

32ND NATO SUMMIT 2022

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July 26, 2022

(Views expressed in the brief are those of the author, and do not represent those of ISSI)



Following the 48th G7 Summit in Germany that took place on June 26-28, 2022, the Heads of State and Government of North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) member countries and key partners assembled in Madrid, Spain for the 32nd NATO Summit 2022. The NATO Summit was a two-day affair from June 29-30, 2022.¹

The 32nd NATO Summit, termed as a historic moment for the Transatlantic Alliance by The White House² came at an extremely crucial time when war had returned to Europe after decades in the form of the Russia-Ukraine conflict that started back in late February this year.

Before this Summit, two extraordinary Summits were held on February 25, 2022 (virtual) and March 24, 2022 (Belgium) in response to Russia's aggression against Ukraine. The Summit in Madrid also marked the 40th Anniversary of Spain's accession to NATO.

Although every NATO Summit is important but the 32nd NATO Summit had special significance for multiple reasons as the politico-military alliance discussed highly significant issues being faced by the alliance, identified new threats and commitments, took important budgetary, conceptual and policy decisions, extended invitations for membership to some European countries, reiterated commitment to the alliance's values and purpose, and made new pledges.

¹ "2022 NATO Summit", North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), News, last updated on July 01, 2022. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_196144.htm

² "FACT SHEET: The 2022 NATO Summit in Madrid", The White House, Statements and Releases, published on June 29, 2022. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/06/29/fact-sheet-the-2022-nato-summit-in-madrid/>

Many diplomats and officials called this Summit the most important Summit in many years.³ Although much of the conversation during the Summit revolved around the Russia-Ukraine war and the profound threat posed by Russia to the Euro-Atlantic unity and security, several other important decisions were also made by the NATO leadership against this backdrop as well.

Firstly, a New Strategic Concept (NSC) was endorsed by NATO members at this Summit. The document, which has been updated after every 10 years since the Cold War is an overall assessment of the prevailing security environment and provides the alliance members with a military and political development roadmap.

The most striking feature of the new Strategic Concept 2022⁴ is that Russia has been identified as the "*most significant & direct threat*" to the Euro-Atlantic security (a return to the very fundamental *raison d'être* for the creation of NATO back in 1949) and for the first time China was addressed in the document and recognised as a "*systematic challenge*" to the allies.

It is important to note that since 1949, seven (7) Strategic Concept documents have been adopted so far. The last NSC document was released in November 2010 titled, "Active Engagement, Modern Defence"⁵ and there was no mention of China in the document nor in the last NATO Summit that took place in Belgium in March 2022.

Furthermore, in the wake of Russia-Ukraine war, NATO adopted a New NATO Force Model (see Figure 1 below)⁶ in order to strengthen the alliance's deterrence and defence for a quick, robust and united allied response to all kinds of threats.

The adoption of this new model is being termed as the biggest overhaul of NATO's collective defence and deterrence since the Cold War⁷, according to which the number of NATO's high-readiness forces (across all domains - land, sea, air, cyber) will increase substantially (a seven-fold increase).

³ Rauhala, Morris, Noack, & Viser, "Turkey drops opposition to Finland and Sweden joining NATO", The Washington Post, published on June 28, 2022.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/06/28/biden-heads-nato-summit-support-ukraine-alliance-strategy/>

⁴ "NATO 2022 Strategic Concept", North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), published on June 29, 2022.

https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2022/6/pdf/290622-strategic-concept.pdf

⁵ "Active Engagement, Modern Defence", Strategic Concept 2010, North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), published on November 19, 2010, last updated February 03, 2012.

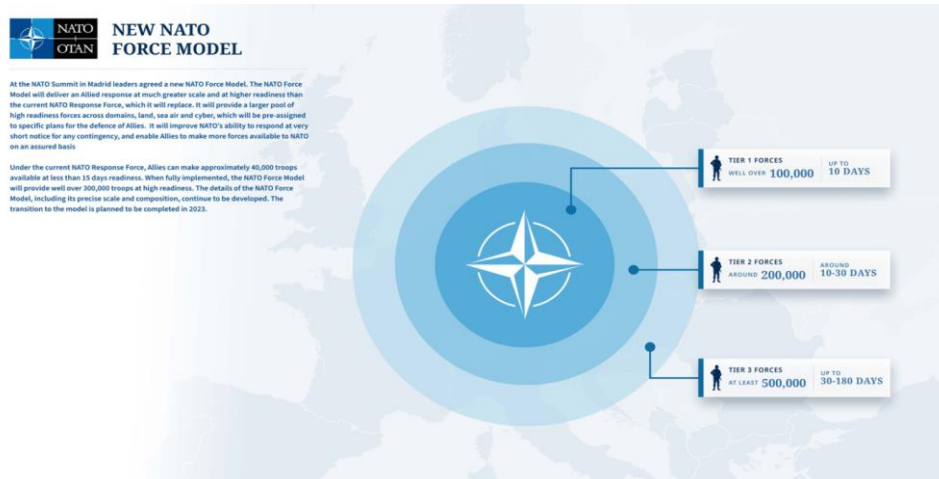
https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_82705.htm

⁶ "New NATO Force Model", North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), accessed on July 05, 2022.

https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2022/6/pdf/220629-infographic-new-nato-force-model.pdf

⁷ "2022 NATO Summit", North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), News, last updated on July 01, 2022.

https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_196144.htm



(Figure 1 - New NATO Force Model)

In order to support their lofty military motives, NATO members reaffirmed commitment to spend 2% of their GDP (Gross Domestic Product) on defence by 2024.⁸ As of now, almost 10 out of the 30 NATO members fulfil this criteria including US, UK, France and Greece).⁹ However, Germany (the biggest economy in Europe) is yet to meet its NATO defence spending requirement as it spends 1.53% of its GDP (as per its 2021 data).

NATO allies also pledged more common funding for NATO during the Summit along with a strengthened Comprehensive Assistance Package for Ukraine. President Volodymyr Zelensky who participated in the Summit and addressed the gathering via video link reiterated that the current financial, military and political aid provided by the West to Ukraine is not enough and that Ukraine needs more. During his speech, the Ukrainian leader asked for \$5 billion per month for its defence and protection.¹⁰

Among other important pledges made & discussions undertaken during the Summit included:

- agreement to cut down on green-house gases by 45% till 2025 & achieve net zero by 2050
- investment of EUR 1 billion over the next 15 years in development of dual-use technologies (such as AI) under NATO Innovation Fund (mainly to counter Chinese advances in this domain)

⁸ "2022 NATO Summit", North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), News, last updated on July 01, 2022. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_196144.htm

⁹ "NATO Spending by Country 2022", World Population Review, accessed on July 05, 2022. <https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/nato-spending-by-country>

¹⁰ Volodymyr Zelensky, "You have to find a place for Ukraine in the common security space - speech by the President of Ukraine at the NATO Summit", President of Ukraine Official Website, Speeches, published on June 29, 2022. <https://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/vi-mayete-znajti-dlya-ukrayini-misce-u-spilnomu-bezpekovomu-76121>

- recommitment to fight the menace of terrorism
- new support packages to partners at risk that include Bosnia & Herzegovina, Georgia and Moldova and partner countries like Mauritania and Tunisia
- reaffirmation of principles of NATO
- discussion on food crisis (mainly created by Russia-Ukraine war)¹¹ and climate change, which for the first time was recognized as a "defining challenge of our time"¹²
- endorsement of a new chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear defence policy and development of a virtual rapid response cyber capability (on voluntary basis)¹³

Moreover, formal invitations to Finland and Sweden were also extended to join the NATO alliance during the 32nd NATO Summit. The two countries applied for NATO membership after Russia launched an attack against Ukraine in late February this year. However, this matter was overshadowed by Türkiye (a NATO member) voicing its concerns over their membership (pertaining to its own security concerns) and indicated to veto the bids.

But the matter was amicably resolved after the three countries concluded successful negotiations just before the NATO Summit commenced in Madrid by signing a trilateral memorandum agreeing to protect each others' security.¹⁴

This was a clear reaffirmation of NATO's Open Door Policy (ODP) which not only manifested NATO's eastward expansion towards Russia but also signalled the abandoning of the two Nordic states' traditional policy of neutrality.

In addition, for the first time ever, NATO heads were joined by the Heads of State of NATO's Asia-Pacific Partners also known as the AP4 (Australia, Japan, New Zealand and South Korea). This was the first time that Asia-Pacific leaders were included in a NATO Summit at leaders level. This

¹¹ "Madrid Summit Declaration", North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), issued on June 29, 2022, last updated on July 05, 2022. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_196951.htm

¹² Kate Whiting, "What is NATO and what happened at the NATO Summit", World Economic Forum (WEF), published on July 01, 2022. <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2022/07/what-is-nato-and-what-happened-at-the-nato-summit/>

¹³ "Madrid Summit Declaration", North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), issued on June 29, 2022, last updated on July 05, 2022. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_196951.htm

¹⁴ Pamuk & Kauranen, "Turkey lifts veto on Finland, Sweden joining NATO, clearing path for expansion", Reuters, published on June 29, 2022. <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/us-press-turkey-finland-sweden-hope-nato-breakthrough-2022-06-28/>

invitation to AP4 leaders was made on the recommendation of the United States.¹⁵

By engaging with the Ap4, NATO not only tried to establish a vast net of partnership for securing European cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region beyond its other mini-laterals¹⁶ like AUKUS and QUAD but also executed the alliance's 2030 priority of '*taking a more global approach*' as laid out by NATO Secretary General in June 2020.¹⁷

Conclusion

The Russian attack on Ukraine transformed the security architecture of Europe and changed the threat landscape for the Euro-Atlantic Alliance - NATO. Before February 24, 2022, the world was discussing non-traditional threats to global peace, stability and security such as climate change, malnutrition, population explosion and water scarcity to name a few. These threats remain important and have magnified due to the ongoing conflict in Europe, however, the Russia-Ukraine war has re-shifted the focus on traditional security challenges.

NATO has redefined its priorities according to the existing security environment as it faces profound challenges on multiple fronts from different actors. It has allocated more resources for the modernization of its forces and increased the number of troops on its eastern flank and pledged to improve interoperability in order to boost its deterrence and defence capabilities. But the future looks extremely bleak as pessimism prevails on both sides of the fence.

With the inclusion of Finland and Sweden into NATO's fold, Russian apprehensions have been exponentially increased. While NATO claims that its latest posturing is due to its threat perception vis-a-vis Russian aggressive actions, Russia on the other hand perceives it as its east-ward expansion and a direct threat to its territorial integrity and national security.

Recent developments will further add to the escalation of the prevailing situation in Europe which can be observed with Western resolve to back Ukraine's 'just struggle' against Russia by all possible

¹⁵ "Press Gaggle by Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre and National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan En Route Madrid, Spain", The White House, Press Briefings, published on June 28, 2022.

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/press-briefings/2022/06/28/press-gaggle-by-press-secretary-karine-jean-pierre-and-national-security-advisor-jake-sullivan-en-route-madrid-spain/>

¹⁶ Antara Vats, "Going beyond the conventional: NATO Summit 2022", Raisina Debates, Observer Research Foundation (ORF), published on July 14, 2022. <https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/going-beyond-the-conventional/>

¹⁷ "NATO 2030", Factsheet, North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), published in June 2021.

https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2021/6/pdf/2106-factsheet-nato2030-en.pdf

means while Russia on the other hand claims to have military goals beyond eastern Ukraine.¹⁸

China is another challenge for NATO as highlighted in the NSC 2022 which will only add to the Alliance's concerns and will most probably increase over time.

Since NATO has also decided to increase the ambit of its cooperative security and undertake a more global approach, it seems that temperatures are most likely to rise between the Alliance and its identified rivals like China and Russia. The latter have also not taken the outcomes of the 32nd NATO Summit well as was evident from their officials' statements who not only condemned NATO's ambitions by terming them 'imperialist'¹⁹ but also warned against fanning of the zero-sum mindset and Cold War mentality which will only disrupt the world.²⁰

¹⁸ "Lavrov says Russia's military goals not focused 'only' on Donbas", Al-Jazeera, published on July 20, 2022. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/7/20/lavrov-says-russia-military-goals-not-focused-only-on-donbas>

¹⁹ "Putin condemns NATO's 'imperial ambitions', warns Finland, Sweden", Al-Jazeera, published on June 29, 2022. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/6/29/putin-condemns-natos-imperial-ambitions-warns-finland-sweden>

²⁰ John Feng, "China Rails Against NATO as Asian Rivals Attend Summit for First Time", Newsweek, published on June 29, 2022. <https://www.newsweek.com/china-nato-summit-japan-south-korea-security-defense-1720169>