



Summit prepares ground for 'NATOisation of Europe' and continues collision course with China and high levels of military spending

Analysis of the NATO Madrid Summit, 29-30 June 2022

By Dr. Ian Davis, NATO Watch

Key decisions:

- The summit adopted an official text: the [Madrid Summit Declaration](#).
- NATO agreed a **new force structure to deter Russia**: NATO's high-readiness forces will be increased almost eightfold from 40,000 to 300,000 troops by next year; battlegroups in the eastern part of the alliance will be enhanced up to brigade levels, with forces pre-assigned to specific locations; and more heavy weapons, logistics and command-and control assets will be pre-positioned.
- President Biden [promised](#) **more US troops and weapons to Europe**, including a new permanent army HQ in Poland.
- **Long-term support for Ukraine** was agreed through a strengthened Comprehensive Assistance Package.
- New political and practical support for **other partners** said to be at risk from Russia, including Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia and Moldova.
- A new [Strategic Concept](#) for the alliance was approved, setting out priorities, core tasks and approaches for the next decade. The document declared Russia as the "most significant and direct threat" and for the first time addresses the challenges posed by China. It warns of Beijing's "coercive policies" and its "deepening strategic partnership" with Moscow.
- Agreement to **reduce NATO greenhouse gas emissions** by at least 45% by 2030, down to net zero by 2050. The Secretary General released an [Assessment Report](#) on the impact of climate change on security.
- **Finland and Sweden** were invited to join NATO, after a [trilateral memorandum](#) with Turkey assuaged Ankara's previous objections. The two Nordic countries will become NATO members after the Accession Protocol is ratified by all 30 member states.
- The launch of a €1 billion **Innovation Fund** by 22 member states to develop dual-use emerging technologies of priority to NATO over the next 15 years, including: artificial intelligence; big-data processing; quantum-enabled technologies; autonomy; biotechnology and human enhancement; novel materials; energy; propulsion and space.
- Deepening cooperation with **Indo-Pacific partners** Australia, Japan, New Zealand and South Korea that participated in a NATO Summit for the first time.
- New support packages for partners **Mauritania and Tunisia**.
- Agreement to invest more in NATO and to **increase common funding**.
- The **next NATO Summit** will be held in Vilnius, Lithuania in 2023.

Introduction

The NATO Madrid Summit took place on the 29-30 June 2022. In a [pre-Summit press conference](#) on the 27 June, the NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg called the Summit “transformative, with many important decisions”, including a new Strategic Concept, a major strengthening of NATO’s deterrence and defence and greater support to Ukraine. NATO leaders would also focus on investing in defence, aim to make progress on Finland and Sweden’s “historic applications for NATO membership” and deepen cooperation with Australia, Japan, New Zealand and South Korea, he said

On the 28-29 June in the margins of the Summit a NATO Public Forum was held which brought together NATO allies with partner nations and other stakeholders for a High-Level Dialogue on Climate Change and Security. Speaking at the start of the Forum, Stoltenberg [said](#) that “NATO is determined to set the gold standard on addressing the security implications of climate change”. As discussed below, the Secretary General released a 12-page ‘[Climate Change and Security Impact Assessment](#)’ report, as promised under an Action Plan on Climate Change and Security that NATO Leaders adopted at the Brussels Summit in 2021

Day 1 of the Summit

The Summit began on 29 June with the NATO Secretary General delivering a [doorstep statement](#) where he again outlined the “transformative” nature of the Summit agenda. This was followed by the scheduled arrivals and doorstep announcements of leaders, although only the arrival of the US President was afforded coverage in the official Summit programme. During this staged arrival of the US President and ‘warm words’ with the NATO Secretary General, President Joe Biden [committed](#) “to defend every inch of allied territory” adding that although “Putin was looking for the Finlandisation of Europe”, he was looking forward to “the NATOisation of Europe”.

After an official photo the first session of the North Atlantic Council (NAC) at the level of Heads of State took place. Aside from some [opening remarks](#) by the NATO Secretary General and the Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez, the NAC meeting took place behind closed doors. Ukraine’s President Zelensky took part in the meeting via a

video link. The [Madrid Summit Declaration](#) was published at the close of the NAC session, and the NATO Secretary General held a [press conference](#) in which he outlined what had been agreed, adding that the war in Ukraine had “shattered peace in Europe” and “created the biggest security crisis in Europe since the Second World War”.

In the margins of the first day of the Summit, there were two closed bilateral meetings between the NATO Secretary General and Canada and Japan, as well as a closed ‘[roundtable discussion](#) of women Foreign and Defence Ministers from allied countries’. Regarding the latter, the NATO Secretary General’s Special Representative for Women, Peace and Security, Irene Fellin, gave some public [opening remarks](#). The other participants in the roundtable were Mélanie Joly (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Canada); Anniken Huitfeldt (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Norway); Ann Linde (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sweden); Liz Truss (Secretary of State, United Kingdom); Thórdís Kolbrún Reykjörd Gylfadóttir (Minister for Foreign Affairs, Iceland); Tanja Fajon (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Slovenia); Annalena Baerbock (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Germany) and Ludivine Dedonder (Minister of Defence, Belgium).

A second meeting of the NAC took place in the late afternoon at the level of ‘Heads of State and Government with Partners’—with leaders from European partners (the EU, Georgia, Finland and Sweden) and, for the first time, Indo-Pacific partners (Australia, Japan, New Zealand and South Korea). Again, aside from some [opening remarks](#) by the NATO Secretary General, the meeting was closed. In another [press conference](#), the NATO Secretary General outlined the nature of the discussions in response to “a deepening strategic partnership between Moscow and Beijing”. The day concluded with an informal working dinner of the NAC at the level of Ministers of Defence. There was no media coverage.

Day 2 of the Summit

The second day of the Summit began with a ‘Signing Ceremony of the NATO Innovation Fund Letter of Commitment by participating Allied Leaders’, and this was followed by a final meeting of the NAC at the level of Heads of State and Government, which discussed challenges in NATO’s southern neighbourhood and the fight against terrorism. The Summit concluded with a final [press conference](#) by the NATO Secretary General (who

also held two bilateral meetings in the margins of the Summit, with the UK and South Korea, respectively).

The following more detailed analysis of key aspects of the Summit draws on a combination of the above links, a Summit [agenda](#) document published by NATO, wider press reporting of the Summit and NATO Watch insights in attempt to fill the information gaps. The remainder of this briefing discusses key developments at the Summit under the following eight headings:

- I. Strengthening NATO's long-term deterrence and defence
- II. Sustaining support for Ukraine
- III. Launching NATO's 2022 Strategic Concept
- IV. Reinforcing partnerships and maintaining an Open Door
- V. Membership invitation for Finland and Sweden
- VI. Military investments and burden-sharing
- VII. Combating climate change
- VIII. Challenges in the southern neighbourhood and the fight against terrorism

I. Strengthening NATO's long-term deterrence and defence

Backstory

To fulfil NATO's three core tasks (deterrence and defence; crisis prevention and management; and cooperative security, as set out in the Strategic Concept), the alliance employs a mix of mix of nuclear, conventional and missile defence capabilities, complemented by space and cyber capabilities. At successive summits since 2014, NATO leaders have agreed a range of measures to enhance their deterrence and defence posture, including the establishment of an [enhanced Forward Presence](#). This Forward Presence was initially based on four multinational battlegroups in Poland and the Baltic states, and then, in the wake of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, it was agreed to expand it to include four more in Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia. NATO also previously recognised that credible deterrence required these relatively small multinational forces to be underpinned by a robust reinforcement strategy. The Madrid Summit was expected to further strengthen conventional deterrence on its eastern front.

What was agreed in Madrid?

The Madrid Summit approved what the NATO Secretary General [described](#) as the "biggest overhaul of our collective defence and deterrence since the Cold War". This new force structure to deter Russia is based on four policy enhancements:

A massive increase in the NATO Response Force (NRF): This 40,000-strong force, that can supposedly deploy within 30 days, is to be increased to 300,000 troops across the continent and beyond and placed on high readiness by next year.

More pre-assigned forces: The eight battlegroups in the eastern part of the alliance (the Forward Presence) will be increased up to brigade levels—about 3,000 to 5,000 troops in addition to local forces—with foreign forces pre-assigned to specific locations, but not permanently deployed. For example, the UK [committed](#) to provide an extra 1,000 UK-based troops and one of its two new aircraft carriers to the defence of Estonia, where Britain already has about 1,700 personnel deployed. Germany has also already [said](#) that it will increase its existing commitment to Lithuania where it leads a 1,000-member battlegroup, although the bulk of the extra 3,500 Berlin intends to contribute will be based on its own soil, ready to move farther east if needed. Canada leads the battle group in Latvia, where it currently contributes 700 troops, while the United States is responsible for the one in Poland.

More pre-positioned heavy weapons, logistics and command-and control assets: The NATO Secretary General, explained that the new strategy meant heavy equipment would be positioned near NATO borders, with the ability to rapidly move people into place to use it.

An increase in the US long-term military presence in Europe. The other three policy changes are effectively underpinned by US commitments. Since February 2022, the United States had already deployed or extended over 20,000 additional forces to Europe in response to the Ukraine crisis, adding additional air, land, maritime, cyber, and space capabilities, bringing its total commitment to more than 100,000 service personnel across Europe. At the Madrid Summit President Biden [announced](#) the following additional long-term commitments to Europe:

- a permanent US 5th Army Corps headquarters in Poland—the first permanent US forces on NATO’s eastern flank—and an enhanced rotational force presence in the country;
- an increase in the number of destroyers stationed at Rota, Spain, from four to six;
- forward-stationing of two squadrons of F-35s combat aircraft at RAF Lakenheath in the UK;
- a brigade of 3,000 combat troops in Romania;
- enhanced rotational deployments in the Baltic region; and
- forward stationing of air defence systems in Germany and Italy.

Analysis

The headline announcement was the increase in the NRF (created at the Prague Summit in 2002) from 40,000 to 300,000 troops. However, the detailed troop contributions are still to be agreed and whether this will be achieved in practice remains an open question. Until February 2022, when NATO activated the NRF in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, units assigned to it had only been used to assist with disaster relief and security at high-profile security events. Thus, 20 years on from its creation, the NRF's reliability and credibility as a rapidly first-in response force is still unproven.

Asked by a journalist during his [press conference](#) on 29 June to clarify the 300,000 number and to provide a national breakdown of troop contributions, the NATO Secretary General said that only a “new NATO Force Model... the framework, the principles” had been agreed, and that the detailed force contributions were still being worked out, but would be in place by next year. He also said that the “majority of these forces will be home based” and that their readiness will be increased in a tier system: “One part of that is ready within 10 days and the second part will be ready within 30 days”, he said.

NATO officials briefed reporters about the new force on 30 June and it seems clear that the 300,000 number remains “[aspirational](#)”. The proposed tier structure was [clarified](#): “the first being about 100,000 troops ready to fight in 0-10 days, 300,000 troops ready in 30 days, and 500,000 ready in 180 days. It’s still not clear when the planning for these ready forces will be ready, but one official suggested it could be as far out as 2028”. A key point of tension remains among member states as to whether troops would be

deployed in frontline countries on the eastern flank or not.

The enhancements of NATO’s Forward Presence, including more pre-positioned heavy weapons, was less controversial and had been heavily signposted in the run up to the Summit. Before the Summit, Estonia’s Prime Minister Kaja Kallas had [claimed](#) that existing NATO defence plans would give Russia the time to wipe Tallinn off the map before western troops could be mobilised. And during the Summit, UK Defence Secretary Ben Wallace, [admitted](#) it would have taken 60 days to move extra tanks to the Baltic states in the event of a conflict under the old plans. (Also see this lengthy TV [interview](#) with former Polish army general Mieczyslaw Gocul, who among other things was Poland’s former chief of General Staff, on the considerable deficiencies of NATO, the NRF and particularly its command structure).

While the announced enhancements to Forward Presence were [endorsed](#) by a group of independent research institutes and think-tanks from NATO’s eastern flank, they may not satisfy several member states in the region that have long-called for permanent basing of troops on their territories. However, the creation of a new permanent army headquarters in Poland was immediately [welcomed](#) by Polish president Andrzej Duda, “It is a fact that strengthens our safety a lot ... in the difficult situation which we are in,” Duda said.

The changes to the Forward Presence posture appear to be a proportionate and measured [confidence-building approach](#) that meets the security concerns of member states on the eastern flank without further escalating the conflict with Russia. In short, while it means more NATO troops in the Baltic States and Poland, more equipment, weapons and ammunition sent to the region, and the setting up a system of rapid reinforcements, that particular package of measures appears to be primarily defensive in nature. However, the picture may change once the revamped NRF is up and running. A rapid response force of 300,000 troops would have the potential to be a significant expeditionary force for spearheading offensive operations in out of area conflicts. This force is likely to be destabilising, not only in the context of relations with Russia, but also potentially with China.

II. Sustaining support for Ukraine

Backstory

On 24 February 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine in a major escalation of the armed conflict that began in 2014. The war has now entered an attritional phase in the Donbas, where Russia appears to be gaining the upper hand, with Ukraine now pinning its hopes on receiving increased international military support. Before the Summit Ukrainian officials gave an [inventory](#) of Ukraine's needs: 1,000 155mm-calibre howitzers, 300 multiple-launch rocket systems, 500 tanks, 2,000 armoured vehicles, and 1,000 drones. They particularly need ammunition or artillery, but NATO does not have the ammunition for the old Soviet artillery systems that Ukraine uses. So far, the US has only delivered four HIMARS launchers, but more deliveries from both the US and the UK have been promised.

What was agreed in Madrid?

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky urged NATO leaders to help him regain the initiative during an address to the Summit on 29 June, pleading for more modern artillery and sustained support to battle the Russians. "The war should not drag on. To break the advantage of Russian artillery, we need a lot more of these modern systems, modern artillery", Zelensky said.

Zelensky also lamented that NATO's open-door policy to new members did not appear to apply to his country. "The open-door policy of NATO shouldn't resemble the old turnstiles on Kyiv's subway, which stay open but close when you approach them until you pay", Zelensky [said](#) "Hasn't Ukraine paid enough?".

The NATO Secretary General [confirmed](#) that member states "will continue to provide major military and financial help" and noted that leaders had agreed "to strengthen our support by agreeing a Comprehensive Assistance Package for Ukraine". He then outlined that this package includes secure communications, fuel, medical supplies, body armour, equipment to counter mines and chemical and biological threats, and hundreds of portable anti-drone systems. Over the longer-term, he also said that NATO would help Ukraine "transition from Soviet-era equipment to modern NATO equipment, boost interoperability, and further strengthen its defence and security institutions". He also specifically listed, Germany, the Netherlands and

Norway, as being among the countries that announced further military support to Ukraine.

President Biden [said](#) during a news conference he was preparing to unveil \$800 million in new security assistance, including the same model of missile defence system that is used to protect airspace in Washington, DC. The UK, the second biggest supplier of military aid to Ukraine, agreed to spend [another £1 billion](#) of military aid to the country.

Analysis

It is unclear whether the further military aid promised can change the battlefield momentum that currently favours Russia. The weapons promised by NATO member states fell short of what Zelensky had requested, and for now appear unlikely to fundamentally alter the trajectory of the war. Biden and Stoltenberg both [confirmed](#) that the US and NATO would support Ukraine for "as long as it takes", but this is starting to be a contentious issue within the alliance. Some NATO leaders are pushing for a decisive battlefield victory; others believe more vigorous attempts at brokering a settlement must be made, particularly amid the domestic economic fallout of sanctions.

While the NATO Secretary General [acknowledged](#) that the war "will, as most other wars at some stage, end at the negotiating table", he stressed the importance of Ukraine being able to get an agreement on its own terms, adding "there is a very close link between what they can achieve around the negotiating table and their strength on the battlefield". He also reiterated that NATO's door remains open for future Ukrainian membership, despite this becoming an increasingly less likely outcome of the war.

III. Launching NATO's 2022 Strategic Concept

Backstory

NATO's Strategic Concept is reviewed and updated regularly. Since the end of the Cold War, it has been updated approximately every 10 years to take account of changes to the global security environment and to make sure the alliance is prepared for the future. The [previous Strategic Concept](#) was adopted at the NATO Lisbon Summit in 2010. The 2021 Brussels summit duly tasked the Secretary General "to lead the process to develop

the next Strategic Concept". After a consultation phase, officials in member states negotiated and agreed the next Strategic Concept for endorsement at the Madrid Summit.



Resilience, technological innovation, climate change—"a defining challenge of our time"—cyber security, human security and the 'Women, Peace and Security agenda' are cross-cutting issues that sustain the core tasks.

What was agreed in Madrid?

The [2022 Strategic Concept](#) was adopted—the eighth in NATO's history. It identifies Russia as the main threat and its invasion of Ukraine as the driving force behind many of the changes. While the 2010 Strategic Concept assessed that "the Euro-Atlantic area is at peace and the threat of a conventional attack against NATO territory is low", the latest version declares that the "the Euro-Atlantic area is not at peace... We cannot discount the possibility of an attack against Allies' sovereignty and territorial integrity". And while in 2010 the document aspired "to see a true strategic partnership between NATO and Russia", Moscow is now accused of using "coercion, subversion, aggression and annexation" to extend its reach. Moreover, the document brands Russia as "the most significant and direct threat to Allies' security and to peace and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area".

The document also set out NATO's approach on the growing economic and military reach of China. While China did not warrant a single mention in 2010, it is now described as a "systemic challenge" that includes "malicious hybrid and cyber operations" and "confrontational rhetoric and disinformation" that "target allies". The document adds that China's "stated ambitions and coercive policies challenge our interests, security and values". Furthermore, the relationship between Russia and China is described as a "deepening strategic partnership" which is also likely to threaten NATO. Nonetheless, the document also says that NATO remains "open to constructive engagement" with Beijing.

The core tasks remain broadly the same, although the wording has been tweaked: defence and deterrence (previously collective defence), crisis prevention and management (previously just crisis management) and cooperative security. There appears to be a notable shift away from crisis management towards defence and deterrence.

The document also stresses the need to address political instability in Africa's Sahel region and the Middle East, where conflict is aggravated by "climate change, fragile institutions, health emergencies and food insecurity". Host [Spain](#) and other European countries drove this new focus. Overall, the document includes a total of 71 "we will" commitments, spread across 11 pages of text.

Analysis

NATO Watch will be publishing a series of briefings over the next 12 months that will explore the implications of the new Strategic Concept in more detail, including how the political-military ideas contained in the document are likely to be interpreted and implemented in practice. And most importantly, how they might best be implemented to further common and human security principles.

The new Strategic Concept reflects that the world is totally different now compared to 2010, when Russian President Medvedev participated at the Lisbon Summit. Its core rationale was summed up by the NATO Secretary General who [said](#) that "we now face an era of strategic competition". The Strategic Concept will be discussed in more detail in a subsequent briefing series (see box), but it is worth briefly commenting on two aspects here: the new approach to China and the continuing reliance on nuclear 'deterrence'.

The rise of China:

The first minor reference to China in a NATO [statement](#) was at the London summit in 2019, but transatlantic concerns have accelerated since then, driven largely by current US administration perceptions that democracies are in an existential confrontation with autocracies. The NATO Secretary General [claimed](#) that "China is not our adversary, but we must be clear-eyed about the serious challenges it represents". These he

outlined as “substantially building up its military forces, including nuclear weapons. Bullying its neighbours, and threatening Taiwan. Investing heavily in critical infrastructure, including in allied countries. Monitoring and controlling its own citizens through advanced technology. And spreading Russian lies and disinformation”.

The new emphasis on China is in part the realization of President Biden’s [strategy](#) to build a coalition of like-minded nations to confront China over its activities. The Pentagon has been publishing [annual reports](#) on China’s growing military capabilities since 2000, and sees it in the longer term as posing a greater strategic threat than Russia. China’s military budget—the second largest in the world after the United States, although still less than 40% of Washington’s—has grown for 27 consecutive years, and reached an [estimated \\$293 billion](#) in 2021 (an increase of 4.7 per cent compared with 2020).

During the Summit China issued a strong rebuke to NATO. “Who’s challenging global security and undermining world peace? Are there any wars or conflicts over the years where NATO is not involved?” China’s mission to the EU said in a [statement](#). “NATO’s so-called Strategic Concept, filled with cold war thinking and ideological bias, is maliciously attacking and smearing China. We firmly oppose it” the statement added. Chinese officials argue that their country remains committed to peaceful development and international cooperation through the United Nations and blame the United States and others for trying to thwart its inevitable rise as a global power.

While some European NATO states, principally France and Germany, had seemingly objected to describing China as a ‘threat’ due to strong economic ties with Beijing, there is clearly a growing transatlantic convergence in attitudes towards China. NATO’s tilt towards China was also reflected in the attendance of partners Australia, Japan, New Zealand and South Korea at the Summit. Going forward NATO is expected to increase exchanges of information with these partners and encourage more interoperability with their armed forces.

To this end, the Secretary General also [said](#) that “we must continue to stand with our partners to preserve the rules-based international order. A global system based on norms and values. Instead

of brute violence”. But as China eluded to in its statement, it is in fact the United States—not China—that has at various times since the Cold War [sought to remake the world by force](#) and created vast humanitarian crises through its military interventions.

There is rightly widespread and justified disquiet at China’s behaviour in Xinjiang and Hong Kong, and concern at the possible consequences of the self-assertive nationalism increasingly displayed since Xi Jinping came to power. However, the sweeping hostility to China shown in the Strategic Concept is a disproportionate response to those concerns. There is a real danger of this approach entrenching a systemic three bloc rivalry between China, Russia and NATO-EU-US, with all the attendant risks – from nuclear war to missed opportunities to address the existential threat of climate change and future pandemics. To avoid NATO being drawn into a great power competition, further public and parliamentary scrutiny of the motivations, advantages and shortcomings of this strategy is needed.

NATO’s nuclear posture

There are no explicit changes to NATO’s nuclear posture, despite some changes of emphasis and language. For example, NATO’s controversial [nuclear sharing arrangements](#) are given greater prominence: “NATO’s nuclear deterrence posture also relies on the United States’ nuclear weapons forward-deployed in Europe and the contributions of Allies concerned. National contributions of dual capable aircraft to NATO’s nuclear deterrence mission remain central to this effort”. This nuclear sharing arrangement is unique to NATO—or it was until Russia seemingly copied it on 25 June with an [announced](#) Russia-Belarus nuclear sharing agreement, a new and possibly precarious development in the deteriorating security situation in Europe.

Second, “authoritarian actors” are noted as “investing in sophisticated conventional, nuclear and missile capabilities, with little transparency or regard for international norms and commitments”. Of course, there is no mention of the nuclear weapon modernisation programmes of France, the United Kingdom, or the United States—the assumption being that these are [responsible nuclear-armed states](#). However, US [spending on nuclear weapons](#) is expected to climb by \$140 billion over the next ten years, while the UK has just [lifted the ceiling](#) on its nuclear weapons arsenal.

Moreover, the situation in Ukraine has exposed the system of [nuclear deterrence as highly unjust and precarious](#). In other words, all nuclear armed states (including those within NATO) pose a threat to peace and security. And as the vast majority of the world's states have concluded, the goal of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament is a safer and more secure path to take.

Third, the 2022 Strategic Concept reiterates that “as long as nuclear weapons exist, NATO will remain a nuclear alliance”, while seeking “to create the security environment for a world without nuclear weapons”. However, when it comes to a central element of the means to create such an environment—nuclear arms control—NATO continues to be [‘missing in action’](#). The alliance continues to treat nuclear arms control as an afterthought rather than a guiding principle, and the Strategic Concept contains no new ideas for strengthening it. Instead, the document reiterates a longstanding commitment to the “full implementation” of the 1968 Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, while studiously ignoring the 2017 Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), which it has tried to [undermine](#) at every step of its entry into force.

Moreover, while the 2010 Strategic Concept contained the (unmet) commitment to “seek to create the conditions for further [nuclear] reductions in the future”, there is no such commitment in the 2022 document. With global stockpiles of nuclear weapons [expected to increase](#) in the coming years for the first time since the end of the Cold War, and the risk of such weapons being used the greatest it has been in decades, NATO appears to be part of the problem

IV. Reinforcing partnerships and maintaining an Open Door

Backstory

Upholding the ‘rules-based international order’ has become the new in-vogue term. NATO has also been quick to point out on numerous occasions that countries like Russia and China do not share the alliance's values and are at the forefront of a pushback against that order. Thus, in what NATO describes as an ‘era of strategic competition’, with authoritarian regimes contesting core security principles, the alliance is

exploring ways of working even more closely with like-minded countries and organisations.

What was agreed in Madrid?

The [Madrid Summit Declaration](#) reaffirmed NATO's commitment to “upholding the rules-based international order” and allies' shared values of “democracy, individual liberty, human rights, and the rule of law”. It also reaffirmed NATO's Open Door Policy, and the decision to invite Finland and Sweden to become members of NATO (see below).

The Declaration also outlined several developments with partners at the Summit, including “valuable exchanges” with the leaders of Australia, Finland, Georgia, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea, Sweden, and Ukraine, as well as the President of the European Council and the President of the European Commission. Cooperation with the EU will be further strengthened “in a spirit of full mutual openness, transparency, complementarity, and respect for the organisations' different mandates, decision-making autonomy and institutional integrity, and as agreed by the two organisations”. In seeking to discuss “common approaches to global security challenges where NATO's interests are affected”, the Declaration also commits the alliance to “move ahead with strengthening our engagement with existing and potential new interlocutors beyond the Euro-Atlantic area”.

Although details of new concrete initiatives were sparse, during his press conference the NATO Secretary General [said](#) increased cooperation with the Indo-Pacific partners would include “cyber defence, new technologies, maritime security, climate change and countering disinformation”. As for cooperation with other partners, an enhanced package of support was approved for Ukraine (see above) and it was agreed to “step up tailored political and practical support for partners” (especially, according to Stoltenberg, those “at risk from Russian aggression”), including Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia and Moldova. The focus will be on helping them to “build their capabilities, and strengthen their resilience”.

For the first time, NATO agreed a defence capacity-building package for Mauritania to help them deal with security concerns, which Stoltenberg said included “border security, irregular migration, and terrorism”. Support will focus on special operations, maritime security and intelligence.

Specific commitments to Georgia [outlined](#) by the NATO Secretary General include increased participation in NATO's cyber exercises, strengthening secure communications and helping develop protection of critical infrastructure. Additional personnel will also be added to NATO's Liaison Office in Georgia.

Analysis

Despite reaffirming their commitment to the rules-based international order, the United States and several other NATO member states remain vulnerable to accusations of the selective application of international norms and rules that they expect others to follow. For example, the US-UK decision to invade Iraq in 2003 under a contested UN authorization; the failure to close the Guantanamo Bay detention facility, the use of torture under previous US administrations, the continued use of presidential authority under 'war on terrorism' directives to carry out lethal drone strikes in the Middle East, Asia and Africa, and the exposure by Edward Snowden of the way US intelligence services used the dominance of US technology companies over the internet to carry out espionage—all continue to cast a long shadow over NATO claims to be the principal defender of a rules-based international system. Of course, this does not mean that such a system is not worth defending – it is. But it also suggests that the rules need to be applied consistently and extensively across the alliance, and where appropriate, revised in cooperation with other like-minded states to ensure that they remain relevant.

V. Membership invitation for Finland and Sweden

Backstory

Finland and Sweden's historic moves to join NATO following Russia's invasion of Ukraine faced opposition from Turkey, which was threatening to veto the enlargement. The Turkish opposition stemmed from accusations by Ankara that both countries are harbouring people linked to groups it deems terrorists, including the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK)—also deemed a terrorist group by the United States and the EU—and took issue with Helsinki and Stockholm's decisions to halt arms exports to Turkey in 2019. Also read: [Should Finland and Sweden hold a referendum on NATO membership?](#) NATO Watch Briefing no. 93, 6 May 2022

What was agreed in Madrid?

On the 28 June, on the eve of the Summit, leaders from Turkey, Finland and Sweden signed a 10-point [trilateral memorandum](#) that purportedly addressed Ankara's security concerns and paved the way for the two Nordic countries to obtain full NATO membership. The trilateral deal was reached between Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, President Sauli Niinistö of Finland and the Swedish Prime Minister, Magdalena Andersson. For further NATO Watch analysis see [here](#).

NATO's 30 leaders duly invited Finland and Sweden into the alliance, subject to ratification. "The significance of this really can't be overstated", the UK's Prime Minister Boris Johnson [told](#) reporters. "We're seeing the expansion of the alliance, which is exactly the opposite of what Putin wanted. He wanted less NATO, he's getting more". On 5 July, the accession protocols for Finland and Sweden were signed and Canada became the first member state to formally ratify their accession.

Analysis

The invitation to Finland and Sweden represents a major geopolitical shift in Europe as the two countries move away from neutrality. However, ratification by Turkey is still by no means certain. The trilateral agreement could still [falter](#) on implementation, especially regarding Turkish extradition requests. "The agreement that was signed is just a beginning, an invitation. What is of essence is that promises that were made are put into action", Erdogan [said](#) at a news conference in Madrid on 30 June at the close of the Summit. "This deal won't materialize unless it's approved by our parliament", Erdogan added. "Sweden and Finland must remain faithful to their pledges; otherwise, it is out of the question that [their memberships] would be brought before [the Turkish] parliament".

VI. Military investments and burden-sharing

Backstory

The burden-sharing debate has dominated successive NATO summits (see, for, example the discussion in NATO Watch Observatory No. [48](#)). The reluctance of many European member states to spend more on defence has been a major grievance of most US presidents, but especially former President Donald Trump. The NATO

Secretary General has been promoting continued investment in collective defence, while also seeking to change who pays for key missions. One way to achieve the latter would be to increase NATO's relatively small [common budget](#)—roughly \$2.5 billion a year or 0.3% of total allied military spending; with much of it currently taken up in administrative and infrastructure costs, like running the Brussels headquarters—and use those funds to support missions, such as air policing in the Baltics or multinational battle group deployments along NATO's eastern flank. Currently, the nation that deploys troops on such missions pays the bill.

Technological innovations constantly change the nature of peace, crisis and conflict. The United States and several key European NATO member states have traditionally placed great emphasis on retaining their technological edge (and often articulate this aim almost as an entitlement), but as this has become increasingly challenged by China and others, the debate around how NATO can stay ahead of the curve has sharpened. In recent years, NATO has identified seven key emerging and disruptive technologies (EDTs): artificial intelligence, data and computing, autonomy, quantum-enabled technologies, biotechnology, hypersonic technology and space. These areas were further elaborated in a March 2020 [report](#) by the NATO Science and Technology Organization ([STO](#), a NATO subsidiary body and “the world's largest collaborative research forum in the field of defence and security”), which provided an assessment of the impact of EDT advances over the next 20 years. Among the report's conclusions was that disruptive effects would most likely occur through combinations of EDTs and the complex interactions between them.

NATO is working towards a strategy for both fostering these technologies—through stronger relationships with innovation hubs and specific funding mechanisms—and protecting EDT investments from outside influence. NATO is expected to eventually develop individual strategies for each of the seven science and technology areas, but in the short to medium term the priority is AI and data. To foster greater technological cooperation among NATO, it was agreed at the Brussels Summit in 2021 to “launch a civil-military Defence Innovation Accelerator for the North Atlantic” (DIANA) and “to establish a NATO Innovation Fund” to support start-ups

working on dual-use emerging and disruptive technologies.

What was agreed in Madrid?

The leaders recommitted in the [Madrid Summit Declaration](#) to the pledge made in 2014 to spend at least 2% of GDP on defence and will “decide next year on subsequent commitments beyond 2024”. Before the Summit, NATO released [expenditure data](#) showing that military spending among its 30 members was expected to increase by 1.2% in real terms in 2022, the slowest growth rate in eight successive years of growth. Nine countries are projected to exceed the 2% of GDP target, led by Greece on 3.76% and the US on 3.47% with the UK sixth on 2.12%, down marginally on the two previous years. France spends 1.9% and Germany 1.44%.

In his [press conference](#), the NATO Secretary General said that, since 2014, European allies and Canada had spent an extra \$350 billion on defence, and that nineteen members have clear plans to reach the 2% target by 2024, and an additional five have concrete commitments to meet it thereafter—adding that 2% is “increasingly seen as a floor, not as a ceiling”.

It was also agreed to increase common funding, but very few further details were given. The Secretary General [explained](#) that the decision was made in principle last year and that a “trajectory for common funding up to 2030” had been agreed with the specific figures to be decided in the yearly or annual budgets. Nonetheless, he confirmed that the agreement reached at the Summit “represents a considerable significant increase in NATO's common funded budgets”.

Finally, the leaders also launched the NATO Innovation Fund. Backed by 22 member states (Belgium; Bulgaria; Czech Republic; Denmark; Estonia; Germany; Greece; Hungary; Iceland; Italy; Latvia; Lithuania; Luxembourg; Netherlands; Norway; Poland; Portugal; Romania; Slovakia; Spain; Turkey and the UK) it will invest €1 billion in developing dual-use emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence, big-data processing, quantum-enabled technologies, autonomy, biotechnology and human enhancement, novel materials, energy, propulsion and space. “This fund is unique”, the Secretary General [said](#), “with a 15-year timeframe, the NATO Innovation Fund will help bring to life those nascent technologies that have the power to transform our security in the

decades to come, strengthening the Alliance’s innovation ecosystem and bolstering the security of our one billion citizens”.

The Fund complements NATO’s DIANA, which will support the development and adaptation of dual-use emerging technologies to critical security and defence challenges. During the Summit leaders also agreed that innovators participating in DIANA’s programmes will have access to a network of more than 9 Accelerator Sites and more than 63 Test Centres across Europe and North America.

Analysis

This latest iteration of the burden-sharing debate is designed to appease Washington. President Biden is just as demanding about military spending as his predecessor. However, there are two fundamental flaws in this ‘fairer-burden’ sharing discussion. First, justifying greater military spending when government budgets have already been ravaged—by restrictions imposed to limit the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic and as a result of a growing global economic recession, in part due to the war in Ukraine—is going to be a hard sell. This is especially the case as the burden may well fall on those least able to carry it (i.e., the evidence [suggests](#) that high military spending exacerbates existing inequalities within societies). Second, and the ongoing elephant in the room, while most European member states probably do not need to spend more, the United States certainly needs to spend less on the military. A cut of 10% in the [pandemic of Pentagon spending](#), for example, would release more than \$80 billion for other more pressing needs.

Weapon systems that rely on artificial intelligence are advancing rapidly, and there is insufficient public debate or accountability on their development. Leading this technological arms race are the United States, China, Russia, South Korea, Israel and a few EU/NATO member states. NATO policy in this area is still emerging, largely driven by the United States (In January 2021, for example, the US Congress [backed](#) the creation of a national AI strategy as part of the country’s annual defence authorization bill).

For nearly a decade, a coalition of non-governmental organisations has pushed for a treaty banning autonomous weapons systems, or ‘killer robots’, saying human control is necessary to judge the proportionality of attacks and to

assign blame for war crimes. At least 40 countries including Brazil, China (on use only) and Pakistan, and two NATO member states (Croatia and Spain) [want a ban](#), and a UN body has held meetings on the systems since at least 2014. Exactly where the alliance falls on the spectrum between permitting AI-powered military technology in some applications and regulating or banning it in others was expected to be part of the Strategic Concept debate. However, the 2022 Strategic Concept simply states that “We will enhance our individual and collective resilience and technological edge”.

It is imperative that NATO’s debate on this issue is open and transparent. The UN Secretary-General António Guterres has called on states to prohibit weapons systems that could, by themselves, target and attack human beings, [calling them](#) “morally repugnant and politically unacceptable”. With NATO leadership such weapons could be banned by a treaty similar to the initiatives that successfully prohibited antipersonnel landmines in 1997 and cluster munitions in 2008. Preserving meaningful human control over the use of force is an ethical imperative and a legal necessity.

VII Combatting climate change

Backstory

NATO has recognized the adverse effects of climate change on international security. NATO’s 2010 Strategic Concept, for example, said that environmental and climate change will shape the future security environment and have significant implications for the alliance’s planning and operations. Similarly, the Wales Summit Declaration in 2014 identified [climate change, water scarcity and increasing energy needs](#) as future disruptors of security.

There is a growing willingness in NATO to discuss and explore responses to climate-related dangers, and in June 2021, the alliance agreed a new [Climate Change and Security Action Plan](#), which included four key commitments: an annual Climate Change and Security Impact Assessment; an adaptation strategy; a mitigation strategy; and an outreach strategy. To track the progress made, re-assess the level of ambition, and inform the way ahead, the first Climate Change and Security Progress Report was due to be delivered at the Madrid Summit. In June 2021, the NATO Secretary General was also tasked with formulating “a

realistic, ambitious and concrete target for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by the NATO political and military structures and facilities and assess the feasibility of reaching net zero emissions by 2050”.

What was agreed in Madrid?

The NATO Secretary General [described](#) climate change as “a defining challenge of our time” (wording replicated in the Madrid Summit Declaration and 2022 Strategic Concept), adding “We cannot choose between having green militaries or strong militaries”. The NATO leaders agreed a new methodology to map military greenhouse gas emissions and concrete targets to cut NATO emissions. The aim is cut emissions by NATO bodies and commands by at least 45% by 2030, and to move towards Net Zero by 2050. Moreover, the 2022 Strategic Comment aims for NATO to become “the leading international organisation when it comes to understanding and adapting to the impact of climate change on security”.

Analysis

While all these announcements are worthy aims, they are likely to be undermined by the twin pressures of raising military spending (see above) and the increases in military exercises as part of efforts to contain China and Russia. Moreover, the [poor quality of emissions reporting](#) in this sector means that no one actually knows whether military carbon emissions are falling or not. A key step is thus for member states to calculate the specific carbon footprints of their militaries and then report these figures. More difficult will be persuading all member states to carry out similar climate and carbon reduction actions when climate policies are not equally prioritised across the alliance.

While the 2022 Strategic Concept does encourage cooperation on climate change mitigation and adaptation, the focus up until now has primarily been on the resulting security risks and the promotion of energy saving in member states’ armed forces. This ‘greening of the military’ agenda not only results in such absurdities as adding [solar panels to battle tanks](#), it shifts responsibility away from NATO member states to do more to reduce greenhouse gas emissions for which they are collectively responsible.

VIII. Challenges in the southern neighbourhood and the fight against terrorism

Backstory

While Russia’s invasion of Ukraine dominated the lead up to the Summit, other member states—principally France, Italy, Spain and the UK—have been pushing NATO to focus once more on Europe’s southern flank, especially the rise of instability in Africa. The 2010 Strategic Concept did not explicitly mention such concerns, but Italy currently hosts [NATO’s Joint Force Command base in Naples](#), which in 2017 opened a south hub focusing on terrorism, radicalization, migration and other issues emanating from North Africa and the Middle East.

These concerns have taken on an added dimension with both Russia and China extending their influence in the region. Russian mercenaries (the Wagner Group) have been active in central and North Africa and the Middle East. In Mali, for example, [Wagner soldiers](#) are filling a void created by the exit of former colonial power France. Similarly, the United States has been [warning](#) that China is trying to build a military naval base on Africa’s Atlantic coast, although currently Beijing only operates one acknowledged foreign military base, located in Djibouti in East Africa.

What was agreed in Madrid?

The final session at the Madrid Summit focused on threats and challenges from the Middle East, North Africa and the Sahel, and the new Strategic Concept identified “conflict, fragility and instability” in these localities as one of the main threats to the security of NATO member states. As part of this discussion, the NATO leaders also [reviewed](#) “progress in the fight against terrorism”. Specific deliverables [cited](#) by the NATO Secretary General included NATO’s ongoing training mission in Iraq (“helping to prevent the return of ISIS”), a defence capacity-building package for Mauritania, a former French colony in West Africa (see above), additional capacity-building support for Tunisia, and continuing support to Jordan.

The Secretary General said that the meeting also addressed how Russia and China “continue to seek political, economic, and military gain across our southern neighbourhood”, through “economic leverage, coercion, and hybrid approaches to advance their interests in the region”.

Finally, the meeting also discussed efforts to mitigate the global food crisis from the war in Ukraine and disruption to wheat and other food exports from the region. According to Stoltenberg the discussion explored how to get grain out of Ukraine by land and sea, but apparently did not reach any conclusions or agreed outcomes.

Analysis

This topic raises multiple, complex and overlapping security issues, and a detailed analyses of these is beyond the scope of this briefing. However, several broad points can be made. First, Africa is increasingly being treated as an arena for geopolitical and commercial competition by countries from Asia, Europe, the Middle East and North America. It is often unclear whether former colonial European powers are any less exploitative than some of the newer entrants to the region.

Second, most Western forces deployed in Africa are there to train and build capacity in local, national or subregional forces, largely with the aim of countering transnational jihadist groups. But their record to date is [mixed](#) at best. The dominant military counterterrorism approach has often [failed](#) to address the influence of foreign jihadist movements or deeper community grievances. Abuses by security force and a perceived lack of access to justice and protection has also driven recruitment into extremist organizations and other armed groups.

Third, it remains unclear what NATO will bring to the table. France has a long tradition of maintaining a significant military footprint in sub-Saharan Africa, but more recently has made efforts to reduce it through multilateral arrangements with African and European states (e.g. the [Takuba Task Force](#)). Meanwhile, independent estimates suggest at least 6000 US military personnel are deployed across 13 countries in the sub-Saharan Africa region. Moreover, the United States [deploys](#) small teams of Special Operations forces as part of an obscure and secretive funding authority that allows the US to conduct counterterrorism operations “[by, with, and through](#)” foreign and irregular partner forces around the world. Hence, it is hard to imagine any national combat forces in Africa coming under NATO command—especially given the legacy of the 2011 [Libyan intervention](#). Instead, further capacity building support programmes for new and existing partners seem more likely, as well as

further logistics and airlift support to the African Union.

Fourth, if NATO is to become directly involved in military training and capacity-building in Africa, the right lessons need to be applied from earlier missions, especially those in Afghanistan. Despite a nearly 20-year US-led NATO military presence in Afghanistan, which only ended in August 2021, the mission has become a taboo subject within the alliance. There was no mention of Afghanistan in the Madrid Summit Declaration, and it warranted only one mention in the 2022 Strategic Concept, with a commitment [in crisis prevention and management] to build “on the lessons learned over the past three decades, including through our operations in Afghanistan”.

That ‘lessons learned process’ was launched in September 2021, following the rapid collapse of the Afghan Government and forces a month earlier. By then, the Western security effort in Afghanistan had [cost](#) the United States alone \$2.3 trillion, and the price in lives included 2,324 US troops and 1,144 personnel among NATO partners. Afghan losses included more than 46,000 civilians, about 69,000 members of the national armed forces and police, and over 52,000 opposition fighters. NATO insists that it helped to prevent the launch of international extremist attacks from Afghan soil for almost two decades, but that is a low bar for such costs.

None of the various internal and expert reviews that made up the lessons learned process in Afghanistan have been made public. The main findings were published in a 730-word NATO [Factsheet](#) in December 2021, but the conclusions and recommendations were barely detailed enough to fit on the back of a proverbial envelope. (For further analysis see [here](#)).

Throughout the nearly two decades of NATO’s presence in Afghanistan, many of the military and intelligence assessments on progress in the country were [deliberately misleading](#) or hid inconvenient facts about ongoing failures inside confidential channels. Before enhancing its levels of engagement in Africa, it is vital NATO improves the transparency of its operational metrics, and that parliamentary oversight in member states is significantly strengthened.

IX. Conclusions

In the past 30 months the world has changed in a way that nobody anticipated. First, there was an unprecedented global public health emergency on a scale not seen for a century. Second, in February Russia invaded Ukraine in a major escalation of an armed conflict that began in 2014. Unsurprisingly, the core message from within the Madrid Summit was that NATO has regained vitality and reaffirmed its strategic purpose, not least by displaying unity and solidarity in countering Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine.

This unity and determination have also resonated with the public. According to a [new survey](#) of international opinion conducted by the Pew Research Global Attitudes Project public attitudes towards NATO are at or near 10-year highs in most of Europe. A median of 65% across 11 member states said they had a favourable view of NATO, while 26% said they had an unfavourable view. Most favourable were Polish respondents (89%), and favourability was at or close to their highest point in seven of the covered member states in the past ten years. Nearly 80% of respondents in Sweden, said they had a favourable view of the alliance.

Yet below the surface, there are fundamental and largely unanswered questions about the future of the alliance. First, while all member states agree that Russia is responsible for the war, and support Ukraine's defensive efforts, there are clear differences on what should constitute the West's ultimate strategic goals—both in terms of how the war should end and in how to deal with Russia in the medium term.

Second, there is a danger that the emphasis on Russia and China as threats to the West, underplays the many internal threats to Western liberal democracy. Socioeconomic inequality, demographic changes and cultural anxieties are driving internal extremism within several member states. While the 2022 Strategic Concept refers to the need to enhance 'resilience' this is almost entirely framed in the context of external coercion by Russia and China, and completely ignores home-grown malign and illiberal influences within member states. The [democratic backsliding](#) within NATO is rarely discussed at summits, and this one was no exception (although America's Roe reversal was apparently [raised](#) by some diplomats in Madrid).

Third, there is no indication that NATO is prepared to address the long-standing [democratic deficit](#) within the alliance itself. NATO should be adopting an information openness policy consistent with the access to information laws already in place in the alliance's 30 member states, including guidelines for proactive publication of core information, a mechanism by which the public can file requests for information, and an independent review body for hearing appeals against refusals or failures to make information public within a short timeframe. The issue of improving transparency and accountability in NATO was once again overlooked in the 2022 Strategic Concept.

Fourth, as NATO prepares to do more to address instability in Africa and other regions of the world, it is unclear whether the right lessons have been learnt from the strategic failure in Afghanistan and the 2011 intervention in Libya.

Finally, despite all the backslapping in Madrid, the 2022 Strategic Concept sets NATO on a path that is likely to lead to a further deterioration in relations between the world's 'great' powers. It is a path that seeks to protect the interests of some of the most militarised states in the world rather than one that protects humanity. At a time when humanity and the planet face an array of profound and pressing common challenges, it is hard to escape the conclusion that international cooperation to address those challenges became even harder as a result of the Madrid Summit.

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