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**FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**

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ii

**The future of NATO:  
between territorial defense and out-of-area operations**

**Budoucnost NATO:  
mezi teritoriální obranou a expedičními operacemi**

Master's thesis

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Year of defense: 2021

### **Declaration**

1. I hereby declare that I have compiled this thesis using the listed literature and resources only.
2. I hereby declare that my thesis has not been used to gain any other academic title.
3. I fully agree to my work being used for study and scientific purposes.

In Budapest on 1st of May 2021

Bianka Béres

## **References**

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## **Abstract**

This diploma thesis deals with the development of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) emphasizing the Alliance's capability to adequately adapt to the ever-changing security environment. Using the historical turning points and the experiences gained during the various activities the dissertation's focus is on the future of NATO.

The first part of the thesis consists of an overview of the four main stages of the NATO development. The first phase (1949-1990) is the Cold War period, when the member states' emphasis was to build a strong collective defense but at the same time they established liberal democratic system and accepted common values. The new countries have adopted these domestic governance standards and institutions proving the effective assertion of the liberal institutionalism doctrine. The second stage (1990-2001) was represented by emerging new security challenges and the Alliance reacted to this by adapting the crisis management policy and launched out of area operations. This new period could be characterized the best by the metaphor of the former CIA director, James Woolsey, who in 1993 stated in front of the Congress: "We have slain a large dragon, but we live now in a jungle filled with a bewildering variety of poisonous snakes. And in many ways, the dragon was easier to keep track of" (Jehl). The third stage (2001-2014) started with the 9/11 terrorist attack and ended with the Russian aggression against Ukraine. Due to the new experiences the NATO continued its active engagement in out of area operations, but the need for a strengthened collective defense policy appeared, accompanied by a cooperative security approach. The fourth stage started in 2014 and is up until present day. The most important findings of this period are the reemerging conventional threat represented by mainly China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea. At the same time this period is also characterized by non-conventional (irregular) challenges like international (Islam-based) terrorism, cyber-attacks, and hybrid type of interferences by state and non-state actors. The irregular (mass) migration also belongs to this group of new challenges. Though this part of the thesis is mostly descriptive, the content is examined with analytical approach. Through the liberal institutionalism theory resilience, each stage is analyzed, and the main factors that affect the investigated research question are identified. The results are then reflected upon in the next part of the thesis which deals with the current state of the organization and the actual tasks the Alliance accomplish.

The main part is trying to foresee the core issues of the next NATO Summit in July 2021. The importance of this meeting is well represented by the intensive and comprehensive preparation work aiming to pave the road to the next Strategic Concept of the Alliance. Since 2010 the NATO did not elaborate similar vision-filled document and the actual preparation work is targeting to reach consensus among member states about the future of NATO. There will probably be serious debates within the Alliance because member states have different views on issues like China, Russia, or the United States' role. As latter the cohesion of the Alliance was damaged by unilateral USA actions which shown the sign of embracing the liberal internationalism doctrine (attacking sovereign states in order to pursue liberal objectives) instead of following the principals of the liberal institutionalism. The former American president, Donald Trump's NATO policy also caused grievances within the Alliance. The NATO Summit in July 2021 based upon the NATO 2030 document and extensive consultations with member states will probably address the most important differences and the Alliance will accept and approve the basic principles on the NATO's future.

## List of Abbreviations

ANA	Afghan National Army
AWACS	Airborne Warning and Control System
CHST	Counter Hybrid Support Teams
CTBT	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty
<i>CTRC</i>	Counter-Terrorism Reference Curriculum
DCB	Defense and Related Security Capacity Building
DEEP	Defense Education Enhancement Programme
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
FRONTEX	European Border and Coast Guard Agency
IFOR	Implementation Force
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
JCPOA	Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action
JISD	Joint Intelligence and Security Division
KFOR	Kosovo Force
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
NAC	North Atlantic Council
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
COE	Center of Excellence
NFIU	NATO Force Integration Units
NTM-I	NATO Training Mission-Iraq
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
RSM	Resolute Support Mission
SFOR	Stabilization Force
SHAPE	Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe
UN	United Nations

## Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	9
<b>1. Methodology</b> .....	<b>11</b>
1.1. Research question.....	12
1.2. Conceptual anchoring.....	12
1.3. Literature review .....	14
<b>2. The main stage of NATO development</b> .....	<b>14</b>
2.1. Stage 1 – 1949-1990: Cold War period – collective defense .....	15
2.2. Stage 2 – 1990-2001: Emerging new security challenges, adapting crisis management, launching out of area operations .....	16
2.3. Stage 3 – 2001-2014: Active engagement in out of area operations (crisis management), collective defense, implementing cooperative security .....	18
2.4. Stage 4 – 2014 - up until present day: Strengthening collective defense, facing both conventional and growing non-conventional challenges .....	19
<b>3. Current tasks and challenges</b> .....	<b>21</b>
3.1. NATO crisis management operations.....	21
3.2. NATO’s role in Iraq .....	23
3.3. NATO’s role in Afghanistan .....	26
3.4. New conventional challenges(defending member states/territorial defense).....	29
3.4.1. Russian threat.....	30
3.4.2. Chinese threat .....	33
3.4.3. Iranian threat .....	34
3.4.4. North Korean threat .....	35
3.5. New type of non-conventional challenges .....	36
<b>4. The future of NATO</b> .....	<b>41</b>
4.1. The NATO 2030-A transatlantic agenda for the future.....	45
4.2. Concerns among member states .....	51
Conclusion.....	58
Bibliography .....	60

## **Introduction**

The international security environment is undergoing dynamic changes. The environment's predictability has decreased due to a growing interconnectedness of security trends and factors. Although the likelihood of an all-out war remains low, emerging conventional and non-conventional threats urges member states of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization to take action. It is vital to the Alliance to make proper adaptations to these challenges and accomplish the necessary theoretical and practical actions to overcome them.

The goal of the dissertation is to prove that NATO was always able to recognize the main threats in front of the member states and will continue to respond adequately to the challenges we are facing today and in the upcoming future.

In my paper, I intend to show how NATO's focus switched from collective defense to crisis management through its engagement in territorial defense and out-of-area operations and what factors made it necessary to build cooperative security and to strengthen again the collective security approach within the Alliance. I will present how and why the Alliance's focus is changing today, and what are those issues that create serious debates among the member states.

Despite the tensions and differences the Alliance has the capability to find commonly agreed solutions to the existing and emerging security challenges. Working groups are elaborating the future collective/territorial defense policy and the out-of-area crisis management operations of the Alliance. In the last decades the NATO experienced that out-of-area missions strengthened its ability to provide strong territorial defense to its members states.. Though since 2010 (NATO Summit in Lisbon), the Alliance did not elaborate a new strategic concept; however, in the last ten years, the official statements (communiqué) of the different NATO summits clearly identified the challenges and paved the way for a new concept. The new strategic concept will have two main pillars: carrying on the three types of crisis management (military operations, non-military crisis management operations, humanitarian operations) and building strong deterrent capability against aggressive or rogue states. As part of the latter, the Alliance will address non-conventional (like cyber-attacks, hybrid interferences or international terrorism) threats too.

Concerning the crisis management operations over the years, the Organization's recognition has become more robust. It needs to be careful with the further commitments it takes not to fall victim to its successes. NATO's capabilities have limitations, and it can easily undermine its position by taking on more than it can accomplish. The Alliance must carefully

decide where to interfere in the future and which tasks should be given to United Nations or the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). The most challenging task will be finding consensus and achieving unity among the member states, representing now different national, regional, and strategic interests.

To understand the current debates and tensions within the Member States concerning the Alliance's future, I find it important to overlook the essential strategic concepts and the reasons/arguments behind the changes. Once we have a clear picture about the logic of the adaptation/renewal process, we can specify the decisive factors in the current international security environment, we can identify the challenges and the multi-factor inputs the recently re-established Group of Wise Men face with.

In the first part of my dissertation, I will outline the reasons for the Organization's formation and then present its activities during the Cold War, when the core goal of the Alliance was to defend the member states against a possible Warsaw Pact aggression (to prepare for a new world war).

I will then turn to the main events of the years following the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact. I will focus on those strategic concepts that started to deal with new challenges like ethnical conflicts or democratic transformation of former Warsaw Pact countries. This decision resulted engagement in actions (crisis management in the Balkan) outside NATO's former area of responsibility ("out of area" operations) and the "Partnership for Peace" concept contributed to the promotion of democratic values among former Warsaw Pact member states. The role of the NATO as an international organization proved to be extremely essential – in accordance with the liberal institutionalism doctrine – to bring peace and cooperation to the transforming Eastern European countries. In the last part of this point I will then present the NATO's post-Cold War missions in an indicative manner, illustrating the versatility of the Organization's international peace making, crisis management role.

The situation that has arisen due to NATO's 70 years of operation is what I address in the next part of my dissertation, namely the current state and main tasks (international commitments) of the Alliance. On the one hand, I want to focus on the Iraqi and Afghanistan crisis management missions. On the other hand, I intend to list and analyze the steps taken by NATO to face the conventional challenges posed by countries like Russia, China, Iran, or North Korea. In the last part of this section I will address those non-conventional challenges (terrorism, migration, cyber-threat, hybrid interference), which are threatening the security of the member states internal/domestic security consequently the cohesion and capability of the

whole Alliance. The NATO recognized that these phenomenon's are targeting the key elements of the functioning of the state and society and can cause serious disturbances by paralyzing political decision-making process, disrupting key defense, security or economic sectors and mechanisms, weakening the citizens' trust in the democratic institutions. As a reaction, the Alliance worked out cooperative frameworks (the system of NATO Center of Excellence – NATO-COE), where the member states can learn from each other the best practices how to handle individually and commonly these non-conventional (or irregular) threats.

In the main part of my dissertation I seek to outline the content of NATO's future transformation. Based on primary sources like the report of the expert group (“group of wise men”) to the NATO secretary general, or the food for thought paper about the NATO's future (NATO 2030 – A transatlantic agenda for the future) I intend to identify those areas which will be the core issues of the next NATO Summit and the center points of the new NATO Strategic Concept. I will use secondary sources to summarize those areas of interest where the member states' approach differs – putting in danger the principal of the seven decades long liberal institutionalism doctrine.

As a conclusion, I will summarize the experiences of the 70 years long NATO development. In doing so, I point out why the most successful politico-military organization in history has survived since the end of the Cold War and why it has adequately adapted to the ever changing new challenges, contributing effectively to global peace and security.

## **1. Methodology**

In my dissertation I will use quantitative methodology as a primary research method, since my research question is based on the one handwritten facts and documents and on the other hand prediction of outcomes represented by secondary sources, like essays, articles and political analyses.

The first part of my paper is more about historical overview (description of events) but in an analytical way. The description is focusing more on the core changes and turning points of the examined era. Comparative analyses will be used to determine whether the NATO decisions in the different periods were adequate or irrelevant.

The main part will focus on the possible future scenarios including predictions and theory testing. The main findings connected to the research question will be based on thorough analysis.

### **1.1. Research question**

The thesis wishes to provide answers to the following question:

What could be the central issues in the NATO's next Strategic Concept?

Derivates:

1. Was the NATO successful in adapting to the changing security environment during the decades?
2. Was the impact of USA on the Alliance's development always useful?
3. Will the USA's role be in the current transformation process decisive?
4. Is it correct to say (as many argue) that the NATO has been worn out, its capabilities have limitations, and it can easily undermine its own position by taking on more than it can successfully accomplish?
5. What are the main problems to solve ahead of the 2022 NATO Summit?
6. What are those issues in the context of the future Strategic Concept that can reach consensus among member states?
7. What are those issues where there are deep differences among member states?

### **1.2. Conceptual anchoring**

In my dissertation I will use liberal institutionalism as theoretical framework to analyze the establishment and the 70 years long transformation process of NATO. Through this theory I intend to present when and how the NATO – similar to other international institutions, like United Nations or European Union – strengthened cooperation and facilitated common democratic values among different countries.

Though liberal institutionalism has certain connection to a previous international relations theory called political realism (that appeared after the First World War) the liberal institutionalism is focusing not only on international (as its predecessor) but internal politics

too. Due to the founding states' key liberal norms and common will, NATO membership required a general conduct line: member states built similar internal political system and in the international policy they were committed to solve conflicts in a peaceful way among each other. During its 70 years of existence the Alliance faced different challenges but those core values did not change for decades.

Though the NATO could be considered as the typical representative of the liberal institutionalism doctrine the Alliance was accused several times of showing the marks of the liberal internationalism foreign policy doctrine as it has carried out military operations in other sovereign states territory to push its own liberal democratic objectives. In my dissertation I will prove that the Organization never intervened in any country against the will of the legal leadership of the troubled country.

By describing and analyzing the different development stages of NATO when the line of thinking was a pure form of liberal institutionalism, we reach to the second decade of the 21st century when the Alliance faces serious challenges both inside and outside. While the international security environment is deteriorating, old and new security challenges (re)emerge there is a clear disagreement among member states about the future of the Alliance. Taking into consideration these debates there is a question to be answered: Could it be connected to the crisis of liberal institutionalism doctrine? The theory presented itself as a corrective to conventional international relations theory, which held that powerful nation-states dominate world politics and international institutions. It also assumed that internal and international institutions facilitate cooperation and peace among states. And yet today, liberal democracies - which are some of the world's most powerful states - seem to be desperate to escape the clutches of formidable international institutions that supposedly demand too much. Meanwhile, non-liberal authoritarian regimes like China are willing not only to stay, but to take on greater burdens. It is necessary to understand liberal institutionalism in tandem with historical events.

As for the future of NATO, it is important to emphasize that the existence and development of the Alliance was always bordered with challenges, threats, and dangers. Today it is still the case but there is a strong determination among member states to achieve solution and the soundly prepared NATO 2030 document is a clear evidence for it.

Similar question arise for international relations scholars and policy practitioners: is liberal institutionalism on the cusp of collapse, or merely experiencing growing pains on the path to Immanuel Kant's perpetual peace? (Johnson and Heiss, 3) When placed within the

historical context, these questions point to a core truth. The future is fraught with danger but for liberal institutionalism and liberal institutions, that has always been the case.

### **1.3. Literature review**

The literature review will be based on primary and secondary sources. Primary sources are the official documents of NATO (strategic concepts, communiqués, strategic papers), secondary sources are mainly researcher analyses, theoretical works, reports from governmental or international organizations, articles, published books.

## **2. The main stages of NATO's development**

NATO's role in the international sphere has changed significantly since its establishment. In the Cold War era, the threat posed by the Soviet Union was the Alliance's primary objective. Besides, it was also in the Organization's interest to closely engage in transatlantic relations and involve the German Federal Republic in the common defense. As the First Secretary-General of NATO, Lord Hastings Ismay said once: "*Keep the Soviet Union out, the Americans in, and the Germans down*" ("Lord Ismay").

It is important to note that while most people view the Alliance as a military organization, it does operate under solid political control. The tasks ahead of the Organization are decided by the political leaders of the member states. The strategic concepts, which reflect the main changes of direction, are approved by the North Atlantic Council (NAC), which brings together the Heads of State and Government of the Member States.

NATO's formation throughout history, or more precisely its shift in priorities, is best represented by its strategic concepts. These are the documents that result from long conciliation processes presented to the member states' political leaders. After approval, the military leaders begin the military accounting, develop specific military plans, and create the necessary tools and conditions. Strategic concepts practically summarize the primary goal of the strategy. The short, concise, and expressive wording intends to illustrate the simplicity, so it is "*Even understood by a milkman in Omaha*" (*Shaping the Treaty, I*).

Experts that deal with the formation of NATO distinguish three significant stages in the Organization's life. The first phase represents the 40 years of the Cold War. The second phase begins with the end of the Cold War until the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. The third phase is from 2001 until the outbreak of the Ukrainian crisis. Many experts interpret the period from 2014 to the present day as the fourth stage of NATO's formation. It

comprehends the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, Russia's aggressive foreign policy, cyber-intervention attempts by China and Russia towards Western European states, and the rise of the Islamic State (Čížik and Novák,7).

### **2.1. Stage 1 – 1949-1990: Cold War period – collective defense**

Following the establishment of NATO in 1949, the first strategic concept, also known as "Deterrence of aggression," was established in 1950, which defined the purpose of establishing the Alliance. The goal was to deter the Soviet Union from a possible attack on the 12 NATO member states. Its international legal legitimacy, constituted by Article 51 of the UN Charter, authorized the UN member states to protect themselves both collectively and individually in the event of an armed attack. The concept was a great foresight because, on August 29, the Soviet Union detonated its first nuclear bomb, reinforcing the fear of threat among the NATO member states. In December 1952, the strategic concept that meant the protection of the North Atlantic region was adopted, which in its principles and content resembled the 1950 strategic concept and depicted a situation in which the Soviet Union's superiority in traditional military capabilities are offset by the development of a European advanced defense capability. During this period, Turkey and Greece became members of the Organization, which, due to their military potential and geographical proximity to the Soviet Union, played an essential role in NATO's defense plans ("Member countries"). In 1957, at the height of the Cold War and the shadow of the nuclear arsenal, the United States proclaimed the doctrine of "Mass Retaliation," preparing for a war with nuclear weapons. More precisely, in case of an attack from the Soviet Union and its allies, a large-scale nuclear attack threatened the aggressor (Wells,41). During the Cold War in 1967, the "Flexible Response" doctrine announcement marked a significant change from the previous one. In addition to strengthening deterrence, it also provided political openness and easing between opposing parties. In 1969, talks on limiting military nuclear weapons began between the two major nuclear powers, making it clear that the two military blocs were committed to the process of easing. By the early 1980s, the process of easing had slowed down, and the great powers started arming again but a couple of years later they returned to negotiations. Overall, the doctrines of this period intended to prevent possible aggression by the Soviet bloc and these were based on the dominant power of the United States within the Alliance.

## **2.2. Stage 2 – 1990-2001: Emerging new security challenges, adapting crisis management, launching out of area operations**

Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, the new security policy environment posed new challenges for the member states. After 1990, the framework of the traditional system of tasks proved to be narrow, so by 1991 the Member States developed a new concept, which was adopted at the NATO summit in Rome. Under the new concept of "Peace and Cooperation," NATO focused on partnership with former adversaries (former members of the Warsaw Pact) while maintaining a collective defense capability. Instead of focusing on the previous confrontations, it aimed – in accordance with the liberal institutionalist theory – to guarantee peace and security (*Declaration on Peace and Cooperation*).

After the end of the bipolar world order, NATO's basic premise was that conflicts could not, for the most part, take place within NATO's area of responsibility. Clashes occurred around its neighborhood, and with the new partners cooperating, it could now carry out crisis management tasks. This new change of direction was also necessary because, after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the absence of a clear image of the enemy, the need to preserve NATO was not evident to the Western public. With new guidelines adopted due to extensive political consultations, the Organization has set itself credible and precise tasks.

The new international political situation was characterized by unusual and profound political changes such as the unification of Germany, the dissolution of Yugoslavia, Iraq's aggression against Kuwait, and the First Gulf War. NATO's new strategy meant adapting to the changing world. The Organization's missions expanded beyond the geographic scope (Middle East conflicts) and in the field of security policy. It committed itself to tackle ethnic conflicts and combating economic instability. With this new approach, NATO made traditional European cooperative security and the management of crises a vital objective of the Organization.

According to the 1991 concept, the primary tasks of NATO are (*The Alliance's New Strategic Concept*):

1. Ensuring security (the Alliance's contribution to a security environment in Europe)
2. Institutionalized, regular consultation between member states (providing a transatlantic forum for Allied consultations)

3. Deterrence and protection (protecting the member states against any threat or aggression).
4. Maintaining a strategic balance in Europe.

Institutionalized and regular consultations seem unusual, but at the same time, the highly uncertain political changes and security crises of the 1990s, the handling of disputes between the member states, and the need to finally reach a consensus on how to deal with crises were much more critical than before. The Yugoslav war well illustrated the necessity of consultation. The inertia of European countries, the lack of independent and effective actions forced the United States to take control because NATO only committed itself to counter Serbian aggression after four years of debate. At the same time, this debate has also resulted in NATO designating one of its new strategic directions: crisis management.

In the context of crisis management, actions outside NATO's former area of responsibility, the so-called "out of area" missions, broadly divided the Member States. The solution came from establishing formal cooperation with the United Nations (UN), under which NATO got an international legal mandate to deal with extraterritorial crises (*Final Communiqué*). By engaging in "out of area" missions, NATO's mandate expanded to commit to enhanced and comprehensive security throughout Europe. NATO's peacekeeping doctrine took place in 1993. As a result of the "Partnership for Peace" concept adopted at the NATO Summit in Brussels in 1994, the accession process of the former Warsaw Pact Member States begun, the countries of the Eastern Bloc have been assured of the promotion of democratic values and Euro-Atlantic integration. The "Partnership for Peace" concept marked the beginning of the accession process of the former Warsaw Pact members. The doctrine of liberal institutionalism worked again, the new NATO concept not only maintained peace and security in the region, but promoted democratic values and Euro-Atlantic integration too.

The first major crisis of this period was the conflict between the former Yugoslav Member States, in which NATO intervened in 1995 to support the UN's efforts. This was the first military engagement of the Alliance not under Article V. Following the Dayton conflict settlement the Alliance deployed a peacekeeping force as part of a support operation. It became an active participant in crisis management in the Balkan region. The need for a role in crisis management was already formulated in the Alliance's Strategic Concept adopted in 1999. The "Cooperative Security" concept clarifies that NATO is ready to participate in conflict prevention and crisis management operations.

### **2.3. Stage 3 – 2001-2014: Active engagement in out of area operations (crisis management), forming collective defense, implementing cooperative security**

Following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, the fight against terrorism became one of the most critical "out of area" tasks for the Organization. By applying Article V, the Alliance became part of the "global war on terror," which was launched by the United States and set NATO's priorities for the next decade.

The joint declaration did not mean consensus among the member states regarding armed intervention. As a result, the USA only required political support from the member states. This meant that the Allies could not hold back the USA from taking action to go to war against terrorism. This has raised questions in the context of the US action in the Middle East, with which not all members agreed (Turkey, Germany). At the same time, member states also disagreed with where the NATO members should focus geographically. The Alliance's core interest was on the European crises while the USA focused on the areas that it considered more important (Middle East). With the war against Afghanistan and Iraq, the USA demonstrated that it would act without the Allies' consent. This '*goal defines the coalition*' approach has even more divided the member states that were used to the principles of solidarity and consultation.

Along with these discussions, a compromise was reached between the member states. The fight against Islamic terrorism in the Middle East continued to go hand in hand with the enlargement of NATO towards Eastern Europe (thereby democratizing the participating states and stabilizing their internal situation). Furthermore, it also contained a policy of deterrence against resurgent Russian superpower aspiration.

In 2010, the year after NATO's 60th anniversary, the NATO Summit in Lisbon adopted the Alliance's concept of "Active Engagement, Modern Defense." The concept initially set out NATO's future global role while outlining the key challenges facing the Alliance. Threats in the new concept were supplemented with cyber defense, anti-piracy, securing the transport of energy carriers, and preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The tasks represented by the Alliance were supplemented by the guarantee of cooperative security along with the former activities of collective defense and crisis management. In addition to the previous areas of collective defense and crisis management, the tasks that the Allies represented were implemented by guaranteeing cooperative security. Based on the principles, NATO considered and gathered countries that were willing to

cooperate. The basic principle was that countries willing to cooperate worked together because they chose winning over the competition. At the same time, this security community built around NATO also strengthened the security of Alliance member countries. The principle of guaranteeing cooperative security also meant that the Organization expressed its determination to take over a significant part of the role and responsibilities of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Where it was possible, it got involved in the prevention, treatment, stabilization, and reconstruction during any phase of a crisis (“NATO”). This allowed NATO to adopt new, more comprehensive approaches such as local force training, consultancy, planning, and civil-military cooperation. The concept, adopted in 2010, put the use of conventional weapons among the primary threats, which proved to be the right in the foresight of the outbreak of the 2014 Ukrainian crisis. Nevertheless, NATO was unprepared against the Russian aggression, which generated change and renewal within the Organization. Cooperative security and the need for putting collective defense as a priority reappeared, especially because members neighboring Russia could only hope for protection from the Alliance against Russian aggression.

#### **2.4 Stage 4 – 2014 - up until present day: Strengthening collective defense, facing both conventional and growing non-conventional challenges**

Even though no new strategic concept was drawn up following the Ukrainian crisis in 2014, the outcome and the communiqué of the summits clearly show the direction of the changes within the Alliance. The 2014 Wales, the 2016 Warsaw, the 2018 Brussels, and the 2019 London summit statements reflected the views of the member states on issues like security events, current and future roles, tasks, and objectives. The results of the four summits can be viewed as a single process in which the Wales summit can be seen as a defining event because it pushed NATO towards collective defense and marked the beginning of a new development phase, also known as the fourth stage.

The main features of the summits are the following (*Key outcomes of the summit of NATO*):

- In the communiqué of the summit in Brussels in 2018, the member states reaffirmed the decisions adopted at the previous summits and took several new decisions for implementation aimed at strengthening deterrence, collective defense, the fight against terrorism, and enhancing the projection of stability

- Three main types of crisis management were decided: 1.) Military operations under Article V., 2.) Military operations and crises response operations that are not under Article V., 3.) Operations related to natural and humanitarian disasters.
- In addition to further strengthening deterrence and protection (which the member states requested in order to improve the collective defense of the Alliance), the southern strategic direction has emerged. It has been decided to prioritize threats from the south such as illegal migration, proliferation, and terrorism. NATO also remained the foundation of collective defense for the member states. It is the key forum for security foundation and decision making amid the Allies. (“London Declaration”). The NATO stayed committed to what is laid down in Article V that an attack against one Ally shall be considered an attack against all member states.
- The development of conventional (non-nuclear) armament, as well as the enhancement of this capability, has been determined. In this sense, the member states have agreed to raise defense spending to 2% of GDP by 2024. Moreover, the Organization is investing in new capabilities and increasing the number of forces available for missions and operations.
- In response to perceived threats in the east, especially from the Russian side, NATO member states established a rapid-response military capability to defend smaller NATO member states bordering Russia (Baltic States).
- Permanent armed forces from the United States are stationed in NATO countries bordering Russia.
- They voluntarily started forming coalitions for military action against the Islamic State (ISIL/DAESH). The Russian threat, as well as the phenomenon of terrorism in all of its forms, remain a constant challenge. To defeat terrorism, the Alliance must strengthen its readiness to react to any threat and stand united in the fight against terrorism.
- The Alliance concluded that NATO's nuclear arsenal would not prevent adversaries from using hybrid weapons, and that a way to counter hybrid threats must be sought. They also concentrate on the development of new technologies to respond to cyber-attacks and the strengthen the member states' ability to prevent and protect against hybrid attacks.
- China's rising presence and foreign policy pose a challenge to the Alliance, which

must be addressed (“London Declaration”).

- The Organization's ability to deter and counter nuclear, conventional, and missile defense capabilities must be strengthened. Moreover it also needs to improve arms control, disarmament, and nonproliferation tools (“London Declaration”).

### **3. Current tasks and challenges**

In the Cold War era, the Alliance did not engage in any operational activity beyond the various international military exercises. This changed after the collapse of the Soviet Union. After 1991 the new NATO strategies meant adapting to the changing world. The "Cooperative Security" concept declared that NATO is willing to participate in conflict prevention and crisis management operations beyond the European geographical area in order to handle ethnic conflicts or to fight against terrorism. More than that, the Alliance expressed its willingness to help troubled countries to maintain peace or to stabilize state institutions or to prevent instability.

#### **3.1. NATO crisis management operations**

Within the Alliance the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) plans and implements multiple missions. In the last three decades NATO carried out the following operational activities:

- Operation Allied Force (1999-2004): Air operations against Yugoslavia – nine operations including maritime blockade, areas of prohibition of flight, and for the first time in NATO's history, air operations and peacekeeping
- Operation Eagle Assist (2001-2002): within the United States airspace after the 2001 terrorist attacks
- Operation Deliberate Force (1995): to enforce the subsequent Dayton Agreement in Bosnia and Herzegovina
- IFOR (1995-1996): Peace enforcement and peacekeeping in Bosnia and Herzegovina
- SFOR (1996-2004): Peace enforcement and peacekeeping in Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Operation Amber Fox (2001), Operation Essential Harvest (2001), Allied Harmony (2002): Operation to prevent the civil war in Macedonia

- AMIS (2005-2007): Sudan, Darfur, African Union logistical support
- ISAF (2001-2014): within the territory of Afghanistan
- Humanitarian air movement operation in Pakistan following the devastating earthquake in Kashmir (2005)
- Libyan no-fly zone and air operation
- The NTM-I (2004-2010): NATO training mission in Iraq
- Operation Ocean Shield (2009-2016) against piracy

**Ongoing NATO operations:**

- KFOR (since 1999): NATO-led Kosovo Forces in Kosovo
- ALTHEA (since 2004): together with the European Union within the territory of Bosnia Herzegovina
- AIR POLICING (since 2004)
- Island's Peacetime Preparedness Needs (since 2008)
- The airspace operation PATRIOT in Turkey (since 2013)
- Resolute Support Mission (since 2014): within the territory of Afghanistan
- SEA GUARDIAN (since 2016): monitoring shipping in the Mediterranean
- NATO Mission for Iraq (since 2017)

**3.2. NATO's role in Iraq**

NATO was not involved as an international organization in the U.S.-led war against Iraq, and even the debate that preceded armed intervention divided the transatlantic Alliance. The training mission in Iraq was only decided after the war at the 2004 Istanbul Summit (*Istanbul Summit*, 34). The Member States agreed to assist in the democratization of Iraq

through joint military cooperation. They undertook the training of Iraqi security forces, Iraqi soldiers, and police (*Istanbul Summit, 5*). The NATO Training Mission Iraq provided insight into the decision-making process between member states. It highlighted the vital role of NATO in future missions (both inside and outside of any territory). The mission was established at the request of the Interim Iraqi Government (*Istanbul Summit,5*).

The main goal of the NTM-I mission was to create a democratic and stable Iraq while also providing the necessary comprehensive support to achieve it. In addition to creating governmental stability, the goal was to create a society for the Iraqis based on democratic principles (freedom of expression, free elections, and an open community). Further tasks also included creating a security environment in which Iraqi citizens do not feel threatened by either the state or Islamist forces. This could only be achieved if the Iraqi soldiers were trained in such ways that even after the departure of the international troops, they were able to carry out the duties on their own without needing any international assistance (“NATO’s assistance to Iraq”,3).

The NATO Training Mission-Iraq started in August 2004. The task was to examine the possibilities of training Iraqi security forces and develop cooperation with civilian personnel in the military environment and develop a comprehensive action plan that regulated and systematized NATO's training program throughout Iraq. The mission provided an opportunity to build a long-term partnership that ultimately led to truly fruitful and structured cooperation. The training process included areas of mentoring, counseling, and educating.

In 2007, the Allies expanded their assistance to prepare internal security forces by providing law enforcement training to the Iraqi Federal Police and improving cooperation between police and military personnel in parallel operations for a common purpose. Because the previous efforts were successful, NATO expanded the mission. It included the Iraqi Navy and Air Force training a year later and launched radical internal reforms and leadership training. At the same time, NATO supported establishing new institutions in the defense sector, aimed to collect small arms from the population, organized the new weapons registration, and issued accountability. During NATO's training mission in Iraq, the Alliance's best trainers aimed to pass on their best knowledge to the Iraqi state to prepare their citizens for all danger (“NATO’s assistance to Iraq”, 3).

NATO aimed to provide every opportunity to properly prepare the new post-war Iraqi officers to defend the new democratically organized country. To this end, it offered training

opportunities abroad, based on offers from the member states and in the so-called NATO Centers of Excellence.<sup>36</sup>

On a positive note, NATO trained more than 5,000 troops and 10,000 police officers in Iraq during the 2004-2011 mission. In addition to training the Iraqi armed forces and reorganizing the officer education system, it has contributed to the armed forces' technical training and modern armaments. The mission can be considered successful in many ways. It has managed to stabilize the country's economy, and political leadership has come to power democratically, which seeks to govern the country according to the principles of democracy. The new Iraqi force stood up and proved operational. Overall, the foundations have been put in place for the country to recover from the Saddam regime. This is also due to the fact that in April 2011, NATO granted NATO partner status to Iraq (“NATO’s assistance to Iraq”,4).

Simultaneously, it can also be considered as a failure because a large part of its population rejected NATO forces in Iraq. The Sunni minority saw NATO as an occupying force. The humiliating, repressive measures of the Shiite leadership paved the way for the emergence of a new organized Islamist party in the Sunni triangle, which later escalated into a terrorist organization known as the Islamic State. Besides, the Shiite-majority Government under Iranian influence also viewed the presence of foreign soldiers as a burden. The controversial relationship is well illustrated by the fact that the mission ended on December 31, 2011, because the Iraqi Government and NATO could not agree on the legal status of NTM-I personnel within Iraq. The Iraqis wanted to bring NATO soldiers under their legislation, but NATO rejected this and attributed the competence of such procedure to the sending Member States. Finally, in the absence of an agreement, the mission ended.

Iraq's accession to the NATO Partnership Program paved the way for further developing the NTM-I, which went beyond Iraq's training programs. In May 2012, the Iraqi government formally proposed the signing of an Individual Partnership and Cooperation Program, which was adopted in September and provided a new framework for cooperation between the two parties. The new framework offered the continuation of the existing training programs, the collaboration in the fight against terrorism, the fight against cross-border organized crime, and the protection of critical energy infrastructure (“NATO’s assistance to Iraq”,4)

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<sup>36</sup> In the NATO Center of Excellence system, each member state undertakes, in the form of a voluntary offer, to provide training in a particular field to other member states or officials from selected non-NATO countries

This intention to cooperate was reaffirmed at the 2014 NATO Summit in Wales, at which NATO members agreed to launch the Defense and Related Security Capacity Building (DCB) Initiative with Iraq. The DCB package included measures to increase Iraq's defense and security capacity and assist key military areas, such as tactical training for Iraqi special operations forces (Ziad,4). This defense capability program, launched in July 2015, also aimed to respond to the Iraqi government's request for assistance in the fight against the Islamic State (ISIL/DAESH).

The Iraqi government turned to UN member states for help in the fight against the terrorist organization. The United States formed the Global Coalition (GC) to combat a growing terrorist organization in Iraq, to which NATO member states joined by individual decision. Although Operation "Resolute Support" launched by the Global Coalition is not a NATO operation, NATO decided at the 2016 Summit to provide direct support to GK in the fight against Islamic State through the deployment of AWACS air surveillance and reconnaissance aircraft. In early 2017, NATO sent a team of civilian and military personnel to Baghdad to coordinate training and capacity-building efforts for Iraqi security forces ("NATO's assistance to Iraq",3). Seeing the further rise of the terrorist organization, NATO joined the Global Coalition in May 2017 as a full participant, of which most member states were already members as voluntary contributors. Since 2017, as an organization, NATO has also been involved (with combat units sent by member states) in "Resolute Support" to dismantle the terrorist organization ISIL/DAESH and restore the territorial integrity of Iraq.

At the 2018 NATO Summit in Brussels, at the request of the Iraqi Government and the Global Coalition, the Alliance launched a non-combat training and capacity-building mission (NATO Mission in Iraq - NMI) in Iraq to help stabilize the country and to fight terrorism. The new mission builds on NATO's previous work in Iraq (NTM-I). The Alliance's goal is to help Iraq consolidate security, seek to prevent the possible rise of another terrorist organization, and provide the best conditions for the reconstruction of Iraq. Furthermore, NATO believes that stabilizing security in Iraq (and the region) will also help reduce irregular migration.

### **3.3. NATO's role in Afghanistan**

In 2003, NATO conducted its first outside mission, taking over strategic command of the UN-mandated peacekeeping force in and around Kabul. However, the fight against

terrorism is now NATO's top priority, with the alliance fighting Al-Qaeda and Taliban rebels in Afghanistan (Sheikh,51).

After the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack against the United States NATO immediately responded. The then nineteen member states were all in favor of NATO's involvement; however, the US alone did not support it. This was due to Washington's understanding of the member states' military capabilities and the fact that they couldn't carry out a collective defense mission outside of the NATO region (Sheikh,53). For this reason, NATO was not involved in the war of terror; instead, the US picked states from different parts of the world and formed an "international coalition" to fight against the Taliban. After the removal of the Taliban government a UN-mandated force (International Security Assistance Force - ISAF) was deployed to Afghanistan. Despite NATO not taking part as an international organization, the United Nations Security Council approved NATO to combat terrorism with the assistance of international efforts in 2003. NATO took command of the ISAF forces on August 11, 2003 (Sheikh,59). This was NATO's first peacekeeping operation outside European borders.

NATO had sole command of the ISAF mission in 2006, and almost all foreign powers were under direct NATO command (Sheikh,60). The reconstruction of Afghanistan was NATO's responsibility in the region, as was assisting the government in establishing law and order and developing a functioning democratic environment. Combating insurgency was one of NATO's priorities in the war on terror.

The second objective was to strengthen Afghanistan's security institutions. NATO had a number of problems because it could not obtain a regular army that was proportionate to its security needs. As part of their nation-building process, the international community sought to establish a national army and police force. NATO provided training and weapons to the Afghan forces. The United States and the European Union were in charge of preparing and equipping the army and police, which included 70,000 army and 82,000 police personnel (Sheikh,61). With the help of the American and French instructors, the rebuilding of the Afghan National Army (ANA) began and strengthened gradually. NATO's main objective was to pass the responsibility of waging the war on terror to the local army. In 2007, the Afghan National Army's force reached up to 41,000.

The third objective was to reduce the opium trade. This was an essential part of the country's economic life since it accounts for 40 percent of its GDP (Hamid,107). At the same time, it's worth noting that Afghanistan produces 92 percent of the world's opium and heroin (Sheikh,62). Poppy cultivation was most famous in the southern part of the country. The

production of such drugs was prohibited when the Taliban was in power, but as it battled thousands of foreign troops, drug smuggling became a source of revenue. It was difficult for the Kabul government to combat drug trafficking because of the system's deep rooted corruption and lack of the rule of law. According to the UN, illicit opium revenue is used to fund insurgency and other illegal activities in the region (Sheikh,62). The new NATO target in Afghanistan was to eliminate the opium production and smuggling (Sheikh,62).

When Barack Obama took office, the Alliance had 50,000 troops in Afghanistan, and 15,000 to 30,000 was still needed. However, the member states were not enthusiastic about supplying the mission with more troops. This out-of-area clearly put the limits of cooperation to the test (Sheikh,67).Moreover, it was also challenging to reach consensus among the member states. The majority of European countries opposed sending more forces to Afghanistan because they did not believe the Afghan issue could be solved militarily. Many assumed that the war in Afghanistan was a US-led campaign, and that the soldiers who died were fighting and dying for the US (Sheikh,68).Obama featured a policy called the "exit strategy," which started in mid-2011.

NATO's Resolute Mission was launched in January 2015 after the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission in Afghanistan ended in 2015.The participants were devoted to developing a stable a prosperous country. For the local security forces and institutions, the mission offered additional training, advice, and assistance (“Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan”). The new mission encouraged the Afghan government and the Taliban to engage in peace talks and advised all parties to work for a lasting peace agreement. It was formally launched in September 2020, with both parties committing to ending violence and building on the progress made over the previous 19 years to protect human rights, uphold the rule of law, and ensure that Afghanistan is never again used as a safe haven for terrorists (“Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan”). NATO partners contributed to the peace process by sending troops to Afghanistan, as well as training and supporting Afghan security forces and institutions. Many who did not contribute troops to the mission increased their efforts to reinforce Afghanistan's National Defense and Security Forces. Moreover, the participants endorsed long-term financial support for Afghan stability until 2020, which was later extended until 2024 (“Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan”). Political dialogue and practical cooperation were also enhanced by the Allies.

Within the Resolution Support Mission, there are 10,000 personnel from 36 NATO member and partner countries. Its responsibilities include preparation, guidance, and assistance at security-related ministries, in the country's agencies, and among the army and police's senior

ranks (“Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan”). They work closely together with the Afghan military, police, and the air force. It’s essential tasks are the following:

- Providing assistance with planning, programming, and budgeting
- Assuring transparency, accountability, and oversight.
- Helping to commit to the principles of the rule of law and good governance. (“Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan”).
- Supporting the establishment and sustainment of processes such as force generation, recruitment, training, management, and personnel development (“Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan”).

The latest development is that the US government – in accordance with other NATO member states and partner states – decided to end the RSM mission and withdraw the NATO forces from Afghanistan by September 11, 2021.

### Troop contributions by nations

	Albania	43		Germany	850		Poland	200
	Armenia	121		Greece	4		Portugal	10
	Australia	229		Hungary	96		Romania	650
	Austria	10		Iceland	2		Slovakia	36
	Azerbaijan	94		Ireland	7		Slovenia	7
	Belgium	60		Italy	829		Spain	9
	Bosnia-Herzegovina	55		Latvia	23		Sweden	27
	Bulgaria	84		Lithuania	14		the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia <sup>1</sup>	39
	Croatia	106		Luxembourg	1		Turkey	508
	Czech Republic	232		Mongolia	120		Ukraine	10
	Denmark	90		Montenegro	17		United Kingdom	470
	Estonia	4		Netherlands	83		United States	6,800
	Finland	41		New Zealand	8			
	Georgia	870		Norway	46		Total	12,905

(Fig. 1. NATO.” Troop Contributing Nations”, Resolute Support Mission,)

### 3.4. New conventional challenges (defending member states/territorial defense)

The Alliance faces many different challenges and asymmetries compared to what it dealt with during the Cold War. The unity among the Member States becomes harder since

they perceive priorities threats differently, and as a result lack of trust and solidarity is created among them. For instance, there is disagreement over the Iran nuclear deal, climate change, and there is an emerging trade war within the member states. Moreover, some members have been accused of getting too close to Russia politically and economically, while bilateral disputes intensify the situation. Despite differences and debates, core common values such as democracy, respect for human rights, and adherence to the rule of law serve to unite NATO rather than divide it.

The Soviet Union was a strong adversary for the Alliance during the Cold War; however, today's member states face a variety of challenges that shape the security landscape. While Poland and the Baltic countries view Russia as an existential threat, Southern members worry more about the Middle East and North America. The United States, on the other hand, also has different priorities, namely Iran, North Korea, and illegal migration. According to the Pew Research Center international survey, the top three threats to global security (Poushter and Manevich) are the Islamic State, climate change, and cyber-security. The United States, United Kingdom, France, and Germany all ranked these at the top of their defense plan. Poland ranked the Islamic State, Russia, and refugees, while Turkey thought the US power and influence was the most dangerous one. Hungary regarded the movement of refugees as a serious threat. All of this demonstrates how member states view individual threats differently depending on their geographic proximity and historical experiences (Szöke,7).

Next to internal challenges, NATO members are facing external issues as well. The renewal of territorial defense and collective security has been a key topic for the Organization. This is the most critical concern on the so-called Eastern Flank, where Russia has emerged as a new and assertive challenge (Szöke,7). The Georgian-Russian war showed what Russia is capable of, but the Ukrainian crisis in 2014 was a turning point for NATO. The event made NATO refocus its efforts on territorial defense. Deterrence includes conventional armed forces, missile defense capabilities, or even elements of nuclear force (Szöke,11). Despite the Alliance's military superiority to Russia's, serious steps must be taken to further reinforce deterrence capability. During the NATO summits in 2014 and 2016, the Alliance adopted the Defense Investment Pledge, established the Enhanced forward presence in the Baltics and Poland, increased the NATO Response Force to 40,000 troops, and created the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VHRJT).

In addition, new assurance measures were implemented, military exercises were conducted, a network of NATO Force Integration Units (NFIU) was created, and more

attention was paid to the Black Sea region (Szöke,11). Strengthening cooperation between NATO and the European Union was also a priority since 22 NATO countries are EU members too. In addition to countering hybrid warfare, conducting defense research, and combating cyber-security and terrorism, enhancing cooperation in the territorial defense field seemed reasonable (Szöke,11).Despite the difficulties, NATO appears to be succeeding in territorial defense and reacting to attacks on its eastern flank (Szöke,12).In the coming years, this is likely to remain its main focus and a top priority.

### **3.4.1. The Russian threat**

During the Cold War, the Soviet Union posed the greatest threat to NATO; but, after the collapse of the Warsaw Pact, NATO was forced to redefine its relevance and concentrate on out-of-area operations. NATO started to establish a meaningful relationship with Russia after the Cold War ended and focused on dialogue and practical cooperation in areas of mutual interest (*United for a new era* ,25). When Vladimir Putin returned to power in 2012, Russia launched a new strategy to return to the international arena as a super power that has to be taken seriously. It has started an assertive and aggressive behavior in the international community. The annexation of eastern Ukraine and the invasion of Crimea are two reasons why NATO sees Russia as a threat and has shifted its attention to countering and deterring Russian aggression (Taylor and Edmonds,54) .It has taken actions to adapt and remain effective.

Russia's evolving foreign policy created more challenges for the Alliance. Putin focuses on opposing unilateralism by the United States and the international order that seeks to undermine Russia. He relies heavily on military means, such as cyber weapons, to further his goal and become more assertive in his intentions to weaken the Western democracies and member state cohesion. The Russian foreign policy indicates the way Russia views NATO. Previous efforts by Russia to alter the international order and reassert its great power position have been brazen, mostly because it threatens NATO's cohesion (Taylor and Edmonds,54).

To prevent the threats and costs associated with direct military confrontations with both the US and NATO, Russia employs strategies such as increasing the use of information warfare and cyber operations(Taylor and Edmonds,55) . Because of these tactics, NATO must be alert and address these issues to maintain its effectiveness. In line with the non-conventional threats, NATO needs to pay attention to the conventional Russian threats. Russia's hybrid strategies are successful because they are backed by credible military power.

Therefore, NATO needs to address Russian hybrid actions that can affect NATO's cohesion and the credibility of Article V. NATO should seek to improve not only military but also non-conventional capabilities in order to effectively deter Russian aggression in any potential conflict (Taylor and Edmonds,54).

Russia's foreign policy stems from the country's primary goal, which is to uphold the state's hegemony and regime's stability. Putin argues that if Russia is strong at home, it will be strong elsewhere, and a state's strength is measured by its unity and stability (Taylor and Edmonds,54). To achieve unity, the Russian government targets enemies in order to reinforce the narrative that Russia is under attack from the United States and the West (Taylor and Edmonds,55). According to this narrative, the West aim is to weaken and destabilize the Putin regime through a color revolution and promote democracy worldwide. Russia also believes that the United States wants to overturn governments that seem unfriendly and wish to undermine Putin himself. Thus, Russia's attitude towards the West is defensive since it does not feel secure and does not trust the West's intentions. Because of the instability, Russia has claimed the right to preserve independent but compliant states on its periphery that lack substantial physical barriers (Taylor and Edmonds,55). Russia took advantage of this by establishing buffer zones along its borders, giving its leaders enough time to prepare the state in the event of a war(Taylor and Edmonds,55).

NATO's eastward expansion also added to Russia feeling insecure since losing Georgia and Ukraine meant that Russia loses influence over countries that maintained its prestige. Losing influence means that both Georgia and Ukraine could become a powerful and prosperous country without Russian help. As mentioned before, Russia tries to reassess its status as a great power and it expects respect from the international community to treat the country as an equal party. The Russian fundamental expectations and interests are present in all the major international decisions (Taylor and Edmonds,56). Putin goal is to boost its global prestige. Its increased influence in the Middle East, Afghanistan, North Korea, and Libya all added to its domestic prestige (Taylor and Edmonds,56).

Russia seems to be unsuccessful in attracting other countries to its sphere of influence, and its ability to positively influence the world has declined. He aims to oppose the attempts by the West that support international rules and norms only when it serves the interest of the West, and in case it does not serve those interests, the West tends to circumvent those. This is also challenging for NATO since some members such as Turkey and Hungary support Putin's views towards the West. Russia truly believes that the United States seeks to overthrow it, change the regime and promote Western-type democracy. For this reason, it intensified its

efforts and tried its best to enhance its standing in the international order. In terms of NATO, Russia is attempting to exploit the organization's flaws by exacerbating suspicions among member states regarding their commitment to collective defense (Taylor and Edmonds,57).

Russia also emphasizes its militarism and relies more on its military tools. The interventions in Georgia, Ukraine, and Syria show how confident Russia is with its military actions and its attempts to achieve its foreign policy objectives. It aims to attract the attention of the West and strengthen its negotiating position by using such military power. Russia also made efforts to modernize its military and successfully built up a competent force, including cyber weapons. These actions have gained more influence than Russia's use of soft power or economic tools, implying that relying on such military options offers greater results (Taylor and Edmonds,58).

Russia and China have found a common cause, believing that the US-led world is coming to an end, and that rising powers like China and Russia should have a greater say in international affairs (Taylor and Edmonds,58). The two countries are cooperating on a political, economic, and military level and sharing similar ideas about reducing the US global influence could be seen as a threat to the US and the European interests. Because the West is facing many challenges nowadays, it allows Russia to make a move to influence the international order.

Russia's foreign policy does create challenges for NATO since it became more assertive with its efforts to make the political cohesion of NATO member states less effective. However, it is important to note that even though Russia is more assertive, it does not want any direct military confrontation with the Allies. NATO and the US would most likely have a superior force correlation along Russia's border and would ultimately defeat the country in a conventional war (Taylor and Edmonds, 59).For this reason, Russia tries to contest with NATO instead of getting involved in a military confrontation. To achieve this, Russia uses hybrid warfare tools to undermine NATO that are not lead to a military response from the Organization. Russia is focusing more on information warfare and using it to influence political dynamics in countries that are hostile to Russian interests (Taylor and Edmonds, 59).These efforts include different political goals such as influencing campaigns during elections and affecting the Alliance by creating disagreement between the member states. Information warfare can be divided into two aspects, technical and psychological. Technical consists of cyber operations, electronic warfare, and activities to protect or damage any data- or information-driven assets or activities that can be subject to interruption or destruction (Taylor and Edmonds, 59).Furthermore, actions taken during peacetime to form

the attitudes and policy priorities of an adversary's political, military, and civilian populations are referred to as psychology (Taylor and Edmonds, 59). Putin has become very confident with its foreign policy stance, which is shown by its security policies. Russia demonstrates its military capabilities along the Ukrainian border sent troops to Syria to protect its core interest. Russia will take these actions knowing that the US will not respond immediately because it does not want to be involved in a war with Russia.

### **3.4.2. The Chinese threat**

China's power and global reach in the international sphere cause acute challenges for democratic countries. China's reported policies include the goal of becoming a global leader in artificial intelligence by 2030 and a technical superpower by 2049 (*United for a new Era*, 26). China wants to have greater authoritarianism and expand its territory, which raises questions among the NATO member states. There are countries in the Alliance that are trade partners and economic competitors with China. Therefore, it is viewed as a full-spectrum systemic competitor rather than just an economic player or a security actor (*United for a new Era*, 26). While China does not pose a direct military threat to the Euro-Atlantic region, it is expanding its military presence in the Atlantic, Mediterranean, and Arctic regions, as well as strengthening its ties with Russia. China also intends to expand its nuclear arsenal by developing long-range missiles, aircraft carriers, and nuclear attack submarines. China's presence is growing, with the Belt and Road Initiative, Polar Silk Road Initiative, and Cyber Silk Road Initiative all gaining traction, as well as infrastructure being built across Europe with a possible link to communication and interoperability (*United for a new Era*, 26). During the COVID-19 pandemic, NATO member states reported many cyber-attacks by Chinese actors, identified intellectual property theft with security consequences, and were exposed to Chinese misinformation campaigns (*United for a new Era*, 26).

NATO agrees that China poses both opportunities and challenges for the Alliance that need to be addressed. NATO must protect the member states against a possible attack from China and therefore needs to provide security and strengths for the Allies. NATO must work to strengthen its resilience, keep up with technological advances, and react to vulnerabilities that could jeopardize the Alliance's security (*United for a new Era*, 27). It must remain a platform for the member states to consult with one another about China's actions and develop ideas about how to react to those. NATO also needs to pay attention to China's capabilities, activities, and intentions that affect the Euro-Atlantic region. Furthermore, the Alliance also

needs to understand the risks, threats, and opportunities that China poses. When it serves NATO's interests, it must be willing to engage in dialogue with China, as well as consider opportunities and prospects for addressing global challenges (*United for a new Era*, 26).

### **3.4.3. The Iranian threat**

Iran has been accused of actively pursuing a nuclear weapons program, and while it has denied it, several international bodies such as the U.N Security Council have imposed sanctions. It has taken part in developing nuclear weapons, including mining uranium, converting uranium to uranium hexafluoride, enriching uranium hexafluoride to acquire high-grade fissile material needed for military use. It also developed an implosion system, which is needed for nuclear device detonation (“The Iranian Threat”). Iran also has a large number of medium- and long-range ballistic missiles capable of delivering nuclear payloads to Middle Eastern, European, and North American countries (“The Iranian Threat”).

The NATO’s relation with Iran also includes key players in the crises such as France, United Kingdom, Turkey and the United States. While the Alliance is aware of the threat Iran poses with its missile-defense program, there isn't any comprehensive action taken against it. The question of what should be done poses different opinions and perceptions among the member states, and no consensus was reached. A nuclear-armed Iran means intense and long-lasting consequences for the Organization’s roles and missions. One of the dangers posed by the country is blackmailing against one or more NATO countries involved in the military operation in the Middle East that Iran might want to deter, while the other threat posed is the conflict between Turkey and Iran. The Iran nuclear agreement, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), is a landmark accord reached between Iran and several world powers, including the United States, in July 2015. Under its terms, Iran agreed to dismantle much of its nuclear program and open its facilities to more extensive international inspections in exchange for billions of dollars’ worth of sanctions relief. However, the deal has been in jeopardy since President Donald J. Trump withdrew the United States from it in 2018. In retaliation for the U.S. departure and for deadly attacks on prominent Iranians in 2020, Iran has resumed some of its nuclear activities. The revival of Iran’s nuclear weapons program would dramatically escalate tensions in the Middle East, raising the prospects for conflict between Iran and its regional rivals, including Israel and Saudi Arabia. The new US president, Joe Biden announced that the United States will return to the JCPOA if Iran resumes compliance, stressing that diplomacy is the best way to prevent

Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons. The prospects for new negotiations are uncertain because there will be presidential election in Iran in June 2021 and according to Iran-experts there is a high possibility that the current president, Rouhani will likely be replaced by a conservative hard-liner (Robinson).

#### **3.4.4. The North Korean threat**

North Korea's ballistic missile and nuclear tests are a global threat, and it is a challenge for regional and international security. North Korean dictator Kim Jong-un pursues radical policies that have pushed the country to the forefront of global concerns(Connolly, 3). The country withdrew from the Treaty of the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in 2003, did not join the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), and carried out several nuclear tests since 2006 (Connolly, 3).Intelligence Services roughly calculated that North Korea's nuclear arsenal may consist of 20-30 nuclear heads, which the United States estimates to be more than 50. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) has increased nuclear, and missile testing since Kim Jong-un is in power. Since 2012 the DPRK carried out 80 ballistic missile tests and in 2017 conducted 20 ballistic missile launches. The country is making progress in developing its ballistic missile program. Since they are not reliant on export, they can produce their engine for advanced ballistic missiles. Their Hwasong-15 ballistic missile has a range of 13,000 kilometers and can go up to 4,475 kilometers in altitude (Connolly,4). As a result of these developments, North Korea's nuclear-armed ballistic missile is within reach of the United States mainland and European capitals (Connolly, 4). In 2018 Kim Jong-un threatened to begin mass-producing its nuclear weapons and missiles.

Furthermore, the DPRK violated international agreements by developing and expanding its nuclear program. It continues to violate UN Security Council resolutions by taking these measures. They also acquire chemical and biological weapons, with the world's third-largest chemical weapons arsenal (Connolly, 2).North Korea's nuclear, ballistic, chemical, biological, and conventional weapons programs, as well as the smuggling of these weapons to state and non-state actors, pose a direct threat to global and regional stability (Connolly, 5). For example, it was reported that numerous African countries purchased arms and other military means from North Korea and also received military training from the government. Furthermore, there was also trade in weapons with Syria to produce chemical weapons. North Korea was also accused of sending technical advisers, engineers, and combat

troops to Syria to help the Assad regime against the opposition (Connolly, 5). Also, DPRK cooperated with Iran with nuclear and missile technology and arms sales. According to reports, the DPRK embassy in Cairo, Egypt is selling missiles, military hardware, and services to MENA countries (Connolly, 5).

### **3.5. New type of non-conventional challenges**

Researchers and scholars identify different type of non-conventional challenges, like climate change, cross-border environmental degradation or resource depletion, water or food shortages, infectious diseases, natural disasters, terrorism, hybrid and cyber threats, irregular migration, human smuggling, drug trafficking, and other different forms of transnational crime (Chaudhuri). In my dissertation I want to focus only on four areas (terrorism, hybrid-treat, cyber-threat, migration) that I consider extremely important issues and need to be addressed by NATO in the future strategic documents.

#### **Islam-related international terrorism**

Islam-related terrorism poses an immediate and asymmetric threat to the member states and their citizens; therefore, NATO must engage in counter-terrorism as its primary task. Activities to fight terrorism are directed by NATO's Policy Guidelines on Counter-Terrorism approved by NATO Head of State of Government in 2012. NATO has its capabilities to support the member states to fight against the threat. The Allies focus on three main areas: awareness of the threat, capabilities to address it, and engagement with partners and international organizations (“NATO counter-terrorism cooperation”, 1). NATO wants to improve its communication and cooperation with its allies. This is accomplished by the Organization analyzing the threat, consulting, and improving capabilities. These operations may be focused on one area or multilaterally coordinated within a regional context that incorporates both civilian and military capabilities. NATO conducts consultations and information sharing in order to raise awareness of the threats and vulnerabilities that may affect member states.

Through engagement and strategic communication, the Alliance also plays an important role in promoting a common understanding of its role in combating terrorism as a wider international effort (“NATO counter-terrorism cooperation”, 1). The second area is training, education, and exercises through which NATO promotes an effective response to countering terrorism. The third area is Capability Development and Support to Operations.

The Allies aim to maintain the right capabilities to protect against and prevent an attack from happening. It does it through cooperation with the partners to develop new technologies and methods that address asymmetric threats in a broader and more informed way. The fourth area is fighting terrorism through science and technology cooperation. NATO members work closely together to address the issue through scientific research and innovation. Partners get offered to work on detecting dangerous material, emergency preparedness, assessment of human factors in counter-terrorism, and risk management (“NATO counter-terrorism cooperation”, 3). NATO has civil-military preparation and civil emergency planning tools and procedures in this area, which prepare it to combat terrorism (“NATO counter-terrorism cooperation”, 4). The sixth area is international cooperation, which necessitates a holistic approach by the international community that involves a broad range of instruments and global and regional organizations, especially the United Nations, the European Union, the OSCE, and the Council of Europe (“NATO counter-terrorism cooperation”, 5).

In 2020 NATO launched its first Counter-Terrorism Reference Curriculum (CTRC), allowing Allies and partner countries to enhance their skills and capabilities to improve their counter-terrorism skills. It is close cooperation between Defense Education Enhancement Programme (DEEP) and NATO's Counter-Terrorism Section, and the Partnership for Peace Consortium. The curriculum also serves as a referendum document, addressing the requirements of partner nation defense educational institutions and presenting recommendations for the most current NATO courses (“Counter-terrorism reference curriculum”). The CTRC also discusses terrorist ideologies, motivations, and tactics, as well as counter-terrorism strategies and possible predictions (“Counter-terrorism reference curriculum”). Launching the Curriculum Dr. Antonio Missiroli, NATO's Assistant Secretary-General for Emerging Security Challenges, stated: *"Terrorism and other security threats are not going away as a result of the global pandemic. Terrorism jeopardizes our protection as well as the ideals that guide and empower our communities. The Alliance is committed to using all available resources to combat this challenge. Supporting enhanced awareness, resilience, and counter-terrorism capability among Allies and partners are all part of this initiative, and the CTRC ideally suits these objectives"* (“Counter-terrorism reference curriculum”). The Defense Education Enhancement Programme (DEEP) of NATO assists partners in developing and forming counter-terrorism courses. Dr. John Manza, NATO's Assistant Secretary-General for Operations, highlighted: *"Both interested partners and Allies will have access to the Counter-Terrorism Reference Curriculum. DEEP will work hard to assist partners who seek assistance in implementing the program for their professional*

*military education institutions. In view of the COVID-19 pandemic and other long-term trends, NATO will seek to make the Counter-Terrorism Reference Curriculum accessible as a distance course to all partners who wish to introduce it in their institutions. In the face of a common challenge, supporting our partners in this way makes us all stronger."* ("Counter-terrorism reference curriculum").

### **Hybrid-threat**

Hybrid interference or attack intends to cross the line between peace and conflict by deliberately striving to be covert, ambiguous to make it difficult for the victim to identify the perpetrator. During a hybrid attack the perpetrator precisely mapping and uses the already existing vulnerabilities and internal divides within the victim country's social, economic, or defense sector. Its scope could be to delay or paralyze the political, economic, or military decision-making process or weakening of the citizens' trust in the government or the state institutions. The attacker intends to disrupt economic processes, gain influence in key economic or financial sectors, manipulate or take control of the information environment and weaken the operation of critical infrastructure. The attacker uses a wide variety of methods and a flexible combination of economic, financial, social, military, diplomatic, informational (social media) and legal tools. The perpetrators could be both state and non-state actors, the latter are usually authoritarian and revisionist regimes with regional or global power ambitions. The hybrid attack can include mobilization of interest groups (criminals, religious or ethnic groups, political extremists) to violate public order or to act against the victim country's security/defense interests. The hybrid attack can cause serious turbulence within the country's security and defense domain which requires a coordinated and effective action from the NATO' collective defense system. The NATO as a defense institution and as an organization of member states also faces hybrid-threats, including propaganda, deception, sabotage, and other non-military tactics that threaten the Alliance's countries (*United for a new era*, 45).

The digital era played a huge role in speeding up technology and global interconnectivity, which made the threat even more potent because its methods are faster, more intense, and broader. It is also challenging since detecting the perpetrator who is behind the attacks can be difficult, as states sometimes use proxies (*United for a new era*, 45).

In 2018 NATO created a Counter Hybrid Support Teams (CHSTs) to provide tailored assistance to Allies (*United for a new era*, 45). In November 2019, it accepted the Report on

Enhancing NATO's Response to Hybrid Threats that outlined key priorities for fighting hybrid-threats.

### **Cyber threat**

The cyber issue (cyber-threat cyber-attack, or cyber-warfare) could be considered as part of the hybrid tools. The reason why it must be handled separately is, that cyberspace represents the fifth theatre of warfare, and countries – including NATO member states – around the world are in a hurry to develop strong offensive and defensive cyber capabilities. The term cyber-threat refers to a possible computer-based cyber-attack by a state or a non-state actor against a target country's IT infrastructure.

An example of such hostile action taking place in the fifth dimension of warfare is the 2007 Russian attempt to virtually block out Estonia's internet infrastructure as a unilateral countermeasure and retribution for Estonia's removal of a WWII Soviet War Memorial from the center of Tallinn. Governmental and party websites as well as businesses were severely obstructed by this incident of cyber-attack. This incident was followed by the employment of cyber measures in connection with the Russian military campaign in Georgia in 2008( Bachmann,82 ).

In recent years, NATO has taken several measures to counter the threat. In 2016, the Allies recognized cyberspace as a sphere of operations alongside air, ground, space, and sea, and established the Cyber Defense Pledge to strengthen national cyber defenses (*United for a new era,45*).

Simultaneously, a common political framework is needed for NATO to show how it should assess, attribute, and respond to cyber incidents in times of a crisis. That way, the level of ambition in these areas and the appropriate roles for NATO, the EU, and national governments is more precise. Political discussions are needed to determine how NATO should respond to the challenges. It's debatable whether the Alliance should be allowed to respond quickly because it would raise the likelihood of miscalculation and unintended escalation by potential adversaries (*United for a new era,45*).

### **Migration**

Migration is another non-conventional problem for the Organization. The danger itself is unique in that it is a humanitarian crisis originating in several countries. NATO's involvement in countering the issue is unique since it employs military means to protect the European Union's external borders from a non-military threat. (Belova, 40) It is not within

NATO's capacity to completely defeat migration. Still, it has the capabilities and resources to minimize the causes of migration (Belova, 40). The crisis management missions show how NATO can get involved in a migrant crisis and make it a priority (Belova,40).In 2016 NATO contributed to the international effort to counter illegal human trafficking and migration in the Aegean Sea through the help of intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance in the Aegean and the Turkish-Syrian border. The Organization cooperated with European Border and Coast Guard Agency (FRONTEX). NATO supported its member states and Frontex in combating illegal migration during its deployment in the Aegean Sea. (Sarantaki,17). Frontex helped NATO by sharing information, assets, and knowledge, while Frontex shared skills, intelligence, and operational know-how in the field of migration(Sarantaki,17).NATO has played a huge role in countering migration in the past few years. In 2006, the Mediterranean Sea's Active Endeavour Operation aided the Hellenic Coast Guard in preventing human smuggling by providing information (Sarantaki,14).During the 2015 migration crisis in Europe, NATO shifted its focus on migration and supported the European Union to fight against irregular migration in the Aegean mission. During deployment, NATO could participate in new operational exercises, gain experience, and develop a strategy.

NATO established a new Joint Intelligence and Security Division (JISD) at NATO's headquarters in Brussels during the Warsaw summit, calling it "the most significant reform in the history of Allied intelligence." It also meant a wider approach to the integration of civilian and military intelligence (Sarantaki,14). This acknowledged NATO's intelligence gathering and analysis, allowing it to develop a new direction. Furthermore, in the current threat environment, it may adapt and react effectively to rising political, security, and military issues (Sarantaki,14).

#### **4. The future of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization**

Just because NATO was successful with its missions and tasks in the past, it does not mean it will succeed in the future; therefore, it must adapt to the new circumstances.

The fundamental mission of NATO continues which is “to safeguard the freedom, common heritage and civilization of their peoples, founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law... to promote stability and well-being in the North Atlantic area... [and] to unite their efforts for collective defense and the preservation of peace and security” (*United for a new era*, 9) .Military strength and political unity, as well as pursuing a long-

term stable international environment, are the most important factors in a successful mission (NATO, 9).

The Alliance's unity will be more crucial and more complex in the coming decade because the member states prioritize threats differently. During the Cold war, NATO only faced one significant danger. In the present days, it faces two major rivals (Russia, China), non-conventional threats, instability along NATO's southern periphery, changes in the technological landscape, non-state threats, and man-made as well as natural risks (*United for a new era*, 9). While these threats show that NATO has a purpose, the different views of each member state make it harder to reach consensus.

The Allies' relationship will be challenged due to the differences in fundamental values (*United for a new era*, 9). External actors such as Russia and China will be able to profit from intra-Alliance differences and take advantage of those member states, putting NATO's mutual interests and stability at risk (*United for a new era*, 9). These activities will affect democratic ways of life by spreading into the cyber, technological, and strategic-commercial areas (*United for a new era*, 9). If there is no cohesion, the member states will have to face these problems on their own, and neither Europe nor North America are strong enough to deal with these risks on their own (*United for a new era*, 9). In case the disunity does happen, it should be seen as a strategic rather than just a tactical or optical problem (*United for a new era*, 10). If the issue is not dealt with, it will place both big and small member states on less favorable terms than would otherwise if they cooperated.

The most important central political challenge for NATO is to improve transatlantic ties in preparation for a period of strategic simultaneity, in which the Alliance faces many interconnected challenges at the same time (*United for a new era*, 10). It is also essential to keep and increase political consultations since it will be necessary for such an environment. The North Atlantic Council serves as an important forum for consultation on the most important security issues that concern the Alliance and its members (*United for a new era*, 10). Even though the divergence in threat perception is inevitable because states have their interest, geography, and national-political outlook, reaching an agreement on political and strategic priorities can be achieved. NATO uses policy and statecraft to achieve convergence by preserving the structure and tradition of proactive consultation, which helps to reduce differences in threat perceptions (*United for a new era*, 10). NATO would need political convergence in the coming years, as the Organization's threats have serious security consequences. As a result, NATO will continue to be an important forum for member states

to defend their core regions while also providing a source of stability in an uncertain world (*United for a new era*, 10).

The literature on NATO contains a myriad of articles on what the future might hold for the Alliance. The emerging internal problems are increasingly calling into question the future of the Alliance, while "cohesion" and "solidarity" are labels traditionally attached to the abbreviation "NATO".

The Alliance faced several challenges, as well as internal and external tensions, over the previous years, which makes it essential for NATO to renew itself as the most important military alliance in the world, and to adapt to the new challenges of the current era, and give proper responses to them. For this, both NATO and the elements that make up the Alliance must be redefined. The primary objective is to create a new and common foundation, which will render inner conflicts easier to deal with, so that subsequently, we will be able to face the new challenges of the current age as a solid unit. NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg is working to make all of this happen with a ten-year plan on how this renewal should take place. This longer process will certainly lead to conflicts of various magnitudes.

The fact that the problems have been identified and the solutions are being sought, in itself, might guarantee that the organization – which has been able to adapt to new challenges for decades – will be renewed, and find its place and role in the continuously changing security environment.

The document, which discusses the future of NATO until 2030, is a way to look ahead; however, it may not achieve guaranteed dramatic results. The aim is to establish new common principles for member states to render inner conflicts easier to handle.

In December 2019, NATO leaders asked NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg to launch a forward-thinking process for the sake of strengthening NATO. In June 2020, the Secretary General determined the top priorities for NATO 2030 as the following: ensuring that NATO remains a strong military power, gaining strength politically, and taking an increasingly global approach in the future.

In order to support the work of the Secretary General, the NATO 2030 initiative gathers Allied MPs, civil society, experts of the public and private sectors, and selected youth experts, to launch a new thinking process on how NATO could become an even stronger Alliance. ("Making a Strong Alliance")

On 31 March 2020, the Secretary General established an independent expert group<sup>190</sup> to support the NATO 2030 initiative. The group submitted a report on 25 November 2020, in which, 138 recommendations were formulated on how to make NATO a stronger Alliance (*Uniter for a new Era*).

The report titled "NATO 2030: United for the new era" focuses on the political dimension of the Alliance:

- it recommends increasing the role of NATO as a unique and vital Transatlantic forum;
- emphasizes issues with China, especially the need for formulating proper responses to the security challenges posed by China;
- stresses the need for defining the values of NATO in a more precise manner;
- and urges for a closer and more extensive cooperation with the European Union.

The challenges relevant for the Alliance listed by the report include Russia, China, new technologies, terrorism, issues of the southern flank, arms control and nuclear disarmament, energy security, climate change, human resources, pandemics and other natural disasters, hybrid and cyber threats, and issues of space<sup>2</sup>

In order to achieve full spectrum in providing strategic guidelines, on 9 November 2020, Secretary General Stoltenberg invited the youth of the Alliance, and organized the first Youth Summit. The aim of the series of events was to become familiar with the opinions and ideas of young people on the present and future of our security. As the NATO 2030 Young Leaders<sup>191</sup> group, the selected young people submitted their report<sup>192</sup> on 4 February 2021, to support the Secretary General in preparing his strategic-level recommendations. ("Embrace the change")

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<sup>190</sup> The independent group consists of five women and five men from 10 NATO member countries. Their professional backgrounds include roles in the public and private sectors, at universities and think tanks, as well as in top-level political leadership positions.

<sup>191</sup> The NATO 2030 Young Leaders group consists of 25-35 years old experts from several member states of the Alliance. The diverse group includes journalists, diplomats, engineers, elected officials and CEOs.

<sup>192</sup> NATO 2030: Embrace the change, guard the values

The report titled "NATO 2030: Embrace the change, guard the values" focuses on presenting the perspective of the younger generation. According to the report, the spectrum of security must be expanded, and the definition of security redefined, so that we can more precisely anticipate an evolving threat spectrum. The document formulates recommendations in five areas: defence, deterrence and resilience, values and partnerships, climate change, and new technologies. Understanding these may result in a more extensive, holistic and inclusive approach to security, where military force is complemented by non-traditional security elements as well ("Embrace the change", 3).

These two main documents provided support to the Secretary General in identifying the elements that the guidelines must include. The Secretary General then continued to consult with the representatives of Alliance members, both with expert groups, and – within the framework of bilateral cooperation – with member countries. Following extensive negotiations, the Secretary General prepared his final recommendations, and on 11 February 2021, he sent his food-for-thought summary<sup>193</sup> to the Permanent Representatives, to be studied and discussed at the defence ministerial meeting, thus preparing for its adoption at the NATO Summit in June 2021.

According to NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, the aim of the initiative is to make the Alliance ready today to handle the challenges of the tomorrow. The Secretary General is planning to present the strategic-level recommendations of the NATO 2030 document to top-level leaders at the Brussels Summit for NATO state and government leaders scheduled for June 2021 ("What is NATO 2030").

#### **4.1.NATO 2030 – A transatlantic agenda for the future (Secretary General, 1-7)**

At the beginning of the document, Secretary General Stoltenberg explains the events leading to the preparation of the document. According to Stoltenberg, at a London meeting of Allied NATO state and government leaders held in December 2019, he was asked to launch the so-called "reflection process", as well as the development of the relevant NATO 2030 concept.

The Secretary General explains that a historic opportunity has emerged to open a fresh page in Transatlantic relations. The aim of the recommendations is to elaborate an ambitious programme for the Allies, which could help them seize this opportunity, and

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<sup>193</sup> FOOD FOR THOUGHT PAPER: NATO 2030 - A TRANSATLANTIC AGENDA FOR THE FUTURE

enable the constant adaptation and renewal of the Alliance. The Secretary General repeatedly emphasizes his following objectives: that NATO preserves its military power, gains more political strength, and retains a global perspective. The Secretary General believes that this document will create a foundation for Allied leaders to make their own decisions, and will occupy a central position in the agenda of the summit.

Following the introduction, the Secretary General summarizes the foundation and present of the Transatlantic Alliance. In this chapter, he explains that NATO is the most successful alliance in history, which has not only been securing the peace in the Euro-Atlantic region for over 70 years, but has always reacted to the challenges of the ever-changing security environment as well. In recent years, the Alliance took significant steps<sup>194</sup> for the sake of adaptation, and as a result, it remains a cornerstone of security in the Transatlantic region.

According to Stoltenberg, we must face that widely discussed fact that, in the recent years, doubts concerning the strength of Transatlantic ties have emerged on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean, and the question of whether or not Allied countries can cooperate with or have trust in each other has also arisen. It is vital for member states that the present tensions are handled and even stronger Transatlantic ties are established, since the need for a robust and institutionalized alliance is greater than ever before.

The rise of China is shifting the global power relations, which challenges the world order based on international law, and increases geopolitical competition. China is not an opponent of NATO, but its rise poses a risk to democracies, and represents a determining factor in Transatlantic relations as well. This challenge is simply too great for any country to handle on its own. In addition to the issue of China, the Alliance must also face several new, sophisticated cyber and hybrid threats, the proliferation of new technologies, and the security consequences of climate change. For this reason, an even stronger Transatlantic cooperation and joint adaptation are necessary.

At the same time, the current threats have not ceased to exist. Russia continues to represent a threat, especially with its provocative military operations alongside NATO borders, as well as hybrid and influence activity pursued in NATO's eastern and southern neighbourhoods. Furthermore, terrorism also remains a major challenge to our security.

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<sup>194</sup> Establishing collective defence, enhancing capabilities, increasing contributions, fighting terrorism and hybrid warfare, handling cyber threats.

The Secretary General summarizes that, until 2030, the Alliance will have to face several considerable challenges, in the face of which, it can only be successful if its members stand together. He states that he does not believe in either an independent Europe, or an independent United States of America.

In the main section of the document, the Secretary General discusses the top priorities of the Alliance, which are the following:

1. Strengthening unity, cohesion and solidarity: Increased funding in the areas of deterrence and defence activities

The Secretary General proposes the expansion of common funding to activities that support deterrence and defence capabilities, such as forward presence, air policing, or maritime activities and exercises.

In support of this proposal, Secretary General Stoltenberg reasons that it would demonstrate the commitment of the Allies to Article 5 on Collective Defence of the NATO Treaty, and as such, could strengthen unity, cohesion, and solidarity (Szűcs). Thus, the Alliance could enhance its deterrence and defence capabilities. However, such an initiative would also contribute to the handling of existing issues in the area of collective defence, by enhancing high readiness forces or developing maritime capabilities. It is vital to establish basic incentives for the Allies to increase participation in the programme.

The even distribution of funding is another priority issue, which would enable a more equitable sharing of responsibility and fairer burden-sharing among the Allies.

2. Ensuring a common level of Allied resilience: Increased focus on resilience

Secretary General Stoltenberg proposes the formulation of clearer and more measurable national resilience objectives, in order to establish a minimum standard for shared resilience among Allies.

According to the Secretary General, our potential adversaries are using all military, political, and economic tools at their disposal to challenge our institutions, economies, and societies, and thus, to undermine our security. In order to counter this challenge, a more extensive, integrated, and coordinated approach would be necessary to expectations regarding resilience, which constitutes the first line of defence in the areas of deterrence and defence. Given the existing economic and technological interconnectedness, as well as mutual dependence, among North American and European Allies, this issue can only be handled on a Transatlantic level, via NATO.

Based on the proposal of the Secretary General, within the framework of NATO's Defence Planning Process, the Allies should formulate concrete objectives and minimum requirements regarding national resilience capabilities. All Allied countries should appoint a Minister responsible for the implementation of resilience objectives, who should regularly meet to discuss and review achievements and formulate relevant policies. Within the framework of NATO Command Structure, several new civilian-military organizations should be established, with the aim of supporting the realization of national objectives, as well as continuously monitoring the level of civilian-military preparedness. The Secretary General suggests that an annual report is prepared to determine the vulnerabilities of critical infrastructure, assets, and technologies, including threats stemming from foreign ownerships, investments, and influence.

In order to successfully realize the objectives above, a closer cooperation must be established with the European Union.

3. Preserving our technological edge: Greater support for Transatlantic defence innovation and interoperability

The Secretary General suggests launching an innovation initiative to strengthen interoperability and catalyze Transatlantic defence innovation.

According to the Secretary General, the key to the superiority of the deterrence and defence capabilities of NATO have always been maintaining a technological edge. In today's highly competitive world, upholding this technological dominance presents an increasingly great challenge. Our ability to adopt and use new (emerging and disruptive) technologies will influence our strength and political unity to a great extent. The emergence of a gap among Allies would undermine our ability to cooperate and weaken our cohesion.

The defence innovation initiative might help Allies identify and use state-of-the-art dual-use emerging and disruptive technologies, contribute to strengthening and protecting our defence industries, as well as solve our defence industrial needs and problems. Within the framework of this initiative, a cooperation must also be maintained with the private sector, specifically start-ups that are developing dual-use state-of-the-art technologies, as well as with the scientific sphere. The initiative would also examine the possibilities of providing information, training, and strategic advice.

#### 4. Increasing political consultation and coordination between Allies in NATO: Renewed political commitment

The Secretary General proposes that we renew our commitment to the strengthening of NATO as the primary tool of Transatlantic political consultation and coordination. This could be achieved by the expansion of our agenda, and the closer involvement of Allied capitals.

According to Secretary General Stoltenberg, the mechanisms aimed at ensuring effective consultations in NATO are already in place. There is no lack of tools or procedures for consultation, coordination, and joint action taking. From time to time, however, there is a lack of political will necessary for their carrying out. Consultations should become broader, more inclusive, and more frequent. For the sake of this, the Secretary General proposes to hold annual meetings for state and government leaders, more frequent foreign ministerial meetings, regular consultations with interior ministers and national security advisors, and more frequent meetings between political directors. The Secretary General suggests broadening the NATO agenda to include all security issues, including restoring the role of NATO as a Transatlantic forum for security-related economic issues, such as export controls and technology transfers. (Garamone) According to the intentions of the Secretary General, all of this would make a more deliberate use of NATO possible, in order to achieve non-military objectives and to actively shape our security environment.

The Secretary General believes that the consensus-based decision-making process should not be changed; however, the possibility of the involvement of a civilian-military organization operating with previously approved sphere of rights should be considered, which would necessitate the expansion of the NATO civil budget.

#### 5. Taking a more global approach: Defending the rule-based international order and cooperating with like-minded partners

The Secretary General makes a highly ambitious proposal regarding the enhancement of practical cooperation and political consultation with like-minded partner countries amidst geopolitical competition, in order to defend rules-based international order.

China and Russia are number one countries in taking authoritarian pushback against the rules-based order, which poses a threat to the international system. NATO must play a greater role in protecting and shaping the international order (Erlanger). NATO must be better used to formulate and represent common positions, and the established principles and rules must be used in key issues of the Alliance's security, ranging from freedom of marine

navigation to the use of emerging and disruptive technologies for defense purposes. To achieve this goal, regular consultations should take place in the UN General Assembly, prior to the G-20 and in other relevant international fora, where a united front should be represented at the federal level. The Secretary General also recommends that the Alliance issue a joint statement more frequently for the sake of protecting common values, especially in the case of condemnation of cyber and hybrid attacks or the violation of international humanitarian law. The Secretary General urges for the promotion of NATO's observer status alongside the UN General Assembly.

In handling security challenges – especially issues stemming from the rise of China – cooperation with like-minded partners should be better utilized. The Secretary General proposes the organization of a NATO-Asia-Pacific summit, in order to discuss joint global security challenges, and to examine the possibilities of improving cooperation in this regard. According to the Secretary General, in the future, we must strive to launch dialogues concerning security with Asian, African, and Latin American democracies as well (Garamone). Secretary General Stoltenberg states that, by 2030, NATO must become a forum where Allies and like-minded democracies can carry out joint consultations on common challenges that affect their security.

#### 6. Contributing to the security and stability of our Neighbourhood: Strengthened commitment to training and capacity building

The Secretary General makes a suggestion concerning the establishment of a NATO Training and Cooperation Command, in order to enhance the defence capacities of NATO partners and their relevant training activities.

The conflicts in NATO's neighbourhood, as well as instability and terrorism, have an effect on the security of the Allies, and engender considerable vulnerability in the era of competition between great powers. The Alliance must always be ready to deploy forces to counter-terrorism or other crisis management operations. At the same time, training local forces is a more sustainable and cost-efficient tool for promoting stability in our neighbourhood, since prevention is better than intervention.

NATO must reinforce and solidify its internal system of education, training, and capacity building, as well as the practical implementation of these tasks. The Training and Cooperation Command must be manned by both civilian and military personnel, and equipped with suitable expertise and resources, so that it will be able to carry out the training of local forces, support the building of defence capacities, advise on defence and security

reforms, and establish institutions, all at the same time. The new command would place great emphasis on counter-terrorism and stabilization tasks.

7. Combating and adapting to climate change: Enhanced global climate and security agenda

The proposal intends an international leading role for NATO, so that the Allies will be able to understand, adopt, and mitigate the impact of climate change on security. To this end, NATO must assess the effects of climate change on its institutions and critical infrastructure, and determine how it influences the operations and activities of the Alliance. NATO may serve as a vital platform for Allies in identifying, monitoring, and discussing the effects of climate change on security. (Olver)

NATO must also become a leading organization in the area of adaptation. The vulnerabilities of the climate should be reduced, and long-term NATO activities – including defence planning and capability development – determined in accordance with them.

Emissions resulting from military activities should be reduced and operational effectiveness improved. The aim is to reduce the emission of pollutants in the military sector, and establish zero carbon emissions by 2050.

The Secretary General proposes launching a regular top-level dialogue in 2022, where Allies, NATO partners, and other countries could discuss the impact of climate change on security.

8. Cementing the Transatlantic bond: The strategic concept for 2022

According to the Secretary General, the Allied leaders should agree on updating the Strategic Concept at the 2021 summit. They should task the Secretary General with launching the elaboration process on the new strategic concept, so that it can be ready for adoption at the 2022 summit.

The new Strategic Concept will enable recommitment to the values of the Alliance, as well as the reinforcement of NATO's three basic tasks. It presents opportunities for the assessment of the ever-changing strategic environment, the joint determination and prioritization of the handling of relevant challenges, and the consolidation of a common political position in key issues, such as NATO's attitude towards Russia, or the implications of the rise of China.

The new concept will also provide an opportunity for the clarification of certain elements of NATO-EU relations, and for solidifying the cooperation.

In closing the document, the Secretary General states that, in the upcoming period, he will continue to consult with Allies, in order to process their suggestions concerning the document until the next summit.

#### **4.2. Concerns among member states**

According to the assessment report of the US Congressional Research Service<sup>195</sup> published in March 2021, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg – in response to the recent Transatlantic tensions and questions concerning NATO’s long-term significance – launched the NATO 2030 initiative to put forward proposals for the military and political enhancement of the Alliance. The report lists all the issues on which consensus will have to be reached, and outlines all existing differences of opinion.

##### **1. Concerns regarding the US commitment to NATO**

Joe Biden, US President elected in 2020, has indicated that he is in support of the Secretary General’s recommendations, and – in the broader sense – has pledged to renew the support system provided to NATO by the US, and to increase his country’s cooperation with NATO Allies. Although this announcement was welcomed by all within the Alliance, analysts are wary of prevailing differences of opinion between the US and its Allies, especially concerning relations with China and Russia, defence expenditures, burden-sharing, and the differing threat assessment of member states. In light of the new political direction the country has taken, the Allies may continue to question the credibility of the US, stemming from the long-term US foreign policy trends experienced during the Trump-era, especially the "America First" policy and the plans to withdraw the support provided to NATO (Belkin,2).

The Biden administration is clearly communicating that the US has left the Trump era behind, therefore, a new kind of communication can certainly be expected in both US-Russian and US-Chinese relations. However, during his short tenure so far, President Biden has not yet proven that his country’s focus will shift from the Pacific region to the strengthening of the European cooperation.

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<sup>195</sup> The institute works solely for the Congress of the United States of America, preparing political and legal analyses for the committees and members of both the White House and the Senate, regardless of party affiliation.

## 2. Deterring Russia

Conflicts between the Allies may also remain over the issue of deterring Russia. In 2019, the Allies decided on several new initiatives aimed at developing NATO's rapid reaction capabilities (Erlanger). The cornerstone of these efforts is the so-called Four-Thirties Readiness Initiative<sup>196</sup>, proposed by the US, the effectiveness and sustainability of which is being questioned by several experts. Several studies have also shown that, in the current situation, NATO forces will fight for the most vulnerable Allies, for example, if the Baltic states were attacked by Russia. At the same time, Poland and the Baltic states are dissatisfied with this, and have requested the Allies to deploy additional forces in the region, thus demonstrating the deterrent power of the Alliance. Other Allies prefer increasing military mobility, while the critics clearly see expanding the spectrum of deterrence as the top priority, especially the need to respond to cyber and hybrid activities and disinformation campaigns. However, Germany, Italy and France all emphasize the importance of a dual approach (deterrence and dialogue) towards Russia. They believe that efforts aimed at renewing cooperative relations with Russia should take place at the minimum at the same level as the deployment of deterrence forces. These countries do not support the deployment of permanent troops in the Eastern countries of the Alliance, as it would also go against the contents<sup>197</sup> of the NATO-Russia Treaty<sup>198</sup>(Belkin, 3).

The issues concerning Russia are further exacerbated by the fact that, in the recent period, the relations between Russia and the EU have reached a low point, during which, it has been proven that Russia is not necessarily open to having a dialogue.

## 3. Expanding NATO engagement in Iraq and assessing the security political situation in the MENA region

In recent years, several NATO members – including the US – called upon the Alliance to intensify its efforts against terrorism and other security threats coming from the

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<sup>196</sup> 30 mechanized battalions, 30 air squadrons, and 30 naval combat vessels ready to use within 30 days.

<sup>197</sup> In the Founding Act, NATO states that, in the current and foreseeable security environment, the Alliance will carry out its collective defence and other missions by providing the necessary interoperability, integration, and reinforcement capabilities, and not by the permanent deployment of considerable combat forces. (Source: [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official\\_texts\\_25468.htm?selectedLocale=en](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_25468.htm?selectedLocale=en))

<sup>198</sup> In 1997, NATO and Russia established the NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council, by signing the NATO-Russia Founding Act concerning the relations, cooperation, and security of the two countries. In 2002, the relations were further developed, and the NATO-Russia Council was created.

Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. In February 2021, NATO defence ministers announced the expansion of the NATO Mission in Iraq, which will be significant, but gradual. The non-combat advisory and training mission will expand its partnerships with Iraqi institutions, and extend its activities beyond Baghdad. In 2020, due to political instability, changing security conditions, and the COVID-19 pandemic, NATO curbed or suspended the activity of the mission, while the Secretary General emphasized that the expansion of the mission will remain conditions-based. However, several Allies are wary to give a leading role to NATO regarding issues of terrorism and migration. France advocates for strong European responses to terrorism, and generally opposes NATO's role-taking in the MENA region. Several other Allies disagree on the proper responses to be given to the security challenges of the Middle East region, stressing that involving NATO could be viewed as endorsing military action (Belkin, 5).

#### 4. China's impact on NATO and Transatlantic security

Regarding China, at the 2019 NATO Summit in London, the Alliance already acknowledged that China's growing influence and international policies pose potential challenges to the Alliance (Emmott and Seibold). In 2019, the Alliance agreed to update its baseline requirement for civilian telecommunications, which special emphasis on the concerns regarding 5G technology. Even though the EU attempts to develop common guidelines to govern contracting decisions concerning 5G networks, the making of these decisions remains the prerogative of individual national governments. The US warned the Allies that the use of Huawei or other Chinese 5G networks – due to compromised network security – could impede intelligence sharing. Germany and Italy announced that they will not exclude Chinese companies from submitting tenders to state projects, but will formulate serious national security requirements that these companies will have to meet. The United Kingdom excluded Huawei from participating in tenders, while Poland and Romania introduced certain restrictive measures when calling for tenders that prevent Huawei from participating (Belkin,6).

The priority objective of the Biden administration is to work closely with the European Union in handling the security and economic challenges stemming from the rise of China. President Biden and his national security advisors believe that putting pressure on China can only be effective if it is done jointly by the US and Europe. The Trump

administration also sought to speak out and raise awareness about the threat posed by China among European partners.

### 5. Enhancing resilience

Allied leaders increasingly often emphasize the importance of extensive social and economic resilience. Thus, it will most likely be the topic on which consensus will be reached most widely and easily. In the upcoming year, NATO will most likely refine its basic requirements for national resilience and flexible response, in light of the lessons learned from the pandemic, and express concerns regarding the possible effects of non-military threats, including disinformation campaigns and the vulnerabilities of critical infrastructure.

### 6. Defence spending and burden-sharing

Concerning defence expenditure and burden-sharing, the Allies' way of thinking continues to be problematic. Even though all Allied governments agreed to the the commitments<sup>199</sup> undertaken at the 2014 NATO Summit in Wales, Germany and Italy both emphasize that contributions made to ongoing NATO missions and the effectiveness of military capabilities should be considered equally important as the total amount of defence spending. For example, an Ally that spends less than 2% of its GDP on defence can possess more modern and efficient military capabilities than another Ally that reaches the 2% target, but spends most of the funds on personnel expenses (Szűcs). Secretary General Stoltenberg also emphasized a broad approach to measuring contributions to the Alliance, thus, prolonged negotiations can be expected on this topic (Belkin,9).

Based on the uncertain support provided by the US, several European leaders – including French President Emmanuel Macron – have been working on reducing the dependence of European Allies on the US, while increasing their levels of autonomy in terms of foreign and security policy. They developed a long-term plan for coordinated European defence development<sup>200</sup>, which would not only develop European capabilities, but also ensure fairer burden-sharing within NATO (Belkin,12).

Restrictions on military technology developments and acquisitions could create further tensions between American and European Allies. Thus far, only member states have

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<sup>199</sup> By 2024, the nations will allocate at least 2% of their GDP to defence expenditures, and at least 20% to acquisition and research and development.

<sup>200</sup> In recent years, the EU announced several new defence initiatives, including the European Defense Fund, which provides support, and the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), a new EU defence pact aimed at increasing the efficiency of defence spendings.

been included in the European Union's defence industrial development plans as suppliers or contractors. The exclusion of the US has not only provoked sharp criticism in the US, but several Allies (including Poland and Romania) are also protesting against the exclusion, because they are now unable to claim the significant US aid to realize several of their short-term plans. The underlying economic interests will prove decisive in the reconciliation of opposing sides.

#### 7. Increasing political cohesion

Concerning the issue of increasing political cohesion, the Allies are in agreement with each other. Both the American and the European members are sensing the problems that necessitate a quick solution. The repeatedly increased role-taking of the US may have a positive effect on the solution, which however, may be overshadowed by European concerns over US credibility.

Although the issue of Turkey was not included in the proposal package of the Secretary General, it will remain a hotbed of conflict in NATO, the solution of which will necessitate political rapprochement. Certain Allies are increasingly of the opinion that official steps should be taken against an Allied country such as Turkey, as certain elements of the Turkish foreign and defence policies may pose a threat to the unity of NATO.

Another issue not included in the recommendations of the Secretary General is the topic of commitment to democratic values, but several Allies have expressed concerns over the democratic setbacks observed within the Alliance.

## **Summary**

The Secretary General has more or less adhered to the mandate of the reflection process, as he formulated forward-looking recommendations aimed at strengthening the unity of NATO, and did not urge for a complex review of the current political direction of the Alliance. The majority of his proposals are non-political, but rather military in nature, which increases the acceptability of the package. Secretary General Stoltenberg stuck to his previous views, according to which, he wishes to strengthen the unity of the Alliance not through concepts, but concrete results. The possible areas to address:

#### 1. Defence area

- more focus on cyber and hybrid threats, the proliferation of new technologies.

- fairer burden-sharing among the Allies
- Preserving technological advantages
- strengthening interoperability
- catalyzing Transatlantic defence innovation
- NATO must play a greater role in protecting and shaping the international order
- strengthened commitment to training and capacity building
- establishment of a NATO Training and Cooperation Command, in order to enhance the defence capacities of NATO partners and their relevant training activities
- Alliance must be ready to deploy forces to counter-terrorism or other crisis management operations

## 2. Deterrence and resilience

- declaring that China poses a risk to democracies and Russia continues to represent a threat
- increased funding in the areas of deterrence and defence activities
- formulate concrete objectives and minimum requirements regarding national resilience capabilities.
- Allied countries should appoint a Minister responsible for the implementation of resilience objectives
- within the framework of NATO Command Structure, new civilian-military organizations should be established, with the aim of supporting the realization national objectives
- annual report is to be prepared to determine the vulnerabilities of critical infrastructure, assets, and technologies, including threats stemming from foreign ownerships, investments, and influence
- restoring the role of NATO as a Transatlantic forum for security-related economic issues, such as export controls and technology transfers

## 3. Values and partnerships

- stronger Transatlantic ties needed, Allied countries should better cooperate and build trust among each other
- political consultation and coordination between Allies (NATO as the primary tool of Transatlantic political consultation and coordination)
- holding annual meetings for state and government leaders, more frequent foreign ministerial

meetings, regular consultations with interior ministers and national security advisors, and more frequent meetings between political directors

- closer cooperation must be established with the European Union
- cooperation with like-minded partner countries amidst geopolitical competition, in order to defend the rule-based international order
- organization of a NATO-Asia-Pacific summit, in order to discuss joint global security challenges
- regular consultations should take place in the UN General Assembly, prior to the G-20 and in other relevant international forums
- promotion of NATO's observer status alongside the UN General Assembly.

#### 4. Climate change

- enhancing global climate and security agenda in order to understand, adopt, and mitigate the impact of climate change on security
- NATO must assess the effects of climate change on its institutions and critical infrastructure, and determine how it influences the operations and activities

#### 5. New technologies

- strengthening and protecting defence industries
- cooperation with the private sector, specifically start-ups that are developing dual-use state-of-the-art technologies, as well as with the scientific sphere.

The Secretary General did not get lost in the recommendations of expert groups, instead, he presented his own recommendations to the state and government leaders, which lead to consensus. All in all, the proposals of the Secretary General will be supportable, and the leaders will most likely be able to agree on the main challenges of the future, and the proper responses to them. However, the future of NATO is in the hands of the Allies, who will be able to exercise their decision-making rights for the first time at the summit in June 2021.

## **Conclusion**

This diploma thesis evaluated the development of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) including the Alliance's past, present and future role. The dissertation's main focus was put on the future of NATO. By analyzing the difficulties, experiences and historical turning points during the Alliance's 72 years long existence and studying the working papers prepared for the next NATO Summit, credible conclusion could be drawn about the possible future tasks of the Organization. The thesis aimed to map the main course of research focused on the Strategic Concept of NATO in 2022.

To answer the research question set at the beginning ("*What could be the central issues in the NATO's next Strategic Concept?*"), the primary identified points are: 1) defence, 2) deterrence and resilience, 3) values and partnerships, 4) climate change, 5) new technologies. The new concept will aim to avoid debates and to strengthen the unity of NATO (more military less political requirements).

Overall, the dissertation continuously and consistently reflected that NATO to uphold its position in a changing security environment, must advocate peace, stability, and the rule of law in the Euro-Atlantic area. The Organization should remain a center for collective defense based on an up-to-date Strategic Concept. Moreover, it should maintain a forum where the Allies reach consensus and build common strategies while facing common threats (*United for a new era*, 11). Furthermore, it should play a more significant part in the international order, where different worldviews and differences of opinion are not obstacles to reach cooperation and dialogue. Lastly, it should aim for a deeper strategic and mutually reinforcing connection with its partners that share similar principles (*United for a new era*, 10).

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