

## THE MADRID SUMMIT AND NATO'S NEW STRATEGIC CONCEPT

Patricia Daehnhardt

The NATO summit in Madrid was a historic summit. The Atlantic Alliance adopted its new strategic concept in a radically different context from the strategic environment of 12 years ago, when, in 2010, the Alliance's last strategic concept had defined a 'reset' policy with Russia. Now, the Atlantic Alliance is faced with the return of war in Europe, with the Russian invasion of Ukraine marking the Alliance's new strategic orientation and confirming the deterioration of relations with Russia. In defining the new strategic concept, what decisions were taken at the Madrid summit? How did the main European member states respond? And how do Lisbon, Madrid, Berlin, Paris and Warsaw position themselves in this new strategic context? This *IDN Brief* brings together a number of national and foreign experts to answer these and other questions.

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# The Madrid Summit and NATO's new strategic concept

## The Madrid Strategic Concept

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The invasion of Ukraine by Russia marks NATO's new Strategic Concept, which replaces the Lisbon Strategic Concept, approved in 2010 and obsolete since the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014. Everything, or almost everything, has changed: twelve years ago, peace was assured, now the allies recognise that the Euro-Atlantic space is 'not at peace'. For the first time since its foundation, NATO has failed to prevent the return of war to Europe, where 'strategic competition, pervasive instability and recurrent shocks' condition Western security, which has to face a 'global and interconnected' threat framework, dominated by the challenge of authoritarian powers that undermine multilateral institutions.

In this context, it is necessary to review NATO's priorities as a guarantor of transatlantic defence. The Madrid Strategic Concept, the elaboration of which began two years ago under the tutelage of NATO's Secretary General, serves this purpose. Typically, the document reveals the tensions between the Allies, expressed in compromise formulas that identify the hierarchy of missions, the order of threats, risks and challenges to common security and the vocation, global or regional, of the Atlantic Alliance.

First, the new Strategic Concept maintains the definition of NATO's three core tasks adopted in 2010 - collective defence, crisis management and cooperative security. But continuity is apparent, in the sense that the resurgence of the threat from Russia restores the status of collective defence as the priority of NATO's priorities. The disastrous exit from Afghanistan marks the end of large-scale military expeditions in the

peripheries and confirms the depreciation of crisis management within the NATO framework.

Russia, presented as a 'true strategic partner' of NATO in the Lisbon Strategic Concept, is now recognised as 'the most significant and direct threat to Allies' security and to peace and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area'. Terrorist networks and failed states in the Middle East and Mediterranean are a secondary threat and the list of challenges to Western security includes, for the first time, China as one of NATO's 'strategic competitors and potential adversaries'.

The Strategic Concept states that China's 'stated ambitions and coercive policies' challenge the interests, security and values of the Western alliance as a whole. The European Union qualifies China as a 'systemic rival', and NATO, which considers the Sino-Russian 'strategic partnership' opposed to its interests and values, classifies China as a 'systemic challenge' to which it wants to respond within the framework of the 'strategic partnership' between the two pillars of the transatlantic community.

Secondly, the new Strategic Concept seeks to maintain a semblance of continuity in the definition of NATO's geographic priorities, levelled by the 360-degree strategy - an Alliance for all azimuths. However, with the Ukraine War, there is no longer any pretence of equivalence between the eastern and southern flanks.

NATO's strategic map is once again centred on the East-West divide separating Europe from Russia and Belarus. On the eastern flank, Russia threatens its neighbouring states to the east and south

of NATO, as well as the North Atlantic, the Great North, the Baltic, the Black Sea and the Mediterranean. The security of NATO is closely linked to that of Ukraine, Georgia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, candidate countries. The Western Balkans and the Black Sea are classified as regions of 'strategic importance'; the Middle East, North Africa and the Sahel - the southern flank - as regions of 'strategic interest'; and the Indo-Pacific is merely 'important for NATO'.

Third, the Madrid Strategic Concept underlines the international vocation of the Atlantic Alliance and stresses, for the first time, the nature of NATO as guarantor of international order. The reference to China, the Sino-Russian partnership and the "authoritarian challenge" to the multilateral order go beyond the definition of NATO as a Euro-Atlantic regional alliance and confirm its vocation as guarantor of the Western and international status quo. The repeated reference to the defence of the rules-based international order places NATO in the camp of conservative powers. It is important to underline that the document avoids referring to the 'liberal international order' and defends 'a world in which sovereignty, territorial integrity, human rights and international law are respected and where each country can choose its own path'. In this sense, NATO transcends the limits of the alliance of democracies and opens the door to the reconstitution of a grand alliance where all sovereign states committed to defending the international order against the subversion of the revisionist powers, including Russia and China, have a place.

## A new strategy for NATO viewed from Portugal

**Bruno Cardoso Reis**

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We have a new NATO strategic concept. Does it matter? I know some argue that this type of piece of paper is an irrelevance to entertain academics. They

are wrong. Since 1991 these documents define publicly the Alliance's strategic priorities for its citizens, partners and adversaries, providing important guidance for highly complex and hierarchical military organizations as well as a relevant public commitment around a shared set of priorities in a political-military alliance with 30 Member States (soon to be 32). With it NATO shows renewed cohesion and a willingness to adapt to new circumstances vital for it to remain relevant and the reason why sound strategic doctrine should be periodically revised. The key element in these new strategic circumstances is clear to most Portuguese and across the other 29 allies – the threat posed to European peace and security by the unprovoked, illegal Russian invasion of Ukraine. Moreover, Russia is the closest and most openly aggressive example of an increasingly dangerous and contested World as stated in this new document. A good strategy must reflect present threats, but it must also seek to anticipate future ones. Therefore, while it is understandable that at present greater attention is given to Eastern Europe more conventional threats should not be entirely fixated on the region or the type of threat dominant at present. It is important, especially for countries like Portugal, that other types of threats and other regions are not entirely ignored, not least because a more assertive and aggressive Russia is not only present in the East, but also in the Mediterranean or indeed in Africa. It is especially important and positive for Portugal that its active commitment and that of other like-minded countries resulted in an explicit commitment to the security of the Southern Flank. No less relevant is the fact that maritime security is included for the first time as a priority in the Strategic Concept, and not only in a specific maritime security strategy. The maritime domain is indispensable in terms of global power projection and for economic and energy security. For a coastal country with significant island territories like Portugal maritime security is even more vital. From the point of view of relevant future challenges, a reference to China for the first time in Strategic Concept is also very

pertinent. Although the Allies state that they do not want a Second Cold War in which Beijing would be the natural leader of a Bloc hostile to the Western bloc, strong trends point in that direction. This makes it all the more relevant that the document points to the fact that a Cold War requires the ability to compete and deter effectively but also to engage in "dialogue". With this document the Alliance commits clearly to a 360° and multidimensional approach to security. Both crisis management – associated with countering terrorist safe-havens and other forms of insecurity in fragile states – and the importance of cooperative security and partnerships is reaffirmed. The importance of the latter is, in fact, made clear by the Ukraine and the significant change in its military capabilities since 2014 as well as its current efforts in integrating effectively western military equipment. And it is also key if NATO wants to remain globally relevant without becoming a global policeman. The fact that the EU was named a vital partner of NATO is all the more welcome in view of the concern expressed with resilience and Emerging and Disruptive Technologies (EDTs). The new concept indeed makes clear a commitment to strengthening the resilience of our societies in areas like energy or food security. A concept that irks some but reflects the fact that security must go beyond the conventional military dimension. No less vital is the commitment to the notion that the West must remain in the vanguard of technological innovation, leading the way in defence and security EDTs via initiatives like the Defence Innovation Accelerator for the North Atlantic (DIANA) and NATO Innovation Fund (NIF). This and the explicit commitment to cyber and space should help counter the danger of an excessively conventional understanding of collective defence and the temptation of return to the "good old days" of the First Cold War or the Second World War. The Atlantic Alliance is often caricatured as an informal US empire. Yes, the US has a decisive influence because it invests 70% of the total of the Alliance in defence, but it cannot simply impose its

will on NATO. The new Madrid Strategy is, therefore, the result of compromise between 30 allies. But the real question is whether the search for compromise led to a lack of clarity in setting vital priorities. I believe the 2022 strategic concept generally points in the right direction, given currently available information and trends. Of course, the hardest test comes with effective implementation, starting with the commitment to increase readiness and the size of its rapid reaction force from 40.000 to 300.000. For that, more resources are, of course, needed. As the Secretary General of NATO made clear this would require the 2% - 20% Wales pledge to become a minimum ceiling for Allies, not a maximum commitment. This will be a challenge for heavily indebted countries far from Russia, like Portugal, but we must meet that challenge if we want to retain some relevance in the Alliance.

## The Madrid NATO Summit: the gap between expectations and outcomes for Spain

**Felix Arteaga**

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The assignment of the June 2022 NATO Summit to Spain was an unexpected reward for the Spanish government given its internal division about defence and security issues (Unidas Podemos is against NATO and defence expenditures). Precisely to overcome doubts about its reliability, the Spanish government and its ambassador to NATO made a great diplomatic effort to host the NATO Summit in Madrid, coinciding with the 40th anniversary of Spain's entry into NATO. Nevertheless, and despite the allied criticism about the low level of the Spanish defence expenditure, Spain is a reliable partner of NATO and the United States, and a significant contributor to all the allied missions and operations. As a hosting nation, the Spanish role was limited to provide a warm and safe environment to the Summit, thus Spain cannot take ownership of the Summit

results but for its successful organization. The results satisfy the interests of the Government regarding the need for a stronger deterrence and defence posture regarding Russia, the reinforcement of the transatlantic relationship and the acknowledgement of the growing instability in the South. Spain has asked NATO to pay greater attention to the southern flank since the 2014 Summit of Wales and the South has been its main goal along the elaboration of the Strategic Concept. The term southern flank was unofficially coined but most of NATO's planning has been focused on the eastern flank without explicit measures to reinforce the southern one. Therefore, the Government tried to include in the Strategic Concept both the explicit term and the associated deterrence and defence measures for the South. The outcome satisfies in part the Spanish interest because the Strategic Concept officially recognizes the security challenges in the Middle East, North of Africa, and Sahel, though its implications for the allied military posture are far from clear (the wording refers to East and South but omits flanks). Second, the entry of hybrid threats such as the coercive use of political, economic or energy by states and non-states actors in the scope of Article 5 could help Spain to deter such malicious practices in the South though the Strategic Concept excluded migration in its wording (in May 2021 Morocco organized a massive migration of 12.000 Moroccans Spain towards Ceuta to coerce Spain amidst bilateral disputes).

As expected, the Strategic Concept has put into motion a new military posture in the Alliance that will transform the Spanish one as well if it is implemented according to the stated level of ambition. The Spanish president announced after the Summit that Spain will achieve the committed goal of the 2% of the GDP in 2029, doubling the 1% of 2022 in seven years. Spain will have to dedicate a significant amount of the new money to finance the readiness, training and maintenance of the troops required to reinforce the troops deployments in the east and the NATO Response Force according to NATO's standards. Spain could restructure part of its expeditionary

force designed for crisis management operations to carry out territorial defence roles, but this option will have to wait until NATO or the EU assign its replacement to a multinational force structure in the South.

## Germany and the Madrid NATO Summit

**Markus Kaim**

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NATO Secretary General Stoltenberg had already accurately attuned the international public when he spoke of a "transformative meeting" in the run-up to the Madrid summit. Indeed, the alliance radically accelerated its process of adapting to the changed security environment, which had already begun in 2014, and credibly underpinned it with corresponding decisions: during the Madrid summit, NATO leaders agreed to strengthen their military commitment along the alliance's eastern flank through additional battle groups. They also laid out plans to increase NATO's rapid reaction force from 40,000 to 300,000 troops by next year. The U. S., as the alliance's lead power, also underscored that it would increase its military presence in Europe, namely with a permanent base in Poland, two more U. S. Navy destroyers in Spain and two more F35 squadrons in the United Kingdom. NATO also formally invited Finland and Sweden to join the alliance after overcoming objections from the Turkish government.

The alliance's key documents also underwent a revision: In its updated strategic concept, the alliance removed Russia's status as a "partner" and instead accuses Moscow of using coercion, subversion, aggression and annexation to expand its sphere of influence: "We want to eliminate any room for misperception and misunderstanding in Moscow about our readiness to protect every inch of NATO territory", Secretary General Stoltenberg said.

Germany has followed through on this NATO swing toward collective defense,

thus embedding the security policy shift announced by Chancellor Scholz in the Bundestag on Feb. 27 in a multilateral framework – German security policy is now more transatlantic than at any time since the end of the East-West conflict. Starting from the assumption that a partnership with Moscow would be inconceivable in the foreseeable future with Putin’s aggressive and imperialist Russia, the Chancellor stressed at the summit that Germany was taking responsibility not only for its own security but also for that of its allies. This, he said, was underscored not least by the 100 billion euros in special budget funds for the Bundeswehr approved by parliament. Accordingly, Scholz promised in Madrid that Germany would rapidly increase its military capabilities and become more involved in the alliance, for example by leading a combat group in the Baltic States: In the future, 3,000 German soldiers will be available to defend NATO territory in Lithuania. Half of the force is to be permanently stationed in Lithuania, with soldiers rotating through Germany at all times. If necessary, all can be quickly deployed to Lithuania. Germany would also maintain a regional naval command in the Baltic Sea, an armored division with 15,000 soldiers, 60 aircraft and 20 naval units. The German government, on the other hand, is having a hard time with military support for Ukraine, which NATO members reaffirmed in Madrid. Although the chancellor said in Madrid that Ukraine would be supported for as long as it was necessary for defense against Russia, he did not comment on how long that might be. Despite the fact that Germany’s first heavy weapon, the self-propelled howitzer 2000, has been delivered to Ukraine, the impression remains that Berlin is slow to respond to Kiev’s requests for weapons and slow to deliver the weapons it has already promised. The hoped-for gain in security prestige, especially among NATO’s Central and Eastern European partners, has therefore failed to materialize.

## A French Reading of the NATO 2022 Strategic Concept

**Martin Quencez**

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The NATO 2022 Strategic Concept aimed to strike the right balance between the urgent adaptation of the alliance’s defense posture in the Eastern flank following the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and the need to anticipate and prepare for the future security crises that will shape the strategic environment of the 2020s. The result is largely in line with France’s defense priorities.

First, Paris supports the idea that the alliance must significantly reinforce its deterrence in the East, and has long promoted the idea that European allies needed to increase their defense spending. The recent French deployments in Romania, with France embracing the role of framework nation, and the new budget increase voted by the French parliament illustrate these commitments.

The reaffirmation of collective defense as the heart of NATO’s *raison-d’être* is also a positive development, as NATO’s increasing focus on issues such as climate change, pandemics, and foreign investments in critical infrastructure, was perceived as a distraction that risked encroaching upon EU prerogatives. A “back to basics” approach thus better aligns with the French vision of the Alliance.

While France was among the most sceptical allies on the NATO-China issue, the result leaves enough room for manoeuvre. Building on the NATO 2021 Brussels Summit communiqué, the Strategic Concept highlights the intention to confront China’s coercive actions while remaining open for “constructive engagement”. Perhaps more importantly for Paris, it explicitly underlines the need for EU-NATO coordination in dealing with the challenges posed by the PRC.

Finally, France has pushed for NATO to remain agile enough to address other security threats in addition to Russia.

The priority given to the Eastern flank is acknowledged and endorsed, but the reality of the terrorist threat is clearly reaffirmed in the document, as well as the interconnected challenges of the Southern neighbourhood. The adaptation work in the East will have to take into account the need for capabilities in other theatres and against different enemies.

While the Strategic Concept is therefore a workable compromise, the real test lies in the actual implementation of its guidelines. On this, two issues may be particularly relevant in France. First, the defense effort will require some difficult choices, especially in time of economic recession. In the short term, the emphasis needs to be put on readiness and mobility. Investments in new capabilities, while fundamental given the general lack of mass and volume in European military, should not overshadow the priority of combat readiness of forces.

The choices made by each ally has direct implications on all, and difficult discussions will follow. Second, the need to strengthen EU-NATO complementarity is supported by allies for many years, yet structural blockages remain. In that sense, the ambitious message of the Strategic Concept does not suffice. Political issues as well as institutional competition have impeded coordination in the past, and a clearer division of responsibilities is yet to emerge.

Last but not least, the question of the political leadership within the alliance remains a French concern. Admittedly, this was not the role of the Strategic Concept to answer it, but the challenges that led to president Macron’s “Brain Dead” remarks have not been addressed, and could come with a revenge. While NATO has been able to present its vision to engage with the new strategic environment, its own future depends on political dynamics on both sides of the Atlantic.

## The Results of the NATO Madrid Summit – A View from Poland

**Wojciech Lorenz**

Analyst at the Polish Institute of International Affairs, Warsaw.

*Poland can be satisfied with NATO's new strategy, which labels Russia as a direct threat for the alliance and reinstates collective defence as its main priority. To strengthen the credibility of defence and deterrence NATO allies will have to establish larger multinational units on the eastern flank and create a new model of reinforcement forces. Poland is also likely to continue its efforts to secure permanent U.S. combat presence on its territory.*

Since the beginning of its membership in NATO in 1999 Poland has been a vocal advocate of credible collective defence based on integrated command structure, capable forces under NATO command, planning and exercises. Poland also called for permanent U.S. military presence on its territory, convinced that it would be the strongest deterrent against Russian revisionism. For years Poland was concerned that NATO was mainly focused on fighting terrorism, development of crisis management capabilities and attempts to build partnership with Russia at the expense of collective defence mission. Such concerns were exacerbated by the 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Act (NRFA), which had long been used by the Alliance to limit its military presence on the eastern flank.

Although Russia has used NATO enlargement as a pretext for its revisionist policy and the NRFA limited the speed and scale of NATO's adaptation, the allies have been developing necessary command and force structures in response to Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014, the years-long conflict in eastern Ukraine, and finally the Russian full-scale invasion launched in February this year. From the Polish perspective the decisions taken during the NATO Madrid Summit will constitute yet another step in NATO's adaptation to a long term threat from Russia.

The new NATO strategy indicates that collective defence became again a priority mission for the Alliance. The allies recognise Russia as the most significant and direct threat to the Euro-Atlantic security. Without referring to NRFA directly, the Alliance sends a signal that it no longer feels bound by the 1997 agreement with Russia. There are also important changes in NATO's defence and deterrence policy. There are going to be more troops deployed on the eastern flank (up to a brigade-size – 3,500-5000 troops) supported with a new force model of reinforcements consisting of at least 500 000 troops. For the first time since the end of the Cold War, the reinforcement forces will be assigned to specific countries. These decisions, when implemented, should strengthen NATO's ability to defend allies from the very first day of aggression, strengthening the credibility of deterrence. Although NATO maintains a broad approach to security the way a new strategy is framed indicates that the allies are preparing for a long-term confrontation with Russia and rivalry with China. Policies regarding cyberspace, space, hybrid threats and resilience, can better prepare the allies for threats from both authoritarian states under the threshold of open warfare. The significance of crisis management is diminishing. NATO is going to perform this mission through cooperation with partners (including European Union) rather than large-scale military operations. At the same time there are still concerns in Poland that despite those decisions, which refocus NATO on collective defence, NATO allies may not be ready for a long-term rivalry with Russia, which will require investments in collective defence and significant support for Ukraine. There are already signals that NRFA can be still used as a pretext for not strengthening the forward defence with U.S. permanent combat presence on the eastern flank. The U.S. on the one hand announced the element of the V Corps headquarters deployed in Poland will be based there permanently, but on the other hand stressed that its decisions to strengthen eastern flank countries do not violate the NRFA. From the Polish perspective it sends

a wrong signal to Russia, which can be still convinced that a status of the eastern flank countries can be up for negotiations. This creates the incentive for Russian revisionism, escalation in Ukraine and attempts to increase the risks and costs for the Alliance in the expectation that sooner all later NATO's resolve evaporates. That is why, despite all the significance of the decisions taken by NATO in Madrid, the summit will be perceived as just another step in a right direction. It will remain Poland's priority to secure a permanent US combat presence on its territory. Poland with other eastern flank countries will also have to make sure that NATO implements the decisions to establish a brigade-size units on the eastern flank, agrees the details of a new reinforcement forces before the summit in Lithuania in 2023 and develops necessary capabilities despite deteriorating economic and social situation in numerous NATO countries.

## NATO's new strategic concept

**Francisco Proença Garcia**

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NATO's Strategic Concept, recently approved at the Madrid Summit, systematises the main ideas under discussion since the last Strategic Concept approved in 2010 in Lisbon. The main key point of the new strategy is the identification of Russia as the most significant direct threat to the Alliance.

This Alliance, which by definition is defensive, is the political forum for consultation, coordination and action based on its Article 5, with the Strategic Concept reaffirming the guarantee of collective defence against all threats, never forgetting to mention the importance of freedom, democratic values and the commitment to strengthening unity and cohesion. This Strategic Concept presents a characterisation of the current strategic environment, considering that the Euro-Atlantic area is not at peace, that it faces strategic competition from various actors,

namely from authoritarian actors who maliciously interfere with our institutions and democratic process and deliberately undermine the international order. These actors test the resilience of the Alliance and exploit the vulnerabilities created by the openness, interdependence, and digitalisation of our nations, employing hybrid tactics and, resurfacing with a word forgotten from the cold war period, subversion as a form of action. In this complex context, however, a channel of communication with Russia should always be maintained, in order to mitigate risks, increase transparency and avoid escalations.

China appears in the Strategic Concept as a systemic challenge to NATO's values, security and interests, although the Alliance remains open to a constructive engagement and reciprocal transparency. The characterisation of the strategic environment would not be complete without the identification of other threats such as terrorism, instability and fragility in the Sahel and the Middle East, as well as the emergence of new disruptive technologies, the growing competition for dominance in space and cyberspace, the erosion of the Disarmament and Arms Control and non-proliferation regimes, and finally climate change, identified as a multiplier of crises and threats.

Of the identified core functions, namely Deterrence and Defence, Conflict Prevention and Management and Cooperative Security, we highlight the first, the guarantor of Art 5, being 360 degree security. Here it is specified that today part of deterrence (which was already gradual and a mix of nuclear and conventional capabilities) is the missile defence component, complemented by cyber and space capabilities. Nuclear capabilities continue to play a differentiating role in deterrence and the narrative in the document is doctrinal, ensuring that unacceptable costs can be inflicted on any adversary. For the first time a Strategic Concept details what these capabilities are, highlighting the US Strategic Forces and, the contribution of the British and French Nuclear Forces, particularly as they are located in dispersed decision centres

which complicate calculations for potential adversaries.

Regarding cooperative security, the strategic partnership with the EU is reinforced as well as the continuity of the open door policy, extendable to all European democracies. Finally, a last chapter expresses the guarantee of continuity of the Alliance's success, through the consultation mechanisms and the commitments made in Wales concerning investment criteria. With this Strategic Concept, the Alliance re-emerges on the international scene as a more cohesive regional organization with a new political and military agenda with global intentions.

## NATO's response to the new confrontational Euro-Atlantic order

### Patrícia Daehnhardt.

#### Patrícia Daehnhardt

Advisor to the National Defense Institute and Researcher at the Portuguese Institute of International Relations (IPRI-NOVA).

Faced with the greatest threat since the Cold War, NATO adopted its new Strategic Concept at the recent Atlantic Alliance summit in Madrid, based on collective defence with a 360-degree approach and on NATO's three core tasks of deterrence and defence, crisis prevention and management, and cooperative security. In fact, the new strategic concept reaffirmed the old principle of collective defence and the strengthening of the deterrence and defence component as its priority, by recognising the point of no return to the status quo ante: the Russian military invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022 confirms the failure of the cooperative order with Russia and the Alliance's policy of 'reset' with Moscow, and the identification of Russia in the new Strategic Concept as the 'most significant and direct threat to allied security'. The Allies recognise the beginning of a period of prolonged confrontation with this country, the return to power politics between the great powers

and the ideological crystallisation between democratic states and authoritarian actors. The consolidation of the revitalisation of the Atlantic Alliance, underway since the beginning of Joe Biden's presidency in January 2021, stated at the NATO summit in Brussels in June of that year, but interrupted shortly afterwards with the allies' chaotic exit from Afghanistan, and the signing of the AUKUS agreement, was the most immediate consequence of the Russian invasion of Ukraine for transatlantic relations. The allies pledged to accelerate the development of forces, capabilities and infrastructure to more quickly reach the commitment to invest 2 per cent of GDP annually in defence, and days before the summit Jens Stoltenberg, the NATO Secretary General, announced the new NATO force model, namely the strengthening of advanced defences on the alliance's eastern flank, the transformation of the NATO Response Force and the increase in the number of high-readiness forces to more than 300,000. This increase exceeded the number that was expected, but its attainment will depend on how these forces will be constituted and the geographical distribution of the groupings is formed, which will not be known until 2023. The United States has increased its military presence in Europe to around 100,000 troops and announced the deployment of two additional warships to the naval base in Rota, Spain, two squadrons of F-35 fighters to the United Kingdom, an additional combat brigade to Romania, as well as the establishment of the permanent headquarters of the US's Army V Corps in Poland, although the deployment of additional troops in the eastern flank will continue on a rotational rather than permanent basis. The accession of Finland and Sweden to NATO will also give a boost to NATO's capabilities and increase the security of the Atlantic Alliance, especially for Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania and the Baltic Sea region. As long as the confrontational relationship with Russia persists, NATO's centre of gravity will remain in northern Europe, where it has been moving to since the beginning of the war. This puts pressure on the southern flank countries, including

Portugal, to avoid that in the long term the threats to the south are not neglected, not least because Russia's interference in countries in North Africa and the southern Mediterranean is also felt in the domains of cyber and hybrid threats, and more recently in energy and food security. In this context, maritime security is recognised as fundamental to defending freedom of navigation and the security of maritime routes.

The People's Republic of China, referred to for the first time in a NATO Strategic Concept, is defined as a systemic competitor of NATO because of the disruption that its 'stated ambitions and coercive policies' and 'the PRC's malicious hybrid and cyber operations and its confrontational rhetoric and disinformation' pose to the security of the Alliance and the stability of the international order.

The realisation that 'developments [in the Indo-Pacific] could directly affect Euro-Atlantic security' reflects, on the one hand, strategic concerns of the United States, which a decade ago began its strategic repositioning towards the Indo-Pacific, and on the other, leads NATO to strengthen its strategic partnership with the European Union by recognising that '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.'

Inevitably, Europeans know that the Alliance will have to become more European and that the European pillar of NATO will have to be strengthened: first, because the European Union as a military power is not realistic; second, because the future US political leadership after 2024 may be much less transatlantic; third, because NATO is the best guarantee to keep post-Brexit UK associated with European security; fourth, because a debate has started on European nuclear deterrence that should be conducted within the framework of the Atlantic Alliance; and finally, because the challenge of maintaining transatlantic unity will only be won with a joint European contribution to Euro-Atlantic security.

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