Research Division

NATO's New Strategic Concept

Edited by Thierry Tardy

NDC RESEARCH PAPER

NATO's New Strategic Concept

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List of abbreviations

AUKUS	Australia, United Kingdom, United States
AWACS	Airborne Warning & Control System
BRI	Belt and Road Initiative
DIANA	Defence Innovation Accelerator for the North Atlantic
DoD	Department of Defense
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
KFOR	Kosovo Force
NAC	North Atlantic Council
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
PRC	People's Republic of China
TPNW	Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons
US	United States
USD	US Dollars

Introduction

Thierry Tardy

At the Madrid Summit held on 28-30 June 2022, NATO Allies adopted a new Strategic Concept (see Annex I). This is the fourth of its kind in the post-Cold War era, following previous Concepts adopted in 1991, 1999 and 2010.

NATO's Strategic Concept aims to define the Alliance's vision for the coming decade. It lays out the security challenges facing the Alliance and outlines the political and military tasks that NATO must carry out to address them. As such, the Concept is not an Action Plan, nor does it aim to offer policy options for Allies. Its objective is strategic; its main purpose is to define what NATO stands for and to communicate this to a broad audience both within and beyond the Alliance.

The process through which the Strategic Concept is drafted, adopted, and finally released enables Allies and observers to reflect on the rationale of such a document. This includes the objectives that a strategic-level document serves, the pitfalls these documents must avoid, and, once released, the vision that it offers, as well as the opportunities it has possibly missed.[1]

The 2022 NATO Strategic Concept was of course drafted during a particular historical moment. While a semi-formal process began at the end of 2019, when the London Leaders' Meeting mandated the NATO Secretary General to establish a reflection group,[2] the final document itself was directly and fundamentally shaped by Russia's February 2022 invasion of Ukraine.

A decade ago, the 2010 NATO Strategic Concept stated, "the Euro-Atlantic area is at peace and the threat of a conventional attack against NATO territory is low".[3] In 2022,

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1   Examples of recent NDC publications on these issues include A. Gilli *et al.*, "Strategic Shifts and NATO's new Strategic Concept", *NDC Research Paper 24*, June 2022; J.H. Michaels, "It's that time of the decade again: some considerations for NATO's eighth Strategic Concept", *NDC Policy Brief 2*, January 2020; T. Tardy, "The future of NATO", *NDC Policy Brief 20*, November 2021; B. Kunz, "European allies and the forthcoming NATO Strategic Concept", *NDC Policy Brief 15*, September 2021; M. Henke, "The 'dos and don'ts' of strategy making", *NDC Policy Brief 6*, March 2022.

2   London Declaration issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in London 3-4 December 2019, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_171584.htm

3   NATO, Strategic Concept, "Active Engagement, Modern Defence", Lisbon, 2010, para.7; https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_82705.htm

this is obviously no longer the case. While the Alliance itself has not faced military attack, war has returned to Europe. Russia has not only blatantly violated principles and values that NATO Allies stand for, it has also raised the plausibility of a conflict directly involving NATO. Not since the Cold War has the threat of war against the Alliance been so real. Indeed, the 2022 Strategic Concept states that "The Euro-Atlantic area is not at peace" (para.6) and that "an attack against Allies' sovereignty and territorial integrity" cannot be discounted (para.6). Russia is depicted as the "most significant and direct threat to Allies' security and to peace and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area" (para.8). Inevitably, the war in Ukraine bluntly interrogates NATO's purpose, including how it can deter Russia from attacking Allies and how it should defend itself if need be.

These dangers have prompted Allies to initiate a reset of their posture that re-prioritises collective defence and a "deterrence and defence" agenda. The era of NATO crisis management operations, in Afghanistan and elsewhere, is over. And while the new Concept maintains the three core tasks (deterrence and defence, crisis management, and cooperative security) as defined in the 2010 document, these are subordinated as "complementary to ensure the collective defence and security of all Allies" (para.4).

That being said, the international security environment still presents broader challenges than Russia alone. In the 2022 Concept, drafters have therefore balanced their emphasis on Russia's aggression against Ukraine by identifying other challenges NATO faces and assessing their impact on the Alliance. For instance, consider the issue of terrorism, characterised in the new Concept as "the most direct asymmetric threat to the security of our citizens and to international peace and prosperity" (para.10), or the issue of "pervasive insecurity", which NATO sees emanating from its Southern neighbourhood. Indeed, the Concept insists on a 360-degree approach, in which collective defence is not unidirectional.

Most importantly, for the first time ever, the new Concept mentions China, stating that its policies challenge Allied "security and values". China does not make it to the category of "threat", yet the way the document presents China conveys much about how Beijing is perceived (at least by some Allies).

How, then, does the new Concept define the strategic environment and how must the Alliance adapt? What are the core tasks that NATO must fulfil, and how do recent global developments impact the Alliance's *raison d'être*, cohesion, and identity? Is the new Concept evolutionary or revolutionary? Does it offer a vision or a snapshot? To what extent will it shape NATO's mandate in terms of balancing the Eastern flank versus the South, in dealing with China, and in handling issues such as hybrid warfare, the climate crisis, emerging technologies, and resilience? Lastly, what are its possible weak points and likely implementation challenges?

These are the issues that the six authors of this *Research Paper* examine. These authors – namely, Patrick Keller, Stanley Sloan, Bruno Tertrais, Mark Webber, Marcin Zaborowski, and Thierry Tardy – are academics and researchers hailing from five different countries. They present their own views on the Strategic Concept, deciphering what it says about the Alliance, what it does not say, and how it prepares the Alliance to adapt to the coming decade.

Overall, four issues stand out in the following chapters. First, the new Strategic Concept is concise, clear, and focused; it is the result of a broad consultation process and offers a mix of continuity and disruption – for instance, keeping the three core tasks while taking into account an evolving security environment. As such, it successfully conveys the sense of cohesion and unity that the Alliance constantly craves.

Second, in contrast to the 2010 document, the new Concept is clear-eyed regarding the nature of the international security environment, buffeted by the return of strategic competition and the renewed Russian threat to Europe. The document marks the return of collective defence, though Allies have refrained from overemphasizing confrontation with Russia. In this context, the text tends to overlook threats emanating from NATO's Southern flank.

Third, China is included in a NATO Strategic Concept for the first time – not quite as an explicit threat but nonetheless portrayed as such. What this implies for the Alliance, however, remains unsaid. There is an understanding that China poses a number of problems to the Alliance and its member states, yet how and where NATO can or will respond is still to be defined. Nevertheless, the very fact that the Concept mentions China indicates a shift in Alliance policy.

Finally, while the Concept depicts a rather large security agenda for the coming decade, with threats and challenges ranging from hard security to softer human security-related issues, it is largely silent on NATO's internal cohesion and on the ways this cohesion is potentially undermined from within, be it by its own governments or peoples. The Concept largely refers to "NATO values" and how they matter to transatlantic security. In the face of current threats, then, it stands out as an interest-focused document rather than one which offers a strategic vision, articulated around shared values and what NATO will stand for in the coming decade.

Six takeaways from NATO's new Strategic Concept

Thierry Tardy

At the Madrid Summit held on 28-30 June 2022, NATO Allies adopted a new Strategic Concept, the highest-level political document that the Alliance produces besides its constitutional treaty. This Concept is the fourth of its kind in the post-Cold War era (the eighth since 1949), following previous Concepts adopted in 1991, 1999 and 2010. The 2022 Concept *de facto* replaces the one agreed to in Lisbon in 2010.[1]

NATO's Strategic Concept defines the Alliance's *raison d'être* and vision. It lays out the security challenges facing the Alliance and outlines the political and military tasks that NATO must carry out to address them. As such, the Concept is not an Action Plan, nor does it offer policy options for its Allies. Its objective is strategic; it aims to define what NATO stands for and to communicate this to a broad audience both within and beyond the Alliance.

The new document (see Annex I) is composed of a preface followed by a main body of 49 paragraphs, forming a total of 11 pages. It is divided into four sections: "Purpose and Principles"; "Strategic Environment"; "NATO's Core Tasks"; and "Ensuring the Alliance's Continued Success". Contrary to its 2010 predecessor (but similar to the 1991 and 1999 Concepts), the 2022 text has no title. The cover page only refers to "NATO 2022 Strategic Concept". The text is relatively short, written in accessible prose for a broad audience while offering a relatively clear picture of what NATO is and does.

The process

The exercise of writing the new Strategic Concept officially began at the June 2021 NATO

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1   NATO, "Active Engagement, Modern Defence", Strategic Concept, Lisbon, 2010, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_82705.htm

Summit. There, Allies mandated the NATO Secretary General to "lead the process to develop the next Strategic Concept", to be "negotiated and agreed by the Council in Permanent Session and endorsed by NATO Leaders at the next Summit".[2] With this mandate, the Policy Planning Unit (PPU) of the Secretary General acted as the Concept writing cell.

The Concept's drafting was informed by two parallel consultation tracks. One track was internal, and involved the Alliance's International Secretariat and the member states; the other track was external, with consultations with partner countries, organisations, and civil society. Internally, the PPU circulated a number of "framing papers" to Allies, while a series of open and closed-door seminars were hosted by Allies and public engagements were organized in both consultation tracks.[3] Input was also solicited from academic institutions and think tanks.[4]

A first draft was presented to Allies in mid-May 2022. This was followed by a six-week negotiation process that produced ten subsequent drafts in the lead up to the Madrid Summit in June. It was agreed that these negotiations would be held directly within the North Atlantic Council rather than within committees, with national representatives making general comments on the circulated draft rather than suggesting precise and written amendments. This resulted in a document that was largely institution-led rather than state-led. Nonetheless, major Allies, including the United States and other members of the Quad (namely France, Germany and the United Kingdom), expectedly played an important role in shaping the final text. The Concept language was negotiated until the very last moment and then adopted on 29 June 2022 in Madrid. It was accompanied by a Summit Declaration (see Annex II), a Trilateral Memorandum on Sweden's and Finland's accession to NATO,[5] as well as a parallel text on NATO funding which remains classified.

If producing the Concept officially took a full year, the overall reflection process began at the December 2019 Leaders' Meeting, when Allies invited the Secretary General to present a "Council-agreed proposal for a forward-looking reflection process under his auspices, drawing on relevant expertise, to further strengthen NATO's political dimension including consultation".[6] Although this was not presented as a precursor effort prior to a

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2   Brussels Summit Communiqué issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Brussels 14 June 2021, para.6.h, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_185000.htm

3   See NATO, "Consultations and Events", https://www.nato.int/strategic-concept/events/

4   Among those were the "shadow" strategic concept produced by the Alphen Group (see https://thealphengroup. com/2022/02/03/the-tag-shadow-nato-strategic-concept/), as well as various publications and events organized by the NATO Defense College (see https://www.ndc.nato.int/research/research.php?icode=39 for publications and https://www. ndc.nato.int/research/research-events.php?icode=2 for events).

5   See https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2022/6/pdf/220628-trilat-memo.pdf

6   London Declaration issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic

new Strategic Concept, it effectively played this role.

This initiative came implicitly as a response to French President Emmanuel Macron's November 2019 statement that NATO was "brain dead",[7] which itself came in the aftermath of the US withdrawal from northern Syria and the subsequent October 2019 Turkish operation there. France had deployed troops in the region and deplored the lack of consultation within NATO prior to its Allies' moves. This context allows France to claim some responsibility for the revision of the Concept (see Bruno Tertrais in this volume).

The so-called Reflection Group, which was not the shadow writing cell of the Strategic Concept, submitted its report in November 2020, in which it *inter alia* called for an update of the 2010 Strategic Concept.[8] In parallel, though, the Secretary General pushed to lead his own initiative. In June 2020, he launched the NATO2030 process, aimed at adapting the Alliance to the challenges of the coming decade.[9] The Reflection Group was only one component of this broader initiative, which also included the convening of a group of Young Leaders and a series of events and activities in connection with the private sector, civil society, parliamentarians, and academia. This led to the NATO2030 agenda, adopted by Allies at the June 2021 Summit.[10] This agenda was composed of eight items, one of which calling for an update to the 2010 Strategic Concept.

The Strategic Concept's take-aways

Six issues deserve scrutiny when looking at the new Strategic Concept.

A deteriorated security environment

First, the new Strategic Concept offers a novel characterization of the current security environment. The second section ("Strategic Environment") of the document depicts how

Council in London 3-4 December 2019, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_171584.htm

7   "Emmanuel Macron warns Europe: NATO is becoming brain-dead", *The Economist*, 7 November 2019, https://www.economist.com/europe/2019/11/07/emmanuel-macron-warns-europe-nato-is-becoming-brain-dead

8   "NATO 2030: united for a new era. Analysis and recommendations of the Reflection Group appointed by the NATO Secretary General", 25 November 2020, p.12, https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2020/12/pdf/201201-Reflection-Group-Final-Report-Uni.pdf

9   See https://www.nato.int/nato2030/

10   See Brussels Summit Communiqué issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Brussels 14 June 2021, para.6, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_185000.htm.

Allies interpret the environment they face. The first sentence – "The Euro-Atlantic area is not at peace" (para.6) – comes in stark contrast with the first sentence of a similar section in the 2010 Concept, which then stated that "the Euro-Atlantic area is at peace and the threat of a conventional attack against NATO territory is low".[11] The following sentences in the new Concept identify Russia as having violated norms and principles that previously contributed to a stable European security order while acknowledging that "an attack against Allies' sovereignty and territorial integrity" cannot be discounted (para.6). The text then describes "strategic competitors" testing the Alliance's resilience, interfering in our democratic processes, and challenging "our interests, values, and democratic way of life". The general tone of the document mirrors these lines. What emerges is a gloomy view of a deteriorating security environment that poses significant challenges to the Alliance and its member states. Most important is the notion that war has returned to Europe and that NATO cannot ignore it.

The threats

Second, the Strategic Concept clearly identifies threats against the Alliance, an important step that influences how NATO must respond. Two threats are explicitly identified in the new Strategic Concept: Russia and terrorism. This is done in the section titled "Strategic Environment".

First, Russia is pictured as "the most significant and direct threat to Allies' security and to peace and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area" (para.8). Such a direct characterization of any state had not occurred since the Cold War. Today, Russia is described as seeking to "establish spheres of influence and direct control through coercion, subversion, aggression and annexation"; using "conventional, cyber and hybrid means against us and our partners"; and undermining "the rules-based international order". Russia's identification as a clear threat justifies NATO's posture reset and shapes the entire Strategic Concept. The Concept reaffirms NATO's intent to "keep open channels of communication with Moscow to manage and mitigate risks, prevent escalation and increase transparency", but the pre-24 February 2022 "dual-track" approach, wherein NATO pursued both defence and dialogue with Russia, is no longer the preferred path.

Second, the Concept states that "terrorism, in all its forms and manifestations, is the most direct asymmetric threat to the security of our citizens and to international peace and prosperity" (para.10). This issue of terrorism is addressed in (only) one paragraph (para.10)

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11   NATO Strategic Concept, Lisbon, 2010, para.7, https://www.nato.int/lisbon2010/strategic-concept-2010-eng.pdf

in the "Strategic Environment" Section and then in one paragraph (para.38) under the "Deterrence and Defence" agenda. As such, terrorism is inevitably marginalized in the Concept; it is a key threat to the Alliance, but not to the extent that it would deserve the type of response that Russian aggression calls for. This is all the more true as Allies diverge on their assessments of the terrorist threat as well as on the role that NATO should adopt in response.

The core task

A third take-away relates to the clear focus that the new Strategic Concept places on the core task of "deterrence and defense". Previously, the 2010 Strategic Concept defined three core tasks for the Alliance: collective defence, crisis management, and cooperative security. The new Concept maintains those three core tasks, albeit with slight name changes: "deterrence and defence" has replaced collective defence while "crisis prevention and management" substitutes for crisis management. Cooperative security remains unchanged.

If anything, the 2022 Strategic Concept is "deterrence and defense-centric" and moves NATO away from its past crisis management focus. Most importantly, it subordinates the three core tasks to collective defence, affirming that the three core tasks are "complementary to ensure the collective defence and security of all Allies" (para.4).

This reflects NATO's evolution since the 2014 Ukraine crisis, which has only been further reinforced by Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine. If, as the Concept states, "the possibility of an armed attack against Allies' sovereignty and territorial integrity" cannot be discounted (para.6), then NATO must return to a deterrence and defence posture in accordance with its original mandate. This is by and large what the Concept suggests. The question raised, then, is to what degree should NATO return to its Cold War posture? To this, the Concept provides a balanced response. NATO must relearn deterrence and defence and predominantly orient its posture towards Russia. This is what is meant by sentences such as: "We will enhance our global awareness and reach to deter, defend, contest and deny across all domains and directions"; "We will significantly strengthen our deterrence and defence posture to deny any potential adversary any possible opportunities for aggression" (para.21); "We will deter and defend forward with robust in-place, multi-domain, combat-ready forces, enhanced command and control arrangements, prepositioned ammunition and equipment and improved capacity and infrastructure to rapidly reinforce any Ally, including at short or no notice." (para.21)

In practice, the Alliance's new deterrence and defence-centric approach has already

materialized via NATO's reset of its policy on the Eastern flank, with a series of decisions taken since February 2022 to reinforce existing forces (such as the enhanced Forward Presence), deploy new forces at the periphery of the Alliance, and review NATO's force model and level of preparedness.[12]

At the same time, NATO's posture remains moderate in the sense that Allies have yet to opt for a full return to a Cold War-style defence posture. At least three factors attest to this restraint. First, the two core tasks of crisis management and cooperative security remain, although they are clearly less central to NATO's role than in the past. The Concept also reaffirms the 360-degree approach (preface, paras.24, 34) by which the Alliance seeks to deter and defend on the widest geographical spectrum, not just the Eastern flank. Second, insofar as troop deployments on the Eastern flank are concerned, Allies have not formally declared the 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Act "null and void" and appear keen to maintain its policy of rotational (non-permanent) military deployments on the Eastern flank. Similarly, the notion of "forward defence" has not been included in the Concept, the only occurrence of the term "forward" being that "We will deter and defend forward" (para.21).[13] Third, despite the increased prevalence of the Eastern flank in its deterrence and defence logic, the United States has taken steps to demonstrate to some adversaries – namely China – that it has not renounced the Indo-Pacific as its main security priority.

NATO's posture reset on its Eastern flank is accompanied by an equally strong reaffirmation of NATO's nuclear policy. Building on previously-agreed language, the text restates that "the fundamental purpose of NATO's nuclear capability is to preserve peace, prevent coercion and deter aggression" (para.28). The centrality of the United States in NATO's nuclear policy is also reasserted ("The strategic nuclear forces of the Alliance, particularly those of the United States, are the supreme guarantee of the security of the Alliance" (para.29)), while the traditional mention of British and French components is also present ("The independent strategic nuclear forces of the United Kingdom and France have a deterrent role of their own and contribute significantly to the overall security of the Alliance" (para.29)). The notions of integration and coherence are also included ("The Alliance is committed to ensuring greater integration and coherence of capabilities and activities across all domains and the spectrum of conflict"), while the text reaffirms the "unique and distinct role of nuclear deterrence" (para.30). Finally, the Concept also

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12   See NATO, "Deterrence and defence", https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_133127.htm; "Defending every inch of NATO territory: Force posture options for strengthening deterrence in Europe", *Issue Brief*, Atlantic Council, Washington, DC, March 2022, https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Force-Posture-Options-Issue-Brief.pdf

13   For its part, the Summit Declaration states that "All these steps will substantially strengthen NATO's deterrence and forward defences". (para.9)

refers to the so-called "appropriate mix", here defined as bringing "nuclear, conventional and missile defence capabilities, complemented by space and cyber capabilities" (whereas the 2010 text only referred to nuclear and conventional capabilities).

The new challenge

Fourth, one of the most notable innovations contained in the 2022 Strategic Concept is its reference to China as a state whose ambitions and policies "challenge [NATO's] interests, security and values" (para.13).

The 2010 Strategic Concept did not mention China. The first occurrence of China in a NATO official statement came with the 2019 Leaders' Meeting Communiqué,[14] in which Allies "recognize[d] that China's growing influence and international policies present both opportunities and challenges that we need to address together as an Alliance." The term "opportunities" has not been used in the new Concept though, giving way to "challenges" only.

Observers note that, in contrast with the narrative on Russia, the term "threat" is not used in the new Concept in relation to China; instead the drafters preferred the verbs "challenge", "subvert", "target Allies", and "harm Alliance security" (para.13). The question that intuitively follows is: what else is an actor that challenges another's "interests, security and values" if it is not a threat? In other words, the Concept essentially portrays China as a looming (or existing) threat without explicitly using the term.

Beyond the debate over terminology, the Alliance took stock of China's increasing and often disruptive role on the international scene, identifying a number of Chinese activities that are problematic for the Alliance. China is also mentioned in relation to its "strategic partnership" with Russia, which comes as an aggravating factor. Simply put, the Alliance can no longer ignore China as a potential adversary, although the Concept reveals uneasiness as to what explicit identification of the issue could bring.

Most specifically, the document falls short of laying out how NATO can or should respond to this mounting challenge. It mentions boosting "shared awareness", enhancing "resilience and preparedness", and protecting against China's coercive tactics, but nothing is offered in terms of counter-measures, articulation of military and other tools, or the geographic place of NATO's response, i.e. the Euro-Atlantic area *versus* the Indo-Pacific. This confusion likely reflects divergence among Allies regarding the rationale of putting

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14   London Declaration issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in London 3-4 December 2019, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_171584.htm

China on the Alliance's agenda; however, this also implies that the potential options available to a military institution like NATO in meeting a diversified challenge like China are simply not so obvious. Also, whether any response should occur in the Euro-Atlantic area or in the Indo-Pacific is one notable point in which consensus has failed to emerge.

Incidentally, the last sentence in the section dedicated to China declares that Allies "will stand up for our shared values and the rules-based international order, including freedom of navigation" (para.14). The mention of freedom of navigation may imply that Allies contemplate a role for the Alliance outside the Euro-Atlantic area, as freedom of navigation is threatened in regions other than the Mediterranean Sea and the North Atlantic.

The essential partner

Three months after the European Union (EU) released its Strategic Compass, in which NATO was given a prominent place, NATO reciprocated by identifying the EU as its "unique and essential partner" (para.43), echoing the 2010 Strategic Concept. The ways in which each organization features the other in their respective documents is always contentious. Each is torn between their aspiration to maximize cooperation on the one hand and their will to assert their own identity/autonomy on the other. National preferences may also hamper inter-institutional cooperation. NATO's new Strategic Concept follows this legacy to a large extent, reflecting the current political context that is marked by tensions between the EU and key Allies – the UK and Turkey in particular. On the US side, European defence initiatives are generally welcomed by the Biden administration, but the concern persists that those efforts could divert resources away from the Alliance.

In this context, the new Concept uses language that is relatively positive towards the EU. To start, the Concept dedicates a full paragraph (para.43; the longest of the entire document) to the EU, although this was already the case in the 2010 document. There, the EU is identified as NATO's only strategic partner.[15]

Second, the 2022 Concept lists a number of activities that will strengthen the "NATO-EU strategic partnership". Most of these already appeared in the 2016 and 2018 NATO-EU Joint Declarations, while four were added (the impact of climate change on security, emerging and disruptive technologies, human security, and addressing the systemic challenges posed by the People's Republic of China (PRC) to Euro-Atlantic security). However, three agenda items of the NATO-EU Joint Declarations (counter-terrorism,

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15   Without overinterpreting, the two kinds of strategic partnerships referred to in the Strategic Concept are: a) the one between NATO and the EU (para.43); and b) the one between Russia and China (para.13).

maritime security, and exercises) are not mentioned in the NATO Strategic Concept as areas of NATO-EU cooperation.

Interestingly, the nine listed activities[16] are predominantly non-military in nature. This can be interpreted either as implicit recognition that the EU can best support NATO in non-military activities or as a more deliberate signal that the EU should not aspire to support NATO in the military domain. This latter interpretation, however, is contradicted by a sentence that states that "NATO recognises the value of a stronger and more capable European defence that contributes positively to transatlantic and global security and is complementary to, and interoperable with NATO". Of note, this sentence partly lifts wording from the 2010 Strategic Concept (which iterated that "NATO recognizes the importance of a stronger and more capable European defence" (2010, para.32)), but also takes language from the readout of the telephone conversation between US President Biden and French President Macron that came a couple of weeks after the AUKUS submarine deal fallout.[17] In these sentences, the notions of complementarity and contribution of European defence to transatlantic security are key, albeit not totally new.

What is at stake is an endorsement by NATO (and the United States) of European (or EU) defence initiatives.[18] This is further reinforced by the last sentence of the paragraph, which states that "Initiatives to increase defence spending and develop coherent, mutually reinforcing capabilities, while avoiding unnecessary duplications, are key to our joint efforts to make the Euro-Atlantic area safer". The language is obviously very diplomatic, but one message that emerges is the implied notion that European capabilities make the Euro-Atlantic area safer, which supports the idea of complementarity between European initiatives and NATO as a transatlantic organization. Of course, whether this wording will change the nature and complexity of the partnerships between the two institutions remains to be seen, and long-term political obstacles cannot anyways be fully addressed in a strategic-level document. Nonetheless, the Strategic Concept lays the basis for some mutually-reinforcing cooperation.

Finally, although Brexit shapes the NATO-EU relation – and not necessarily in a positive way – the wording regarding the role of "non-EU Allies" in the NATO-EU partnership is quasi-identical between the 2010 and 2022 Concepts. In both cases, the text states that

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16   Those activities are: military mobility, resilience, the impact of climate change on security, emerging and disruptive technologies, human security, the Women, Peace and Security agenda, countering cyber and hybrid threats and addressing the systemic challenges posed by the PRC to Euro-Atlantic security.

17   See Joint Statement on the Phone Call between President Biden and President Macron, 22 September 2021, https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/09/22/joint-statement-on-the-phone-call-between-president-biden-and-president-macron/

18   See A. Marrone, "NATO's New Strategic Concept: Novelties and Priorities", *IAI Commentaries* 22, July 2022, p.4.

"For the development of the strategic partnership between NATO and the EU, non-EU Allies' fullest involvement in EU defence efforts is essential". In reality, such involvement has remained difficult so far.[19]

Overall, the identification of potential areas where NATO and the EU should boost their cooperation is welcome, as is the language on complementarity. Nonetheless, the Concept is silent on how the strategic partnership will move forward, particularly in terms of the division of labour between the two institutions, be it in responding to Russia or in "addressing the systemic challenges posed by the PRC to Euro-Atlantic security" (para.43). In other words, as was the case with its discussion of China, the Strategic Concept does not offer a vision of partnership so much as a list of principles to be acted upon. That the third NATO-EU Joint Declaration was not adopted alongside the EU Strategic Compass and NATO Strategic Concept (as planned) further attests to the difficulties in operationalizing the NATO-EU partnership.

The rest

Finally, the new Strategic Concept reviews issues that have either occupied a role in NATO's agenda over the last decade or are steadily becoming important today. Most of them are not central to the Concept, but this does not mean these issues are unimportant. For example, in addition to the above-mentioned threats and challenges, the "Strategic Environment" section of the Concept identifies five evolutions of the international system that are presented as important components of the contemporary security landscape: "pervasive instability" (para.12), cyberspace (para.15), technological evolutions (paras.16-17), arms control (para.18), and climate change (para.19). Those are not threats *per se*; rather, they are domains, evolutions, or regimes that present opportunities or risks, depending on how NATO Allies act.

"Pervasive instability" (para.12) is geographically associated with NATO's southern neighbourhood. Conflict, fragility and instability in Africa and in the Middle East are said to "directly affect our security and the security of our partners". The Concept also draws a connection between instability and climate change as an aggravating factor. Cybersecurity, the role of emerging technologies, and climate change are subsequently addressed in more prescriptive terms under the deterrence and defence agenda for "pervasive instability"

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19   In 2010, the text stated that "Non-EU Allies make a significant contribution to these efforts. For the strategic partnership between NATO and the EU, their fullest involvement in these efforts is essential" (para.32).

(para.12) cybersecurity (para.25), under cooperative security for climate change (para.46),[20] and in a mix of both for emerging technologies. Issues such as resilience, human security, and the Women, Peace and Security agenda are also addressed, although less prominently.

This said, at least two topics or areas have expectedly diminished in importance within the new Strategic Concept. One is crisis management as a core task, the other is the Alliance's Southern flank. Crisis management is renamed "crisis prevention and management", the intent being to broaden a domain – crisis management – that had grown too narrow in scope in the aftermath of the Alliance's withdrawal from Afghanistan in the summer 2021. Nonetheless, the section dealing with crisis prevention and management (paras.35-39) struggles to convey a clear message regarding NATO's added value within these domains. Of note is the total absence of the term "projecting stability" within the new Concept, a term that was controversial yet had tended to replace that of crisis management in NATO's parlance in past years.[21]

In the same vein, the Alliance's Southern flank is not prominent in the Strategic Concept. The "Southern neighborhood" of the Alliance appears in connection with the notions of "conflict, fragility, and instability" (para.11) as well as within the sections on cooperative security. For the first time in a NATO Strategic Concept, the Sahel is mentioned (twice) in this context (paras.11 and 45). The South also appears in connection to Russia, with the Concept stating that Russia "aims to destabilise countries to our East and South" (para.8). Nonetheless, it is clear that the South has overall taken a backseat to the Eastern flank. In other words, the new Strategic Concept is ostensibly about deterrence and defence on the Eastern flank, and marginally about crisis management and cooperative security in the Southern flank.

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20   In the margin of the Summit, NATO's Secretary General also presented his report on climate change; see "Climate Change & Security Impact Assessment – 2022", https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2022/6/pdf/280622-climate-impact-assessment.pdf

21   See I. Hope (ed.), "Projecting Stability: Elixir or Snake Oil?", *NDC Research Paper* 1, NATO Defense College, Rome, December 2018.

NATO in an evolving world disorder

Stanley R. Sloan

Faced with an ongoing war on their eastern borders, NATO Allies have agreed on a new Strategic Concept that, in a quiet and elegant way, recalls the foundation of interests and values underlying the Alliance while taking into account the political, economic and technological changes since Allies last agreed on a Concept in 2010. Despite all the change, however, the new Concept carries forward an emphasis on NATO as a political-military Alliance of values with three core tasks: deterrence and defense, crisis prevention and management, and cooperative security. The 2010 Concept's effective conflation of Article 5 (dealing with attacks) and Article 4 (consulting on threats) is a critical part of the new Concept's foundation. It identifies the threats posed by its two primary antagonists – the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China – and challenges from other quarters, setting the stage for individual member state and collective responses.

Without discussing how the Concept was drafted, it is known that NATO's Secretary General and his staff received inputs from several sources.[1] The result is very much a consensus approach, but the overall content nonetheless reveals major consideration for the preferences of the Biden Administration, including its emphasis on the need for Europeans to take more responsibility for security in Europe. The Madrid Summit, where the concept was issued, reflected continuing support for providing Ukraine assistance while denying Russia victory, consistent with Washington's policies.

To the Alliance's credit, the need for more attention to climate change and to women's equality reflects a new and welcome focus on some of the non-military security challenges facing Western democracies – also a preference of the Biden Administration. But it is no

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1   See, for example, the "shadow" strategic concept produced by The Alphen Group, 3 February 2022, https://thealphen-group.com/2022/02/03/the-tag-shadow-nato-strategic-concept/, and the "Research Symposium on the NATO Strategic Concept" based on a conference organized by the Social Sciences Department of the United States Military Academy on 3-4 February 2022, https://www.tandfonline.com/journals/fdef20/collections/New-Nato-Strategic-Concept

surprise that such a consensus document does not hint of the dangers that stem from illiberal political challenges arising within Western democracies on both sides of the Atlantic, aided and abetted by Russia and China. Illiberal political tendencies are nonetheless potential critical threats to NATO's future cohesion and relevance.

One significant criticism that could be raised about the document is that it does not offer much detail about how the funding and force commitments required of the members will be realized. It certainly is true that many of the promises included in the Concept do not yet have full political support or the resources required for successful implementation. And, as one analyst commented, "If NATO fails to translate words into action now, it could be fatal for the Alliance".[2] The purpose of a Strategic Concept, though, is not to lay out a detailed plan but to articulate the organization's purposes, threats and challenges to those purposes, and the required and intended responses. As Julian Lindley-French has observed, "The Strategic Concept is one half of a two-part strategic realignment of NATO and should ideally be read in conjunction with the [2019] NATO Military Strategy",[3] which is classified. This Concept nonetheless creates an effective roadmap to guide the Allies. Now they have to implement it with political courage and, to some extent, sacrifice.

Characterizing the Russian threat

At the end of the Cold War, NATO Allies progressively eliminated the concept of threat from their official documents. The first post-Cold War Strategic Concept in 1991[4] argued that NATO would remain relevant given the "risks and challenges" still facing Allies, carefully avoiding the use of the word "threats". The word "threat" appeared only nine times in the 1991 document, and most of these were references to the fact that past threats had disappeared. The 2010 Concept reflected growing concern, referring to "threat" some twenty times. In the context of relations with Moscow, however, the Allies used "threat" only to proclaim that NATO posed no threat to Russia.[5]

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2   E. Arnold, "New concepts but old problems: NATO's new Strategic Concept", *RUSI Commentary*, 1 July 2022, https://www.rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/new-concepts-old-problems-natos-new-strategic-concept

3   J. Lindley-French, "NATO's Clint Eastwood doctrine", The Alphen Group, 6 July 2022, https://thealphengroup.com/2022/07/06/natos-clint-eastwood-doctrine/

4   The Alliance's New Strategic Concept (1991), North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 8 November 1991, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_23847.htm#:~:text=The%20purpose%20of%20the%20Alliance,of%20the%20United%20Nations%20Charter

5   This point draws on the analysis in: S. Sloan, *Defense of the West: transatlantic security from Truman to Trump*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2020, pp.308-10.

By the time of the Wales Summit in September 2014, the 2010 Concept still seemed like a good overall strategic framework, but significant changes had occurred in the world that raised some new threats for NATO to consider. The 2014 Summit communiqué featured the term "threat" some fifty-four times.[6] Most of the instances had to do with terrorism and related topics. But Allies chose to make several direct and indirect references to threats posed by Russia. They had moved from talking about "risks and challenges" toward calling a spade a spade.

Allies finally recognized fully the Russian threat in the 2022 Strategic Concept when they agreed that "The Russian Federation is the most significant and direct threat to Allies' security and to peace and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area" (para.8). Allies minced no words in identifying the nature of the threat, saying that Russia's aggression against Ukraine in February 2022 "has shattered peace and gravely altered our security environment. [Russia's] brutal and unlawful invasion, repeated violations of international humanitarian law and heinous attacks and atrocities have caused unspeakable suffering and destruction" (preface).

Back in 1967, the Harmel Report[7] had added the pursuit of "détente" to NATO's mission – in addition to those of defense and deterrence. In the post-Cold War era, Allies transformed that mission into "dialogue" and "cooperative security" to reflect the fact that the Alliance was reaching out to Russia to discuss and cooperate on mutual security concerns. Since 2008, when Russia attacked Georgia, and particularly 2014, when Russia seized Crimea and began its offensive aimed at taking control of Ukraine's Donbas region, the concept of a dialogue with Moscow has become increasingly untenable. Russian President Putin has declared that his war was not only against Ukraine but also intended to weaken NATO and the Western liberal international system, explicitly creating an enemy relationship between Russia and the West.[8] In the 2022 Concept (para.9), Allies declare they can no longer "consider the Russian Federation to be our partner". The Concept left the door open to dialogue with Russia, but only if Moscow ceases its "aggressive behaviour" (para.9) and fully complies with international law.

The new Concept clearly demonstrates the cohesion that has characterized NATO's response to Russia's aggression from the start of the 2022 war against Ukraine. Such cohesion might become more difficult down the road given growing economic costs

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6   "Wales Summit Declaration", North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 5 September 2014, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_112964.htm

7   For background to and text of the Harmel Report, also known as "Report of the Council on the future tasks of the Alliance", see: North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "Harmel Report", https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_67927.htm

8   See P. Kirby, "Why has Russia invaded Ukraine and what does Putin want?" *BBC News*, 9 May 2022, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-56720589

to individual Allies – including the United States – stemming from imposed sanctions and the sentiment in some quarters of the Alliance that Russia's permanent presence in Europe requires re-engagement with Moscow. More specifically, Allies will have to address the divide between, on the one hand, those states adamant that the only reasonable path forward is to defeat Russia in Ukraine so that it is not only punished but also dissuaded to attack another state (possibly a NATO Ally) and, on the other hand, those states advocating for some sort of dialogue with Russia in the name of long-term strategic stability.

Bringing China into the picture

Russia without doubt is the starring villain in the new NATO Strategic Concept, but the other major authoritarian state that challenges the Western liberal democracy dominated system is the People's Republic of China. For the first time in a formal NATO statement, the Alliance identifies China as a challenge to NATO values and interests, judging (para.13) that "the People's Republic of China's stated ambitions and coercive policies challenge our interests, security and values". It is notable that the Concept does not use the word "threat" explicitly in the discussion of the China challenge. More general language, however, indirectly captures the threat China poses. In its very first paragraph, the Concept suggests that the Alliance will defend against "all threats, from all directions". This "360 degree" commitment is expanded in paragraph 6, when the Allies state that "The threats we face are global and interconnected". The next paragraph then expands the threats posed by "authoritarian actors" which clearly captures, at a minimum, Russia and China. And, in the paragraph addressing the China challenge (para.13), the concept makes the link to Russia even more explicit saying, "The deepening strategic partnership between the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation and their mutually reinforcing attempts to undercut the rules-based international order run counter to our values and interests".

Both Russia and China have made it clear that their cooperation is in part inspired by the common goal of disrupting and replacing the liberal international order led by the United States and defended by NATO. As Alexander Cooley and Daniel Nexon wrote in 2020, "Moscow and Beijing view a number of the liberal norms and standards baked into current global governance arrangements – particularly involving human and political rights, democracy, and transparency – as threats to their regimes".[9]

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9   A. Cooley and D. Nexon, *Exit from hegemony: the unraveling of the American global order*, Oxford Scholarship Online, Oxford, March 2020, p.81, https://oxford.universitypressscholarship.com/view/10.1093/oso/9780190916473.001.0001/oso-

Moscow's 2022 aggression against Ukraine has made cooperation with Russia much less comfortable for China, and it is in the West's interest to discourage any closer Russian/Chinese alliance.[10] China derives substantial economic benefits from the international economic system that is firmly set in the liberal international order. Moscow's blatant aggression does not fit easily with the model that China has so far deployed to expand its international power and influence. That model, represented by Beijing's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), seeks through financial, economic and cultural contacts to build not only good will toward China but also influence, presence and dependencies.[11] It has been a remarkably successful deployment of Chinese soft power, potentially building foundations for more heavy-handed, coercive uses of hard power down the road. But for now, the Chinese leadership would prefer to be seen with a smiling face, even while hiding a clenched fist.

In contrast with the Strategic Concept's treatment of relations with Moscow, where Russia's aggressive actions have blown the partnership concept out of the water, Allies do suggest the possibility of dialogue with China. They say they "remain open to constructive engagement with the PRC" (para.14). The Concept hedges the commitment by linking it to the need to defend Western values and interests. But the language does serve as an invitation to dialogue with Beijing.

Neither China nor Russia has a value base for their attempts to win place of pride internationally. They both depend on coercive means, payment, and hard power to maintain internal control and to manage their international relations. They offer the world models of political systems that deny individual liberty, democratic rights, the rule of law, and the derivative institutions required to sustain these values. The convergence of China and Russia's transactional foreign policy approaches regarding liberal political values created a threat to which NATO has now responded, at least rhetorically.

In sum, the Allies have taken the step of identifying China as an aggressive competitor that they had previously been unwilling to take. For the Alliance, this is a historic step in a direction long advocated by the United States, which takes the challenges posed by China into its overall concept of Allied security threats. This marks a clear "win" for the Biden Administration in recruiting Alliance support for US strategic objectives in Asia.

9780190916473-chapter-4

10   V. Tchakarova, "The Russia, China Alliance: what does "The Dragonbear" aim to achieve in global affairs?", *Medium*, 24 November 2016, https://medium.com/@vtchakarova/the-russia-china-alliance-what-does-the-dragonbear-aim-to-achieve-in-global-affairs-e09b1add1c4a

11   Y. Jie and J. Wallace, "What is China's belt and road initiative (BRI): explaining China's motives for the BRI, perception of the initiative internationally, and how the belt and road may evolve in the future", Chatham House Explainer, 13 September 2021, https://www.chathamhouse.org/2021/09/what-chinas-belt-and-road-initiative-bri

The Concept's text builds significantly on the 2019 London Declaration's statement that "China's growing influence and international policies present both opportunities and challenges that we need to address together as an Alliance".[12] As with most other parts of the Concept, though, Allies left open what they might do to balance China's growing and potentially threatening postures. But the first step was to open the Alliance's eyes to the potential threats and prepare to deal with them more effectively.

The unspoken internal threat: illiberalism

It is not NATO's job to comment on or interfere in any way with the domestic politics of member states. NATO's consensus decision-making rule, as well as traditional diplomatic respect for the sovereignty of each Ally, guarantees that the Alliance will not formally speak or act against any individual member. But the new Concept is replete with references to the values on which the Alliance is based. The references range from the Concept's second paragraph's declaration that "We are bound together by common values: individual liberty, human rights, democracy and the rule of law", to the final sentence that proclaims, "As Allies, we will continue to stand together to defend our security, values, and democratic way of life".

Over the past two decades, democracy inside NATO countries has faced serious challenges from internal political forces aided and abetted by authoritarian powers, particularly Russia. These challenges have emerged largely from the radical political right, asserting what has been called "illiberal democracy".[13] Such tendencies contributed to the election of Donald Trump as President in the United States and to his attempt to retain power when Joseph Biden defeated him in the 2020 election. They have also challenged democracy and the rule of law in several European countries. In a few of those countries, a radical right approach to governance is increasingly entrenched, moving political systems away from the values underlying both NATO and the European Union.

From this perspective, the most dangerous threats to NATO Allies may not be those that kill people, but those which progressively undermine the founding values of the transatlantic Alliance. It was already clear by 2017 that a "perfect storm" was building in which disruptive Islamist terror and Russian meddling in support of radical right political

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12   North Atlantic Treaty Organization, London Declaration, 4 December 2019, para.6, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_171584.htm

13   See, for example, F. Zakaria, "The rise of illiberal democracy", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol.76, No.6, 1997.

movements intensified internal Western social, economic and political vulnerabilities. That storm still endangers the security of Western democracies, the values on which they are founded, and the institutions that defend and advance those values.[14]

In this context, the 2022 Strategic Concept gives favorable mention to the importance of NATO cooperation with democracies around the globe to sustain the rules-based international order. In several paragraphs (including para. 42, 44 and 45) it renews a strong push for strengthening partnerships with Indo-Pacific democracies, a priority for the Biden Administration.[15]

While the Strategic Concept was not intended and could not by its very nature address internal challenges to the values and purposes of the Alliance, such challenges nonetheless critically threaten the Alliance's future. If NATO is hollowed out from within, the purpose of defending its borders will remain but the values for which the Alliance stands and the quality of life of its citizens and their democratic institutions will be in jeopardy.

The challenge of implementation

Whether the new Strategic Concept will succeed in producing the responses suggested in the document remains to be seen. Such an outcome will depend on whether European NATO members are able to generate more military capacity than they have since the end of the Cold War. It could be said that the Madrid Summit has been a major accomplishment for the United States in strengthening its role in European security. In the aftermath, the United States will be required to provide the kind and quantity of continuous leadership that helped inform this new Concept. But the main burden will rest with the Europeans, both to demonstrate that they understand the nature of the threats identified in the Concept and to find the political will to implement the efforts required.

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14   S. Sloan, *Transatlantic traumas: has illiberalism brought the West to the brink of collapse?*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2018, p.3.

15   President Biden declared support for democracy at home and abroad as a core principle of his administration; see S. Sloan, *De-Trumping US foreign policy: can Biden bring America back?*, De Gruyter, Berlin, 2021.

An evolutionary, not revolutionary, Strategic Concept

Bruno Tertrais

What a difference a decade makes. NATO's new Strategic Concept is a significant departure from the 2010 document. It cannot state any longer that the Euro-Atlantic area is "at peace", as was the case a decade ago. It remains, however, an evolutionary document rather than a revolutionary one. It builds significantly on previously agreed language in the 2019 London Declaration[1] and the 2021 Brussels Declaration[2] and is flexible enough to stand the test of time.

The Strategic Concept is the North Atlantic Council's product. Although its elaboration benefitted from the Secretary General's Reflection Group convened in late 2019,[3] no single group of experts was officially and specifically tasked with writing the bases of the Strategic Concept as had been the case for the 2010 Concept. Diplomats point though to the key role of the Quad (France, Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States) as the venue where many of the new Concept's key elements were agreed.

What's not in the Concept

A good way to begin an analysis of the text is to state what is *not* in it. On NATO's defence posture, first. There will now be considerable reinforcement of the Alliance's ability to defend itself. Understandably, recent US announcements on specific steps are not included

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1   London Declaration issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in London 3-4 December 2019, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_171584.htm

2   Brussels Summit Communiqué issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Brussels 14 June 2021, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_185000.htm

3   "NATO 2030: united for a new era. Analysis and recommendations of the reflection Group Appointed by the NATO Secretary General", Brussels, 25 November 2020, https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2020/12/pdf/201201-Reflection-Group-Final-Report-Uni.pdf

in the text, even though they are among the most important decisions taken by Allies at the Madrid Summit. These include the establishment of a permanent V Corps Headquarters Forward Command Post in Poland; a commitment to maintaining an additional rotational Brigade Combat Team in Europe, which will be positioned in Romania; enhanced rotational deployments in the Baltic region; an agreement to work with Spain to increase the number of US destroyers stationed there from four to six; the deployment of two squadrons of F-35 aircraft to the United Kingdom; the stationing of additional air defence and other enablers in Germany and Italy.[4]

As impressive as these and other national decisions might be, the expression "forward defence" is not employed in the Concept nor in the Summit Declaration (see Annex II).[5] This signifies that NATO is not going to reproduce its defence posture of the Cold War – something that Central European Allies such as Poland were probably interested in. A key reason is that the United States did not want to once again revise the Global Defense Posture it adopted in late 2021. An underlying rationale is almost certainly that it did not want to signal to Beijing that it was giving up on prioritizing China and East Asia. A closely related point is the language on the NATO-Russia Founding Act of 1997. Specifically, Allies have refrained from declaring any withdrawal or formal end to the Founding Act, which is thus left in limbo.[6] The Alliance did not want to appear as if it had given up cooperation with Russia for good – to say nothing of the fact that a consensus on a formal declaration of irrelevance may have been more difficult to find.

Overall, the decisions taken on NATO's new defence posture seem to reflect the Biden administration's strategic outlook, which appears coherent. The US "surge in Europe" is meant to be temporary and the priority remains China. Partly for this reason – the United States does not want a "two-front confrontation" – Washington remains prudent vis-à-vis Russia. Despite the language sometimes used by the US President, the White House is keen not to give the impression that it wants to enter a direct military confrontation with Moscow.

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4   Fact Sheet: the 2022 NATO Summit in Madrid, The White House, 29 June 2022, https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/06/29/fact-sheet-the-2022-nato-summit-in-madrid/

5   Without using the term "forward defence", the Concept states that "We will deter and defend forward…" (para.21). As for the Summit Declaration, it says that "All these steps will substantially strengthen NATO's deterrence and forward defences" (para.9).

6   At their Extraordinary (virtual) Meeting on 25 February 2022, Allies had declared that "Russia's actions are also a flagrant rejection of the principles enshrined in the NATO-Russia Founding Act: it is Russia that has walked away from its commitments under the Act". Statement by NATO Heads of State and Government on Russia's attack on Ukraine, 25 February 2022, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_192489.htm

How new is the Concept?

Slightly longer than its 2010 predecessor (4,800 against 3,900 words), the 2022 Strategic Concept largely builds on previously agreed documents, including the 2010 text itself, in three major ways.

First, it maintains the "360-degree" approach dear to the Secretary General. This means that NATO is not going back to the exclusive eastward focus of the Cold War. Second, it maintains the same hierarchy of threats laid out – reportedly – in the classified 2019 Military Strategy: Russia first, terrorism second. The former is given special treatment for good reasons. However, it may appear strange that the pervasive threat of terrorism, which could spectacularly reappear at any given time and was the main focus of NATO's military activities during the past two decades, is entitled to only one paragraph (para.10). The word "terrorism" appears seven times as opposed to 17 times for "Russia". Third, the Concept maintains the "three core tasks" of the 2010 Concept, though slightly amended: deterrence and defence (versus collective defence in 2010); crisis prevention and management (versus crisis management); and cooperative security.

What is new in the Concept largely builds on recently-agreed language, in particular coming from the London Leaders' Meeting Declaration (2019) and the Brussels Summit Communiqué (2021).

Despite the absence of a formal "forward defence" doctrine, the Concept affirms that the Alliance will protect "every inch" (para.20) of Allied territory. Furthermore, it embraces multi-domain deterrence by stating that "we will employ military and non-military tools in a proportionate, coherent and integrated way to respond to all threats to our security in the manner, timing and in the domain of our choosing" (para.20). This critically important choice of words – which, regarding its latter part, can actually be traced to early Cold War nuclear deterrence statements made by the US – accompanies previous affirmations that Article 5 may be applicable in cyber and outer space: "a single or cumulative set of malicious cyber activities; or hostile operations to, from, or within space; could reach the level of armed attack and could lead the North Atlantic Council to invoke Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty" (para.25).[7] The new "appropriate mix" now involves "nuclear, conventional and missile defence capabilities, complemented by space and cyber capabilities" (para.20). At the same time, the Alliance recognizes "the applicability of international law and will promote responsible behaviour in cyberspace and space" (para.25). This suggests that

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7   US Secretary of State John Foster Dulles introduced similar language in a famous 1954 speech: "The basic decision was to depend primarily upon a great capacity to retaliate, instantly, by means and at places of our choosing", Address to the Council of Foreign Relations, 12 January 1954, *Department of State Bulletin*, 25 January 1954, pp.107-110.

NATO will have to integrate its deterrence and defence planning in various domains much more than it has in the past, but also that it does not seek confrontation in cyberspace and outer space.

Most importantly, China is mentioned for the first time in a Strategic Concept and gets no less than ten mentions. It is not referred to as a "threat" though, and NATO's geographical focus is in no way broadened to the Indo-Pacific. However, China's "stated ambitions and coercive policies" are said to "challenge our interests, security and values" (para.13) and it presents "systemic challenges to Euro-Atlantic security" (para.14). What this means is that NATO will from now on "look East beyond Russia" much more than in the past. This is in response to actions of foreign countries that may affect its infrastructures and communications security, cyber security, or malign influence operations. But importantly, this also means that there is no reason for the Alliance to plan for military defence against China *per se*. To recall, the Washington Treaty in principle applies only to the Euro-Atlantic area and, unless the territory or forces of a member State in that area are directly attacked – e.g., through the use of long-range missiles – NATO has no reason to be militarily involved in a contingency involving China, including, for instance a US-China war involving Taiwan.

Two more issues deserve to be mentioned. First, there is a stronger focus than in 2010 on the challenges posed by the consequences of climate change while "human security" appears for the first time, as does "risk reduction".

Second, the European Union (EU) gets an important and positive treatment (para.43). Here the post-AUKUS Biden-Macron language of September 2021 and the EU's March 2022 adoption of a "Strategic Compass" have probably made a difference.[8] It also seems that the one Alliance country traditionally most reluctant to emphasize the importance of the EU – namely Turkey – decided that it could not fight on all fronts. The EU is portrayed as a "unique and essential partner", with NATO and the EU playing "complementary, coherent and mutually reinforcing roles". Of note, specific areas of NATO-EU cooperation are identified, starting with some domains where the EU is a mandatory partner, such as military mobility and resilience. Crucially, "NATO recognises the value of a stronger and more capable European defence that contributes positively to transatlantic and global security and is complementary to, and interoperable with NATO". EU members conceded, however, that "non-EU Allies' fullest involvement in EU defence efforts is essential". The overall message is clear: NATO's renewed relevance does not signify a zero-sum approach with the EU. This will be helpful when confronting Chinese operations in Europe, an issue

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8   United States-France Joint Statement, 29 October 2021, https://fr.usembassy.gov/united-states-france-joint-statement-by-president-biden-and-president-macron/; European Union External Action Service, "A strategic Compass for security and defence", 24 March 2022, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/strategic-compass-security-and-defence-0_en

of increasing concern for the EU. These are very welcome developments which clarify NATO positions on contentious issues.

A very nuclear text

Nuclear issues take up no less than six paragraphs in the 2022 Concept (paras.28 to 33). The Concept does not break any new ground, but the message Allies convey is clear: nuclear deterrence is now more important for NATO than it has been since the end of the Cold War.

First, the Concept confirms that "as long as nuclear weapons exist, NATO will remain a nuclear alliance", while stating that its members "seek to create the security environment for a world without nuclear weapons" (preface). This takes into account the sensitivity of some Member States without, however, mentioning the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). This is all the more noticeable considering that four Alliance members participated as observers in the first Conference of State Parties of the TPNW in June 2022, including three nuclear-sharing nations (Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, as well as Norway). Some of these countries reportedly wanted at least a mention of the Ban Treaty in the new Concept.[9] In the end, the language is nearly identical to that of 2010 even though it is less strong (the preface of the 2010 concept "commit[ed] NATO to the goal of creating the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons").

Building on previously-agreed language, the 2022 Concept also affirms that the fundamental purpose of NATO's nuclear capability remains to "preserve peace, prevent coercion and deter aggression", that "any employment of nuclear weapons against NATO would fundamentally alter the nature of a conflict" and that the Alliance "has the capabilities and resolve to impose costs on an adversary that would be unacceptable and far outweigh the benefits that any adversary could hope to achieve". However, "the circumstances in which NATO might have to use nuclear weapons" remain "extremely remote" (para.28).

On the role of specific Member States, the Concept's language is inspired by the 2021 Brussels Declaration. UK and French nuclear forces now contribute "significantly" (para.29) to the overall security of the Alliance, an adverb that was first used by French President Emmanuel Macron in a February 2020 speech.[10] The existence of separate centres of

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9   Conversation with senior European officials, July 2022.

10   Speech of the President of the Republic on the Defense and Deterrence Strategy, 7 February 2020, https://www.elysee.fr/en/emmanuel-macron/2020/02/07/speech-of-the-president-of-the-republic-on-the-defense-and-deterrence-strategy

decision-making "contributes to deterrence by complicating the calculations of potential adversaries" (para.29). Non-nuclear States are no longer called to "the broadest possible participation" (para.19 of the 2010 Concept, a language also present in the 2021 Brussels Declaration), but nuclear-sharing nations are now identified as a "central" element of the Alliance's nuclear deterrence posture (para.29). Note that there is no formal indication as to whether NATO considers its "Three No" statement of 1996 (enshrined in the 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Act) to be still valid.[11]

On the relationship between conventional and nuclear weapons, the Concept does not refer to the traditional expression "appropriate mix" as much as it did in the past. At the same time, NATO resolves to ensure "greater integration and coherence of capabilities and activities across all domains and the spectrum of conflict" (para.29), thus going beyond conventional forces, to integrate the cyber and outer space dimensions. However, this comes after having recalled that "nuclear weapons are unique" (para.28) and immediately before "reaffirming the unique and distinct role of nuclear deterrence" (para.30).

Realistically, the Concept downgrades the role of arms control. As noted by a seasoned observer, NATO's approach remains consistent with the logic of the seminal 1967 Harmel Report: first deterrence and defence, and only then arms control.[12] Also of note is NATO's acceptance of the logic of "risk reduction" – a new element in a Strategic Concept and a domain considered fruitful by many in the international community as a "second best" path when arms control is not an immediate option, in particular to avoid inadvertent nuclear war. Paragraph 32 states: "We will pursue all elements of strategic risk reduction, including promoting confidence building and predictability through dialogue, increasing understanding, and establishing effective crisis management and prevention tools. These efforts will take the prevailing security environment and the security of all Allies into account and complement the Alliance's deterrence and defence posture". Implicitly, the message is that NATO has not given up on diplomacy with Russia, assuming mutually agreed steps for reducing the risk of further confrontation between adversaries proves feasible.

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11   Per the 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Act, "The member States of NATO reiterate that they have no intention, no plan and no reason to deploy nuclear weapons on the territory of new members, nor any need to change any aspect of NATO's nuclear posture or nuclear policy – and do not foresee any future need to do so. This subsumes the fact that NATO has decided that it has no intention, no plan, and no reason to establish nuclear weapon storage sites on the territory of those members, whether through the construction of new nuclear storage facilities or the adaptation of old nuclear storage facilities". Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between NATO and the Russian Federation, 27 May 2007, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_25468.htm

12   W. Alberque, "The new NATO Strategic Concept and the end of arms control", IISS blog, 20 June 2022, https://www.iiss.org/blogs/analysis/2022/06/the-new-nato-strategic-concept-and-the-end-of-arms-control?_cldee=ilznOqPtloUz8hwGuL-BVTacG_NuQwIDCJnHEzW5nd-fBmJv4YxOIGlds1mR23HYB&recipientid=contact-9fa954a76980de11b23000237dde6e5c-7b22028655db40999f434256035166f7&esid=3b4fcf4b-20f9-ec11-82e7-6045bd0e77d7

The vision thing

How good a vision is the Strategic Concept? After 12 years without a reference point, a political text adopted at the highest level, Allies managed to present a coherent vision of NATO's purpose and future. The context of the war in Ukraine has certainly helped – but it was not a given considering recurrent tensions in the Euro-Atlantic space over the past few years. While largely US-shaped (as is the case for most NATO documents), the Concept has been the subject of consultations in which Allied views were heard and taken into account, which in the end allowed for a seamless adoption.

Still, as others have noted, the Concept says less about what NATO is fighting "against" than about what it is striving "for".[13] Given domestic political trends within some Alliance countries, it may be more difficult to claim that NATO defends liberal democracy in 2022 than it was in 1991. However, a clearer picture of the Alliance's desired Euro-Atlantic security architecture after the Ukraine war would have been appreciated. Although Russia is no longer a "partner" and now clearly portrayed as a threat, the NATO-Russia Founding Act is not formally revoked by the Concept, and the text largely omits any long-term vision of NATO-Russia relations.

Additionally, some of the most important decisions made in Madrid are not in the Strategic Concept but in the simultaneously-issued Declaration by Heads of States and Governments – which acts as a *de facto* first implementation roadmap (see Annex II). This includes details on the new force posture ("additional robust in-place combat-ready forces on our eastern flank, to be scaled up from the existing battlegroups to brigade-size units where and when required"), and the establishment of a Defense Innovation Accelerator and the launch of a multinational Innovation Fund. Most importantly, this also includes Finland and Sweden's candidacies to join NATO and the Alliance's "stepped up" support to partners, notably Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia and Moldova, all of which will have a bearing on the implementation of the concept.

Of note, finally, is that neither the Concept nor the Summit Declaration includes any detailed reference, meaning including numbers or figures, to national defence expenditures or NATO common funding.

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13   Atlantic Council, "Scowcroft strategy scorecard: NATO's Strategic Concept clear on threats, but will require sustained commitment from Alliance", 7 July 2022, https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/content-series/scorecard/scowcroft-strategy-scorecard-natos-strategic-concept/

French views heard

As a key, often critical and always vocal ally, France was satisfied with the outcome of the Concept's negotiations and could claim that Macron's famous "brain death" outburst in November 2019[14] contributed to the soul-searching that ultimately produced the 2022 text. This may be a bit of an exaggeration, but it does seem that Paris was able to make its views heard in at least three critical areas. The first is China, where France – along with Germany – prevented its mention as a "threat" and ensured that the Concept could not be perceived as an enlargement of the Alliance's geographical scope. (For that reason, US allies in Asia who were present at the Summit did not participate in the NAC meeting.) The second area is nuclear deterrence. Paris was keen to emphasize – as it has since the late 2000s – that NATO is a "nuclear Alliance", insisting on the specific character of nuclear weapons while refusing any explicit reference to the TPNW. The third area is Europe. Here, as mentioned above, the fallout of the AUKUS crisis and France's stewardship of the EU Strategic Compass finalization in March 2022 helped Paris have its views taken into account, in particular regarding complementarity between the two institutions.

An evolutionary document

An evolutionary document, the new Strategic Concept is also a rather vague and thus flexible text. No doubt that Allies will be in a position to state in a few years that it has been "implemented" and has allowed the Alliance to once again adapt. But the Concept does nothing to ensure future unity in light of the policies of some Allies, such as Turkey, who seek to maintain good relations with Russia. And, of course, it does not prevent a future US President from taking radical decisions regarding the global US force posture – or even regarding the US commitment to the Alliance itself. In other words, while the new Concept will be an important political anchor, much of what will make it a success will depend on the very cohesion of the Alliance, and in particular the support of its most powerful Allies.

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14   "Emmanuel Macron warns Europe: NATO is becoming brain-dead", *The Economist*, 7 November 2019, https://www.economist.com/europe/2019/11/07/emmanuel-macron-warns-europe-nato-is-becoming-brain-dead

The new status quo concept

Patrick Keller *

The overdue concept

Ever since Russia attacked Ukraine and illegally annexed Crimea in 2014, there have been calls to revise NATO's Strategic Concept. After all, the previous text adopted in 2010 reflected a shaky Allied consensus that aspired towards a "strategic partnership" with the Russian Federation. This position was no longer tenable after 2014, especially not for NATO's most important document after the Washington Treaty itself. Since the Strategic Concept is produced as much for NATO's internal bureaucracy and its member states as it is for the wider world (including possible adversaries and NATO publics), an outdated and skewed Concept remained a problem for eight years. With the publication of the new Strategic Concept, the Alliance seeks to provide fundamental orientation about its purpose, its priorities, and the ways and means of achieving them.

In evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of the new Concept, it is useful to understand why it took so long to revise. First and foremost, concept writing is a difficult and cumbersome exercise. Given the naturally diverging perceptions and priorities of thirty sovereign nation-states, agreeing on a common text requires considerable craft – especially if the desired result is not a lengthy list of watered-down compromises but instead a concise and helpful strategy. In 2014, with Russian aggression shaking up the established Euro-Atlantic security order, NATO members placed greater urgency on its immediate reaction than on developing a more philosophical, long-term framework. In a sense, that decision paid off: NATO actions in the aftermath of the annexation of Crimea included, to name just three, the establishment of a rotating enhanced Forward Presence on NATO's Eastern flank, the creation of the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force, and a renewed commitment to the 2 percent pledge, i.e. 2 percent of GDP on defence spending.

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* The author is writing in a strictly personal capacity.

Together with strong language from the various Summit declarations since, these decisions – in connection with the various revised NATO documents below the threshold of the Concept – papered over the fact that NATO's premium strategic document was outdated. For NATO's serious and substantial re-orientation on deterrence and defence, the 2010 Strategic Concept's deficiencies did not matter all that much.

Moreover, a revised Concept would not just have to consider Russia's changed role. For years, the Alliance was uncertain as to whether it could generate sufficient internal consensus on the rise of China, the lessons of Afghanistan and other matters to warrant – and risk – the process of writing a new Concept. This scepticism was particularly evident during the presidency of Donald Trump in the United States (2017-2021), whose brash rhetoric and (at best) transactional view of NATO has shaken confidence of member states in the durability and reliability of the transatlantic bond to this day.

Finally, the 2010 Concept's high overall quality made its revision a particularly daunting task. That Concept was crisp and clear (lending itself to public diplomacy) and boasted the welcome invention of the three core tasks. While NATO had already engaged in deterrence and defence, crisis management, and cooperative security for many years, these three elements of NATO's broader security purpose had never been put so succinctly. It would need great effort – or a massive change in circumstance – to ditch this Concept in the hunt for something better.

A snapshot more than a strategy

Increasing tensions with Russia were exactly that change, especially after Russia's renewed aggression against Ukraine beginning in February 2022 escalated the conflict to an even greater scale than in 2014. Russia's 2022 attack was met with great resolve and unity of member states not just because there was a new administration in Washington, but also because people across Europe realized that Putin's aggression was not limited to Ukraine: it was directed against their open societies, their way of life, the very idea of a free Europe. That translated into NATO unity at the governmental level, helped in no small part by the end of the Afghanistan mission. While the outcome of that mission must be considered a political and operational disaster, the mission's termination removed a thorny issue from NATO deliberations.

This new Ukraine moment played into and accelerated a process Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg had already launched in 2020, taking a page from the 2010 playbook. Building

on the work of a commissioned group of experts[1] and a broad consultation phase, the new Concept was drafted in a tightly controlled operation led by the Secretary General and his closest advisers. A draft was then circulated to the member states with tight deadlines to minimize additions of narrow topics, nuances, and caveats important to only a few members. The result is a striking achievement that nonetheless suffers from a number of missed opportunities.

To produce a single, readable document reflecting the strategic consensus of thirty Allies is a success in itself. To start, the text manages to close the most obvious holes that the passage of time and events had torn into the 2010 Concept, especially regarding Russia. In doing so, the new Concept reflects not just an existing consensus but makes it more precise and thus stronger. This will propel the Alliance forward at a time when it is in high demand, as evidenced by Sweden and Finland's decisions to join.

This consensus, however, is more brittle than anyone might care to admit. Under the Concept's carefully worded language, one can sense fault lines of serious disagreement among Allies. This does not pertain so much to the essential issue, Russia, described as "the most significant and direct threat to Allies' security" (para.8), but is present in a number of underwhelming paragraphs which amount to the overall impression that the document does not lay out a strategy for the years to come. The new Concept does not flesh out the idea of what NATO needs to do and to become to guarantee the security of its members. It does a well-enough job explaining what NATO is in 2022. The NATO of 2030, however, remains an indistinct shape. In this respect, the Concept is a snapshot more than a strategy. A closer look at three examples illustrates this argument.

The core tasks

First, the 2022 Concept broadly reconfirms the three core tasks established in the 2010 document. This is a wise decision, as they provide a framework of how to think about NATO's manifold challenges and activities. Yet, since 2010 the balance between the tasks has shifted. With war raging in Europe and NATO's most notable crisis management mission having ended in Afghanistan, most member states were eager to give additional weight to the core task of collective defence of European NATO territory. In practical

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1   See "NATO 2030: united for a new era. Analysis and recommendations of the Reflection Group appointed by the NATO Secretary General", Brussels, 25 November 2020, https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2020/12/pdf/201201-Reflection-Group-Final-Report-Uni.pdf

terms of capability planning and troop deployment, this is already underway and received an additional push at the Madrid Summit.

Still, those who argued in favour of giving deterrence and defence pride of place among the core tasks have met robust opposition. Many Allies are uncomfortable with what they see as an exaggerated emphasis on the Eastern flank. They agree that NATO must react to the changed security situation, but they also insist that other aspects remain – maybe just as – relevant: mainly the ongoing threat of terrorism and the need to maintain a global international system in which NATO democracies can safely flourish. Thus, there can be no prioritization among the core tasks.

To resolve these competing perspectives, the Concept's drafters have shuffled their cards. While the 2010 Concept described the first core task quite interchangeably as both "collective defence" and "deterrence and defence", the 2022 Concept exclusively uses the latter. In turn, "collective defence" has been promoted to an overarching principle to be served by all three core tasks.[2] This is to build consensus: the three core tasks remain on equal footing while "collective defence" – widely understood as territorial defence primarily focused on the Eastern flank – still enjoys pride of place. This, however, comes at the cost of a rather befuddling distinction between "collective defence" and "deterrence and defence" that is hard to explain and unlikely to be upheld in practice.

In addition, the second core task of "crisis management" has been expanded to "crisis prevention and management". While prevention was mentioned in the 2010 Concept, this additional emphasis reflects Allies' diminished political appetite for large-scale out-of-area military operations. It also opens the door for increased cooperation with partners such as the European Union and to various aspects of human security, including the Women, Peace, and Security agenda, that are sprinkled throughout the document, complementing the military-centric nature of the first core task.

Evidently, striking a balance between territorial defence and crisis management remains a challenge for the Alliance, as does a meaningful interpretation of the "360-degrees" approach. Naturally, most practical emphasis today is on deterrence and defence and the Eastern flank. This is what NATO is most comfortable with and what it did almost exclusively for the first forty years of its existence. While the challenges of the southern flank and the need to project stability are still considered, it is hard for the Alliance to translate that into specific action, especially in the post-Afghanistan context. The 2022 Concept demonstrates this most clearly with the issue of terrorism, which is mentioned in

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2   In its paragraph 4, the Concept states that "NATO will continue to fulfil three core tasks: deterrence and defence; crisis prevention and management; and cooperative security", before it says that "These are complementary to ensure the collective defence and security of all Allies".

various contexts throughout but never receives coherent treatment.

The third core task, cooperative security, has not been re-phrased. This might be read as an indication that NATO partnerships have received short shrift in the Concept. Noticeably, all the familiar pledges are there, including the reaffirmation (para.41) of the 2008 Bucharest Summit declaration that Georgia and Ukraine will become members of the Alliance – as inconceivable as this might seem today. But there is also a lack of concrete and fresh ideas on how to develop and use existing partnerships, not to mention how to build new ones. That the section on the Indo-Pacific (para.45) does not name like-minded partners in the region nor elaborates a NATO policy towards them is a glaring omission. It is not remedied by NATO's notable pledge to work closer with the EU in "addressing the systemic challenges posed by the PRC to Euro-Atlantic security". (para.43)

A side effect of the core tasks' re-arrangement is that there is no room for true innovation. For instance, many argued[3] in favour of a fourth core task: resilience. Instead, resilience is buried in one of 14 paragraphs pertaining to deterrence and defence. Elevating resilience would have provided a broader understanding of defence and security, placing domestic preparations of member states into focus. The interplay between military and civilian actors in crisis response, the role of NATO publics in hardening our defence, and the continuum from conventional military attack to cyber or non-state actor attack on critical infrastructure would all have received greater and much-needed attention. Making resilience more central would also have increased NATO's role as a political forum for all member states (and societies) to discuss their broader security concerns. It is a missed opportunity, a sacrifice to strengthen consensus on the *status quo*.

China

A second example illustrating the Concept's lack of strategic vision is China. China was not mentioned at all in the 2010 Concept. In contrast, it is explicitly addressed in two paragraphs of the new Concept that pertain to NATO's strategic environment. It unequivocally states that "China's stated ambitions and coercive policies challenge our interests, security and values" (para.13). This is a significant assessment, bolstered by further language on China's efforts "to subvert the rules-based international order", its "deepening strategic partnership"

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3   See, for example, D. S. Hamilton (ed.), "Forward resilience", Center for Transatlantic Relations, Johns Hopkins University, Washington, DC, 2016, p.ix, https://archive.transatlanticrelations.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Forward_Resilience_Full-Book.pdf

with Russia, and its "malicious hybrid and cyber operations and its confrontational rhetoric and disinformation" (para.13). Elsewhere, the Concept also maintains that China is "rapidly expanding its nuclear arsenal […] without increasing transparency or engaging in good faith in arms control or risk reduction". (para.18)

Such language on China is an important step towards acknowledging reality. And yet, those passages are more interesting for what they do not state: China is not identified as a "threat" or a "systemic rival" or even a "systemic challenger". It merely poses "systemic challenges" to Euro-Atlantic security (paras.14 and 43). Thus, the document does not substantially expand on the language established at the 2021 Brussels Summit.[4] Also, the Concept is thin regarding NATO's response to these challenges. Beyond a general pledge to maintain unity, raise awareness, and enhance preparedness, the Concept does not offer any strategic orientation. This goes not just for policy responses to counter China, but also for how best to engage with it. The idea of creating a NATO-China Council, for example, did not make it into the Concept nor to the attached Summit Declaration. Combined with a lack of policy options regarding how to forge effective partnerships in the Indo-Pacific, this gives the impression that Allies have been decidedly undecided on what to do about China.

This also confirms the idea that the Strategic Concept is a snapshot rather than a guideline: Allies disagree about the significance of China's rise; about the right balance between cooperation, competition, and containment; and about whether NATO is the right organization for this discussion – including whether it is primarily concerned with military security on the European continent or whether it has a role to play in global strategic rivalries. This boils down to quite different strategic perspectives between the United States on the one hand and most European Allies on the other. Despite some progress, most Europeans still have a way to go in acknowledging the ideological and political threat that China represents.

Nuclear strategy

Third, the complex and sometimes arcane subject of NATO nuclear strategy is addressed in a series of paragraphs on deterrence and defence (paras.28 to 33). This is a much more compact statement than in the 2010 Concept, where nuclear issues were mentioned in a

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4   See Brussels Summit Communiqué issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Brussels 14 June 2021, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_185000.htm

scattered fashion. Appropriately, the new Concept focuses on nuclear purpose while not ignoring arms control, disarmament, and risk reduction.

In substance, the calibrated language amounts to a full affirmation of established positions. This is solid, especially given the kerfuffle about Germany, the Netherlands, and Belgium becoming observers to the Treaty on Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Of particular importance here is the affirmation of nuclear-sharing arrangements, bolstered by the new German government's decision to invest in necessary capabilities, and the renewed designation of NATO as a "nuclear alliance" "as long as nuclear weapons exist" (preface).

The method of merely recycling established language has its limits, however. That the "circumstances in which NATO might have to use nuclear weapons are extremely remote" (para.28) did ring true in the 2010 Concept. Reiterated today in the context of the Ukraine war, though, it gives the reader pause. There have been significant changes to the strategic situation in recent years and months, ranging from Russia's modernization of its nuclear forces and Putin's unprecedented rhetoric threatening the use of nuclear weapons to technological innovations that threaten to alter the strategic calculus of nuclear deterrence. Yet, none of these evolutions is clearly reflected in the new Concept.

The last time NATO revised its nuclear strategy was in the 2012 Deterrence and Defence Posture Review.[5] It is high time for an update, also given the breakdown of the network of arms control arrangements between Russia and the West. That the 2022 Summit could not deliver such a mandate demonstrates a lack of unity among Allies on the topic. With NATO publics increasingly concerned about the aggressive behaviour of nuclear-weapons states such as Russia, however, the Alliance is called upon to provide fresh answers.

NATO's treading water

The 2022 Strategic Concept fulfils its most important task: defining a consensus among Allies on NATO's role in a dramatically changed security environment. In doing so, it provides the basis for explaining the Alliance's purpose to NATO's democratic publics and for continued implementation of necessary measures to defend the Euro-Atlantic area.

The Concept does so at the expense of a more forward-leaning vision. It is conceivable that the security situation will rapidly change again, including as a result of new developments in relation to China, terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, technological breakthroughs,

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5 2012 Deterrence and Defence Posture Review, Brussels, 2012, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_87597.htm

and instability following the collapse of state structures. The new Strategic Concept does not ignore such scenarios; in its strategic thinking, however, the Alliance is treading water.

The new Concept enables greater unity amongst Allies in dealing with the tasks at hand. Whether it will enjoy longevity or, in hindsight, be regarded as an interim document, however, will largely depend on events – especially Allies' willingness to anticipate and prepare for events rather than simply react to them.

NATO Strategic Concept in the shadow of the war

Marcin Zaborowski

As expected, Allies adopted a new Strategic Concept at their June 2022 Summit in Madrid. The document defines the Alliance's core tasks and identifies ways to execute them. By nature, the Concept is not an operational document; its purpose is to communicate what NATO stands for to a wide audience. As a consequence, the new Concept has its limits when laying out concrete policies for the Alliance. It inevitably remains general in its description of the security environment and in its prescriptions for addressing the identified challenges. Concrete measures are to be found in annexes of the Concept, which are classified and therefore unavailable to the public.

This being said, the new Concept communicates a clear evolution in the Alliance's prioritization of its core tasks: defence and deterrence and an end to the illusion of partnership with Russia. Mirroring the structure of the 2010 Strategic Concept, the 2022 document addresses not only deterrence and defence but also "crisis prevention and management" and "cooperative security", all of which are named as core tasks of the Alliance. In parallel, the Alliance identifies China and its coercive policies as a "challenge" to Allied interests, security, and values. The 2022 Concept also speaks repeatedly about climate change, hybrid warfare and maintaining the Alliance's technological edge.

What the Concept says about NATO

NATO adopts new Concepts on average once per decade. The former text was adopted in 2010 and the ones before that in 1999 and 1991. The main rationale for a new Concept is less about adapting or changing the Alliance than it is about communicating its purpose to the external world. As such, the 2022 Concept posits NATO as a defensive Alliance focused on its core tasks as identified by the 1949 Washington Treaty – especially collective

defence, as defined in the Treaty's Article 5.[1]

The concept lays out Allies' perception of the security environment, communicates NATO's resolve in addressing current security threats, and suggests policy responses (although without going into specifics). The new Concept depicts a decidedly negative security environment, beginning with "The Euro-Atlantic area is not at peace" (para.6). The document was developed against the background of Russia's war against NATO's direct neighbour Ukraine, which broke out on 24 February 2022. The Concept is straightforward in its condemnation of Russia's "war of aggression against Ukraine" (preface). In a sentence that comes immediately after a reference to Russia's violation of the European security order, it also makes clear that the expansion of the war into NATO territory cannot be ruled out, stating "We cannot discount the possibility of an attack against Allies' sovereignty and territorial integrity" (para.6). Not since the end of the Cold War have Allies faced a material threat of equal seriousness. In fact, even during the Cold War there was no conventional war involving Russia (or the Soviet Union) along Allied borders.

In addition to the Russian threat, the Concept claims that the Alliance is also challenged by China: "the People's Republic of China's (PRC's) stated ambitions and coercive policies challenge our interests, security and values" (para.13). NATO is also concerned with the "deepening strategic partnership" (para.13) between China and Russia and the impact this link may have on the stability of the international order.

The tone of the Concept is therefore openly pessimistic – or maybe simply realistic. With a war on the Alliance's direct periphery and a tangible threat to NATO's own territory, the current situation is unprecedented in the Alliance's history. And, as alluded to by the Concept, the emerging axis of autocratic China and Russia, brought together mostly by shared anti-Western or anti-NATO stances, adds up to a historically difficult moment for the Alliance.

With this environment in mind, the Strategic Concept communicates NATO's resolve and unity. In doing so, a considerable part of the document is focused on NATO's deterrence and defence posture, including commitments under the Defence Investment Pledge (para.48) to provide the "full range of required capabilities". The document also stresses investment in technological innovation (preface and paras.5 and 24), which was foreshadowed by pre-Summit decisions to establish an Innovation Fund and a Defence

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1   Article 5 of the Washington Treaty poses that "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". The Washington Treaty, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_17120.htm

Innovation Accelerator for the North Atlantic (DIANA).[2]

How much change and how much continuity?

Although the 2022 Concept was developed under extraordinary conditions, there is a strong element of continuity between the 2022 text and the other Concepts developed after the end of the Cold War. In particular, the 2022 Concept follows the typology of the core tasks designed in the 2010 Concept.

As indicated earlier, the 2022 document clearly prioritises "deterrence and defence", dedicating 15 of the text's 49 paragraphs to the issue. In contrast, the two other core tasks, "crisis prevention and management" and "cooperative security", are addressed in five paragraphs each.

This contrasts with the former Concepts, which each dedicated substantially more attention to crisis management and cooperative security and less to deterrence and defence. Each of the pre-2022 Concepts argued that the Cold War was over and that the risk of a full-scale conventional attack on a NATO member state was far removed.[3] The 1991 text, the first developed after the end of the Cold War, was dominated by a search for the Alliance's purpose, identified as the promotion of security and stability in a still uncertain environment. The 1999 Concept focused on crisis management in the context of the wars in former Yugoslavia (most specifically in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo) as well as on the development of co-operative security relationship with Russia. As NATO was enlarging to the first group of ex-communist states (Czechia, Hungary and Poland) in 1999, it also concluded the NATO-Russia Founding Act (1997), hoping to establish a firmly co-operative relationship – possibly even a genuine partnership – with Moscow.[4]

The 2010 Strategic Concept was the first adopted after the events of 9/11 and was therefore preoccupied with the threat of terrorism and crisis management in Afghanistan.[5] Other than the threat of terrorism, the 2010 text was developed against the background

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2   On defence innovation at NATO, see "Adaptive portfolio: GLOBSEC report on catalysing NATO's Performance Through Innovation", GLOBSEC, 5 March 2022, https://www.globsec.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Adaptive-Port-folio-GLOBSEC-Report-on-Catalyzing-NATO's-Performance-Through-Innovation-report-ver8-spreads.pdf

3   For example, the 1991 concept argued: "the threat of a simultaneous, full-scale attack on all of NATO's European fronts has effectively been removed and thus no longer provides the focus for Allied strategy"; https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_23847.htm

4   See "25th Anniversary of the NATO-Russia Founding Act", *Deutsche Welle*, 27 May 2022.

5   "Active Engagement, Modern Defence", Strategic Concept for the Defence and Security of the Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Lisbon, 19-20 November 2010, https://www.nato.int/lisbon2010/strategic-concept-2010-eng.pdf

of severe resource constraints in the wake of the 2008 global economic crisis. However, the 2010 document also marked the return of deterrence and defence as a core task for the Alliance. The document was rather optimistic and hopeful about the relationship with Russia, stressing the importance of the NATO-Russia Founding Act. The text tacitly admitted that the relationship with Moscow had not lived up to its potential, arguing that "we want to see a true strategic partnership between NATO and Russia".[6]

Compared with its predecessors, the 2022 document is far more pessimistic about Russia in particular and about the Alliance's strategic environment more generally, including the emergence of the China challenge. Considered a "potential partner" in 2010, Russia has since evolved into a threat that the Alliance must deter and defend against in 2022. Still, while deterrence and defence has become the Alliance's most important task, the 2022 Concept maintains crisis prevention and management and cooperative security in its list of tasks, just as the post-Cold War Concepts did.

Geographical focus

The 2022 Concept's focus on deterrence and defence, together with a clear description of Russia as the Alliance's main threat, suggests that the Alliance will continue to operate in Europe and on its Eastern flank more specifically. Yet, the description of China as a "challenge" to the Alliance's interests, security, and values also indicates some strategic refocusing for the Alliance in the years to come. In this context, the Alliance's Southern flank, which figured prominently alongside Afghanistan in the 2010 Concept, is given substantially less attention in the 2022 document. However, given the general nature of the document one should remain cautious about assuming an overall strategic shift in terms of troops and the presence of other military assets.

The 2022 Concept makes some bold statements regarding Allies' deterrence and defence posture, including that "we will deter and defend forward with robust in-place, multi-domain, combat-ready forces, enhanced command and control arrangements, prepositioned ammunition and equipment and improved capacity and infrastructure to rapidly reinforce any Ally, including at short or no notice. We will adjust the balance between in-place forces and reinforcements to strengthen deterrence and the Alliance ability to defend" (para.21). While the Eastern flank is not mentioned explicitly in those passages, it is clear that defending the Alliance against the Russian threat requires NATO to reinforce

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6   *Ibid.*

its presence in NATO member states most exposed to Russian belligerence (i.e. the Baltic States and Poland) and in Allies that border Ukraine or the Black Sea (Hungary, Romania, Slovakia and Bulgaria).

Following the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, the Allied presence has quadrupled along the Eastern flank, growing from approximately 10,000 to 40,000 troops under NATO command.[7] The Alliance has also despatched some strategic assets to the region, including Patriot missile batteries now stationed in Poland, Romania and Slovakia. The permanent Headquarters for US Army's V Corps are to be established in Poznan, Poland, following decisions announced at the Madrid Summit.[8] It also seems that the Concept (and related decisions) have sealed a decision – debated since 2016 – to preposition ammunition and equipment in the Alliance's Eastern flank. However, at no point have the Concept nor indeed NATO officials announced the establishment of permanent NATO bases on its Eastern flank.

The language of the 2022 Concept is firmer in this respect than that of the 2016 Alliance Summit in Warsaw, which established the enhanced Forward Presence now deployed in the Baltic States and Poland.[9] At the time, the Alliance stressed that the presence would be rotational and temporary. In contrast, the language of the 2022 document speaks about a "substantial and persistent presence" (para.21) in all domains. While there is a marked difference in both language and concrete decisions regarding NATO's posture on the Eastern flank in 2022 (compared with 2016), it remains unclear how enduring and substantial the Alliance's refocused posture will be. Russia's actions towards the Alliance and its neighbours will largely determine the longevity of the Alliance's new posture, but it will also be influenced by the US's resolve to sustain its "surge" in Eastern Europe, all while the pivot to the Indo-Pacific still looms. Importantly, the 2022 Concept refrained from pronouncing the 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Act "null and void". This means that, at least in principle, Allies have not decided to remove self-imposed limitations on the Allied presence on the Eastern flank.

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7   "NATO's Eastern flank: stronger defence and deterrence", NATO Public Diplomacy Division, June 2022, https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2022/3/pdf/2203-map-det-def-east.pdf

8   "Permanent HQ for US Army's V Corps will be established in Poland", 30 June 2022, https://www.gov.pl/web/national-defence/the-permanent-hq-for-us-armys-v-corps-will-be-established-in-poland

9   Warsaw Summit Communique, NATO, 9 July 2016, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_133169.htm

Coherence and relevance

The 2022 Strategic Concept proves that NATO remains both coherent and relevant. Although various Allies have had different geographical and political priorities, the Concept focuses on issues that are of direct relevance to the entire NATO area.

NATO is arguably a strong military Alliance, yet it is not alone. NATO's natural and closest partner is the European Union – not least because the membership of both organizations overlaps, with 21 (soon 23 once Finland and Sweden will have joined NATO) states being members of both. The 2022 Concept calls for closer co-operation between NATO and the EU (para.43) at a time when the security environment necessitates the greatest possible complementarity between democratic security actors. The Concept also calls for EU defence efforts to involve non-EU Allies. This concerns Turkey, which has been excluded from various EU initiatives due to the objections of EU member states, in particular Cyprus but also the United Kingdom and the United States. With war raging at NATO's borders, it is essential that Allies put aside their differences and work towards strengthening complementarity between their respective institutions.

The 2022 Strategic Concept intends to project the image of an Alliance that is prepared and ready to act. However, the Concept also contains shortfalls that dent the intended outcome. For example, the Concept reasserts its open-door policy and refers to Ukraine, Georgia and Bosnia and Herzegovina in this context (para.41). However, the open-door policy was declared in 2008 in Bucharest, and since then NATO has not moved to implement its pledge, evident in the fact that NATO has not offered a Membership Action Plan to any of the hopefuls. The 2022 Concept does not offer any advancement of this process. Such caution is probably motivated by a desire to avoid playing into the Russian narrative of alleged NATO encirclement. Russia, however, is likely to maintain such a narrative regardless, as it interprets this signal as indicating that NATO is afraid of bold moves.

The same goes for Allies' caution regarding the 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Act. It should be clear that NATO's self-imposed limitations regarding the strategic balance on its Eastern flank are no longer binding following Russia's invasion of a NATO partner and direct neighbour. Yet, the 2022 Strategic Concept fails to say so explicitly, and Moscow has no doubt noticed this.

Despite these shortcomings, the 2022 Strategic Concept clearly communicates that NATO is adapting to the new security environment within a relatively short period of time. With deterrence and defence dominating the document, *de facto* replacing the task of crisis

management, radical changes in NATO's posture are looming. But Allies must now live up to the challenge of providing both the political support and the capabilities required, so that the Concept is operationalised to the benefit of the Alliance's one billion citizens.

The Strategic Concept and the US-China-Russia strategic triangle

Mark Webber

NATO issued its new Strategic Concept in the midst of the Russo-Ukraine war, the most destructive armed conflict in Europe since 1945. Not surprisingly, collective defence loomed large: this, the document's preface makes clear, is NATO's "key purpose and greatest responsibility". Crisis prevention and management alongside cooperative security are carried forward from the 2010 version as "core tasks" of the Alliance, and "national and collective resilience" is seen as "critical" to alliance purpose (paras.20-46). But NATO's actions make plain the direction of travel. The *Financial Times* noted in May that in response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, NATO had "collectively embarked on the most significant – and rapid – military deployment in the history of modern Europe".[1] Other priorities have, in consequence, been displaced. The three-decade preoccupation with crisis management, that lasted from the Balkan interventions of the 1990s up until NATO's withdrawal from Afghanistan in the summer of 2021, has largely come to an end. (A depleted KFOR in Kosovo together with small operations in Iraq and in the Mediterranean are its remaining legacy). Terrorism is referred to as "the most direct asymmetric threat to the security of our citizens" (para.10) but NATO's collective role in countering it remains limited.[2] This narrowing of objectives means the 2022 Strategic Concept has moved away from the approach of its three post-Cold War predecessors. The documents adopted in 1991, 1999 and 2010 sought a balance between NATO's core tasks; that of 2022 makes a clear choice as to which takes precedence. If, then, "collective defence is back",[3] how does this priority sit with the position of the United States, NATO's leading power? And, how, in turn, does the NATO position take account of what is the most consequential

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1   H. Foy, "NATO's eastern front: will the military build-up make Europe safer", *Financial Times*, 4 May 2022.

2   S. Loertscher *et al.*, "Developing an enduring role for NATO's fight against terrorism", *Defence Studies*, online early, 2022, available at https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14702436.2022.2082952

3   E. Perot, "NATO, the EU and the return of collective defence", *CSDS Policy Brief*, No.12, 2022, p.1.

development of contemporary international politics – the rise of China? Answers to these questions can be provided by looking at the dynamics of the US-China-Russia "strategic triangle".[4]

The "strategic triangle"

Steeled to counter Russia, NATO has been described as having returned to its Cold War roots.[5] But there is one major difference from that period - the altered position of China. China was not, of course, absent from the Cold War. At first it was a proxy belligerent of the United States (as in the Korean and Vietnam wars) but during the 1970s and 1980s China became the object of American courtship as Washington sought to exploit the Sino-Soviet rift. At no point during the Cold War was China regarded in Washington as a strategic threat greater or even equal to that posed by the Soviet Union. Indeed, it was increasingly treated as a tacit ally of America. The situation that has crystallised in the decade or so since 2010 is fundamentally different. Not only is China now seen as a "near-peer competitor", but the global balance of power has shifted to America's disadvantage. The United States is caught up in competitive and antagonistic relations with *both* Russia and China, and is the object of a strategic alignment *between* these two powers. In a triangular relationship of three powers this is the worst possible position to be in.[6]

American national security policy has had to adjust to this reality. "China's rise, and Russia's aggression all significantly impact the future of major power relations", the Obama administration's 2015 National Security Strategy declared.[7] President Trump, despite his alleged pro-Russian sympathies, signed off on near identical pronouncements.[8] The Biden administration has viewed Russia and China as engaged in a joint effort to undermine global security and international order. Following a formula already clear under Trump, it has identified China as the main worry. Russia, in the language of the 2022 National Defence Strategy is an acute threat to the United States and its allies, but China is America's

4   S.M. Ali, "Introduction: a new Cold War? The US-China-Russia strategic triangle", in S.M. Ali (ed.), *The US-China-Russia triangle: an evolving historiography*, Springer publishers, 2022.

5   B. Hall, H. Foy and F. Schwartz, "Military briefing: NATO brings back Cold War doctrine to counter Russian threat", *Financial Times*, 30 June 2022.

6   L. Dittmer, "The strategic triangle: an elementary game-theoretical analysis", *World Politics*, No.33, Iss.4, 1981, pp.489-90.

7   B. Obama, *National security strategy*, Washington, DC, The White House, 2015, p.4

8   D. Trump, *National security strategy*, Washington, DC, The White House, 2017, p.2.

"most consequential strategic competitor".[9] Other concerns – climate change, pandemics, terrorism, nuclear proliferation – have not gone away, but as keynote American statements make clear, great-power competition has emerged as the organising construct of American foreign policy.[10]

NATO's new Strategic Concept follows the American lead. "Strategic competition" is the first of three defining characteristics of NATO's strategic environment (alongside "pervasive instability and recurrent shocks" (para.6)). Iran, North Korea and Syria are all mentioned as "[s]trategic competitors and potential adversaries" (para.18), but it is Russia and China which constitute the main axis of concern. Russia is positioned as "the most significant and direct threat" (para.8). However, China has also moved clearly into NATO's sights. NATO's first ever statement on China – at the Leaders' Meeting in London in December 2019 – spoke of both "opportunities and challenges" in dealing with Beijing.[11] The language of the Strategic Concept is much tougher. China is not singled out as "threat" as such (perhaps reflecting some European reservations), but the key paragraphs use synonymous language. China is referred to as a "challenge [to the …] interests, security and values" of the Alliance, as engaged in "malicious cyber and hybrid operations", as "seek[ing] to control key technological and industrial sectors" and alongside Russia, as aiming to "undercut the rules-based international order" (paras.13-14). The Concept goes on to warn that "[s]trategic competitors and potential adversaries are investing in technologies that could restrict our access and freedom to operate in space, degrade our space capabilities, target our civilian and military infrastructure, impair our defence and harm our security" (para.16). Without naming them, that injunction is directed at China as much as it is at Russia.

This focus on Russia and China is evident also in regional priorities. References to Africa, the Middle East and NATO's "southern neighbourhood" (para.11) are all included, but the "Indo-Pacific" makes its first ever appearance in a NATO Strategic Concept. Developments in the region are seen as "directly affect[ing] Euro-Atlantic security" (para.45). Strengthening dialogue and cooperation with partners there is thus a priority. By contrast, no mention is made of NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue or the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (focused on the Gulf). Afghanistan, meanwhile, is seen as a closed chapter – relevant only as a case for "lessons learned" (para.36).

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9 US Department of Defence, "Fact Sheet: 2022 National defence strategy", https://media.defense.gov/2022/Mar/28/2002964702/-1/-1/1/NDS-FACT-SHEET.PDF

10 A. Wyne, *America's great power opportunity: revitalizing US foreign policy to meet the challenges of strategic competition*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 2022, pp.2-5.

11 London Declaration issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in London 3-4 December 2019, paragraph 6.

Strategic triangles of three international actors come in many different forms. The most consequential for NATO is that which connects the United States with China and Russia. The new Strategic Concept does not refer to this relationship explicitly, but it is implicit in the picture the document paints of an international order challenged by Moscow and Beijing but defended by the United States and its transatlantic allies (para.47).

Dealing with "strategic competition"

In an environment of "strategic competition", what might we expect of NATO? Given the costs of facing off against two concurrent threats (or challenges), one logical course of action would be to pursue "selective accommodation" with Russia.[12] The purposes of such a policy would be to wedge apart the Sino-Russian alliance, to give the United States room to concentrate on China and to position the Alliance and Russia in a refashioned European security space. With a return to reconciliation and partnership, NATO would no longer have to face Russia as an all-consuming problem. It would thus regain the time and resources needed to attend to other issues, not least the Strategic Concept's second core task of crisis prevention and management. For all its appeal, such an approach is currently closed off. A policy of partnership between NATO and Russia underpinned the 1999 and 2010 Strategic Concepts, but it was clear even before Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022 that such an approach had run out of road. Eastern enlargement, as well as NATO (and America's) distinctive partnership with Ukraine, were used by Moscow as a pretext for its annexation of Crimea in 2014. The Allies rejected any such linkage and since 2014 the formal NATO-Russia relationship has been suspended. The two sides have since developed military strategies (with associated deployments and exercises) where the other is seen as the principal antagonist. Some allies – Germany, France, Italy and Turkey – remain open to dialogue with Moscow, but as a whole NATO is committed to a long-term struggle with Russia. The view in Moscow is even more recalcitrant. Russian strategy, Michael Kofman and others have noted, "is oriented towards the prospect of a regional or large-scale war with NATO".[13] To cap it all, the two sides are, in effect, fighting a proxy war in Ukraine that may go on for years.[14]

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12   T. W. Crawford, *The power to divide: wedge strategies in great power competition*, Ithaca and London, Cornell University Press, 2021, p.193.

13   M. Kofman *et al.*, *Russian military strategy: core tenets and operational concepts*, Arlington, VA, CNA, 2021, p.21.

14   S. Winter-Levy, "A proxy war in Ukraine is the worst possible outcome – except for all the others", *War on the Rocks*, 28 March 2022, https://warontherocks.com/

The corollary of accommodation, a wedge strategy directed at Russia, meanwhile, is precluded by the solidity of the relationship between Moscow and Beijing. One might question the reality of the "no limits" partnership declared by Presidents Putin and Xi in February 2022. China has supported Putin's political case for war in Ukraine but has desisted from providing arms to Russia and has held off certain commercial operations for fear of secondary sanctions. Yet, Russia and China remain locked in a strategic embrace. Both share the view that the United States (and thus for Russia, NATO) is their principal strategic rival. The conflict in Ukraine (whatever the associated Chinese reservations) is only likely to reinforce this situation, as a war-weary and isolated Russia turns to China as a source of long-term support.[15]

In this light, the obvious alternative is to accommodate China, the other vertex of the strategic triangle. NATO's Strategic Concept notes the possibility of "constructive engagement" with China and of "reciprocal transparency" (para.14). But, ultimately, this is America's business, not NATO's. And as such, a rapprochement with China has been off the table since the Obama administration. For the United States, the emerging era of strategic competition calls forth two main options for dealing with Beijing: "China first" or a "two-front" strategy ("simultaneously upholding the deterrence and alliance architectures of Europe and East Asia").[16] The Strategic Concept reflects the Biden administration's commitment to the second of these.[17] That said, NATO is not about to become a channel for American engagement in the Indo-Pacific. Only a few allies (Canada, France and the United Kingdom) possess relevant military capabilities, and there is no allied consensus to repurpose NATO in this manner. Thus far, NATO's approach to China has been largely declaratory. The Alliance has upgraded it partnerships with Australia, Japan, New Zealand and South Korea, and has acted as a framework for discussing China-sensitive issues such as 5G security. Other possibilities – intelligence sharing, diplomatic coordination, defence planning and a coordinated technology policy[18] – have yet to materialise. And insofar as the United States seeks help in balancing China, existing bilateral arrangements with Japan, South Korea and potentially India, alongside new regionally-focused initiatives such as

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15   D.O. Shullmann and A. Kendall-Taylor, "Best and bosom friends: why China-Russia ties will deepen after Russia's war on Ukraine", *The Marshall Papers*, June 2022, www.csis.org

16   L. Simón, "Bridging US-led Alliances in the Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific: an inter-theater perspective", *CSIS Briefs*, May 2022, www.csis.org

17   See comments of Julianne Smith, US ambassador to NATO, in J. Garamone, "Russia forcing changes to NATO Strategic Concept", *DoD News*, 1 June 2022, https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/3049900/russia-forcing-changes-to-nato-strategic-concepts/

18   H. Binnendijk and S. Kirchberger (lead authors), *The China plan: a transatlantic blueprint for strategic competition*, Washington, D.C., Atlantic Council, Scowcroft Centre, March 2021, p.5.

AUKUS[19] and the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, serve that purpose far better than does NATO.[20]

In the meantime, the Biden administration has revitalised America's security commitment to Europe, so affirming America's alignment with the Strategic Concept's prioritisation of deterrence and defence. During the first six months of 2022, US force size on the continent grew by some 20,000 troops, bringing the total to 100,000, the largest European deployment since 2005. The United States has also been by far the largest source of support to the Ukrainian war effort. But American steadfastness has its limits. Leaving aside the outcome of the 2024 presidential election (and the possible return to power of NATO-sceptic Donald Trump), the commitment to NATO Europe remains contingent on American calculations regarding China. As the 2022 US Defence Strategy suggests, in a real two-front war there is no doubt that the United States would prioritize the Indo-Pacific (so implying that the NATO allies would have to take the strain in dealing with Russia).[21] As for the current position in Europe, with the exception of a new permanent presence in Poland, American deployments are, according to one forthcoming analysis, "consistent with the broader, post-Cold War shift [away] from a heavy and permanent presence to a lighter and more rotational one".[22] The logic here is that the Russian threat to NATO (as opposed to Ukraine) is modest and that China remains the most important call upon American defence resources.

US budgetary allocations give some sense of this ranking. The Department of Defence (DoD) 2023 budget request set aside USD6.1bn for the Pacific Deterrence Initiative and USD4.2 bn for its European equivalent. The difference of USD1.9bn may not seem much when set against a total request of USD773bn. But as one DoD summary noted, in the budget as a whole, "the majority of DoD investments are applicable, directly or indirectly, to [the] strategic imperative" of boosting "warfighting effectiveness, deterrence, and competition [in] the Indo-Pacific".[23] The Senate Appropriations Committee in July 2022 increased the recommended top-line budget to USD850bn. This was largely to take account of inflation. The war in Ukraine also shaped the budget proposal. Significant sums were earmarked for the Baltic Security Initiative, supplemental assistance to Ukraine, and the

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19   AUKUS is a security pact signed in September 2021 by the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia.

20   *Indo-Pacific Strategy of the United States*, Washington, DC, White House, 2022, pp.12-13.

21   As discussed in A. Wyne, "Great power competition isn't a foreign policy", *The Washington Quarterly*, No.45, Iss.2, 2022.

22   L. Desmaele and L. Simón, "From the annexation of Crimea to the Ukraine war: forward deployment and reassurance", in J. Sperling and M. Webber (eds.), *The Oxford handbook on the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, forthcoming.

23   Office of the Under Secretary of Defence (Comptroller)/Chief Financial Officer, *Defence budget overview, United States Department of Defence fiscal year 2023 budget request*, April 2022, pp.3-2 – 3-3.

replenishment of weapons and ammunition shipped to the Ukrainian military. However, as the Committee noted, the principal focus of US defence strategy (and thus the budget itself) remained the "increased challenge of strategic competition with China". This was the pivot around which other matters turned – "the United States' ability to compete with China", it went on, "support[s] broader strategic objectives, including reassuring allies and partners and enhancing deterrence *vis-à-vis* Russia".[24]

NATO Europe – stepping up?

A US global force posture that prioritises China does not mean that NATO, European defence, and Russia have become marginal to American strategic calculations. The Biden administration has been clear that NATO's Strategic Concept is an opportunity to affirm America's commitment to NATO and that in the European theatre it is Russia's aggression that poses the gravest threat to American interests. That position has been accompanied by the familiar admonitions on burden sharing.[25] American concern here has been carried into the Strategic Concept's penultimate paragraph (48)[26]. This is the document's only reference to burden-sharing, but it is an important one. While not containing quite the wording the US would have preferred (that, per the suggestion of Secretary of Defence Lloyd Austin, the two per cent GDP commitment "is a floor, and not a ceiling"[27]) – it is lengthier and more direct than that contained in the 2010 Strategic Concept, and expressly reaffirms agreed NATO language on defence spending.

The broader meaning of this position is, however, not drawn out. An obvious policy implication is that the Europeans should commit much more to their own defence, so freeing up the United States to better deal with China. That would be a truly strategic moment – but it is not even hinted at in the Strategic Concept. Such a division of labour is anathema to many European allies, just as much as it is to Washington. Attached to America's post-

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24   US Senate Appropriations Committee, *Explanatory statement for the Department of Defence Appropriations Bill, 2023*, p.4.

25   Statement by Celeste Wallander, Assistant Secretary of Defence for International Security Affairs, House of Representatives, Committee on Armed Services, 30 March, 2022, p.4.

26   Paragraph 48 states: "[…] We will ensure our nations meet the commitments under the Defence Investment Pledge, in its entirety, to provide the full range of required capabilities. We will build on the progress made to ensure that increased national defence expenditures and NATO common funding will be commensurate with the challenges of a more contested security order".

27   Secretary of Defence Lloyd J. Austin III, Remarks Welcoming NATO Secretary Jens Stoltenberg to the Pentagon, 2 June 2022, US Department of Defence, https://www.defense.gov/News/Transcripts/Transcript/Article/3051297/secretary-of-defense-lloyd-j-austin-iii-remarks-welcoming-nato-secretary-genera/

1945 dual vocation as an Atlantic and a Pacific power, the Biden administration believes the United States can sustain both its European and Indo-Pacific defence efforts. The NATO allies, meanwhile, have no problem with such strategic altruism. European and Canadian defence spending has increased since 2014 – and has been boosted further by the 2022 war. But the United States remains NATO's principal power in Europe so sustaining a form of "easy riding" on its efforts by a significant portion of the Alliance. Some states – the Baltics and Poland – have departed from this pattern having made significant increases in defence spending. But data for 2022 show that only nine of NATO's thirty allies meet the two per cent of GDP benchmark.[28] There is also an inverse relationship between national wealth and commitment. Of NATO's eight largest economies, just two (the United States and the United Kingdom) cross the spending threshold.[29] Germany, arguably the most important laggard, has promised a one-off EUR100bn hike in defence spending – but its regular defence budget is not expected to meet the NATO target until 2026. For Italy the date is 2028; Spain 2029; Denmark 2033 and Belgium 2035.[30] The Strategic Concept's insistence that the allies "share equitably [the] responsibilities and risks [… of] our defence and security" (para.46) thus seems entirely appropriate – even if it has been met more in the breach than the observance.

For all that, NATO Europe still outpaces Russia. According to one estimate, by 2024 NATO minus the United States will be spending six times more on defence than Russia.[31] In that light, some have suggested that the European allies ought to make a greater effort toward continental defence and crisis management.[32] Others, aware of the extent of transatlantic dependency, suggest that American leadership and defence technological prowess is still required – thus, keeping the United States engaged in Europe, albeit in a NATO refashioned for greater European "strategic responsibility".[33] The US-China-Russia strategic triangle and the war in Ukraine mean these questions have been posed anew. However, they have not been fully answered in the Strategic Concept. They are too political and controversial for that. It might be achievement enough that China and Russia are, at least conjoined in the document (in what paragraph 13 refers to as "a deepening

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28   NATO Public Diplomacy Division, "Defence Expenditure of NATO Countries (2014-2022)", Graph 3, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_193983.htm

29   The six who miss out are, in descending GDP order: Germany, France, Italy, Canada, Spain and Turkey. See "Defence Expenditure of NATO Countries (2014-2022)", Table 5, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_193983.htm

30   D. Hutt, "How European countries stand on 2% of GDP defence spending", *Euronews*, 22 July 2022, www.euronews.com/

31   S. Kuper, "Is the West's defence spending even necessary?", *Financial Times Magazine*, 7 July 2022.

32   S.M. Walt, "Exactly how helpless is Europe?", *Foreign Policy*, 21 May 2022, https://foreignpolicy.com/

33   H. Binnendijk, D.S. Hamilton and A. Vershbow, "Strategic responsibility: rebalancing European and trans-atlantic defence", The Brookings Institution, 24 June 2022, www.brookings.edu/

strategic partnership"), and that the beginnings of a new transatlantic bargain in a world of "competitive multipolarity"[34] have come into view.

Conclusion

NATO's 2022 Strategic Concept is not a long laundry list of aspirational statements. Its gestation over twelve months has resulted in a document informed above all else by the alliance's position in an emerging "era of great power competition".[35] The full import of that position is not articulated. But the Concept's statements on Russia are notably forthright (shaped by the immediacy of the war in Ukraine); those on China are pathbreaking and would have been even more assertive had the Allies moved closer to the American position. Overall, the new Concept represents a significant shift away from the themes of the 2010 document. It is also fitting move toward the future. Great power competition is not a fleeting fixture of international politics, but one of its mainstays.[36] It may be the case that in years to come, the 2022 Strategic Concept will be regarded as a correction to years of strategic digression and a welcome return to NATO's core business.

34   P. Porter, "Advice for a dark age: managing great power competition", *The Washington Quarterly*, No.42, Iss.1, 2019, p.7.

35   Summary of speech by Deputy Secretary General Mircea Geoană at the Copenhagen Democracy Summit, 10 June 2022, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_196299.htm

36   For a recent statement of this position, see S. Kotkin, "The Cold War never ended: Ukraine, the China challenge, and the revival of the West", *Foreign Affairs*, No.101, Iss.3, 2022.

Annex I

NATO 2022 Strategic Concept

Adopted by Heads of State and Government at the NATO Summit in Madrid

29 June 2022

Preface

We, the Heads of State and Government of the NATO Allies, have come together in Madrid at a critical time for our security and for international peace and stability. Today, we endorse a new Strategic Concept to ensure our Alliance remains fit and resourced for the future.

For more than seventy years, NATO has ensured the freedom and security of Allies. Our success is the result of the service and sacrifice of the women and men of our armed services. We owe them and their families a great debt of gratitude.

We remain steadfast in our resolve to protect our one billion citizens, defend our territory and safeguard our freedom and democracy. We will reinforce our unity, cohesion and solidarity, building on the enduring transatlantic bond between our nations and the strength of our shared democratic values. We reiterate our steadfast commitment to the North Atlantic Treaty and to defending each other from all threats, no matter where they stem from.

We will continue to work towards just, inclusive and lasting peace and remain a bulwark of the rules-based international order. We will retain a global perspective and work closely with our partners, other countries and international organisations, such as the European Union and the United Nations, to contribute to international peace and security.

Our world is contested and unpredictable. The Russian Federation's war of aggression against Ukraine has shattered peace and gravely altered our security environment. Its brutal and unlawful invasion, repeated violations of international humanitarian law and

heinous attacks and atrocities have caused unspeakable suffering and destruction. A strong, independent Ukraine is vital for the stability of the Euro-Atlantic area. Moscow's behaviour reflects a pattern of Russian aggressive actions against its neighbours and the wider transatlantic community. We also face the persistent threat of terrorism, in all its forms and manifestations. Pervasive instability, rising strategic competition and advancing authoritarianism challenge the Alliance's interests and values.

Our new Strategic Concept reaffirms that NATO's key purpose is to ensure our collective defence, based on a 360-degree approach. It defines the Alliance's three core tasks: deterrence and defence; crisis prevention and management; and cooperative security. We underscore the need to significantly strengthen our deterrence and defence as the backbone of our Article 5 commitment to defend each other.

The fundamental purpose of NATO's nuclear capability is to preserve peace, prevent coercion and deter aggression. As long as nuclear weapons exist, NATO will remain a nuclear alliance. NATO's goal is a safer world for all; we seek to create the security environment for a world without nuclear weapons.

The Strategic Concept emphasises that ensuring our national and collective resilience is critical to all our core tasks and underpins our efforts to safeguard our nations, societies and shared values. It also emphasises the cross-cutting importance of investing in technological innovation and integrating climate change, human security and the Women, Peace and Security agenda across all our core tasks.

Our vision is clear: we want to live in a world where sovereignty, territorial integrity, human rights and international law are respected and where each country can choose its own path, free from aggression, coercion or subversion. We work with all who share these goals. We stand together, as Allies, to defend our freedom and contribute to a more peaceful world.

Purpose and Principles

1.   NATO is determined to safeguard the freedom and security of Allies. Its key purpose and greatest responsibility is to ensure our collective defence, against all threats, from all directions. We are a defensive Alliance.

2.   The transatlantic bond between our nations is indispensable to our security. We are bound together by common values: individual liberty, human rights, democracy and the rule of law. We remain firmly committed to the purposes and principles of the Charter of

the United Nations and the North Atlantic Treaty.

3.   NATO is the unique, essential and indispensable transatlantic forum to consult, coordinate and act on all matters related to our individual and collective security. We will strengthen our Alliance based on our indivisible security, solidarity, and ironclad commitment to defend each other, as enshrined in Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty. Our ability to deter and defend is the backbone of that commitment.

4.   NATO will continue to fulfil three core tasks: deterrence and defence; crisis prevention and management; and cooperative security. These are complementary to ensure the collective defence and security of all Allies.

5.   We will enhance our individual and collective resilience and technological edge. These efforts are critical to fulfil the Alliance's core tasks. We will promote good governance and integrate climate change, human security and the Women, Peace and Security agenda across all our tasks. We will continue to advance gender equality as a reflection of our values.

Strategic Environment

6.   The Euro-Atlantic area is not at peace. The Russian Federation has violated the norms and principles that contributed to a stable and predictable European security order. We cannot discount the possibility of an attack against Allies' sovereignty and territorial integrity. Strategic competition, pervasive instability and recurrent shocks define our broader security environment. The threats we face are global and interconnected.

7.   Authoritarian actors challenge our interests, values and democratic way of life. They are investing in sophisticated conventional, nuclear and missile capabilities, with little transparency or regard for international norms and commitments. Strategic competitors test our resilience and seek to exploit the openness, interconnectedness and digitalisation of our nations. They interfere in our democratic processes and institutions and target the security of our citizens through hybrid tactics, both directly and through proxies. They conduct malicious activities in cyberspace and space, promote disinformation campaigns, instrumentalise migration, manipulate energy

supplies and employ economic coercion. These actors are also at the forefront of a deliberate effort to undermine multilateral norms and institutions and promote authoritarian models of governance.

8.   The Russian Federation is the most significant and direct threat to Allies' security and

to peace and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area. It seeks to establish spheres of influence and direct control through coercion, subversion, aggression and annexation.

It uses conventional, cyber and hybrid means against us and our partners. Its coercive military posture, rhetoric and proven willingness to use force to pursue its political goals undermine the rules-based international order. The Russian Federation is modernising its nuclear forces and expanding its novel and disruptive dual-capable delivery systems, while employing coercive nuclear signalling. It aims to destabilise countries to our East and South. In the High North, its capability to disrupt Allied reinforcements and freedom of navigation across the North Atlantic is a strategic challenge to the Alliance. Moscow's military build-up, including in the Baltic, Black and Mediterranean Sea regions, along with its military integration with Belarus, challenge our security and interests.

9.   NATO does not seek confrontation and poses no threat to the Russian Federation. We will continue to respond to Russian threats and hostile actions in a united and responsible way. We will significantly strengthen deterrence and defence for all Allies, enhance our resilience against Russian coercion and support our partners to counter malign interference and aggression. In light of its hostile policies and actions, we cannot consider the Russian Federation to be our partner. However, we remain willing to keep open channels of communication with Moscow to manage and mitigate risks, prevent escalation and increase transparency. We seek stability and predictability in the Euro-Atlantic area and between NATO and the Russian Federation. Any change in our relationship depends on the Russian Federation halting its aggressive behaviour and fully complying with international law.

10.   Terrorism, in all its forms and manifestations, is the most direct asymmetric threat to the security of our citizens and to international peace and prosperity. Terrorist organisations seek to attack or inspire attacks against Allies. They have expanded their networks, enhanced their capabilities and invested in new technologies to improve their reach and lethality. Non-state armed groups, including transnational terrorist networks and state supported actors, continue to exploit conflict and weak governance to recruit, mobilise and expand their foothold.

11.   Conflict, fragility and instability in Africa and the Middle East directly affect our security and the security of our partners. NATO's southern neighbourhood, particularly the Middle East, North Africa and Sahel regions, faces interconnected security, demographic, economic and political challenges. These are aggravated by the impact of climate change, fragile institutions, health emergencies and food insecurity. This situation provides fertile ground for the proliferation of non-state armed groups, including terrorist organisations. It also enables destabilising and coercive interference by strategic competitors.

12.   Pervasive instability results in violence against civilians, including conflict-related sexual violence, as well as attacks against cultural property and environmental damage. It contributes to forced displacement, fuelling human trafficking and irregular migration. These trends pose serious transnational and humanitarian challenges. They undermine human and state security and have a disproportionate impact on women, children and minority groups.

13.   The People's Republic of China's (PRC) stated ambitions and coercive policies challenge our interests, security and values. The PRC employs a broad range of political, economic and military tools to increase its global footprint and project power, while remaining opaque about its strategy, intentions and military build-up.

The PRC's malicious hybrid and cyber operations and its confrontational rhetoric and disinformation target Allies and harm Alliance security. The PRC seeks to control key technological and industrial sectors, critical infrastructure, and strategic materials and supply chains. It uses its economic leverage to create strategic dependencies and enhance its influence. It strives to subvert the rules-based international order, including in the space, cyber and maritime domains. The deepening strategic partnership between the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation and their mutually reinforcing attempts to undercut the rules-based international order run counter to our values and interests.

14.   We remain open to constructive engagement with the PRC, including to build reciprocal transparency, with a view to safeguarding the Alliance's security interests. We will work together responsibly, as Allies, to address the systemic challenges posed by the PRC to Euro-Atlantic security and ensure NATO's enduring ability to guarantee the defence and security of Allies. We will boost our shared awareness, enhance our resilience and preparedness, and protect against the PRC's coercive tactics and efforts to divide the Alliance. We will stand up for our shared values and the rules-based international order, including freedom of navigation.

15.   Cyberspace is contested at all times. Malign actors seek to degrade our critical infrastructure, interfere with our government services, extract intelligence, steal intellectual property and impede our military activities.

16.   Strategic competitors and potential adversaries are investing in technologies that could restrict our access and freedom to operate in space, degrade our space capabilities, target our civilian and military infrastructure, impair our defence and harm our security.

17.   Emerging and disruptive technologies bring both opportunities and risks. They are altering the character of conflict, acquiring greater strategic importance and becoming key arenas of global competition. Technological primacy increasingly influences success on the

battlefield.

18.   The erosion of the arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation architecture has negatively impacted strategic stability. The Russian Federation's violations and selective implementation of its arms control obligations and commitments have contributed to the deterioration of the broader security landscape. The potential use of Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear materials or weapons against NATO by hostile state and non-state actors remains a threat to our security. Iran and North Korea continue to develop their nuclear and missile programmes. Syria, North Korea and the Russian Federation, along with non-state actors, have resorted to the use of chemical weapons. The PRC is rapidly expanding its nuclear arsenal and is developing increasingly sophisticated delivery systems, without increasing transparency or bengaging in good faith in arms control or risk reduction.

19.   Climate change is a defining challenge of our time, with a profound impact on Allied security. It is a crisis and threat multiplier. It can exacerbate conflict, fragility and geopolitical competition. Increasing temperatures cause rising sea levels, wildfires and more frequent and extreme weather events, disrupting our societies, undermining our security and threatening the lives and livelihoods of our citizens.

Climate change also affects the way our armed forces operate. Our infrastructure, assets and bases are vulnerable to its effects. Our forces need to operate in more extreme climate conditions and our militaries are more frequently called upon to assist in disaster relief.

NATO's Core Tasks

Deterrence and Defence

20.   While NATO is a defensive Alliance, no one should doubt our strength and resolve to defend every inch of Allied territory, preserve the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all Allies and prevail against any aggressor. In an environment of strategic competition, we will enhance our global awareness and reach to deter, defend, contest and deny across all domains and directions, in line with our 360-degree approach. NATO's deterrence and defence posture is based on an appropriate mix of nuclear, conventional and missile defence capabilities, complemented by space and cyber capabilities. It is defensive, proportionate and fully in line with our international commitments. We will employ military and non-

military tools in a proportionate, coherent and integrated way to respond to all threats to our security in the manner, timing and in the domain of our choosing.

21.   We will significantly strengthen our deterrence and defence posture to deny any potential adversary any possible opportunities for aggression. To that end, we will ensure a substantial and persistent presence on land, at sea, and in the air, including through strengthened integrated air and missile defence. We will deter and defend forward with robust in-place, multi-domain, combat-ready forces, enhanced command and control arrangements, prepositioned ammunition and equipment and improved capacity and infrastructure to rapidly reinforce any Ally, including at short or no notice. We will adjust the balance between in-place forces and reinforcement to strengthen deterrence and the Alliance's ability to defend. Commensurate with the threats we face, we will ensure our deterrence and defence posture remains credible, flexible, tailored and sustainable.

22.   We will continue to enhance the collective readiness, responsiveness, deployability, integration and interoperability of our forces. We will individually and collectively deliver the full range of forces, capabilities, plans, resources, assets and infrastructure needed for deterrence and defence, including for high-intensity, multi-domain warfighting against nuclear-armed peer-competitors. We will ensure a robust, resilient and integrated command structure, increase the alignment of national and NATO defence plans and strengthen and modernise the NATO force structure. We will strengthen training and exercising, adapt and streamline our decision-making processes, enhance our planning and improve the effectiveness of our crisis response system.

23.   Maritime security is key to our peace and prosperity. We will strengthen our posture and situational awareness to deter and defend against all threats in the maritime domain, uphold freedom of navigation, secure maritime trade routes and protect our main lines of communications.

24.   We will expedite our digital transformation, adapt the NATO Command Structure for the information age and enhance our cyber defences, networks and infrastructure.

We will promote innovation and increase our investments in emerging and disruptive technologies to retain our interoperability and military edge. We will work together to adopt and integrate new technologies, cooperate with the private sector, protect our innovation ecosystems, shape standards and commit to principles of responsible use that reflect our democratic values and human rights.

25.   Maintaining secure use of and unfettered access to space and cyberspace are key to effective deterrence and defence. We will enhance our ability to operate effectively in space and cyberspace to prevent, detect, counter and respond to the full spectrum of threats,

using all available tools. A single or cumulative set of malicious cyber activities; or hostile operations to, from, or within space; could reach the level of armed attack and could lead the North Atlantic Council to invoke Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty. We recognise the applicability of international law and will promote responsible behaviour in cyberspace and space. We will also boost the resilience of the space and cyber capabilities upon which we depend for our collective defence and security.

26.   We will pursue a more robust, integrated and coherent approach to building national and Alliance-wide resilience against military and non-military threats and challenges to our security, as a national responsibility and a collective commitment rooted in Article 3 of the North Atlantic Treaty. We will work towards identifying and mitigating strategic vulnerabilities and dependencies, including with respect to our critical infrastructure, supply chains and health systems. We will enhance our energy security and invest in a stable and reliable energy supply, suppliers and sources. We will ensure civil preparedness to provide for continuity of government, the delivery of essential services to our populations and civil support to our armed forces. We will boost our capacity to prepare for, resist, respond to, and quickly recover from strategic shocks and disruptions, and ensure the continuity of the Alliance's activities.

27.   We will invest in our ability to prepare for, deter, and defend against the coercive use of political, economic, energy, information and other hybrid tactics by states and non-state actors. Hybrid operations against Allies could reach the level of armed attack and could lead the North Atlantic Council to invoke Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty. We will continue to support our partners to counter hybrid challenges and seek to maximise synergies with other relevant actors, such as the European Union.

28.   The fundamental purpose of NATO's nuclear capability is to preserve peace, prevent coercion and deter aggression. Nuclear weapons are unique. The circumstances in which NATO might have to use nuclear weapons are extremely remote. Any employment of nuclear weapons against NATO would fundamentally alter the nature of a conflict. The Alliance has the capabilities and resolve to impose costs on an adversary that would be unacceptable and far outweigh the benefits that any adversary could hope to achieve.

29.   The strategic nuclear forces of the Alliance, particularly those of the United States, are the supreme guarantee of the security of the Alliance. The independent strategic nuclear forces of the United Kingdom and France have a deterrent role of their own and contribute significantly to the overall security of the Alliance. These Allies' separate centres of decision-making contribute to deterrence by complicating the calculations of potential adversaries. 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.

30. NATO will take all necessary steps to ensure the credibility, effectiveness, safety and security of the nuclear deterrent mission. The Alliance is committed to ensuring greater integration and coherence of capabilities and activities across all domains and the spectrum of conflict, while reaffirming the unique and distinct role of nuclear deterrence. NATO will continue to maintain credible deterrence, strengthen its strategic communications, enhance the effectiveness of its exercises and reduce strategic risks.

31. We will continue to invest in our defence against Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear threats. We will enhance our policies, plans, training and exercises and assess our capabilities to ensure that these requirements are integrated into our deterrence and defence posture.

32. Strategic stability, delivered through effective deterrence and defence, arms control and disarmament, and meaningful and reciprocal political dialogue, remains essential to our security. Arms control, disarmament, and non-proliferation strongly contribute to the Alliance's objectives. Allies' efforts on arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation aim to reduce risk and enhance security, transparency, verification, and compliance. We will pursue all elements of strategic risk reduction, including promoting confidence building and predictability through dialogue, increasing understanding, and establishing effective crisis management and prevention tools.

These efforts will take the prevailing security environment and the security of all Allies into account and complement the Alliance's deterrence and defence posture. We will make use of NATO as a platform for in-depth discussion and close consultations on arms control efforts.

33. The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty is the essential bulwark against the spread of nuclear weapons and we remain strongly committed to its full implementation, including Article VI. NATO's goal is to create the security environment for a world without nuclear weapons, consistent with the goals of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

34. Countering terrorism is essential to our collective defence. NATO's role in the fight against terrorism contributes to all three core tasks and is integral to the Alliance's 360-degree approach to deterrence and defence. Terrorist organisations threaten the security of our populations, forces and territory. We will continue to counter, deter, defend and respond to threats and challenges posed by terrorist groups, based on a combination of prevention, protection and denial measures. We will enhance cooperation with the

international community, including the United Nations and the European Union, to tackle the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism.

Crisis Prevention and Management

35.   NATO Allies have a shared interest in contributing to stability and managing conflicts together through NATO. We will continue to work to prevent and respond to crises when these have the potential to affect Allied security. We will build on the unique capabilities and expertise we have acquired in crisis management. To that end, we will invest in crisis response, preparedness and management, through regular exercises and leverage our ability to coordinate, conduct sustain and support multinational crisis response operations.

36.   We will ensure the resources, capabilities, training and command and control arrangements to deploy and sustain military and civilian crisis management, stabilisation and counter-terrorism operations, including at strategic distance. Building on the lessons learned over the past three decades, including through our operations in Afghanistan, we will continue to improve our readiness, our military and civilian capabilities and civil-military planning and coordination. We will further develop the Alliance's ability to support civilian crisis management and relief operations and to prepare for the effects of climate change, food insecurity and health emergencies on Allied security. This will allow us to respond to any contingency at short notice.

37.   Partners make an important contribution to NATO-led crisis management. We will continue to ensure sustained political engagement and military interoperability with partners who express an interest in contributing to our missions and operations.

38.   We will increase our efforts to anticipate and prevent crises and conflicts. Prevention is a sustainable way to contribute to stability and Allied security. We will enhance support for our partners, including to help build their capacity to counter terrorism and address shared security challenges. We will scale up the size and scope of our security and capacity-building assistance to vulnerable partners in our neighbourhood and beyond, to strengthen their preparedness and resilience and boost their capabilities to counter malign interference, prevent destabilisation and counter aggression.

39.   Human security, including the protection of civilians and civilian harm mitigation, is central to our approach to crisis prevention and management. We will work with other international actors to address the broader conditions fuelling crises and pervasive instability and contribute to stabilisation and reconstruction. We will reinforce our coordination

and cooperation with the United Nations and the European Union, as well as with other regional organisations such as the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe and the African Union.

Cooperative Security

40.   NATO's enlargement has been a historic success. It has strengthened our Alliance, ensured the security of millions of European citizens and contributed to peace and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area. We reaffirm our Open Door policy, consistent with Article 10 of the North Atlantic Treaty, as an expression of our fundamental values and our strategic interest in Euro-Atlantic peace and stability. Our door remains open to all European democracies that share the values of our Alliance, which are willing and able to assume the responsibilities and obligations of membership, and whose membership contributes to our common security. Decisions on membership are taken by NATO Allies and no third party has a say in this process.

41.   The security of countries aspiring to become members of the Alliance is intertwined with our own. We strongly support their independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. We will strengthen political dialogue and cooperation with those who aim to join the Alliance, help strengthen their resilience against malign interference, build their capabilities, and enhance our practical support to advance their Euro-Atlantic aspirations. We will continue to develop our partnerships with Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia and Ukraine to advance our common interest in Euro-Atlantic peace, stability and security. We reaffirm the decision we took at the 2008 Bucharest Summit and all subsequent decisions with respect to Georgia and Ukraine.

42.   Political dialogue and practical cooperation with partners, based on mutual respect and benefit, contribute to stability beyond our borders, enhance our security at home and support NATO's core tasks. Partnerships are crucial to protect the global commons, enhance our resilience and uphold the rules-based international order.

43.   The European Union is a unique and essential partner for NATO. NATO Allies and EU members share the same values. NATO and the EU play complementary, coherent and mutually reinforcing roles in supporting international peace and security. On the basis of our longstanding cooperation, we will enhance the NATO-EU strategic partnership, strengthen political consultations and increase cooperation on issues of common interest, such as military mobility, resilience, the impact of climate change on security, emerging and disruptive technologies, human security, the Women, Peace and Security agenda, as well as

countering cyber and hybrid threats and addressing the systemic challenges posed by the PRC to Euro-Atlantic security.

For the development of the strategic partnership between NATO and the EU, non-EU Allies' fullest involvement in EU defence efforts is essential. NATO recognises the value of a stronger and more capable European defence that contributes positively to transatlantic and global security and is complementary to, and interoperable with NATO. Initiatives to increase defence spending and develop coherent, mutually reinforcing capabilities, while avoiding unnecessary duplications, are key to our joint efforts to make the Euro-Atlantic area safer.

44.   We will strengthen our ties with partners that share the Alliance's values and interest in upholding the rules-based international order. We will enhance dialogue and cooperation to defend that order, uphold our values and protect the systems, standards and technologies on which they depend. We will increase outreach to countries in our broader neighbourhood and across the globe and remain open to engagement with any country or organisation, when doing so could bolster our mutual security. Our approach will remain interest-driven, flexible, focused on addressing shared threats and challenges, and able to adapt to changing geopolitical realities.

45.   The Western Balkans and the Black Sea region are of strategic importance for the Alliance. We will continue to support the Euro-Atlantic aspirations of interested countries in these regions. We will enhance efforts to bolster their capabilities to address the distinct threats and challenges they face and boost their resilience against malign third-party interference and coercion. We will work with partners to tackle shared security threats and challenges in regions of strategic interest to the Alliance, including the Middle East and North Africa and the Sahel regions. 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.

46.   NATO should become the leading international organisation when it comes to understanding and adapting to the impact of climate change on security. The Alliance will lead efforts to assess the impact of climate change on defence and security and address those challenges. We will contribute to combatting climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, improving energy efficiency, investing in the transition to clean energy sources and leveraging green technologies, while ensuring military effectiveness and a credible deterrence and defence posture.

Ensuring the Alliance's Continued Success

47.   Investing in NATO is the best way to ensure the enduring bond between European and North American Allies, while contributing to global peace and stability. We will continue to reinforce our political unity and solidarity and to broaden and deepen our consultations to address all matters that affect our security. We commit to reinforce consultations when the security and stability of an Ally is threatened or when our fundamental values and principles are at risk.

48.   We will share equitably responsibilities and risks for our defence and security. We will provide all the necessary resources, infrastructure, capabilities and forces to deliver fully on our core tasks and implement our decisions. We will ensure our nations meet the commitments under the Defence Investment Pledge, in its entirety, to provide the full range of required capabilities. We will build on the progress made to ensure that increased national defence expenditures and NATO common funding will be commensurate with the challenges of a more contested security order.

49.   NATO is indispensable to Euro-Atlantic security. It guarantees our peace, freedom and prosperity. As Allies, we will continue to stand together to defend our security, values, and democratic way of life.

Annex II

Madrid Summit Declaration

Issued by NATO Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Madrid, 29 June 2022

1.   We, the Heads of State and Government of the North Atlantic Alliance, have gathered in Madrid as war has returned to the European continent. We face a critical time for our security and international peace and stability. We stand together in unity and solidarity and reaffirm the enduring transatlantic bond between our nations. NATO is a defensive Alliance and poses no threat to any country. NATO remains the foundation of our collective defence and the essential forum for security consultations and decisions among Allies. Our commitment to the Washington Treaty, including Article 5, is iron-clad. In this radically changed security environment, this Summit marks a milestone in strengthening our Alliance and accelerating its adaptation.

2.   We are united in our commitment to democracy, individual liberty, human rights, and the rule of law. We adhere to international law and to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. We are committed to upholding the rules-based international order.

3.   We condemn Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine in the strongest possible terms. It gravely undermines international security and stability. It is a blatant violation of international law. Russia's appalling cruelty has caused immense human suffering and massive displacements, disproportionately affecting women and children. Russia bears full responsibility for this humanitarian catastrophe. Russia must enable safe, unhindered, and sustained humanitarian access. Allies are working with relevant stakeholders in the international community to hold accountable all those responsible for war crimes, including conflict-related sexual violence. Russia has also intentionally exacerbated a food and energy crisis, affecting billions of people around the world, including through its military actions. Allies are working closely to support international efforts to enable exports of Ukrainian

grain and to alleviate the global food crisis. We will continue to counter Russia's lies and reject its irresponsible rhetoric. Russia must immediately stop this war and withdraw from Ukraine. Belarus must end its complicity in this war.

4.   We warmly welcome President Zelenskyy's participation in this Summit. We stand in full solidarity with the government and the people of Ukraine in the heroic defence of their country. We reiterate our unwavering support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders extending to its territorial waters. We fully support Ukraine's inherent right to self-defence and to choose its own security arrangements. We welcome efforts of all Allies engaged in providing support to Ukraine. We will assist them adequately, recognising their specific situation.

5.   We continue to face distinct threats from all strategic directions. The Russian Federation is the most significant and direct threat to Allies' security and to peace and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area. Terrorism, in all its forms and manifestations, continues to pose a direct threat to the security of our populations, and to international stability and prosperity. We categorically reject and condemn terrorism in the strongest possible terms. With determination, resolve, and in solidarity, Allies will continue to counter Russian threats and respond to its hostile actions and to fight terrorism, in a manner consistent with international law.

6.   We are confronted by cyber, space, and hybrid and other asymmetric threats, and by the malicious use of emerging and disruptive technologies. We face systemic competition from those, including the People's Republic of China, who challenge our interests, security, and values and seek to undermine the rules-based international order. Instability beyond our borders is also contributing to irregular migration and human trafficking.

Against this backdrop, we have taken the following decisions:

7.   We have endorsed a new Strategic Concept. It describes the security environment facing the Alliance, reaffirms our values, and spells out NATO's key purpose and greatest responsibility of ensuring our collective defence based on a 360-degree approach. It further sets out NATO's three core tasks of deterrence and defence; crisis prevention and management; and cooperative security. In the years to come, it will guide our work in the spirit of our transatlantic solidarity.

8.   We will continue and further step up political and practical support to our close partner Ukraine as it continues to defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity against Russian aggression. Jointly with Ukraine, we have decided on a strengthened package of support. This will accelerate the delivery of non-lethal defence equipment, improve Ukraine's cyber defences and resilience, and support modernising its defence sector in

its transition to strengthen long-term interoperability. In the longer term, we will assist Ukraine, and support efforts on its path of post-war reconstruction and reforms.

9.   We have set a new baseline for our deterrence and defence posture. NATO will continue to protect our populations and defend every inch of Allied territory at all times. We will build on our newly enhanced posture, and significantly strengthen our deterrence and defence for the long term to ensure the security and defence of all Allies. We will do so in line with our 360-degree approach, across the land, air, maritime, cyber, and space domains, and against all threats and challenges. NATO's role in the fight against terrorism is an integral part of this approach. Allies have committed to deploy additional robust in-place combat-ready forces on our eastern flank, to be scaled up from the existing battlegroups to brigade-size units where and when required, underpinned by credible rapidly available reinforcements, prepositioned equipment, and enhanced command and control. We welcome the cooperation between Framework Nations and Host Nations in strengthening forces and command and control, including in establishing division-level structures. We welcome the initial offers by Allies to NATO's new force model, which will strengthen and modernise the NATO Force Structure and will resource our new generation of military plans. We will enhance our collective defence exercises to be prepared for high intensity and multi-domain operations and ensure reinforcement of any Ally on short notice. All these steps will substantially strengthen NATO's deterrence and forward defences. This will help to prevent any aggression against NATO territory by denying any potential adversary success in meeting its objectives.

10.   Resilience is a national responsibility and a collective commitment. We are enhancing our resilience, including through nationally-developed goals and implementation plans, guided by objectives developed by Allies together. We are also strengthening our energy security. We will ensure reliable energy supplies to our military forces. We will accelerate our adaptation in all domains, boosting our resilience to cyber and hybrid threats, and strengthening our interoperability. We will employ our political and military instruments in an integrated manner. We have endorsed a new chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear defence policy. We will significantly strengthen our cyber defences through enhanced civil-military cooperation. We will also expand partnership with industry. Allies have decided, on a voluntary basis and using national assets, to build and exercise a virtual rapid response cyber capability to respond to significant malicious cyber activities.

11.   We are establishing a Defence Innovation Accelerator and launching a multinational Innovation Fund to bring together governments, the private sector, and academia to bolster our technological edge. We have endorsed a strategy which will ensure the seamless

delivery of the next generation Airborne Warning & Control System (AWACS) and related capabilities.

12.   Climate change is a defining challenge of our time with a profound impact on Allied security. It is a threat multiplier. We have decided on a goal to significantly cut greenhouse gas emissions by the NATO political and military structures and facilities, while maintaining operational, military and cost effectiveness. We will integrate climate change considerations across all of NATO's core tasks.

13.   We emphasise the centrality of human security and are ensuring that human security principles are integrated into our three core tasks. We are advancing a robust Women, Peace and Security agenda, and are incorporating gender perspectives across NATO.

14.   We have met here in Madrid with many of NATO's partners. We had valuable exchanges with the Heads of State and Government of Australia, Finland, Georgia, Japan, the Republic of Korea, New Zealand, Sweden, and Ukraine, as well as the President of the European Council and the President of the European Commission. We welcomed the engagements with the Foreign Ministers of Jordan and Mauritania, as well as the Defence Minister of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

15.   Taking into account our unprecedented level of cooperation with the European Union, we will continue to further strengthen our strategic partnership 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. Our common resolve in responding to Russia's war against Ukraine highlights the strength of this unique and essential partnership. The participation of our partners from the Asia-Pacific region, alongside other partners, demonstrated the value of our cooperation in tackling shared security challenges.

16.   We will further enhance our partnerships so that they continue to meet the interests of both Allies and partners. We will discuss common approaches to global security challenges where NATO's interests are affected, share perspectives through deeper political engagement, and seek concrete areas for cooperation to address shared security concerns. We will now move ahead with strengthening our engagement with existing and potential new interlocutors beyond the Euro-Atlantic area.

17.   In light of the changed security environment in Europe, we have decided on new measures to step up tailored political and practical support to partners, including Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, and the Republic of Moldova. We will work with them to build their integrity and resilience, develop capabilities, and uphold their political independence. We will also enhance our capacity-building support to partners from the South.

18.   We reaffirm our commitment to NATO's Open Door Policy. Today, we have decided to invite Finland and Sweden to become members of NATO, and agreed to sign the Accession Protocols. In any accession to the Alliance, it is of vital importance that the legitimate security concerns of all Allies are properly addressed. We welcome the conclusion of the trilateral memorandum between Türkiye, Finland, and Sweden to that effect. The accession of Finland and Sweden will make them safer, NATO stronger, and the Euro-Atlantic area more secure. The security of Finland and Sweden is of direct importance to the Alliance, including during the accession process.

19.   We welcome the considerable progress on Allied defence spending since 2014. In line with our commitment in Article 3 of the Washington Treaty, we will further strengthen our individual and collective capacity to resist all forms of attack. We reaffirm our commitment to the Defence Investment Pledge in its entirety. We will build on that pledge and decide next year on subsequent commitments beyond 2024. We will ensure that our political decisions are adequately resourced. We will build on the progress made to ensure that increased national defence expenditures and NATO common funding will be commensurate with the challenges of a more contested security order. Investing in our defence and key capabilities is essential.

20.   We pay tribute to all women and men who continue to serve daily for our collective security, and honour all those who have sacrificed to keep us safe.

21.   We express our appreciation for the generous hospitality extended to us by the Kingdom of Spain, on the 40th anniversary of its accession to NATO. We look forward to meeting again, in Vilnius, in 2023.

22.   With our decisions today, we have firmly set the direction for the Alliance's continued adaptation. NATO remains the strongest Alliance in history. Through our bond and our mutual commitment, we will continue to safeguard the freedom and security of all Allies, as well as our shared democratic values, now and for future generations.

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