NATO 75

Evolution · Achievements · Challenges

Deutsche Atlantische Gesellschaft e.V.

THE AUTHOR

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Prior to that, Brauss' positions included Head of Division in the EU Military Staff, Commander of the former 42nd Armoured Brigade in Potsdam, Chief of Staff of the NATO Operation SFOR at the Headquarters in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Head of Department in the Staff of the German Military Representative to the NATO and the EU Military Committees, and Head of Section in the Planning and Advisory Staff of the Federal Minister of Defence, Volker Rühe. Since the end of 2018, Brauss has been a Senior Associate Fellow of the German Council on Foreign Relations in Berlin.

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PRELIMINARY REMARKS

The 75th anniversary of the foundation of the North Atlantic Alliance – this unique alliance between North America and Europe – that we celebrate this year is an occasion to recall its role as the strongest, longest-standing and most successful alliance in history and to bring its achievements to mind in providing security and prosperity for Germany in diverse security policy eras since 4 April 1949. The reliable mutual commitment to protection and defence of once twelve, and now 32 Western democracies, was and remains the basis of its success: "One for all, all for one."

However, three quarters of a century of the North Atlantic Alliance is also a reason to take a look at the major challenges the Alliance faces and which it will have to cope with in the future. Russia's brutal war of aggression against Ukraine has radically changed the European security order. The Allies must continue to support Ukraine marshalling all their efforts. Russia's aggression must not succeed. The Alliance must continue to substantially strengthen its deterrence and defence capabilities, and Germany must make a significant contribution to this. China's claim to global power is challenging the USA, in particular in the Far East. The Middle East has once again become an acute flashpoint. That is why, as part of fairer burden-sharing among Allies, the Europeans must do much more for the security of their continent. Germany's defence budget must therefore grow significantly and sustainably so that the Bundeswehr can quickly reach full combat readiness.

With this publication on 75 years of NATO, we want to encourage discussions about Germany's security and the necessities brought about by the historical turning point (Zeitenwende) in Europe and worldwide. For this reason, the German Atlantic Association (Deutsche Atlantische Gesellschaft – DAG) has set itself the task of maintaining and fostering public awareness of the central importance which this transatlantic partnership has for the security of our country and for Europe as a whole. Supported by its approx. 3,000 members, it provides information on NATO's goals, tasks and strategy by organising lectures and discussion events in all regions of Germany. It explains complex security policy matters and offers a forum for public dialogue on current security policy issues and for new substantial impulses.

I am delighted that, in preparing this brochure, we were able to draw on the experience of our board member, Lieutenant General (retd.) Heinrich Brauss. As a former longtime NATO Assistant Secretary General for Defence Policy and Planning, he knows NATO from the inside like few others. I would like to thank him and all those who have contributed to this publication. Security depends on broad awareness. We are determined to promote this.

Christian Schmidt
High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina
Former Federal Minister
President of the German Atlantic Association

FOREWORD

Since its foundation 75 years ago, the North Atlantic Alliance, this unparalleled security partnership between North America and Europe, has preserved our peace and freedom. This alliance has demonstrated an impressive ability to adapt to ever-changing circumstances, it has confronted new challenges and proved its importance for stability in the Euro-Atlantic area.

Today, NATO is once again facing major challenges. Russia's brutal war of aggression against Ukraine has fundamentally changed the security order in Europe. Ukraine is fighting for its survival. Russia is threatening the entire Alliance, especially the countries on its eastern flank. At the same time, we are witnessing the rise of terrorism and instability on Europe's periphery. In addition, China is showing growing ambitions and capabilities in the Indo-Pacific, more and more evidently demonstrating its striving for dominance. All of this poses an increasing threat to the existing rules-based international order.

North America and Europe must stand together to overcome the challenges of today and tomorrow. NATO must strengthen its deterrence and defence capabilities. Working together, we must enhance our resilience to cyber and hybrid threats and the protection of critical infrastructure.

Germany makes a central contribution to the Alliance. As the largest European economy, we have a special responsibility for strengthening Euro-Atlantic security and, in particular, for security in Europe. As the second largest supporter of Ukraine after the USA, Germany contributes significantly to achieving this goal. A strong and effective Bundeswehr plays a major role in ensuring NATO's credibility and ability to act. For this reason, we have led the way with the Brigade in Lithuania, a new Baltic Sea Command and initiatives for multilateral procurement. We must strengthen the European pillar in NATO sustainably and advance cooperation with our partners, especially with the EU.

This brochure prepared by Lieutenant General (retd.) Heinrich Brauss describes the challenges NATO has overcome in the various periods of its history and analyses those it faces today and will have to resolve tomorrow. I would like to thank him and the German Atlantic Association for their commitment to the indispensable transatlantic relationship.

Boris Pistorius
Federal Minister of Defense

INTRODUCTION

In July 2024, the Heads of State and Government of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization met in Washington, D.C. to celebrate a memorable landmark event. They commemorated the 75th anniversary of the founding of NATO during a festive summit. They honoured the Transatlantic Alliance as the largest, longest-standing and most successful defence alliance in history. But it was not a celebration with jubilation. NATO is facing a major security crisis, in Europe and worldwide. Russia's war of extermination against Ukraine is continuing with attacks on the front line, systematic destruction of residential areas, hospitals and civilian infrastructure. Also, the number of conflicts and wars in various regions of the world has increased significantly. Their simultaneity, scale and interconnections are worrying. Small and large autocracies are challenging the international order, which is based on common rules. The alignment of interests between China, Russia, North Korea and Iran carries significant weight.

Russia's aggression against Ukraine, which started in 2014 with the invasion and annexation of Crimea in violation of international law and with the destabilisation of Eastern Ukraine through military support for separatists in Donbass, was a turning point in security policy. It fundamentally changed the security situation in Europe. Already then, many spoke of a watershed, as it became clear that years and years of attempts to create a partnership between Russia and the West had failed. Since February 2022, Russia has been waging a large-scale war of aggression against Ukraine as a whole. Russian President Vladimir Putin has declared his intention to eradicate Ukraine as an independent, viable state and to turn it into a part of a new Greater Russia. Ukraine is fighting for its survival as a free nation that belongs to the democratic West and wants to become a member of the EU and NATO. In addition, Putin is seeking a revision of the security policy developments that have taken place in Europe since the end of the Cold War and envisions a return to the geopolitical lines of before 1997, i.e. before new members from Central and Eastern Europe, starting with Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary, joined the Alliance. NATO would thus end at Germany's eastern border. The Central and Eastern European countries from Estonia in Northeast Europe to Bulgaria in Southeast Europe would find themselves in a grey zone in terms of security policy and would thus de facto come under Moscow's control.

In the Middle East, since the atrocious terrorist attacks by the Islamist terror militia Hamas on 7 October 2023, Israel has been waging war against Hamas in the Gaza Strip in order to destroy the structures of Hamas. This war has led to tremendous suffering among the civilian population in the region. Israel, in turn, is under constant threat and repeated bombardment with combat drones and ballistic missiles from terrorist groups like Hezbollah in Lebanon and Houthi in Yemen as well as from Iran, whose state doctrine includes the destruction of Israel. The killing of the Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh and that of the leader of the terrorist organisation Hezbollah, Hassan Nasrallah, as well as Iran's numerous missile attacks against Israel and Israel's massive military countermeasures, especially in southern Lebanon, have further exacerbated the explosive situation. This regional conflict also has a strategic dimension. The United States are Israel's protective power, US forces are stationed in the region and have been further augmented. Together with the EU mission EUNAVFOR ASPIDES, they are securing the shipping route in the Gulf of Aden and through the Red Sea against attempted Houthi attacks on international shipping. Russia supports Hamas, Hezbollah and Iran and receives combat drones from Tehran in return. China is positioning itself as a unbiased mediator and supposedly neutral, fair trading partner on an equal footing. After all, its energy security as an emerging global power continues to depend largely on access to raw materials, including in the Middle East. [1]

Beijing is striving for supremacy in the entire Indo-Pacific region. For several states, such as Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Australia and New Zealand, the United States are providing a security guarantee in this major region. The risks arising from China's rise to power are exacerbated by it's cooperation with Russia. Both countries speak of a "strategic partnership". Beijing supplies the Russian defence industry with large quantities of microelectronic devices (chips), which Moscow needs for the construction of

tanks, aircraft and missiles. The rise of China as a world power has changed the entire international system. Western democracies are now facing two authoritarian great powers, China and Russia. The U.S. sees China as its main geopolitical, ideological, economic and military opponent. It considers China as its global systemic rival that challenges both the democracies in the Indo-Pacific region and the entire Western alliance. For the United States, the geostrategic centre of gravity is therefore located now in the Indo-Pacific and no longer in the Euro-Atlantic region. This development has serious implications for the geometry of the Alliance and especially for the European Allies.

The international situation described above formed the framework for the discussions and decisions taken at the Washington anniversary summit in July 2024. The main focus was (1) on increased and sustained military support for Ukraine with an ambitious package of measures to help Ukraine withstand the Russian attacks; (2) on significantly strengthening NATO's deterrence and defence posture against Russia in a "new era of collective defence" and finally (3) on deepening the strategic dialogue with both the European Union and NATO's four Asia-Pacific partners Australia, New Zealand, Japan and South Korea on common challenges posed by nuclear autocratic powers in the Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific regions. In addition, the foreign ministers of all 40 NATO partner nations were invited, whose presence reflected the Alliance's interest in dialogue and cooperation with many regions of the world, especially with countries in the south of Europe.

The Washington summit agenda reflected the change and the scope of challenges that the Alliance will have to face in the future. NATO's main task remains to maintain security in the Euro-Atlantic region. This includes recognising that supporting Ukraine is part of its own security provision and that NATO must act with determination and consistency. In light of the emerging global geopolitical competition between the major powers, the Alliance must also redefine its political-strategic role and the necessary distribution of burdens between North America and Europe in order to continue to successfully fulfil its core mission, which is the provision of security for all Allies. In doing so, NATO can build on its unparalleled political and strategic functions, structures and experiences as well as on its resilience and ability to adapt to fundamental security policy changes.

On the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the founding of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, it is only fitting to recall the core elements of this unique Alliance. NATO embodies and represents the unique security partnership that has grown over decades between the two major hubs of Western democracy, North America and Europe, with almost one billion people. Its promise of protection and security against external threats and its commitment to solidarity apply to all Allies, large and small, regardless of their geostrategic location. Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty is the strongest instrument against coercion, intimidation, division and aggression: "One for all, all for one". Or as former NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg put it, *"Never has a single document with so few words, meant so much to so many people. So much security. So much prosperity. And so much peace."* [2] The certainty of shared security has created trust and stability in Europe and has prevented the re-nationalisation of defence. Military integration, joint defence planning and NATO's integrated capability planning process have made the need to take national precautions against potential mutual threats obsolete. NATO provides a forum in the North Atlantic Council as well as in civilian and military committees for permanent consultations on all issues concerning Allied security. All decisions are made by consensus. Each nation has a vote, the U.S. as well as Iceland. The negotiations leading up to an agreement can be laborious and can take a long time. But the process increases the credibility and legitimacy of decisions in the parliaments and populations of the member states. Generations of diplomats, service members and civilian employees in the Alliance's staffs on both sides of the Atlantic have developed a common transatlantic mindset that over the course of decades has shaped and decisively promoted the Alliance's internal cohesion and effectiveness.

Furthermore, NATO forms the institutional framework for the military presence of American forces in Europe. They were and remain indispensable for the internal stability and cohesion of the Alliance, for the protection and, if necessary, for the collective defence of the Allies. NATO has integrated most of Europe into a security and defence community and created conciliation and trust among Europeans in East and West who had previously been adversaries. NATO has also built a unique network of partnerships with over 40 countries and international organisations, including the European Union (EU) and the United Nations (UN). Finally, the *NATO Command Structure*, i. e. its network of military headquarters in Europe and North America, provides permanent military assessment, planning and command capabilities, which do not exist in any other international organisation. Generations of Allied officers and NCOs, men and women, who have served and are serving in NATO have developed a common military culture.

In the 75 years of its existence, the transatlantic Alliance has shaped and has helped form epoch-making security policy. It has mastered significant political and military-strategic challenges, withstood security policy upheavals in Europe and actively helped to shape security in and for Europe. This makes it clear that the NATO has always been more than just a military defence alliance. It has also had an essential political function for uniting all Alliance partners towards a common political and strategic vision based on shared values and common security interests and for taking the resulting measures by mutual agreement as democratic, sovereign and equal nations. NATO began with twelve nations. At the end of the Cold War, there were 16, today there are 32. Finland's and Sweden's accession to NATO in 2023 and 2024 are further proof of its appeal and trustworthiness. Clearly, NATO has also witnessed disagreements and conflicts among Allies from time to time. Well-known examples are: France's withdrawal from military integration in 1966, the struggle over NATO's Dual-Track Decision in 1979, the war waged by a US-led coalition against Iraq in 2003, the dispute over ballistic missile defence becoming part of NATO's security provisions, the ongoing Greek-Turkish dispute over Cyprus in the Aegean Sea and these days the special role that Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán occasionally claims for himself. Nevertheless, the Alliance has been able to maintain its unity, joint decision-making ability and solidarity. These are the key prerequisites for its credibility and ability to act.

Structure and Layout of the Publication

Against the backdrop outlined above, the present publication by the German Atlantic Association (Deutsche Atlantische Gesellschaft, DAG) aims to give a brief summary of NATO's evolution over more than seven decades. NATO's history is described as a sequence of different political-military embodiments of the Alliance. The specific challenges of the various security policy eras and their characteristic features as well as NATO's respective role, its adaptations and contributions to shaping these eras are presented. The Brochure also highlights the political and military constants and priorities that the Alliance needs to keep in mind and to continue to pursue in order to meet the challenges of the future.

The first chapter deals with the main political and military strategy developments during the Cold War, i. e. the period from 1949 to 1989. These four decades can be divided into two major periods; the first period up to 1966 is defined by the so-called bloc confrontation between NATO and the Soviet Union-led Warsaw Pact as well as the development of NATO's deterrence strategy and its adaptation to changing military-strategic conditions. The second period starts with the political-military dual strategy which was introduced by the legendary Harmel Report of 1967, i. e. the combination of credible defence capability and political détente, which facilitated the first important steps towards a lasting peace order in Europe. The founding of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE, now OSCE) and its 1975 Helsinki Final Act established the principles and standards of conduct for mutual relations between all participating states in East and West. The new political climate also led to numerous treaties between the U.S. and the Soviet Union to limit and reduce their nuclear arsenals.

The second chapter looks at the epochal turning point after the fall of the Iron Curtain in Europe, the establishment of Germany's unity and the eventful period leading up to 2014. In this period, NATO completely realigned itself and played a decisive role in shaping this new era. Old adversaries became new partners. The admission of new members from Central and Eastern Europe was accompanied by, and linked to, new cooperation with Russia, expressed in the 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Act, and also to new cooperation with the other successor states of the former Soviet Union. Both the security policy consolidation of Europe through the admission of new members to NATO and the EU and the partnership with Russia for joint management of crises that were affecting both NATO and Russia, according to Western opinion, formed the two supporting pillars of the then new European

security order. At the same time, the war in the Balkans led to NATO's first mission of war in its history. The military interventions outside its borders, first in Bosnia and Herzegovina, then in Kosovo and later in Afghanistan and Libya, marked the Alliance's new strategic orientation: crises and conflicts were to be kept away from Europe. NATO was, in fact, shifting its focus from collective defence to international "out of area" crisis management as well as to cooperation with partners in Europe and beyond. This cooperation proved its worth during joint crisis operations and was at the same time consolidated through such joint operations. NATO's political-military transformation was leading to drastic reductions and further far-reaching and extensive adjustments in the armed forces of NATO member states, particularly among European Allies. 'Heavy' mechanised large formations, which were needed for collective defence had to be turned into 'light' contingents for multinational stabilisation missions, which could be sustained for a long time through rotation, while at the same time defence budgets were continuously being cut.

The third chapter is dedicated to the security policy shift that was brought about by Russia's military invasion of Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea in February/March 2014 in violation of international law, and to what this means for the European security order. NATO once again had to adapt to a fundamental change in European security. It has been responding by reactivating its deterrence and defence capabilities. The chapter describes and explains Russia's antagonistic policy as well as its hybrid destabilisation strategy towards the Alliance, Europe and individual nations. The rearmament of its conventional armed forces and the expansion of its nuclear potential are part of this policy vis-à-vis Europe. This chapter also summarises and explains NATO's wide-ranging programme to strengthen its deterrence and defence posture. At the same time, the Alliance maintains its concept of projecting stability in crisis regions but adopts a new focus; instead of armed intervention, selected partners in Europe's periphery are to be supported in building up their own security and defence capacities, both in the South (Jordan, Iraq and, until the summer of 2021, Afghanistan) and in the East (Ukraine, Georgia). The end of this chapter also addresses the potential impact that the rapid collapse of the government, army, and police in Afghanistan following the withdrawal of the NATO-led coalition and the takeover of power by the Islamist Taliban will possibly have on NATO's future role in international crisis management. It begs the question whether this situation will provoke a major shift in NATO's approach to attempt to militarily stabilise remote crisis regions and rebuild them from the outside in the belief that good and accountable governance will emerge, which will then lead to sustainable, self-supporting stability.

The fourth chapter deals with the escalation of the political shift of 2014 into an epochal change and political-strategic turning point in Europe, caused by Russia's ruthless war of conquest to subjugate the whole of Ukraine as of February 2022. The European security order which had emerged after the end of the Cold War has been destroyed. Henceforth, Europe's security has to be protected from Russia's imperialistic goals and organised against Russia. This chapter summarises NATO's political-military response to the fundamental changes in the security landscape that have been caused by Russia´s threat to European security. NATO's response consists, roughly speaking, of two elements; the political, economic and military support for Ukraine being a cornerstone of European security, and the continued strengthening of NATO's own deterrence and defence posture, including comprehensive military planning for the defence of Europe based on the new NATO Strategic Concept of June 2022.

Finally, the fifth chapter focuses on the turn of an era at a global scale. It illustrates that NATO has to address the impact of fundamental changes in global security on NATO itself: the rise of China as a world power and the resulting systemic rivalry with the United States of America. This situation has led to growing strategic competition between the major powers, which in turn has led to significant implications for NATO and European security, most notably the "strategic partnership" between Russia and China as well as the shift in the U.S.'s geostrategic orientation towards the Indo-Pacific region. The global security landscape calls for a new balance in burden-sharing between America and Europe, and it must begin in Europe; Europeans have to do much more for the defence of their own continent. In order to develop modern military capabilities that the Europeans need for European collective defence and complex crisis interventions, NATO and the EU have to intensify their cooperation and elevate it to a new level. Germany is expected to provide leadership and show dedication. According to German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, the Bundeswehr must become the "cornerstone of conventional defence in Europe". This is main theme when looking at Germany's role and responsibility.

The present publication is issued on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the founding of NATO and provides an update to the 2021 German Atlantic Association publication entitled "NATO 2030 – Experience, Challenge, Future". Like before, the text of this publication is not a historic or scientific study in the strict sense of the term but a reflective, systematic and structured essay that aims to inform on, and explain, NATO's evolution over seven decades. The following chapters thus provide a synopsis of the key factors that have determined the development of the

transatlantic Alliance. They illustrate NATO's strategic role and effectiveness, which are based on its consistent core functions as well as its ability to adapt and shape Euro-Atlantic security and which will also carry the Alliance into the future. They therefore also describe the security policy challenges that the transatlantic community as a whole is facing today. In the author's view, NATO as well as the European nations in NATO and in the EU, and especially Germany, must face up these challenges and act accordingly. Some themes or topics appear in more than one chapter. These are areas, like for example the EU's role in security and defence policy, that are linked to more than one period of NATO's evolution and strategy development, but which have also progressed independently and therefore need to be viewed from different perspectives.

The individual chapters are based on the author's many years of professional experience in NATO and in the EU, in-depth study of the sources listed in the bibliography, as well as many conversations and discussions with national and international security policy experts in NATO, at security policy conferences, seminars and workshops in Germany and abroad. The selection of events and developments, the way in which they are summarised, and the presentation of correlations are necessarily selective and, to that extent, represent the author's personal viewpoint.

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[1] Cf. Philipp Mattheis: China positions itself as an international mediator in the Middle East, in: DER STANDARD, 24 July 2024: https://www.derstandard.de/story/3000000229709/china-positioniert-sich-als-internationaler-vermittler-im-nahen-osten (article in German)

[2] Speech by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg during the meeting of NATO foreign ministers on 4 April 2024 in Brussels: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_224162.htm

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SECURITY FOR WESTERN EUROPE – NATO IN THE COLD WAR (1949 – 1989)

1947
Truman Doctrine

1948
Berlin Blockade; communist coups in Hungary and Czechoslovakia

1948 – 1952
Marshall Plan

1949
Founding of NATO

1950
Invasion of South Korea by Communist North Korea: Korean War until 1953

1954/55
Paris Agreements: end of occupation statute in West Germany

1955
Accession of the Federal Republic of Germany to NATO

1957
'Sputnik shock'

1962
Cuban Missile Crisis

1966
France's withdrawal from the military integration of NATO

1967/68
Harmel Report on the 'Future Tasks of the Alliance' and Military Strategy of 'Flexible Response'

1969
Start of the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT)

1972
SALT I Treaty

1973
Opening of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE)

1975
Final Act of the CSCE (Helsinki)

1976
Deployment of SS-20 intermediate-range missiles by the Soviet Union

1979
NATO Dual-Track Decision; SALT-II Treaty

1987
Treaty between the USA and the Soviet Union on the abolition of all intermediate-range nuclear weapon systems (INF Treaty)

1989
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SECURITY FOR WESTERN EUROPE

NATO IN THE COLD WAR (1949–1989)

When looking back on the first four decades of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, one usually thinks of the Cold War, of political, military and ideological confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union as well as of hostility between NATO and the Warsaw Pact. The antagonism between the two blocs determined security policy in Europe for forty years. The Berlin Wall and the Iron Curtain were visible signs of the antagonism that divided Germany and Europe. This systemic conflict between the free, democratic West and the communist East was "cold" because, despite the highly armed armies that faced each other in the middle of Europe and in divided Germany, it never led to a direct military confrontation on European soil but rather to so-called proxy wars in other parts of the world (such as Korea from 1950 to 1953 or Vietnam from 1965 to 1975).

In retrospect, one might be tempted to think that NATO's first forty years were a period of militarily dominated stagnation, that this period is long gone and that it cannot teach us any lessons for today's challenges. This would be a false conclusion. The Cold War was a period of many significant and game-changing political developments that modified Europe and Germany's role, and some of these developments still have an effect today. It also saw a remarkable evolution of the strategic thinking within NATO that gradually changed not only its military role but also its political role in Europe; from preserving security and peace in Europe to actively shaping stability. Its core function and the overriding strategy guideline have always remained the same: protection and security for all its members against all external threats and preservation of peace in Europe. Also, the Federal Republic of Germany evolved from a destroyed and occupied country into one of the most important European powers within the Alliance.

With the benefit of hindsight, seeing the bigger picture as well as the lines of development, two phases in terms of NATO's evolution between 1949 and 1989 can be identified, during which crucial characteristics as well as political-strategic functions of the Alliance manifested themselves; first, the period from its founding in April 1949 until well into the 1960s, which was essentially characterised by a strategy of preventing war with nuclear deterrence; second, the phase from 1967 onward, when NATO initiated political détente with its Harmel Report and a military strategy called *Flexible Response* and thus paved the way for cooperative arms control, arms limitation, and finally disarmament.

Foundation of the North Atlantic Alliance

After the end of World War II, the Anti-Hitler coalition of Great Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union rapidly disintegrated. The establishment of communist regimes in Poland, Romania, and Bulgaria, the coups in Hungary and Czechoslovakia, and especially the Berlin Blockade of 1948, by which the Soviet Union sought to incorporate West Berlin into the Soviet Occupation Zone of Germany, convinced the Western powers that the Soviet ruler Josef Stalin wanted to expand further to the west and might be tempted to overrun all of Germany militarily. For unlike the Western powers, which had drastically reduced their forces after the end of the war, the Soviet Union continued to maintain a large army in its sphere of influence. [1] As early as 1947, the U.S. government implemented a foreign policy change with the Truman Doctrine and initiated a policy of Containment. [2] With this policy, the U.S. wanted "to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures". This was a clear announcement to counter the Soviet Union's encroachment on freely elected governments and democracies in Europe. [3] The invasion of South Korea by communist North Korea in 1950 raised fears of a possible communist expansion into Western Europe.

The U.S.'s primary goal at the time was to prevent by all available means the worldwide spread of communist ideology and the Soviet Union's associated claim to power. [4] This U.S. objective was also based on the strategic necessity as a global naval power to secure safe access to America's counter-coasts in order to maintain its role as a world power against the expansionist Soviet continental power. The protection of Western Europe against the

The signing of the Paris Agreements, 1954: The Federal Republic Germany receives the invitation to join NATO

Soviet Union by a U.S.-led alliance also supported the U.S. strategy of Forward Defense. Against this background, it was important to stabilise Western Europe and to protect it from an expansion of Soviet influence. On the one hand, the Marshall Plan served this purpose, providing billions in aid between 1948 and 1952 to stimulate economic reconstruction in the war-torn countries of Western Europe, including the former wartime enemies West Germany and Austria. On the other hand, a protection and defence alliance had to be formed in Europe to ward off the Soviet threat. Signing the Brussels Pact in 1948, Great Britain, France and the Benelux countries had in fact founded a European collective self-defence alliance. But the Soviet threat demanded U.S. defence commitments in Europe. Unlike Western Europe, the United States was militarily superior to the Soviet Union, even though in 1949, with the detonation of the first Soviet atomic bomb, the Soviet Union basically broke the United States' monopoly on nuclear weapons, which had existed since 1945. But the U.S. had far superior air force capabilities to carry its nuclear weapons and was itself invulnerable for years because the Soviet Union did not have any long-range means of delivery.

On 4 April 1949, NATO was founded with the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty in Washington, D.C. At that time, it had twelve members. [5] The treaty stands out for its brevity and functionality. It consists of only 14 articles. Of these, the following four are key:

➤ In Article 5 the parties agree that "an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all". They agree that in the event of such an armed attack, "each of them, in exercise of the right of individual or collective self-defense" under Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, shall assist the party

or parties attacked and shall take, individually and jointly with the others, such measures as may be deemed necessary, including the use of military force. This matter-of-fact text of the treaty reflects the essence and the core function of NATO, it signifies what has come to be known as "collective defence guarantee".

➤ In Article 6 the territory covered by collective defence is defined as the territory of any of the signatory parties in Europe or North America, islands under the jurisdiction of any of the parties in the NATO contract territory (north of the Tropic of Cancer), or vessels or aircrafts of any of the parties located there. This scope of application needs to be kept in mind when considering future missions and allied actions. [6]

➤ In Article 3 the parties commit themselves to separately and jointly, by means of continuous and effective self-help and mutual aid, maintain and develop their individual and collective capacity to resist an armed attack. This article underpins the expectation that each ally will develop and maintain the operational forces that are necessary to accomplish NATO missions. NATO force objectives for each ally are ultimately based on this article. Especially in the U.S. there are some who argue that there should be a link between national commitments and collective defence obligations.

➤ Finally, Article 4 mandates that Allies will consult together whenever, in the opinion of any of them, the territorial integrity, political independence or security of any of the parties is threatened. This threat-related consultation was requested, for example, by Poland in the North Atlantic Council in 2014 following Russia's military aggression against Ukraine. In such cases, the Council decides by consensus what action should be taken.

On 5 May 1955, ten years after the end of World War II, the accession of what was then the Federal Republic of Germany to NATO became legally binding. Germany became NATO's 15th member. This membership was based on the Paris Agreements of 1954/55, which ended the occupation of West Germany. Apart from certain restrictions, the Federal Republic of Germany reassumed the functions of a sovereign state with respect to domestic and foreign policy. [7] Like Italy, it joined the Brussels Pact, which was thus transformed into the Western European Union (WEU). Great Britain, Canada and the United States committed themselves to stationing forces on the European continent. All NATO forces in Europe were assigned to SACEUR, the Supreme Allied Commander Europe. In response to all this, on 14 May 1955, the Warsaw Pact was founded under the leadership of the Soviet Union. Bloc Confrontation had begun.

From a political point of view, the importance of this development and the role of NATO cannot be overstated; the United States was anchored with armed forces in Europe, it became a European power. West Germany regained equal status as a member of the international community since its economic and future military potential was needed. Germany was integrated into the political West, thus achieving Chancellor Konrad Adenauer's greatest goal. With the establishment of the Bundeswehr, West Germany became the crucial centrepiece of Allied defence in Europe. As a result, over the years, it gained the trust and respect of its Allies. The integration of West Germany into NATO and the presence of significant numbers of American forces on its soil made the rearmament of the Federal Republic of Germany, the former enemy, tolerable for the other European nations and also facilitated trust and cooperation between Allies. By the same token, the presence of U.S. and other Allied forces in West Germany was critical to the security of the young Federal Republic. Thus, NATO became the decisive catalyst for defence integration of the free part of Europe.

NATO became the decisive catalyst for defence integration of the free part of Europe.

NATO was also instrumental with regard to the evolving global leadership role of the U.S. and the building of new U.S.-led international institutions. The cornerstone was laid earlier by the Bretton Woods Agreement, which created the international monetary system with the U.S. dollar as the reserve currency. At the end of 1945, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) were founded. In addition, an international agreement on world trade was reached in 1947 with the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, and tariffs and other trade barriers were dismantled step by step.

Development of NATO´s Deterrence Strategy

When it came to defence preparedness, the geopolitical conditions and the constellation of forces in the 1950s were unfavourable and dangerous, especially from a German point of view. The Warsaw Pact was highly armed, which gave it the option of a surprise attack. NATO's military-strategic concept basically envisaged countering such an attack with a combination of forward defence with conventional forces and a rapid nuclear counterattack.[8] The United States and its strategic bomber fleet, which had been built up during World War II, had the necessary air superiority to implement this strategy. NATO's initially weak land forces were supposed to slow the progress of a possible conventional attack, and then a massive U.S. nuclear strike was to break the offensive power of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact. Ground forces were seen to some extent as NATO's 'shield', U.S. nuclear weapons were its 'sword'. At that time, war planning was essentially about nuclear warfare in the middle of Europe. West Germany would have become the primary combat zone and the main battlefield of the blocs, which is incredible from today's perspective.

The unrestricted ability of the United States to threaten the Warsaw Pact with nuclear destruction of its armies and the Soviet Union with elimination of its industrial and command centres was intended to convince Moscow that war was not worthwhile. The core idea of deterrence was born; the threat of horrific nuclear damage inflicted on those contemplating war, with the aim of dissuading them from doing so because reasonable risk assessment would lead them to conclude that not only would they not succeed but the damage to them would be far greater than the hoped-for gain. The strategy of *Massive Retaliation* with nuclear weapons adopted by NATO in 1957 was to prevent war and thereby ensure the security of the free West. In 1955, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill described the paradox of nuclear deterrence with a sombre observation by saying, "safety will be the sturdy child of terror, and survival the twin brother of annihilation."[9]

The so-called Sputnik Shock in 1957 fundamentally changed the situation. The Soviet Union was the first to succeed in putting a satellite into orbit. In military terms, this meant that the Soviet Union was now also capable of building long-range intercontinental missiles that could reach North America. Suddenly, the U.S. was also exposed to a nuclear-strategic threat and became vulnerable at home. The Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 did the rest. Both nuclear powers were on the brink of nuclear war with unforeseeable consequences for themselves. The horror of such a scenario led to a process of rethinking in Moscow and in Washington. They established the Moscow-Washington hotline to allow direct communication between the two top political leaders in cases of a crisis. Both acknowledged mutual "assured nuclear second-strike capability" against each other's territory. "Whoever shoots first, dies second" was the sarcastic motto of this approach. Both consciously accepted the possibility of *Mutual Assured Destruction or MAD* (U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara 1965).[10]
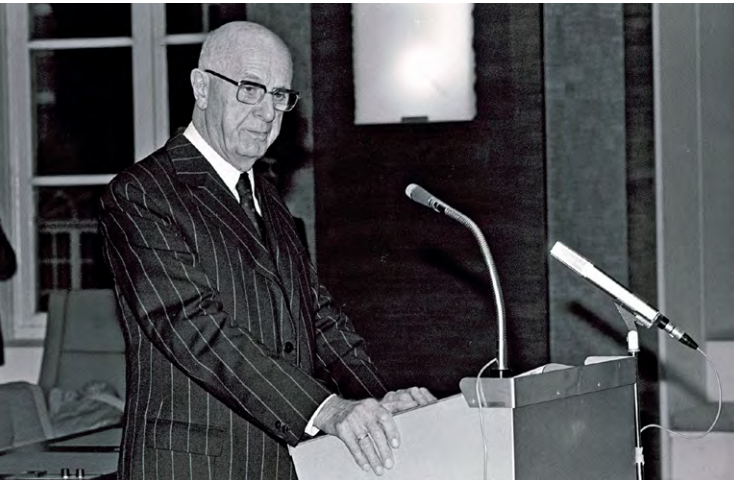
Pierre Harmel, Belgium's Foreign Minister, 1967

This "balance of terror" created, paradoxically, strategic stability from the point of view of both opponents. Politically, the Soviet Union acknowledged "Peaceful Coexistence" of the two systems. Since then, the Soviet Union and later Russia on the one hand, and the United States on the other hand, have avoided getting into direct military confrontation anywhere in the world. The flip side of this military strategy was that both sides continued their arms build-up with regard to warheads and launching systems. This behaviour was polemically called an 'arms race', which erroneously suggested that it was only about having more weapons than the other side. In fact, it was about expanding one's own options and limiting those of the adversary. The preservation of the nuclear second-strike capability, for example, required the certainty that, after a nuclear first strike by the opponent with devastating effects, one would in any case have sufficient means to carry out a devastating counterstrike, the second strike. Mutual distrust constantly expedited build-up efforts.

A new Approach – The Harmel Report and the Strategy of Flexible Response of 1967

The nuclear stalemate and the logic of nuclear second-strike capability not only led to huge arsenals with thousands of warheads on both sides and swallowed up tremendous resources, but also carried a lethal risk in the event of human error or system failure. This was one of the reasons why France left NATO's military integration in 1966. French President Charles de Gaulle did not believe that NATO's nuclear strategy, and in particular the "extended nuclear deterrence" provided by the U.S. to protect European Allies, who did not themselves have nuclear weapons, was credible. He was convinced that, because of the devastating effect of nuclear weapons, which could endanger the existence

of an entire nation or even a region, the use of nuclear weapons should only be decided by the respective political leadership of each nation for itself, rather than by others. France wanted to become independent of the United States in matters of military strategy and established its own *Force de dissuasion nucléaire française*. As a consequence, NATO Headquarters moved from Paris to Brussels, and the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) moved from Fontainebleau to Mons, Belgium. Around 30,000 NATO troops left France.

In December of the same year, NATO created the Nuclear Planning Group (NPG). This is a group in which the Alliance's defence ministers including those of non-nuclear states exercise political control over NATO's nuclear strategy. They hold consultations and make decisions on nuclear planning and exercises. In wartime, only the U.S. president or the British prime minister would decide on the use of nuclear weapons. The participation of European Allies in nuclear planning and exercises as well as the storage of nuclear weapons in so-called Special Ammunition Storages (SAS) on the territory of European Allies were and remain effective means to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons in Europe. France is still not a member of the NPG but returned to NATO's integrated military structure in 2009.

NATO was looking for alternatives to its military strategy at the time. It was about reviewing its political-strategic position. The aim was to break free from the impasse of rigid bloc confrontation and the permanent struggle for nuclear balance, which had produced ever increasing arms race spirals, and to find ways to engage in dialogue with the Warsaw Pact states. The Harmel Report of 1967 on the "Future Tasks of the Alliance" and the military strategy of "Flexible Response" [11] endorsed in early 1968 marked the beginning of a new era in NATO's political-strategic orientation.

The report of the *Special Group* headed by the Belgian Foreign Minister Pierre Harmel was approved by the North Atlantic Council at the level of foreign ministers. It proposed a political-military dual strategy. On the one hand, maintaining adequate military strength to deter aggression and defend Allies in the event of an attack; on the other hand, seeking to establish lasting relations with Warsaw Pact states to resolve fundamental political disputes in Europe, especially the "German Question". The report stated that "*military security and a policy of détente are not contradictory but complementary*." All Allies were encouraged to participate in the implementation of the policy of détente without jeopardizing the unity of the Alliance. The goal was to achieve assured military balance in Europe through cooperative arms control and balanced

force reductions. The proposed policy of détente, while at the same time maintaining reliable defence capabilities, was intended to help pave the way for achieving a just and lasting European peace order, which was NATO's ultimate political purpose.

Harmel report: "Military security and a policy of of détente are not contradictory but complementary."

In its military strategy NATO was looking for an approach that would not lead quasi-automatically to nuclear escalation in the event of a military conflict. NATO wanted to gain flexibility and raise the threshold for nuclear use. In case of war, NATO wanted to have a spectrum of options at its disposal from which to select those that could successfully repel an attack and that would convey to the adversary the hopelessness of any attempted aggression and the risk it would entail for the adversary himself. NATO wanted to maintain political control over its actions in every situation and to respond in a well-considered manner. The goal was to end a war as quickly as possible. This included having so-called escalation dominance, which in turn included, if necessary, responding to every move by the other side at a qualitatively higher level in order to prevent the adversary from achieving its objectives. At the same time, however, the Soviet leadership was not to fear to be confronted with an overwhelming threat be-cause this could have led it to a further, potentially uncontrollable, escalation. Rather, NATO's response was to be proportional (*Principle of Proportionality*) and appropriate, and the necessary deployment of force was to be no more than sufficient (*Principle of Sufficiency*). In this sense, the new military strategy envisaged three categories of military response: (1) *Direct Defence* with conventional forces, (2) *Deliberate Escalation* by expanding con-ventional defence or selectively deploying tactical nuclear weapons;[12] and (3) *General Nuclear Response* to a major nuclear attack. Which option exactly would be used in which scenario was deliberately left uncertain by NATO (*Principle of Uncertainty*). The adversary was not to be given the opportunity to assess the risk associated with an attack or to be able to prepare for it. NATO also deliberately did not explicitly rule out the selective *first use* of nuclear weapons.

Strategic Dilemmas and NATO's Double-Track Decision

Strong conventional forces were needed to implement the new military strategy of Flexible Response. By then, the Bundeswehr had grown to its full strength of nearly 500,000 servicemembers. It was embedded in NATO's Forward Defence, which was based, among other things, on nine army corps,[13] which according to the *General Defense Plan (GDP)* were deployed side by side along the inner German border, like a layer cake. The U.S. V Corps was respon-sible for securing the most critical forward defence sector, i.e. the so-called Fulda Gap region with its shortest distance between the inner German border and the Greater Frankfurt am Main area. In a war, the U.S. V Corps was to prevent the Soviet armoured forma-tions of the 8th Guards Army from rapidly advancing on Frankfurt and the Rhine through the Fulda Gap and splitting NATO's defence in Germany. The number and intensity of military exercises on military training areas and in open terrain was high. Up to 80,000 servicemembers participated in annual large-scale exercises in all parts of West Germany, including the Exercise Campaign REFORGER of the U.S. Armed Forces[14]. With a strength of three corps, the Bundeswehr was NATO's strongest army in Europe at that time, which secured West Germany great influence in the Alliance.

All West German governments were anxious to link the United States militarily as closely as possible to Europe and, above all, to West Germany. A strong U.S. military presence was considered to be one of the most effective deterrents. The alert system was such that the Bundeswehr would come under SACEUR's command more or less automatically at a very early stage in a crisis. In the event of an attack, the leadership of the Warsaw Pact was to be immediately confronted with the entire NATO force and especial-ly with that of the United States. The West German government had established within NATO that the *Principle of Forward Defence* was to be understood literally and had to be implemented into military planning. Consequently, strong defence efforts had to start directly at the inner-German border. Using West German territory or major parts of it for larger-scale, mobile operations had to be averted. This thinking was militarily questionable, but politically essential, since any war on German soil carried the risk of Germany's destruction. For the same reason, from Germany's point of view, the threshold for the use of nuclear weapons was not to be elevated to such an extent that would tempt opponents and Allies to conclude that they could fight a conventional war on German soil without the risk of nuclear escalation.

West Germany was also concerned about the fact tha forward defence included the possibility of using tactical nuclear weapons if NATO forces were unable to withstand a conventional attack.

In such a case, due to their range, nuclear projectiles, bombs, or missiles would have fallen on East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Poland but would have spared the main aggressor, the Soviet Union. The concern was that the superpowers might thus tacitly consent to limiting a war to Europe using conventional formations and nuclear weapons and leaving their own territories unharmed. Such a war, however, would have destroyed Central Europe. These latent German fears were reinforced when the Soviet Union began deploying SS-20 medium-range missiles with nuclear warheads in 1976, which could hit targets throughout Western Europe but did not reach U.S. territory. German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt in particular saw this as a special nuclear threat to Western Europe[15]. Due to the nuclear-strategic parity, which had been agreed upon in the meantime in the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT I) between the USA and the Soviet Union, and due to the existing second-strike capability on both sides, the nuclear-strategic potentials of the two great powers were practically neutralised. The Soviet Union could have leveraged nuclear pressure on West Germany and Western Europe and at the same time prevented the United States from responding with a counterthreat at the strategic level for fear of an intercontinental nuclear strike exchange. In such a scenario West Germany and Western Europe would have been decoupled from the U.S. security guarantee.

In the beginning of 1977, Chancellor Helmut Schmidt started emphasizing the need to counter the SS-20 threat by stationing (what he called "upgrading") U.S. medium-range weapons in Europe that could strike the Soviet Union. NATO's 1979 Double-Track policy provided for two complementary paths; deployment of 108 American ground-launched intermediate-range Pershing II missiles and 464 ground-launched cruise missiles as of 1983 on the territory of some European Allies including the Federal Republic of Germany; and offering arms control negotiations with the aim of limiting the number of existing Soviet and future U.S. medium-range missiles in Europe. The Double-Track Decision with its two-part strategy reflected the logic of the Harmel Report. The rearmament part ensured the credibility of NATO's nuclear deterrence posture as a whole. In simple terms, the underlying logic was as follows: In the event of an intermediate-range nuclear missile strike against Europe by the Soviet Union, American nuclear weapons launched from West Europe would then strike Russian territory in response. Next, Moscow would retaliate using nuclear weapons against American territory, which might result in an intercontinental nuclear strike exchange and lead to, as previously mentioned, *Mutual Assured Destruction*. Thus, the rearmament component was intended to undermine a (feared) tacit agreement between the two superpowers to limit war to Europe. The inherent existential risk for both of them, however,

Former Federal Chancellor Helmut Schmidt: speaking on NATO's Double-Track Decision in the German Bundestag in 1982

was the strongest reason for preventing any war. With respect to arms control, the Double-Track Decision sought numerical parity and a limitation of nuclear capabilities on both sides.[16]

Moscow did not approve. Two years later, in November 1981, again on the insistence of Germany, U.S. President Ronald Reagan put forward a proposal for mutual renunciation of land-based medium-range missiles, the so-called *Zero Option*. Initially, this proposal did not evoke a positive reaction from the Soviet Union. After the end of Helmut Schmidt's chancellorship in the fall of 1982, against a backdrop of growing political and social opposition to rearmament and of repeated large-scale demonstrations against it particularly in West Germany, Helmut Kohl's government proceeded with the deployment of missiles, as did Belgium, Great Britain, and Italy. (In the Netherlands, the Dutch parliament rejected deployment.) Nevertheless, in 1985, negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union commenced. Ultimately, it was President Ronald Reagan and the Soviet Secretary-General Mikhail Gorbachev, who in 1987 in Washington, D.C. signed the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF Treaty), which completely eliminated intermediate-range missiles with a range of between 500 and 5,500 km on both sides.[17] This success proved Helmut Schmidt right in insisting on combining military strength and arms control negotiations.

Emerging into an Era of Dialogue and Confidence-Building, Arms Control and Disarmament

NATO's political strategy inspired by the Harmel Report had far-reaching political effects, especially with regard to arms control and disarmament. The 1968 *Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of*

*Mikhail Gorbachev and Ronald Reagan signing the INF Treaty
in December 1987*

Nuclear Weapons, the *Strategic Arms Limitation Talks* limiting and then reducing strategic nuclear weapons, the *Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe* limiting and reducing conventional weapons systems in Europe, they all contributed to a climate of political détente between the East and the West. However, there were repeated setbacks: In 1979, Soviet forces invaded Afghanistan, in September 1983, the Soviet Union shot down a Korean airliner with 269 people on board, which it had mistaken for a spy plane, and in November of the same year, nuclear war almost broke out because Moscow initially mistook the NATO Able Archer exercise for preparations for a nuclear attack. These alarming events underscored the imperative of moving forward with dialogue, mutual transparency, and confidence building.

NATO gradually changed its role in Europe; from preserving security and peace to actively shaping stability

Overall, the new approach enabled numerous political and arms control negotiations between the East and the West, the U.S. and the Soviet Union in the 1970s and 1980s, which led to significant results. The Harmel Doctrine of combining "defence and détente" also became the guiding formula for the foreign policy of the Federal Republic of Germany. It determined alliance and security policy as well as Bonn's policy of détente. For its part, the Brandt government's Ostpolitik made a major contribution to confidence-building in Europe. Its success was also based on the Federal Republic's firm rootedness in NATO. In 1973, the *Conference on Security and Cooperation (CSCE)* was convened in Helsinki concluding with the Helsinki Final Act in 1975. In it, the participat-

ing states from the East and the West (35 states, predominantly European, the U.S., Canada and the Soviet Union) committed themselves to the peaceful and non-violent settlement of disputes, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, respect for the territorial integrity of all participating states, non-interference in the internal affairs of other states and the inviolability of existing borders. The possibility of consensually redefining borders was maintained at Germany's request. The CSCE served as a forum for consultations, political rapprochement and confidence-building between the two blocs. The biannual CSCE follow-up conferences beginning in 1977 reviewed whether and how the agreements of the Helsinki Final Act had been observed. In 1995, the CSCE was renamed the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, OSCE. As already mentioned, direct talks between the United States and the Soviet Union on Strategic Arms Limitation had begun as early as November 1969 in Helsinki. They resulted in the 1972 SALT I Treaty, which froze the existing nuclear strategic arsenals of both sides. The nuclear arms spiral was halted. The *Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty* (ABM Treaty) of the same year limited the arsenals of Russian and U.S. anti-ballistic missile defence systems to 100 each for protecting a single target.[18] It did not affect the mutual nuclear second-strike capability and thus deliberately left in place the existential vulnerability of both sides, which, as mentioned earlier, paradoxically, guaranteed strategic stability under the circumstances of that time.

Further negotiations led to the 1979 SALT II Treaty, which limited the number of intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs, including those with multiple warheads), sea-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs), and nuclear-capable bomber aircraft. The Strategic Arms Reduction Talks led to the 1991 START I Treaty, which further reduced the number of ICBMs, SLBMs, and long-range bombers, as well as warheads. Finally, the 1993 START II Treaty would have led to the deactivation of all land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles with multiple warheads and reduced the number of warheads installed on delivery systems to 3,500 on each side. However, the treaty was not ratified by the Russian Duma for several years and finally failed when the U.S. withdrew from the ABM Treaty in 2002. The earlier mentioned INF Treaty, which had reduced an entire category of nuclear weapons to zero, also belonged to the series of successful disarmament treaties of this period.

As far as conventional forces were concerned, the NATO Allies had begun a dialogue with the Warsaw Pact states in November 1972 within the framework of the CSCE, which also included confidence- and security-building measures. These talks resulted in the Document of the Stockholm Conference on *Confidence-*

and Security-Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe, signed in 1986. In 1973, the *Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions (MBFR)* Talks between NATO and Warsaw Pact members opened in Vienna. They dragged on for a long time and were transformed in 1989 into negotiations on the mutual limitation of conventional forces in Europe, which eventually led to the 1990 *Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe* (CFE Treaty) with thirty signatory states as of 1993. This treaty reduced conventional force imbalances between the East and the West. Inventory reporting and mutual inspections (verification) were intended to rule out the possibility of military surprise attacks in Europe. By the mid-1990s, some 60,000 heavy weapons systems, battle tanks, artillery systems, combat aircraft, and attack helicopters had been destroyed. This was the largest cooperatively agreed disarmament in the history of Europe. [19] For many years, the CFE Treaty was referred to as the "cornerstone of European security".

Dialogue, negotiations and cooperation for the purpose of mutual arms limitation and disarmament led to growing transparency of military potentials on both sides and to a mutual learning process about each other's principles, perceptions, security needs and thought patterns. This process increased mutual accountability and consolidated political-military stability in Europe. NATO may also have contributed to the political processes within some Warsaw Pact countries and the eventual political-strategic transformation of 1989, which at the time had not been deemed possible. These transformations ended the Cold War and ushered in an era of renewed partnership and cooperation in Europe with an expanded security role for NATO. This new era and the Alliance's changed role are the subject of Chapter 2: NATO in a New Era.

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[1]   After World War II, the Soviet Union permanently maintained 175 army divisions with a total of 4.5 million soldiers under arms, see Günter Walpuski: Verteidigung + Entspannung = Sicherheit. Texte und Materialien zur Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik, Düsseldorf 1981, p. 20.

[2]   The reason for this was Stalin's refusal to withdraw Soviet troops from Iran in accordance with the 1943 Tehran Agreement. The impetus for the policy of containing the Soviet Union was given by the American diplomat George F. Kennan in his "Long Telegram" in February 1946.

[3]   Speech by U.S. President Harry S. Truman to both houses of the U.S. Congress on 12 March 1947, in: Manfred Görtemaker, Ursachen und Entstehung des Kalten Krieges, Informationen zur politischen Bildung, No. 245, 9 July 2004.

[4]   For the young Federal Republic of Germany, this uncompromising attitude of the USA was a blessing. But it also led to numerous conflicts and wars over the years - from Korea to Vietnam, Cuba and Nicaragua, but also to the overthrow of elected governments with the help of the CIA, as in Iran in 1953 and in Chile in 1973. The fear of communist aggression also led NATO to tolerate military dictatorships in its ranks; several times in Turkey, in Greece (1967 to 1974) and in Portugal (until 1974).

[5]   Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France (with the French territories in Algeria), Great Britain, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal and the USA. Greece and Turkey joined NATO in 1952.

[6]   The stipulatory defence obligations apply, for example, to ships in the Arctic, but not in the Indo-Pacific, unless the North Atlantic Council has decided otherwise. Politically, however, the support of the U.S. by European Allies would be a different matter.

[7]   Subject to Allied reservation provisions and rights of control with regard to Germany as a whole, which ended only with the Two Plus Four Treaty in 1990.

[8]   This strategy evolved over several years in several steps developed as military-strategic concepts DC 6/1, MC 14, MC 14/1 and MC 14/2. This development is deliberately summarised here to what is essential from the author's point of view.

[9]   "Safety will be the sturdy child of terror, and survival the twin brother of annihilation." Quote from Winston Churchill's speech to the House of Commons on 1 March 1955.

[10] The sarcastic motto for MAD at the time was, "He who shoots first, dies second."

[11] North Atlantic Military Committee: MC 14/3 (Final), 16 January 1968: Overall Strategic Concept for the Defense of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation Area.

[12] Tactical nuclear weapons had a range of less than 500 km and were therefore intended for use on the Central European battlefield of the time.

[13] From North to South: LANDJUT German-Danish Corps, 1st Dutch Corps, 1st German Corps, 1st British Corps, 1st Belgian Corps, 3rd German Corps, 5th U.S. Corps, 7th U.S. Corps, 2nd German Corps.

[14] REFORGER means Return of Forces to Germany, i.e. practicing the deployment of American units across the Atlantic to reinforce NATO forces within the framework of collective defence.

[15] Schmidt, Helmut: "Political and Economic Aspects of Western Security"; lecture at the International Institute for Strategic Studies, London, 28 October 1977 (Alastair Buchan Memorial Lecture), in: Press and Information Office of the Federal Government, Bulletin No. 112, p. 1013, Bonn, 8 November 1977.

[16] The rearmament part followed the principles of Flexible Response; the number of American weapon systems remained well below the number of Russian SS-20 missiles. They were supposed to be able to hit the Soviet Union, but their range was to remain intentionally limited.

[17] The last treaty-relevant missile was dismantled in May 1991. The implementation of the INF Treaty required not only the dismantling of missiles but also the destruction of nuclear warheads. The process is complex and expensive, and capacities are limited. Depending on the extent of agreed nuclear disarmament, it may take years or even decades.

[18] The Soviet Union chose Moscow, the U.S. chose Grand Forks Air Base, the site of ICBMs and B52 long-range bombers.

[19] Richter, Wolfgang: Regional Stability? Conventional and Nuclear Arms and Deterrence in Central and Eastern Europe Today – Possible Ways for Arms Control and Disarmament; public hearing of the Subcommittee on Disarmament, Arms Control and Non-Proliferation, German Bundestag, Berlin, 15 May 2019.

2

NATO IN A NEW ERA – NEW PARTNERS AND NEW MISSIONS (1990 – 2014)

1990
Two-Plus-Four Agreement; German Unification; Charter of Paris for a New Europe

1991
Dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union; NATO Strategic Concept

1992
NATO enforcement of the UN-mandated No-Fly Zone over Bosnia and Herzegovina

1994
"NATO Partnership for Peace (PfP)" Programme

1995
Srebrenica massacre in Bosnia and Herzegovina; Dayton Agreement; NATO IFOR deployment to Bosnia and Herzegovina

1997
NATO-Russia Founding Act

1999
NATO Strategic Concept; NATO Accession of Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary; NATO air strikes against Serbia

2001
9/11: Terrorist attack on the USA; start of the NATO Mission ISAF in Afghanistan

2003
2003 start of the Iraq war

2004
NATO Accession of Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia; replacement of SFOR by EUFOR Althea

2008
NATO membership in principle granted to Ukraine and Georgia; Russia's war against Georgia

2009
France's returns into NATO's integrated military structure; NATO accession of Albania and Croatia

2010
NATO Strategic Concept; New START Treaty

2011
NATO air campaign in Libya

NATO IN A NEW ERA

NEW PARTNERS AND NEW MISSIONS (1990 – 2014)

The Fall of the Berlin Wall on 9 November 1989 and the opening of the Iron Curtain marked the beginning of a new era in Europe and far beyond. It was a time of extraordinary events that followed one another in quick succession; the signing of the Two-Plus-Four Treaty between the two German states and the four victorious powers of the Second World War on 19 September 1990 granted full sovereignty to a united Germany. On 3 October 1990, German unity came into effect. Lithuania had already declared its independence in March 1990, followed by Latvia and Estonia in May 1990. On 31 March 1991, the Warsaw Pact dissolved. This was followed by the disintegration of the Soviet Union on 26 December 1991. The massive military threat to Germany and Western Europe disappeared. Russian forces in East Germany and Central Eastern Europe were withdrawn; by 1994, all had relocated back to Russia.

NATO became the architect of a new, cooperative security order in Europe.

These events heralded a period in which old adversaries became new partners and NATO underwent a fundamental transformation. NATO's steadfastness and policy of détente, the CSCE process that had begun in 1975, the economic decline in the East, the Solidarność movement in Poland, President Gorbachev's policy of Perestroika and Glasnost in the Soviet Union, the Velvet Revolution in Czechoslovakia and, finally, the large peaceful demonstrations in the "German Democratic Republic (GDR)" had been major driving forces behind the developments that ultimately led to the disintegration of the Eastern Bloc and the end of the East-West confrontation. The opportunity now arose to replace decades of confrontation between the blocs with a new era of democracy, confidence-building and cooperation among all countries in the Euro-Atlantic area. NATO had to develop a new raison d'être and become a decisive shaper of a new cooperative security order for all of Europe. Together with the European Community, it had to make its contribution to the stabilisation of Europe.

At the same time, the wars in the Balkans, which began after the disintegration of Yugoslavia in 1991, demonstrated that old unresolved conflicts and militant nationalism had tremendous effects causing violence, population displacement and genocide, all of which had no longer been deemed possible in Europe. It threatened the cohesiveness and stability of a unifying Europe. There was growing realisation that political stabilisation of the whole of Europe involved completely new challenges for NATO, namely, military intervention in order to deal with crises and conflicts outside of NATO territory, but in regions that were important for the security of NATO Allies. Such crises were to be contained and and resolved at the point of origin, as was the rationale often put forward at the time. In the 1990s such regions were in the Balkans, then since 2001 in Afghanistan and finally in 2011 in Libya.

In the period from 1990 to 2014, roughly speaking, cooperation with new partners, on the one hand, and military crisis management outside NATO's borders, on the other hand, were NATO's two main fields of action. Both posed new and very different political-military challenges to the Alliance and required NATO to deal with them almost simultaneously. A number of key events and developments took place in parallel, overlapped, or were intertwined. These developments may be grouped into two major time periods. In the 1990s, NATO was welcoming new members, started a new cooperation with Russia and Ukraine, and launched its first military operation in the Balkans. The terrorist attack on the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. on 11 September 2001 marked the beginning of the second time period. The U.S. launched the War on Terror, which turned into a nearly twenty-year long military engagement in Afghanistan for NATO and its partners. The European states began to gradually develop a common security policy capability for civilian and military crisis management, first within the framework of NATO and then independently within the EU. This period also saw the resurgence of Russia and its alienation from the West. [1]

NATO's realignment as of 1990 –
From Confrontation to Cooperation in Europe

As early as May 1989, the American President George H. W. Bush pointed the way to Europe's future in his speech on "A Europe whole and free", which he gave in Mainz, Germany. The values, principles and strategies that had led to a free, democratic, prosperous and peaceful Western Europe after the Second World War and thus to Europe's "second renaissance" were now also to determine and shape the development of Eastern Europe.[2] Transatlantic security, stability and prosperity established in Western Europe were to be transferred to Eastern Europe. In this context, it was no longer primarily a matter of military-strategic stability based on the balance of large conventional forces and a formidable arsenal of nuclear weapons as it had been in the past. Rather, it was about political stability that was to develop within and between states. Internally, reforms were to lead to the assertion of human rights, viable democratic structures and the rule of law, the protection of minority rights, a prosperous economy and social justice. Externally, relations were to be based on good neighbourhood and effective cooperation between smaller and larger states as equal partners.

NATO extended a hand of friendship to former adversaries in order to build new partnerships.

The *Charter of Paris for a New Europe*, signed on 21 November 1990 at the Paris Summit of the CSCE, created the political and normative framework for this process. It declared the division of Europe to be at an end, recognised democracy as the only legitimate form of government and committed signatories to the continuation of the disarmament process. It also prohibited any threat or use of force against the territorial integrity and political independence of any participating state. Several of the goals of the Harmel Report had thus been achieved. In particular, the "German Question" had been resolved. However, a "just and lasting peace order in Europe", as defined by the Harmel Report as the ultimate political purpose of the Alliance had yet to be achieved. The countries of Central and Eastern Europe were breaking away from communist unfreedom and seeking, in varying degrees, their way to democracy, rule of law and economic prosperity. But there were new threats. The iron grip of the Warsaw Pact had only suppressed, but not resolved old antagonisms over borders and national minorities. Instability resulting from economic, social and political upheavals in Central and Eastern Europe created tensions that might spill over into NATO countries. In this respect, the security of all Europeans was interconnected, that of NATO members and that of former Central and Eastern European Warsaw Pact members. NATO had to and wanted to act. The process of renewal in the East was to be rendered irreversible. It is fair to say that the key players in this process were the U.S. government and the German government. After the close and trusting cooperation between Chancellor Helmut Kohl and President George H. W. Bush in the preparation of German unity, both governments continued to engage in a *partnership in leadership* in NATO in the 1990s, which President Bush had offered to Germany in 1989 in Mainz.

The Declaration on a Transformed North Atlantic Alliance issued at the 1990 NATO London Summit *(The London Declaration)* was a seminal moment sending out a profound signal. The Heads of State and Government extended their "hand of friendship" to former adversaries in order to build new partnerships. The basic mission of the Alliance in terms of maintaining security for Allies remained unchanged. But NATO wanted to be the driving force and shaper of change in Europe, while adapting itself to the entirely transformed conditions. The 1991 Strategic Concept followed a broad, political notion of security consisting of dialogue, cooperation with all European states, and the maintenance of an adequate collective defence capability. In view of the withdrawal of Soviet troops, NATO changed its force structure. "Forward Defence" of the Cold War was transformed into sufficient military presence throughout the territory of the Alliance with smaller, more mobile forces. They were tiered in their operational readiness: (1) forces for rapid crisis response, (2) main defence forces to ensure the territorial integrity of the Alliance following preparation and build-up as and when required, and (3) reinforcement forces for specific regions of NATO's territory in case of specific threats. This structure also increased the importance of multinational formations which were intended to reflect the joint responsibility of all Allies for security and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area and at the same time to mitigate the effect of declining defence budgets. NATO's nuclear forces retained their fundamental political role as credible *"weapons of last resort"* to prevent war. U.S. sub-strategic systems[3] remained indispensable linking the security of European NATO countries to the U.S. strategic nuclear potential but were drastically reduced, and short-range nuclear battlefield weapons (artillery) were completely eliminated. What remained were some 150 to 200 free-fall U.S. B61 nuclear bombs under U.S. control in Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, Italy and (back then also) Turkey; the exact number is not publicly known.

New Structures and Programmes –
The North Atlantic Cooperation Council and the Programme
"Partnership for Peace"

The new strategy demanded new structures and programmes. The CSCE became increasingly important because it provided a link between all the states of Europe, the successor states of the Soviet Union, and the United States and Canada. NATO established the *North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC)* in December 1991. The NACC was a forum for dialogue at the ministerial, ambassadorial, and working group levels among NATO Allies, Russia, and eight Central and Eastern European countries on common security issues, force planning, democratic control of armed forces, and civil-military relations. In 1997, on the initiative of the United States, the NACC was replaced by the *Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC)*, which included Ukraine as a founding member. The EAPC provided an overarching framework for NATO Allies to cooperate with all partners throughout the Euro-Atlantic region (North America, Europe, Caucasus, and Central Asia). Today, it includes eighteen from originally twenty partner countries in addition to the thirty-two NATO countries.[4]

NATO's 1994 *"Partnership for Peace (PfP)"* programme, initiated by the United States, became a vital instrument for practical cooperation. It was designed to bring the new partners closer to NATO, reform their armed forces and prepare them for joint peacekeeping, rescue and humanitarian operations. Democratic control of the armed forces, transparency regarding defence budgets, joint planning, and military exercises were the most important fields of activity. Each partner was able to determine the extent and pace of PfP implementation in an individually tailored programme. All were invited to send liaison officers to NATO Headquarters in Brussels and to the newly established Partnership Coordination Cell at SHAPE in Mons. PfP thus had a far-reaching political and military impact; it gave NATO influence over force reforms, planning and exercises of many partners. PfP gradually created the conditions for partners to participate in NATO military operations. Another important aspect was the Alliance's assurance that it would enter into consultations if a partner faced a direct threat; at the time, this was perceived (and meant) as an indirect promise of support in the event of a crisis.

In the years that followed, PfP was moulded into further concepts and concrete programmes that brought the participating partners ever closer to the practical workings of the Alliance. It further narrowed the difference between membership and partnership in practical terms. A common understanding of security developed between Allies and many partners.[5] Two prominent

The first military exercise within the framework of the Partnership for Peace Programme, 1994

examples: The *Political Military Framework (PMF)* governs PfP partners' participation in political consultations and in decision preparation, operational planning, and command and control of NATO-led operations in which they participate. Through the *Planning and Review Process (PARP)*, NATO provides systematic assistance in the force planning of PfP partner countries. This assistance is modelled on the NATO Defence Planning Process designed for NATO members. Today, PARP is still helpful for many partners in the development of their forces.

NATO's Partnership for Peace programme became a vital instrument for practical cooperation.

Following the PfP model, the Alliance has expanded its partnership structure to the South. In 1994, it launched the *Mediterranean Dialogue* with non-NATO countries in the Mediterranean region, which is of great importance for European security and stability. Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Morocco, Mauritania and Tunisia are participating in this dialogue. Each country pursues an individual cooperation programme with NATO. The southward orientation was complemented in 2004 by the *Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI)*, which includes Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates. Then in 2014, NATO identified a group of *Enhanced Opportunities Partner (EOP)* countries that were most involved in joint crisis stabilisation operations: Australia, Finland, Georgia, Jordan, and Sweden.[6] The purpose of the EOP status is to engage in security policy consultation, information and experience

sharing, and interoperability. The geographic, political and substantial diversity has, however, rendered NATO's partnership network convoluted. Also, there is a shortage of personnel and resources to fully manage it. For some time, NATO has sought to make its partnerships more strategic, coherent and effective, i. e. to streamline procedures and to add focus to them. This approach is controversial, however, because it leads to selection decisions that do not meet with general approval and are difficult to explain politically. With the Alliance's current focus on supporting Ukraine and on strengthening its new/old main mission of deterrence and defence, these considerations have evidently faded into the background.

All of Europe's historical-political and cultural region was to be united under the umbrella of NATO and the EU.

Opening of NATO for new members

Despite a substantial offer of partnership, it was still the objective of Central and Eastern European states to quickly become members of NATO and the EU. To consolidate their democracies, they wanted to be integrated into Western institutions. In June 1993, the European Council decided at the Copenhagen Summit that the associated countries of Central and Eastern Europe could become members of the EU. In comparison, Washington's PfP programme was initially intended as a substitute for NATO enlargement while at the same time it was intended to help prevent the emergence of new, alternative alliances.[7] Europe at that time was still divided into different zones of security, stability, and prosperity. An anxious, shaky "Europe in between" ("Zwischeneuropa") had to be avoided and the security vacuum eastward of NATO's boundaries had to be filled, but at the same time new dividing lines on the continent had to be prevented. Extending Western stability eastwards required a coherent institutional framework. In March 1993, German Defence Minister Volker Rühe publicly took the initiative. He proposed a dual approach that would combine the integration of Central and Eastern European countries into NATO and the EU with special cooperation arrangements with Russia and Ukraine.[8] The historical-political and cultural entity of Europe was to be joined together under the umbrella of NATO and the EU. Rühe promoted his proposal in the German government and – with the aid of NATO Secretary General Manfred Wörner – also within the Alliance.[9]

Wörner used the PfP programme to translate Rühe's dual approach into practical Alliance policy; for some, PfP was to serve as preparation for accession; for others who did not seek membership, including Russia and Ukraine, it was to serve as a framework and means for deeper, practical cooperation with NATO. U.S. President Bill Clinton recognised the importance of having a united Europe as an ally for consolidating the U.S. role as a world power and eventually assumed political leadership. The NATO Summit in Brussels in early 1994 initiated the process for admitting new members. NATO's 1995 *Study on NATO Enlargement* set demanding political conditions for aspiring members to ensure that the Alliance would be strengthened and not import unresolved conflicts into its ranks: a functioning democratic system, protection of minorities, peaceful settlement of conflicts, democratic control of armed forces, and the ability and willingness to participate in NATO operations. In parallel with the EU accession process, NATO's accession promise became a powerful mechanism in the political transformation of Central and Eastern Europe.

At the NATO summit in Madrid in 1997, Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary were invited to join NATO; their membership came into force in 1999. France and Italy demanded to invite Romania and Slovenia as well, but this request was not accepted at that time.[10] The Heads of State and Government, referring for the first time to NATO's "Open Door", held out the prospect of further admissions of European states, including states from the Baltic and South-eastern European regions. For Germany, this meant that a strategic goal had been achieved: the shifting of NATO's border to the East. Germany moved to a centre position in Europe and has since been surrounded by Allies and partners. Since 1999, aspirant countries have been required to prepare themselves for accession by following a demanding, individual *Membership Action Plan (MAP)*, practically under the guidance and supervision of NATO. Various, different and diverging interests surrounded the selection of new members, which finally resulted in the so-called *"Big Bang"* of NATO enlargement in 2002, when seven countries were invited to join. In 2004, the three Baltic states, Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia acceded to NATO. This second round of NATO enlargement was driven primarily by political considerations of stabilising Europe as a whole, as the military contributions of the new members were limited at that time. In 2008, at the NATO Summit in Bucharest, Ukraine and Georgia were given a basic promise of membership but were not given a *MAP*.[11] Albania and Croatia joined in 2009, followed by Montenegro in 2017 and North Macedonia in 2020. Today, NATO continues to adhere to an Open Door Policy; in accordance with Article 10 of the North Atlantic Treaty, the Alliance is in principle

open to any European state that accepts all the obligations of membership, contributes to collective security, and receives consent from all Allies to its accession.

Cooperation with Russia – The NATO-Russia Founding Act

It was NATO Secretary General Wörner who made the proposal in September 1993 to combine the opening of the Alliance to new members with offering Russia deepened cooperation, so as to make the admission of new members acceptable to Russia [12] and to avoid new dividing lines in Europe. Preferably, the two processes were to be conducted in parallel. Deeper cooperation was to be turned into a special security partnership on an equal footing in order to integrate Russia, a nuclear power, into a new European security architecture and thereby help stabilise it. After all, Russia was in the midst of a deep political and economic crisis. This made it all the more necessary to integrate the country into the Western-oriented network of international institutions. In 1992, Russia was admitted to the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, in 1996 it became a member of the Council of Europe, and in 1997 it joined the Group of Seven (G7). [13]

Then Russian President Boris Yeltsin needed the support of the West and was receptive to it. However, he was wavering in his attitude toward the opening of NATO. On the one hand, he explicitly recognised the right of every state to choose an alliance as it wished. [14] On the other hand, the Russian leadership wanted to maintain control over its western periphery and explicitly stated in a letter to the Heads of government of the United States, Germany, France, and Great Britain that it envisaged joint NATO-Russia security guarantees for the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. [15] NATO rejected the concept of a condominium. Furthermore, Central and Eastern European states saw their distrust regarding Russia's traditionally imperial intentions confirmed. By the same token, in Moscow, the eastward advance of NATO, as it was called in Moscow, was assessed as a unfavourable shift of power and a potential threat to Russia, even though the German government in particular made it clear that "a zone of stability oriented towards defence", out of which no war of aggression would be waged, made Russia's western borders objectively more secure. [16] In December 1993, NATO Secretary General Wörner began to solicit President Yeltsin´s support for the idea of opening NATO to new members and, at the same time, deepening the partnership with Russia. Initially, Yeltsin reacted disapprovingly, but later he warmed to the idea and eventually became a proponent of an agreement between NATO and Russia and of establishing a joint forum.

Visit of NATO Secretary General Manfred Wörner in Moscow in February 1992

The NATO-Russia Founding Act (NRFA) [17] of 27 May 1997 seemed to have successfully squared the circle. NATO and Russia laid the foundation for a "privileged partnership" that set Russia apart from other PfP partners. In the Founding Act, NATO and Russia explicitly committed themselves to the same values and principles of peaceful coexistence as set forth in the CSCE Helsinki Final Act and the Charter of Paris, including the right of each member state to freely choose the alliance to which it wishes to belong. The *Permanent Joint Council (PJC)* at the ambassadorial level and above, which was replaced in 2002 by the *NATO-Russia Council (NRC)*, became the forum for consultation, coordination, and, whenever possible and appropriate, joint decision-making and joint engagement on security issues of common interest to both partners, namely in nineteen areas that were identified in the Founding Act. All activities within the framework of the NATO-Russia Council followed the principles of transparency and reciprocity. The Founding Act expressly excluded the right to veto measures taken by the other side and any restriction of the right to make independent decisions. Thus, the recurring accusations by Russia that the West had promised not to expand NATO to the East are completely unfounded. Also, the claim that Moscow was assured during the Two Plus Four Talks in 1990 that NATO would not move its facilities to Central and Eastern Europe is a delusion, because at that time the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact still existed, and it was not foreseeable that they would collapse in the following year.

Ukraine was also granted a special status in cooperative relations with NATO. During the Madrid Summit in 1997, the *Charter on a Distinctive Partnership* was signed between NATO and Kyjiv. It emphasised that Ukraine's independence is of central importance for stability in Central and Eastern Europe. In contrast to the NATO-Russia Founding Act, the Charter also underlined the

positive impact of NATO enlargement on European stability. Since then, ministerial meetings have been held at least twice a year within the framework of the *NATO-Ukraine Commission*.[18] NATO's dual approach of integration and cooperation set the course for key events in the Alliance in 1997. The Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) provided a multilateral forum for cooperation in the Euro-Atlantic area. The NATO-Russia Founding Act of May 1997 documented the will for a special partnership with Russia. The Madrid Summit of NATO in July 1997 marked the beginning of the integration of Central and Eastern European countries and, at the same time, the "distinctive partnership" with Ukraine. The enlargement of NATO and the emphasis on cooperation with Russia and Ukraine were thus central elements of the new security architecture for a free and undivided Europe.

The opening of NATO for new members and special cooperation with Russia and Ukraine were the central elements of the European security architecture at that time.

NATO's intention to exercise deliberate strategic restraint vis-à-vis Russia out of consideration for Russian security perceptions fitted into this approach. In the NATO-Russia Founding Act, it was stated that NATO has "no intention, no plan and no reason to deploy nuclear weapons on the territory of new members." Furthermore, NATO declared in the Founding Act that "in the current and foreseeable security environment", the Alliance will provide collective defence and carry out other missions by ensuring the necessary interoperability, integration, and capability for reinforcement rather than by "additional permanent stationing of substantial combat forces". Russia committed itself to equal restraint in stationing its conventional forces in Europe. However, the Founding Act did not define what exactly the term "substantial combat forces" entailed. This was not precisely agreed upon within NATO either, nor was it specified in the CFE Treaty. During a visit to Moscow in March 1997, the then Chairman of the NATO Military Committee, General Klaus Naumann, answered the question of how to define the term "substantial combat forces" by recommending that it could be a temporary relocation of one army division with corresponding elements of air force and navy to each new member state. There was as little opposition to this as there was afterwards in the North Atlantic Council, where Naumann presented the results of his discussions

in Moscow.[19] In the CFE negotiations, however, an unchallenged understanding developed that Russia would accept a reinforced German or U.S. brigade (i. e. up to approx. 4,000 servicemembers) in each new member state, in addition to the respective national forces.[20] This understanding became an accepted benchmark in Western capitals. The Central Eastern European Allies accepted it at the time, but increasingly saw this limitation as a confinement of their security, especially in light of Russia´s incursion into Ukraine in 2014, as NATO's rapid reinforcement capability was not assured, and given the fact that Russia violated the Founding Act in several respects (see Chapter 3).

Arms Control and Disarmament

The development of a cooperative security architecture was accompanied by a reduction of active forces in Europe to about 75 percent of the 1990 levels and a reform of NATO's command structure; the number of military headquarters was reduced from 65 to 20. The readiness level of many units was lowered. With the self-commitment in the Founding Act, NATO was acting out of consideration for Russia's security needs and in accordance with the core idea of the CFE Treaty, namely limiting and disengaging combat forces on both sides of the former blocs. The Vienna Document on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures (CSBMs) of the CSCE, which was adopted in 1990 and was built upon and updated several times, is equally very important. It contains provisions on military transparency and verification through the exchange of information on units and personnel strengths, their positioning, equipment and movements, as well as mutual inspections. Fully implemented, it contributes significantly to military stability.

Confidence-building was also the purpose of the 1992 *Treaty on Open Skies*, which allowed cooperative unarmed aerial surveillance flights by formerly 34 participating states in the area between Vancouver in the west and Vladivostok in the east over the territory of other signatory states to monitor compliance with conventional or nuclear arms control agreements or to collect data on military developments.[21] The Budapest Memorandum regulated the renunciation of nuclear weapons by Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan in 1994. Their nuclear arsenals were handed over to Russia. In return, the U.S., Great Britain and Russia guaranteed all three countries full sovereignty and the inviolability of their borders. With its war of aggression against Ukraine since February 2022, Russia has broken its obligations under this agreement and shamefully abused the trust placed in its leadership.

In the 1990s, significant progress was made in the field of nuclear arms control. Negotiations between the U.S. and the Soviet Union on the START I Treaty to reduce strategic nuclear weapons, which had begun in the 1980s, were successfully concluded in 1991. Strategic delivery systems were reduced to 1,600 each for both states. The maximum number of allowed nuclear warheads was roughly halved (to 6,000 each). START I expired in December 2009. As already explained in Chapter 1, its follow-on treaty, START II, signed in 1993, was nullified under protest by the Russian side in 2002 when the U.S. left the ABM Treaty.[22] However, the 2010 New START Treaty set the upper limit of the strategic nuclear arsenals of both countries at 1,550 deployed warheads and 800 delivery systems each; of the latter, a maximum of 700 were allowed to be in use."[23] Taken together, all of these treaties helped underpin growing political stability across Europe at that time.

Crisis Management and Stabilisation – NATO's new Main Task

In addition to contributing to the development of a cooperative security order in Europe, NATO's 1991 Strategic Concept recognised the need for the Alliance to contribute to effective conflict prevention and to actively participate on a case-by-case basis in international crisis management, including operations to manage crises under UN or CSCE (later OSCE) mandates. This was because the risk had grown that "completely different types of crises" could arise, "which could escalate quickly and require a rapid response", as stated in the Strategic Concept. This gradual expansion of NATO's role in the direction of peacekeeping and peace enforcement operations first materialised in the wake of the disintegration of Yugoslavia and the wars that accompanied it, beginning in 1991. NATO's military interventions in Bosnia and Herzegovina beginning in 1993 and against Serbia beginning in 1997 were NATO´s first military operations since its founding. These operations, however, were not conducted for collective defence but to manage a crisis in Europe and beyond NATO borders.

➤ **Bosnia and Herzegovina**

After the breakup of Yugoslavia, Serbian President Slobodan Milošević aspired to a Greater Serbia and fanned Serbian nationalism. After the outbreak of inter-ethnic violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the siege of Sarajevo by Bosnian Serbs beginning in April 1992, NATO's role from 1993 onward was to monitor and enforce the no-fly zone over Bosnia and Herzegovina imposed by the UN in 1992 and to provide air support to UN peacekeepers in order to protect UN Safe Areas. After the 1995 Srebrenica massacre, in which several thousand Bosniaks were murdered by Bosnian Serb forces in a UN Safe Zone, the Bosniak-Croat forces supported by NATO airpower (with more than 3,500 sorties) inflicted a heavy defeat on Serb forces in Bosnia and conquered large parts of the territory. The 1995 Dayton Agreement divided Bosnia and Herzegovina into two entities, one composed of mostly Bosniaks and Croats, and one composed of mostly Serbs. The High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, assisted by the *Office of the High Representative (OHR)* in Bosnia and Herzegovina, has since overseen the implementation of the civilian aspects of the Dayton Agreement and is vested with the broad powers to do so.[24]

NATO's military interventions in Bosnia and Herzegovina as of 1993 and in Serbia as of 1997 were the first military operations since its founding.

NATO received a mandate to monitor the implementation of the military provisions of the Dayton Agreement. For this purpose, it established the *Implementation Force (IFOR)* with over 60,000 servicemembers from NATO and PfP partner countries, including a Russian contingent. A complex intergovernmental agreement between the Croat, Muslim, and Serbian communities went into effect. IFOR transitioned at the end of 1996 after a phased reduction in size to the NATO-led *Stabilisation Force (SFOR)*, which was tasked with providing a stable and secure environment for further political consolidation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It had to ensure general freedom of movement, inspect military properties of the three entities, control their military activities and support international organisations. In 2004, it was replaced by the EU's mission *"EUFOR Althea"*.

➤ **Kosovo**

As of 1992, the Kosovo Albanians sought independence from Serbia. This met with bitter resistance in Serbia because the Kosovo Field, which makes up a large part of Kosovo's territory, has played a mytho-historical role in the Serbian national identity. In 1998, fighting ignited between Serbian security forces and Kosovo's Albanian population. A UN resolution threatened President Milošević with air strikes. When Milošević relented, an OSCE mission was sent to Kosovo to monitor compliance with the UN measures, which called for the withdrawal of heavy weaponry and a large part of Serbia's paramilitary police forces. NATO provided support to the OSCE mission through Operation *Eagle Eye*. The new PfP member, Macedonia, hosted a French-led NATO

German Armoured Vehicles in Kosovo, June 1999

Task Force to protect OSCE personnel. But tensions, violence and fighting continued. The "Rambouillet Agreement" proposed by the Balkan Contact Group (representatives of Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Russia, and the United States) called for comprehensive autonomy and self-government for Kosovo under Serbian sovereignty and the deployment of NATO forces. Milošević did not accept the proposal. In response, NATO began air strikes in 1999, without having solicited a UN Security Council resolution due to a likely Russian veto, and thus began air strikes without a UN mandate. NATO did so on the grounds of preventing a humanitarian catastrophe and systematic ethnic cleansing in Kosovo, which still claimed the lives of approximately 10,000 Kosovo Albanians even after the start of the air strikes. After 78 days of war and a 48-hour NATO ultimatum, Milošević relented. Serbia agreed to a G8 peace plan. [25] The UN deployed the civilian *UNMIK (United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo)* to establish a functioning administration and democratic institutions in Kosovo and tasked NATO with deploying a peacekeeping force *(Kosovo Force, KFOR)*, initially consisting of 50,000 servicemembers. Together with its partners, the NATO-led force was to facilitate the safe return of some 850,000 displaced persons and refugees and oversee the demilitarisation of Kosovo. Today (as of January 2024), KFOR consists of approximately 4,400 servicemembers from 28 nations. [26]

In view of the crises and conflicts in the Balkans and their implications, it was necessary to find a comprehensive, regional approach to deal with the region's instability. In 1999, at the initiative of Germany, the "Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe" was created. The EU, the U.S., Turkey, Russia and the Balkan states participated in the pact, which aimed to pool and coordinate political and economic efforts in order to stabilise the Balkans on

a long-term basis. In 2008, the pact was replaced by the *South-East European Cooperation Process (SEECP)*.

➤ Libya

In the spring of 2011, NATO carried out another military operation for humanitarian reasons, mainly in the form of airstrikes, this time in Libya. In the Libyan civil war, the troops of ruler Muammar al-Gaddafi committed serious human rights violations resulting in many civilian casualties. Gaddafi threatened to flatten the city of Benghazi in the east of the country and to massacre the rebels there. UN Security Council Resolution 1973 authorised the establishment of a no-fly zone to prevent Libyan air force operations against civilians. The resolution also authorised the international community "to take all necessary measures […] to protect civilians and civilian populated areas" and also ensured implementation of the established arms embargo. However, the resolution excluded a foreign occupation force of any form on any part of Libyan territory. Led by France and the United Kingdom, a group of states started aerial bombardments targeting Gaddafi's troops and facilities. The U.S. participated, but President Obama had opted for "leading from behind." After two weeks, France and the United Kingdom handed the command to NATO, which had the planning and command capacity to lead a complex air operation. The operation lasted seven months. Gaddafi was captured and killed by insurgents. NATO had fulfilled its UN mandate to save the country's population from Gaddafi's planned mass murder. The mandate explicitly did not provide for a subsequent stabilisation mission with ground forces as in the Balkans. Today, there is still no peace in Libya, and the country is split into a western and an eastern part.

The aerial warfare against Serbia in 1999 eventually led to the development of the UN concept of *Responsibility to Protect (R2P)*, which was welcomed by Germany at the time, but which the German government opposed in its application against the Libyan dictator Gaddafi. Germany abstained from voting in the UN Security Council, along with Russia, China, India and Brazil. It did not participate in the NATO operation and also withdrew its personnel from the respective NATO headquarters. Nevertheless, Germany provided considerable logistical support to NATO forces. The German government's behaviour led to heavy criticism in Germany and among its allies for failing to honour NATO´s principle of solidarity in an attempt to prevent a massacre of the civilian population in Libya.

The Alliance's military operations outside its territorial boundaries had a catalytic effect on the further development of NATO's strategy. The 1999 Strategic Concept, adopted at the Washington Summit by NATO Heads of State and Government in April 1999,

reflected the ongoing shift in emphasis toward crisis management and partnership. It described in detail the international challenges and risks. For the first time, Crisis Management and Partnership were explicitly added to the Alliance's "fundamental security tasks". NATO also identified for the first time *"non-Article 5 crisis response operations"* as a new mission for NATO forces, i. e. military operations beyond collective defence. Allied forces were now required to have capabilities across the full spectrum of tasks, from collective defence requiring a long period of preparation to military crisis intervention, stabilisation operations, and peacekeeping in remote regions beyond the Alliance's territorial boundaries. This was preceded by a lengthy internal discussion within NATO, in which the question of NATO's relevance was raised primarily by the U.S.: "either out of area or out of business." (This demand had already been voiced by U.S. Senator Richard Lugar in 1993). As mentioned already, it was argued that it was important to keep risks at a distance and contain them at the point of origin so that they would not come to Europe. This development eventually culminated in the definition of three core functions of NATO in the 2010 Strategic Concept: Deterrence and Collective Defence, Crisis Management, and Cooperative Security. In view of the security situation in Europe back then, deterrence and defence played in fact only a secondary role in NATO's planning.

NATO needed adequate forces for the task of crisis management. Mechanised, armoured large-scale units, which had been needed for Collective Defence in Central Europe, were to be transformed into contingents for multinational stabilisation missions. Command and control, (air) transport and logistics over strategic distances, mobility (helicopters) and protection in the theatre of operations were now given priority. Overall, this required a major transformation of the armed forces of most European states. Establishing the multinational *NATO Response Force (NRF)* in 2002 was one of the core elements of this transformation. The tasks assigned to the *NRF* reflected the experiences of that time. It was intended as an *Initial Entry Force* to fight terrorists, enforce embargoes, conduct evacuation operations, and provide humanitarian assistance. The *NRF* was also intended to serve as a transformation tool for the national forces of many European Allies. Although the adaptation required additional resources, defence budgets continued to decline steadily. All NATO countries had allowed themselves a "Peace Dividend" after the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union. Now, in the wake of the Global Financial Crisis of 2008, defence budgets came under even more pressure. The then NATO Secretary General Anders F. Rasmussen tried to make a virtue out of necessity. The *Smart Defence Initiative* envisaged that several nations would jointly develop modern, expensive military capabilities, which they could not afford on their own but which NATO needed, thereby complementing each other and sharing capabilities, or pooling forces and capabilities and saving costs. Many multinational projects that emerged during this period are still relevant today.

**Terrorist Attack 9/11 on the USA –
The Expansion of NATO's Military Crisis Intervention
and the Deployment in Afghanistan**

Only two years after the Washington summit, NATO's reorientation seemed to dramatically prove itself as correct and necessary. The terrorist attack on the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington on 11 September 2001 marked a turning point in the self-perception of the United States and its foreign, security and defence policy. It was also a watershed for NATO. The largest Ally had been attacked from outside. For the first time in its history, NATO invoked Article 5 of the Washington Treaty. The U.S. needed to receive "unconditional solidarity" of the Allies, as emphasised by German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder. His statement was primarily a necessary political demonstration. In practical terms, this meant that NATO, on the one hand, provided the U.S. with its AWACS reconnaissance aircraft to help monitor U.S. airspace and, on the other hand, began *Operation Active Endeavour*, a maritime operation in the Mediterranean. Its purpose was to help detect and deter possible terrorist activity through maritime surveillance and to show resolve and Alliance solidarity. Its mission included monitoring civilian maritime traffic, inspecting suspicious ships or escorting ships through the Strait of Gibraltar for their protection.

The U.S. launched the "Global War on Terrorism (GWOT)" or War on Terror. The September 11 attacks had been planned and carried out by al-Qaeda terrorists. Their leader, Osama Bin Laden, had been given a hideout by the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. From there, he had directed the preparation of the attack. The U.S. counterterrorism offensive began with *Operation Enduring Freedom* in Afghanistan against the Taliban. Several European Allies participated in this operation with special forces. In parallel, the participants of the *International Petersberg Conference*, which took place in December 2001 near Bonn, decided that the security of the Afghan interim government in Kabul and its surrounding area as well as the security of UN personnel, should be ensured by an international force. The UN Security Council Resolution 1386 authorised NATO to implement this decision by deploying the *International Security Assistance Force (ISAF)*. The multinational force consisting of some 5,000 servicemembers was led for six months at a time first by Great Britain, then by

Turkey and finally by Germany. At the insistence of the Afghan government and some NATO Allies, including Germany, the mandate of the ISAF mission was extended by UN Resolution 1510 to cover the whole of Afghanistan in order to establish a secure environment outside Kabul for the self-defined goal of creating a stable, democratic Afghanistan based on the rule of law. In the summer of 2003, NATO assumed responsibility for command, planning and support of ISAF out of its operational headquarters in Brunssum, Netherlands, in order to ensure the provision of all necessary forces by the Alliance. This was because, beginning in the fall of 2002, the U.S. increasingly focused on preparing for the Iraq War, which began in March 2003. This decision caused major rifts within NATO. Germany and France led a group of European Allies who opposed Washington and considered the invasion of Iraq a strategic mistake. But the United Kingdom and some other states supported the United States.

Starting in Kabul, ISAF gradually expanded its presence across Afghanistan and was eventually divided into four regional commands, each under the leadership of a specific NATO nation. Civil-military *Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs)* were formed, which in addition to their military tasks were helping with reconstruction (roads, schools, local infrastructure) and providing humanitarian aid. Furthermore, the *United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA)* was present in the region and implemented a civilian reconstruction and aid programme.[27] 2,000 nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) were conducting similar activities as well. The common goal was to support the Afghan government in establishing security forces and a civil administration, in conducting free elections, and in developing good governance, infrastructure, health care and education.

After the terrorist attack on the United States, NATO invoked Article 5 for the first time in its history.

The Taliban, however, continued to fight the ISAF mission with terrorist attacks. What was originally intended as a 'peacekeeping' mission became, in the daily experience of the soldiers, a war operation with thousands of dead and wounded international troops, Afghan security forces, and civilians.[28] At times, nearly 130,000 servicemembers from almost 50 Allied and partner nations were involved. In 2014, ISAF was superseded by the *Resolute Support Mission* in Afghanistan. Its size dropped to around 10,000 servicemembers. "Germany's security is being

Terror attacks of 9/11 on the USA

defended in the Hindu Kush", the then German Defence Minister Peter Struck declared in March 2004 when summarising the legitimacy of the mission. Until the end, the Bundeswehr was the second largest troop contributor after the United States, with around 1,300 servicemembers. After the withdrawal of NATO and its partners in summer 2021, the Taliban returned to power. After 20 years, the Afghanistan mission had ended in failure. (For critique of the mission, see Chapter 3).

The Role and Ability to act of the Europeans

The EU played an essential role in the reorganisation of Europe after the end of the Cold War. NATO and the EU complemented each other in expanding the Western zone of stability to the East; the EU primarily provided political and economic stability, while NATO provided security and military strategic stability. In parallel with NATO's opening to new members, the EU also admitted a total of thirteen countries from Central, Eastern, and Southern Europe between 2004 and 2013 (ten of them in 2004 alone). This significant enlargement was complemented in 2010 by the *Eastern Partnership*, an initiative to intensify the EU´s political,

Vehicles of the German Armed Forces in Afghanistan

economic and cultural relations with Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. In 1994, the EU and Russia signed the *"Partnership and Cooperation Agreement"*.

In 1992, with the Maastricht Treaty, the EU began not only to create an *Economic and Monetary Union*, but also to develop a *Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP)*. Back then, the Foreign Minister of Luxembourg, Jacques Poos, expressed the hope that the solution of the Balkan crisis could become "the moment of truth for the Europeans". According to him, it was up to them to bring order to their own continent without American support. But the EU as an institution was not yet ready for that. In view of the military conflicts and operations in the Balkans, it became obvious that the Europeans had to jointly assume more responsibility for stability on their own continent. They needed and wanted to develop a common *"European Security and Defence Identity" (ESDI)*, which was at the same time supposed to strengthen the "European pillar" of NATO.

This required a design that, on the one hand, would allow the EU to conduct military crisis operations under EU political control if and when NATO did not want to act itself. On the other hand, parallel structures, competition and duplication of military capabilities for NATO and EU purposes had to be avoided. After all, the majority of the European members of both organisations were (and are) the same. But each state only has one set of armed forces. NATO and the EU should therefore complement each other

in their contribution to international security and mutually reinforce each other, as was the guiding principle in the relevant summit documents. Above all, the link between the security of Europe and that of the U.S. must not be weakened.[29] In the EU there was broad agreement that it should focus on international civilian and civil-military crisis management outside the EU, but that the protection of Europe through collective defence should remain NATO's responsibility.[30]

The *"Berlin-Plus Agreement"* of 2003 provides the framework for this approach as part of the agreed "Strategic Partnership" between NATO and the EU. The Alliance was willing on a case-by-case basis to place certain assets and capabilities at the disposal of the EU for crisis management operations (on the principle of "separable but not separate" capabilities), if NATO itself was not militarily engaged.[31] In practical terms, this essentially means that the NATO Deputy Supreme Commander (DSACEUR), who is always a European, under the political guidance and strategic direction of the EU, commands a multinational military operation while making use of the planning and command capabilities of NATO Staffs. The armed forces are provided by participating EU Member States. EUFOR Althea in Bosnia and Herzegovina has been the only Berlin-Plus operation to date. Any deployment of that kind would have to be approved by the North Atlantic Council, which includes Turkey, but also by the Council of the European Union, which includes the Republic of Cyprus, i. e. the Greek-speaking southern part of the island.[32] Since Turkey does

not recognise this part, additional Berlin-Plus missions have not been possible any more since 2004, when the Republic of Cyprus joined the EU.

In the following years, the EU further developed the institutions and structures of CFSP. The *European Security Strategy* of 2003 pointed the way: the EU was to become "more active, more capable and more coherent".[33] As an international actor, it also needed a *Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP)*. Numerous political, civilian, and military bodies, staffs, and procedures emerged, enabling the EU nowadays to conduct not only civilian but also smaller military crisis operations even autonomously, i. e. without recourse to NATO capabilities.[34] Since 2003, the EU has conducted 37 civilian and civilian-military missions and military operations on three continents; at the end of 2023, there were 15 civilian operations, including police operations, nine military operations and one civilian-military operation in Europe, Africa and the Middle East.[35]

The 2016 *EU Global Strategy*[36] defines three fields of action for the EU's security and defence: (1) Responding to external conflicts and crises, i. e. crisis prevention and civil-military crisis management, (2) Capacity building of partners, especially by advising on the Security Sector Reform, i. e. on the development and reform of their security and defence capabilities, and (3) Protecting the Union and its citizens. The last point primarily refers to the protection of communication networks and critical infrastructure against cyberattacks, protection against terrorism, organised crime and illegal migration, security of EU borders, disaster relief etc. It does not refer to the military defence of the continent. As already stated, the EU recognises that the collective military de-

Russia's military intervention in Georgia has drawn a deep red line against the further rapprochement of this country to NATO.

fence of Europe remains the responsibility of NATO. By the same token, NATO and the U.S. welcome the efforts of EU nations to jointly develop modern, high-quality military capabilities, and to draw on EU financial resources such as the *European Defence Fund (EDF)* to achieve this. It is now widely recognised that the challenges faced by the transatlantic community are so huge and numerous that each and every strengthening of European capabilities is welcome.

EU Operation EUFOR RD CONGO with German participation, July 2006

The civilian and civilian-military EU crisis management missions are an important contribution to transatlantic burden sharing in terms of security policy. However, with the UK's exit from the EU, the 'Brexit', the EU has nominally lost a significant part of its military capabilities and defence spending resources required for Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) objectives. The combined defence budgets of the 27 EU Member States, 23 of which are also NATO members, currently correspond to around 25 percent of the combined defence budgets of the NATO Allies. (The USA's defence spending alone accounts for approx. two-thirds of the combined defence budgets of all NATO Allies.) This makes it all the more important for NATO and the EU to further intensify their cooperation and for the United Kingdom to partake in capability development within the framework of the EU (see further considerations on this topic in Chapter 5).

Russia's Turning Away from the West

With the NATO-Russia Founding Act of 1997 many in NATO believed that they could develop a "strategic partnership" with Russia, especially with respect to the joint management of international crises operations. Crises were supposed to be managed based on the principles stipulated in the Founding Act. However, relations have never been free of tensions. In the 1990s, Russia imposed trade sanctions on several of its neighbours. It waged two wars in Chechnya (1994 and 1999). The positive momentum in arms control for conventional forces after the end of the Cold War did not last. The dissolution of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact and the accession of Central and Eastern European countries to NATO had changed the the basic, geopolitical structure underlying the

CFE Treaty because the two blocs no longer existed. In the 1999 Agreement on *Adaptation of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (A-CFE)*, restrictions on conventional weapon systems were no longer based on the two opposing blocs of the past, but on individual territorial boundaries. *A-CFE* was signed by all participating states, but not ratified by the NATO states. In their view, Russia had not withdrawn its troops from Georgia and Transnistria as it had been agreed. In December 2007, Russia suspended the application of the CFE Treaty. Moscow cited the refusal of the Baltic states and Slovenia to join the CFE Treaty as one of the main reasons. Then in 2011, NATO countries stopped sharing information with Russia. NATO accused Russia of repeatedly violating the Vienna Document, in part because of the discrepancy between the declared and actual personnel levels of its large-scale military exercises in the vicinity of the Russian border and because Moscow circumvented the obligation to invite exercise observers by splitting exercises into several smaller ones.[37] As already outlined in Chapter 1, Moscow held the opinion that the U.S. withdrawal from the ABM Treaty in June 2002 and the U.S. plan to build a ballistic missile defence system would allegedly limit Russia´s nuclear second-strike capability and would thus be perceived by Russia as a perspective threat to security. The U.S. and NATO argued that the ballistic missile defence capability was directed exclusively against a possible missile threat from states like Iran or North Korea and that the two missile defence systems in Romania and Poland (with a very limited number of missiles) could not reach Russian intercontinental ballistic missiles for technical-physical reasons and would not endanger Russia's nuclear second-strike capability. These arguments were disregarded by Moscow.

Above all, the Russian leadership was not willing to come to terms with NATO's expansion to the east of Europe and the loss of the strategic buffer zone and sphere of influence in Russia's west. From the outset, there was also a conceptual tension between, on the one hand, admitting new member states that due to experience feared Russia's imperial ambitions, and, on the other hand, NATO´s intention to develop an equal partnership with Russia based on the consent of all NATO members. When President Vladimir Putin gave an angry speech at the Munich Security Conference in 2007, in which he railed against the supposed monopolistic world domination of the United States and called NATO's opening to new members from Central and Eastern Europe a threat to Russia, Moscow began shifting away from partnership with the West.[38] During the NATO-Russia Council meeting at the level of Heads of State and Government at the 2008 NATO Summit in Bucharest, the Russian President stated that Ukraine was not even a state, when losing his temper over the Alliance's just recently taken decision that Ukraine and Geor-

President Putin's angry speech at the 2007 Munich Security Conference

gia would become members of NATO, albeit at an undefined time in the future. Putin announced that Russia would "fulfil its responsibilities wherever Russian citizens lived and their security might be threatened."[39] Shortly thereafter, Russia invaded Georgia in the conflict over the Georgian province of South Ossetia, claiming that it had to protect its citizens there. Without NATO protection, Estonia and Latvia fear a similar fate since a quarter of their population is of Russian descent.

Russia's security is defined in absolute terms, that is, at the expense of the security of others, especially states in its neighbourhood.

According to most experts on Russia, the strategic thinking and actions of today's Russian leadership are based on a mixture of offensive and defensive elements that have their origins in Russian history, Russia's self-image as an imperial power and its geographic location. Securing the existing authoritarian system is the highest priority. Democracy, the rule of law and economic recovery in Ukraine, where millions of Russians live, would be an existential threat to President Putin's rule. From the Kremlin's point of view, the democratic 'colour revolutions' in Ukraine and Georgia in the 2000s and most recently in Belarus in 2020 evoked a perception of genuine danger. They were therefore denounced as being instigated and controlled from outside, primarily by the US, and denigrated as "fascist". In 2008, Russia's military interventions in Georgia drew a deep red line against the country's further rapprochement with NATO.

At the same time, because of its imperial history, its size and nuclear power, Russia believes it has a quasi-natural claim to be respected as a privileged great power and to act accordingly, on a par with the United States and as its rival. In this interpretation, an equal level of security only exists between great powers. An institutionalised level of security, equal for large and small states, as granted by NATO and the EU, is alien to the thinking of the Russian leadership. After all, Moscow's fear of encirclement and invasion is rooted in the geostrategic position of its vast continental landmass. The over 20,000 kilometres of land border cannot be secured militarily. Presumed threats must be warded off or at least kept under control far outside the Russian heartland. Russia's security is therefore defined in absolute terms, i. e. at the expense of the security of others, especially of states in its neighbourhood.

What stands in the way of expanding Russian control in Europe are the EU and NATO, as well as the military presence of the USA in Europe.

Taken together, all these factors underpin Russia's claim to dominance and control over its neighbourhood, to its insistence on "privileged interests" (according to former President Dimitri Medvedev) in the "Near Abroad" and on exclusive geostrategic spheres of influence. The Russian-controlled protective buffer zone that the Soviet republics and the Warsaw Pact provided until 1989 is now being pursued by the Russian leadership by other means. There is some evidence that Moscow had expected that beyond the areas of consultation and cooperation defined in the NATO-Russia Founding Act, the NATO-Russia Council would give Russia a practical veto over the admission of European states to NATO as well as over other questions concerning the security order in Europe.[40] But the expectation that the United States would recognise Russia's geostrategic zones of influence and take into account its special interests in these zones, including for example in the Western Balkans and the Middle East, was dashed. From Putin's point of view, NATO's engagement against Serbia as well as the U.S. war against Iraq that was fought without a UN mandate were attempts to practically undermine and remove Russia's veto power in the UN Security Council.[41] President Medvedev's 2009 proposal for a new European Security Treaty and President Putin's 2013 proposal to establish a Western sector under U.S. responsibility and an Eastern sector under Russian responsibility for ballistic missile defence in Europe would have come down to a virtual division of Europe and a Russian veto on NATO decisions. Moscow's insistence on "privileged interests" in its neighbourhood therefore fell on deaf ears.

What stands in the way of expanding Russian control in Europe are the EU, NATO, and the U.S. military presence in Europe. From Russia's point of view, their cohesion must be undermined, their decision-making capacity must be paralysed, and their ability to act must be blocked. Then Russian dominance and control over Europe can unfold by itself. Moscow's revisionist security policy has a defensive motive, i. e. the protection of a vast continental empire. But at the same time, Russia follows traditional imperial ambitions and behaves aggressively and unpredictably towards the outside world – today in an extremely brutal war of conquest against Ukraine and also pursuing a policy of permanent confrontation with the West. At the same time, domestically, media surveillance and repression of the opposition are steadily increasing.

The transatlantic community cannot put its values and principles, the freedom and security of its members or the existence of its partner Ukraine at risk in order to satisfy the geopolitical interests of Russia's autocratic leadership. The need for defence preparedness against Moscow´s territorial expansion became apparent when Russia occupied Crimea in 2014 and later annexed it, and when Russia provided military support to alleged rebels in Donbass. This breach of taboo in international law and NATO´s response will be discussed in Chapter 3.

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[1] *In essence, the overall development of NATO and its core functions can be tracked by comparing the three successive Strategic Concepts of 1991, 1999, and 2010 (see Source Materials). In contrast to the classified military strategies of the Cold War culminating in Flexible Response (MC 14/3) in 1968, these Strategic Concepts are public and are rather politico-military conceptualizations of NATO's role in the changing security environment. They reflect the shift in NATO's mission and the change in NATO´s focus of action, from collective defence to international crisis management and partnership relations in Europe and far beyond.*

[2] *Bush, George H.W.: A Europe Whole and Free. Remarks to the Citizens in Mainz/Federal Republic of Germany, 31 May 1989, published by the U.S. Embassy in Germany.*

[3] *In principle, all nuclear weapons with a range of less than 5,500 km are designated as sub-strategic; however, there is no generally accepted definition.*

[4] *These are Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Finland, Georgia, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Malta, Moldova, Serbia, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. Belarus and Russia were also members but in 2024 NATO suspended practical cooperation with Belarus and Russia due to the invasion and annexation of Crimea.*

5   The number of PfP partners rose to twenty over time. Sweden and Finland, for example, intensified relations with NATO after Russia's incursion into Ukraine. Several times a year, they attended meetings of the North Atlantic Council to exchange views on the security situation in the Baltic Sea region. The military leaders also coordinated planning. Both partners had made their territory available for NATO exercises.

6   In 2020, NATO recognised Ukraine as an EOP. Finland and Sweden are now members of the Alliance.

7   Naumann, Klaus: Frieden – der noch nicht erfüllte Auftrag, Hamburg 2002, p. 82. In 1991, in the Hungarian city of Visegrád, Poland, Czechoslovakia (as of 1993 the Czech Republic and Slovakia) and Hungary formed an informal alliance, the Visegrád Group, in order to coordinate their policies in various fields and to support each other in their striving for EU and NATO membership.

8   Rühe, Volker: Shaping Euro-Atlantic Policies – A Grand Strategy for a New Era, Speech delivered at the International Institute for Strategic Studies, London, 26 March 1993 (Alastair Buchan Memorial Lecture).

9   Weißer, Ulrich: Sicherheit für ganz Europa, Stuttgart 1999, p. 23-59.

10 France wanted to eliminate a "northern imbalance", Italy wanted to create a land bridge to Hungary; see Hecht, Tobias: Die Haltung der USA zur NATO-Erweiterung. Strategie, Pragmatik und Weltordnung in den Jahren nach dem Ost-West-Konflikt, in: Schriften des Zentrums für Interdisziplinäre Regionalstudien, vol. 5, Halle an der Saale 2014, p. 153.

11 In the case of Ukraine, the NATO Heads of State and Government at their meeting in Vilnius in 2023 decided that Ukraine no longer had to go through a MAP because it was already well advanced in terms of readiness for accession; see Vilnius Summit Communiqué, 11 July 2023, para. 11.

12 Asmus, Ronald D.: Opening NATO's Door, New York 2002, p. 4142.

13 After the annexation of the Crimea Peninsula in 2014, Russia was excluded from the G 8.

14 As President of the Russian Federation, Yeltsin even wanted to join NATO in December 1991, according to Alexander Vershbow, the then U.S. Ambassador to NATO; see Vershbow, Alexander: Present at the Transformation: An Insider's Reflection on NATO Enlargement, NATO-Russia Relations, and Where We Go from Here, in Hamilton, Daniel S., Spohr, Kristina: Open Door – NATO and Euro-Atlantic Security after the Cold War, Washington, D.C. 2019, p. 427.

15 Weißer, Ulrich loc.cit., p. 42.

16 Naumann, Klaus loc.cit., p. 52.

17 NATO: Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between NATO and the Russian Federation signed in Paris, France, 27 May 1997.

18 At the NATO summit in Vilnius in 2023, the NATO-Ukraine Commission was replaced by the NATO-Ukraine Council, see Chapter 4.

19 Naumann, Klaus, loc. cit., p. 55.

20 Alberque, William: "Substantial Combat Forces" in the context of NATO-Russia Relations, NATO Defence College, Research Paper 131, Rome, June 2016; also: Richter, Wolfgang, loc. cit., p. 14; the NATO Battlegroups in the Baltic states and Poland remain well below this limit.

21 In 2020, the U.S. withdrew from the agreement in response to restrictions imposed by Russia on the inspection of certain Russian territories (for example Kaliningrad). In 2021, Russia also declared its withdrawal.

22 As explained in Chapter 1, the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM Treaty) prohibited missile defence systems that were capable of protecting the entire territory of a state. However, it allowed limited defence systems to protect certain cities and military bases. In 2002, the U.S. were confronted with new threats, such as the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and of missile technology, the threat from so-called rogue states such as Iran, Iraq and North Korea, and the threat of international terrorism, as demonstrated by the attack on the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington on 11 September 2001. Therefore, Washington wanted to develop a national missile defense system. After announcing its intention in 2001, the U.S. withdrew from the treaty on 13 June 2002.

23 After Presidents Biden and Putin in 2021 extended the treaty by five more years, Putin suspended it in February 2023. Reciprocal inspections no longer take place.

24 Since August 2021, the German politician and President of the German Atlantic Association, former Federal Minister Christian Schmidt, has held this office.

25 The then Russian Foreign Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin played a crucial role in convincing Milošević to give up and thus spare NATO an invasion on the ground; see Vershbow, Alexander, loc. cit., p. 437.

26 Following renewed tensions between Serbia and Kosovo in 2023, the KFOR troops were increased from 3,800 to their current strength.

27 ISAF's mandate was based on Chapter VII of the UN Charter, which authorises peace enforcement which in turn entails the use of armed force.

28 Domröse, Hans-Lothar, "Our soldiers have given their most valuable possession – their lives", interview in the newspaper Berliner Zeitung, 12 Sept. 2021.

29 Scharioth, Klaus: Making ESDP strong will strengthen NATO and the Transatlantic Partnership, in: Brimmer, Esther (ed.): The EU's Search for a Strategic Role: ESDP and its Implications for Transatlantic Relations, Washington, D.C. 2002, p. 165174.

30 These central questions still essentially determine the discussion today about the EU's Common Security Policy, its "Strategic Autonomy", which France in particular is striving for, and the relationship between NATO and the EU. The summary presented here is a concise political and military synopsis of twenty years of development, insofar as it is relevant to NATO. For more on the development of the CSDP and of NATO-EU cooperation in recent years, see Chapter 4.

31 The entire Berlin-Plus Agreement is laid down in numerous individual regulations, which are identical in wording for both the EU and NATO and which were approved by the North Atlantic Council and the Council of the European Union on the same day.

32 The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus in the north of the island is recognised only by Turkey. The latter occupied this part in 1974, when Greek putschists wanted to enforce the annexation of Cyprus to Greece.

33 European Council: A Secure Europe in a Better World, European Security Strategy, Brussels 2003

34 For an overview in German, see The Federal Government: Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-de/service/gemeinsame-sicherheits-und-verteidigungspolitik-gsvp--450272

35 See Zentrum für Internationale Friedenseinsätze (ZIF, Centre for International Peace Operations): Akteure in Friedenseinsätzen (Actors in Peace Operations): https://www.zif-berlin.org/akteure-friedenseinsaetzen

36 European Union: Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe – A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy, Brussels 2016.

37 For an overview of the state of conventional and nuclear arms control in Europe, see Richter, Wolfgang, loc. cit.

38 Leersch, HansJürgen: Putins Paukenschlag, in: Die WELT, 12 Feb. 2007.

39 The author attended the NATO-Russia Council meeting in Bucharest and witnessed President Putin's spontaneous remarks during the session.

40 Zagorski, Andrei: Russia and NATO in the 1990s, in: Hamilton, Daniel S., Spohr, Kristina: Open Door – NATO and EuroAtlantic Security after the Cold War, Washington, D.C. 2019, p. 474.

41 Vershbow, Alexander, loc. cit., p. 44.

3

SECURITY POLICY TURNING POINT IN EUROPE – RUSSIA'S AGGRESSION AGAINST UKRAINE IN 2014 AND THE ARC OF CRISIS IN THE SOUTH

2014
Russia's military aggression against Ukraine, annexation of the Crimean Peninsula; NATO's response: *Readiness Action Plan*; launch of the US-led *Global Coalition against ISIS*; transition from ISAF to the *Resolute Support Mission (RSM)* in Afghanistan

2016
NATO Summit meeting in Warsaw: decision on NATO's dual strategy – strengthening NATO's deterrence and defence posture (to the east) and the 'projection of stability' concept (to the south)

2017
Enhanced Forward Presence: four multinational NATO battle-groups in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland; Montenegro joins NATO

2020
NATO accession of North Macedonia

SECURITY POLICY TURNING POINT IN EUROPE

RUSSIA'S AGGRESSION AGAINST UKRAINE IN 2014 AND THE ARC OF CRISIS IN THE SOUTH

Russia's covert military intervention in Ukraine in violation of international law at the end of February 2014 and the annexation of Crimea a few days later caught NATO unprepared. Even though Russia's alienation from NATO since 2007 had naturally not gone unnoticed, no one had expected Russia's military aggression against a neighbouring state or the annexation of part of its territory in blatant violation of numerous international treaties and agreements. [1] Moscow violated an iron principle, which until then had been essential for Euro-Atlantic security and stability, i. e. respect for the territorial integrity of states and for the inviolability of national borders. NATO saw this action as a breach of taboo, which fundamentally changed security in Europe. Who could guarantee that the Kremlin would not threaten other western neighbours, even though they were members of NATO? These NATO states now sought greater protection from (rather than cooperation with) Russia.

As seen from 2024, two years after Russia's aggression against Ukraine, the invasion and annexation of Crimea and the belligerent acts of the Russian-backed separatists in Donbas seem like a prelude to Russia's major military attack on Ukraine in February 2022. However, this was not foreseeable in 2014. On the contrary, the West hoped that the Minsk Agreement of 2015 ("Minsk II"), negotiated in the so-called Normandy format (the Heads of Government of Germany, France, Ukraine and Russia), could end the fighting in eastern Ukraine, stabilise the situation and enable a political solution to be found. [2] From today's perspective, NATO's reaction to the Russian invasion was generally restrained. Although NATO suspended all practical civilian and military cooperation with Russia, it kept open the channels for political and military communication, probably also in the hope that President Putin might come to his senses. In the years that followed, however, relations between Russia and NATO deteriorated noticeably, mainly due to Moscow's recurring subversive actions, disinformation campaigns, cyberattacks and assassinations (e. g. the poisoning of the Russian-British double agent Sergei Skripal in Salisbury in 2018 or the Tiergarten murder in Berlin in 2019). Nevertheless, military precautions against a

possible military threat to the Alliance from Russia remained overall limited, also in order to avoid giving Putin a pretext for escalation and also because the Alliance was still heavily involved in international crisis management, and the military capabilities of European NATO Allies were limited.

Practically, this meant that after 20 years of concentrating on crisis management and cooperation with partners, NATO had to reacquire the grammar of deterrence and defence. For a whole generation of politicians, diplomats, NATO planners and military commanders and their staffs, this was a new, partly unfamiliar challenge. The new situation had far-reaching implications for strategic and operational planning as well as for the structures and capabilities of the armed forces of NATO members. The Allies held the opinion that Russia posed the most serious military and geopolitical threat to NATO.

Russia's Strategy of "Hybrid Warfare"

In retrospect, NATO could have guessed. President Putin had repeatedly stated his opposition to an independent, Western-oriented Ukraine. The war in Georgia in 2008, which Russia waged over the Georgian province of South Ossetia on the grounds of protecting its citizens, led to great irritation within the Alliance. For a short time, it suspended the NATO-Russia Council meetings. However, a significant part of the responsibility was attributed to the Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili, who, relying on the support of the U.S., wanted to regain control of South Ossetia and was the first to take military action. Furthermore, the Alliance did not want to give up the objective of a special partnership with Russia, as it was of "strategic importance" at the time for "creating a common space of peace, stability and security". [3] The thinking was such – as explained in Chapter 2 – because the New-START Treaty on the further significant reduction of strategic nuclear weapons was successfully concluded in 2010 under then U.S. President Barack Obama and then Russian President Dmitry Medvedev.

Russian soldiers in front of a Ukrainian barracks in Crimea, 2014

With the invasion of Ukraine in 2014, Russia demonstrated its willingness to use military force to attack neighbours and permanently shift territorial borders, in violation of international law, if the Russian leadership considered such action justified to enforce its geopolitical interests and considered the associated risk to be manageable. The surprise for NATO was not only due to the aggression itself, but also to the way in which Russia proceeded. Russia applied almost perfectly what the West calls "hybrid warfare" strategy, i. e. a broad, coordinated campaign of non-military means as well as covert and overt military measures. These include comprehensive propaganda and disinformation, subversive actions and assassinations, covert support for "rebels", cyber-attacks against civilian and military infrastructure, undisclosed military exercises near the border and threatening levels of troop deployments along the border, demonstrative nuclear force exercises and threatening, intimidating public rhetoric. Russian measures also include severe influencing of elections in democratic states via the internet and social media. This "strategy of active defence" (General Valery Gerasimov, Russian Chief of General Staff) [4] uses all options in a flexible way depending on the situation and on the occasion, in peace, in a crisis and in a war. This strategy has been designed to blur the lines between peace and conflict, to make it more difficult to attribute aggression and to avoid crossing the threshold that could be perceived by NATO as an open military attack and trigger military defence action; and yet it is to achieve an effect similar to that of military action, i. e. surprise, uncertainty, intimidation and paralysis of the adversary. This strategy aims to destabilise Western states and organisations from within and to intimidate them from the outside.

The most important target of Russia's "hybrid" strategy at the time was Ukraine. From Moscow's perspective, Ukraine had to be kept in a fragile political state in order to retain sufficient control over its internal development and a de facto veto over the status of Donbas. Ukraine's further rapprochement with the EU and NATO had to be blocked. With the rapid, concentric deployment of around 100,000 troops and military equipment on the border with Ukraine and the blockade of the Sea of Azov in April 2021, the Russian leadership demonstrated its military options to discipline Ukraine politically in line with Russian interests, without Kyjiv, its European partners or the U.S. being able to prevent it. In addition, there was political rhetoric and propaganda. In his much-noticed article from July 2021 [5] President Putin once again denied Ukraine's own statehood and spoke of the alleged "historical unity of Russians and Ukrainians". The West, on the other hand, wanted to turn Ukraine into an "anti-Russia project". Russia would not allow this. Those who tried to do so anyway were "destroying their own country"; he was probably referring to the Ukrainian leadership and a war, which he then started in February 2022. In light of the ongoing positional warfare in Donbas and the Russian deployment, this sounded like a renewed military threat. Putin's stance and his actions were also the reason for the criticism that was voiced in Ukraine, in some Central and Eastern European NATO members, and in Washington, against the German-Russian Nord Stream 2 natural gas pipeline, which runs from Russia through the Baltic Sea to Germany. This pipeline would have allowed Moscow to deliver gas to Europe by bypassing Ukraine and Poland, thereby closing a significant source of income for Ukraine and thus further increasing the pressure on Kyjiv. [6] In July 2021, the U.S. and Germany reached an agreement, and Berlin assumed extensive responsibility for implementing measures to support Ukraine. [7] The U.S. and Germany threatened the Russian leadership with sanctions if it used "energy as a weapon".

The example of Ukraine has shown that large, deployable and rapidly available military forces continue to be the most important instrument in Russia's strategy. Russia has systematically modernised its army since the 2000s and has significantly increased its defence budget over the last ten years. According to the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), the Russian defence budget amounted to approx. $ 62 billion in 2019, which corresponded to a purchasing power of around $ 164 billion in Russia. Around 40 percent was spent on modernizing large equipment. [8] According to IISS estimates, Russia was able to quickly deploy 60,000 operational land forces in all directions. Furthermore, what the USA had seen coming in previous years and repeatedly cautioned NATO about, became

apparent in 2018; in breach of the 1987 INF Treaty [9], Russia deployed new, ground-based, mobile medium-range precision weapons (SSC-8 or 9M729) in its western territory. These weapon systems are part of an extensive arms build-up including medium-range missiles and cruise missiles, which are dual-capable, i. e. can carry conventional or nuclear warheads and which can reach targets in Europe from different distances with great accuracy. Today, large parts of Europe can again be precision-targeted by Russian nuclear weapons.

Moreover, by entering the war in Syria in 2015 to support the Assad regime, Moscow further expanded its anti-Western radius of action. Russia has shown that it is capable of projecting military power over strategic distances. Today, Russia maintains several air bases and the Tartus naval base in Syria. Russia has thus filled a gap that was left by the U.S. and has permanently established itself as an important player in the Middle East – not as a peacemaker but as a brutal protective power of autocratic rulers. Russia also has a military presence on the African continent, for example in Libya, Mali and Congo, albeit less visibly as Russia uses private military companies *(PMCs)* such as the Wagner Group.

Russian Military Doctrine – preparing for regional wars

The Russian military doctrine and armament build-up measures fit seamlessly into the policy and strategy of the Russian leadership. Regional wars on Russia's periphery play a major role in this doctrine. It also stipulates that conventional and nuclear forces are combined and that the use of nuclear weapons or the threat of using them is a means of operational warfare in order to win wars. This approach is in contrast to NATO's doctrine, according to which the use of nuclear weapons would "fundamentally change the nature of a military conflict"[10], i. e. it would be potentially uncontrollable and would cause unacceptably high damage to the attacker itself because of a nuclear counterattack. Russia, on the other hand, is clearly trying to achieve escalation dominance capability in a regional conflict in Europe and probably sees this as a decisive strategic advantage over the U.S. and NATO. Every four years, Russia carries out a large-scale exercise called ZAPAD ("West") to train for a military confrontation with the West, including the use of nuclear weapons.

The Russian leadership is aware that it could not survive a long war with conventional forces against NATO, which could count on the huge military potential of the U.S. But by having deployed its armed forces during peacetime along the Baltic states, which are an exposed region of NATO bordering directly on Russia,

Russia had gained considerable regional military superiority.[11] The Kremlin might assume that principally there is an option to occupy the Baltic states or parts of them with a rapid, regionally limited attack, supplemented by cyberattacks, systematic disinformation campaigns and subversive actions, and to create a fait accompli – underpinned by the threat of far-reaching conventional or nuclear strikes against European capitals and critical civilian and military infrastructure that are essential for the deployment of

Russia's intervention in Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea caught NATO unprepared and fundamentally changed the security situation in Europe.

Allied troops and the defence of NATO area. The Russian leadership might believe that it could paralyse the Europeans' will to defend themselves, that it could cause the U.S. to stay out and force NATO to give up, especially for fear of nuclear escalation. It could thus achieve strategic success without a long war. From the perspective of 2014, Moscow might also have been tempted to use such behaviour as a bargaining chip to force NATO into concessions in other places, for example to give up its support for Ukraine and Georgia. Such scenarios and strategic options that might be available to Moscow in a future crisis with NATO as well as the potential political implications for the Alliance's unity and ability to act caused great concern within NATO after the events of 2014. Since then, NATO´s strategic development has focused on denying Russia the above options.

NATO's Response since 2014 – revitalising its Core Function of "Deterrence and Collective Defence"

As described in the previous chapter, over the past 20 years, NATO had concentrated on stabilisation missions in regions outside the Alliance's territory and on expanding partnerships. Deterrence and collective defence had taken a backseat, also in view of fostering a "strategic partnership" with Russia at the time. All this changed abruptly in 2014. NATO was faced with the geopolitical interests, the imperial ambitions, and the "hybrid" strategy of the Russian leadership. Deterrence and defence capability became NATO's primary *core function* again, albeit in a completely different political, strategic and technological environment and in a much larger area with a considerably longer eastern border, compared to the Cold War. Back then, NATO's defence was

essentially concentrated in West Germany, where large armies and an arsenal of nuclear weapons faced each other. In 2014, the military challenges were less imminently threatening, but the dangers have become far more complex since then. The Alliance has had to resist Russia's disinformation and intimidation tactics, in peacetime and in a potential crisis. NATO and its member states must drastically increase the protection of their communication networks against cyberattacks. They must deny Moscow the option of a quick, successful regional attack that could create a fait accompli. And they must be able to refute a possible threat to use nuclear missiles against European Allies.

Today, large parts of Europe can again be threatened from Russia's soil with pinpoint precision, both conventionally and with nuclear weapons.

The entirety of these strategic priorities required a fundamental strategic and conceptual reorientation of the Alliance. This had far-reaching consequences for operational planning and the development and equipment of Allies' armed forces. In light of these priorities, NATO was guided by a number of political and military considerations in 2014 and in the subsequent years to strengthen its deterrence and defence posture. The Alliance needed to radically improve its reconnaissance and response capabilities and increase its political and military decision-making and command and control capacity. NATO, and the USA in particular, spoke of a thorough *"culture of readiness"* that needed to be established. The Alliance also had to drastically strengthen its resilience against cyberattacks as well as its protective measures to safeguard its command and communication systems and its underseas infrastructure. NATO forces had to increase their ability to protect themselves against long-range enemy reconnaissance, electronic warfare and precision long-range missiles as well as against swarms of drones [12] The Alliance had to increase the operational readiness of its forces, especially its rapid reaction forces. It had to be able to deploy forces in a timely manner in all regions of the Alliance that could be threatened in a crisis – from northern Norway and the Norwegian Sea to the North Atlantic, the Baltic and the Black Sea region and the Mediterranean. It therefore had to be able to deploy the right forces in the right place at the right time, possibly in several regions simultaneously. In addition, as a result of the drastic reduction and transformation of armed forces and reduced defence budgets in Europe

in the two decades prior to 2014, the military capacities of the Europeans were limited, a rapid increase was unrealistic and quite a few troops were tied up in rotating deployments in crisis regions. At the time, NATO therefore decided against the permanent deployment of larger units along the Alliance's borders. Instead, it relied on being able to provide timely military support over long distances to allies under threat and to strengthen their national defence. The armed forces required for this had to be very flexible, highly mobile and highly effective and able to act with pinpoint accuracy over long distances.

There were also political reasons for this approach. To this day, NATO is consciously adhering to the military commitments of the NATO-Russia Founding Act of 1997, while Russia has violated its obligations. NATO wants to show that, unlike Russia, it is sticking to its international commitments. Furthermore, it did not want to give the Russian leadership an excuse to respond to an alleged threat with further armament build-up in border regions, for example in Belarus. In shaping its strategy, the Alliance reaffirmed its commitment to the dual Harmel principle, which combines a policy of strength with dialogue. In principle, all practical cooperation with Russia in the civilian and military sphere as developed before 2014 remains suspended *("no business as usual")* until Russia takes measures that demonstrate a renewed adherence to contractual obligations. But unlike after the war in Georgia in 2008, the NATO-Russia Council was not suspended in 2014. The military commanders-in-chief still communicated to some extent. In times of growing tensions, it was important to avoid misunderstandings and to maintain a minimum of understanding and predictability. However, Russia's interest in a dialogue waned considerably. Initially, the position of the Russian ambassador to NATO remained vacant. Then, at the beginning of November 2021, Moscow closed its representation at NATO Headquarters in Brussels and also withdrew the accreditation for the members of the NATO representation in Moscow.

The renewal and strengthening of NATO´s deterrence and defence capability, which will be summarised in the following sections, has followed a clearly defensive orientation. NATO has asserted that its measures have been deliberately balanced and proportionate. They have not posed a threat to Russia, but they have sent the message that coercion would remain ineffective, that an attack with conventional forces would not be successful, that the disadvantages for Moscow would be greater than the hoped-for gains and that in extreme cases, for example in the event of a nuclear attack, such an attack could result in unacceptable damage for Russia itself.

Renewal of Deterrence and Defence – NATO's Programme as of 2014

The Alliance developed a comprehensive programme for the practical implementation of this strategy. It began with the *Readiness Action Plan (RAP)*, which was developed and negotiated in a fast-track process and adopted at the Wales Summit in 2014. It provided for a wealth of individual measures to increase NATO's ability to respond. These included, for example, the strengthening of reconnaissance and surveillance of airspace over the Baltic states; the tripling of the *NATO Response Force (NRF)* with army, air force and navy components to 40,000 servicemembers and, as part of this, the establishment of a multinational rapid reaction force called Very High Readiness Joint Task Force – (VJTF) with a troop strength of around 5,000. The first elements of the VJTF had to be ready to deploy within a few days. Its leadership rotated annually between five European nations including Germany, which also provided the majority of this task force. The operational readiness of the Danish-German-Polish headquarters of the *Multinational Corps North-East* in Szczecin (Stettin) in Poland was drastically increased. It became responsible for the planning and, if necessary, for the command of defence operations in the entire northeast of the Alliance area.[13] The number of exercises in the east was increased, contingency plans were drawn up for five critical regions, the military infrastructure was improved, and military equipment and supplies were moved to arms depots in the region.

For geostrategic reasons, NATO decided to go one step further in 2015. As mentioned before, the Baltic states and Poland share borders with Russia and its ally Belarus. The Baltic states are geographically exposed and are only connected to NATO territory by the so-called Suwałki Corridor in Poland between the Russian Kaliningrad Oblast and Belarus. Due to the geography and the large distances between Central Europe and the Baltic states, the numerically superior Russian forces in the region had a numerically significant advantage in terms of space, time, and force deployment over NATO reinforcements. In a war, NATO deployment efforts could be significantly weakened and delayed by the Russian *Anti-Access/Area-Denial (A2/AD)* capabilities in Kaliningrad, i. e. multiple air defence systems, long-range artillery, missiles and cruise missiles, and electronic warfare systems. Back then, Finland and Sweden were not yet members of the Alliance. After in-depth internal discussions, NATO concluded that multinational combat forces should be stationed in peacetime in the Baltic states and in Poland in order to reinforce the respective national defence forces.

At the NATO summit in Warsaw in 2016, NATO decided to launch *"enhanced Forward Presence" (eFP)*. It consists of multinational battlegroups[14] deployed in the Baltic states and Poland on a rotational basis, led by Germany (in Lithuania), the UK (in Estonia), Canada (in Latvia) and the USA (in Poland). More than twenty Allies are participating with troops. The battlegroups were deliberately limited in size (with up to 1,800 servicemembers) and thus demonstratively remained in line with the self-commitment cited in the NATO-Russia Founding Act. But they signal to Moscow that even in the event of a limited incursion, Russia would immediately be at war with the entire Alliance, including the three nuclear powers USA, France and Great Britain. NATO would immediately invoke Article 5. After rational consideration, this would be too great of a risk for Russia: NATO´s deterrence strategy in a nutshell. A mechanised American brigade and additional US support forces, in total approx. 6,000 troops, have been deployed to Poland on a rotational basis as part of Washington's European Defence Initiative. Their presence reinforces the deterrence effect. NATO battlegroups were on the ground as of mid-2017. Many experts consider this measure to be the key element of NATO's new 2016 deterrence and defence posture.[15] However, in order for this posture to be credible, the members of NATO had to be in a position to reinforce the armed forces of the Baltic states and Poland and the respective battlegroups quickly and effectively, in terms of air, land, and sea warfare, so as to deny Russia the prospect of success for any form of regional attack (and let any such threat come to nothing).

With the 'Readiness Action Plan', NATO wanted to be able to deploy the right forces in the right place at the right time.

The *enhanced Forward Presence* in the northeast was supplemented by *tailored Forward Presence (tFP)* in the southeast of the Alliance area in Europe. NATO increased its visible military presence through enhanced multinational exercises on a rotational basis. The Multinational Brigade South-East and the staff of the Multinational Division South-East in Romania, supported by Bulgaria, provided the setting. In addition, NATO strengthened air surveillance over Romania and Bulgaria and over the Black Sea and increased its maritime presence in the Black Sea.

In addition to the required force structure, the strategy of NATO calls for effective command and control capabilities and also for protective measures to safeguard the command and communi-

NATO exercise "Trident Juncture", 2018

cation systems against all forms of hybrid attacks, especially against paralysing cyberattacks. However, identifying the perpetrators of cyberattacks is difficult and time-consuming. NATO has stated that it will use all means at its disposal to deter or counter such attacks, including offensive actions in cyberspace by nations willing to carry out such activities. Certain cyberattacks may trigger the invocation of Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty and thus collective defence measures. The North Atlantic Council reserves the right to decide on the nature and circumstances of such attacks as well as on NATO's response.

NATO needed "heavier and more high-end forces and capabilities as well as more forces at higher readiness".

The NATO Command Structure, i. e. the network of NATO headquarters in Europe and North America, has been strengthened and given the ability to lead demanding defence operations. This includes a new Cyber Operations Centre at SHAPE. A *"NATO Hub for the South"* was established at NATO Headquarters in Naples, the *Allied Joint Forces Command Naples*. Since then, it has been monitoring and analysing developments in NATO's South, in particular possibly destabilising developments, terrorism, radicalisation trends, migration and threats to the environment in the Mediterranean region, North Africa and the Middle East. It contributes to a better understanding of the region within NATO

and maintains contact with partner countries. The reform of the Command Structure also included two new headquarters responsible for managing the deployment of Alliance forces across the Atlantic and in Europe: *Joint Force Command Norfolk* in Norfolk, Virginia, and *Joint Support and Enabling Command* in Ulm, Germany. This constellation also reflects the special German-American responsibility for the security of the Central Eastern European Allies. Germany hosts the most important U.S. military units in Europe, it is the "hub" for deploying Allied forces across Europe and it is the country that would have to provide immediate military support in the event of a crisis.

Continuous increase in Defence Budgets – the two-percent commitment and fair burden sharing

The new situation required not only a political-military reorientation of NATO but also modern military capabilities, which would be needed for mechanised defence operations in Europe. As mentioned before, many Europeans had eroded their armed forces and military strength for years, they had focused almost exclusively on capabilities for multinational contingents that were dependent on U.S. support in operations. Over the years, most European Allies had continuously reduced their defence budgets. Therefore, the Heads of State and Government agreed at their meeting in Warsaw in 2014, that NATO needed *"heavier and more high-end forces and capabilities, as well as more forces at higher readiness"*. However, increasing the size of armies and restoring full operational capability required a drastic increase in defence spending. Back in 2014 – and reaffirmed at all NATO summits

since then – the Heads of State and Government of those nations whose defence budgets were less than 2 percent of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) agreed to a Defence Investment Pledge (DIP) and thus politically committed themselves to increase their defence budgets to a target of 2 percent by 2024, i. e. within a ten-year period. They also pledged to spend more than 20 percent of their defence budgets on new major equipment, including related research and development. And they agreed to use the additional resources to meet NATO Capability Targets, i. e. to increase modern military capabilities. [16]

Bundeswehr IT exercise GELBER MERKUR 2023 – electronic monitoring of communication channels via cable

Why exactly 2 percent? As already explained, after the end of the Cold War, all Allies, including the U.S., reduced their armed forces, sometimes drastically, and received a "peace dividend". Defence spending was reduced because it was believed that due to the intended partnership with Russia, in the long term there would not be a threatening military opponent in Europe. At the same time, the transformation, deployment and maintenance of armed forces for distant crisis stabilisation missions in structurally poor regions like Afghanistan required additional resources and new long-term investments in reconnaissance and remote command and control, air transportation capacity, operational mobility (helicopters), operational logistics, field camp capacity and force protection. Nonetheless, defence budgets continued to decline. When the average defence budget percentage of NATO members in terms of GDP fell below 2 percent, NATO sounded the alarm. The NATO defence ministers then set a benchmark guideline of 2 percent for the annual national defence spending of Allies. Regardless, defence budgets continued to decline. In 2014, the NATO average was 1.4 percent, and Germany was at 1.19 Percent, which had a damaging effect on Germany's reputation and credibility among its Allies. [17]

While "2 percent" is a political benchmark, it is by no means a random target. The built-in flaw is its dependence on a country's GDP. If there is no nominal increase in the defence budget but a decline in GDP, the share of defence spending increases, which creates the misleading impression that defence spending has gone up in comparison with either the previous year or other nations. It is nevertheless a pragmatic reference value for measuring how much a country invests in its armed forces, which is something that most Allies need to do. Based on a systematic, detailed procedure (the NATO's Defence Planning Process) approved by all nations, each Ally is allocated a number of NATO capability targets that it needs to meet. These are targets in terms of quantity, quality and deadlines for the development of national armed forces and military capabilities. These "packages" taken together cover all of NATO's military requirement for any current or expected missions and tasks that the ministers of defence have agreed upon. These requirements and capability targets are updated every four years. This is done to ensure that NATO's armed forces are able to cooperate effectively, which means they must be interoperable. Each national "package" is approved by all Allies. It takes into account a country's economic strength and its geostrategic location. [18] The U.S. gets the largest „package", Belgium only gets a small one and Germany the second-largest. The apportionment of NATO capability targets and their timely and complete fulfilment is also important to ensure fair burden sharing among Allies. It is therefore of particular political significance for the Alliance and the solidarity among its members. The same applies to the 2 percent goal. Both criteria are suitable for the evaluation of "fair burden sharing" among the Allies. [19] National contributions to available response forces, joint forces and NATO operations are also taken into account. [20]

The Federal Ministry of Defence had planned to meet NATO's capability targets – such as having three fully equipped army divisions ready to deploy – by 2032, taking a step-by-step approach. The Allies agreed. This approach was, however, based on the assumption that the annual defence budget would increase substantially to reach 2 percent of the projected GDP no later than by 2024. Which did not happen. The updated capability targets for 2021 were approved by NATO's ministers of defence in October 2021 with no adjustments made. They represent the appropriate fair share of Germany's contribution to the Alliance's force requirements. Everything Germany will not do will have to be done by the other members, otherwise there will be an unacceptable lack of capabilities.

NATO's Nuclear Strategy and Defence against Ballistic Missiles

An effective defence capability and credible nuclear deterrence are the two decisive pillars of NATO's strategy. As a result of the 2012 *Deterrence and Defence Posture Review (DDPR)*, NATO could proceed on the assumption that in view of the security situation at the time it still had an effective deterrent and defence capability. The DDPR document also conveys some of President Obama's optimism with respect to nuclear disarmament, as well as concerns about the proliferation of nuclear weapons as evidenced by the emphasis on so-called negative security guarantees to help limit nuclear proliferation. [21] The DDPR also served the purpose of explicitly embedding *Ballistic Missiles Defence (BMD)* as an integral part of NATO's strategy. There had been long disputes between the U.S. and France over this issue, because Paris perceived this as undermining the credibility of its own nuclear doctrine. From a French point of view BMD might have led to the assumption that nuclear wars are an option. In its 2012 DDPR, NATO finally stated that BMD would support the role of nuclear weapons but not replace them. Since then, the triad of the "Appropriate Mix" of conventional, missile defence and nuclear capabilities provides the basis of NATO's posture. It has since been supplemented by "Space Capabilities" and "Cyber Space Capabilities".

Meeting NATO capability targets and the 2 percent goal in time is proof of fair burden sharing and solidarity among the Allies.
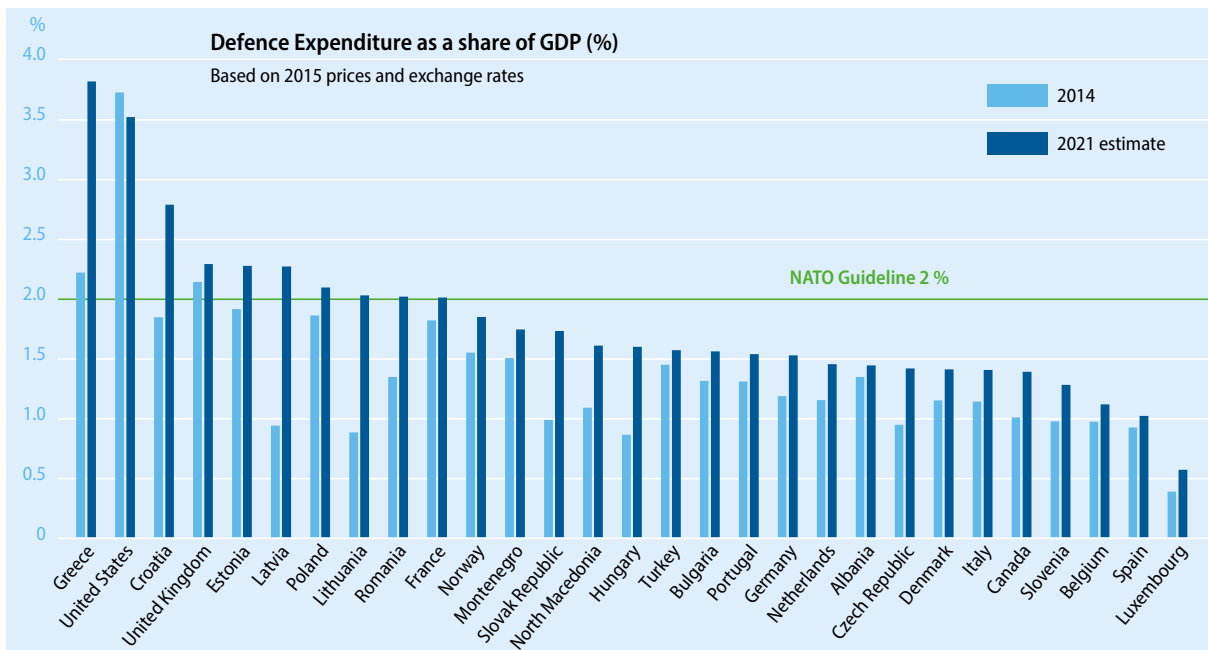
In view of Russia's invasion in Ukraine and the Russian doctrine with its emphasis on the combined use of conventional and nuclear weapons in regional wars, and in view of the fact that Russia's nuclear armament is directed against European NATO members, the nuclear component of NATO's deterrence strategy has again gained considerable importance. The Alliance prepares for the scenario of a political crisis escalating to a point when Allies come under military attack. NATO's entire deterrence posture is designed to influence the opponent's risk calculation, in short: prevent aggression, reject coercion, deny the opponent courses of action and maintain NATO's freedom of action. [22]

An old tenet of the doctrine of deterrence goes: "Deterrence happens in the mind of the opponent." NATO's posture aims at making the Russian leadership understand that in case of an aggression against NATO or one or several of its Allies, an analysis of the chances of success and the risks involved will inevitably lead to the conclusions that even a limited attack will trigger a response by all NATO members, in particular the U.S.; NATO will be ready and willing to use the full range of options at its disposal; the chances of success of such an attack, no matter where, how or when it is launched, are uncertain, but its negative impact on the aggressor itself enormous and by far exceeding the desired gain; in extremis, Moscow must envisage catastrophic damage and unacceptable losses, in particular if nuclear weapons are used. The Russian leadership's risk assessment must always come to the same conclusion: the risk is just too high.

Three key factors are essential for this: (1) The (clearly demonstrated) political will of all members of the Alliance and their resolve to counter any aggression with great determination; (2) a clearly recognisable wide range of military capabilities offering a variety of options to counter any kind of threat or aggression appropriately and effectively to deny the opponent military success. And finally (3), the ability to clearly and convincingly communicate to the enemy (and to the public) the unity, determination, defence readiness and defence capability of the Alliance. In times of peace as well as in times of crisis this is done through strategic communication, through "deterrence messaging", especially through official joint statements by the Allies at the highest level as well as through military exercises which, in addition to their military purpose, demonstrate NATO's capabilities and political unity. Political unity is NATO's strategic centre of gravity. The adversary must assume that whatever action he takes against one or several NATO members, he will always have to deal with the Alliance as a whole, including U.S. forces. He will not be able to cut off any member from the protection of all the others, especially not from US nuclear protection.

These principles and mechanisms are basically the same as those of the *Flexible Response* strategy from the height of the Cold War, which was based on the legendary MC 14/3 of 1967/68, which has been outlined in Chapter 1. [23] After 1990, during the dawn of the age of cooperation in Europe and international crisis management, it was seen as a relic of the Cold War. Nuclear weapons were considered a means of last resort, a reinsurance for the ultimate, but extremely unlikely worst case. The *Flexible Response* strategy had been forgotten in Europe. The Cold War is definitely over, because the confrontation between the blocs that faced each other in the middle of Germany is now history. Today, however, Europe is once again threatened by Russia's conventional and nuclear weapons. In view of Russian President Putin's strategic goals and Russia's willingness to use force through conventional

Defence Expenditure as a share of GDP (%)

Based on 2015 prices and exchange rates

NATO Guideline 2 %

2014

2021 estimate

Only three Allies beyond 2 percent of GDP for defence

Source: NATO 11 June 2021

and nuclear weapons, the principles of *Flexible Response* and its nuclear component have regained considerable importance. Today they must be internalised again and implemented under fundamentally different conditions. They must guide the development of NATO's deterrence and defence posture.

This includes the fact that the Alliance has to and wants to retain political control over its actions in any situation, even in an escalating crisis or war, and must act prudently. In the event of war, Russia must be prevented from achieving its objectives and the war must be ended as quickly as possible and damage be kept to a minimum through robust direct defence using conventional forces or, if necessary, through the well-considered, selective but efficient use of long-range and accurately targeted conventional missiles or sub-strategic nuclear weapons. [24] However, the scale of this operation would have to be such that the Russian leadership would not have to fear an excessive use of violence and large-scale destruction, because this could lead Russia to further escalate. NATO's response should be appropriate and proportionate to make the Russian leadership understand that giving in is the most reasonable thing to do. NATO leaves it deliberately open which option beyond conventional defence of the NATO area would be used (Principle of Uncertainty). The opponent must remain unable to assess the reaction to his attack and be left in the dark about the risk he is taking so that he cannot take measures to minimise that risk. While the Alliance does not

explicitly rule out the selective first use of nuclear weapons, it does not mention it as an option either. [25] Diplomatic efforts would also be part of NATO's approach. When the Heads of State and Government met in Warsaw in 2016, they agreed on enhancing NATO's forward presence, the renewal of its nuclear strategy and the core elements of NATO's conventional and nuclear posture.

In all summit declarations since 2014 the Allies have clearly and consistently formulated the text on nuclear deterrence. NATO emphasises that it has the capabilities and determination to impose tremendous costs on an aggressor should he threaten the fundamental security of one of its member states. These costs would far outweigh any gain to be expected. [26] The broad spectrum of U.S. conventional armed forces and nuclear capabilities as well as the "independent" nuclear weapons of France and the UK offer NATO a wide range of options. In this context, the United States' permanent military presence in Europe, including the far forward presence of conventional forces along NATO's eastern border as well as the B 61 nuclear bombs stored in Europe are of particular importance. The ability to transport an American nuclear weapon on board of a European fighter aircraft, the *Dual Capable Aircraft (DCA)*, and aim it at a target in Russia, and to demonstrate this capability during exercises in peacetime or in a crisis, is of paramount importance for its strategy and policy. It sends the message that Russian territory will not be considered a sanctuary if the Kremlin were to threaten Europe or individual

European Allies with nuclear weapons, while deliberately not challenging the U.S. – with the intention of dividing NATO, paralysing its will to defend itself and, protected by its nuclear weapons, potentially risking a conventional war of conquest. [27]

In essence, the strategic function of the American nuclear weapons forward-deployed in Europe is the same as that of the U.S. medium-range nuclear weapons (Pershing-II missiles and cruise missiles) in NATO's 1979 Double Track Decision: if the opponent threatens to use nuclear weapons against Europe, these missiles will ensure that the security of the European Allies will not be decoupled from U.S. nuclear capabilities and its nuclear umbrella. They are the manifest expression of the United States' "extended nuclear deterrence" for the protection of Europe. American nuclear weapons, which can target Russia from Europe, signal to Moscow that a conflict might escalate, in the worst case leading to mutual nuclear annihilation, the Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD) through the "assured nuclear second-strike capability" on both sides. The message is that the United States is, even in extreme situations, prepared to guarantee Europe's security, accepting the associated risk, because a Russian counterattack might also hit the U.S. itself, something that from a Russian point of view might lead to an escalation with unpredictable consequences. However, precisely for this reason – and provided that the Russian leadership thinks through the implications – there would be a high probability that Russia would back down and stop the attack. So, from a strategic point of view, U.S. nuclear weapons connect Europe's security to the United States' strategic nuclear potential. Figuratively speaking, they connect the American and European territories of NATO to form a common, transatlantic security space. It is this connection that has the greatest deterrent effect on Russia.

NATO's deterrence strategy is meant to reject coercion, prevent aggression, deny the opponent courses of action and maintain its own freedom of action.

The provision of combat aircraft and shelters, storage facilities and technical infrastructure by European Allies on their territory – in Belgium, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Turkey – is in turn an expression of their willingness to share the risk. Other European countries provide fighter aircraft for the *Conventional Support to Nuclear Operations (CSNO)*. These *Nuclear Sharing Arrangements* [28] have become particularly important since Russia might direct its

Germany's Tornado fighter jet

nuclear threat against Europe hoping that the U.S. will stay out of a regional conflict. They demonstrate the indivisibility of the Allies' security and the cohesion of the Alliance on both sides of the Atlantic. Thereby, the nuclear deterrence offered by the U.S. through these arrangements and the risk-sharing by Europeans are, taken together, also an effective means against the proliferation of nuclear weapons in Europa, because European Allies who do not have nuclear weapons are protected by the United States.

Decisions on nuclear planning and exercises in peacetime or in a crisis are made by NATO's Nuclear Planning Group, i. e. the NATO defence ministers, excluding France, which has its own national nuclear strategy. Those nations that provide combat aircraft for nuclear missions have special access to particularly sensitive information and a say in the planning. In view of Russia's military doctrine and nuclear arsenal, nuclear sharing must continue to be a decisive political-strategic element of NATO's deterrence strategy. It is of vital importance to NATO nations like Germany that do not have nuclear weapons. Their political leaders, parties, parliaments and social elites should therefore be able to explain to the public why Nuclear Sharing is so important for the security of their countries and advocate it.

In the recent past, there have been demands, in particular by German politicians, to unilaterally withdraw from the Nuclear Sharing arrangements [29] This would significantly weaken the credibility of NATO's strategy. It would jeopardise the U.S.' extended deterrence, which is essential for the protection of European Allies. It would drastically reduce Germany's influence on an issue in which influence and a say are of central importance for its security. And it would severely damage the Alliance's solidarity and sow deep mistrust of Germany among its partners. [30]

U.S. President Obama visiting troops in Afghanistan in 2010.

The Arc of Instability in the South – Projection of Stability as a Strategy

In addition to the Russian invasion of Crimea and Russia's numerous hybrid actions against Ukraine and against NATO Allies, the Alliance faced another major challenge in those years. In the *"Arc of Instability"* stretching from North Africa to Afghanistan, economic hardship, state and government failure, violent religious extremism, conflicts between regional powers (such as between Saudi Arabia and Iran or the war in Syria) have led to the spread of terrorism, in particular to the rise of the "Islamic State" (ISIS or Da'esh), a terrorist militia. The war against Iraq in 2003 ultimately led to the collapse of the Iraqi state, to violence and the rise of religious extremism and terrorism. After 2014 terrorism started spreading from Iraq and Syria with serious attacks being committed in several European capitals. All of these factors led to major migratory movements towards Europe, which affected the political stability of some European states and undermined the unity of the European Union.

Russia's aggression against Ukraine has fundamentally changed the security situation *in* Europe. The spread of ISIS in Iraq and Syria and its attacks have become a threat *to* Europe. These threats from two strategic directions are of a very different nature: a highly armed aggressive power in the east – a *peer state actor*, and an elusive terrorist threat from *non-state actors* in the south. Russia represents the greatest threat to Central Eastern Europe and to the Northern-Baltic region, while instability and terrorism in the South represent the greatest threat to Southern Europe. According to the North Atlantic Treaty, NATO has to take into account the security needs of all Allies and therefore meet both challenges simultaneously.

With this in mind, NATO Heads of State and Government decided on a dual strategy at their meeting in Warsaw in 2016: strengthening deterrence and defence against Russia in the east and "projecting stability" into the strategic periphery of Europe, above all by stabilising fragile states in the south, such as in the Balkans and, as NATO considered appropriate at the time, in Afghanistan. From 2014 on all NATO member states were part of the U.S.-led *Global Coalition against ISIS*, which defeated the 'Islamic State' in Iraq and Syria through air strikes and special forces on the ground.[31] ISIS no longer controls large stretches of territory in either country. In addition, the Alliance focused on supporting partner countries in their efforts to improve defence and security structures and capabilities.

NATO had already learned from its military operations in the Balkans that external military interventions can put an end to war and violence in a crisis region, but usually do not lead to lasting peace. Today, there is a broad consensus within NATO that only a comprehensive, civil-military approach will lead to long-term "self-sustaining" stability. This includes, above all, guidance and assistance in building democratic and constitutional institutions (administration, judiciary, police, armed forces), economic reconstruction, humanitarian aid and military security. It is crucial that local governments take responsibility and cooperate unconditionally, and that the population supports these efforts. The international organisations (UN, EU, OSCE and NATO) as well as the non-governmental organisations supporting this process require political, historical and cultural contextual knowledge and should proceed in a coordinated manner. As developments in the Balkans have shown, such an approach requires continuous commitment over a very long period of time.

NATO's dual strategy: deterrence and defence preparedness vis-à-vis Russia in the east and stabilisation of fragile states in the south.

The EU has made this *"Comprehensive Approach"* its program for crisis management, stabilisation and reconstruction within the framework of its *Common Security and Defence Policy*. It also uses it as a guideline for its civilian and civil-military missions, particularly in Africa. NATO intends to participate in this comprehensive approach. Its strength lies in supporting partner countries in crisis regions in their efforts to build defence capabilities and structures, train their security forces, and, if necessary, providing military

back-up for this process. Ideally, the governments of partner countries should be able to take responsibility for their internal and external security, practice good governance, respect human rights, implement reforms and, if possible, play a stabilising role in their region.

Since 2016, the approach of supporting partner countries in *"security sector reform"* according to Western principles has been the core element of NATO's *"Projection of Stability"* strategy, which was also decided at the 2014 summit in Warsaw, complementing the strengthening of deterrence and defence. In the Balkans, in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Kosovo, this approach has worked quite well, even if the presence of EUFOR Althea (in Bosnia and Herzegovina) and KFOR (in Kosovo) will probably still be required for a long time to come. With their cultural background these countries are in a favourable position to develop democracy and the rule of law based on the Western model. Due to their geographical proximity, there is a strong political will in Europe to maintain the necessary presence and support. There are also countries in unstable regions that wish to cooperate with NATO and receive support, such as Tunisia, Jordan and Iraq in the south, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova in the east. Since the invasion of Crimea, but most notably since the start of Russia's full-scale war of aggression against Ukraine, NATO's cooperation with Ukraine and support by the Allies have reached an unprecedented level *(see Chapter 4)*.

The *"Train, Assist, Advise"* concept of the NATO-led mission *Resolute Support (RSM)* in Afghanistan was based on NATO's "Projecting Stability" approach, which focused on strengthening partner countries. When *RSM* replaced the *International Security Assistance Force (ISAF)* in 2014, this marked a paradigm shift for NATO's mission in Afghanistan. With the help of military and civilian instructors from NATO and partner countries a functioning army and a police force capable of acting in accordance with Western standards were to be established, equipped and trained (see Chapter 2). The Afghan government was to assume responsibility for the country's internal and external security nationwide, which would allow NATO and its partners to withdraw their troops from Afghanistan.

"NATO Mission Iraq (NMI)" was also based on the *"Advising, Training and Capacity-Building"* concept. It was the follow-on to the combat mission *Global Coalition against ISIS/Da'esh* in Syria and Iraq. The Iraqi government had invited several hundred military and civilian instructors from all NATO countries and Australia who have been advising and supporting the Ministry of Defence and military training facilities in Iraq with a focus on defence policy

and strategy, force planning and development, cyber defence, logistics and resource planning, management training and personnel development. In 2021 NATO's defence ministers even decided to enhance the mission. NATO is cooperating with United Nations and EU missions in the country and the US-led Coalition against ISIS, which is also involved in the effort of stabilising state structures. Their common goal is to enable the Iraqi government to fight terrorism to ensure stability even after the US combat mission ended in 2021. It is to be hoped that the lessons that NATO must and intends to learn from the failure of *RSM* in Afghanistan will be applied in *NMI*.

The Termination of the NATO-led Mission in Afghanistan

The rapid collapse of the Afghan government and the Afghan army and security forces following the withdrawal of NATO troops and their partners in the summer of 2021, the concept of projecting Western stability to distant crisis regions appears to have been severely shaken. After the rapid advance of the Taliban throughout the country and their return to power, NATO's attempt to facilitate the establishment of a free, peaceful state with respect for human rights had failed. After 20 years of combat and training operations with more than 130,000 soldiers deployed at certain times, supported by numerous NATO partner countries, with thousands of men and women of the Afghan and Allied armed forces killed and wounded, with civilian casualties and the loss of billions invested, Afghanistan became once more an authoritarian state ruled by Islamists. Now the country threatens to become a base of operations for the Islamic State again. The IS offshoot "Khorasan Province" carried out numerous attacks in several cities of that province, killing hundreds of people. The terrorist militia could also feel encouraged to carry out further attacks against facilities in neighbouring countries (Pakistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan). According to experts, Europe might also become a target. [32]

The international coalition had suffered a serious political and strategic defeat. There were no political conditions attached to the withdrawal, for example for an inclusive government, which NATO and partner troops would have had to monitor before withdrawing completely. The Doha Agreement, which then US President Trump concluded with the Taliban in February 2020, only regulated the technical issues of the withdrawal on May 1, 2021. In return, the Taliban merely agreed to keep quiet until then and not to attack American troops and their allies. So, the USA arranged for 5,000 prisoners to be released, including several Taliban commanders. President Trump could not care less about

the future of Afghanistan. Since then, all Allies and NATO partners have known that the end of the *Resolute Support Mission* was inevitable. No Allied government opposed this decision, even when President Biden informed them that he would complete the withdrawal of US forces by September 2021 and his ministers briefed their European counterparts in the North Atlantic Council about the details of the withdrawal. [33] They were all facing the dilemma of either withdrawing, accepting the risk that the Taliban would return, or staying and risking further fighting and casualties and therefore having to significantly increase their contingents again. However, the Afghan army was apparently unwilling to fight the Taliban without support from U.S. and civilian contractors. And the Taliban made good use of the time and prepared for the takeover of power.

The credibility of the West and its approach to ensuring stability and, ultimately, fostering lasting peace in crisis states and regions was severely damaged. The validity of the concept of *"Projecting Stability"* was questioned. Can efforts to stabilise and help to build a state from the outside according to Western principles in a foreign region with a foreign culture and history and its very own traditions be realistic and sustainable to begin with? And what should NATO's future role in international crisis management be? According to US President Biden, the sole purpose of the Afghanistan mission after the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center in New York in September 2001 was to fight the terrorist organisation Al-Qaeda and its leadership, whom the Taliban had granted a safe haven. This goal was achieved with the death of Osama Bin Laden in 2011. Other than that, the U.S. did not pursue any vital national interests in Afghanistan [34] except to make sure that the country would never again serve as a home base for terrorists planning attacks against America and its friends. And fighting terrorist organisations today would not require a ground war anyway. Today, the use of "over-the-horizon capabilities" with precise air strikes and deployments of special forces was much more effective and at the same time more effort-saving.

President Biden's second reason for leaving the country is of strategic importance: The real new challenges for the USA today are quite different. "We are in serious competition with China. We have challenges on various fronts with Russia. We are facing cyberattacks and nuclear proliferation." So, the U.S. does not want to get bogged down in Afghanistan for another decade. The U.S. president wanted to get rid of this burden so that the U.S. could fully concentrate on its strategic priorities: the global competition with China and Russia. This position has far-reaching implications for NATO and the European Allies as will be shown in Chapter 5.

Chancellor Angela Merkel visiting German troops in Afghanistan in October 2013.

The credibility of the West and its approach to stabilising and sustainably pacifying crisis states and regions has been severely damaged.

The question remains whether the exodus from Afghanistan has heralded the end of the era of armed peace and stabilisation missions and humanitarian interventions for NATO, because such missions take a long time, are associated with high losses of human life and financial costs, their outcome is uncertain and the majority of nations, their parliaments and populations obviously no longer want to take that risk. Especially since a lot of political effort and enormous resources are required to support Ukraine and to develop Europe's defence capabilities in view of Russia's aggressive imperialist policy in the immediate vicinity. On this issue, Biden was also clear when he said that the era of military operations with the aim of transforming other countries was over. And that two factors were decisive for military operations: first, clear objectives that are achievable, and second, the fundamental national security interests of the United States. Nevertheless, NATO's Heads of State and Government acknowledged at the 2024 summit in Washington that NATO would continue to fight terrorism as part of its comprehensive approach to defence. They adopted an update of its political guidelines and an action plan to further develop NATO's role in the international community's fight against terrorism. The NATO Secretary General also appointed a *Special Coordinator for Counter-Terrorism* who will play a primarily political role in cooperation with NATO partners and

other international organisations, in particular in NATO's southern neighbourhood (Middle East, North Africa and Sahel). [35]

As things stand, President Biden's position is likely to be shared by future American presidents and will have far-reaching implications for NATO and the Europeans. The long-lasting mission in Afghanistan and the dramatic evacuation via airlift from Kabul in August 2021 also were a harsh reminder of the European Allies'

continuing dependence on decisive US military capabilities in demanding stabilisation missions, even more than twenty years after the Balkan wars. This will have to change fundamentally if they want to play a significant role in NATO in the future. The EU, with its civilian and civil-military approach to crisis management, must and will play an increasingly important role. This is explained in more detail in Chapter 5.

[1]   These include the UN Charter, the CSCE Helsinki Final Act of 1975, the Charter of Paris of 1990, the Budapest Memorandum of 1994, which was intended to guarantee the territorial integrity of Ukraine, and the NATO-Russia Founding Act of 1997.

[2]   Despite some success in reducing violence, most of the agreements were not fully implemented. The conflict remained unresolved, and the agreement is now considered a failure.

[3]   This is stated in the 2010 Strategic Concept, paragraph 33, as well as in the 2012 Chicago Summit Declaration issued by NATO.

[4]   Johnson, Dave: Review of Speech by General Gerasimov at the Russian Academy of Military Science, NATO Defence College, Russian Studies no. 04, Rome, 2 March 2019.

[5]   Putin, Vladimir: On the Historical Unity of Russians and Ukrainians, Moscow/Kremlin, 12 July 2021.

[6]   In February 2022, the German government halted the approval process for North Stream 2. In September 2022, one strand of the Nord Stream 1 pipeline and two strands of the Nord Stream 2 pipeline were destroyed by explosions. The perpetrators are not yet caught.

[7]   Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Joint Statement of the U.S. and Germany on Support for Ukraine, European Energy Security and our Climate Goals, press release of 21 July 2021.

[8]   Barrie, Douglas et al: European Defence Policy in an Era of Renewed Great-Power Competition, International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), London, February 2020

[9]   As explained in Chapter 1, the 1987 Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces Treaty between the USA and the Soviet Union completely eliminated both sides' ground-based medium-range missiles with a range of 500 to 5,500 km. Following Russia's breach of the treaty, the United States officially withdrew from it in 2019.

[10] NATO: Brussels Summit Communiqué Issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Brussels, 14 June 2021, Paragraph 41

[11] Today, many of these forces are deployed in the war against Ukraine. But it is to be assumed that after the end of the war with the remaining troops returning to their bases and being reconstituted, the concrete threat will arise again.

[12] The 2020 war between Armenia and Azerbaijan has also been described by observers as the "first drone war between states"; see Käppner, Joachim: Worum es bei der Debatte um bewaffnete Drohnen geht (What the debate about armed drones is all about), Süddeutsche Zeitung, 02 Jan. 2021. On the consequences for the Bundeswehr, see Gady, Franz-Stefan: Krieg um Berg-Karabach 2020 (War over Nagorno-Karabakh 2020): Implikationen für Streitkräftestruktur und Fähigkeiten der Bundeswehr (Implications for the force structure and capabilities of the Bundeswehr), Arbeitspapiere Sicherheitspolitik 3/21, Federal Academy for Security Policy, Berlin 2021.

[13] At that time, the Baltic States practically made up the northeast of the Alliance area. Finland was not yet a member of the Alliance.

[14] Battlegroups usually comprise combat troops in battalion size (tanks or mechanised infantry), reinforced by reconnaissance, artillery, engineers, anti-aircraft forces, combat helicopters and logistics.

[15] For an overview of all the measures NATO introduced in 2014 and in subsequent years to strengthen its deterrence and defence capabilities, see Brauss, Heinrich: NATO Beyond 70 – Renewing a Culture of Readiness, International Centre for Defence and Security, Tallinn, November 2018.

[16] The corresponding political commitment made by the governments concerned reads: "Allies whose current proportion of GDP spent on defence is below this level will: halt any decline in defence expenditure; aim to increase defence expenditure in real terms as GDP grows; aim to move towards the 2 percent guideline within a decade with a view to meeting their NATO Capability Targets and filling NATO's capability shortfalls." See NATO: Wales Summit Declaration, Press Release (2014) 120, 5 Sep. 2014, paragraph 14.

[17] On the development of defence spending by NATO member states since 2013, see NATO: Press Release: Defence Expenditure of NATO Countries (2013-2020), PR/CP(2021)030, 16 March 2021.

[18] A country such as the Czech Republic will not be allocated any maritime capability targets, while Germany's targets cover all domains, i. e. the three services, cyber defence, space-related capabilities and others.

[19] An example: In 2015 Estonia's defence budget amounted to € 418 m or 2.01 percent of its GDP. For Estonia's 1.3 million inhabitants with a GDP of € 25.5 bn, this is just as big a burden for the country as a defence budget of € 67.5 bn for Germany with its 83 million inhabitants and a GDP of € 3.37 tn would have been. In 2015 Germany's defence budget was € 44.21 bn resp. 1.19 percent, although Russia had invaded Crimea the year before.

[20] In NATO jargon "3 c" means: cash, capabilities, contributions. At the end of each year, the NATO Secretary General writes a report on how each nation is meeting its targets and the ministers of defence discuss it. It happens that individual ministers have to justify themselves for not meeting the agreed targets.

[21] Negative security assurances are guarantees by nuclear-weapon states that they will not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon states that have jointed the Non-Proliferation Treaty and adhere to its terms.

[22] See here and in the following Brauss, Heinrich: Erweiterte Nukleare Abschreckung – zur Glaubwürdigkeit der NATO-Strategie im Lichte der russischen Bedrohung, in: SIRIUS, Zeitschrift für Strategische Analysen 2023, Vol. 7, Issue 3

[23] Publicly accessible under: https://www.nato.int/docu/stratdoc/eng/a680116a.pdf.

[24]   *As mentioned in chapter 1 and in this chapter: Sub-strategic nuclear weapons have a range of less than 5,500 km. Russia's sub-strategic systems could be used against targets in Europe, but not in the United States. Strategic nuclear weapons, such as U.S. and Russian land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles, have a longer range.*

[25]   *As also mentioned in Chapter 1, giving up the first-use option would reduce the risk associated with an attack for the attacker, because the unpredictability of NATO's response and thus the risk for the attacker would be reduced. This would undermine the strategy of preventing war in a crisis and thus weaken strategic stability. This is why the NATO allies have refused to sign the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.*

[26]   *See below, for example, NATO: Brussels Summit Communiqué, Press Release (2021) 086, June 14, 2021, paragraphs 38-41*

[27]   *See Brauss, Heinrich: Die Rolle von Kernwaffen in der europäischen Sicherheit – ginge es auch ohne die USA?, in: SIRIUS – Zeitschrift für Strategische Analysen, 2024, Volume 8, Issue 3*

[28]   *On Nuclear Sharing from the U.S. perspective see Roberts, Brad: Deutschland und die Nukleare Teilhabe der NATO, Arbeitspapier Sicherheitspolitik 7/21, Bundesakademie für Sicherheitspolitik, Berlin 2021*

[29]   *Such as former Minister of Foreign Affairs Guido Westerwelle in 2010 and SPD parliamentary group leader in the German Bundestag Rolf Mützenich 2020*

[30]   *See Kramp-Karrenbauer, Annegret: Dritte Grundsatzrede der Verteidigungsministerin, Führungsakademie der Bundeswehr, Hamburg, 18 June 2021*

[31]   *The coalition was founded during the NATO summit in Wales in 2014 under the leadership of then US Secretary of State John Kerry. Germany was a founding member. It now consists of 83 nations and organisations, including NATO as an organisation. It provided the coalition with the AWACS reconnaissance aircraft under permanent NATO command. It is represented at coalition meetings by the NATO Secretary General.*

[32]   *Cf. Guido Steinberg/Aljoscha Albrecht: Terror gegen die Taliban, in: SWP-Aktuell No. 8, February 2022, https://www.swp-berlin.org/publications/products/aktuell/2022A08_IS_Afghanistan.pdf*

[33]   *See Bjerg Moller, Sara: Five Myths about NATO and Afghanistan, in: LAWFARE, Foreign Relations & International Law, September 5, 2021; https://www.lawfaremedia.org/article/five-myths-about-nato-and-afghanistan, Myth 3: The United States blindsided its NATO allies with its „hasty" withdrawal.*

[34]   *Cf. Remarks by President Biden on the End of the War in Afghanistan, The White House, Washington, D.C., August 31, 2021*

[35]   *Cf. NATO – Washington Summit Declaration, 10 July 2024, Paragraph 22.*

4

SEA CHANGE IN EUROPE'S SECURITY ORDER – RUSSIA'S WAR OF EXTERMINATION AGAINST UKRAINE

2021
NATO-Summit in Brussels: NATO 2030 Agenda

2022
Large-scale military attack by Russia on Ukraine; German Chancellor Scholz's "Zeitenwende"-speech; Madrid Summit and new NATO Strategic Concept 2022; EU Strategic Compass; 100 billion Euro Special Fund for the Bundeswehr

2023
Suspension of the New START Treaty by Russia; "No-limits partnership" between Russia and China; Finland joins NATO; NATO Summit in Vilnius and NATO-Ukraine Council

2024
75th anniversary of the founding of NATO; Sweden joins NATO; NATO Summit in Washington, D.C.: "new era of collective defence"; Long-Term Security Assistance Pledge for Ukraine: "irreversible path to full Euro-Atlantic integration"; deepening partnerships (Asia-Pacific Partners)

SEA CHANGE IN EUROPE'S SECURITY ORDER

RUSSIA'S WAR OF EXTERMINATION AGAINST UKRAINE

Over the course of 2021, Moscow deployed more and more troops to the border region with Ukraine. In February 2022 around 100,000 Russian soldiers with military equipment, supported by 30,000 soldiers in Belarus, were deployed in a large semicircle north, east and south of the border with Ukraine From a military point of view, this deployment of troops suggested that a large-scale concentric attack on the entire territory of Ukraine was imminent.[1] Although Putin denied this, he officially recognised the self-proclaimed Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics in eastern Ukraine as independent by decree on the evening before the invasion. He also accused Ukraine of an allegedly planned "genocide" of the "Russian" population on Ukrainian territory. On 24 February 2022, the war began.[2]

The drastic change in Europe's security policy, which was marked by the hybrid invasion and annexation of Crimea in 2014, had finally become the "Zeitenwende" (a historical turning point), which Chancellor Scholz proclaimed in the German Bundestag on February 27, 2022. After 2014, the Alliance had once again to respond to Putin's challenge when he used military force against a priority partner nation that had already been offered the prospect of NATO membership in 2008. The invasion of Ukraine has created a new political and strategic reality in Europe. It was only after Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine and Scholz's "Zeitenwende" speech that many people in Germany realised the dimensions of what was happening: Russia is (once again) a major military threat to Europe and NATO and will be for a long time to come. At first, Putin called the attack a "special operation" to eliminate the "fascists" in Kyjiv. Later, in Putin's rhetoric Ukraine became a battlefield in the war against the West. The Russian president violated the main principles of the European security order, which had stood firm for almost 50 years since the Helsinki Final Act of 1975, even during the Cold War: Respect for national sovereignty and the inviolability of each state's borders.

The aim of this chapter is to show how NATO Allies are responding to the new reality in European security policy. They are faced with two complex challenges: massive, long-term financial and military support for Ukraine, without being directly involved in the conflict as NATO itself, and, at the same time, the decisive, immediate strengthening of NATO's deterrence and defence posture, far beyond what NATO began in 2014 and achieved by 2021.

Russia's War of Aggression against Ukraine

On February 24, 2022, the Russian army crossed the border into Ukraine.[3] The plan was to quickly advance on Kyjiv and conquer the capital in order to install a puppet government to facilitate the submission of the country. The attempt failed. The Ukrainian army was far better prepared than in 2014. It fought back and was able to regain half of the territory captured by Russia. In response Moscow shifted its offensive to the east and south. Since then, the war has dragged on along a front of around 1,200 kilometres. The massacres of civilians in Butscha and Irpin on Kyjiv's outskirts, discovered after the Russians withdrew, were a foretaste of what could be expected from Russian warfare: brutality, unscrupulousness, contempt for humanity, no consideration for the population, the use of glide bombs and missiles against vital infrastructure and supply facilities, even residential areas, cultural institutions and hospitals. The missile attack on the Ochmatdyt Children's Hospital on July 8, 2024, a flagrant violation of international law, is just one of the war crimes committed on an almost daily basis. The aim is to terrorise and wear down the population, break their morale and their will to resist and undermine support for the government and the army. Russian soldiers cannot expect any mercy from their government either. Since they are being sacrificed on the battlefield, the losses of the Russian army are appallingly high. According to a statement made by NATO Secretary General Stoltenberg in April 2024 they amount to more than 350,000 troops, 2,000 armoured vehicles and most of the Black Sea Fleet.[4]

If anyone still had doubts or hope: this criminal war of aggression by Russia against Ukraine marks a definitive epochal shift in Europe. It destroyed the Euro-Atlantic order that had emerged in the 1990s after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Balkan wars (see Chapter 2). Putin has declared that he wants to eradicate Ukraine as an independent state and make it part of a new Greater Russia. Nevertheless, the subjugation of Ukraine is 'only' the first stage of a revisionist and imperial strategy. With two "draft treaties", one addressed to the USA and one to NATO, dated December 17, 2021, Putin revealed his geopolitical goals for the first time in writing.[5] These goals actually were ultimatums, as the Russian deployment along the border with Ukraine in the north, east and south continued. Taken together, they are essentially aimed at three strategic changes in Europe: First, any NATO enlargement was to be ruled out. Second, all NATO troops and weapons systems were to be withdrawn from all countries that had joined the Alliance after 27 May 1997, the

The predictions of some 'military strategists' that Russia would win the war in a few days had not come true.

date on which the NATO-Russia Founding Act was signed. Finally, the deployment of U.S. and Russian nuclear weapons as well as ground-based missiles of short (up to 500 km) and medium (up to 5,500 km) range outside U.S. and Russian territory was to be prohibited. The U.S. would therefore have to withdraw its (few) nuclear weapons from Europe and dismantle the associated infrastructure, while Russia would keep its approximately 2,000 short- and medium-range missiles, which are dual-capable, i.e. can carry conventional or nuclear warheads, and reach targets anywhere in Europe[6] (Cf. Chapter 3).

Putin's ultimatums reveal two essential strategic goals: first, Europe is to be decoupled from the United States' extended nuclear deterrence and will no longer be protected. The states of Central Eastern Europe would, in terms of security policy, become a grey zone starting with Germany's eastern border. So de facto they would be part of the zone of influence of a new Russian empire. In the event of "rejection", Moscow threatened "military-technical measures", which could have well meant that the troops deployed would have been reinforced and the rearmament process continued until the start of hostilities. In a nutshell: Putin wants to re-establish the geopolitical situation of the Cold War with a Greater Russia modelled on the former Soviet Union.[7]

The war of aggression against Ukraine is an example of how Russia under Putin has prepared for war in recent years, intending to wage and win regional wars in its neighbourhood, if necessary through the use of nuclear weapons – taking the geopolitical goal of subjecting its immediate neighbourhood, the "Near Abroad", to the extreme.[8]

Despite repeated, boastful and grandiose threats from members of the leadership in Moscow, including Putin, this has not yet happened. That may be due to publicly expressed warnings from high-ranking US officials (Secretary of State Blinken, Security Advisor Sullivan) in September 2022 to stop the "loose talk" on nuclear weapons, because Moscow was perfectly aware that the consequences would be horrific, even for the country using them.[9] Blinken reminded the Kremlin of the essential mechanism of nuclear deterrence: anyone who uses nuclear weapons must expect a nuclear counterstrike against their own territory. The second message to Moscow in this context was even more important: the U.S. would be the one reacting to the threat. This meant spelling out to the Russian leadership that in the event of the use of nuclear weapons, even if limited to Ukraine 'only', things might escalate – with catastrophic consequences for Russia itself. "It's very important that Moscow hear from us and know from us that the consequences would be horrific," Blinken said, "we have made that very clear." The Chinese leadership, too, is said to have warned Putin against the use of nuclear weapons. NATO remained outwardly calm but internally the procedures for the potential use of nuclear weapons were reviewed.

Stance of the West

Thus, it can be stated that NATO and all Allied countries – maybe with the exception of the Heads of State and Government of Hungary and Slovakia (states that receive Russian oil via Ukraine) – share the point of view that Putin's war and his attempts at strategic blackmailing clearly mark the end of the illusion that peace and stability in Europe are allegedly possible only with Russia. Today it is evident that the security in Europe again and in a longer term must be organised confronting Russia.[10] But what does this mean for Ukraine?

For a long time, the war seemed to have been frozen in a kind of gruelling trench warfare. No side was in a position to carry out large-scale mobile operations which would result in breakthroughs and produce decisive changes of the operational situation.[11] But this is how it might be perceived from a position of an outside observer who is not directly affected. In reality, many fierce

clashes can be witnessed which are taking place on the tactical level along the frontline extending over 1.200 km. However, the overall territorial gains, achieved by the Russian forces after two years and nine months of war (as of November 2024), are limited. The over-hasty predictions by some "military strategists" that Russia would win the war within a few days turned out to be wrong. Ukraine has put up admirably courageous and smart resistance. To preserve its existence, the country depends, however, on substantial political, humanitarian, financial and material help from the West. First of all, it needs air defence capabilities against the permanent threat from the air (especially for protection of its cities and energy infrastructure), modern armoured vehicles, long-range artillery systems, high precision strike missiles (rockets, cruise missiles, drones) and, most importantly, ammunition.

The Allies were faced with some difficulties. On the one hand, the military capabilities – mainly high-quality systems and ammunition which the Europeans possess themselves were and still are available in limited quantities. On the other hand, the industrial production has first to re-accelerate and new production facilities must be built. Ukrainian soldiers must be trained to use Western systems. Moreover, the situation was aggravated by the strange reluctance of the West to equip Ukraine with modern weapons that it needed for its defence and that could have made the difference on the battlefield. In fact, Berlin as well as Washington were worried that they could become involved in the war or that it would give Putin a pretext for an allegedly possible escalation. Trying to demonstrate good judgment and tranquillity, Olaf Scholz, the German Chancellor, continued to stress publicly what – in self-interest – should have been avoided: "No going it alone!", "No participation of NATO in hostilities", "No German entry into the war!", "No escalation!". These imperatives were and are certainly shared by a vast majority of Germans. However, the need to support Ukraine with all means possible so that it can prevail and push back the Russian army also because it is of greatest significance for German and European security has not been sufficiently highlighted and explained to the public – as well as the fact that NATO protects Germany against possible threats and any attempts at coercion and blackmailing.

It took months for Germany to deliver modern Leopard 2 tanks and Marder armoured infantry fighting vehicles, and this probably happened only after the US President had given the green light to it. The situation was additionally exacerbated by the delay of a large Western support package because of the blockade that emerged in the US Congress. Up until today Olaf Scholz has not provided a convincing explanation as to why he declines the delivery of long-range conventional TAURUS cruise missiles. [12]

With a reach of around 500 km it could hit command posts, fortified ammunition depos, bridges, train lines, runways and landing strips which are located deeply in the territory occupied by the Russian forces. In other words, it could considerably weaken the command and supply chains of the Russian army and in this way its offensive capabilities on the front and make easier the defence for the Ukrainians. At the same time, TAURUS missiles could strike the Russian air force bases that are located far in the east of the country and from which the Russian fighter airplanes launch their devastating assaults with gliding bombs. In the meantime, the U.S. supplied to Ukraine the ATACMS (*Army Tactical Missile System)* with a range of 300 km. And the European Union, the U.S. and many European countries are providing substantial economic, humanitarian, financial and military support with Germany being the second largest contributor after the United States. [13]

The Strategic Role of Ukraine

In any case, the West cannot afford to give up Ukraine. *"A strong, independent Ukraine is vital for the stability of the Euro-Atlantic Area"* – says the Alliance's Strategic Concept of 2022. Putin's victory in this war would also pose an immediate danger for European security. Moreover, it could be expected that after taking a break to rebuild its army Russia might try to seize the former Soviet republics of Moldova, Georgia and, possibly, the three Baltic states. And from the geostrategic point of view, while holding its ground, Ukraine is also protecting large parts of NATO's eastern and southeastern flank along a 1,500- km-long border. It is binding and wearing down the Russian forces. That is why it is necessary for Ukraine to continue to hold on. Putin must not succeed, an aggression must not pay off, also in order to discourage China from an invasion of Taiwan. Another aspect can only briefly be mentioned here: if Russia wins the war against Ukraine and completely occupies it, the neighbour countries and Western Europe, keeping in mind the experience of Ukrainians with the Russian occupation of Bucha and Irpin, should reckon with millions of refugees fleeing the country. To try to make any predictions about the exact numbers would be a pure speculation but Poland and Germany with the already existing Ukrainian communities could become attractive destinations for refugees.

For this reason, it is crucial that the West – both the U.S. and the Europeans – not only continues providing financial and material assistance to Ukraine but significantly increases it so that Ukraine can defend itself and push back the Russian army. It appears that, regardless of enormous losses suffered by his army and all in all

now modest military successes, Putin is betting on a protracted war hoping that the West would become tired and force Ukraine to make concessions and that, unhindered by a critical public and press at home, he has a longer leverage. On the other hand, it seems possible that the Allies have been supplying the modern weapon systems, so far, cautiously and gradually because of "natural" delays in production and delivery times, on one hand, and, on the other hand, the increasingly larger amounts and quality are intended to test Russia's reaction and signal to Putin that the West is proceeding in a measured way but will not relent. The message to Putin: Putin cannot win and should change its mind.

To have a longer-term protection from a Russian aggression, Ukraine aspires to membership in NATO and the EU. In December 2023 the EU Member States agreed to open accession negotiations which started already in June 2024. NATO does not demonstrate a similar dynamic. During the summit in Vilnius in 2023 the Heads of State and Government re-confirmed the declaration issued by their predecessors at the summit of 2008 in Bucharest that Ukraine would join the Alliance (one day): they declared that "Ukraine's future is in NATO"[14]. They also raised the status of the *"Distinctive NATO-Ukraine Commission"* to the level of a "NATO-Ukraine Council" in which the Ukrainian president and the Allies talk as equal partners about the future cooperation and the converging trajectories between Ukraine and NATO and make joint decisions. During the summit in Washington in 2024 an *"irreversible path to membership"* was announced. However, neither in Vilnius nor in Washington, the Allies could agree upon

At the Washington summit, the Allies put together a large support package for Ukraine 'for the next decade'.

a concrete invitation which would have launched the accession process. The exact reasons remain unknown. But it's possible that, first of all, the U.S., Germany and other Allies from the west and the south believed that it still was to early – probably for three reasons: (1) from the very beginning, one of the basic principles and prerequisites for the accession of new members was the requirement that they must not be engaged in a conflict with their neighbours – otherwise it would bring such a conflict into NATO, and even involve the Alliance directly into it. (2) Russia is an imperial and, on top of that, the strongest nuclear power[15]. For the Russian leadership, the control over Ukraine is at the core

President Biden, President Zelensky, NATO Secretary General Stoltenberg and Deputy Secretary General Geoana at the NATO summit in Vilnius in 2023

of the Russian national security interests. Should Ukraine be firmly anchored in the Western zone of influence on a permanent basis, NATO's deterrence must be 'watertight' and absolutely credible, and Russia must assume that all Allies would in all conceivable eventualities fulfil their obligations under Article 5. The Alliance is not there yet. (3) The U.S. would take the main risk, but also the most important European states would probably need to station forces *in* Ukraine – a kind of a visible, combat ready *"NATO enhanced Forward Presence for Ukraine"* designed to protect the country against possible Russian attacks in the future. As things currently stand, it would be upon the U.S. to shoulder the brunt of the task which would bind it still closer to Europe. However, the Americans believe that the biggest risk for them is presented by China in the Asian-Pacific region.

Instead of starting the accession process, the Allies and NATO prepared for the Washington summit a substantial aid package "for the next decade" (Antony Blinken, the US Secretary of State). Basically, it includes three interrelated components[16]:

➤ The Alliance shall take over the responsibility for coordination of international military equipment deliveries and training assistance as well as logistical support which were previously led by the United States. For this purpose, the *"NATO Security Assistance and Training for Ukraine (NSATU)" mission*[17] was established, with its headquarters in Wiesbaden and liaison offices in individual member states.

➤ A commitment made by the Allies to provide long-term financial support and supplies of military equipment, assistance and training worth at least € 40 bn in 2025 alone. This is meant to enable the Ukrainian army to repel the Russian aggression and, in the future, deter Russia from further attempts to invade the country.

➤ Establishment of a *Joint Analysis, Training and Education Centre (JATEC)* in Bydgoszcz, Poland, which would collect and evaluate lessons and experiences of the war in order to improve interoperability with the Allied forces.

Moreover, 23 Allied countries including the U.S. and Germany signed bilateral security and assistance agreements with Ukraine. Various Allies also promised additional air and missile defence systems, and during the summit the first F-16 jets were delivered to Ukraine. Finally, the NATO Secretary General appointed a *Senior NATO Representative to Ukraine*, who will be the head of the NATO representation in Kyjiv. From the Alliance's point of view, the 'Washington Package' is to serve for Ukraine as a bridge on its "irreversible" way to the membership.

Further Strengthening of Deterrence and Defence

As mentioned above, substantial strengthening of its Deterrence and Defence Posture is NATO's second big challenge. As described in Chapter 3, after 2014 the emphasis in the defence preparations of NATO in relation to Russia was put on the so-called *Enhanced Forward Presence* which has been based on reinforced multinational combat formations deployed in the Baltic countries and Poland – the most exposed region of the Alliance. By 2017, four multinational battlegroups were in place and combat ready. Already in case of a limited military attack with the aim of creating a *fait accompli* Russia would find itself in war with the entire NATO – that has been the message to Moscow. But precisely for this, that is to say for the conceivable comprehensive defence of the entire Alliance area against a regional or large-scale attack by Russia, conceptional foundations had to be created, a number of military plans needed to be developed, and multiple, precise decisions be made, as the credibility of the conventional component of NATO's deterrence and defence posture demands.

With a view to the substantial work on further strengthening the Alliance's deterrence and defence capabilities against the now openly aggressive, imperialistic Russia, three NATO summits took place in three consecutive years (Madrid 2022, Vilnius 2023 and Washington 2024) and adopted many decisions and so laid the necessary foundations. They ensured continuity and complemented each other. Thus, in stages, numerous political-strategic concepts and military plans were prepared and agreed by Allies. For the sake of clarity and a better understanding, in the following, they are summarised, presented and explained in such a way, as if they had originated together.

The New Strategy of NATO

The Madrid summit of 2022 created a crucial political and strategic basis for a further adjustment of NATO to international developments: The Heads of State and Government approved a new Strategic Concept. It reflects the historic sea change at NATO level.[18] The message is clear and unequivocal: "The Euro-Atlantic area is not at peace." Three factors are made responsible for this: Russia is described as the "most significant and direct threat to the security of the Allies and to the peace and stability in the Euro-Atlantic region." Terrorism remains an omnipresent, direct asymmetric threat to the security of the citizens.[19] And, considering its claim to power, strategic goals and policy of coercion, China for the first time is named as a "systemic rival" and a challenge to the values, interests and the security of the allies.

NATO's new Strategic Concept 2022 reflects the turn of eras in security policy at NATO level.

In light of these threats and risks, *collective defence* is characterised as a comprehensive main function of the Alliance – today against all dangers coming from all directions ("360 degrees") heralding a "new era of collective defence."[20] The known three key functions (collecitve defence, crisis prevention and management and cooperative security, i. e. cooperation with partner nations and organisations worldwide) all contribute to the realisation of the comprehensive concept of defence in the Euro-Atlantic region: repelling possible attacks on the Allies along the NATO borders, in the air and on the sea and keeping crises and conflicts away from NATO's territory. New here is the extremely increased significance of *resilience*, i. e. the ability to resist hybrid attacks, coercion and cyber-attacks but also to preserve independence from other powers in the matters of critical infrastructure, imports of raw materials, supply chains and energy delivery.

➤ **Defence Plans**
The Alliance must develop its future deterrence and defence capabilities for the entire NATO territory and for the full range of threats in all "dimensions" (land, air, sea components, cyber domain, outer space, and information space – stretching from Europe's Arctic region, the Norwegian Sea and the North Atlantic Ocean to the Nordic-Baltic region with the Baltic Sea via the eastern flank and the Black Sea region and further to the Medi-

terranean region of North Africa and the Middle East. Since 2019, NATO has a military strategy again – the first one since *Flexible Response* of 1968. Based on this, NATO prepared a comprehensive concept of deterrence and defence for the entire Alliance area, i. e. SACEUR's Area of Responsibility. [21] On this foundation the military leadership drew up so-called Regional Plans for the conventional defence of NATO's territory in three big regions: one stretching from the North American Atlantic coast across the North Atlantic to Great Britain and the Norwegian Sea and the High North; the second region includes Central Europe and another one covers the entire region south of the Alps. These regional plans served as the basis for classical detailed operation plans for specific areas, in which threats to the security of the Allies could emerge. This "family of plans", as they are called in NATO, determined the required composition of forces, military capabilities and headquarters, their deployment areas and tasks, as they are necessary for SACEUR to ensure the defence of the Alliance's territory. [22]

During the planning and preparation processes special attention has been given to the rapid strengthening of the defence of NATO's eastern flank. Realistic military exercises involving formations and large formations of all services (army, air force, navy) – also in the "open terrain" – once again gained greater significance. They are extremely important for the combat readiness of the forces and their quick deployment over great distances with the aim of reinforcing the Allies along the eastern flank. The large-scale exercise *STEADFAST DEFENDER 2024*, conducted by NATO with a total of 90.000 soldiers in which the German armed forces participated with 12.000 troops, was the first one of its kind after a long pause. Along with achieving a military objective, such Allied exercises also fulfil a political function of deterrence. They show a possible opponent the military strength of the NATO forces, their command capabilities and their unity and solidarity. Thus, they are an important part of NATO's *"deterrence messaging"* that demonstrates the Alliance's determination and the ability to engage in Collective Defence.

➤ **From "Forward Presence" to "Forward Defence"**
In view of Putin's strategic objectives and the barbaric warfare of the Russian army it is extremely important for the Alliance to be able to start with an effective defence far ahead in the future, without delay, in order to prevent Russia from a rapid seizure of Allied territory. After the events in Butscha and Irpin NATO can no longer count on temporally giving up parts of the Baltic territory to gain time for the deployment of reinforcements and then retaking the affected territory in a counterattack. On the contrary – NATO is determined to defend "every inch" of its territory from

NATO Summit in Washington, D.C., July 2024; Meeting of the North Atlantic Council

the very beginning of an attack and much faster than it has been possible until now. For this reason, *Forward Presence* is evolving into *Forward Defence*. To achieve this, the NATO forces permanently stationed in the east ("Forward Defence Forces"), especially in the Baltic countries, must be able to grow rapidly into brigades and further into divisions and army corps. The first step is a rapid build-up of the multinational battlegroups into brigades which alongside national formations held in a state of high combat readiness are to be deployed along the eastern flank, on the border with Belarus/Russia. [23] Behind them other forces from across the Alliance area follow in various compositions and degrees of combat readiness. That is why according to the new *NATO Force Model* [24] the size of NATO's readily available forces will be increased from 40,000 (the size of today's *NATO Response Force*) to 300,000. The overwhelming majority of them will need to be provided by the Europeans (out of geographical considerations, at the very least). The number of battlegroups has grown from four to eight. Nowadays, such formations are stationed also in Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria. In addition, there is the new *Allied Reaction Force* in the size of a division which is designed for rapid crisis response in vulnerable areas and which has replaced the *NATO Response Force*. [25] And finally, as during the Cold War, there will again be a NATO-wide alert system encompassing various alert levels each including a list of specific alert measures for a gradual, controlled increase in the defence readiness of the nations and their armed forces in a crisis situation.

➤ **The German Brigade in Lithuania**
Germany has pledged to permanently deploy in Lithuania a "robust combat brigade" (Boris Pistorius, Minister or Defence) consisting of 4,800 troops and 200 civilians. It will have several combat formations including the German-led multinational

For the first time, the German Bundeswehr is stationing a large formation permanently on the territory of a NATO Ally.

Battlegroup which is already deployed in Lithuania. By now, its core staff is present there, and it is supposed to become fully operational by 2027. For the first time, the German Armed Forces will have a large formation permanently stationed abroad, on the territory of an Ally, and that constitutes a step of historical significance. It means that Germany is directly involved militarily in maintaining the security of an Ally and thus assumes responsibility on the eastern flank of NATO – in a way that no other European Ally has done yet. In doing this, Germany makes a significant contribution to strengthening NATO's deterrence and the defence posture in this area.

➤ **Rapid Deployment of Forces – Military Mobility**

As already mentioned, the credibility of NATO's deterrence depends, among other things, on the ability to reinforce threatened Allies in peripheral regions of NATO territory as quickly as possible in the event of crisis or war. To these end, Allied military units must be quickly transported across Europe, national borders, territories and over great distances to their areas of deployment. This must be practiced also in peacetime. From a military point of view, Germany is the operational and logistical "hub" in the middle of Europe facilitating the build-up of Allied forces including American, Canadian and British troops arriving in the Netherlands, Belgium and Northern France. The Netherlands, Germany and Poland have established a virtual "corridor" for *Military Mobility* to develop common rules for a rapid crossing of borders by military units, formations, military vehicles, weapons and ammunition during a crisis, to test the civilian infrastructure (bridges, harbours and tunnels) and, if necessary, to improve them. The Operational Command of the German Armed Forces in Berlin plays a crucial role in managing the build-up of the German Armed Forces and, on the other hand, supporting the Allied forces during their stay in Germany, as well as their deployment in their areas of operation in the northeast and southeast and the necessary cooperation with the German civil authorities. In the planning phases of such build-up efforts, it closely cooperates with NATO's *Joint Support and Enabling Command (JSEC)* in Ulm. The significance of this task for the efficiency of *Forward Defence* and the credibility of NATO's deterrence and defence cannot be overestimated.

➤ **Resilience**

The ability to resist "hybrid" threats is NATO's first line of defence – already in peacetime. This task is a national responsibility and, at the same time, a self-commitment for all Allies.[26] At their Warsaw summit in 2016 the Alliance's Heads of State and Government agreed upon seven basic requirements for maintaining resilience of the nations in times of crisis and war. The overall resilience of the states, e. g. against cyber-attacks, disinformation and other hybrid treats as well as civil crisis prevention etc. is being further strengthened and broadened. The specific national objectives for achieving resilience that are regularly reviewed and adjusted are designed to improve the measurability of progress. In this regard the Allies undertake to strengthen the security of critical military infrastructure (harbours, airfields), key industries, chains of supply as well as information and communication networks. Civil planning must be systematically integrated in the defence plans. A leading NATO official is in charge of coordinating the efforts of the nations. Additionally, the Allies have appointed resilience representatives who exchange experiences on a regular basis. In this regard, it must be mentioned that within NATO's supreme military headquarters (SHAPE) a *NATO Integrated Cyber Defence Centre* was created with the task to repel cyber-attacks in peacetime, crisis and war as well as to strengthen the security of NATO networks. Moreover, after the acts of sabotage against the Nord Stream 1 und 2 pipelines the Heads of State and Government during their meeting in Washington agreed to establish a centre for the security of critical underwater infrastructure at the NATO Maritime Headquarters (MARCOM) in Northwood/London.[27]

Finland and Sweden: Allies 31 and 32

And finally: a spectacular counterpoint to Putin's imperial phantasies was the accession to NATO of Finland (in 2023) and of Sweden (in 2024). Both states have had a long tradition of neutrality and non-alignment with military alliances which outlasted even the Cold War. The Soviet Union respected this. However, given the events of the "Zeitenwende", especially Russia's war of extermination against a sovereign European state and nuclear threats against the West, both countries no longer wanted to stay in a security policy grey area. Their membership has now changed the geopolitical, strategic, and military situation in Northern Europe.[28] The Alliance becomes larger, stronger and extends further to the North. Both countries make a significant contribution to the deterrence and defence capabilities of NATO. The entire Nordic-Baltic region including the Baltic Sea constitutes a coherent area now effectively under NATO's custody – quasi the northeastern quadrant of the NATO star. The defence of the

Baltic area – the most vulnerable region of the Alliance which is connected to the rest of the Alliance territory only via the approx. 80-km-wide Suwałki corridor in eastern Poland – has gained new spatial depth for bringing up reinforcements and supplies via sea, e. g. from Denmark, Sweden and Great Britain.

Finland and Sweden both have modern ground, air and naval forces. Although, in the past, they contributed to a number of NATO and EU crisis management operations, in contrast to most other European states they continued to put the main emphasis on territorial defence – also after the Cold War. In 2017, Sweden re-introduced conscription. With the "unsinkable aircraft carrier" Gotland, it plays a key military role in the Baltic Sea area. Owing to the 1340 km long border and the experience of the "Winter War" of 1939/40, Finland has long been prepared for a possible defence against Russia. The country never abandoned conscription, and within the framework of its comprehensive defence concept it possesses a large active mobilisation reserve. In case of a military conflict, Helsinki can quickly mobilise around 280.000 trained soldiers, if necessary, up to 900.000. The country could thus become the cornerstone of the defence of the northeastern part of the NATO territory. This is complemented by a bilateral security agreement with the U.S. that provides the American forces with access to military bases and allows for storing equipment and ammunition.

The entire Nordic–Baltic region around the Baltic Sea is now a large coherent region practically under NATO's wing.

The High North and the Arctic Region

From the viewpoint of security policy, the High North and Artic regions are becoming increasingly important. In the midterm, the ice melting in the Arctic Ocean due to the climate change will provide access to big oil and gas fields and shorten the sea route from China to Europe by around 5,000 km. On the one hand, this opens economic prospects. On the other hand, the Arctic could become a new theatre of geopolitical competition and military tensions. Russia has already visibly strengthened its military presence in the sea along the Northeast Passage and in the Norwegian Sea down to the so-called GIUK gap *(Greenland-Island-United Kingdom)*. As a self-proclaimed *"Near-Arctic State"*, China also demonstrates clear economic interests in the region. Should Russia and China reach agreement on a joint military

control of this large area, NATO would be faced in the High North with another strategic risk which it would need to address. [29] Those of the European Allies who have necessary capabilities and means, e. g. the United Kingdom, Iceland, Norway, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Denmark and Sweden, should render support to the U.S. in monitoring this area.
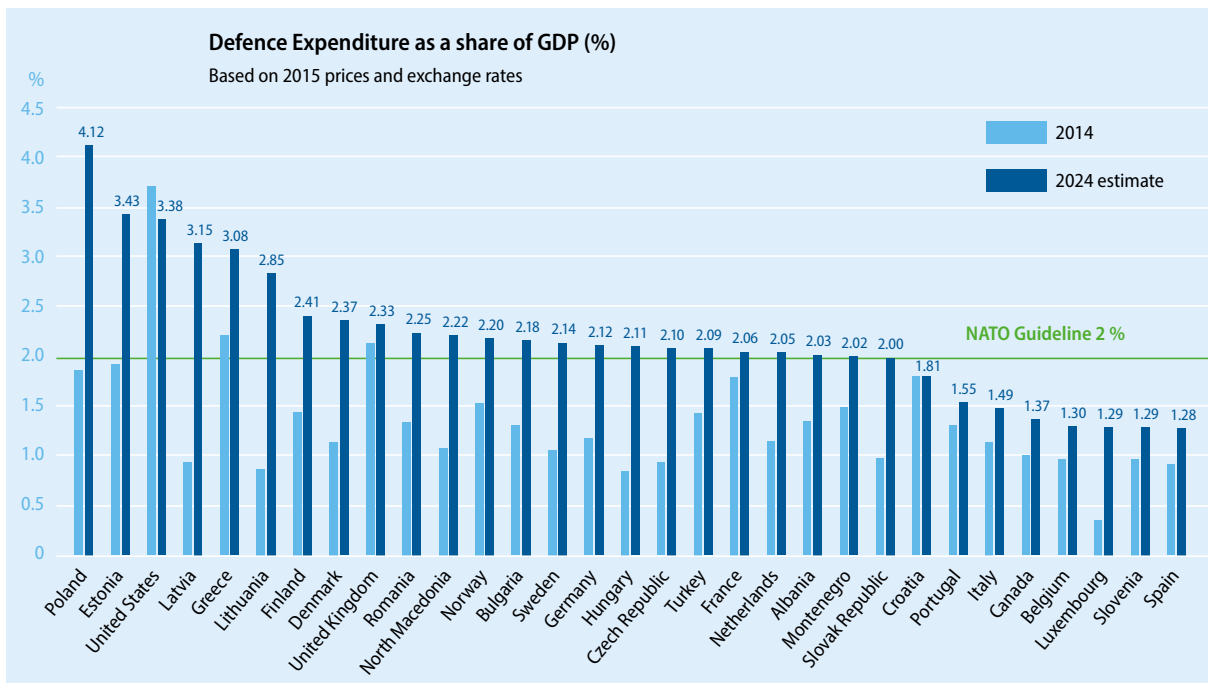
Capability targets and Defence Spending

According to SACEUR's assessment, the re-orientation of the, primarily, European Allies from conducting limited "out of area" missions on a rotational basis towards large-scale defence of Europe is tantamount to "turning around the entire system." [30] In the future, the armed forces and military capabilities that NATO requires for its entire range of tasks will significantly exceed the scale that has existed until now. [31] For the first time after the Cold War, this requirement has been clearly defined on the basis of specific, detailed operation plans for the defence in all regions of the Alliance – instead of generic scenarios and the so-called *Level of Ambition* (i. e. a description of the desired and affordable size, composition and structure of one or several stabilisation missions in crisis regions outside the NATO territory). As a consequence, the number of capability targets which NATO apportions to each Ally will be much larger and more ambitious and the time available for their fulfilment much shorter. [32] For this reason, at their meeting in Vilnius in 2023, the Heads of State and Government made a pledge to spend annually and on an enduring basis *at least* 2 percent of their national GDP for defence (from which at least 20 percent should be allocated for large equipment, research and development). They also acknowledged the fact that in many cases, in order to fill existing gaps, more than 2 percent will be needed. This is also explained by the fact that due to the challenges of an increasingly competitive security environment defence spending and joint funding of NATO must also rise. [33] Just in time for the Washington summit, Germany was able to reach the 2 percent benchmark (2,12 percent). All in all, the number of nations which spend 2 percent of GDP or more on defence increased markedly – from three in 2014 to six in 2021 to 23 in 2024.

Capability Priorities and Air Defence

The war in Ukraine has shown which capabilities are especially needed now for defence operations: first of all, air defence (both against aircraft and missiles); long-range artillery systems; long-range high-precision missiles *(Deep Precision Strike Capabilities)*, drones of all ranges and, in particular, ammunition. It can be

Defence Expenditure as a share of GDP (%)

Based on 2015 prices and exchange rates

Legend: 2014, 2024 estimate

NATO Guideline 2 %

Values (2024 estimate): Poland 4.12, Estonia 3.43, United States 3.38, Latvia 3.15, Greece 3.08, Lithuania 2.85, Finland 2.41, Denmark 2.37, United Kingdom 2.33, Romania 2.25, North Macedonia 2.22, Norway 2.20, Bulgaria 2.18, Sweden 2.14, Germany 2.12, Hungary 2.11, Czech Republic 2.10, Turkey 2.09, France 2.06, Netherlands 2.05, Albania 2.03, Montenegro 2.02, Slovak Republic 2.00, Croatia 1.81, Portugal 1.55, Italy 1.49, Canada 1.37, Belgium 1.30, Luxembourg 1.29, Slovenia 1.29, Spain 1.28

NATO defence spending in 2024: 23 Allies at or above 2 percent of their GDP on defence

assumed that these capabilities are identical to SACEUR's top priorities. These are also the areas in which the European Allies have the biggest deficits. In the light of the Russian threat, there is an increasing number of defence-relevant civilian and military targets in Europe that must be protected against air assaults (with combat aircraft, ballistic/cruise missiles and drones). However, the extremely heightened demand is not met by a sufficient quantity of air-defence systems available to NATO which thus can protect the large Alliance territory only to a limited extent. What is needed most urgently are the capabilities for an early neutralisation of command-and-control centres, radar systems, missile and cruise missile launching platforms as well as airfields in the depth of the operational space. It also includes long-range, high-precision conventional missiles capable of hitting the Russian A2/AD-capabilities in Kaliningrad [34] in order to significantly weaken Russia's ability to start a regional conventional attack. [35]

After years of focusing on crisis management in remote regions without any threats from the air in the theatres of operation, the creation of air and missile defence capabilities in Germany and in other European countries must become the main priority of force planning and development. In 2022, Germany launched the *European Sky Shield Initiative (ESSI)* – a multinational project designed to fill the gaps in the European air-defence shield.

21 European Allies and partners including Austria and Switzerland intend to jointly procure air-defence systems for various altitudes, of short-range (up to 15 km) and long-range (50 km), and thus strengthen the Integrated Air and Missile Defence (IAMD) of NATO. Moreover, the U.S. and Germany agreed [36] that, in 2026, the U.S. would deploy in Germany three conventional weapon systems: the surface-to-air missile SM-6, the *Tomahawk* cruise-missile and the *Long-Range Hypersonic Weapon (LRHW) Dark Eagle*. All three systems are conventional missiles that cannot be retrofitted with nuclear warheads. So, they are not designed to be part of the extended nuclear deterrence provided for Europe by the U.S. (as was the case with the missiles under the NATO Double-Track-Decision of 1979) as some critics in Germany have wrongly insinuated, but 'only' serve conventional defence, especially air-defence. However, the deployment of U.S. intermediate-range missiles also sends a specific deterrence message to the Russian leadership: if Russia militarily threatens or attacks one or several Allies, its territory will no longer remain a sanctuary. Far-reaching medium-range missiles of the U.S. in Germany which are capable of hitting high-value targets in Russia thus also constitute an important means of NATO's conventional deterrence. And, finally, within the framework of the *"European Long-Range Strike Approach – ELSA"*, Germany, France, Italy and Poland agreed to jointly develop long-range cruise-missiles (over 1,000 km).

Dual-capable 5th generation combat aircraft F 35

Nuclear Strategy 2024: Would the Capabilities Deployed in Europe Suffice?

The synopsis of NATO's efforts to align its strategy and forces with deterrence and defence against a Russian threat of aggression shows that its primary emphasis is placed on conventional capabilities. It is the main area in which it has the biggest gaps to fill. Its nuclear strategy and its nuclear forces in Europe remain unchanged. The Allies seem to be convinced that the strategy of "extended nuclear deterrence" provided by the U.S. in combination with the nuclear sharing arrangements for the Europeans, as discussed in Chapter 3, works also in the face of the Russian aggression against Ukraine and Moscow's nuclear threats, and the message it sends continues to be effective.

Its core principles are: *"Any employment of nuclear weapons against NATO would fundamentally alter the nature of the conflict. The Alliance has the capabilities and resolve to impose costs on an adversary that would be unacceptable and far outweigh the benefits that any adversary could hope to achieve."*[37] Both sentences belong together: a nuclear war against, and a victory over, NATO is not possible. Whoever employs nuclear weapons against the Alliance must expect an appropriate response, a possibly uncontrolled escalation and thus the worst outcome for himself. To achieve this, the Alliance focuses on three categories of nuclear weapons: the strategic nuclear forces (first of all, those of the U.S. as the primary security guarantor of the Alliance), the strategic nuclear weapons of France and Great Britain, whose independent decision making centres make it more difficult for a potential opponent to calculate the risks, and, finally, the American *(forward-deployed)* nuclear weapons in Europe which would be carried by European *Dual-Capable Aircraft (DCA)*. The last aspect

has a special significance: it is the European end piece of the "extended nuclear deterrence" provided by the U.S., the proverbial nuclear protective shield which America holds over the European NATO Allies. It ultimately forms the core of European security.

The political decision on a possible employment of nuclear weapons will be made on the highest level of NATO. It would have just one political and strategic objective: neutralisation of a nuclear threat to the European Allies and a stop of a war of aggression. But in order to make such an employment credible, highly efficient and reliable military tools are needed. If during a war NATO decides in favour of a nuclear response it would, first of all, entail a well-considered, selective use of nuclear weapons with a limited explosive yield and limited collateral damage designed to demonstrate to the Kremlin the danger of an escalation and to convince it to end the war. To achieve this, there must be a possibility to precisely hit and eliminate a high-value military target with certainty. The extraordinary importance of such employment and the associated high risk call for the most advanced fighter aircraft of the so-called 5th generation that today are represented solely by the F 35 stealth aircraft which are produced by the United States. The European Allies, including Germany, agreed on their procurement, making thus a contribution to nuclear burden sharing. The modernised US American nuclear bomb of the B61-12 type is end-phase-guided, therefore accurate and has a warhead with scalable explosive power between 0.3 and 50 kt.

But will this be sufficient for credible deterrence and prevention of war? To demonstrate their unity and resolve, the Heads of State and Government regularly re-confirm the "imperative of the broadest possible participation"[38] of the Europeans in the Alliance's burden sharing. Also, a nuclear threat or such an attack must be treated as an attack on all and must consequently trigger a joint response. In light of this, the following options should be considered:[39]

➤ Certification of, basically, all suitable European combat aircraft capable of carrying the B61-12 bombs, as well as training and certification of pilots. This step would convince Russia that it is not advisable to try to minimise the nuclear risk by means of an early, even pre-emptive strike against a limited number of targets. In fact, NATO and SACEUR would have more options at their disposal to prepare a "nuclear deployment package."

➤ The increase in number of the airfields available for fighter jets with nuclear weapons as well as runways and landing strips for distribution of warplanes before their employment in a geographically very broad area.

➤ Participation of, in principle, all European Allies who possess suitable means for providing support, supply and escort with conventional fighter aircraft to nuclear operations *(CSNO – Conventional Support to Nuclear Operations)*.

➤ Provision of long-range ground/air-based high-precision missiles in order to increase the number of options and to make it more difficult for Russia to defend itself against the employment of nuclear weapons.

➤ And, finally, as mentioned previously, a rapid build-up of territorial air-defence for protection of large areas against Russian (conventional and nuclear) missiles

In the author's view, all these considerations suggest reviewing and adapting NATO's nuclear posture in Europe. An expanded nuclear deterrent in Europa should be designed in such a way that the Europeans would materially have a main share in it. This would allow the burden-sharing key in the Alliance to be adapted in favour of the U.S. and counteract the "free rider" argument.

The triad of the *"Appropriate Mix"* of the conventional, air-defence and nuclear capabilities must remain the basis of NATO's deterrence and defence posture. The experience from the war in Ukraine shows that long-range conventional missiles which are capable of reaching deep into the enemy's territory and precisely hitting military targets are of paramount importance for successful defence and the protection of the population as well as civilian installations and thus markedly increase the effectiveness of deterring an aggressor.

[1] *Repeated attempts by the U.S. to avert Russia's attack at the last minute by publishing intelligence information failed.*

[2] *The descriptions and analyses contained in this chapter relate to the security policy and strategic developments in the years 2022 to 2024, i. e. in a relatively short period of time. Some of them, in particular the war in Ukraine, could develop relatively quickly. How and with what consequences is difficult to say.*

[3] *The following part of this chapter, concerning Russia, is based on several articles by the author, in particular the one entitled: „Erweiterte Nukleare Abschreckung – zur Glaubwürdigkeit der NATO-Strategie im Lichte der russischen Bedrohung", in: SIRIUS – Zeitschrift für Strategische Analysen 2023, Volume 7, Issue 3*

[4] *Speech by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg on the occasion of being awarded the Eric Warburg Prize by Atlantik-Brücke on April 25, 2024 in Berlin: "So far in his disastrous war, Putin has lost 350,000 troops, 2,000 tanks, a tenth of its air force, and much of its Black Sea Fleet." At the end of October 2024, NATO's new Secretary General, Mark Rutte, put the losses of the Russian army at more than 600,000 dead or wounded soldiers.*

[5] *See (1) Treaty between The United States of America and the Russian Federation on security guarantees, v. Dec.17.2021: https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/rso/nato/1790818/?lang=en; und (2) Agreement on measures to ensure security of the Russian Federation and member States of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, v. Dec.17.2021: https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/rso/nato/1790803/?lang=en*

[6] *These include Iskander-M ballistic missiles with a range of around 500 km and 9M729 ground-launched cruise missiles (SSC-8) with a range of around 2,000 km.*

[7] *Putin in 2005: "The collapse of the Soviet Union was the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the 20th century", for the source see Adomeit/ Krause 2022, 134, footnote 23.*

[8] *See Brauß, Heinrich/Krause, Joachim: Was will Russland mit den vielen Mittelstreckenwaffen? In: SIRIUS 2019, Volume 3, Issue 2, p. 154-166.*

[9] *Cf. Brad Dress: Blinken: The U.S. has warned Russia to 'stop lose talks on nuclear weapons' in: The Hill 9/25/22: https://thehill.com/policy/international/3660657-blinken-us-has-told-russia-to-stop-the-loose-talk-on-nuclear-weapons/*

[10] *See also: SPD Commission on International Policy: Sozialdemokratische Antworten auf eine Welt im Umbruch. Berlin 2023, P. 17.*

[11] *This assessment, as of October 2024, is not changed by the Ukrainian army's deep cross-border incursion into Russia's Kursk region. Ukraine has thus gained a political-military bargaining chip and may have slowed down the Russian army's advance in Donbass because the Russian counter-offensive is tying up Russian forces. However, it has split its own forces and has not changed the overall operational situation.*

[12] *France and the United Kingdom have delivered similar cruise missiles (SCALP and Storm Shadow) which however have a shorter range (250 km).*

[13] *As of the middle of 2024: U.S. € 98.7 from which € 65 are allocated as military assistance; the EU provides € 110 bn with € 40 being designated for military equipment; Germany gives in total € 34 bn, from which € 19 are spent for weapon systems, air defence, armoured vehicles, artillery and ammunition, in 2024 the amount is € 7 bn.*

[14] *See: NATO, Vilnius Summit Communiqué, 11 July 2023, Paragraph 11*

[15] *In the first half of 2024 alone, there were 10.000 containers with probably more than one million artillery shells; see: address by the NATO Secretary General J. Stoltenberg during the Eric Warburg Award ceremony*

[16] *See: NATO, Statement of the NATO-Ukraine Council, 11 Jul. 2024, in particular, paragraphs 5 – 8.*

[17] *One of the reasons to give this task to NATO allegedly was the intent to prevent a possible future US-President Trump from unilaterally refusing to fulfil this role.*

[18] *NATO 2022 Strategic Concept, Madrid, 30 June 2022, www.nato.int/strategic-concept/#StrategicConcept. After the end of the Cold War, it became clear that NATO needs to update its Strategic Concept every 10 years in order to reflect the strategic changes in Europe and worldwide defining its interests and tasks. The last Strategic Concept was adopted at the Lisbon summit in 2010. Comparing both documents, one cannot but notice the stark difference.*

[19] *Added to this list are the consequences of the climate change, new disruptive technologies and erosion of the armament controls and disarmament mechanisms.*

[20] *NATO, Washington Summit Declaration, see also: paragraph 7*

[21] *SACEUR's Area of Responsibility (AOR) stretches from the North Pole to the Tropic of Cancer in the south and from the eastern coast of North America to NATO's eastern border in Europe.*

[22] *At the same time, the Alliance must and is willing to remain ready for military missions for conflict management in other world regions outside the territory of the Alliance.*

[23] *The national forces and multinational battlegroups together form the so-called "In-Place-Forces".*

[24] *The NATO Force Model includes three groups of forces with various degrees of readiness: Tier 1: over 100.000 troops, with a notice to move within 10 days; Tier 2: around 200.000 troops (within 10-30 days); Tier 3: at least 500.000 soldiers ready to be deployed within 30-180 days.*

[25] *Similar to Allied Command Europe Mobile Force (AMF) during the Cold War, but at present also for military crisis management outside the NATO borders.*

[26] *See: NATO, Washington Summit Declaration, Paragraph 12.*

[27] *NATO Centre for Security of Critical Undersea Infrastructure (CUI); this centre is complemented by a 'CUI network' of Allies and relevant private actors to provide the CUI with information on suspicious activities in the maritime zones of particular interest, especially in the North and Baltic Seas.*

[28] *See also: Brauß, Heinrich: Eine strategische Win-Win-Situation, in: Internationale Politik, July/August 2022*

[29] *See: Lindley-French, Julian: Honest Broker? The EU, Strategic Autonomy and Security in the Future Arctic. A Report for the European Parliament Committee on Foreign Affairs, Brussels, May 2021*

[30] *SACEUR, General C. Cavoli, NATO Public Forum of the NATO Summit, 10 July 2024, Washington, D.C.*

[31] *See: Marco Seliger: Die NATO gibt sich eine Struktur wie im Kalten Krieg, Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 4 June 2023.*

[32] *According to Defence Minister Boris Pistorius, the German Armed Forces must be made "fit for war" not later than by 2030. This corresponds to the short-term period of six-years of the NATO Defence Planning Process. When, in the fall of 2025, Berlin receives new NATO capability targets for Germany – significantly more in numbers and costs – 2 percent will no longer suffice. (In the author's opinion, the spending will likely need to range between 3 and 4 percent).*

[33] *NATO, Washington Declaration, Paragraph 7 (p. 1)*

[34] *See also: Chapter 3; Anti-Access-/Area-Denial-capabilities include multiple air-defence systems, long-range artillery, rockets and cruise missiles as well as electronic-warfare systems.*

[35] *See also: Brauß, Heinrich: Künftige Stationierung von Mittelstreckenwaffen in Deutschland – Kommentar zur Gemeinsamen Erklärung der USA und Deutschlands, https://ata-dag.de/aktuelles/debatte/kuenftige-stationierung-von-mittelstreckenwaffen-in-deutschland/21392/*

[36] *On the sidelines of the NATO summit in Washington on 10-11 July 2024 the US Secretary of Defense and the German Minister of Defence signed the following Joint Declaration: „Following discussions ahead of the NATO Summit, the governments of the United States and Germany released the following joint statement: The United States will begin episodic deployments of the long-range fires capabilities of its Multi-Domain Task Force in Germany in 2026, as part of planning for enduring stationing of these capabilities in the future. When fully developed, these conventional long-range fires units will include SM-6, Tomahawk, and developmental hypersonic weapons, which have significantly longer range than current land-based fires in Europe. Exercising these advanced capabilities will demonstrate the United States' commitment to NATO and its contributions to European integrated deterrence."*

[37] *See: NATO Strategic Concept 2022, Paragraph 28*

[38] *Vilnius Summit Communiqué, see: Paragraph 45 and the following*

[39] *Also see: Brauß, Heinrich: Die Rolle von Kernwaffen in der europäischen Sicherheit – geht es auch ohne die USA?, in: SIRIUS, Band 8, Heft 3, S. 299-304*

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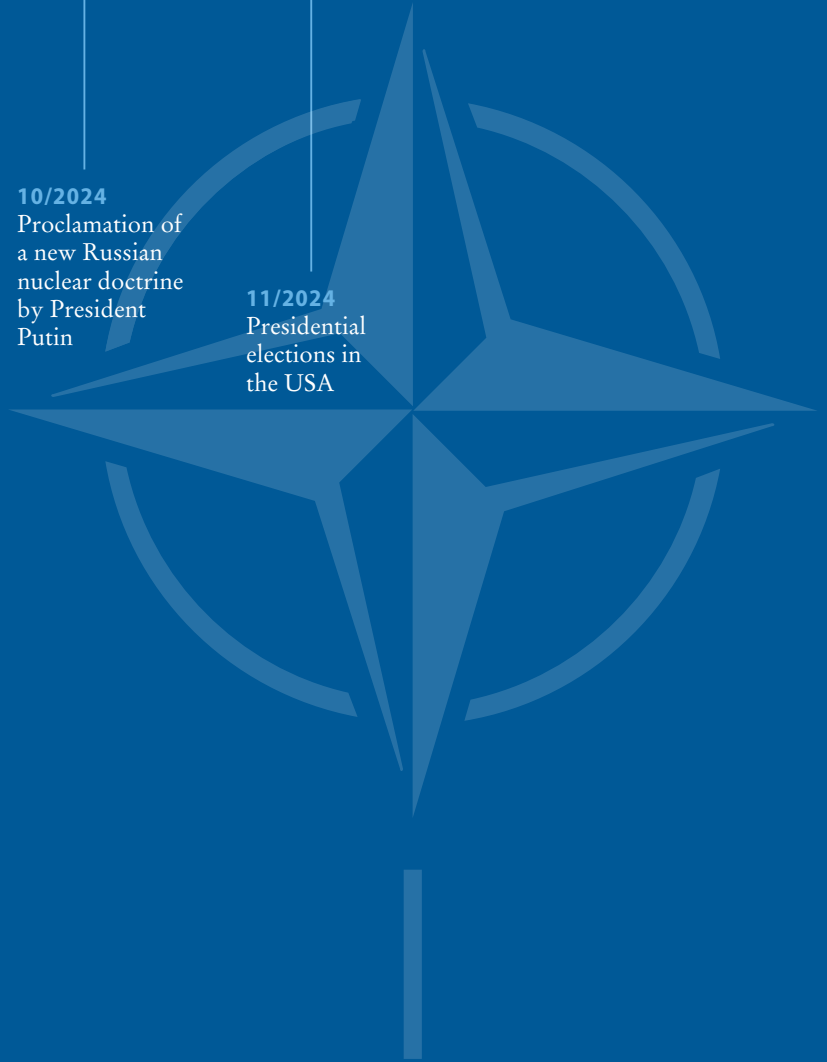## CHANGE OF TIMES AT GLOBAL LEVEL – RISE OF CHINA TO WORLD POWER AND THE NEW GLOBAL GREAT POWER COMPETITION

10/2024
Proclamation of a new Russian nuclear doctrine by President Putin

9/2024
New European Commission: new Commissioner for Defence and Aerospace

11/2024
Presidential elections in the USA

CHANGE OF TIMES AT GLOBAL LEVEL

RISE OF CHINA TO WORLD POWER
AND THE NEW GLOBAL GREAT POWER COMPETITION

As explained in the previous chapter, Russia's war against Ukraine has fundamentally changed the security landscape of the Euro-Atlantic Area. The invasion of the Crimea peninsula in 2014 and its annexation produced a dramatic split in the security policy. After the Russian large-scale attack against Ukraine in February 2022 this split widened to a deep divide with the West – and became a historical turning point in Europe. These events were going hand in hand with an unstoppable development of strategic importance with a global reach and: the rise of China to a world power, which increased the competition with the U.S. and spawned the latter's new strategic pivot towards the Asian-Pacific Region. The consequences for Europe and NATO are far-reaching in scope.

However, the communiqués from the NATO-summits of recent years, as well as the Strategic Concept of 2022 show that for many years the Allies had believed that they have been – and still are – faced with a spectrum of diverse security risks and threats, such as international terrorism, the spreading instability in the South, primarily in the Middle East and Africa, as well as transnational risks that are linked to the global climate change and emerging disruptive technologies. Only gradually moved China in the focus of the most Europeans in NATO. It is for the first time that in the Strategic Concept of 2022 China is characterised as a "Challenge". So, for a long time, NATO has been dealing with several security risks and threats which the Allies, given their geographical position, have treated differently. But they are all relevant for the Alliance as a whole. In the current overall security situation, they require political unity, ability to act and innovative power so that, also in the future, NATO can successfully fulfil its most important task: maintaining protection and security for all its members and ensuring peace and stability for Europe and North America.

In the recent past, maintaining the unity and decision-making ability of the Alliance was not a matter of course. The years of Donald Trump's presidency (2017 – 2021) were turbulent. A number of unfavourable events were taking place at the same time: Trump's unpredictable irritating behaviour ("NATO obsolete"

2017, meeting with Putin in 2018, with the North Korean dictator Kim Jong Un in 2019); "NATO's brain death" polemic by France's president Macron with his criticism of the U.S. and Turkey (2019)[1]; the rising threat from Russia; the war in Syria with US-American, Turkish and Russian participation, huge flows of refugees and the threat of terror, as well as China's rising strategic nuclear potential. Because of all this, the Allies had to regain unity and ability to act. Keeping that in mind, during the summit of 2021 in Brussels the Heads of State and Government adopted the "NATO-2030-Agenda" which was based on the proposal put forward by the former Secretary General Stoltenberg.[2] According to him, NATO should remain militarily strong, bolster its political unity and cohesion and devote more attention to global developments relevant to its future tasks.[3]

New was here Stoltenberg's explicit appeal to the nations, also within NATO, to watch more closely the global trends that have an impact on European security. Many Europeans have not been accustomed to it: most of them have willingly left this task to the United States. While the continental Central and East European Allies were predominantly occupied with the rising threat from Russia and the nations on the Southern flank were mainly focusing on the risks emanating from the Mediterranean, the Middle East and North Africa, the main interests and concerns of the U.S. and, to a certain degree, of Great Britain as maritime powers were becoming ever more connected with China as a growing challenge. When security is concerned, the Europeans in the first line think of the defence of the European region. For the U.S., however, security is a global challenge. With this in mind, one of the most important pledges included in the 2030 Agenda was to strengthen NATO as a forum for constant consultations between North American and European Allies in order to ensure the "convergence" of national priorities in security policy as well as the ability of NATO to make decisions and to act.

Then Putin launched his large-scale war in Europe. In the meantime, a number of urgent tasks and goals of the 2021 Agenda have already been incorporated into decisions made during the

subsequent NATO summits on bolstering deterrence, defence and resilience of the Allies. However, the specific political and military consequences that result from China's objectives and its striving for power as well as the U.S. response to such ambitions are not yet clear. The Strategic Concept of 2022 states that *The People's Republic of China's (PRC) stated ambitions and coercive policies challenge our interests, security and values* and, at the same time, formulates an obligation for the Allies to deal systematically with the challenges posed by China to the Euro-Atlantic security in order to "guarantee the defence and security of the Allies". It can be assumed that during the North-Atlantic Council meetings the U.S. will regularly raise the issue of the relations with China along with the support for Ukraine and deterrence of Russia.

The New Epoch: The Rivalry between Great Powers on the Global Scale

Russia is a storm; China is the climate change. That is how the President of the Federal Agency for the Protection of the Constitution put it at a public hearing in the German Parliament in 2022, in order to illustrate quite a different quality of the threats coming from Russia and China. He indicated that, in a longer term, China poses a far greater threat to Germany's security and interests. Russia was described as an acute, immediate challenge whereas China is considered a long-term lingering danger which, with the time passing, is going to spread and have profound implications. The rise of China to a world power is the most significant strategic development of our time. It changes the overall global power balance. Thus, in the field of security policy the transatlantic community faces an advent of a new era, both regionally and globally, which will be characterised by the geopolitical and systemic[4] rivalry of great powers – or, as President Biden put it – by the global competition between democracy and autocracy.

For this reason, for the U.S., regardless of who will take up office in Washington, the strategic (and political, economic as well as military) centre of gravity will be in the vast Indo-Pacific region. The freedom of navigation in that area and unhindered access to the markets and its allies and partners as well as uninterrupted chains of supply in this large space constitute main strategic interest of the country as a world power and globally trading nation. The centre of the global competition lies in the Indo-Pacific.[5] Asia is the region with the most dynamic grow. 90 percent of the world trade is carried out on the sea routes, and the Indo-Pacific accounts for the bulk of it with 50 percent of the shipping passing through the South China Sea. More and more American politicians and strategists are convinced that Asia, and no longer Europe,

is the centre of the world. Most notably, the European export-dependent economies such as Germany rely on access to the global markets and free navigation and for this reason their protection by the U.S. is crucial for the European security and stability. At the same time, China is trying to gain control over the South and East China Sea and wants to become the dominating power in East Asia and the Into-Pacific. That is why the U.S. considers the containment of China the main task of its global strategy. NATO needs to deal with the future direction of the U.S. strategy because it will have an impact on the US presence in Europe and thus NATO's ability to act.

The rise of China as the world power constitutes the most significant strategic development of our time.

China's Economic Power and Its Political and Military Ambitions

Russia constitutes the biggest *immediate* danger but the larger strategic challenge, a threat of a new quality to the entire West, is posed by China. While Moscow's claim for power is based predominantly on its military strength, raw materials and its geographical size, the Chinese leadership pursues a coherent longer-term strategy. Beijing mainly relies on its economic potential and technological superiority. Already today, China is the second-largest economy in the world and, for example, accounts for the half of the global steel production. In 2020, China signed with 14 states of the Asian-Pacific Region the worldwide largest regional free-trade agreement – RCEP *(Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership)*. Together, these 15 states have a population of 2,2 bn and account for one third of the global economic output. In addition to this, the *One Belt, One Road Initiative* ("New Silk Road") which is designed to create a worldwide trading association under Chinese control encompasses more than 150 countries and international organisations (around 70 percent of the world population with 40 percent of the global GDP). Investment in this project will open for China access to raw materials and markets in various regions of the world but also allow it to influence the global supply chains and the decision-making processes of national governments and international organisations. Thus, the economic cooperation and the conclusion of investment agreements between China and Central European countries and Greece in the so-called 16-plus format[6] create a risk of emerging political dependencies. They could divide Europeans

12th National People's Congress, 2013

in issues affecting Europe's security. This is particularly true in cases of investment by state-controlled Chinese corporations in critical infrastructure, key technologies, telecommunications networks (5G) or energy and transport infrastructure in the NATO nations. For example, since 2016 COSCO, the Chinese shipping company, possesses the majority of shares in the Greek port of Piraeus and has meanwhile significantly increased its capacity and container handling. Some observers are talking of Chinas "gateway" to Europe.[7]

The risks posed by China's rise are exacerbated by its co-operation with Russia.

Beijing complements and underpins its economic strategy by the fast-growing capability to project military power.[8] In 2024, China's defence budget has reached approximately € 205 bn (in 2022 it amounted to around € 292 bn) and has thus become the second largest in the world. By 2030, Beijing wants to be the world leader in the development and use of Artificial Intelligence, by 2049 – the 100-year anniversary of the Communist Party rule – it plans to have the technologically most advanced armed forces. China's behaviour is becoming more assertive and has become the reason for uncertainty and concern in the region, particularly in the South and East China Sea which it considers its maritime backyard. The illegal transformation of uninhabited islands and reefs in the South China Sea into military bases, military threatening posturing toward its neighbours, especially Taiwan, as well

as "hybrid" employment of "maritime militias" (paramilitary forces disguised as fishermen) against foreign ships are designed to delineate a Chinese de-facto sphere of influence in the South China Sea. These steps are accompanied by cyber-attacks and disinformation campaigns – also across the world. Beijing has been constructing harbour infrastructure in Cambodia, Djibouti, Oman and Equatorial Guinea.[9] The rapid modernisation of the Chinese armed forces and its nuclear arsenal is continuing at an unrelenting speed. Special emphasis is put on the growth of China's navy. Between 2014 and 2018 alone the country significantly increased its naval capabilities, which at that time already included two aircraft carriers and added to them ships with the total tonnage equivalent to that of the entire British Royal Navy of the same period.

China's armament programme (B.E.) is aimed, first of all, at denying the US armed forces access to and freedom of manoeuvre in the South and East China Sea – or, at least, making it more difficult – mainly keeping in mind the possible military support of Taiwan. In addition, in 2022 the Chinese president Xi announced the "reunification" with Taiwan "in a few years" – "if necessary, with the use of force". Moreover, Beijing started constructing military bases along the global maritime routes.[10] China adapted its military doctrine accordingly: the Chinese People's Liberation Army whose initial mission for a long time has been only the territorial defence is now present across the world – participating in UN Blue Helmets missions but also in joint military exercises with Russia in the Indian Ocean, in the Mediterranean, the Baltic Sea or, for example, in the Russian large-scale military exercise VOSTOK 2018.

China's Striving for Dominance – in East Asia and Worldwide

Primarily due to China's striving for dominance but also because of the threat posed by North Korea the entire East Asian region is building up military capabilities. Between 2010 and 2019 defence spending rose by 50 percent – and that of China even by 80 percent. The claim to power, its strategy and, to an ever-greater degree, its military build-up and demonstration of military power are posing a danger not only to its immediate neighbours but also to countries in the entire Indo-Pacific region. For them, the U.S. is a security guarantor and a decisive factor for maintaining the rules-based international order as well as political and military stability in the larger region. The trilateral alliance created by U.S., Great Britain and Australia in September 2021 (AUKUS) has been an element of this strategy.

The risks posed by China's rise to the West are aggravated by the country's strategic cooperation with Russia. It is developing in the political, economic, technological and military fields. Both presidents speak of a "strategic" and "no-limits partnership".[11] Both are united by the goal to counteract the global influence of the U.S., especially in some regions of Europe and Asia which they claim to be their zones of influence. Thus, the transatlantic community finds itself confronting two authoritarian powers that are creating a double strategic risk for the whole political West – in the Euro-Atlantic and the Indo-Pacific areas. As an example: when, in the spring of 2021, the Russian Army menacingly concentrated on the Ukrainian border, China, at the same time, carried out an air-supported amphibious offensive exercise directed against Taiwan.[12] Moreover, last year, Russia imported from China around 90 percent of the microelectronic components (chips), that Moscow needed to produce missiles, tanks and airplanes. As a result, Beijing is fuelling the biggest military confrontation in Europe after the Second World War. The same is true of North Korea that has been supplying Russia with big amounts of artillery ammunition.[13] In terms of the relative strength, the strategic competition of the great powers became in practice a rivalry between two global competitors: the USA facing China for world dominance.

The Chinese Challenge to the West

China's increasing strength is challenging the geostrategic role of the U.S. as a protecting power of democracies and of the free global trade but also, as a consequence, it influences the basis of its world power status. At the same time, China is not only an economic rival of the West but also a totalitarian state that does not respect human rights and the rights of minorities. For the EU, China is in important trading partner, economic competitor and systemic rival.[14] For the U.S., Beijing is not only a main economic competitor but also a most important geostrategic opponent and a global *full-spectrum systemic rival*.

In order to gain the upper hand in the competition of the systems, the United States try to convince the European Allies and partners whose interests are also affected by the Chinese striving for power to pursue a common strategy toward China. That is why the future China policy will probably become a determining factor in the transatlantic relations and have an impact on crucial political fields, such as economy and trade, technology and security. For this reason, it is of great importance that Europe and the U.S. develop a common understanding of China and agree on how to deal with the People's Republic. In addition, the United States will likely want to achieve decisions within NATO on how the Euro-

peans can support them. They will also seek agreement on the medium- and long-term division of roles between the United States and the Europeans with regard to the two simultaneous but distinct threats from Russia and China. A thorough discussion and joint understanding of this strategic task for the future is also in the interest of the Europeans.

America's Multiple Strategic Commitments

With its military focus remaining on the South and East China Seas, China is striving to gain control over the greater East Asian region. Beijing supports Russia but remains in the background and outwardly restraint. China is keen to become a dominant power taking the lead in regional influence over the so-called "Global South"; it offers political assistance acting as a "fair mediator" where and when it serves its own economic interests. In the Middle East, Beijing will continue to be dependent on energy access for many years to come. Its political and economic influence in the region seems to be growing.[15]

By contrast, the United States is involved in several regions of the world, with a significant military presence, because its stability or the resolution of conflicts there are in its interest and partners depend on American support. They are needed to Europe. Europe needs the U.S. to help Ukraine fight against Russia. NATO relies on them as a leading political and military power, which ensures cohesion of the Alliance. The U.S. has the strongest military in NATO. Europe continues to rely on the US military presence as part of NATO's deterrence and defence posture against Russia, which is now being significantly strengthened. In recent years, the U.S. has increased its troop numbers from 40,000 to 100,000 servicemen stationed around Europe, expanded military capabilities and command structures. The U.S. is posturing assets to defend Israel and has been increasing its military presence in the region.

Going forward, the United States will have to maintain significant presence in the Middle East to deter Iran and Islamic terrorist groups allied with it. Besides, the U.S. protects civilian shipping in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden. It cannot be ruled out that the explosive situation which has evolved in in Israel following the Hamas massacre on 7 October 2023, the killing of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyya in Tehran as well as the killing of the Secretary General of the terrorist organisation Hezbollah, Hassan Nasrallah, in Beirut, and in view of Iran's recurrent missile attacks against Israel and the latter's massive military countermeasures, especially in Gaza and southern Lebanon – taken all this together could sooner or later escalate into a major war in the Middle East. And

finally, the U.S. sustained presence in the Indo-Pacific region rests on around 300,000 troops deployed to allied nations and military bases in that region. Given Taiwan's relevance for the global economy – with a market share of 68 percent, it is the market leader of the global semiconductor industry – the deterrent impact of the US military presence in the region combined with the ability to provide military support and defend the country in the event of a Chinese attack are of paramount importance.

Noteworthy too, the regional structure of the Middle East conflict has also a global dimension: Hamas, Hezbollah and Iran, all of whom are keen to destroy Israel, are supported by Russia. Moscow presumably wants to keep the U.S. military continually engaged in the Middle East. The Kremlin may also be hoping that the growing political polarisation in the U.S. in the wake of the Middle East conflict will be receiving increased political attention and will require more effort from Washington, moving the focus away from Ukraine, and that the so-called *"competition of wars"* will weaken the support for Ukraine. Given its regional ambitions in the Indo-Pacific region, Beijing is also keen to tie the U.S. down to other parts of the world and weaken it geopolitically. The ongoing conflict between Israel and the Palestinians that routinely flares up, its relations with Arab states, Iran's role, the influence of the U.S. as a global power, as well as Russian and Chinese geostrategic interests – all these factors are interconnected as in a melting pot.

Strategic burden sharing is not a concession to the U.S., but is in Europe's own political interest.

The U.S. and Europe: Complementary Security Policies?

The United States are a global power; their alliance with Europe, which has been growing and expanding over many decades, is an essential, if not decisive prerequisite for this – due to political, economic, military, and strategic reasons. Europe and the United Sates are the largest mutual trading partners. Together, they account for about half of the Global Gross Domestic Product. Assured access of the US military to, and partnership with, Europe is central to the U.S. role as a global power vis-à-vis the two authoritarian major powers Russia and China. To make sure this continues to be the case from an U.S. perspective, Europe in its entirety must remain free and stable and therefore protected from Russian and Chinese influence and control. Besides, Europe, and primarily Germany, serves as a logistics hub for US military

deployments to the Middle East, North Africa, and the whole Mediterranean region. Hence, remaining a military power in Europe also serves U.S. strategic interests.

From the perspective of the European Allies, it is evident that the U.S. military presence in Europe plays – and will continue to play – a crucial role for the security of the continent. Even if the European nations were in a position to establish (literally) a European Defence Union (within the framework of the EU) providing for conventional defence on their own, sustained US military and nuclear presence would still be indispensable – for deterring imperialist, aggressive Russia that is nuclear-armed. It is equally clear that America's potential to carry through political and military interventions in the Middle East also serves European strategic interests. No European nation has comparable capabilities, political independence, sufficient clout and reputation among the conflicting parties. Finally, it is also in the interest of the European states that the U.S. establishes a powerful counterbalance to China in the Indo-Pacific region that protects democracies in this part of the world, secures access to the markets, and keeps global supply chains intact.

Assuming that its future leadership will remain strategically wise, the U.S. will continue to act as a dominant power in both the Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific region. That said, the size and capabilities of the US military stationed across Europe will likely remain limited. A large proportion of the US armed forces and military capabilities will in future be earmarked for deployment options in the Far East. However, American experts believe that the U.S.'s force projection capability is not sufficient for conducting two large-scale combat operations simultaneously, one in Europe against Russia and the other one in Asia against China (for example, in a military confrontation over Taiwan). [16] In the event of a military conflict with China, the U.S. would presumably redeploy numerous high-end military capabilities, mainly air and naval components, from Europe to the Indo-Pacific region. This concerns those forces that have so far been foreseen for collective defence in Europe and which SACEUR factors into NATO's defence plans. If this happens, NATO cannot expect these capabilities to return in the foreseeable future, if at all. The European Allies, and Germany at the forefront, would have to fill the emerging capability gaps and thus reduce the burden placed on the U.S. in the Euro-Atlantic region, and they have to prepare for such a contingency now. To put it in NATO capability planning terms, the existing burden distribution arrangements within the Alliance should be altered in favour of the U.S. in order to achieve "fair burden sharing" within a broader, global framework. This essentially means that in the future, European Allies will have to con-

tribute much more to the defence of Europe. Together, the Europeans organised in the EU (still) have the world's second largest gross domestic product, just ahead of China. The GDP of the UK and Norway would be added to that. Adaptation of burden-sharing arrangements in Europe is therefore a feasible option. Strategic burden sharing is not a concession to the United States, but a necessity that arises from the geostrategic complexity of the tasks facing the Euro-Atlantic community and serves Europe's own interests. A *New Transatlantic Compact* would be a fitting endeavour for the Transatlantic Alliance on the occasion of its 75th anniversary.

New Burden-Sharing Arrangements in NATO and through EU Options

Fair burden sharing is determined by multiple contributing factors, both political and military. Some of them depend on nations' political perspectives, which are different. This section focuses on those factors that are generally recognised by NATO as the most relevant ones.

➤ **Military Capabilities**

As part of the NATO Defence Planning Process, fair burden-sharing is measured based on the size, scope, number, and quality of the armed forces and military capabilities which Allies contribute to NATO and which the Alliance requires to accomplish collective defence and crisis prevention/management tasks set out by the political mandate. The second, and politically more important indicator, since it enables objective comparison, is the level of national defence spending as a percentage of GDP.

Based on the parameters that have been agreed to ensure equitable burden-sharing in NATO, it is understood that no nation should provide more than 50 percent of the forces and high-end capabilities required by NATO. However, in planning terms, the U.S. still contributes about 60 to 70 percent of critical high-end capabilities, including long-range reconnaissance, suppression of enemy air defence, long-range precision-strike missiles, electronic warfare and, above all, ballistic missile defence. The European Allies should therefore provide at least half of the required forces and high-end capabilities, i. e. the *strategic enablers*. Hence, the Europeans and Canada should ultimately deliver 50 percent of the capabilities agreed upon as part of the fair burden sharing equation which are required for deterrence and defence today and going forward. It cannot be ruled out that in the future, the European Allies will have to contribute 60 percent, while the remaining 40 percent will be provided by the U.S.

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, 2017

Given the shift of focus from crisis prevention/management to large-scale collective defence against Russia and the development of critical military capabilities based on a variety of operation plans both the scope and complexity of the required capabilities will likely increase significantly. Based on these capability requirements, NATO experts develop multiple "packages" of various "capability targets", which are tailored to each nation, in accordance with its performance capacity. Many of these targets will have to be implemented in just a few years. It is essential that the European Allies fully accomplish the targets that NATO assigns to them and that they accept in a reliable and, above all, timely manner. In many instances, nations have to invest considerable effort and political will to follow through on it.

➤ **Defence Spending**

The fundamental defence spending requirement, as NATO Heads of State and Government have agreed during the 2023 Vilnius Summit *("We make an enduring commitment")*, is for all European Allies to contribute *at least and on a permanent basis* 2 percent of their national GDP to defence. With this, they should, above all, (1) provide Ukraine with material assistance it urgently needs[17], (2) close long-standing equipment gaps – a measure many nations kept postponing since it is costly and time-consuming, and (3) invest in new, critical capabilities which are key to NATO's deterrence and defence posture. Both NATO and Ukraine should be able to rely on this commitment. Moreover, in light of the pledge to provide material and financial assistance to Ukraine and given the growing number and complexity of NATO capability targets, the European Allies should be prepared for the fact that in 2025 and beyond, when they will be confronted with new NATO capability targets, committing 2 percent of their GDP will no longer be sufficient, as already indicated; so they will in future need to spend 3 or even 4 percent on defence and assistance to Ukraine.[18]

> **Armament Capabilities**

Over a long period of time marked by the imperative of following through on multinational crisis management mandates outside NATO's borders and concurrent massive reduction of the European armed forces, defence industry has, consequently also been shrinking its capacities quite significantly. When European nations wanted to quickly supply Ukraine with weapon systems and, above all, large quantities of ammunition, it turned out that the arms and ammunition depots were not sufficiently stocked. Furthermore, the existing industrial production capacities were insufficient for the rapid procurement/replacement of equipment that had been supplied to Ukraine, or for rapid production of new weapon systems and equipment for Ukraine. And finally, the defence industry has not capable of quickly developing new capacities, especially for the development and production of additional capabilities that the new NATO defence plans require, such as air and missile defence. In the absence of long-term contracts, however, which guarantee sufficient sales for years to come, defence industry is not prepared to ramp-up the required capacity and establish now production lines. Besides, lack of standardisation, interoperability and interchangeability – even of standard Western equipment and Western military supplies, such as artillery ammunition – was particularly damaging. There has been an urgent need to close all these gaps, especially given the requirement to rapidly and fully equip European armed forces to establish full-spectrum Alliance defence capabilities.

Sophisticated defence capabilities on both sides of the Atlantic are an essential part of NATO's deterrence and defence capability.

Against this backdrop, Heads of State and Government agreed the *"NATO Industrial Capacity Expansion Pledge"* in Washington *(NICE-P)* [19] with the goal to systematically strengthen transatlantic defence industry. Production of military equipment in Europe and North America is to be increased pro-actively through open reciprocal cooperation between defence companies quasi "among Allies" and elimination of trade barriers and investment hurdles. The following steps are planned: [20]

> By 2025, each Ally will report on its industrial policy and plans to increase its industrial capacity and the resilience of the necessary supply chains. These national plans will serve as a basis for NATO to get an overview of the existing defence industrial capabilities and the capacity of the Alliance as a whole as well as broadly indicative data on, and options for, potential improvement.

> Where possible, national procurement plans will be coordinated, and respective requirements will be pooled together, with a view to making acquisition efforts more coherent and cost-efficient. As part of this process, NATO standards applicable to military capabilities, equipment and supplies are to be implemented in a better way, ensuring interoperability of weapon systems and mutual usability of facilities and supplies.

> Acquisition of critical capabilities will be accelerated; for the time being, focus is placed on combat ammunition and air defence, primarily to step up the Ukraine aid package (see Chapter 4).

> Multinational procurement programmes should be expanded, and cooperation with the EU and with NATO partners should be further developed, particularly involving the Ukrainian defence industry and also including Asian Pacific partners.

> Defence companies need to be informed about NATO capability requirements. They should receive binding orders/contracts thus greater certainty about the long-term utilisation of their research, development and production capacities over the long-term *("long-term demand signal")*.

This strategy involves Allied governments at a high political level, as well as the leadership of the defence industry in the agreed systematic development of national defence industry capabilities, with the aim of contributing significantly to the establishment and expansion of coherent, effective and efficient European and transatlantic capabilities. This is a new approach. During their regular meetings, defence ministers will monitor and discuss the implementation of *NICE*. Such an approach appears necessary and appropriate, since it has become clear that armaments and technological capabilities on both sides of the Atlantic are an essential part of NATO's deterrence and defence capabilities. The focus is no doubt placed on the development of a powerful European defence industry that will complement its American peer. That said, European nations are still dependent on high-end "off the shelf" capabilities provided by the U.S. industry. At the same time, it is also in the interest of the U.S. that over a reasonable time horizon, European countries develop a robust armament capacity and fully equipped armed forces and are able to provide at least half of the capabilities the Alliance will require in the future. As it was previously mentioned, this will significantly contribute to relieving the burden placed on the U.S. in Europe, especially given that its own requirements may increase in response to the potential deterioration of the security environment in the Indo-Pacific and Middle East in the long term.

To be accomplished, the *NICE* Initiative requires cooperation with the EU, which also presents an opportunity. Early in 2024, the European Commission released the *European Defence Industrial Strategy (EDIS)* [21], which is similarly aimed at strengthening the European armament industries and capabilities and pursues a comparable approach. That said, by definition the focus is placed on the European armaments; 23 European nations which are members of both NATO and the EU should ensure that both strategies are mutually complementary and figuratively go hand in hand, to the extent possible. Mark Rutte, the new NATO Secretary General who has experience with the EU, and Kaja Kalles, the new High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission who has experience with NATO, should work together to this end.

„L'Europe en marche"

➤ Joint Projects

Expansion of multinational projects manifested in the *NICE Pledge* is also welcome since many European Allies are not in a position to develop or acquire technologically sophisticated and costly high-end capabilities on their own. The alternative is joint projects. The *European Sky Shield Initiative (ESSI)* featuring 21 European participating states as well as the *European Long-Range Strike Approach initiative (ELSA)* joined by four (perhaps more in the future) participating nations (see Chapter 4) are examples of how groups of European nations want to develop and/or acquire high-end capabilities which are critical to NATO and beneficial for all nations, including the United States.

In the same vein, all European Allies could launch a *European Capabilities Initiative* within NATO and pledge to jointly develop, tentatively by 2030, around 50 percent of the capabilities which NATO's military leadership has defined as the highest military defence planning priorities, which have acquired critical importance during the war in Ukraine and which European nations need the most, i.e. air and missile defence, long-range artillery and long-range precision-strike missiles, as well as drones and ammunition, to mention a few. Expert evidence suggests that by 2030, NATO and German Armed Forces should be fully combat ready.

➤ The Role and Contribution of the EU

As one of the three largest global economic players, the EU makes a significant contribution to the world economy. Hence, the European Union has considerable political and economic influence and thus also global interests, primarily in maintaining political stability, enforcement of international law and rules-based international order, and strengthening partnerships with other – basically likeminded – state actors such as the United States. As a global actor, the EU should principally possess a

capabilities to contribute to crisis management efforts in regions which are critical to European security and economic prosperity. It could also support such efforts in the Indo-Pacific region, for example acting in coordination and cooperation with the U.S. and NATO's Asia-Pacific partners. The EU and its Member States have provided €110 billion (as of July 2024) as part of the Ukrainian economic, military, and humanitarian aid package, i.e. more than the United States. Other than that, the EU, as explained in Chapter 2, primarily focuses on civil, civil-military and military crisis management and stabilisation missions. Strategically, it aims to ensure keeping conflicts away from Europe, and that is the reason why the EU views all measures, instruments, civil missions, and military deployments required to achieve this goal as part of *European Defence*. In this respect, it perceives itself as an organisation that is complementary to NATO, which remains responsible for the *Defence of Europe*.

Recent years have witnessed significant advancement in the EU-NATO cooperation. On the basis of a repeated *Joint Declaration* between the President of the European Council, the President of the European Commission and the NATO Secretary General, the EU and NATO are working together in numerous fields, where they share common interests and jointly address growing common threats. These areas include hybrid threats, cyber defence, resilience, impact of climate change, emerging disruptive technologies, force deployment, maritime security, partner defence capability development, and systemic challenges posed by China. For the time being, EU-NATO cooperation encompasses 74 specific projects.

In March 2022, almost concurrently with the release of the new *NATO 2022 Strategic Concept* and broadly coherent with it, EU Member States adopted the *Strategic Compass for Security and Defence*. Among other things, it envisages a detailed roadmap for the development of capabilities, means and instruments the EU requires to be able to act as a global player. This includes, *inter alia*, an *EU Rapid Deployment Capacity* with around 5,000 soldiers from Member States, the flagship of the Strategic Compass, as well as a range of European *full-spectrum* military capabilities. Moreover, the Compass aims to better coordinate the development of national capabilities, achieve full interoperability and thus reduce fragmentation. This should also help establish an innovative technology and defence industrial base in Europe.

Military mobility: deployment of German battle tanks, 2018

In September 2024, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen named the 27 new members of the College of Commissioners, including a new *Commissioner for Defence and Space* (former Lithuanian Prime Minister Andrius Kubilius). His list of tasks [22] is extensive and demanding. He is supposed to advance the development of European Defence into a "true *European Defence Union (EDU)*". The term is ambiguous. It does not refer to a *European Defence Union* that could defend Europe, as this remains NATO's responsibility. Rather, the *EDU* is the generic term for all activities, of the EU to support the Member States in developing the necessary range of modern und sophisticated capabilities, including 'for the most extreme contingencies': especially in investment, strengthening the defence industry, research, innovation, development and procurement. All of this should be done in close cooperation with NATO and the Allies to cover the full range of threats. [23]

Civil-military crisis management of the EU (European Defence) is complementary to the collective defence of NATO (Defence of Europe).

If consistently implemented, the areas of activity for strengthening *European Defence* will also benefit NATO and the development of capabilities of the European Allies, for example, the strengthening of military mobility and the civilian trans-European transport network for the rapid deployment of military units and goods, the development of a European air defence shield, joint cyber defence or the (significant) increase of the *European Defence Fund*. The more so, as the capabilities the EU is keen to develop and utilise for *European Defence* are also explicitly meant to be available for

NATO's Collective Defence. This basically suggests that NATO and EU capability planning should be closely coordinated by the responsible staffs, but changing circumstances call for a new, innovative approach. Military capability planning is conducted in both organisations, i.e. NATO and the EU; within the EU, the key responsibility resides with the *European Defence Agency*. In case of the European Member States, it often comes down to the same, or at least similar, capabilities. NATO and EU experts should therefore jointly identify the entire range of military capabilities which all European nations need to accomplish for the entire spectrum of tasks and missions encompassing NATO Collective Defence and complex EU Crisis Management Operations. Specifically, they could define, for example, the top ten capability priorities for the 23 European states that are members of both organisations, which could then be jointly developed, acquired, and co-financed by the EU within the framework of the *Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO)*. [24] Such an approach should be linked to the implementation of the intended expansion of transatlantic armament capabilities, the *NICE-P*, as described above. The goal should be establishing a transparent, coordinated, and complementary processes in the EU and NATO, which will ultimately ensure improvement of both NATO's defence capabilities and the EU's ability to act as a global security policy actor.

The proposed approach suggests a kind of security policy division of labour and complementary cooperation: NATO, based on the primacy of collective defence today and in the foreseeable future, sets the goals and standards for the future armed forces and capabilities required. As far as possible, the EU uses its instruments and means, in coordination with NATO's NICE-P, to push ahead with the necessary armament's cooperation among Europeans, to work towards the establishment of an effective European defence industrial base and to overcome its fragmentation.

NATO Headquarters in Brussels

The latter should *inter alia* be the responsibility of the new EU Commissioner for Defence and Space. The result: the Europeans would be capable of making an adequate and effective contribution to NATO's defence of Europe and to international crisis management efforts, primarily acting, in the author's view, within the framework of the EU. The much-discussed 'European pillar in NATO' would thus become the European pillar of the Transatlantic Alliance including the EU. Germany, which is the 'natural link' between NATO and the EU given its central location and security interests, should pro-actively support this new approach.

It must be emphasised that this approach would require the consent of Turkey (a non-EU country) in NATO and Cyprus (a non-NATO country) in the EU if parallel decisions which are similar in terms of how they are made up need to taken at the political level in both organisations. As long as the dispute between these two countries continues, implementation of the proposed approach will be at least very difficult and will likely depend on individual case decisions. [25] It is to be hoped that the new NATO Secretary General Rutte and the new EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Kalles will be working together to find ways to kick-start a kind of new beginning.

➤ **EU Support – Military Mobility**
Similar to how NATO troops are deployed to defence operations, the EU is keen to bolster its crisis response capabilities by developing a robust rapid force deployment capacity. To achieve this goal, both NATO and the EU have drawn up detailed plans. The responsible staffs are working together to create the legal, infrastructural, logistical, procedural, and military framework for *Military Mobility* in Europe. [26] The European Commission has agreed to finance the improvement of civil infrastructure that is essential for military deployments (including roads, railroads,

bridges, tunnels, port facilities, runways) jointly with the nations involved. *European Military Mobility* is a flagship initiative and a model of cooperation between NATO and the EU driven by shared interests. This is an ambitious goal which often requires consensus of all member states in both organisations, and this is one of the reasons why it has been progressing slowly. As an operational "hub" located at the heart of Europe, Germany should also be pro-actively seeking to speed up the project's implementation at the political level. Jointly with the Netherlands and Poland and by using the virtual *Military Mobility Corridor* they have established, Berlin is already making an important contribution similar to its engagement in the NATO German-led *Joint Support and Enabling Command (JSEC)* based in Ulm (see Chapter 4).

The European Allies, first of all Germany, should ease the burden placed on the USA in the Euro-Atlantic Region.

➤ **Dialogue between NATO, the EU and Three Asia-Pacific Partners**
During the July 2024 Washington Summit, NATO held its third consecutive meeting of Heads of State and Government with the EU, Australia, Japan, New Zealand, and South Korea. Dialogue and cooperation with this group of NATO partners has become extremely relevant. All Indo-Pacific democracies are important trading partners for Europe. As already mentioned, together, Allies and Asia-Pacific partners account for over 60 percent of the global GDP and military capabilities. These NATO partners are well aware of the fact that security policy developments taking place in the Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific regions are interdependent. They have insights and experience which – given China's dominance claims, coercive policy, and military strategy – are essential for understanding the strategic significance of the Indo-Pacific region for both Europe and NATO. From their perspective, one of the reasons why Russia should not prevail against Ukraine is because it could potentially encourage the Chinese President Xi to attack Taiwan since it would mean that the West, and most importantly the U.S., would have suffered defeat. NATO also maintains practical cooperation with the Asia-Pacific partners, focusing on support to Ukraine and such areas as cyber defence, addressing disinformation, and technology. The European Allies, including Germany, should support the U.S. and, through regular political consultations, joint military exercises and armaments cooperation with their Asia-Pacific partners, demonstrate their presence in the region.

1   *Zeit-Online: Emmanuel Macron complains about "brain death of NATO", 7 November 2019; https://www.zeit.de/politik/ausland/2019-11/frankreich-emmanuel-macron-nato-kritik*

2   *See: NATO 2030 Transatlantic Agenda for the Future, in: NATO, Brussels Summit Communiqué, Brussels 2021, paragraph 5.-7. Thus, the heads of state and government accepted the proposal submitted by the Secretary who used the report prepared by an expert group under the leadership of the former German Defence Minister Thomas de Maizière. The report contained 138 recommendations. See also: Brauß, Heinrich: NATO 2030 – Erfahrung, Herausforderung, Zukunft, publication of the German Atlantic Association. Berlin 2021.*

3   *NATO – Opinion: Remarks by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg on launching #NATO2030 – Strengthening the Alliance in an increasingly competitive world; 8 Jun. 2020*
     https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_176197.htm

4   *"Systemic" implies the competition between political, economic, and ideological systems.*

5   *For the points here and below: see the Federal Ministry of Defence: Sicherheitspolitisches Engagement im Indo-Pazifik (Security Engagement in the Indo-Pacific),*
     https://www.bmvg.de/de/themen/dossiers/engagement-im-indopazifik

6   *Together with China, the members include today the following countries: Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia and Slovenia. The three Baltic states initially joined the cooperation framework. In 2021, Lithuania pulled out of the agreement and the following year, Estonia and Latvia followed suit. All of them put more emphasis on the development of their relations with the EU instead of China – "In accordance with the rules-based international order and values as human rights" as formulated by the Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. See also: Deutsche Wirtschaftsnachrichten of 15 Aug. 2022: https://deutsche-wirtschafts-nachrichten.de/521351/lettland-und-estland-steigen-aus-china-forum-aus.*

7   *See: Meier, Albrecht: "So will sich die EU gegen China wehren", in: Der Tagesspiegel of 14 Sep. 2020 The same shipping company will take over 35 percent of shares in the container terminal Tollerort belonging to the Hamburg harbour, see: Müßgens, Christian: Chinas Staatsreederei kauft sich im Hamburger Hafen ein. Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, issue of 21 Sep 2021.*

8   *Here and in the following see: Kirchberger, Sarah: Chinas militärischer Aufstieg. Politische Meinung Nr. 565, November/December 2020, P. 39-44*

9   *Colby, Elbridge: "Die USA können es sich nicht leisten, weiter führend die Ukraine zu versorgen"; Interview mit Stefanie Bolzen, Washington correspondent of the newspaper "Die WELT", WELT, 6 June 2024: https://www.welt.de/politik/ausland/plus251860086/USA-koennen-es-sich-nicht-leisten-weiter-fuehrend-die-Ukraine-zu-versorgen.html?-cachebuster=true*

10   *See also: Hermann, Rainer: Öltanker und Kriegsschiffe – China versucht, im Nahen Osten auch militärisch Fuß zu fassen. Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung Nr. 17/3 D 3 of 21 January 2021*

11   *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, "Xi Jinping Holds Talks with President Vladimir Putin of Russia", 06 Jun 2019.*

12   *Kendall-Taylor, Andrea and Shulman, David O.: China's and Russia's dangerous convergence, in: Foreign Affairs, May 3, 2021*

13   *In the first half of 2024 alone 10.000 container of, supposedly, artillery shells were probably delivered; see: address by the NATO Secretary General J. Stoltenberg during the award ceremony for the Eric-Warburg-Prize, etc.*

14   *European Commission & High Representative of the Union: Joint Communication to the European Parliament, the European Council and the Council, EU-China – A Strategic Outlook, Strasbourg, 12 Mar 2019, JOIN (2019) 5 final*

15   *In 2023, China acted as an "honest broker" in a dispute between Saudi Arabia and Iran; in 2024, China facilitated the agreement between the two Palestinian groups, Fatah and Hamas, regarding establishment of a national unity government in the Palestinian Territories.*

16   *Colby, Elbridge, ibid*

17   *In 2021, the Allies agreed to increase the NATO Common Funding budget beginning with 2023. The Civil Budget, the Military Budget, and the NATO Security Investment Programme will be jointly financed based on agreed arrangements. Germany's share (16.35 percent) is the highest among European Allies and corresponds to that of the U.S.*

18   *In 2024, Poland's defence spending will amount to 4.12 percent of its national GDP; four other Allies have exceeded the 3 percent threshold; see NATO Press Release: Defence Expenditure of NATO Countries (2014-2024); https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_226465.htm*

19   *See NATO Industrial Capacity Expansion Pledge, Washington 10 July 2024, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_227504.htm*

20   *The NICE Pledge is based on the NATO Defence Production Action Plan (DPAP) which was endorsed at the Vilnius Summit in 2023 and is aimed to ensure a more efficient and rapid implementation of the DPAP's objectives.*

21   *European Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy: A new European Defence Industrial Strategy – Achieving EU readiness through a responsive and resilient European Defence Industry, JOIN (2024) 10 final, Brussels, 5 Mach.2024*

22   *See European Commission, Mission Letter by Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission, 17 September 2024, to Andrius Kubilius, Commissioner-designate or Defence and Space, https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/1f8ec030-d018-41a2-9759-c694d4d56d6c_en?filename=Mission%20letter%20-%20KUBILIUS.pdf*

23   *Together with the new High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the Commission, Kaja Kallas, the new Commissioner for Defence is tasked with presenting a white paper on the future of 'European defence' (meaning armaments) after the first 100 days of the new Commission. This should frame a 'new approach to defence' and indicate the investment needed for joint armament projects that contribute to the aforementioned European full-spectrum capabilities.*

24   *The European Commission European Defence Fund (EDF), which currently has an annual budget of € 7,95 billion (2021 – 2027), is available to support joint R&D projects, not procurement initiatives. The European Peace Facility (EPF) is used to comprehensively boost EU partner capacity, which includes provision of military equipment. The approach proposed in this paper would therefore require an expanded European Commission funding mechanism.*

25   *For the 2003 Berlin-Plus Agreement between NATO and the EU, see Chapter 2*

26   *For an overview of the subject, ongoing activities, and the need for action, see: Brauß, Heinrich; Hodges, Ben; Lindley-French; Julian: Moving Mountains for Europe's Defence, CEPA Military Mobility Project, Washington, D.C., March 2021*

OUTLOOK

GERMANY'S ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY

Germany is the largest economy in Europe and the world's third biggest economy, behind the U.S. and China. Located in the centre of Europe, we are surrounded by allies and partners, but are exposed to common risks and threats which are defined in NATO's Strategic Concept and the EU's Strategic Compass. As a nation heavily dependent on commodities, energy supplies, and exports, Germany is highly interested in making Europe secure and stable, in having access to global markets and therefore in keeping global sealines of communications permanently open. For this reason, Germany supports a rules-based international order accepted by all global actors; we are committed to collaborating with like-minded partners in the Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific regions.

National Security Strategy

National values and interests, a wide variety of different risks and threats facing Germany, the resulting political goals, and priority areas of action are summarised in the German Government's National Security Strategy [1] This Strategy is the first of its kind in Germany. It complies with the NATO Strategic Concept and the EU Strategic Compass and is based on an integrated security concept shaped by cooperative efforts of all relevant actors, measures, and instruments and backed by all Federal government agencies. The guiding headlines are "Robust – Resilient – Sustainable." In view of the security policy dynamics and developments taking place in the Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific regions, as described in this paper, NATO and the EU remain the most important security alliances for Germany. [2]

The National Security Strategy and, building on it, Defence Policy Guidelines issued by the Federal Minister of Defence together with the German Chief of Defence set the national framework for the development of the German Armed Forces. "The historical turning point is fundamentally changing Germany's role. [...] We should be the backbone of deterrence and collective defence in Europe." [3] Structural reforms, equipment,

procurement, stockpiling, personnel recruitment, leadership, and training must therefore be geared towards what the most demanding mission requires: *National and Alliance defence* without lengthy preparations. All other missions are of secondary importance. "Germany's security is inextricably linked to the security of our Allies and European partners. Defence of the Alliance and national defence are inseparable." [4] By providing support for our Allies in the East and, if necessary, reinforcing their defence forces, we we protect ourselves.

Re-orientation of the Bundeswehr – the Cornerstone of Europe's Defence

Defence Minister Boris Pistorius is working hard on a consistent re-orientation of the German Armed Forces – away from light, modular, multinational contingents for crisis management missions conducted on a rotational basis towards fully equipped, rapidly available mechanised formations suitable for large-scale, joint all-domain defence operations, and also towards increasing the numbers of permanently available forces at high readiness, because, in the event of a crisis or war, the German armed forces, together with the U.S. forces stationed across Germany, will be the first ones to reinforce our NATO partners on the Alliance's northeastern and eastern periphery. This is why the Bundeswehr must become combat-ready – "fit for war" –, as Minister Pistorius put it.

But it goes beyond that. Germany lies at the heart of Europe. From a military viewpoint, we are a geostrategic "hub" supporting the deployment of, and providing supplies for, Allied armed forces that would be employed in the northeast, east, and southeast of Germany. This entails multiple responsibilities: (1) ensuring operational readiness and, if necessary, rapid deployment of German Armed Forces primarily to areas located in the northeast of the Alliance territory within the framework of Collective Defence, (2) supporting the movement of large formations of Allied nations from the west through Germany, mainly to the east

and northeast, and (3), as part of comprehensive (civil-military) defence, protecting the population and critical infrastructure in Germany in the so-called Rear Area.

These efforts must be planned and prepared in peacetime, in coordination with NATO, that means primarily with the *Joint Support and Enabling Command* located in Ulm. The build-up, protection, supply, and maintenance of large formations moving over long distances, crossing several national borders and territories of sovereign states is an extremely complex task that we have almost forgotten since the end of the Cold War. Besides, back then moving forces to their defensive positions entailed "exclusively" the West German area between the North Sea and the inner-German border, as well as bringing American and Canadian troops across the Atlantic. Today, the area in question effectively the European region and potenially involves movements of forces in multiple directions. In addition, comprehensive resilience, civil defence, civil protection, and civil-military cooperation are also indispensable means for a country's ability to sustain a war.

The *"Operation Plan Germany"* of the Bundeswehr Operational Command in Berlin brings all these components together and hence fulfils a central task for NATO's defence capability and conventional deterrence. Planning for overall, comprehensive defence requires coordination with the departments and agencies responsible for civil defence, and these coordination efforts are already being undertaken now. It also requires the establishment of comprehensive homeland security forces for the protection of the population and critical infrastructure. This task, as well as ensuring sustainability of the Bundeswehr, dictate the need for a large mobilisation reserve. From the author's perspective, there is no alternative to the reintroduction of compulsory military service in an appropriate form.

To make sure the German Armed Forces promptly receive the entire scope of critical capabilities, military equipment and ammunition it needs for all its missions and tasks, the national defence industry should take early action to significantly expand its capacity and maintain it in the long run. The Bundeswehr should be in a position to rapidly fulfil equipment requirements, close existing gaps, and acquire new capabilities. Specifically, there is a need to substantially increase operational readiness of rapidly deployable military units that should, in the event of a crisis, be able to rapidly move to their deployment areas and defensive positions located on the eastern flank; the goal is 35,000 troops by 2025. Hence, in conformity with the decision taken by the Heads of State and Government at the 2024 Washington Summit, the German Government should pro-actively and consistently support full implementation of the *NATO Industrial Capacity Expansion Pledge (NICE-P)* – in coordination with the *European Defence Industrial Strategy (EDIS)* and the (planned) National Armaments Strategy. As explained, for the time being air defence and combat-critical ammunition remain NATO's key priorities.

The adaptation and further development of the Bundeswehr should be financed in a consistent and reliable manner. As mentioned in this paper, in 2024, Germany has reached the agreed NATO spending guideline of at least 2 percent of GDP on defence for the first time since 1991. By drawing on the €100 billion Special Fund initiated by Chancellor Scholz, some (but not all) critical capability gaps can be closed. Besides, as pointed out and explained in this publication several times, the military requirements and capability targets that are going to be allocated to Germany by NATO are likely to increase significantly. In this context, the NATO summit in Vilnius in 2023 concluded that each nation should spend *at least* 2 percent of their GDP on defence *on a permanent basis*, and German Chancellor voiced his support for this target that also serves as a proof of fair burden-sharing, reliability, and trust among the Allies and therefore also has a vital political significance (see Chapters 3 and 5). However, in the coming years, the regular German defence budget of around € 53 billion is supposed to remain essentially unchanged. In 2028, the Special Fund will expire. The Federal Act establishing the Special Fund, however, sets forth that "after the Special Fund has been spent … funding will be available from the Federal Budget to ensure the Bundeswehr capability profile and Germany's contribution to the respective NATO Capability Goals." In 2028, 2 percent of GDP is estimated to account for some € 85 billion or more. Probably, to meet the NATO Capability Targets in the future defence spending will have to be 3 percent of GDP or more. Political honesty requires that the population be timely informed about this potential scenario.

Located in the middle of Europe, Germany has a vital interest in the transatlantic defence alliance quickly and fully developing its deterrence and defence capabilities, in the United States remaining in Europe with significant forces, and in the Europeans being able to take joint military action. A decisive prerequisite for this is the full operational readiness of the Bundeswehr. As stated in the National Security Strategy as an objective, it must become a strong cornerstone of conventional defence in Europe. This requires the reliable, long-term funding, trust in the political leadership and the courage of the major political parties to explain the necessity to the population and solicit support.

1   *The Federal Government: Integrated Security for Germany – National Security Strategy. Berlin, June 2023*

2   *This paper on NATO is not the place for a detailed critical analysis of the National Security Strategy. In a nutshell, it is more of a political-strategic concept, similar to that of NATO, than a strategy. The analysis of geo-strategic areas, which may be interconnected either directly or indirectly, the interests and goals of the main actors in these areas, the resulting risks and threats facing Europe and Germany, and the need for action within the framework of NATO to ensure defence preparedness – all of this is pending. Examples include the paramount importance of the North Atlantic for the defence of Europe; the increasing relevance of the Norwegian Sea and the Arctic Region in view of Russia's maritime strategy and*

China's ambitions; and the significance of the entire Nordic-Baltic Region, which has become the strategic focus of Europe and NATO with the accession of Finland and Sweden to the Alliance. These geostrategic areas, which are integral to the military strategy, are outlined in the Defence Policy Guidelines 2023 (see footnote 3). Presumably, both Supreme HQ Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) and its regional headquarters are currently working on such a military strategy.

3   *Federal Ministry of Defence: Defence Policy Guidelines 2023. Foreword by Boris Pistorius, Federal Minister of Defence, and General Carsten Breuer, Chief of Defence of the German Armed Forces*

4   *National Security Strategy, loc. cit. P. 30*

FINAL REFLECTIONS

Today, the North Atlantic Alliance has been in existence for 75 years. All other alliances that were established in the past disintegrated after their original objective was achieved. The purpose of the Alliance, however, is still relevant: ensuring lasting security for the Euro-Atlantic region under basic conditions that have fundamentally changed several times. NATO has achieved big successes but has also suffered setbacks. Since 1949, it has not only gone through some major turning points relating to security, but it has also taken part in shaping different epochs. At first, for 40 years, it had secured freedom and peace in Western Europe during the Cold War. After that the Alliance gave itself a completely new task: crisis management outside its borders, initially in Europe, then in remote regions, serving the purpose of helping resolve the conflicts where they had emerged, and, in so doing, keeping them at a distance from NATO territory. At the same time – by opening itself to new members with a parallel development of a special partnerships with Russia and Ukraine – NATO, together with EU, played a significant role in the formation of a new cooperative peace and stability order for the whole of Europe.

The annexation of Crimea by Russia, the war in Donbas in 2014, but, first and foremost, the large-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 once again heralded the advent of a new, sharp political turning point. The previous hope of a longer-term partnership with Moscow evaporated. Russia has become the biggest direct threat to Europe's security. The Alliance has revived its main purpose: deterrence, protection and defence of the Allies. On the other hand, the end of the long-lasting operation in Afghanistan signified a political and strategic failure that seriously called into question the concept of projecting (Western) stability to other regions of the world.

Given the rise of China as a world power and its emergence as a systemic rival to the USA, the risks posed to Western democracies in the Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific regions by autocracies such as China, Russia, North Korea, and Iran, as well as the shift of America's strategic focus towards the Indo-Pacific, NATO today also faces the task of contributing to the resolution of geopolitical challenges and transnational threats. The European Allies together must do significantly more for the security and defence of Europe – within NATO and EU, but also through an enhanced and effective cooperation between both organisations.

The NATO Secretary General plays a substantial role in the development of the Alliance. He is the face and the voice of NATO. He prepares political-military concepts to be discussed and decided upon by the Allies. He is responsible for the implementation of mandates and the execution of tasks/missions approved by the North Atlantic Council. And he is a driving force of consensus building. The Norwegian Jens Stoltenberg exerted significant influence on the development of NATO during his ten years' time in office until September 2024 in which the security situation of Europe and worldwide has fundamentally changed and NATO, as he put it, has undergone the biggest transformation in a generation. In his farewell address, he highlighted five lessons that would be key to the Alliance's continued success in the future [1]:

➤ Above all, the transatlantic bond between North America and Europe must be maintained and fostered by both sides to their mutual benefit; this linkage should not be taken for granted. The security challenges facing the West today are so big, diverse and intertwined that the Allies can only meet them together.

➤ Security has its price. The new, approved Capability Targets for nations, which must be reached for the implementation of NATO's new defence plans, require "significantly more" resources for defence than 2 percent of GDP in the future.

➤ The Allies must avoid becoming economically dependent – in energy, rare earths, new technologies, critical infrastructure – on potential autocratic opponents who can use them for political blackmailing and paralysing the decision-making mechanisms and Allies' ability of to act. The experience with Russia must be avoided in future relations with China.

The end of an era – change at the top of NATO:
former NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg (on the right)
and his successor Mark Rutte

➤ Dialogue with adversaries such as Russia is only possible and can only be successful on the basis of military strength. Ending the war in Ukraine by giving up will not bring peace, but Russian occupation and oppression. The more weapons will be delivered to Ukraine, the sooner the war can be ended and peace achieved. Any future agreement with Russia must be backed up by strong military support for Ukraine, credible security guarantees and therefore its membership in NATO. Because Europe's security needs an independent and stable Ukraine.

➤ And finally: the mission in Afghanistan has taught NATO the limits of military power. What began as a counter-terrorism operation turned into a prolonged and increasingly extensive attempt to build a united, democratic state – a creeping expansion and overstretch of the mission with many casualties. In future, every military operation outside the territory of the Alliance must have a clearly defined objective that is realistic and achievable.

If the Allies take these lessons to heart, the chances are good that NATO will also be able to cope with the future challenges. It will be helped by what constitutes the particular strength of the security alliance between North America and Europe: the integration of "big" and "small" nations on the basis of equality as Allies, the pledge of protection and defence for every Ally by all others and the successful building of consensus. They are all crucial for the unity of the Alliance, its credibility and its ability to act. Not least thanks to them has NATO grown from once twelve to 32 nations today with other states desiring to join it, too.

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[1]   *NATO: Reflections on a Challenging Decade: A Farewell Conversation with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, Brussels. (GMF),19 Sep. 2024, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_228915.htm*

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