate. Third, in the past, innovation and modern technologies were primarily linked to developing defense capabilities. Western forces built their superior military power on the basis of the technological dominance they had over their adversaries, an approach that was often referred to as superiority of quality over quantity. Nowadays, in most instances, EDTs are the result of civilian research. Competition between commercial companies has led to shorter innovation cycles, especially in the area of information technology, as well as to a geographical diversification of the centers of innovation – with new hubs sprouting up especially in Asia. Moreover, the civilian origins and related commercial interests in EDTs inhibit any control over their proliferation and use.

Finally, non-Western actors, particularly China, but also Russia, are contesting the Alliance's technological superiority through their own, independent innovation in strategically relevant technological areas. Their growing ability to incorporate civilian innovation into defense applications is increasingly challenging the effectiveness of Allies' conventional deterrence and defense capabilities. While the next few years will most probably not see significant increases in the defense budgets of Alliance members, owing primarily to the economic aftermath of the pandemic, the credibility of deterrence and defense requires NATO to manage a mix of old and new: it still needs to rebuild capabilities required for high-intensity warfare, while it must also keep pace with the radical technological changes that provide both opportunities and risks to Allies' security and their armed forces.

- **NATO's military adaptation towards NATO 2030**

As a full spectrum systemic rival shifting the global balance, China undoubtedly poses the main strategic challenge to the whole Western community. NATO must develop a political strategy for dealing with it. Russia in turn "is likely to remain a chief threat facing NATO over the coming decade". Therefore, NATO's focus must be on implementing its deterrence and defense posture expeditiously and in full.

- **Further strengthening NATO's deterrence and defense posture:**

Since 2014, the Alliance has been implementing a comprehensive programme to strengthen its deterrence and defense posture. It is geared to significantly enhancing NATO's capacity to respond to potential threats in a number of regions at risk – stretching from the Norwegian Sea through the Baltic and Black Sea regions to the Mediterranean region. To that end, NATO's posture essentially rests on five pillars: increasing resilience; enhanced forward military presence in the East; sufficient forces held at high readiness; the capacity to move them quickly over great distances to support threatened Allies; and reinvigorating nuclear deterrence. Significant progress has been achieved since 2014, but the implementation of NATO's posture is not yet complete. The following measures should be taken in the years to come:

• Societal and systems' resilience against malicious cyber activities and disinformation, as well as the protection of critical transport infrastructure, energy supplies, power grids and digital communications constitute NATO's first line of deterrence and defense. NATO should set national resilience targets to ensure a common standard;

The multinational battlegroups in the Baltic States and Poland (NATO's enhanced Forward Presence) signal to Russia that even in the event of a limited incursion, it would immediately find itself in a military conflict with the whole of NATO. However, Allies should further improve the combat readiness of the battlegroups by adding combat support capabilities (e.g., artillery, air defense). Furthermore, US combat units should supplement each of the battlegroups in the Baltic States, as this would further increase their deterrent value;

 • The 2018 NATO Readiness Initiative committed Allies to provide 30 battalions, 30 air squadrons and 30 combat vessels requiring no more than 30 days to be employed in theater. As also agreed, these forces must be developed into several land combat brigades, maritime task groups and enhanced air wings at very high readiness, thereby greatly improving NATO's rapid reinforcement capability and flexibility. European Allies, in particular the ones with large armed forces, must provide these forces in the coming years;

• The ability to move such forces rapidly over distance to regions at risk in a crisis is key to effective reinforcement of Allies. NATO and the EU are working together to create the multiple conditions to be met to enable military mobility across Europe, on land and in the air, in peacetime and during crises (e.g., rules and regulations, transport infrastructure), but progress is slow. Nations that are members of both NATO and the EU must engage to accelerate implementation;

• In 2019, NATO decided not to respond to the deployment of Russian land-based intermediate-range, nuclear-capable missiles by deploying new nuclear missiles in Europe, but instead primarily by advanced conventional capabilities. In this context, it is of the utmost importance for European Allies to acquire effective air and missile defense capabilities, including against drones, to protect critical infrastructure and reinforcement forces. Furthermore, NATO should improve its joint fire capacity with long-range conventional precision-strike weapons, to be able to defeat Russia's Anti-Access/Area Denial capabilities and strike command and control centers to impede Russia's ability to launch regional conventional attacks;

• NATO must also uphold its nuclear sharing arrangements which remain central to the US' extended nuclear deterrence. Russia must realize that its territory would not be a sanctuary if it were to threaten Europe with "euro-strategic" missiles. Also, Russia must be coaxed into embarking on effective arms control as a means to enhance strategic stability in Europe. Sub-strategic weapons threatening Europe must be included in the future US-Russian nuclear arms control negotiations, and NATO should be the forum for consultations on any future arrangements;

• Allies should adopt the Secretary General's proposal to launch a NATO Defence Innovation Initiative8 to further interoperability and advance transatlantic cooperation in this field. Such an initiative should focus on enhancing research and development projects and bringing together the private sector with the scientific community and academia to properly inform and assist Allies in seeking both to adopt and protect innovative technologies.

Defining a European level of ambition:

The sheer number and scale of the simultaneous challenges faced by the transatlantic partners make equitable burden-sharing between America and Europe a strategic necessity. The US still provides the majority of key strategic enabling capabilities for NATO. European nations must take on their full share in ensuring security for the transatlantic community, including with a view to potentially freeing up US forces to focus on the Indo-Pacific region. They must provide at least 50 percent of the conventional forces and strategic enablers required for collective defense in Europe and military crisis management. With this in mind, European Allies should set themselves a "European Level of Ambition" to achieve their joint share of NATO capabilities in quantitative and qualitative terms as a substantial part of NATO's overall capability requirements.

On that basis, Europeans should develop a coherent force contingent capable of covering the whole military mission spectrum – from high-end maneuvers' warfare to peacekeeping. Such a European Joint Force (EJF) within NATO should be designed to act as a first responder force to reinforce deterrence in Europe, conduct crisis response missions in Europe's neighborhood and assist the US in protecting freedom of navigation. It must therefore be fully interoperable with US forces. As a result, such a high-end EJF would reinforce the "European pillar" of the transatlantic partnership and thus strengthen NATO. At the same time, the bulk of the EJF would essentially generate the EU's military ability to act on its own, since the 21 European Allies contributing to it are also EU members.

- Further enhancing NATO-EU defense cooperation:

Identified in a strategic analysis and guidance endorsed by both NATO and the EU. Both are in charge of Europe's security and both essentially face the same risks and threats. The EU has started work on its "Strategic Compass", which for the first time provides a comprehensive analysis of the key challenges the EU faces. On that basis, the EU is now working to define the priorities for its Common Security and Defence Policy with respect to crisis management, resilience, capabilities and partnerships. In parallel, NATO will be working to update its Strategic Concept. It is important that the development of these two concepts are closely coordinated to ensure strategic coherence. On that basis, the EU should contribute to developing those capabilities that are essential for the entire mission spectrum – crisis response and high-end defense alike, e.g., technologically advanced capabilities required to protect Europe, such as air and missile defense or long-range precision strike weapons, possibly through PESCO projects supported by the European Defence Fund. To this end, NATO and EU defense planning staff should further enhance their cooperation. The NATO Defence Planning Process (NDPP) and the EU Capability Development instruments complement each other. In essence, the NDPP apportions capability targets packages to each Ally individually, which represent a fair share of NATO's overall military requirements. In turn, the EU instruments identify capability priorities that support the implementation of the EU Global Strategy. In this context, on the basis of a comprehensive overview of EU nations' capability development plans, including research and development (R&D) and defense industrial aspects, the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD) identifies opportunities for both collaborative capability development and industrial cooperation. Using the first CARD review conducted in 2020, the European Defence Agency (EDA) has proposed six Focus Areas for collaborative development of next generation capabilities: the Main Battle Tank; the Soldier System; European Patrol Class Surface Ships; Counter

UAV/Anti Access/Area Denial; Defence in Space; and Enhanced Military Mobility – areas which also match NATO requirements and would also be essential for an EJF. In light of that, NATO and EU defense planning staff should systematically work together in setting capability targets for European Allies and NATO European Partners and advise them on how to implement them through collaborative projects.

With a view to maintaining NATO's technological edge and ensuring transatlantic interoperability as well as developing an EJF, European Allies must invest in innovation programmes. However, as there are national concerns about technological sovereignty, governments have often gone their individual way. Also, as innovation increasingly emanates from the commercial sector, national control proves challenging, and the costs of innovation are rising exponentially. This points towards the need for new, collaborative ways to help preserve NATO's technological edge. The Defence Innovation Initiative proposed by Secretary General Stoltenberg can build momentum in developing common approaches. In addition, NATO experts should liaise with both the EDA and the European Commission to coordinate efforts to incentivise EU nations to enhance investment and cooperation in both R&D and collaborative capability projects that remedy their shortfalls. The initiative to link NATO and EU cooperative defense innovation efforts should be particularly supported by those 21 European nations that are members of both organizations, since their investments in R&D and modern capabilities benefit both the EU and NATO. Such an initiative and resulting PESCO projects supported by the EDF must, however, embrace the significant British military and technological potential,14 not least because the UK defense budget amounts to about one third of the combined defense budgets of the EU members. Initiating such a new European effort would be down to Germany in particular, as the central European power which has a good track record of supporting European defense and whose armed forces are for the most part geared to NATO requirements.

Preparation and Conduct of Military Actions in Local Wars and Armed Conflicts:

- **National Security Concept, Threats, and Command & Control:**

Batyushkin describes the importance of Russia's 2000 National Security Concept as the base document that states the officially accepted views on national objectives and strategy, in terms of the security of the society and the state from various external and internal threats of potentially a political, economic, social, military, technological, environmental, or informational nature. In particular, the concept notes that Russia does not intend to confront any state or an alliance of states (NATO), and does not pursue hegemonic or expansionist goals, and that ensuring the national security of the Russian Federation is the most important activity of the state.

Although Batyushkin is referencing a document from 2000, more recent documents such as the Russian 2014 Military Doctrine and 2015 National Security Strategy appear to nest well within it.4 Of particular note, Batyushkin mentions that Russia is not attempting to attain parity with potential adversaries (U.S./NATO), but only wants to deter them. Due to the vast advantages of manpower and economic resources of potential adversaries such as U.S./NATO and China, Batyushkin's narrative sheds light on why Russia has continued to modernize its nuclear arsenal. Thus, he states:

'' …Russia does not seek to maintain parity in terms of armaments and military forces with the leading states of the world, but instead focuses on developing a realistic deterrence … to prevent war and armed conflict, the Russian Federation prefers political, economic and other non-military means. However, the nonuse of force is no longer a norm in international relations, so Russia's national interests require the availability of sufficient military power for defense. The Russian Armed Forces play a major role in ensuring the national security of Russia. The most important task of the Armed Forces is to ensure nuclear deterrence in the interests of prevention of both nuclear and conventional large-scale and regional war…to fulfill this task, Russia must possess nuclear forces capable of guaranteeing deterrence… (pp.7-8) ''

After laying out the framework for Russia's security, Batyushkin points out that "the main danger for the state is internal socio-political and ethno-religious conflicts" (p.19). This verbiage should be expected: preventing events such as Color Revolutions, the Arab Spring, and the Maidan protests, have been at the forefront of Russian security thinking for the last few years, and feature prominently in contemporary Russian military scholarship.5 Although the Russians have frequently pointed out that these events are usually instigated by the West, particularly the U.S. and U.K., they are still perceived as internal threats. Batyushkin also explains how main and auxiliary support roles are rendered during local wars and armed conflicts (pp.17-18). In general, if the conflict is with another state actor, the MoD's forces will be the main effort, while the military forces in the other ministries will take a supporting role. In situations where the threat is primarily internal (most situations), the internal military forces will be the main effort, with Russia's other military forces (including MoD forces) operating in supporting roles. Although unlikely, Batyushkin posits that other military forces, such as the FSB's Border Troops, could be the main effort in certain circumstances.

This understanding of the main and supporting roles of different Russian forces in combat operations is important, because Russia has not invested all of its military power in the MoD, a point often overlooked in the West. In 2016, the Russian Federation established the National Guard of the Russian Federation (Rosgvardiya). This controls most of Russia's internally-oriented militarized intelligence and security services, including the Ministry of Internal Affairs-Internal Troops (MVDVV), Special Rapid-Response Detachment (SOBR), the Special-Purpose Mobile Detachment (OMON), the MVD Prompt-Response and Aviation Forces' SpecialPurpose Center, and aviation subunits.

Estimates of the total personnel controlled vary between 200,000 and 300,000 uniformed personnel. Russia's Soviet legacy made stove-piped militarized intelligence and security agencies the norm, as the Soviets were leery of investing all military power in a single organization or ministry, due to fears of a coup. Since the Russian civilian leadership now has few concerns about its ability to control these militarized security and intelligence services, the Russian Federation has been trending towards the consolidation of these organizations' powers to reduce bureaucracy and redundancies.

In recent years, Russia has also been particularly concerned about the aforementioned foreign-sponsored "color revolutions". The formation of a single military command to put down an insurrection may have been the impetus for creation of Rosgvardiya Russia's dispersal of military power is important for two reasons. The first is that Western calculations of Russian military power rarely account for Russia's military forces that are not in the MoD. These forces are often highly trained, and equipped with heavy weapons, armored personnel carriers, artillery and mortars. Although these forces are significantly lighter than their MoD brethren, they are more than sufficiently equipped for handling light forces such as insurgents, airborne troops, and special operations units.

Not only do these forces provide significant numbers of combat capable personnel, but they also free the heavier MoD forces from the manpower intensive duties of rear area security and counterinsurgency operations, duties that Western planners anticipate will be executed by MoD troops. The net effect is that this fact could cause an underestimation of Russian combat power. The second reason is the importance of joint and interministerial cooperation for Russian operations.

Generally speaking, Batyushkin spends little time addressing the command and control aspects of combined arms warfare (such as the interaction of infantry, armor, artillery, air defense, engineers), but instead spends the majority of the book discussing inter-branch (joint) operations (the interaction of the Army, Navy, Air Force, etc. under a unified command.) and the inter-ministerial aspects of command and control, and force employment (p.24).. (In U.S. military parlance, this would probably be referred to as "The Art of Mission Command").

This is unsurprising, as the science of command and control of joint and inter-ministerial groupings of forces is one of key interests of the General Staff, as can be seen in the following passage from Chief of the General Staff, Valery Gerasimov's somewhat infamous 2013 article "The Value of Science is in the Foresight: New Challenges Demand Rethinking the Forms and Methods of Carrying out Combat Operations":

'' The experience of the conduct of military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq showed the necessity of reworking jointly with the scientific structures of other ministries and agencies of the Russian Federation, the role and level of participation of the Armed Forces in post-conflict regulation, the development of a list of missions, the methods of line-unit operations, and the establishment of limits on the use of military forces. The development of the scientific-methodological apparatus for supporting decision making that takes into account the inter-branch [joint] character of groupings of line-units (forces) is an important question. It is necessary to research the integral capabilities, combining the potential of all of the line-units and forces which are part of them.

The problem here consists in the fact that the existing models of operations and combat actions do not make it possible to do this. New models are necessary… Changes in the character of military conflicts, the development of weaponry, the forms and methods of their use determine the new requirements for multifaceted support systems. This is still one more area for scientific activity, which must not be forgotten.The Russians firmly believe that the changing character of warfare requires them to develop command and control structures adequate for the successful employment of joint and inter-ministerial groupings. It is also clear from the writings of Batyushkin and Gerasimov that Russia is still contemplating the best way to harmoniously employ forces, and that there are currently seams that may be exploited (p.276).

-   The Definition of "Operation" and the Role and Importance of Operational Art:

One of the most interesting parts of the book for foreign readers is the Russian description of exactly what an operation is, and how it relates to local wars and armed conflicts. Thus, Batyushkin writes:

'' An "operation" is the highest form of the application of the Ground Forces combat power in local wars and armed conflicts. The operation is a combination of coordinated and interrelated missions to fulfill a particular objective in furtherance of strategic, operational or operational-tactical tasks in a certain area within a specified period of time … An important feature of operations in local wars and armed conflicts is the fact that unlike large-scale wars, one successful operation may determine the outcome of the entire conflict… The duration of the entire operation can be from 30 to 60 days, and the phase of active military operations of 10-15 days (p.20). ''

In a Russian context, operations are the bridge between strategy and tactics.10 An operation is necessarily nested within the national strategy and guides decisions of commanders at the tactical level. In the Russian system, flexibility at the operational level is enabled by rigidity at the tactical level. The Soviet/Russian decision-making and planning process has developed with the goal of quantifiably determining the probability of operational success. To do so, the planners must have the ability to accurately predict the outcome of tactical combat. This is an inherently mathematically-based operational planning process. Instead of the intense staff-centric planning processes found in Western militaries (from a Russian perspective), the Russians prefer well rehearsed tactical drills that can be executed with certain variables (at the battalion-level and below). In this system, speed and predictability are paramount, because an adequate plan executed early is considered to be far better than an excellent plan executed late. As can be seen in the preceding passage, Russians believe that operational art is just as important in relation to local wars and armed conflicts as it is total war, and that even a single operation could determine the outcome of the entire conflict. Batyushkin also makes some pointed observations about the changing character of war, and the role of operational art. In modern conflicts, the main emphasis has shifted from lines of troops in contact to dispersed actions throughout the depth of the enemy's defense. And the role of (operational-level) maneuver is not only to force the enemy into unfavorable conditions for conventional engagement, but also to position them so they may be more effectively targeted by precision, long-range fires

Operational Planning for Local Wars and Armed Conflicts:

Considering Russia's well developed General Staff and emphasis on operational art, it is no surprise that Batyushkin discusses the importance of planning. Apparently, Russians have a concept of operations (CONOPS) process similar to Western nations that begins with the planning of military operations in peacetime, this initial plan being refined before hostilities, and then executed. Batyushkin echoes others in the Russian security establishment with his belief that conflicts do not spontaneously erupt, and there is almost always some ramp-up to hostilities. The below statement is not referring to surprise attacks (the exact time and day an attack will occur), instead it is referring to preparation activities in the pre-war phase. Thus:

'' As a rule, armed conflicts do not arise suddenly, they evolve over a relatively long period, which allows preparatory measures, even before specific mitigating tasks are executed. Naturally, this is only possible with advanced, proper federal guidance in the form of pre-existing orders, predetermined command and control relationships for combat missions, and will provide appropriate sanctions and material means (pp. 71-72). ''

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'' In terms of the planning process in relation to local wars and armed conflicts, the planning aspects are in many ways the same as they are for total war. What differentiates them is that there is not only an emphasis on targeting hostile troops, but also on targeting important administrative and economic centers. This targeting is intended to weaken the military potential of the enemy's irregular units and disrupt their lines of communications. There is also increased emphasis on blocking, encirclements and raids; airborne/air assault missions; (friendly) partisan/insurgent activities; and coordination with the security services (p. 49). ''

A successful counterinsurgency campaign can only be offensively conducted, but first essential lines of communication must be secured. A network of garrisons, guard posts, outposts, strong points, and mobile units must be used to cut the insurgency's economic base and lines of communication. Insurgent elements must be destroyed or captured through the employment of fire strikes, assaults and special actions (p. 76). Longer-term planning is typically conducted by the General Staff, but immediate planning of the operation is carried out by the headquarters staff at the Army Group headquarters, with supporting staff from the Ministry of Defense, General Staff, and other ministries (p. 81).

- The necessary adaptation of NATO's military instrument of power:

Since 2014, the Euro-Atlantic security environment has become less stable and predictable as a result of a series of actions taken by Russia: Russia's illegal and illegitimate annexation of Crimea and ongoing destabilization of eastern Ukraine; Russia's military posture and provocative military activities, such as the deployment of modern dual-capable missiles in Kaliningrad, repeated violations of NATO Allied airspace, and the continued military build-up in Crimea; its significant investments in the modernization of its strategic forces; its irresponsible and aggressive nuclear rhetoric; its large-scale, no-notice snap exercises; and the growing number of its exercises with a nuclear dimension. In parallel, growing instability in our southern region, from the Middle East to North Africa, as well as transnational and multi-dimensional threats, are challenging our security. These factors can all have long term consequences for peace and security in the Euro-Atlantic region and stability across the globe. Yet it is mainly Russian military actions that have brought deterrence and collective defense back to the forefront of NATO's agenda.

As a consequence of this new environment, the Alliance has started to adapt to ensure that its deterrence and defense posture remains credible, coherent and resilient. Military adaptation is only one of the three distinct lines of effort driving the long term adaptation of the Alliance, together with political and institutional adaptation. The objective is the development of an Alliance adaptable by design, where the capacity to anticipate and react to change is integral to how we operate. Since 2010, reforms have contributed to an improved effectiveness and efficiency, moving NATO towards greater readiness and responsiveness.The three core tasks – collective defense, crisis management and cooperative security – remain extant, as per NATO's 2010 Strategic Concept. However, there has been an adaptation and re-balancing of the weight of effort and activities related to these core tasks to reflect the current security environment and accommodate the interests and views of all 29 member states. To place the adaptation of NATO's Military Instrument of Power into perspective, one has to go back in history. Back in 1990, the NATO London Summit provided a sense of the positive trends in the security environment. The Summit Declaration stated that "Europe has entered a new, promising era [...] As Soviet troops leave Eastern Europe and a treaty limiting conventional armed forces is implemented, the Alliance's integrated force structure and its strategy will change fundamentally".

It then noted that NATO will "field smaller forces", and "scale back the readiness of its active units, reducing training requirements and the number of exercises". Also, if and when needed NATO would "more heavily rely on the ability to build up larger forces". Accordingly, the Alliance will have to rely on adequate infrastructure to allow for reinforcement if necessary. Two decades later, these decisions were followed by the 2010 Lisbon Summit Declaration, whereby Allies state that they "want to see a true strategic partnership between NATO and Russia, and we will act accordingly, with the expectation of reciprocity from Russia".

This language was then replicated in the 2010 New Strategic Concept. At the time, the absence of an existential threat allowed NATO to adapt to a changing world and new challenges. From the 1990s to early 2014, NATO's Military Instrument of Power was predominantly used for operations of choice including missions and operations abroad, such as crisis management. Coalitions were established to conduct operations and sovereign nations could decide on a case-by-case basis whether or not to participate. Such operations were not subject to any particular urgency, therefore nations followed their own decision-making procedures and force generated contributions at their own pace.

Continuous military adaptation:

Since 2014, the Alliance has implemented the largest reinforcement of its deterrence and defense posture since the end of the Cold War. NATO tripled the size of the NATO Response Force to 40,000 troops, and created a "spearhead force" within it, known as the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF), ready to move within days. Military exercises have been stepped up and enhanced air policing has been initiated in the Baltic and Black Sea regions. Cyber defense, and defense against missile attacks have also been strengthened.

The Alliance has also reversed the trend of declining defense budgets, in light of growing needs for investment in capabilities and to further a more balanced burden sharing. A more robust deterrence and defense posture strengthens the Alliance's cohesion, including the transatlantic link, through an equitable and sustainable distribution of roles and responsibilities. NATO must also continue to adapt its strategy in line with security trends to ensure that its overall deterrence and defense posture is capable of addressing potential adversaries' doctrine and capabilities.

To respond to the changes in the security environment on NATO's borders and further afield, the Readiness Action Plan (RAP) was approved at the

2014 Wales Summit. It provides a comprehensive package of measures addressing both the continuing need for assurance of Allies and the adaptation of the Alliance's military strategic posture. Measures adopted deal with:

•   An Enhanced NATO Response Force (eNRF);

•   The establishment of a Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF);

•   The establishment of eight multinational NATO Force Integration Units (NFIUs) on the territory of Allies in the eastern part of the Alliance;

•   As part of the NATO Force Structure, making the Headquarters of a Multinational Corps Northeast in Poland fully operational, and establishing the Headquarters of a Multinational Division Southeast in Romania to take command of the NATO Force Integration Units and to provide flexible command and control options in their regions; •   the enhancement of NATO Standing Naval Forces with additional capabilities;

•   Delivering a more ambitious exercise programme;

•   Enhancing advance planning and enabling accelerated decision-making to ensure both military and political responsiveness;

•   A strategy on NATO's role in Countering Hybrid Warfare, implemented in coordination with the European Union;

•   The establishment of a framework for NATO's adaptation in response to growing challenges and threats from the south ("Framework for the South"). The assurance measures include continuous air, land, and maritime presence and meaningful military activity in the eastern part of the Alliance, both on a rotational basis. They provide the fundamental baseline requirement for assurance and deterrence, and are flexible and scalable to respond to the evolving security situation.

In addition, tailored assurance measures for Turkey reflect the growing security challenges from the south and contribute to the security of the Alliance as a whole. Building on the Readiness Action Plan, at the 2016 Warsaw Summit, the Alliance adopted a broad approach to deterrence and defense, drawing upon all of the tools at NATO's disposal.

One of the key decisions was the establishment of the enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland aimed at demonstrating, as part of the overall posture, Allies' solidarity, determination, and ability to act by triggering an immediate Allied response to any aggression.

In parallel, the development of a tailored Forward Presence (tFP) in the southeast region of the Alliance included appropriate measures, tailored to the Black Sea region. This reflected the Romanian initiative to establish a multinational framework brigade to help improve integrated training of Allied units under Headquarters Multinational Division Southeast.

A number of air and maritime measures have been undertaken in the Black Sea region to enhance NATO's presence and maritime activity. Then, at the 2018 Brussels Summit, taking on the RAP and related measures as the strategic background, Allies launched a NATO Readiness Initiative (NRI) to ensure that more high-quality, combat-capable national forces at high readiness can be made available to NATO.

From within the overall pool of forces, Allies will offer an additional 30 major naval combat vessels, 30 heavy or medium maneuver battalions, and 30 kinetic air squadrons, with enabling forces, at 30 days' readiness or less. The NRI will further enhance the Alliance's rapid response capability, either for reinforcement of Allies in support of deterrence or collective defense, including for high-intensity warfighting, or for rapid military crisis intervention, if required. These measures will also promote the importance of effective combined arms and joint operations.

- Towards Responsiveness, Readiness and Reinforcement:

Since the Warsaw Summit in 2016, a number of steps have been taken to support the deployment and sustainment of Allied forces and their equipment into, from, and within the entire Alliance territory. To that end, the implementation of the Enablement Plan for SACEUR's Area of Responsibility (AOR) received the highest priority.

Responsiveness, Readiness and Reinforcement are the strategic imperatives for the work on the implementation of the Alliance's strengthened Deterrence and Defence Posture. Responsiveness encompasses two separate elements. The first element requires a military posture that includes having the right forces in the right place and at the right time to be able to respond in a timely, appropriate and credible manner to assure, deter and address contingencies that might arise.

The second element of responsiveness is expeditious political decision-making. Readiness is about having the right capabilities and forces that are trained, interoperable, deployable and maintained in the right operational structures and groupings and at an appropriate notice to move to meet all Alliance requirements.

The ability to provide rapid and timely reinforcement to a threatened member state is essential for the credibility of the Alliance's Deterrence and Defence Posture, underpinning the tripwire function of the Forward Presence and ensuring effective reinforcement in other regions, if required. In that vein, the enablement of SACEUR's AOR required NATO to be able to rapidly move forces into, within and from the AOR in all directions and to sustain them.

In this context, the adaptation and strengthening of the NATO Command Structure (NCS), the military backbone of the Alliance, enables the Supreme Commanders to command and control forces to deal with any military challenge or security threat at any time, from any direction, including large scale operations for collective defense, as well as to ensure adequate transformation and preparation for the future, in particular through capability development, education, and training.

The new NATO Command Structure was endorsed at the 2018 Brussels Summit; it includes:

• a Cyberspace Operations Centre at SHAPE in Belgium to provide situational awareness and coordination of NATO operational activity within cyberspace;

• a Joint Force Command Norfolk headquarters in the United States to focus on protecting the transatlantic lines of communication;

• a Joint Support and Enabling Command in Germany to ensure freedom of operation and sustainment in the rear area, in support of the rapid movement of troops and equipment into, across, and from Europe. The adapted NCS enhances and strengthens the relationship to the NATO Force Structure headquarters and national headquarters, which also improves the Alliance's regional understanding.

- **Domains of operations: conventional and asymmetric threats:**

The adaptation of the Alliance over recent years was aimed at making it fit-for-purpose in the new strategic environment. NATO's adaptation since the Wales Summit in 2014 has been, and continues to be, a process of critical strategic thinking, which allows the Alliance to meet current and emerging security challenges ahead. The world – and NATO's adversaries – have moved on and NATO must undertake a process of continuous adaptation to ensure that it can face the broad spectrum of threats and challenges.

Alongside the NCS, the strengthening of the Alliance's maritime capabilities responded to the need for adapting to a rapidly evolving and increasingly unpredictable maritime security environment. NATO has continued to intensify and expand the implementation of the Alliance Maritime Strategy, further enhancing the Alliance's effectiveness in the maritime domain, and reinvigorating NATO's Standing Naval Forces.

The Standing Naval Forces are a core maritime capability of the Alliance and are the centerpiece of NATO's maritime posture. They have been enhanced and aligned with NATO's eNRF to provide NATO's highest readiness maritime forces. Similarly, in the air domain, Allies agreed at the 2018 Brussels Summit a Joint Air Power Strategy, a key enabler for NATO's peacetime Air Policing and Ballistic Missile Defence missions.

Furthermore, NATO joined the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS/Da'esh, and has enhanced its AWACS and air-to-air refueling support. NATO's Military Concept for Counter-Terrorism established that NATO will contribute more effectively to the prevention of terrorism and increase resilience to acts of terrorism.

To this end, the Alliance will coordinate and consolidate its counter-terrorism efforts and focus on three main areas: awareness, capabilities and engagement. Most notably, the recognition of cyberspace as a domain of operations represented a milestone in the Alliance's resolve against emerging threats. Through the Cyber Defence Pledge adopted in the margins of the Warsaw Summit, NATO committed to enhance the cyber defense of national networks and infrastructure. NATO will continue to adapt to the evolving cyber threat landscape, which is affected by both state and non-state actors, including state-sponsored.

- **NATO's New Military Strategy:**

Since the Wales Summit, there has been a change in the Alliance's paradigm, shifting from a reactive to a proactive approach, culminating with the May 2019 Chiefs of Defence approval of the new NATO Military Strategy (NMS), a capstone document which supports the ongoing wider military adaptation and modernization of the Alliance. The 2010 Strategic Concept, coupled with the outputs from the Wales, Warsaw and Brussels Summits, as well as the actions taken to follow through on Alliance assurance and adaptation measures, have all formed the basis for the new NMS.

It constitutes the basis for further adaptation of the Alliance's Military Instrument of Power. The approval of NMS marked a fundamental step forward in adapting the Alliance to the increasingly complex security challenges. Under the broader umbrella of NATO's policy on Deterrence and Defence, Projecting Stability, and the Fight against Terrorism, the NMS supports the Alliance's three core tasks and overarching Alliance messaging. It outlines how the Alliance deters and defends and how it provides military support to the efforts in Projecting Stability and the Fight Against Terrorism in a coherent manner.

The last 25 years of continuous reductions in financial resourcing and readiness levels have left NATO and its partners inadequately prepared for the emerging new security environment. This is not to question the changed focus and reduced resourcing and readiness levels throughout the 1990s up to and including 2010.

On the contrary, these were all the results of deliberate decisions based upon valid assessments of the changing security environment. Although one might argue that the Alliance and its member states have missed some signals since 2008. We were looking for the indicators we wanted to see instead of those we needed to see.

Nevertheless, NATO's adaptation since the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014 is something to be proud of and a testimony to the Alliance's agility and solidarity. Taking deliberate consensus-based decisions and carefully coordinated political will and military capabilities could take the Alliance even further. It is impressive to have witnessed NATO's strategic adaptation over the short space of fi ve years. Moreover, NATO's Military Strategy provides – from a military perspective – contextualization, while also allowing for purpose and a coherent approach for the present and for the immediate future.

- **Implications for NATO and global security:**

NATO's rivals and competitors, such as China and Russia, will not be able to easily and quickly develop state of-the-art weapon systems, as well as the infrastructural support intended to achieve not only global reach but also localized technological parity with NATO countries.

Secondly, and connected to this, tackling asymmetrical, hybrid or unconventional challenges is of the utmost importance, but cannot come at the cost of compromising NATO Allies' superiority in military technology – as some analysts, sometimes, recommend. That such competitors have invested in asymmetrical, hybrid or unconventional capabilities seems to suggest that this is a second-best strategy resulting from the technological challenges of developing traditional weapon systems.

Third, NATO countries need to maintain and extend their military-industrial leadership in the years to come. In time, today's state-of-the-art technology will become mature and other countries will develop the capabilities to produce them. Debates about 2 percent expenditure and 20 percent allocations to modernization are helpful – but only up to a point. NATO countries need to increase their defense spending, but a strategy for technological superiority should drive their investments to maximize NATO's competitive advantage.

In this respect, NATO benefits from the diversity of its Allies' scientific, technological and industrial capabilities. This generates a broad portfolio of unrivaled weapon systems in almost every possible domain of operations, from jet fighters to nuclear submarines, from satellites to main battle tanks.

NATO's breadth puts its competitors and rivals at a key disadvantage. While there are often calls for more integration and cooperation, NATO should actually learn to better appreciate the benefits of industrial specialization and promote it further.

Finally, new technological domains offer great opportunities. For this reason, it is imperative that NATO leverages its wide and extensive expertise to establish a long-lasting technological primacy in these areas too. Given relatively high entry barriers, NATO countries should work together to consolidate their expertise, as well as experiment and innovate so as to integrate future technologies into their force structures.

c. Military interventions for political reasons

- Military Exercises: Political Messaging and Strategic Impact

NATO strategic level political military crisis management exercising – history and challenges:

Historical Summary <u>This paper will provide an historical summary</u> of NATO's development of high-level exercising from the Cold War (CW) transition into the 1990s with the widespread perception of peace dividends which were offset by the realities of the break-up of the Balkan States and then, as the 21st century started, the spill-over threats stemming from failed and failing states, the emergence of global terrorism, cyber activities and residual threats of ballistic missiles as well as the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), in particular by rogue states and terror groups.

As indicated below in the three Strategic Concepts of 1991, 1999 and 2010, throughout much of this period the previous allied focus on CW-style Alliance-wide collective defense diminished as the perception of a direct threat receded and, as a consequence, the confrontational CW risk of miscalculation and misunderstanding by potential opposing countries and states was replaced by the Allies' wish to geographically extend NATO's post-CW security role and to face the challenge and sensitivities of confronting emerging asymmetric and hybrid security risks. However, at the end of the first decade of the 21st century, the Alliance once again faces the re-emergence of potential collective defense threats with the necessity to exercise Article 5 concepts, procedures and arrangements while simultaneously conducting successive non-Article 5 crisis response operations (NA5CRO).

- Why Exercise at the highest NATO Level?

NATO is a political but also an operational organization and Allies recognise that high-level, multinational political-military consultations and decision making is complex. Given the high turnover of personnel at NATO HQ, the NATO Military Authorities (NMA)1 , national Ministries and military headquarters, there is continuous erosion of NATO-wide crisis management experience and misperceptions of Alliance structures and relationships. Moreover, there is an increasing lack of militarily experienced political decision-makers and staff.

So, while exercising is part of military DNA, if NATO is to maintain its ability for holistic, coherent and robust management of crises, there is a necessity for regular and collective practice of existing and evolving CM concepts, procedures and arrangements through the conduct of high-level exercises. Such exercising, together with operational experience, is a prerequisite for improving and updating NATO's crisis management architecture and to consolidate lessons learned from real crises and operations.

NATO's CMX series is the only type of exercise that is designed specifically to achieve the validation or testing of current and evolving strategic-level crisis management procedures, arrangements and concepts in a time-sensitive environment using the consultation and decision-making machinery of the Alliance in a realistic, though generic, setting. It also provides the only opportunity to exercise at this level with NATO partners and with other international actors.

- Exercising and Reality This historical summary will highlight how the Alliance adapted its high-level exercising requirements and, in so doing, reflected the realities of an ever changing security environment as Allies agreed to become involved outside the original Alliance area, to significantly enhance NATO's relationship with other international organisations and to widen NATO cooperation with a range of partner countries, a number of which have since become Allies. This adaptation also applied to exercise planning, as indicated in the outline description of the planning process provided at the end of this summary.

- Origins of High-level Political-Military Exercising Modern versions of high level exercising were initiated by NATO at the beginning of the CW in the 1950s with exercises such as FALLEX and, subsequently, the biennial WINTEX (Winter EX)-CIMEX (CIv-Mil EX) held in odd years between the mid-1960s to the late 1980s, as well as the High Level Exercise (HILEX) which was held in even years during the 1980s. NATO exercising in this period was based on the strategic defense requirements embodied in Articles 4, 5 and 6 of the Washington Treaty. The primary aim was always to practice the deterrence and defense of allied territory against any aggression – which then, by implication, meant by the Soviet Union and, from 1955, the Warsaw Pact (WP) – within the NATO area. These exercises were designed to meet the primary commitment to collective defense under Article 5 of the Treaty, itself underpinned by Article 51 of the UN Charter.

The Western European Union (WEU), created by Europe in September 1948 and prior to the Washington Treaty, had only a limited, and solely European, security role during the CW. However, it started conducting high-level political-military exercises during the 1990s following the adoption of the so called 'Petersberg' tasks in 1992. Later in 1996, the NATO Allies agreed at their Berlin Ministerial meeting that the WEU would oversee the creation of a European Security and Defence Identity (ESDI) within NATO structures which would provide a European 'pillar' within NATO. Subsequently, the EU adopted the 'Petersberg' tasks in 1996, and then the whole WEU ESDI role in 1999. In 2003 the EU and NATO agreed to expand this initiative through the mutual agreement of the 'Berlin Plus' arrangements that allowed the EU, with NATO agreement, to make use of NATO assets and capabilities to carry out military operations if NATO, again as a whole, declined to act. Around this time, the EU started to plan and conduct their own highlevel political-military exercises that included joint exercises with NATO. The first, and to date only, joint exercise was planned and conducted in 2003. In 2009, at the EU Lisbon Summit, ESDP was re-named the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP).

The primary aim of NATO's high level political-military exercising is to practice Alliance consultation and consensus driven crisis management procedures and arrangements in order to maintain and improve the ability of the Alliance to manage crises. Exercise conduct is always designed to be held in realtime, which necessitated that widely differing time zones must be taken into account.Transition from the Cold War to the 1st and 2nd Strategic Concepts 1991 & 1999, including the first NATO military missions

NATO-Russia Rivalry and the Baltic Sea: A Brief Introduction:

After an extended period of calm following the collapse of the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact, the Baltic Sea and its littoral have returned to their traditional position as a flashpoint between the East and the West. The Baltic Sea has long been a strategic transit point for maritime commerce between western and eastern Europe, ranging from finished goods to raw materials such as timber, minerals, and herring. Across the ebbs and flows of European military history—from the Middle Ages to World Wars I and II—states have long competed for dominance of the Baltic Sea as a means for access and resupply of their deployed land forces. As such, Russia, Germany, Sweden, Denmark, and the United Kingdom have all waged war in the Baltic Sea and its surrounding littoral.

(NATO's Eastern Flank 2022 Up To Date Statics)

The proximate cause for the re-emergence of the Baltic Sea as a potential arena of conflict was the Russian invasion and annexation of Crimea in 2014, coupled with Moscow's ongoing support for the insurgency in eastern Ukraine. Russia's unwillingness to respect Ukrainian sovereignty and its subsequent truculence in the face of U.S and European sanctions sent shockwaves across the Russian rimlands, from Central Asia to the Nordic region. National leaders and security analysts alike wondered where and when the next incident of Russian territorial aggression would occur.

Nowhere were these fears felt more intensely than in the small Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. Estonia, after all, had been the subject of Russian cyber attacks in 2007—and although these attacks fell short of contemporary definitions of an act of war, they crashed several websites belonging to Estonian banks, universities, newspapers, and government ministries. In the United States, a vigorous debate emerged as to whether it was possible for NATO to deter Russia from seizing one or more of the Baltic states.

Complicating the discourse were questions over whether a Russian land-grab would come in the form of an overt invasion or a more sophisticated form of hybrid warfare, which 'relies on proxies and surrogates to prevent attribution and intent, and to maximize confusion and uncertainty.' In the maritime domain, especially in a closed sea like the Baltic, hybrid warfare could prove difficult to counter because Russia could use a combination of geography and anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) capabilities to isolate the region.

A team from the RAND Corporation, for example, analyzed the possibility of a conventional land attack and found that U.S. and NATO forces were inadequate to either deter or prevail if Russia chose to invade the former Soviet republics. Navalists have also assumed, self-servingly, that it would be virtually impossible to defend the Baltic states on land. Russia could marshal too much land and air power, too quickly for the states themselves to resist or for NATO reinforcements to arrive—assuming, of course, that NATO possessed the political will to invoke Article 5.9 The role of the Russian Navy in any Baltic offensive, however, remains a question mark. Officially, the U.S. Navy has been relatively cautious in interpreting what Russia's naval modernization means, although top-end strategy documents now identify Russia as a threat to peace and good order at sea.

Analysts are aware that the Russian Navy is in the midst of a renaissance from its post Cold War atrophy, but they are careful not to overestimate the potential threat, especially outside Russia's coastal waters and inland seas.

On the other hand, many analysts recognize that the combination of revived naval capabilities and land-based threats to the maritime domain (including aircraft and missiles) amount to an A2/AD threat. As Thomas Fedyszyn concludes, 'Today's Russian Navy is neither midget nor monster, but increasingly acts as a reflection of President Vladimir Putin's character and bolsters his more outrageous gambits.

Thus, it is threatening beyond the bounds of its own capability.' The Russian Navy's shifting posture is evidenced by an increased willingness to deploy aggressively throughout its near seas—for instance, the May 2017 deployment of three warships 12 nautical miles off the Latvian coast. Notably, this incident occurred less than one month before the kickoff of BALTOPS. Predictably, Russia's theoretical threat to the Baltic region has increased the pace of defense preparations in the West.

The United States and NATO have reached agreements to station more ground troops in the region (largely symbolic numbers), increase the rotational presence of U.S. forces, and conduct more exercises and training to improve readiness. These efforts, known collectively as Operation Atlantic Resolve, have been funded by the European Reassurance Initiative (ERI), launched by President Barack Obama in 2014 as a 'powerful demonstration of America's unshakable commitment to our NATO allies.

(European Deterrence Initiative EDI (former European Reassurance Initiative ERI) in practice - to bolster Allies' infrastructure on NATO's Eastern Flank from fiscal year 2015 through 2017.)

In subsequent years, the United States increased funding for ERI, including $3.42 billion in 2017 through the Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) account. Despite American and NATO efforts to project a unified front, analysts remain wary given the extent of Russia's military modernization program and the apparent willingness of the Putin regime to provoke the West.

As John Deni observed relative to the ground components of ERI, the 'expansion plan suffers from several shortcomings, including its relatively small size in comparison to the conventional threat presented by Russia across the border, and the intention to disperse it across six countries in northeastern and southeastern Europe.' Furthermore, the Obama administration did not rule out further withdrawals of American troops, platforms, and equipment stationed in Europe in the future.

The outlook for ERI is particularly uncertain under the Trump administration, which has called for NATO countries to spend more on their own defense. Despite its shortcomings, the ERI has yielded tangible benefits. In the maritime domain, Operation Atlantic Resolve has resulted in increased 'participation by the U.S. Navy in NATO naval force deployments, including more persistent deployments to the Black and Baltic seas.' Moreover, military exercises designed to improve operational readiness have grown in number and intensity.

According to an ERI fact sheet published by U.S. European Command, 'The 2017 budget expands the scope of 28 joint and multinational exercises, which annually trains more than 18,000 U.S. personnel alongside 45,000 NATO allies and Partnership for Peace personnel across 40 countries.' In addition to exercise scope, the ERI has fostered 'increased participation of allied and partner nation's Navies in multinational exercises' and improved 'infrastructure to support P-8A [maritime patrol aircraft] operations.'21 One exercise that has benefited from this expansion is BALTOPS, the annual, multilateral naval drill with origins dating to the Cold War.

d. Military interventions for humanitarian and peace building reasons

With the dissolution of the USSR, NATO adopted a new identity as the white shiny armored knight of the world. NATO identified itself as the hero and savior of the nations which are suppressed and in need of military intervention from other forces to stop the monster at home. For that reason, NATO - or more like members' influence on global politics - shaped its characteristics and decision-making activities at international organizations such as the EU-UN and many more international areas.

One of the key components of this intervention becomes remarkable with NATO's humanitarian intervention in Kosovo with UN approval.

The Kosovo War was an armed conflict in Kosovo that started 28 February 1998 and lasted until 11 June 1999. It was fought by the forces of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (i.e. Serbia and Montenegro), which controlled Kosovo before the war, and the Kosovo Albanian rebel group known as the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA). The conflict ended when the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) intervened by beginning air strikes in March 1999 which resulted in Yugoslav forces withdrawing from Kosovo.

NATO members first declared a willingness to use force over Kosovo in autumn 1998. The pivotal event at this time was the Holbrooke-Milosevic agreement, reached in October. Holbrooke had been explicitly dispatched to Belgrade by then American Secretary of State Madeleine Albright to 'underscore [to President Milosevic] the clear requirements of UN Security Council Resolution 1199 and to emphasize the need for prompt and full compliance'. Further, his mission to Belgrade was announced on the day after publication of a report to the Security Council by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan dealing with the FRY's lack of compliance with previous UNSC Resolutions. In this report Annan 'appealed to the international community to undertake urgent steps in order to prevent a humanitarian disaster' in Kosovo during the winter. The close proximity of timing suggests that this call provided both a spur and justification for the Holbrooke mission. The UN, via Resolution 1199, was, therefore, centrally if indirectly involved in the framing of the terms of reference for the Holbrooke mission, the accompanying NATO airstrike threat and, later, NATO's military action between March and June 1999.

It can also be argued that the UN Secretary-General gave a de facto green light to military action on a visit to NATO headquarters in January 1999. In his public remarks before meeting

the North Atlantic Council, NATO's top decision-making body, Annan said that 'the bloody wars of the last decade … have [not] left us with any illusions about the need to use force, when all other means have failed. We may be reaching that limit, once again, in the former Yugoslavia'. According to Bruno Simma, he also told a press conference that 'normally a UN Security Council Resolution is required' [emphasis in the original] to authorize military action by UN member states; suggesting, perhaps, that one might not be with regard to Kosovo. Indeed, Tomás Valásek has claimed that NATO members purposely 'sought and obtained an indirect endorsement' of the right to use force over Kosovo from Kofi Annan in January 1999, two months before Operation Allied Force was launched.

The launch of Operation Allied Force was, nevertheless, accompanied by a major international controversy over the fact that NATO members had not obtained, or sought, an explicit mandate in the form of a UNSC Resolution. During the course of the operation, NATO members spent a good deal of time and effort justifying it, usually within a frame of reference to the UN. Reference was made to NATO's role in helping maintain the Dayton peace regime in Bosnia (where it was operating under a UN mandate), that could be threatened by uncontrolled violence in Kosovo.

Further, it was asserted that NATO had received the implicit authorisation of the Security Council for military action on account of its support for the Holbrooke-Milosevic agreement, which had, as noted, been concluded with the threat of airstrikes in the background. An especially commonly cited argument was that NATO was acting 'in the spirit' of the UN Charter in attempting to compel the Milosevic government to cease and desist its repressive activities in Kosovo. The then NATO Secretary-General, Javier Solana, encapsulated this argument at his first press conference after Operation Allied Force got underway.

He declared that 'the NATO countries think that this action is perfectly legitimate and it is within the logic of the UN Security Council [sic] … we are engaged in this operation in order not to wage war against anybody but to try to stop the war'. This line of argument was bolstered by reference to key UNSC Resolutions. The first UN Kosovo Resolution – 1160 – had been passed by the Security Council in March 1998.

It spoke of 'the serious political and human rights issues in Kosovo'. In September, Resolution 1199 used stronger language. It spoke of the need to 'avert the impending humanitarian catastrophe' in the province. In addition, as noted above, the UN Secretary-General had called upon member states to take action to prevent a 'humanitarian disaster' in Kosovo. Given the inclusion of such phrases, there is some basis for the NATO claim to have been acting in the spirit of the Resolutions and of the UN Charter more generally.

The de facto blessing of the UN Secretary-General, although welcome for NATO, had limited value. Kofi Annan's views were, at best, privately encouraging whilst he publicly upheld the principles of the UN Charter. His public position with regard to Kosovo was confirmed in the widely quoted remarks that he made to the press on the day that Operation Allied Force was launched:

- It is indeed tragic that diplomacy has failed, but there are times when the use of force may be legitimate in the pursuit of peace. In helping maintain international peace and security, Chapter 7 of the United Nations Charter assigns an important role to regional organizations. But as Secretary-General, I have many times pointed out, not just in relation to Kosovo, that under the Charter, the Security Council has primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security, and this is explicitly acknowledged in the North Atlantic Treaty. Therefore, the Council should be involved in any decision to resort to force.

The UN Secretary-General could not, in any event, have bestowed international legitimacy on Operation Allied Force even if he had been so minded. He only has the right, under Article 99 of the UN Charter, to 'bring to the attention of the Security Council any matter which in his opinion may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security'. He cannot, however, give authorisation on behalf of the Security Council or force its members to do so.The lack of explicit UN authorisation provoked serious opposition to NATO's military action, not least among two of the permanent members of the Security Council; China and Russia. The Chinese Ambassador to the UN, Qin Huasun, described NATO's military operations as a 'blatant violation of the UN Charter, as well as the accepted norms in international law'. He was categorical in expressing the view that 'the Chinese Government strongly opposes such an act'.

Russian condemnation was even more forthright. President Boris Yeltsin called NATO's operation 'nothing other than an open aggression'. It had, in the Russian government's view, 'created a dangerous precedent' that 'threatened international law and order'. Forthright criticism was not only limited to those that predictably took a strong view on the sanctity of state sovereignty. The Rio Group of Latin American states similarly expressed its 'anxiety' over the use of force in 'contravention of the provisions of Article 53' of the UN Charter.13 Clearly therefore, important components of the international community did not accept notions of an implicit mandate for NATO's action.

-   **Humanitarian and strategic imperatives:**

Apart from justifying its action within the context of previous UN decisions, NATO presented another set of arguments based on humanitarian and regional stability considerations. In a press statement on 23 March 1999, Solana outlined the reasons behind the decision to begin airstrikes against Yugoslavia. He stated that NATO action resulted from the fact that 'all efforts to achieve a negotiated, political solution to the Kosovo crisis having failed, no alternative is open but to take military action'. He made clear that 'NATO is not waging war against Yugoslavia' but instead military action had been initiated to 'support the political aims of the international community'. In supporting these aims, Solana emphasised that NATO's action was intended to 'avert a humanitarian catastrophe' and 'prevent more human suffering and more repression and violence against the civilian population of Kosovo'.This was a point Solana stressed on three occasions in his statement. He also indicated that NATO wanted to see the end of human suffering embodied in a 'political settlement' with an 'international military presence' to underwrite it.

A further overarching aim of NATO was to 'prevent instability spreading in the region'. In another press release issued on 23 March, NATO echoed the themes in Solana's remarks. This additional statement, however, placed more of an accent on the Alliance endeavoring to support the aims of the international community to find a political solution:

- NATO's overall political objectives remain to help achieve a peaceful solution to the crisis in Kosovo by contributing to the response of the international community. More particularly, the Alliance made it clear in its statement of 30th January 1999 that its strategy was to halt the violence and support the completion of negotiations on an interim solution … Alliance military action is intended to support its political aims. To do so, NATO's military action will be directed towards halting the violent attacks being committed by the VJ [Yugoslav Army] and MUP [Interior Ministry Forces] and disrupting their ability to conduct future attacks against the population of Kosovo, thereby supporting international efforts to secure FRY agreement to an interim political settlement.

The most definitive statement of NATO's initial war aims was issued as air operations continued in early April 1999. In forthright terms, NATO made clear that military action was driven by compelling humanitarian reasons and in support of the political aims of the international community:

- The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) has repeatedly violated United Nations Security Council resolutions. The unrestrained assault by Yugoslav military, police and paramilitary forces, under the direction of President Milosevic, on Kosovar civilians has created a massive humanitarian catastrophe which also threatens to destabilize the surrounding region. Hundreds of thousands of people have been expelled ruthlessly from Kosovo by the FRY authorities. We condemn these appalling violations of human rights and the indiscriminate use of force by the Yugoslav government. These extreme and criminally irresponsible policies, which cannot be defended on any grounds, have made necessary and justify the military action by NATO … NATO's military action against the FRY supports the political aims of the international community: a peaceful, multi-ethnic and democratic Kosovo in which all its people can live in security and enjoy universal human rights and freedoms on an equal basis.

The major powers within the Alliance, in their individual public statements, echoed the NATO line. President Bill Clinton, in a television address on 24 March, maintained that military action came only 'after extensive and repeated efforts to obtain a peaceful solution to the crisis in Kosovo'. 'Only firmness now', Clinton declared, 'can prevent greater catastrophe later'.17 British Prime Minister Tony Blair, in a statement to the House of Commons, said that, for the Kosovar Albanians driven out of the province, 'we have in our power the means to help them secure justice and we have a duty to see that justice is now done'.

French President Jacques Chirac asserted that what was at stake was 'peace in Europe' and 'human rights'.German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder argued that the 'Alliance wants to stop serious, systematic human rights violations and prevent a humanitarian catastrophe in Kosovo'.In providing a rationale for military action, NATO and its member states made clear that exhaustion of all diplomatic avenues, urgent humanitarian considerations and a desire to support the political aims of the international community justified the decision to employ military power. Furthermore, the desire to avoid a spillover of the conflict into neighboring states, with the consequential destabilization of the region, was an important consideration.

Finally, there was an underlying sense that Serb actions in Kosovo represented an unacceptable violation of the core norms and values embodied in the contemporary 'Atlantic Community'. Because NATO undertook military action without the explicit authorisation of the UN Security Council, but with a number of compelling humanitarian and strategic justifications, the basis of the operation was bound to generate a great deal of controversy. The controversies were not all political. Just as the action pushed the envelope of international politics and legality, it also opened up important military conceptual debates.

- **The intervention and non-intervention debates:**

The military operations conducted by NATO in 1999 have been described as an 'intervention' by many commentators and governments. The idea of intervention is well-trodden ground in terms of the international relations discourse. As a concept, however, it has spawned a variety of permutations; from 'collective' to 'humanitarian' intervention. Moreover, intervention is often viewed critically against the backdrop of the doctrine of non-intervention in the affairs of states. Richard Little represented this view well when he wrote that 'in the international arena intervention is generally seen to be a violation of sovereignty, and a threat to world order'.

Others, however, see intervention as a 'ubiquitous feature' of the international system. Hedley Bull has argued that 'no serious student can fail to feel that intervention is sometimes justifiable' and that there are 'exceptions to the rule of non-intervention'.

Whichever of these views one may subscribe to, it is clear that intervention in the affairs of another state raises a number of questions regarding the ethics, legality and ultimately the legitimacy of the intervention. The contested issues of intervention and non-intervention are not new in terms of the international system.

Since the end of the Cold War, however, the debates have been rein-vigorated, not least as a result of the Kosovo crisis and conflict. The crisis, and NATO's response, represents one of the key watersheds in the post-Cold War debates on the question of intervention.

- Humanitarian intervention:

James Mayall has observed that 'the concept of humanitarian intervention occupies an ambiguous place in the theory and practice of international society'.66 Humanitarian intervention not only occupies an ambiguous place but is also a concept steeped in controversy.

Most of the controversy centers on its ethics and legitimacy. In terms of defining the concept, there is not yet a consensus on its meaning but one factor seems to predominate, the issue of violation of human rights. One of the most succinct definitions, in focusing on this reason d'être of humanitarian intervention, is that of Sean Murphy, who has defined it as being:

- The threat or use of force by a state, group of states, or international organization primarily for the purpose of protecting the nationals of the target state from widespread deprivations of internationally recognized human rights.

Francis Abiew has defined humanitarian intervention in a way akin to that of Murphy: 'humanitarian intervention, understood in the classical sense, involves forcible self-help by a state or group of states to protect human rights'.Pressing this line of argument to its limits, Mervyn Frost maintains that 'humanitarian intervention must be understood as directed at maintaining civil society – the global society of rights holders which has no borders'.Not everyone, however, accepts the narrow rationale of just protecting human rights.

According to Oliver Ramsbotham, 'humanitarian intervention means cross-border action by the international community in response to human suffering' more broadly. Ramsbotham identifies various forms of humanitarian intervention including 'coercive' and 'non-coercive governmental humanitarian intervention' as well as 'transnational, intergovernmental and nongovernmental humanitarian intervention'.

Implicit in all of these are drivers of humanitarian intervention that go beyond upholding human rights. These broader considerations are also sometimes evident where the concept of humanitarian intervention has made its way into the lexicon of policy-makers. For example, a Finnish security and defense policy paper published in June 2001 defined humanitarian intervention in a way that embraces a broader perspective:

- Humanitarian intervention means military intervention by the international community or some other actor in an internal or international conflict, if necessary without the consent of the country in question, in order to save human lives, protect human rights and to ensure that humanitarian aid reaches its target.

The Finnish definition incorporates the related concept of 'military-civilian humanitarianism'. It suggests that the need to alleviate human suffering resulting from natural disaster, famine or conflict provides still more reasons for humanitarian intervention than simply thwarting human rights abuses. Overall, the heart of the matter lies in how one defines 'humanitarianism' and how one addresses the important paradox presented by lethal armed force being applied in the name of saving life.

The UN, NATO and the legality and legitimacy of intervention:

NATO's military intervention over Kosovo brought into bold prominence, as noted earlier, ongoing debates about the legality and legitimacy of the Alliance's action. One side of this debate has been largely critical of NATO's action, arguing that it lacked the legal basis necessary to give it legitimacy. 'NATO countries – ', wrote The Economist, 'albeit with the best of motives – have put themselves, like Mr Milosevic, outside the law'. Similarly, Mark Littman QC, in a critique of the legality of NATO's action, concluded that 'given the weight of opinion and legal authority against the NATO position … it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the NATO action was illegal'. In his detailed analysis of humanitarian intervention and international law, Simon Chesterman takes the view that 'there is no "right" of humanitarian intervention in either the UN Charter or customary international law'.

Friedrich Kratochwil generally takes a similar line, coming to the conclusion that no right of humanitarian intervention exists save in the cases of the 'institution of the protection of nations' or authorized under Chapter VII of the UN Charter.

As noted earlier, major states such as China and Russia opposed NATO's Kosovo operation over questions essentially related to its legality. The arguments were not entirely one-sided. Other commentators maintained that NATO's action could in fact be justified under international law.On balance, however, the debate on the legality of NATO's action over Kosovo for the most part supports the view that Operation Allied Force lacked a firm grounding in international law.

At the nexus of this debate stands the United Nations, the international organization charged with 'the maintenance of international peace and security'. The absence of a formal UN mandate for the NATO air operation was problematic in this respect as the UN, with its global remit and broad security and humanitarian roles, is widely regarded as being the principal (some would say sole) international legitimizing agency for military action.The UN's Charter stresses, as noted, the principle of nonintervention and its legal superstructure is optimized for dealing with interstate aggression rather than intervention in the affairs of a state. Indeed, some critics of the UN argue that these attributes of the Charter make it less relevant to the current international security environment characterized, as it has been, by intrastate violence and attendant human rights abuses.The UN Charter, however, does emphasize the importance of human rights, even if the document does not make upholding them an explicit function of the UN. This does not necessarily mean that the UN and, in particular, its Security Council is powerless to act in the face of massive human rights abuses within states. A number of analysts have argued that, under Article 39 of the Charter, the UNSC could sanction intervention in the affairs of a state on the strength of it posing a 'threat to the peace'. Not all agree with this view of the Security Council's powers, arguing that such an interpretation 'is expanding the scope of its authority beyond that originally envisioned'. Overall it may be said that, on the issue of human rights, the UN is strong on norm articulation but weaker on the instruments to ensure adherence to those norms.

Ironically, perhaps, NATO members seemed to reaffirm the need not to give up on the UN at the very moment that they were acting without its explicit authority vis-à-vis Kosovo in the spring of 1999.

At the NATO Washington summit, held when Operation Allied Force was in full swing in April, a deliberate effort seemed to have been made to build UN-friendly language into the key declarations. Both the Washington Summit Communiqué and the new NATO Strategic Concept included affirmations that, 'as stated in the Washington Treaty [i.e. NATO's founding treaty], we recognise the primary responsibility of the United Nations Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security'. The Strategic Concept, in formally setting out a new (in de jure terms) role for NATO of being prepared to engage in 'crisis management [and] crisis response operations', stipulated that these would be undertaken 'in conformity with Article 7 of the Washington Treaty'.

This states that the treaty 'does not affect, and shall not be interpreted as affecting in any way the rights and obligations under the Charter of the Parties which are members of the United Nations, or the primary responsibility of the Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security'.Various causal factors have been suggested in explanation of the inclusion of what seemed, at first sight, to be a clear statement of intent in Washington to ensure that NATO does not undertake military action without UN authorisation again. It has been argued that the UN-friendly language was included at French insistence, with the US acquiescing in order to preserve allied unity in the midst of the pressing crisis.

Others have suggested that the failure of Operation Allied Force to coerce Milosevic into backing down by the time of the Washington summit had 'tempered the interventionist urge consid-erably' amongst NATO members generally.

Historically, however, NATO's view of itself has been that of a free-standing regional organization not hierarchically subordinate to the UNSC. Sure enough, voices have since been heard arguing that the overall tone of the 1999 Washington documents does not suggest that NATO and its members will feel, in future, bound by acceptance of UN primacy.

Dick Leurdijk and Dick Zandee have drawn attention to passages in the Washington Summit Communiqué and Strategic Concept where NATO is described as 'an Alliance of nations committed to the Washington Treaty and the United Nations Charter'. This form of words seems innocuous but, according to Leurdijk and Zandee:

● By thus binding itself once more to both documents, NATO appears to give itself an equal position to the UN and not a subservient one … Thereby NATO assures itself of an autonomous freedom of action, also in those cases where an explicit consent by the Security Council would be impossible. From a legal point of view it comes down to a lessening of the importance of the UN as compared to that of NATO.

In sum, the wording of the 1999 summit statements is ambiguous and capable of being interpreted in different ways. As with many diplomatic documents, such ambiguity is almost certainly intentional – if only to satisfy the differing agendas of NATO member states. In considering their response to future cases where military intervention might be required, it is unlikely that NATO members – or at least the more powerful among them – would regard their hands as being tied by statements agreed to under the pressure of a major and ongoing crisis in the spring of 1999.

Taking everything into account; NATO's intervention in Kosovo during 1999 was undertaken with humanitarian reasons being among several factors driving the armed action. Although the UN did not authorize the intervention in a de jure sense, NATO's action derived some legitimacy from prior UNSC Resolutions. It gained more from the fact that it was clear to nearly all outside observers that FRY forces had been responsible for serious abuses of the human rights of the Albanian population in Kosovo. It was the moral and ethical dimension underpinning NATO's action, coupled with the employment of military coercion that led to it being labeled a 'humanitarian intervention'. The descriptor thus gained a new currency as a result of the events of spring 1999. Kosovo was, arguably, the first such action in Europe. The descriptor was not widely used at the time of the UN-sponsored international relief efforts in Bosnia between 1992 and 1995. Also, it can be argued that these efforts did not qualify as 'intervention' in the sense in which the term has been defined here. The UN did not seek at the time to compel the various warring factions and their state sponsors to alter the behavior (i.e. the civil war) which had produced the humanitarian crisis.

The NATO action in Kosovo gave significant impetus to debates about the nature, justification and relevance of such activities in the post-Cold War European security environment. Interventions driven by ethical considerations reveal important contradictions in the international system. On one level, as Nicholas Wheeler has observed, 'humanitarian intervention exposes the conflict between order and justice at its starkest'. NATO members' efforts to justify their Kosovo intervention also reflected the contradictions and frustrations of attempting to uphold some norms (regarding human rights) while seemingly violating others (relating to the legality or otherwise of the use of armed force).The difficulties and contradictions have helped to ensure that, in the minds of many analysts and commentators, the Kosovo crisis offers a dubious precedent for future international intervention in Europe or elsewhere.

Adam Roberts has suggested that, at most, NATO's military response to the crisis 'may occupy a modest place as one halting step in a developing but still contested practice of using force in defence of international norms'.Whatever one's views of its merits or otherwise, the controversies surrounding NATO's action over Kosovo are likely to help ensure that it continues to stand less as a precedent for future such interventions than as an exceptional response to violence, human suffering and the perceived need to restore security and stability in a particularly volatile region of Europe.Notes

e. Why NATO is important for Europe

The Vienna Document and the Russian challenge to the European Security Architecture:

In 2016, Russia refused to re-issue an updated version of the so-called Vienna Document (VD), an arms control agreement designed to increase transparency on military activities in Europe. Russia also withdrew the four proposals it had circulated to modernize the Vienna Document, arguing that the political climate was not appropriate for such negotiations, and has since then declined to engage on any update of the VD. These decisions occurred against the backdrop of increased Western concerns following the Russian invasion of Ukraine and a rise of military incidents involving Russian and Western forces (more than 60 between 2014 and 2016) . This paper traces the origins of the Vienna Document, its place in the European security architecture, and shows that the current crisis is the crystallization of both weaknesses in the implementation of the VD and a long-standing Russian dissatisfaction with most conventional arms control agreements in Europe.

The Vienna Document on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures Usually referred to as the 'Vienna document') was initially adopted in 1990, and reissued in 1992, 1994, 1999 and 2011. It is originally a major result of the Cold-War era Helsinki process, which also enabled the transformation of the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) into the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in 1995. The VD is still handled within the OSCE framework, by a special body called the Forum of Security and Cooperation (FSC). The core philosophy of the Vienna document is that increases in military transparency (especially military exercises) reduces the element of surprise, thus leading to improved trust in relationships, diminishing the risks of miscalculation and misperception, and benefiting the security of all parties to the document. The Vienna document is part of the European security architecture, which is a complex entanglement of military alliances (such as NATO and the CSTO) and bilateral (or minilateral) military partnerships, economic-political organizations (such as the EU), as well as nuclear and conventional arms control mechanisms. As such, the Vienna document cannot be considered in isolation from other pillars of the European security architecture, and specifically other conventional arms control mechanisms.

Jozef Goldblat defines arms control as:

'*a wide range of measures [...] intended to: (a) freeze, limit, reduce or abolish certain categories of weapons; (b) ban the testing of certain weapons; (c) prevent certain military activities; (d) regulate the deployment of armed forces; (e) proscribe transfers of some militarily important items; (f) reduce the risk of accidental war; (g) constrain or prohibit the use of certain weapons or methods of war; and (h) build up confidence among states through greater openness is military matter*s'

In Europe, the three pillars of conventional arms control are, respectively, the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (also called CFE treaty), the Open Skies treaty and the Vienna document. Those three mechanisms are distinct evolutions from original initiatives, and were not initially conceived of as part of a coordinated agreement . Yet, in combination, they provide an overarching arms control framework with the CFE Treaty establishing a balance of conventional forces; the Open Skies treaty providing mechanisms of transparency (through aerial observation) and the Vienna document instituting confidence and security-building measures (CSBMs) related to military activities. In particular, the Vienna Document establishes CSBM concerning specific military activities conducted within its zone of application.

The mechanism is a 'global exchange' of military information, area inspections, notification of force structure and disposition, military-to military contacts and observation visits. Overall, the intent is to 'foster transparency and trust through purposely designed cooperative measures. They help clarify states' military intentions, reduce uncertainties about potentially threatening military activities and constrain opportunities for surprise attack or coercion . This is particularly important since Russia decided to suspend its participation in the CFE Treaty in 2007, denouncing the treaty's 'divorce from reality.

 While analyzing the motivations and consequences of this decision is outside the scope of this paper, this move weakens the European security architecture, but also results in reinforcing the importance of the Vienna document as a mechanism to reduce uncertainty on the status of military forces in Europe.

It is important to mention that the Vienna Document, unlike the CFE and Open Skies, is not an international treaty. It is a political agreement which, in itself, is not subject to international law per se. Therefore, non-compliance, non-conformity or violations of the provisions of the document do not constitute breaches in international law. As a Western diplomat put it: 'the potential cost of breaching the document is political: it is about publicly calling on a country and exposing it as non-cooperative and non-transparent . This is related to the nature of arms control itself: one must never forget that arms control takes place in the context of an adversarial relationship.

Countries carefully calibrate agreements by assessing the security benefits of limiting their own and their adversaries' military resources: arms control agreements are a way to freeze the 'race-to-the bottom' logic of security dilemmas, but they do not solve those dilemmas. Therefore, arms control agreements are not an end in themselves, but a means to facilitate a cooperative relationship. Inversely, those agreements are very sensitive to changes in the political climate between signatories, and their implementation is subject to fluctuations: 'when it comes to the Vienna document, success is measured in enthusiasm. If states willingly exchange information, we can consider it a success; otherwise, it is a sign of increased political tensions. As such, enthusiasm for the Vienna document has been fluctuating since its initial adoption, mirroring the evolution of the political climate in the euroAtlantic area.

First Steps of the Vienna Document:

Just after the end of the Cold War, the Vienna document was quickly and significantly reinforced in several ways compared to the original 1990 iteration. The 1992 revision decreased the thresholds of personnel (13.000 to 9.000) and main battle tanks (300 to 250) requiring prior notification before conducting a military activity and the zone of application was expanded to include former members of the USSR.

The 1994 reissuance created the Global Exchange of Military Information (GEMI) as a transparency measure, expanding the obligatory data provided by member states to include command structure, major weapons systems (and associated technical data), and strength and location of forces. Some problems of circumvention, violation and non-compliance were already emerging, specifically from countries actively or recently engaged in armed conflicts (notably Armenia, Azerbaijan, Moldova, Georgia and Uzbekistan).

Yet support for the new regime was still high, overshadowing what was perceived as minor, and largely technical, issues. The 1994 CSCE annual report stated: 'The Fourth Annual Implementation Assessment Meeting (12-14 April 1994) once again called the attention of participating States to the problems of compliance with all obligations stemming from the Vienna Document 1992, in particular with regard to information exchange. Those problems were essentially attributed to technical difficulties and inadequate knowledge of the relevant provisions'

The first major test for the Vienna document occurred during the first Chechen War (1994-1996), with Russia initiating major troop deployments, allegedly in contradiction to the provisions laid out in the VD. At the time, Russia justified withholding notifications of these movements, arguing that the Chechen operation was an internal Russian issue and that the military moves were of no consequence for other states.

This interpretation was rejected by other signatories, and Moscow grudgingly acknowledged that the CSBMs were still applicable to internal security situations. The outcome was a testimony of the flexibility and utility of the CSCE/OSCE's consultative mechanisms and conciliatory approach, but it must also be noted that the Chechnya operation initiated a Russian pattern of violating the provisions of the document when deemed suitable, with few consequences. Therefore, despite what could be considered a favorable outcome, an observer noted in 1997 that, 'Russia displayed an utter disregard for its commitments under the Vienna regime in its Chechnya operation. The full implications of this incident for the regime remain to be played out.

The interpretative disagreement regarding the universal application of CSBM provisions in case of domestic employment of military force also played out during the second Chechen War (1999-2009). NATO members continued to press Moscow for full disclosure of its military activities, which led Russia to host two inspection visits (albeit with a number of constraints). Moscow considered that it had demonstrated 'exceptional goodwill and transparency' but, despite several observations of Moscow's non-compliance with the Vienna document and the Code of Conduct on Political-Military Aspects of Security (notably protection of civilians and proportionate use of force), there were no formal consequences, the OSCE and the member states accepting Moscow's 'good faith' argument.

This pattern of violation/acceptance of goodwill/no consequences was repeated many times during the second Chechen War, which led the OSCE to 'at least allowing, if not excusing, Russian behavior in Chechnya,' thus weakening the Vienna document because of those 'egregious and hypocritical contradictions. The 1999 NATO intervention in Kosovo created further challenges for the Vienna document. NATO countries initially failed to notify their military activities, leading Belarus to request clarification for the conduct of the operation. Russia also conducted specific area inspections in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) and Albania, later complaining that its inspection teams had been denied access to areas where NATO troops were stationed, in contravention of the Vienna document, specifically accusing the United States of blocking such inspections. NATO members justified their refusals by invoking safety and force protection measures (as well as intelligence concerns considering Moscow's closeness to Serbia) and the 'areas or sensitive points' provided under paragraph 78 of the VD 1994. However, NATO countries were forced to acknowledge their lack of compliance with the VD provisions, which led to a 2002 update of NATO military guidance (MC 453), specifically taking into account the VD in the operational planning and into command post and field training exercises. Therefore, despite NATO's goodwill in updating its procedures and Russia's begrudging acceptance of the VD's provisions, the regime was already facing its most important dilemma: how to ensure adherence to the VD's fundamental provisions while at the same time keeping a 'flexible approach' towards violations in order to prevent states' defection?

Challenges of Compliance and Implementation:

Even so, international support for the VD was still high, as demonstrated by its 1999 re-issuing, which included a number of important updates including increased site visits, inspections and observations, and containing new chapters on defense planning and regional security. However, the new version of the VD failed to take into account the transformation of armed forces that followed the end of the Cold War, to the extent that the thresholds for notification were considered increasingly inadequate to tackle the new military realities: 'While the general trend of force reductions in Europe has persisted, there has been a sharp increase of major weapon holdings in the Caucasus area. At force levels which would have been assessed 'minor' in Cold War Times, a war was fought.

One might legitimately ask why the Vienna Document and other CSBMs have not played their expected role in early warning and conflict prevention during recent conflicts. Furthermore, between 2000 and 2007, the OSCE expanded its activities in numerous security-related issues, which strained resources and diverted attention from arms control instruments such as the CFE treaty and the VD. In that period, several instances of non-compliance with the VD, particularly from Russia and Soviet successor states, were reported, without further consequences. Such violations included several denials of access and entry, claims of 'national procedures' superseding VD provisions or extensive use of the notion of force majeure to deny visits and inspections. Russia's suspension of its CFE treaty compliance in December 2007 and the conflict between Russia and Georgia in August 2008 compelled the OSCE to be more attentive to the implementation of the Vienna Document. Results were disappointing as many arms control practitioners noted the OSCE's diplomatic tendency to inflate positive results and downplay observed violations.

The 2009 Annual Implementation Assessment Meeting (AIAM) final report stated that 95% of the inspections and 96% of the evaluations conducted in 2008 'took place in full compliance with the provisions and often in spirit of the VD99'. This assessment was criticized by many practitioners as misguided and downplaying real issues of violations of VD provisions. It also seems that verification of non-compliance findings were on occasion challenged, and even overruled within some national chains of command owing to political decisions not to 'name and shame' specific countries for fear of their negative reactions.

In the context of the aftermath of the Georgia crisis and the US-initiated 'reset' with Moscow, it seems that Russia's violations were particularly overlooked out of concern that it would suspend its application of the VD as it had done with the CFE The 2011 re-issuance of the Vienna Document was perceived as a necessity, considering the evolution of the European security landscape since the previous 1999 iteration.

The new version updated a number of technical issues related to timing, types, and format of visits and inspections. In addition, a new mechanism for the continuous update of the VD was adopted in 2010. Dubbed 'Vienna Document Plus,' this mechanism was supposed to grant greater flexibility to the document with decisions being implemented immediately, unless decided otherwise.

Yet the VD 2011 failed to reach consensus on substantial issues, notably reductions in thresholds for prior notifications of certain military activities, or increases in inspection and evaluation quotas.

Notably, despite an attempt to address the issue of non-compliance, major topics were left unaddressed and unresolved by the re-issuance and following meetings. Those issues include:

- Uzbekistan's de facto abrogation of its participation to the VD;
- Russia's repeated manipulation of information and other forms of deception (including the exhaustion of inspection quotas through 'self-inspection,' e.g. Belarus inspecting Russia, and fake declarations);
- Russia's over-declarations of 'areas of sensitive points' to deny inspection;
- The abuse of force majeure provisions as a means of denying or delaying inspection.

Overall, Russia's refusal to re-issue the document in 2016 must be placed in a larger context of the evolution of the VD since 1990. Most notable has been the tendency to overlook violations of the VD provisions in the name of good cooperation, especially with Russia. 'The VD can only work if Western countries and Russia support it, and we must keep Russia in was the dominating policy line in Western capitals and the OSCE secretariat for a long time, which led to many sanitized AIAM reports. This policy can certainly be placed in the context of a post-Cold War Western attempt to 'socialize' Russia within international institutions. Yet this policy also led to a relative weakening of the regime by circulating toothless assessments giving the (false) impression that violations were exceptional while at the same time signaling that such violations were inconsequential.

The Russian View:

Russia has its own history of disappointments with the Vienna document. The Russian MFA considers that the 1992 and 1994 versions of the VD were 'real effective,' but that from the 1999 version onwards, changes and improvements were mostly cosmetic. Yet, Russia was active in promoting changes and circulating proposals to revise the VD.

For example, in 2004, Russia proposed 'holding a high-level seminar on military doctrines and defense policy in the OSCE area. Over the years, Russia pushed forward several proposals, the most significant being:

- A suggestion that countries conducting large-scale trans-border redeployments of manpower and equipment should be obliged to notify other states prior to deployment;
- A simplification of the procedure regarding unusual military activities (chapter III of the VD);
- Exchanging information regarding multinational rapid reaction forces;
- An expansion of CSBMs to include naval forces

Those proposals were usually declined by Western states for two main reasons. First, they were perceived as a way for Moscow to acquire information about Western armed forces which could not be reciprocated. For example, the proposal regarding multinational rapid reaction forces is clearly targeted at NATO, since Russia does not have comparable forces: Moscow would then have gathered military information on NATO forces without providing any information on its own military activities. Similarly, trans-border redeployments were interpreted as a means to monitor and constrain NATO activities. The second criticism was the lack of precision of the proposals, notably including naval forces in the CSBMs. For example, the proposed zone of application included northern Africa (although no OSCE member-state is in the region), and it was unclear whether coast guards would be included in the proposal. A Western diplomat noted that this proposal was 'similar to the Soviet style of diplomacy: proposing ambiguous and/or half-cooked ideas and letting us fill the blanks, so that they see how far we go and if they can obtain even more'. By 2011, the Russian position on the VD had changed 'due to the country's on-going military reform efforts and because the military did not wish to see additional CSBMs'. There is also a sense that Western countries use the VD and other arms control agreements as a means to constrain Russia.

This interpretation is confirmed by a Western diplomat, who explains that 'Russian delegates regularly accuse us of duplicity and of becoming more aggressive over time'. These statements are consistent with evolutions in Russian military doctrine, presenting NATO as a threat; and of the Russian national security strategy, concerned with Western countries creating and encouraging 'flash points' of tension in Eurasia, at the expense of Moscow's interests As previously mentioned, arms control agreements are heavily dependent on the evolution of the political climate.

As such, current tensions regarding the VD do not come out of nowhere: they can be understood as crystallizing long-standing challenges in its implementation, coupled with renewed security competition with Russia which is intrinsically challenging for arms control agreements

The Ukraine Crisis and the Current Challenges to the VD:

With Russia's suspension of its application of the CFE treaty, the VD and the Open Skies treaty have become the main instruments to gather information about Russia's military activities. In March 2014, an observation team was gathered by the OSCE to monitor military developments in Ukraine following Russia's occupation of Crimea, conducting inspections along the Ukrainian border, but being denied access into Crimea.

Moreover, Russia did not provide advanced notification of the estimated 40,000 Russian troops deployed near Ukraine's eastern border. Yet, so far, according to the interviewees, the provisions of the Document are still (largely) being observed. The main issue is related to the re-issuance of the document, which was scheduled for 2016 but blocked by Moscow. The official Russian justification for blocking the reissuance is worth quoting in full:

'' 'The fate of the Vienna Document is inseparable from the general situation regarding European Security. Today the view was expressed that the consensus rule implies the responsibility of each participating State for its actions. We agree with this and would like to recall that over a period of many years Russia proposed to its partners the modernization of the Vienna Document. However, our Western partners invariably told us that it "should not be opened up" (today for some reason it is not thought fit to remember this). ''

Our Western partners also frequently say that in the current political military situation 'business as usual' with Russia is no longer possible. We are also in agreement with this – we have no need for the kind of "business" in which ever more demands are made of Russia.

However, for some reason, our distinguished colleagues are not bothered that the adoption of a new version of the Vienna Document would send a false political signal that everything is rosy in this area and that we are harmoniously implementing optimistic plans from five or six years ago as if nothing happened.

The anchoring in NATO documents of a policy of military containment of Russia and the Alliance's concrete steps in the military sphere rule out the possibility of reaching agreements on confidence building measures. We can envisage prospects for the modernization of the Vienna Document 2011 only if the North Atlantic Alliance abandons its policy of containment of Russia, recognizes and respects Russian interests, and restores normal relations with the Russian federation, including in the military sphere

This statement perfectly encapsulates Russia's grievances and the reasons for the current deadlock, and they are worth discussing in detail. First, Russia acknowledges the current tensions in the European security architecture. There is no need to try to hide it: the conflict is there and even if it has not spiraled into armed hostilities between Western countries and Russia, the climate does not favor cooperation.

As such, the Russian position is opposite to the approach favored by Western countries. While the latter emphasize that because tensions are high, there is a need to develop CSBMs to manage the risks of misperceptions and escalation, Russia claims the opposite: because tensions are high, there can be no possibility of developing and implementing CSBMs. This also reveals the competing understanding of CSBMs measures: Western countries seem to conceive them as a technical step to manage tensions; Russia considers them as a political indicator of the quality of the relationship.

The second important element is the issue of linkage that Russia introduces by making future developments on CSBMs conditional to a general discussion of the European security architecture, most notably NATO.

The language chosen by the Russian delegation is perfectly consistent with the narrative of an ever-expanding NATO slowly strangling Russia, an understanding of the evolution of European security which is the polar opposite of NATO members' perception of an increasingly aggressive Russia. Russia's constant messaging at the OSCE can be summarized as 'we haven't changed, you [Western countries] have, while most Western countries are increasingly wary of Moscow's renewed military ambitions. The language is also consistent with the idea initially presented by Dmitry Medvedev in 2009 of a 'European Security Treaty' which would encompass existing institutions but was resisted by Western countries on the grounds that it would duplicate the OSCE and give Russia the power of veto over NATO activities. Several Western diplomats were also hoping that the resumption of the NATORussia Council would be considered by Moscow as 'normal relations in the military sphere,' but that hasn't been the case, and Russia has not explicitly described what is meant by 'normal relations. The current Russian refusal to engage with the VD is further demonstrated by Russian diplomats' disinterest in the informal meetings organized by the FSC chair in order to voice concerns and discuss security issues in a more direct manner: they simply don't attend such meetings

Because of this tense situation, a number of important proposals which could help decrease tensions are not moving forward. In particular, a proposal to reduce the threshold of personnel (from 9000 to 5000) and material requiring prior notification has gathered wide-ranging support (with more than 40 countries in agreement), but is blocked by Moscow and allied Central Asian nations. This proposal is considered important among Western countries, since it is supposed to take into account the transformation of armed forces and military activities (towards force reduction and increase of firepower) since the end of the Cold War, when current thresholds were adopted. Other important proposals currently exist, notably regarding Chapter III of the VD: risk reduction. Specifically, there are efforts to update §16 (unusual military activities) and §17 (military incidents) in light of the military practices observed during the Ukraine crisis. Here again, Russia's refusal to engage blocks any development in those directions.

As previously stated, the VD cannot be considered in isolation from other arms control agreements. Therefore, Russian efforts to block any engagement with the VD (thus limiting to a maximum outside oversight of their military activities), coupled with a disengagement from the CFE (permitting a military build-up) but a maintenance of the Open Skies Treaty (which may allow Russia to gather intelligence on NATO countries), may be seen as a concerning signal.

As a Western diplomat put it: 'it is as if they were trying to make us completely blind on their military activities. The only question is why?'. Indeed, assessing Russia's intention is, in arms control as in other areas, the key challenge precluding any form of engagement. In a nutshell, the difficulty is to know whether Russia is an insecure state (acting in reaction to an intense perceived threat which could be mitigated through skillful diplomacy), or a 'greedy' state looking for material and/or symbolic satisfaction through a transformation of the current international system which can only be stopped through effective deterrence.

In the first hypothesis, the current deadlock is only temporary until Western countries and Russia manage to find some common ground to mitigate their mutual concerns and stop the race to the end of the security dilemma. In the second hypothesis, Russia has in fact already given up on arms control, its military considers it an unnecessary constraint, and Russian diplomats are only paying lip service to the OSCE until Moscow feels confident enough to completely shake off the current security architecture.

This paper has traced the evolutions of the Vienna Document, and provided some context to the current deadlock. It has argued that arms control agreements are particularly sensitive to the evolutions of political contexts, and the VD is no exception. As such, it is unsurprising that the current tensions between Western countries and Russia have affected it but is has also illustrated that current difficulties are to some degree the result of a regime that was already weakened by permissive implementation measures and a culture of political consensus which overlooked past violations. The irreconcilable Western and Russian approaches to the VD (necessary because of the lack of trust versus unnecessary because it would signal 'normal' relations) make it impossible to foresee any rapid progression in the situation, despite the urgent need to better control the present volatile military situation in Europe.

NATO and human security

The August 2021 Afghan debacle offers NATO a moment for serious reflection about its role in the world. Some are drawing the conclusion that NATO should not engage in out-of-area operations in the future and should instead focus on its core function of defending Euro-Atlantic territory from attack by foreign states, while dealing with the terrorist threat through long distance strikes using drones but NATO members should draw a different conclusion, namely that in this globalized interconnected world, no one is safe from the complex combination of dangers that include war and violence, climate disasters, forced migration, pandemics or extreme poverty. It is no longer possible, if it ever was, to insulate one part of the world from what happens elsewhere.

What is needed is not retrenchment but rethinking and redirecting NATO's role. In this Policy Brief, I put forward the idea of a global strategy based on human security. Human security is understood as the security of individuals and the communities in which they live, in the context of multiple economic, environmental, health and physical threats, as opposed to the security of states and borders from the threat of foreign attack. Human security offers an alternative way to address "forever wars" whether we are talking about conflicts in different parts of the world, the so-called war on terror, or the geo-political competition with Russia and China. Human security implies that the security of Afghans or Chinese is just as important as the security of Americans or Europeans.

The concept of human security within NATO

A Human Security Unit was established within the office of the NATO Secretary General in 2019. Human Security was understood as an umbrella term that encompass Building Integrity (anti-corruption), Protection of Civilians, Cultural Property Protection, Children and Armed Conflict, Conflict-related Sexual and Gender-based Violence, Human Trafficking, and Women, Peace and Security. Several NATO members have also applied the concept of human security along similar lines. These include Canada, Belgium, Portugal, Italy (in relation to cultural heritage), the UK, Germany and France. Although the term human security had been widely used in the UN system to emphasise the importance of both material and physical threats to human well-being, the concept as it relates to military operations had a different trajectory.

The term can be traced back to two developments, which derive from the changing nature of conflict and the growing importance of crisis management for militaries around the world but especially within NATO. One development is the evolution of the European Security and Defence policy of the European Union in the early 2000s.

A series of reports on European security capabilities were presented to Javier Solana, then High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy, by the Study Group on European Security Capabilities, later renamed the Human Security Study Group. The Study Group proposed a human security doctrine for the EU as a distinctive way of doing security. According to this version, human security is what individuals enjoy in rights-based, law-governed societies.

It is assumed that the state will protect individuals from existential threats and that emergency services – including ambulances, firefighters, and police – are part of state provision. In a global context, human security is about extending individual rights beyond domestic borders and about developing a capacity at a regional or global level to provide emergency services that can be deployed in situations where states either lack capacity or are themselves the source of existential threats. The Study Group also proposed a human security force composed of both civilians and military, and based on a set of principles, which are very different from the principles that apply to the military in a classic war-fighting role. These proposals were echoed in the state of the Union address by Ursula von der Leyen in 2021:

'' *the European Union is a unique security provider. There will be missions where NATO or the UN will not be present, but where the EU should be. On the ground, our soldiers work side-by-side with police officers, lawyers and doctors, with humanitarian workers and human rights defenders, with teachers and engineers. We can combine military and civilian, along with diplomacy and development – and we have a long history in building and protecting peace*".

These two concepts – one individual-centered and the other more focused on the protection of civilians in conflicts – are open to different interpretations. Both concepts originated in the experience of contemporary conflicts, especially in Bosnia-Herzegovina, where civilians were deliberately targeted. They were initially developed in order to counter the tactics of warring parties in contemporary conflicts. Yet within NATO, a traditional military organization, both concepts came to be understood in a different way as a type of activity or a set of concerns that go alongside conventional NATO military operations. Thus, the NATO definition of protection of civilians includes both the "efforts taken to minimize and mitigate

the negative effects on civilians from NATO and NATO-led military operations" as well as the need "to protect civilians from conflict-related threats of violence". In what follows, I argue that the two interpretations are contradictory. If NATO were to adopt a human security approach, the protection of civilians would take priority over traditional military operations. Human security is not something that goes alongside traditional military operations, it would mean a change in the very nature of military operations. It would mean giving priority to saving lives over the goal of defeating an enemy. The security of all human beings should be the overall goal rather than just the security of the Euro-Atlantic region or, to put it another way, the security of the Euro-Atlantic region cannot be achieved without global (human) security. In other words, a military role in support of human security is more like global policing than war-fighting.

Human security and crisis management

Crisis management situations in which NATO is likely to be engaged are those involving armed conflict. Contemporary conflicts are very different from classic Clausewitzean notions of war. Clausewitzean war is about a deep-seated political contest between two sides. Such wars, as Clausewitz explained, tend to extreme as both sides try to win: the politicians try to achieve their objectives; the generals try to disarm their opponents; and passion and hatred are aroused among the population.

The central encounter is battle. In contrast, in contemporary conflicts, multiple armed groups including both state and non-state actors are more interested in the gains from violence than winning. These gains can be economic (setting up checkpoints, hostage taking, smuggling, "taxing" humanitarian aid) or political (killing or forcibly expelling those who resist political control). In these wars, battle is rare, and most violence is directed against civilians. Such wars tend to persistence rather than to the extreme – they are "forever wars".

Such wars also directly violate both International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and Human Rights Law. A human security approach to this type of war necessitates a complex, often long-term, economic, political and military programme. The aim is to end the war by dampening down conflict and reducing the incentives for violence rather than through victory or a single top-down peace agreement. Central to this goal is the establishment of legitimate and inclusive political authority and a rule of law.

Human security interventions are always civilian-led and involve a combination of civilian and military actors

The tasks of the (external) military in these circumstances include::

- Protecting civilians from attack and creating a safe environment in which a legitimate political authority can be established;
- Monitoring and upholding local peace agreements and ceasefires as part of multi-level peacebuilding involving civil society, especially women;
- Establishing humanitarian space through corridors and safe havens that allow for the delivery of humanitarian assistance;
- Arresting war criminals.

There is some similarity with population-centric counterinsurgency (COIN), in which the aim is to gain the support (winning hearts and minds) of the local population. In Baghdad, in 2007-8, US General Petraeus was able to reduce the violence dramatically by negotiating literally hundreds of local agreements and, together with Iraqi security forces, upholding those agreements but whereas for COIN, the security of the population is a means for defeating the enemy, for human security, the security of the population is an end in itself. It is a defensive strategy. It may sometimes be necessary to attack or better still arrest an enemy, but only if it involves no collateral damage and does not provoke counterattacks.

This was the British approach in Northern Ireland after 1974, where the military acted in support of the civil authority. Because people living in Northern Ireland were British citizens, it was not possible to bomb the IRA. Unlike COIN, human security is civilian-led. It has also been the approach of the EU-led anti-piracy mission in the Gulf of Aden (EUNAVFOR Atalanta), which combined the arrest of pirates with non-military measures such as the introduction of fishing licenses on the coast of Somalia. What went wrong in Afghanistan was that the goal was counter terror and not human security.

President Biden has concluded from the Afghan experience that the US should abandon nation-building and focus on counter-terror. I would argue exactly the opposite. In Afghanistan the counter-terror effort undermined the nation-building effort for three reasons. First, continuing attacks on the Taliban and Al Qaeda provoked and legitimized the insurgency.

The insurgency did not develop until after 2006; this was because instead of making peace with and accepting the surrender of the remaining Taliban, they were chased and attacked. Civilians also suffered from intrusive night raids and collateral damage from air attacks. In recent years, and before the August 2021 withdrawal, NATO had made strenuous and effective efforts to minimize civilian casualties. Nevertheless, attacks on the Taliban produced counterattacks in which civilians were killed.

This is why many Afghans refuse to distinguish between attacks by NATO and attacks by the Taliban. Second, in order to attack the Taliban, Al Qaeda and later ISIS Khorasan, the United States relied on corrupt commanders as private security contractors and involved them in Government, thereby greatly weakening the legitimacy of the Afghan government. Many of these co-called commanders had been supported by the CIA in the fight against the Soviet Union in the 1980s. US support for these commanders made it impossible to introduce an effective justice system and end their impunity.

Third, the US dominance of military operations weakened the civilian leadership, namely the United Nations Special Representative. A human security approach in Afghanistan would have focussed on the security of Afghans. It would have involved a combination of top-down and bottom-up peace-building combined with development and governance programmes. It would have been a sort of civilianised nation-building.

The McChrystal plan for Afghanistan in 2009, a population-centric COIN strategy, had some similarities with this approach. But it was too militarised and, in the end, it was defeated by the counter-terror lobby, including then Vice-President Joe Biden.

- **Human security and collective defense**

Both Russia and China have dangerous regimes. Both are engaged in widespread repression against political opposition or, in the case of China, against ethnic groups such as the Uyghurs. Both act provocatively abroad – the annexation of Crimea, the destabilization of Eastern Ukraine, the intervention in Syria in the case of Russia and, an aggressive policy in the South China Sea, on the Indian border or against Taiwan in the case of China. But the answer to these regimes is not military competition or an arms race. Military competition feeds a paranoiac mentality and provides a rationale for repressive and aggressive behavior and for competitive military build-ups. Putin, for example, justified the annexation of Crimea in terms of NATO expansion.

There are frightening possibilities of mistakes and miscalculations, especially given the automaticity of modern weaponry that we are much less aware of than during the Cold War period. A human security approach would involve a differentiated policy towards authoritarian states. First, in the context of common planetary dangers like climate change or pandemics, there is an urgent need to co-operate and to establish a shared stake in overcoming the crisis engendered. Second, there is a need to call these states to account on human rights grounds, to draw public attention to human rights violations, to raise issues of legality and to impose targeted sanctions on individuals responsible for human rights violations. Third, and this is where NATO's role is important, there is a need to prevent war. This third strand of war prevention could combine confidence-building measures, arms control negotiations, with a defensive posture. During the 1980s, there was much concern about the offensive posture of NATO and the dangers of weapons of mass destruction. It might be worth revisiting proposals for what was known as defensive deterrence, i.e. deterring foreign attacks through a credible defensive posture rather than through the threat of retaliation. It was the idea behind Gorbachev's notion of "reasonable sufficiency". Proposals for area defence or in-depth defence were put forward that would have meant drawing down nuclear weapons as well as conventional offensive capabilities, such as bombers or massed tanks. A defensive posture would be more convincing now than in the last years of the Cold War, given the emergence of independent states in Central and Eastern Europe and the large reductions in military manpower on all sides. This argument also applies to new capabilities such as cyber. It is important to develop cyber capabilities that are defensive and human rights-based rather than offensive . This approach has parallels with the Helsinki Agreement of 1975 and its three baskets of economic and social cooperation, human rights and security. Essentially that combination comprised what we now call human security.

- For a human rights approach to security

We are living through turbulent times – a transition period that requires the kind of transformative change that historically took place in or following major wars. Europe and America cannot remain immune to tragedies happening in places like Afghanistan, Ethiopia, or Yemen. Escalating military competition with Russia or China or continuing air attacks against terrorist groups will only make things worse. Indeed, continuing along the same path may lead to a merging of the different forms of "forever wars" engulfing us in a set of violent globalised relations that are already very difficult to reverse.

What US President Biden calls the "cascading crises" of climate change, pandemics, poverty and inequality as well as criminal and political violence are all interconnected. Just to take one example, we cannot solve the problem of Covid without tackling contemporary conflicts. Places like Syria or Afghanistan are transmission belts for Covid because of inadequate healthcare, crowded places such as displacement or detention camps, as well as inter-generational living. Polio was supposed to be eradicated in 2005 but it has reappeared in Afghanistan and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

There is always a risk of a new vaccine resistant variant as long as such conflicts continue. NATO needs to reorient its efforts so as to dampen down conflict of all types and contribute to a broad multilateralist human rights approach to security. The European allies, together with Canada, are moving in this direction but they lack cohesion or the capacity (or will) to act autonomously as became clear in recent months in relation to Afghanistan. NATO could initiate a far-reaching discussion about the potential for reform.

f.Waves of Change: Pacific Zone and Taiwan

- **Strategic Foresight (SF) Regional Perspectives Report (RPR)**

The aim of the Strategic Foresight (SF) Regional Perspectives Report (RPR) on the 'Indo-Pacific' is to identify regional trends and implications for the Alliance and provide possible scenarios out to 2040 and beyond.

This report supports decision making by providing a common starting point from which to examine the consequences of change in the Indo-Pacific for Allied policies and future Alliance operations, in terms of both challenges and opportunities. This RPR will also inform the next NATO Warfighting Capstone Concept (NWCC), as well as SF cycle and other studies/ reports that require a long-term perspective of the future security environment of the Indo-Pacific region.

The Indo - Pacific: Between China's Historical Legacies and Geopoloitcal Ambiguity

1. The Indo-Pacific, identified as a geographic space that connects the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean, is working as a strategic trading hub linked by the Strait of Malacca. Former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe coined the term 'confluence of two seas', encapsulating a vision of the region whose spirit goes beyond its geographic connotation to embrace a wider emphasis on the Indo-Pacific as a crucial sea route for energy demands, infrastructure and global commons. It is accurate to describe the region as the epicenter of the global maritime trade, with an estimated 60 percent of the global commons sailing through this area.

2. The term Indo-Pacific as a geostrategic construct was adopted in response to the rapid rise of China and India being viewed as a strategic balancer. There are also political and security consequences between contesting definitions of this geostrategic area: 'Asia-Pacific' or 'IndoPacific.' The former gained popularity in the second half of the 1980s in the era of globalization and the rapid expansion of free trade agreements at the regional level and beyond. However, it does not include the rise of India as a substantial economic and military power with interests beyond South Asia, as well as the increased connection between the economic powerhouses in East Asia and the Indian Ocean region including India and Pakistan.Thus, 'Asia-Pacific' refers mainly

to an economic construct while 'Indo-Pacific' refers to a more geopolitical and security context. While not all the states using the 'Indo-Pacific' terminology would agree, the main aim of using the 'Indo-Pacific' term is to resist or contain China by including India within the definition.

3. These two competing views, geopolitical and security versus economic dynamics of the region, are aligned with the regional power transition that reflects a dual hierarchy: security is dominated by the US while the economic predominance has become Chinese. Thus, the dual hierarchy of the region has an inherent friction. This multifaceted relationship will bring complex trade-offs amongst regional countries as well as other stakeholders from the rest of the world. These trade-offs will not only see an increase in China's regional power, but will also challenge regional stability and stimulate competition between the US and China, which will increase the potential for conflict and have global political, economic and security consequences.

4. . As a multipolar region that matters profoundly not only in economic terms but also strategic significance, the Indo-Pacific is arguably the new centre of geopolitical and economic power. Indeed, the presence of China as a dominant power has reshaped the economic and military balance of the region during the last decades and this trend is anticipated to continue. Chinese perception of the century of humiliation is a central feature of the recent Chinese history. The CCP describes the years between 1839 and 1949 as a struggle against a humiliation caused by foreign imperialism, the Opium Wars (1839-1842, 1856- 1860), and the Japanese invasion in the 1930s. Since then, nationalism has become a central tenet of Chinese strategic thinking. On October 1, 1949, the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC), formally proclaimed by Mao Zedong, Chairman of the CCP, inherited the legacy of this nationalistic spirit. It was only with the consolidation of Deng Xiaoping's regime in 1978 that the heart of China's new strategy became South-East Asia, while economic growth generated growing national-confidence. By the turn of the century, China had acquired membership in the World Trade Organization (WTO), and the comfort it acquired in its position in the region made Beijing confident it would not be subordinate to any

other country. China succeeded in the manner of Deng Xiaoping in making itself increasingly pivotal to the economic future of its region.

5. The 'community of destiny' has evolved under current President Xi Jinping's administration into a grand strategy pursuing the great revitalization to construct a society of shared human destiny.In contrast to his predecessor, Xi's broader vision encompasses security, politics, economics, and culture. Xi's new products, such as the institution of the Asian Investment Bank, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the construction of artificial islands (Spratly Islands) represent a more assertive China under the new CCP leadership. His objective is that of 'rejuvenating' China to resume its status as the world's most advanced state, and assure that Asia manages its own problems autonomously without outsiders' interferences. This vision has been developed together with an increasing advancement of PLA military capabilities, which is at the core of the new Chinese strategic thinking: in order to reduce the so-called 'perception gap' among China, India, the US, and Japan; China would act to guarantee that a major economic and military interconnectivity in the Indo-Pacific area will be safeguarded and boosted.

6. President Xi's restraint in the Indo-Pacific is to combine China's manifest assertiveness in the military domain with the CCP's project for an Asian security architecture based on win-win economic cooperation. When speaking of Asian security in 2012, Xi spoke of maritime challenges as a primary concern for China. From then on, Beijing has initiated aggressive actions to defend its position in the South and East China Seas, and has tremendously increased its military presence in the Western Pacific, while at the same time establishing bilateral security dialogue with Australia, Thailand, Vietnam, Mongolia, Japan, ROK, Pakistan and India. Continued Chinese military exercises and presence in the SCS, as well as aggressive maneuvers over Taiwan, have generated mistrust among the country's neighbors and will bear on NATO Allies' freedom to operate and navigate in those waters.

7. Nevertheless, in the contemporary context, the balance of power in the region has been shifting in Beijing's favour in important areas, such as the military capabilities over the Taiwan Strait and the struggle over increasing market share in global telecommunication networks, albeit the Chinese economy is slowing down and international backlash is growing against increasing assertiveness. Taiwan has been declared as one of China's core interests along with Tibet and Xinjiang, which are considered as part of territorial integrity in Beijing's view. China sees self-ruled Taiwan as a breakaway province that will eventually be 'reunified' with the mainland. However, Taiwan sees itself as an independent country, with its own constitution and democratically elected leaders. While China has adopted an approach of a 'One China' policy and adhered to pursue a 'peaceful reunification' approach until recently, there have been signals that might change to seeking use of force to unify Taiwan to the mainland.

The Contemporary Context: WhyThe Indo - Pacific Matters For NATO

1. The contemporary relations in the Indo-Pacific are dynamic and subject to constant changes, and NATO's new Strategic Concept recognizes the complexity of these interconnected challenges. Demographic trends, technology advancements, climate change transitions towards a green sustainable economy, safety and security issues, and commercial interests all call for an increased Alliance awareness in the Indo-Pacific. The shift of geostrategic power to the East and South is likely to continue by the growing economic and political weight of emerging players in the Indo-Pacific region.

2. As identified in the new NATO Strategic Concept, the Indo-Pacific is important for the North Atlantic Alliance, given that developments in that region can directly affect Euro Atlantic security.20 Therefore, the evolution of the international security system will require the Alliance to adopt a global outlook and approach. In this region, it would mean that NATO might be challenged to define its own common view for the region.

3. The manifestation of NATO's interest on China and the Indo-Pacific has been reflected in official documents and statements: China was first mentioned in the declaration of the London Summit in December 2019 and again at the Brussels summits in June 2021 and March 2022. Some Asia-Pacific partners in the so-called NAC+4 (Australia, ROK, Japan, and New Zealand) were invited to ministerial meetings in 2020, 2021 and 2022. The NATO 2030 report also addresses China's new role in NATO's renovated strategic calculus and recommends the Alliance's urgency to leverage its partnerships, not only at its neighborhood but further afield in the IndoPacific, by strengthening information-sharing, creating regularized dialogues on technological cooperation and pooling of research and development (R&D) in select fields.

4. NATO does not have a policy for the IndoPacific, yet its political and diplomatic interests in the region are broad. Apart from the US, more recently other NATO countries have reoriented their maritime policy in defense of a Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP). At the Shangri-La Dialogue in 2018, French and British Defence Ministers declared their intention to sail warships through the SCS to challenge China's military expansion. In addition, the United Kingdom (UK) conducted its first joint exercise with the US in the SCS in 2019. In 2020, the German government released policy guidelines for the Indo-Pacific region, and Germany has thereupon expanded the engagement in the region already November 2020, the Netherlands released its first Indo-Pacific strategy. It should also be noted that the European Union (EU) has released its official Indo-Pacific Strategy in September 2021. Focused on an inclusive and broad-based approach, it recommits the EU political and maritime role to the region and enhances its capacity in expanding security and defense dialogue to include more partners in the region and the potential for enhanced NATO-EU cooperation.

5. NATO has formalized strong relations with countries in the region, including Australia, Japan, Mongolia, New Zealand, Pakistan, and ROK, and it sees the value of strengthening further partnerships and cooperation with other countries in the Indo-Pacific who share democratic values and face similar security challenges.

Certain NATO member states also have partnerships with countries in the Indo-Pacific through mechanisms, such as the Five Eyes, the 'Five Power Defense Agreement', the QUAD, and more recently through the AUKUS. NATO partners and other Indo-Pacific nations such as Malaysia, Singapore and Tonga contributed troops to NATO's International Security Assistance Force operations in Afghanistan from 2001 to 2014. Furthermore, NATO and Pakistan have started strengthening dialogue and cooperation following NATO assistance to the country in the wake of a massive earthquake in 2005, and the two parts are now engaged in selected training and education courses that the North Atlantic Alliance offers to Pakistani officers

6. Overall, the region remains a geopolitical hemisphere crucial to the stability and prosperity of the territories of NATO. Some European Allies depend on the flow of energy supplies from the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean, while both European and North American countries have substantial trade interests with China. At the same time, the presence of NATO in the Western Indian Ocean, primarily in the Horn of Africa and the Arabian Peninsula, extends the Alliance's concerns over a possible security vacuum through that sea. Several NATO Allies, the US, the UK, France, the Netherland and to a certain extent Germany, have a presence there, and they have developed and strengthened their strategies when it comes to the Indo-Pacific region.

7. NATO's maritime strategy is subject to increased challenges in the Indo-Pacific. China's actions in the East and South China Sea, with the potential consequences they might have on the established international norms and rules of free navigation, pose an increasing threat to maritime security and to accessing global sea trade and commons, as regulated by the Free and Open Indo-Pacific strategy promoted by Japan and the US. A serious fight over global governance and the rule of law in the SCS will have far reaching consequences beyond Southeast Asia and the Alliance might be called to embrace a multilateral effort to maintain the RBIO. In addition, since the establishment of a collective security architecture involving all major powers in the Indo-Pacific seems a remote objective for this decade, a serious Sino-US crisis over Taiwan represents the main reason why the Indo-Pacific could have security implications for NATO. Taiwan is arguably the biggest strain in Sino-US relations: a

serious confrontation over this island between Beijing vis-à-vis Washington could escalate into military conflict with nefarious consequences not only on the region but also on the Euro-Atlantic area.

8. Since the last decade, the Indo-Pacific has also housed a tremendous arms race that cannot be left unnoticed. Regional competition amongst states is becoming more intense as Indo-Pacific nations are increasingly pressured to choose between different systems. The defense budgets of Southeast Asian nations have increased by 1/3 over the past 20 years , and China's push out of the First Island Chain can be seen as an attempt to gain strategic space so as not to repeat the dynamics of the Century of Humiliation.

9. Technological implications will also affect the equilibrium of the Indo-Pacific. China will continue promoting a global reach, to achieve and then maintain the technological advantage through an innovation process based on a series of structural reforms aimed at strengthening the role of the state and, at the same time, at restructuring the economy with the aim of generating greater domestic consumption and reducing dependence on foreign markets and suppliers, thus creating favorable conditions for becoming a leading power in the technology sector.

10. Lastly, the environmental issue is reason for concern: the Indo-Pacific remains the most disaster-prone region in the world. It contains 75% of the globe's volcanoes, while 90% of the world's earthquakes occur in the Pacific Basin. Many countries across the region lack sufficient capability and capacity to manage natural and human-sourced disasters. The NATO's Climate Change and Security Action Plan sets out the framework for NATO's contribution to climate change and security, not least by strengthening awareness and adaptation with partner nations, as well as with international organizations. Climate change is much more than an environmental crisis; it is a global systemic one with disruptions that will transform the geopolitical landscape,34 thus Allies could be motivated at identifying how the Indo-Pacific, as the most exposed region in the world to climate hazards, will affect their security

interests. Allies and partners might also be ready to promote a shared understanding of the capabilities and activities of the Indo-Pacific actors in crisis management and emergency environmental response, when needed and appropriate.

11. To conclude, the Indo-Pacific region's strategic landscape is transforming and will continue to evolve. Political, human, technology, economics/resources and environment factors will drive the realignment of great powers and policy changes in the years ahead. The China-US competition could make the region a litmus test for future world order or for a future war.

12. The new Strategic Concept underscores that "The Indo-Pacific is important for NATO, given that developments in that region can directly affect Euro Atlantic security. We will strengthen dialogue and cooperation with new and existing partners in the Indo-Pacific to tackle cross-regional challenges and shared security interests."Therefore, NATO, as the Euro-Atlantic alliance responsible to protect its members, will be challenged to respond with a global approach, as China grows increasingly assertive and the transatlantic landscape is impacted and infected by the opportunities as well as by the challenges emanating from this complex and strategic region.

- Political Theme

The Indo-Pacific region is dominated by the systemic competition between the US and China, which is increasingly global in nature, spanning from Asia to South America and from the Arctic to Antarctica. The current state of US-China relations is the product of a long, complex and contested history. Various economic, geostrategic, and multilateral pillars of this initially robust and dynamic relationship first cracked, and then collapsed, turning into a competitive rivalry. The US '2018 National Defense Strategy (NDS)' highlighted China's attempts to reorder the IndoPacific region to its advantage and to establish regional hegemony in the near-term to displace the US. The NDS reiterated American commitment to the FOIP, which aims to bring the QUAD countries of Australia, India, Japan and the US together under the Indo-Pacific Partnership (IPP).

China's 'peaceful rise' rhetoric is now contested by many states. As a result, great power competition is increasingly becoming a new norm, which involves a wide variety of countries both within and beyond the region, including members of NATO and the EU. Associated with the polarization and increasing security concerns, a significant military build-up has occurred, including by China, with the Indo-Pacific's share of global military spending increasing from 20% of the world total in 2009 to 28% in 2019. Increasing Chinese assertiveness has been explained by its desire to protect China's core interests and territorial integrity.

China's leaders have always been concerned with maintaining domestic stability as a top priority. Since the Tiananmen Square incident, the Chinese leadership has consistently responded to increased unrest with repression, censorship and occasionally limited accommodation. Thus, growing assertiveness is connected to the 'core security interests' that are inseparably linked with China's territorial integrity, domestic stability and sovereignty: Taiwan, Tibet and Xinjiang.

The Indo-Pacific regional order is under major internal and external pressures, compounded by the effects of the pandemic that have accelerated many regional and global trends, bringing both challenges and opportunities. China has been using its economic relations and asymmetric interdependence to advance its geostrategic interests.

In the meantime, Chinese actions in the contested territories and maritime zones of the region have intensified tensions and amplified the potential for conflict or miscalculation. In response to the rapid rise of China, regional countries, Australia, India and Japan, as well as the US and France, have adopted the term 'IndoPacific' as a geostrategic construct, albeit there are differences on how this region is demarcated. These challenges are exacerbated with the global economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic, with the final impacts yet to be seen.

. As one of the largest economic and military powers of the region, China has developed its own ideas and concepts of the regional order and subsequently launched its own strategic plans, such as the 'Belt and Road Initiative' (BRI), the 'Maritime Silk Road' (MSR) and the 'Polar Silk Road' (PSR), which are driven by Beijing's increasing claims to shape or reshape the regional and global order in accordance with its own interests.44 Consistent with the Chinese strategic culture, Beijing's strategy emphasizes deception and surprise, and an indirect approach — 'winning without fighting.

Military implications resulting from unilateral actions or miscalculation would be dire in the region. The Indo-Pacific hosts seven of the ten largest standing armies in the world, with six countries in or near the region possessing nuclear weapons: the US, Russia, China, India, Pakistan and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). DPRK's nuclear weapon development and intercontinental ballistic missile programme continue to present a security challenge for the regional countries and global security. DPRK also poses a conventional security threat to the ROK and Japan. The United Nations (UN) and the US have imposed extensive economic and commercial sanctions on DPRK to take steps to denuclearize. In the West, armed clashes between two nuclear armed states, India and Pakistan, over Kashmir and clashes along the Line of Actual Control on the border of India-China have increased concerns. These developments, especially DPRK's missile tests, have highlighted the importance of the USextended deterrence and the nuclear umbrella for its allies, in particular for ROK and Japan. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries, including Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore, steadfastly promote non-proliferation ideals to serve the national interests of the bloc's member states.

- The Redistribution of Geostrategic and Military Power From The West To The Indo - Pacific

In terms of economic power and influence, the region views China as much more influential than the US, and this gap is expected to grow in the next 10 years, while Japan's economic influence is expected to wane over time. A 2019 survey of Southeast Asian countries, including Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam, suggests that China is seen as holding slightly more political power and influence than the US in the region today and will hold considerably more power relative to the US by 2030. The findings also suggest that other major players, Japan, India, Pakistan, and Indonesia, will shape power dynamics in the region. Figure 3 depicts that as of 2020, the ASEAN Countries Spectrum of Relations with the US and China. Although each nation's position on this figure is evaluative and relies on political views, which are subject to change, depending on national elections outcomes. Indo-Pacific countries may have an alternative position, in between China and the US, which this figure does not show. The gap between the US and China's instruments of power has narrowed, with the balance of power tilting towards China. The current trajectory cannot be taken for granted for the next two decades. However, recent reports suggest that China could overtake the US as the world's largest economy as early as 2024 in nominal Gross Domestic Product (GDP) terms, while other estimates suggest this will happen by the end of the decade. Even if China someday passes the US in total economic size, that is not the only measure of geopolitical power. Economic power is just part of the equation. China is well behind the US on military and soft power with US military expenditure remaining several times higher than that of China. China has also invested heavily in soft power to increase its ability to receive preferred outcomes through attraction rather than coercion or payment. Cultural exchanges and the BRI aid projects can enhance China's attractiveness, while economic success strengthens its soft power. China will continue to face two major limitations:
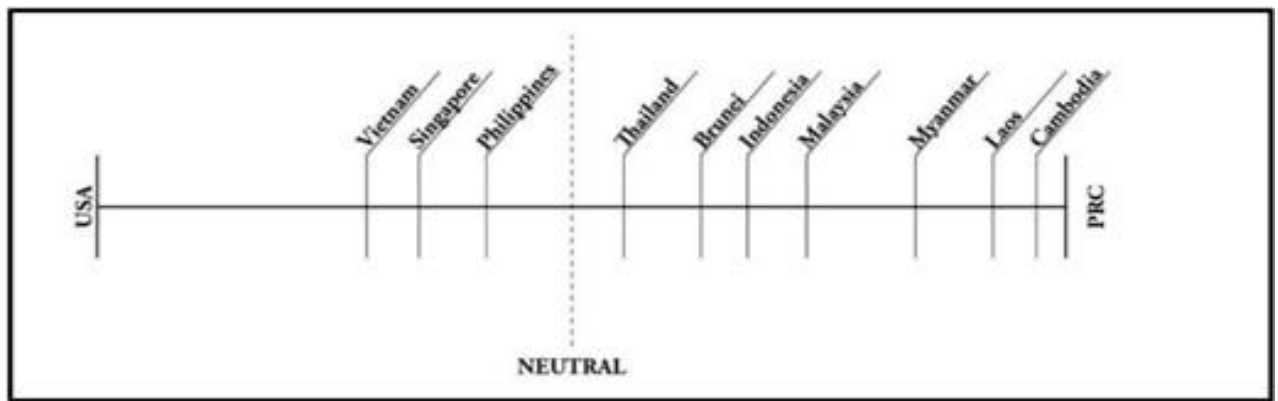
(ASEAN Countries Spectrum of Relations with the United States and China (Shambaugh, David. "Where Great Powers Meet?", Oxford University Press, December 11, 2020, Preface and 243))

First, territorial conflicts with neighbors such as Japan, India, and Vietnam that make it difficult to appear attractive while contesting rival claims; and second, tight CCP control deprives China of the benefits of civil society and reduces its appeal.

China's soft power moves in Africa are also worth attention. Amidst an evolving foreign aid budget and amidst criticism of exploitation from the West, China's efforts in Africa are paying off to hit the targeted objectives of their political, economic and security core interests. In 2009, China surpassed the US to become Africa's largest trading partner.54 Since 2013, China has provided 27 percent of sub-Saharan Africa's weapons, while the US supplied only 11 percent. In the last decade, China has taken over the lead with its weapons sales to sub-Saharan Africa, spiking by 55 percent.55 Out of 54 African states today, 53 have broken diplomatic ties with Taiwan to side with China, snubbing the US which offers them free aid. China's foreign policy has increasingly focused on the developing countries of Africa, Latin America and the Middle East. This trend accelerated after the 2007/2008 global financial crisis when China's own sense of identity and place in the world was evolving.Besides competing for resources, both the US and China need African, Latin American and Middle Eastern nations to support their geopolitical agendas. These nations as non-permanent members of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) could support China's veto power and indirectly its ambitions. China's role in the South-South Cooperation (SSC) provides a further indication of how Beijing can utilize economic expansion in the global South, such as Indonesia and India, to influence the international political system. This conducted approach by China might influence ASEAN countries leveraging partnerships, such as the multi-lateral development bank established by Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) to

further geopolitical ambition. The Indo-Pacific arms race continues including concerns over nuclear proliferation. The global military expenditure continued to increase in 2021, passing $2 trillion for the first time ($2113 billion), showing that military spending growth has continued to increase in recent years. In 2021, the 0.7% growth in world military spending came in a year when the global economic recovery was underway and countries had given priority to address the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Even amid the economic fallout of the pandemic, world military spending hit record levels. US military spending amounted to $801 billion in 2021, a drop of 1.4 percent from 2020; funding for military R&D rose by 24 percent between 2012 and 2021, while arms procurement funding fell by 6.4 percent over the same period. Russia increased its military expenditure by 2.9 percent in 2021, to $65.9 billion, at a time when it was building up its forces along the Ukrainian border. This was the third consecutive year of growth, and although the impacts of RussiaUkraine War have yet to be fully understood, Russia's military spending reached 4.1 percent of its GDP in 2021. 2021 Defence spending in the Asia and Oceania region was 3.5% higher than in 2020, continuing an uninterrupted upward trend dating back to at least 1989. The increase in 2021 was due primarily to growth in Chinese and Indian military spending. Together, the two countries accounted for 63% of total military expenditure in the region. China, the world's second largest spender, allocated an estimated $293 billion to its military in 2021, an increase of 4.7% compared with 2020. China's military spending has been growing for 27 consecutive years. Amid ongoing tensions and border disputes with China and Pakistan that occasionally spill over into armed clashes, India has prioritized the modernization of its armed forces and self-reliance in arms production. India's military spending of $76.6 billion ranked third highest in the world, an increase by 0.9% from 2020 and by 33% from 2012. The Japanese spending rose by 7.3%, to $54.1 billion in 2021, the highest annual increase since 1972. Australian military spending also increased by 4.0%, to reach $31.8 billion.59 The ROK ($50.2 billion) was also one of the largest military spenders in the Asia and Oceania region. While Chinese military capabilities have been increasing in recent years and pose new challenges to Allied nations' presence in the region, China is not yet a global peer in the military dimension. Nor will it be able to exclude the US from the Western Pacific, providing the US can maintain multilateral relationships and a capable military presence in the region. At the same time, current and prospective Chinese capabilities suggest that military capabilities would suffice to significantly raise the cost of any major maritime actions in the region.

Increasing military capabilities are designed to support the following three key objectives. First, to shift the military balance between the US and China in Beijing's favor by developing AntiAccess/Area Denial (A2/AD) capabilities through a combination of ballistic and cruise missiles, associated with ocean surveillance systems, thereby isolating Taiwan. In parallel, developing cyber weapons and submarines would render US allies in the region, such as Japan and ROK, vulnerable to coercion from Beijing.

Second, to deny the US and its allies access to the global commons (space, cyberspace, the air, the sea, and undersea) through the aggressive development of ASAT weapons, increasing cyber operations, and an expanding submarine fleet.

Third, to deter the US by holding their population and economy at risk of severe disruption by either the use of nuclear forces or cyber-attacks.

The arms control architectures established during the Cold War require re-evaluation based on recent violations of international agreements, norms and treaties, including the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START). The US and the Russian Federation have agreed to extend the New START treaty through February 4, 2026. However, China has not been part of the agreement albeit the US urged both Russia and China to reduce the nuclear stockpiles. While arms control architecture continues to weaken, Russia and China increasingly have become more assertive in their influence, both regionally and globally.

This trajectory is expected to continue and will shape the Alliance's relations with Russia and China, as well as with other emerging powers and countries that have aspirations to acquire/ develop nuclear weapons and delivery systems, such as Iran and DPRK.. In the area, regional countries such as ROK, Australia and Japan are internationally identified as non-nuclear weapon states, with no nuclear nor suspected threshold capabilities.

The ability to deliver nuclear attacks from ground, sea and air increases the survivability of a country's nuclear forces and enhances its ability to execute a retaliatory strike. Locally, only the US and Russia possess full, credible nuclear triads. China and India, however, are close to attaining triad status.65,66 Within the proximity of China, India and DPRK, as well as neighbouring Pakistan, nonnuclear weapon states are increasingly concerned over the development of nuclear weapon and delivery systems.

DPRK's nuclear tests and missile launches demonstrate an unprecedented, grave and imminent threat, and challenge the international nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation regime centered on the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). In addressing the erratic behavior of DPRK, the US and its Allies have been working with other regional powers, including China.

While ASEAN–DPRK relations have been for the most part friendly and economic links stable, Pyongyang cannot depend on the former as a counterweight to nuclear and missile nonproliferation pressure exerted by the US and its Allies, as ASEAN steadfastly promotes nonproliferation ideals to serve the national interests of the bloc's member states. Instead of siding with the DPRK, ASEAN members may exert economic and political influence to move the Kim regime towards nuclear munitions and missile abnegation. While ASEAN might align with the US and its Allies' position, it is unlikely that the DPRK voluntarily relinquishes nuclear weapons.

Finally, the US will deliver nuclear-powered submarines to Australia as part of AUKUS, a new trilateral security partnership involving Australia, the UK, and the US. Its first project will be to deliver a nuclear-powered submarine fleet for Australia. The delivery of nuclear submarines has been contested from China and some other local powers as it challenges the NPT's core principle of not transferring nuclear capabilities to non-nuclear states.

Implications

a. Maintaining strategic awareness of China's economic instrument of power.

The Alliance's relation with the Indo-Pacific countries will continue to be influenced by Chinese ambitions through BRI projects and other SSC economic and infrastructure activities. Furthermore, China will support and where possible lead the establishment of shadow governance structures that aim to reduce the effectiveness and reach of the Bretton Woods system. The economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have not ended the continuous upward trend in world military expenditure since 201568 and it is expected to continue to grow based on a perceived return to great power competition. While NATO remains as the benchmark security organization of the Euro-Atlantic region, economic challenges will affect fiscal stability and could reduce support for defense spending.

b. Increasing arms race in the region.

Well before Russia's invasion of Ukraine, concerns were growing in Asia about the weakening of the American-led international world order and US commitment for the Indo-Pacific regional stability. China's aggressive military capability development and assertive conduct in the South and East China Seas, the Taiwan Strait, and along the Himalayas increased the security dilemma, resulting in continued increases in defense spending. Additionally, Chinese activities in cyberspace and potential securitization of space in the IndoPacific might be utilized for military purposes, considering China's strategic calculus aimed at developing a 360-degree approach to the region. The increasing potential for nuclear proliferation is indeed the more concerning aspect of the arms race in the Indo-Pacific. DPRK's continued focus on nuclear weapons and delivery systems have been causing serious regional and global

concerns. Both ROK and Japan perceive DPRK's nuclear weapon systems as a serious national security threat. While Japan has the ability to enrich uranium and reprocess plutonium, it relies on US extended (nuclear) deterrence, albeit not allowing the US to deploy nuclear weapons on its territory. The potential for Japan and ROK to seek nuclear weapons might create further backlash to international non-proliferation efforts. However, China's efforts to improve its nuclear arsenal and the development of hypersonic systems to become a nuclear triad have amplified concerns over regional nuclear proliferation. Therefore, the reliability of the US-extended nuclear deterrence continues to be a key aspect of global security.

c. Challenges to assured access to global commons.

Increased military spending, especially in the areas of A2/AD, Anti-Satellite Weapons (ASAT), and hypersonic, space, and cyberspace capabilities, presents a direct threat to the US and its Allies' ability to project power and to conduct freedom of navigation operations. These capabilities also present a clear risk for the commercial sea lines of communication and free flow of goods. Assured access to the global commons is also essential to the NATO members' ability to preserve access to vital resources and the global supply chain that supports Western economies, and to preserve our individual or collective interests (both for NATO Nations or security partners). Thus, assured access to the global commons is critical to the ability to project power to defend and reassure allies and security partners.

- **Power Politics Accelerating Competition**

The Sino-American competition for power and status in the Indo-Pacific region comprises several dimensions with implications at the global level. Furthermore, China's pernicious espionage, intellectual property theft, and illicit influence activities are expected to continue in order to gain supremacy. Increasingly, therefore, technology development and its use, as well as infrastructure, are considered elements of the competition between the US and China. The Indo-Pacific competition is thus in many respects closely linked to various aspects of the SinoAmerican rivalry. China will also leverage economic and business ties, banks and financial institutions, in most cases using infrastructure development and technology companies as well as state-owned enterprises to exert political influence and harness the information space in its dealings around the world. In Europe, China leverages economic ties as an instrument of power; however, in the IndoPacific region, Beijing is focusing on the use of all instruments of power, including aspects of hard power.

Over the last two decades, the competition arena has changed, including not only aspects of hard power, but also soft power, such as economics, information, diplomacy, and particularly in technology norm/standard setting. China's ability to shape international technological standards and thus give its domestic market more global reach is also being influenced through China's position on significant International Standards regulatory bodies. China's economic success story enhances its soft power.

Moreover, China's authoritarian politics and mercantilist practices make its economic power readily usable by the government. China will gain economic power from the sheer size of its global market as well as its overseas investments and development assistance. Of the seven giant global companies in the age of AI, nearly half are Chinese (Baidu, Alibaba, and Tencent). With its large and diverse population and consequent internet community, Chinese information power relative to the US is likely to increase.

China's objectives to achieve 'Made in China – 2025', an initiative to comprehensively update Chinese industry, and to become the global lead in technology, especially in Emerging Disruptive Technologies (EDTs), present the most significant challenge to the Alliance's objective to maintain its technological edge. Before the Russia-Ukraine war dominated the global agenda, some other clashes between major powers in the Middle East and in South Asia took place in 2019/2020: missile strikes, proxy attacks and challenges to freedom of navigation in the Persian Gulf in mid-2019 raised the possibility of Iran going to war with

Saudi Arabia and other regional powers, and potentially with the US. Armed clashes also escalated between two nuclear armed states, India and Pakistan, over Kashmir and the India-China border clashes along the Line of Actual Control. These developments/events indicate how power will continue to be used to achieve political outcomes in international affairs, including the Indo-China region. In addition, Chinese assertiveness in the region is expected to remain as a source of instability. The increasing pace of competition in the region may also create instability and a vacuum in which terrorism, in all its forms and manifestations, can flourish.

a. Regional alignment adapting to the accelerating competition

China uses economic and financial incentives, technology and infrastructure projects, and most recently military cooperation to expand its influence within and beyond the Indo-Pacific region. The recent activities, such as China's acquisition of the Sri Lanka port in its southern coast that faces the Indian Ocean and China-Solomon security cooperation have increased concerns for the future expansion of China's influence and use of soft power over the Indo-Pacific region using different means. These developments illustrate how the deterrence calculus in the region is continuing to evolve; consequently, military instruments of power are gaining prominence in the face of accelerating competition.

b. 360-degree approach to security and greater outreach to global partners.

The changing competition space and return of great power competition will increase complexity and lead to uncertainties that will demand NATO adapt in a world of competing powers seeking to advance their agendas. This is especially true with China's attempts to gain the lead in technology, which present both economic and military challenges for Alliance security. Under these circumstances, deterrence and defense remain a core element of NATO's overall strategy. While China does not pose a direct military threat, NATO needs to engage China with defending the security interests of the Alliance in mind.76 This includes obtaining an edge in advanced and EDTs. Terrorist access to some tools using one part of EDTs has been a growing concern. Thus, a 360-degree approach will be increasingly important, including enhanced cooperation with global partners.

c. Conflicting Territorial Claims

China shares a border with more countries than any other state in the world. Since 1949, it has had border disputes with every one of its 20 neighbors. Yet China has also resolved its border disputes with many of them, including Myanmar (1960), Nepal (1961), DPRK (1962), Mongolia (1962), Pakistan (1963) and Laos (1991). It has even managed to reach territorial settlements with former enemies, notably Vietnam (1999) and Russia (1991-94). In some cases, these disputes were settled according to international norms through 'peaceful and concessionary diplomatic approaches based on mutual understanding'.

In others, such as with Russia and Vietnam, resolution only occurred following armed conflict. From 1982 to 2010, security and socioeconomic development has influenced an evolving population distribution in China's border regions and may have implications related to sub-regional cooperation. China has one of the longest borders with its surrounding land-based neighbors, containing multi-ethnic settlements and special geographic locations. Land territories under actual Chinese jurisdiction border fourteen countries, including Russia and India. While none is expected to evolve into hot border conflicts over the next few years, India and China have had some recent low level military clashes over the borderlines.

China's hinterland, along these borders, is important for its core interests, territorial integrity and national sovereignty. Additionally, the South and East China Seas have witnessed increased military activities from exercises to Freedom of Navigation Operations involving European powers and Russia. Similarly, there is a tense Line of Control through Kashmir between Indian occupying forces and Pakistani armed forces that has continued through three wars and the Kargil clash.

China's Territorial Disputes with Regional Countries (24.06.2022)

China's unilateral actions in militarizing islands and islets in the Parcel and Spratly Islands of the SCS and claiming disputed maritime jurisdiction areas well beyond the legal limits set by the Law of the Sea Treaty, even though it is one of the signatories of the treaty, is a major international concern. China has sought to assert questionable claims over international commons, for example, in declaring an Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) over the East China Sea, contesting freedom of navigation or introducing itself as a 'Near-Arctic Nation.' China has up until now refrained from direct confrontation albeit there have been some military brinkmanship attempts.

The Philippines took the case to the International Tribunal, which ruled against China's claims. The following map and notes illustrate Chinese arguments and Tribunal decisions. In other areas, such as the introduction of the national security law for Hong Kong, the dispute flare-up between India and China over the line of actual control, and the relationship deterioration over Australia's request for an investigation into the origins of the pandemic, indicate that China will use its military and/or economic power to defend its core interests, such as any potential changes to Taiwan's status.

At different times by different leaders/officials, the following areas have been considered to be among China's core interests: Taiwan, Tibet and Xinjiang. However, ambiguity remains over China's position to declare the SCS as a core interest. While Taiwan, Tibet and Xinjiang clearly identified as 'core interests' due to their link to territorial integrity and sovereignty, in accordance with China's perception, Chinese officials have refrained from describing the SCS in such formal terms in a public setting.

However, the latest Chinese official document 'China's National Defense in the New Era' clearly states that the SCS islands and Diaoyu Islands are inalienable parts of the Chinese territory to counter Chinese claims in these contested maritime zones, nations in the region have increased their military presence. The increasing footprint includes joint exercises with QUAD countries and Freedom of Navigation Operations, as well as sharing military technology and large scale arms sales, such as the AUKUS.

While these interactions have also created differences, the European Union and a number of European members of the Alliance have supported a FOIP approach and advocated increasing multilateralism by promoting interactions with the ASEAN countries, which do not want to be prisoners of this binary choice between China and the US In addition to China's territorial claims and related disputes in the South China and East China Seas, China has disputed territories with India.

After China's 1962 war with India, the border remained largely undefined and bitterly contested. The basic problem is twofold. In the undefined northern part of the frontier, India claims an area the size of Switzerland, occupied by China, for its region of Ladakh. In the eastern part, China claims an Indian-occupied area three times bigger, including most of Arunachal. This 890 km stretch of frontier was settled and named the McMahon Line in 1914 by the governments of Britain and Tibet, which was then in effect independent.

For China, which was afforded mere observer status at the negotiations preceding the agreement, the McMahon Line represents a dire humiliation. China also particularly resents being deprived of Tawang, which although south of the McMahon Line, was occupied by Indian troops only in 1951, shortly after China's new Communist rulers dispatched troops to Tibet. Making matters worse, the McMahon Line was drawn with a fat nib, establishing a ten-kilometre margin of error, and it has never been demarcated.84 However, China and India's border dispute turned deadly for the first time in more than four decades in June 2020.

One of the most serious of all these issues is the competing claims between India and Pakistan over the Kashmir region. With continued violence in the area, tensions and concerns over a serious military confrontation between nuclear armed neighbors, India and Pakistan, remain high.

Territorial disputes over the Kashmir region sparked two of the three major Indo-Pakistani wars in 1947 and 1965, and a limited war in 1999. Although both countries have maintained a fragile cease-fire since 2003, they regularly exchange fire across the contested border, known as the Line of Control. Both sides accuse the other of violating the cease-fire and claim to be shooting in response to attacks.

An increase in the number of border skirmishes began in late 2016 and continued into 2018, killing dozens and displacing thousands of civilians on both sides of the Line of Control. There are three disputed areas along the 450-mile Line of Control.

- Implications:

1. Increased potential for conflict. The IndoPacific region has been undergoing significant changes over the last decades, fuelled by economic growth and military spending driven by China, Japan, ROK and the ASEAN countries. The race over geopolitically significant technologies will continue over the next two decades. Rising nationalism and growing assertiveness in economic, political and military domains, especially over sensitive areas beyond national borders and contested areas, might result in intentional or accidental conflict. Those areas with contested territorial claims of the region, from India-Pakistan in the West to China-Japan in the East will continue to present hot spots that might range from border skirmishes. In turn, this could trigger a larger scale conflict involving NATO Allies and Partner nations who have vested in the region. Furthermore, the presence of illicit border activity, such as the trafficking in persons, drugs and other materials, can increase regional instability and affect the rule of law.

2.Increasing Western presence in the region. Unfavorable opinions of China will continue to be driven by trade relations, assertive actions in the South and East China Seas and rising tensions with neighboring countries. While China has been increasingly taking an assertive stance in the Maritime disputed territories in the South and East China Seas, they have yet to be declared as China's core security interests.
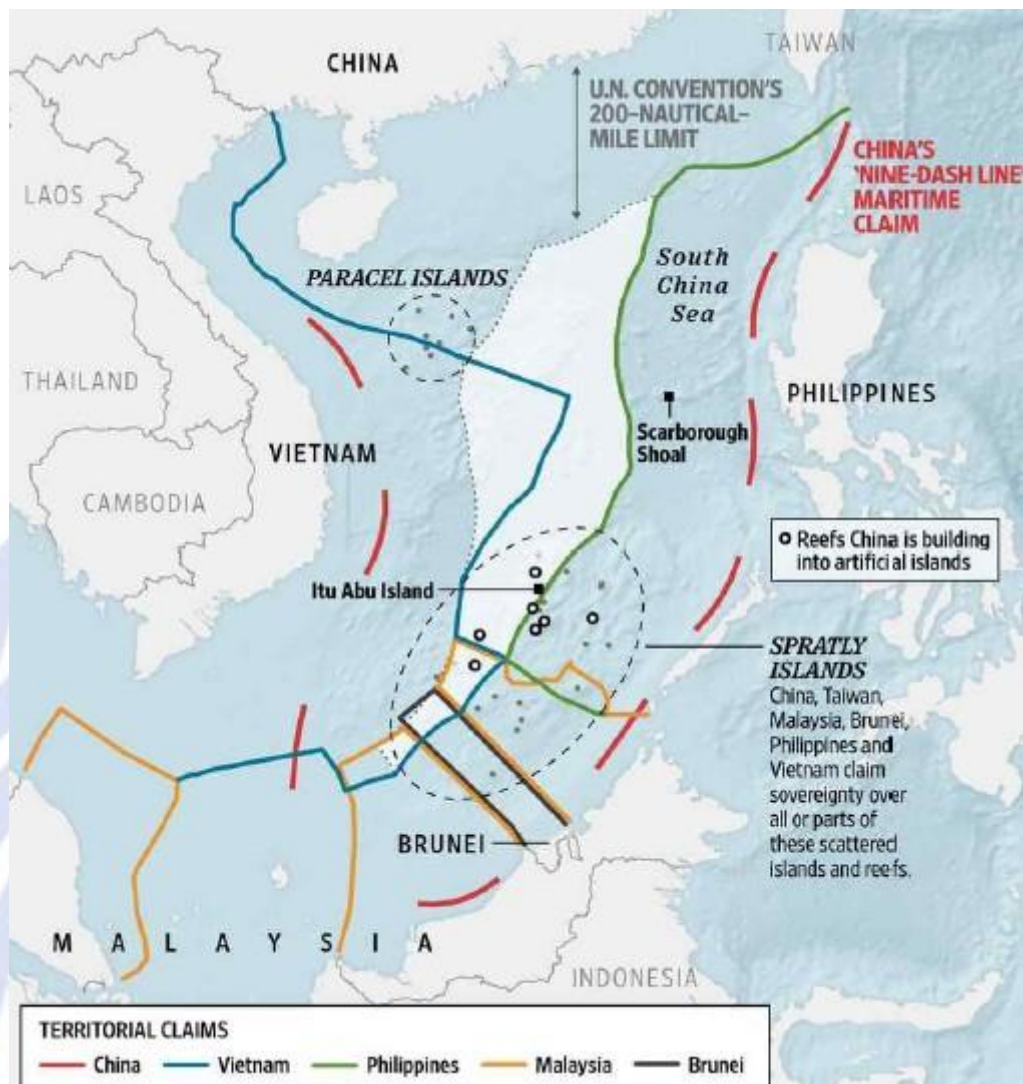
South China Sea International Tribunal Ruling (24.06.2022)

- Diverging Ideological and Security Architecture

The growing economic and political weight of emerging players, in particular China and India, reinforce the shift of global power from the West towards the East. At the same time, a technology-driven shift of power away from states to international/multilateral organizations and transnational non-state actors is taking place, bringing a new and unfamiliar complexity, in which companies in civilian space will have to care about their own security architecture. This change is elevating a number of subjects – including financial stability, transnational environmental politics and climate change, terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, cybercrime, and pandemics – on the global agenda. At the same time these transnational matters tend to weaken the ability of governments to respond to several key issues due to continued gridlock in regional/ global competition.

India-China-Pakistan Border Regions and Current Border Disputes (2022)

In this context, China pursues its ambitions to regain centrality in the international system and over global governance institutions, based on the Sino-centric worldview that suggests China is the cultural, political, and economic center of the world. At the same time, the effectiveness and legitimacy of Sino-based international and multilateral organizations could undermine the foundation of multilateralism and Rules Based International Order. China is attempting to lead the reform of the global governance system, transforming institutions and norms in ways that will reflect Beijing's values and priorities.

China has also been attempting to lead an establishment of shadow multilateral governance structures to support its economic, trade and security ambitions. Recently, another important and emerging issue in the Pacific region is China's attempts to set up economic and military relations (including both naval base construction and conducting exercises) with some of the Pacific islands, such as the Solomon Islands.

While the Indo-Pacific was given the focus of attention, Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine shifted global focus to Europe. While the Russia-Ukraine war is in Europe, it has global consequences for other parts of the world, including the Indo-Pacific region. Russia-China relations may be elevating to a new level since the beginning of the war. Thus, Russia's interest and accordingly, its influence in the Indo-Pacific region, is expected to increase through national outreach and potential change in strategic direction to the East. The most recent China-Russia joint declaration called the 'New World Order' suggests that the partnership between the two states is 'without any limitations.

. With this declaration, President Xi and Putin back each other on Taiwan and NATO enlargement, and approve an assertive manifesto divided into four main ideas: the new world order, the Grand Eurasian Partnership, the US aggression, and the cooperation against US aggression.Furthermore, the Russia-China declaration also highlights that there are 'no forbidden areas' in their cooperation. This is of particular concern in the space and cyberspace domains, where Moscow and Beijing share capabilities and common interests.

Accordingly, Russia-China relations have grown in strategic dimension due to the increased convergence of their views of the international liberal world order and global priorities that has been reinforced during the Russia-Ukraine War.

This relationship, however, is not lacking inherent weaknesses, such as reminiscence of Chinese territories conquered by Russia, demographic issues in the Russian Far East and Moscow's uneasiness with China's ambitions in the Arctic. This relationship, in any event, will continue to carry strategic importance and will be shaped by each country's interactions with the West, in particular with the US.

a. Increasing challenges to the rules based international order.

Emerging players will seek to increase their weight in the international system. Russia's unprovoked and illegal war in Ukraine will continue to increase complexity that will further the divergence of national interests of Indo-Pacific countries. While China may continue to support Russia in global governance institutions, other regional countries, such as India, Pakistan and Indonesia, will also have diverging views and interests contradicting the Western value-based system.

Furthermore, China continues to aim to decrease the Indo-Pacific countries' cooperation with democratic nations, affect fiscal stability and undermine support for defence spending.95 Besides, widespread use of violence against civilian populations and the threat to human security are reoccurring challenges that are visible in Russia's invasion of Ukraine and Chinese discrimination on Uyghur minorities, as well as in other strategies to increase their power through international influence and presence.

b. Russia and China offer a new regional alternative.

Increasing fear of containment by the West and its regional Allies will continue to drive China to a new level of partnership with Russia. The Russia-Ukraine War and the unprecedented level of sanctions will also force Russia to seek China's assistance for economic and political survival. Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin are attempting to challenge a free and open ideology by putting economics at the center of their strategic partnership. Their intent is to draw small-medium sized regional powers, which currently hold a neutral position, towards choosing an alternative, by offering economic cooperation and trade.96,97 Economic sanctions and political pressures will continue to move Beijing and Moscow into greater alignment as they respond to the West.

However, at some stage China might be forced to select between its strategic partner Russia and Western markets that are essential for economic stability. Both China and Russia's perceived fear of containment is expected to grow as developments in the European and Indo-Pacific regions turn against them.98 This will lead to increased militarization of relationships in the Indo-Pacific region that may further defense expenditures and increase the dangers of an accidental conflict. Indeed, China and Western militaries have had several close counters and incidents during exercises and Freedom of Navigation Operations in the Taiwan Strait or in the South and East China Seas.

- Human Theme - Demographic Instability

More than half of the Earth's population lives in the Indo-Pacific region. China, India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Indonesia are five of the 10 most populated countries in the world. The overall population of the region is projected to reach nearly 5 billion people by 2050 with an 11.6% rise. However, this rate is not as high as the world's overall population rising rate (21.64%). ASEAN countries (except Thailand), and some of the currently crowded countries, such as Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, DPRK, India, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, and Papua New Guinea,103 will be more populated by 2050. Conversely, some countries and provinces, such as China, Japan, ROK, Taiwan, and Thailand will be confronted with a population decrease.
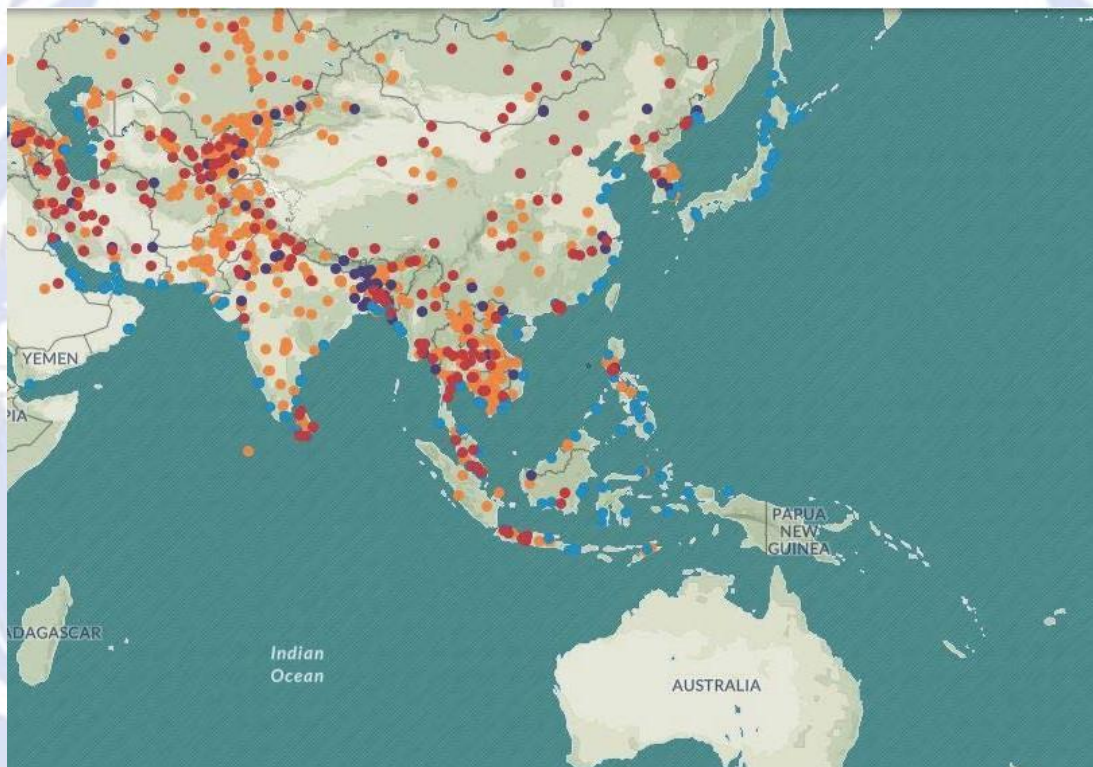
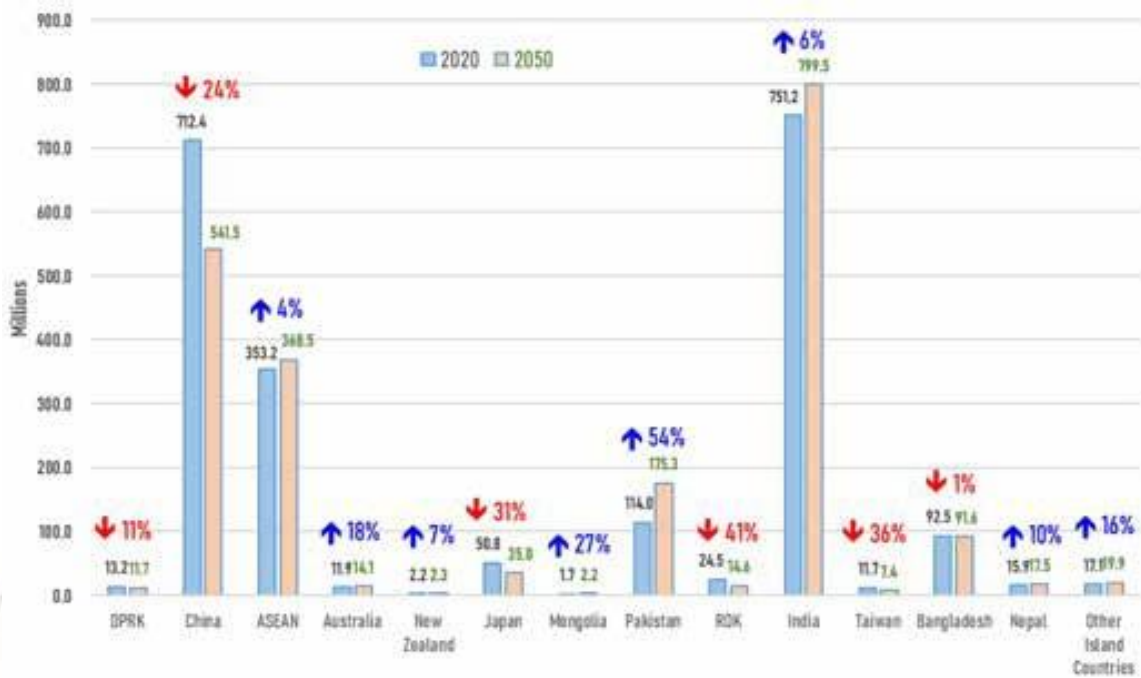*The Indo-Pacific Region Population Prospects (2020-2050)*

One of the reasons for population growth stagnation in the region is the decline in fertility rates, particularly more so in certain religious and ethnic groups. By 2050, the regional fertility rate (currently 2.01 per woman) will downgrade to 1.83, which is below the 2.1 replacement rate needed to maintain the population. According to UN data and projections, ROK, Taiwan, and Singapore will continue to be in the list of the 10 lowest global fertility rates. In addition, factors such as prenatal sex-selection and undocumented births may skew results and disproportionately impact women and girls.

The vast majority of the Indo-Pacific's densely populated states have already passed through their most demographically turbulent phase of the age-structural transition. In the next two decades, the median age in the region is expected to rise from 30 to 39. It is obvious that the Indo-Pacific region's population will become older and population age structures in Taiwan, ROK and Japan will reach unprecedented levels of post-maturity (median ages from 55 to 57 years) by 2050. Projections suggest that these countries will transform into super-aged societies, with 43-46% of their population being over 60. Congruently, China also will have an older society with 48 years as the median age.

Due to low fertility rates and aging populations, by 2050, some regional countries and provinces will have challenges to support their armies. DPRK, China, Japan, ROK, Taiwan, and Bangladesh will lose 11%, 24%, 31%, 41%, 36%, and 1% respectively, of their population fit to military service. Conversely, this index for ASEAN nations, Australia, New Zealand, Mongolia, Pakistan, India, Nepal, and other Island Countries will increase.

a. Aging populations will strain resources and cause labor shortage.

In the next two decades, the population aged higher than 65 in the Indo-Pacific region will increase by 500 million and the portion of this 'gray population' to overall population will be 19%, more than the World rate (16%). Australia, Brunei, China, DPRK, Indo-Pacific islands of France, Japan, Maldives, New Zealand, ROK, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand, and VietNam will have to tackle overaged population problems. Those countries will be forced to find resources for the aged people, who will need pension support and medical care, and these countries will need to cope with a labor shortage. This imbalance will affect economic growth of the region, as well.105 Economically powerful countries such as China, Australia, Japan, New Zealand, and ROK could invite a young workforce from other countries, which will result in labor migration among/ towards the Indo-Pacific region. However, some societies in East Asia would react to the foreign migration conservatively.106 In addition, there are some efforts to pursue automation in some industries to meet the growing need for a strong work-age population

Population Fit to Military Service in the Indo-Pacific Region

b. Rejuvenated countries will have to tackle various problems.

While 'graying' countries have challenges caused by aging populations, some regional states such as Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, and Timor-Leste, will have to struggle with an instability-prone youthful phase. Among these states, the on-going growth of young adults continues to open gaps in services, infrastructure, and employment.108 Besides, differential growth could drive politically significant shifts in local ethnic proportions in some countries that retain enclaves of more youthful minorities, like Indonesia's Papuans,109 and the Philippines' Moros.

c. Gender imbalance and inequalities will continue to lead to social unrest.

Currently, the Indo-Pacific population has 92 million more men than women. China and India are the main source countries of this gender imbalance. Stagnant lives, desperate efforts to attain a bride, women's migration and trafficking, and the need to take a stand against harassment are some negative effects of this disequilibrium. However, these impacts should lessen with the integration of gender perspectives in public programmes, policy and governance models. By 2050, the gap between genders will decrease to 65 million. Nonetheless, current effects of this imbalance will continue to worsen demographic decline and to affect social stability. These single males would be a source for terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, and piracy. In addition, in China, with the negative impact of women labor shortage due to the decline in childcare support and evolving family structure, this imbalance will decelerate the growth of the economy

d. Change in population fit to military service will affect defense capabilities.

Although Japan and ROK will suffer from the decrease of this index, owing to Australia, Mongolia, and New Zealand, NATO Partner Countries in the region will have a total 18.75% rise in population of those fit to military service. Conversely, China, DPRK, and Taiwan will lose 24%, 11,25% and 36% of its armed forces' staffing population, respectively, by 2050. Considering NATO's support to partner nations,capability will become more significant than capacity for Australia, Mongolia, New Zealand, and Pakistan. However, in addition to the capability support, strengthening of Japan's and ROK's armies with capacity would be essential. To that end, these countries are trying to strengthen their armies with robotic systems to mitigate the effects of this implication.

e. Supporting urban resilience in the region will become vital.

. Security of power plants, nuclear energy systems, renewable energy facilities, desalination factories and urban infrastructures will continue to be crucial. To protect these capabilities in the Indo-Pacific region, the Alliance needs to share perspectives on urban resilience with developing regional countries, such as Brunei, India, Indonesia, Kiribati, Malaysia, the Marshall Islands, Nauru, Pakistan, Palau, Singapore, and Taiwan. This encouragement will also reduce the problems originating from demographic instability and internal irregular migration in the region.

f.Future regional armies will have to fight in urban areas.

One of the lessons learned from recent conflicts, like the Russia-Ukraine War of 2022, is that military objectives and operative maneuvers will focus on controlling urban areas rather than fields in the future. Current/Future NATO partner nations in the region will have to adapt their armies to this trend and to the impact that conflicts and military operations may have on the civilian population, especially in urban areas. Those armies should be equipped and trained regarding urban warfare concepts.

g. The support to regional armies will vary throughout the region due to different education levels.

Considering today's conflicts, future armies are expected to depend on capability rather than capacity. Countries cannot transform uneducated youth into future warriors and combat leaders without long training programs. Within two decades, the education levels will continue to diverge throughout the Indo-Pacific region due to asymmetrical economic developments, uneven education programs, cultural barriers, institutionalized discrimination, and unequal foreign assistance to education.

 Therefore, the ability of supporting future regional armies with educated human resources will differentiate from country to country. Particularly, some regional countries, such as Australia, China, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Philippines, ROK, and Singapore, will be able to satisfy the special educational needs of their armies. Conversely, some low-income countries, such as Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam, will have difficulties to support their armies in educational means

h. Revisionist countries would aim to increase their regional influence by supporting low income nations.

Similar to utilization of 'vaccine diplomacy' during the COVID-19 pandemic, some revisionist countries, such as China and Russia, would exploit educational insufficiency, health inadequacy, and poverty conditions of low-income states to increase their efficacy in the region. Such developing and low-income states would be willing to accept assistance from any nation regardless of democratic or autocratic orientation while they face severe problems. Hence, to prevent exploitation by these revisionist countries, low income regional countries need to be supported by Western countries to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Scenerio 1 - Soft Competition Among Great Powers

In this scenario, China will consistently continue to pursue specific goals in terms of economic growth, regional and global leadership, and control over claimed territories. These goals, which are firmly manifested in a long-term strategy, will keep China in competition with Indo-Pacific countries, including NATO member nations and partners.

All competing actors will acknowledge the nature of this competition. Actions and counter actions will be clearly recognizable, threats will be prioritized, and responses will be measured. Nevertheless, attempts will still be made to manage complex relationships in such a way that competitive advantages will be maintained while mitigating potential escalations that could threaten the strategic goals of competing nations.

China will lack the credibility to become a reliable global leader because of systemic corruption, human rights violations, waning population, and a debt trap that would make potential partners reluctant to engage in real longterm deals. Contrary to this, Indo-Pacific nations may choose to follow the established but fragile global world order, mainly based on democratic values and rules, but also to remain aligned with the US dollar as a main trade currency.

China, with Russia's support, will try to gain influence through the UN for its benefit and to strengthen authoritarian regimes globally. The essential re-stabilization of international systems and economic trade may offer better opportunities to non-authoritarian members of the UN and other world organizations. As a result, liberal sectors of China may seek to become part of the open process that allows competition and cooperation at the same time, allowing weaker countries, like Nepal or Bangladesh, to collaborate and therefore prosper as well.

China will continue to use its soft power tools. Western nations and regional powers will find themselves in an unpredictable, complex and intertwined dual relationship. Smaller nations in the region will still be caught in the cross-hairs, seeing a need to align with and appease China without real alternatives, as China controls industries in the region through expansion of its loan network and further integration of the BRI.

Continuing its "war without fighting" and utilizing soft power tools, information warfare assets, like United Front and Digital Influence Operations, China will work even harder to increase its influence in the region, its grip on small Indo-Pacific nations, and potentially to control maritime choke points and supply chains. NATO member states and regional players will increasingly see themselves cooperate across the democratic-authoritarian divides, basing alignment on interest rather than ideology. Regional powers will play an enormous role in containing the expansionist aspirations of China, potentially via expansion of the QUAD, with support of other Western nations. Political power competition further will characterize the region. The Indo-Pacific will likely face dramatic consequences from climate change and natural disasters. Humanitarian consequences and potential instability will have to be addressed with the support of regional powers and partner nations.

Japan will become the most trusted country in the area, through humanitarian assistance but also because of the ability to convey the right language as the voice of the QUAD Plus. This will further limit China's political influence. As a result, the PLA will remain unable to prevent the Alliance from maintaining a strong influence within the Indo-Pacific region. The PRC government will continue to make major efforts to manipulate and manage international organizations to encourage foreign countries to follow its governance model.

The PLA will also continue to expand its regional warfighting reach by building up its SCS islets, matched by friendly naval and air use agreements with countries like Cambodia or other South Pacific Island nations. Further, East and South Pacific Island nations will be a major focus for the Beijing government with the common 'loan diplomacy' (BRI projects) to acquire port access and commercial rights. This situation will increasingly inhibit the free activity of Western nations in the region and will be of particular importance to Allied nations holding territories in the Pacific Ocean, such as France, the UK, or the US.

Therefore, the international ability to counter political warfare, diplomatic strategies on the international level, as well as battles over narrative in the informational and digital sphere, will determine who gets to set the rules of the international order going forward. By 2040, China would reach a position in which it can control the whole information domain owing to gained advantages from Web 3.0 and developing digital tools. By this capability, it will be able to upgrade its acquired influence on the region. In the next decade, regional powers and their Western allies must invest effort to enhance their capabilities to identify, prevent and counter political and informational warfare campaigns.

Scenario 2 - Hard Competition Among Great Powers

In this scenario, China will manage to fulfill its stated goals for National Rejuvenation, solidifying domestic prosperity and party control, as well as achieving its sovereignty and maritime claims. Many Indo-Pacific nations will prefer to follow the China model and will continue to ignore "internal affairs" of other countries around the globe, including genocide, human rights violations, and political oppression. The result will be the essential collapse of the international order. Consequently, democratization efforts are declining, with less influence in the UN for international peace building. In addition, de-coupling with differing technological standards will be progressing, which decreases control over military expansion of developing countries with emerging commercial and military industries.

Unfavorable relations of new partnerships will emerge, with conflicting interests of existing relations. This era faces undermining of international regulations and agreements, especially over open waters. This all will create the proverbial tipping point in regional stability. Unhealthy developments will lead to ceased economic growth and China will experience an economic downturn. PRC elites will become dissatisfied with the economic stagnation. The current head of state has concentrated power around the office of the party leader and will thus be held responsible. Domestic instability together with international backlash will show that China turns inward in an attempt to regain domestic power and stability . Increased exclusionary and purging of party membership signals that the PLA party control is weakening. This unstable China is even less predictable with devastating implications for other regional countries and especially neighboring states. Countries who depend on China to pursue economic alternatives will face stagnation and/or potentially political crises. To mitigate instability, it will become imperative for other regional powers and their partners to define the rules-based maritime order in the region to ensure free and safe waterways, particularly in the South and East China Seas. Western Countries, Australia, New Zealand, ROK and Japan will build a strong alliance of interest against China to avoid tensions escalating to a major conflict. Others find the best way to survive in the international system will be to take care of themselves and turn inward as well, which further fuels decoupling. China will signal and solidify power domestically, and will be highly motivated to use military force to achieve overseas objectives in an attempt to divert from internal challenges, such as reducing emissions, especially coal-fired power plants, in order to avoid climate chaos.

This unstable China will now be even more unpredictable because the international pressure will have made it even more inward and therefore even less transparent. In the next decade, China will challenge the commitments of bilateral partnerships and security alliances, defining the geostrategic status of the Indo-Pacific region until 2040 and beyond. China will likely ramp up low intensity military aggressions in pursuit of its goals around Taiwan and the First and Second Island Chains.

Along with Chinese and Russian aggressive attempts, caused by geostrategic competition and Western sanctioning, an emerging anti-Western alliance would trigger a global war, after a temporary Cold War-II era. In this global war, China will gain advantage due to EDTs, especially robotic systems, which the PLA is using to compensate for China's declining and aging population. The lack of ethical rules within the LOAC in 2040 will create a complex battlespace that will challenge the Western norms.
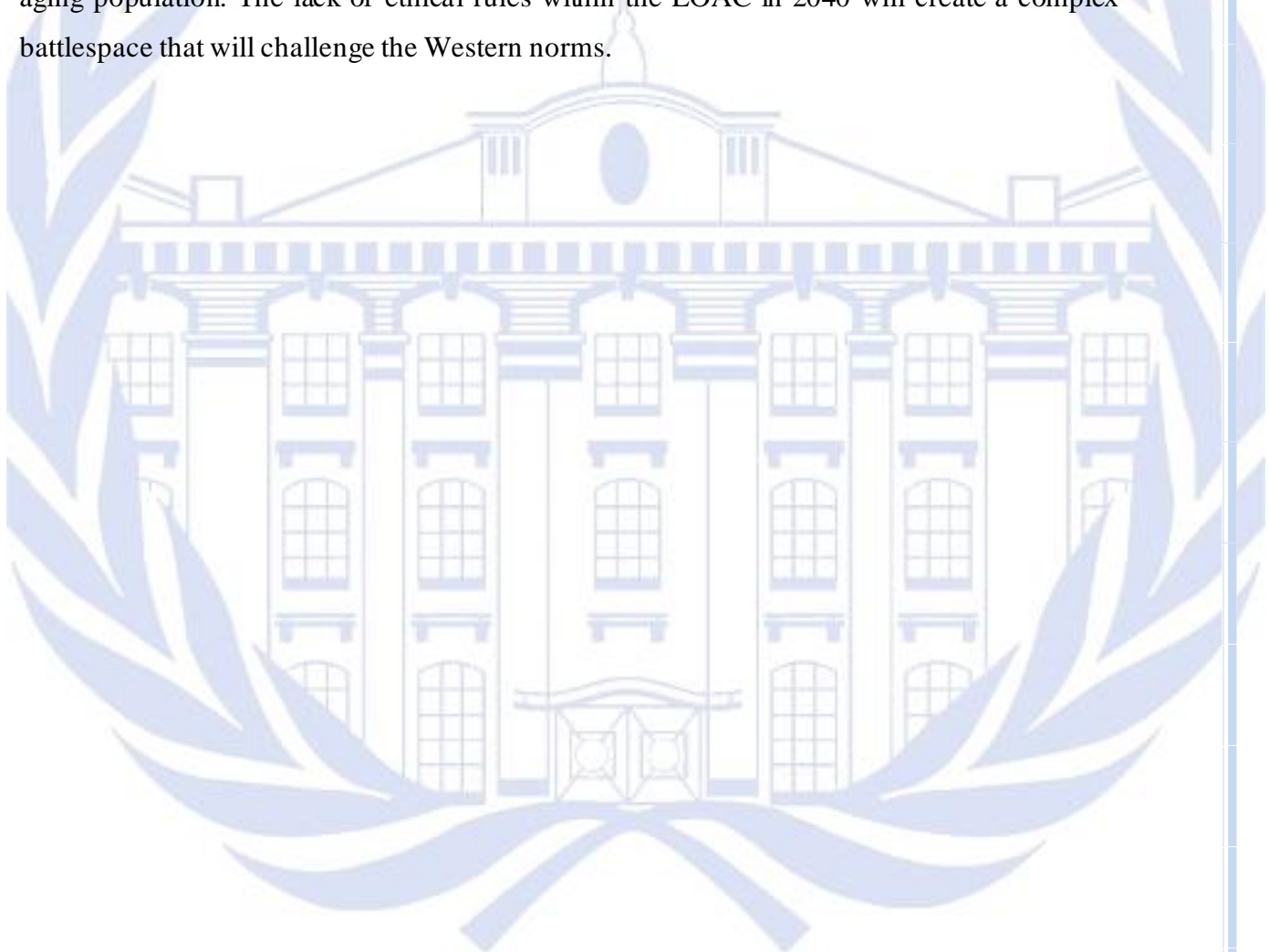
Scenario 3 - Multi Polarized Competition Among Many Actors

In this scenario, instead of being a part of a bipolar strategic competition between China and Western countries, regional countries will prefer to act independently in order to protect themselves from the negative effects of a great power rivalry. Therefore, Southeastern Asian countries will start to agree collectively on strategies against dominant influences of the great powers. As a result, by enrolling new regional countries to the organization, ASEAN will transform into a powerful regional organization such as the EU.

Furthermore, some NATO partner countries, such as Japan, Australia, ROK and New Zealand, will prefer to focus on decreasing China's influential power on the region rather than canalizing other regional countries to act against China. With increasing population and economic progress, India will transform into a new regional power in the Indo-Pacific. After solving border disputes with China and Pakistan, this country will start to concentrate on its internal problems, such as unstable urbanization, unfair distribution of income, and harassments against religious minorities.

Similarly, Pakistan will become another influential actor in the region owing to its increasing prosperity. The rise of India and buildup of Pakistan will prompt China to reconsider its overzealous ambitions, while refining the approach to its role as a world power. Although China increases its economic effects on the region, other international actors will become significant influencers as well. These actors will include international organizations, such as QUAD, ASEAN, NATO, EU, UN, OPEC, Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC); nongovernmental organizations (NGOs); and some globalized firms.

The existence of these actors will balance Chinese soft power activities in the region. Nevertheless, China will continue to insist on its rejuvenation ambitions. However, regional income inequality and harassment to minorities will cause domestic instability within this country. To decrease the negative effects of possible disorder, Chinese politicians will aim to benefit from the SCO as a global/regional influencer. Nonetheless, other regional powers in this organization such as India and Pakistan will be able to balance Chinese ambitions. Additionally, the effects of Chinese soft power tools, like social media, economic assets, and the Chinese overseas diaspora will not achieve the desired aims due to other regional countries' increasing influences.

Similarly, DPRK will prefer not to compete with ROK and Western countries due to its economic problems. This country will strengthen diplomatic ties with the ROK and Japan, especially to reinforce its financial situation and thus its influence in the region. Pyongyang will decide to assure Western countries with an international treaty not to use nuclear weapons against any other country and will declare to be part of regional non-proliferation attempts. The rapprochement of the DPRK towards the West will create required conditions for the reunification of the two Korean countries.

Ultimately, a series of natural disasters and other negative effects of climate change, regional and global economic disorders, and social unrests with hunger will create a platform for a reasonable cooperation of numerous organizations and countries rather than fuelling disputes and competition. This creates a new equilibrium among multi-polarized, powerful actors and a redefined geopolitical architecture in the IndoPacific region.