



MAKING SENSE OF TÜRKİYE'S ROLE IN THE FUTURE OF NATO

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ABSTRACT

As NATO's historically important summit arrives, the alliance is prepared to make crucial decisions and adopt its new strategic concept. While Russia's attack on Ukraine has rapidly boosted NATO's importance, the alliance was already working on its new strategic concept document under the guidance of the NATO 2030 Initiative to update the most recent version, which was published in 2010. The security environment has undergone significant changes since then and NATO needs to adapt. Türkiye, a long-standing key ally within the alliance, supports NATO's 2030 vision, which emphasizes deeper political consultation, increased defense and deterrence, and a more global approach, among other issues. Still, Türkiye has legitimate security concerns that should be addressed, particularly relating to counterterrorism efforts – including the issues recently raised due to Finland and Sweden's applications for membership in the alliance. While Türkiye will continue to demonstrate a strong commitment to NATO, the country also expects concrete support from its allies in addressing its national security concerns.

INTRODUCTION

NATO will hold one of the most important summits in its history on June 28-30 in Madrid, Spain. The alliance endured after the Cold War even when the Soviet Union disappeared and the United States emerged as the sole superpower with a massive military might.¹ One of the key reasons behind NATO's endurance has been the organization's ability to adapt. NATO has always adapted itself to the changing international security circumstances. It added crisis management and cooperative security as new principal missions for the alliance besides the collective defense. It implemented several processes to revise and modify existing structures and procedures.²

The international security environment concerning NATO has undergone a significant change since 2010 when the latest strategic concept document was adopted by the alliance. Throughout the Middle East and North Africa, various terrorist groups or extremist armed organizations have emerged, while several countries have fallen into civil wars due to the collapse of state authorities. In 2014, Russia

1 Charles Krauthammer, "The Unipolar Moment," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol: 70, No: 1, (1990-1991), pp. 23-33.

2 For instance, beginning in 2014, NATO adopted assurance measures for countering immediate threats (including tailored measures for Türkiye that involved the deployment of Patriot batteries since December 2015) and adaptation measures to meet long-term security challenges. The alliance unveiled its Readiness Action Plan initiative at its September 2014 Summit in Wales. Accordingly in 2015, the size of the NATO Response Force nearly tripled from 13,000 to about 40,000 troops. Furthermore, within the NATO Response Force, a new operational body, the Spearhead Force (Very High Readiness Joint Task Force – consisting of 20,000 troops) was established. See, "NATO's Readiness Action Plan," NATO, July 2016, https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2016_07/20160627_1607-factsheet-rap-en.pdf, (Access date: June 22, 2022). Also see NATO's Warfighting Capstone Concept, The Concept of Deterrence and Defense of Euro-Atlantic Area.

illegally annexed Crimea and has continued to flex its military muscle since then, which reached its peak when it launched its ongoing military attack on Ukraine on February 24. Russian behavior has brought about a fundamental change in European security architecture that will have crucial implications for the coming decades. In the meantime, strategic rivalry or great power competition has returned to international politics, manifested by the persistent economic and military modernization of China. It became conventional wisdom in NATO circles that the alliance cannot remain indifferent to China. The alliance now faces the climax of Russian aggression, an uncertain future for the war in Ukraine, and the challenge of defining its future relationship style with China. In this respect, NATO wants to enhance its defense and deterrence, increase political coordination and consultation, and adopt a more global approach under the NATO 2030 initiative.

Türkiye, a staunch supporter and a key member of the alliance for decades, shared almost all the objectives of the alliance and took part in the relevant operational necessities. It committed significant force contribution and intelligence sharing and served in several NATO crisis response missions. However, Türkiye has defined vital threats to its national security but the same view is seemingly not shared by some of its NATO allies. This has been a long-standing but significant problem for the alliance. In this respect, recently, Finland and Sweden decided to apply to NATO, leaving their traditional neutral status behind.³ However, Türkiye has vetoed their bid due to their reluctance in the cooperation in counterterrorism, among other problems such as the imposed arms embargoes on Türkiye due to the latter's counterterrorism operations in northern Syria.⁴ The issue, in fact, is the embodiment of the long-standing problem between Türkiye and its allies in the West. For decades, Türkiye has asked for more cooperation in its fight against the PKK terrorist group. Although the United States and the European Union officially designated it a terrorist organization, their stance against the group has always remained ambiguous at best.⁵

3 Rifat Öncel, "Finlandiya ve İsveç'in Muhtemel NATO Üyelikleri," *SETA Analiz*, No: 371, April 2022.

4 One should also note that Türkiye's counterterrorism operations in Syria made an important contribution to the degradation of the Daesh terrorist group. See, Rifat Öncel, "Why Western Media is Wrong About Türkiye's Fight Against Daesh," *Daily Sabah*, January 21, 2019.

5 For instance, the PKK operates relatively freely in European capitals with extensive criminal networks, including drug trafficking, terrorist recruitment, and engaging in aggression against Turks and the Turkish presence abroad. See, Ümit Tetik and Kutluhan Görücü, "The PYD/PKK's Drug Trafficking & Türkiye's War on Narco-Terrorism," *SETA Report*, No: 52, June 2019; "PKK/PYD attacks towards Turks and Turkish buildings in Europe," SETA, <https://www.setav.org/en/pkk-pyd-attacks-towards-turks-and-turkish-buildingsin-europe-from-01-01-2017-to-15-03-2017/>, (Access date: June 22, 2022). Enes Bayraklı, Hasan Basri Yalçın, and Murat Yeşiltaş, *Avrupa'da PKK Yapılanması*, (SETA Publications, Istanbul: 2019).

Today, NATO faces great external threats but also long-standing internal problems originating from different security interests and threat perceptions. In contrast, the emerging security landscape in Europe and Asia needs more cohesion, unity, and solidarity alongside defense and deterrence due to the increasing hybridization of threats as well as the emerging and disruptive technologies.⁶ Therefore, the Russian attack on Ukraine could be perceived as an opportunity to permanently address the long-standing internal tensions within NATO. NATO's new strategic concept document would be the very first step in this direction by making clearer and stronger definitions of the cooperation in the counterterrorism sector and by establishing feasible plans to bring the security interests of each member state closer to each other. Against this backdrop, this paper consists of two main parts. In the first part, it explains the main priorities that NATO is focusing on by elaborating on the Russian attack on Ukraine, the China challenge, and the changing character of military and non-military threats. In the second part, the paper delivers a framework to make sense of why Türkiye particularly attaches unique significance to some issues. It concludes that Türkiye will continue to support NATO endeavors but the country expects its allies to cooperate on counterterrorism efforts and also expects calibrated and meaningful engagement in Greek-Turkish disagreements.

6 "NATO Advisory Group on Emerging and Disruptive Technologies Annual Report 2020," NATO, 2020, https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2021/3/pdf/210303-EDT-adv-grp-annual-report-2020.pdf, (Access date: June 22, 2022).

THE WAR IN UKRAINE AND EMERGING EUROPEAN SECURITY

The Russian attack on Ukraine is clearly the most important event for post-Cold War European security as well as for NATO. NATO has regained its popularity after a series of reactions that questioned the value of the alliance. Former U.S. President Donald Trump was a frequent critic of the alliance, while French President Emmanuel Macron had defined NATO as “brain dead.”⁷ However, the alliance now enjoys significant prestige and appeal as an ultimate security guarantee against a possible Russian attack. In Finland and Sweden, public support for joining the alliance has reached record-high levels. These traditionally neutral states are now seeking membership in NATO.

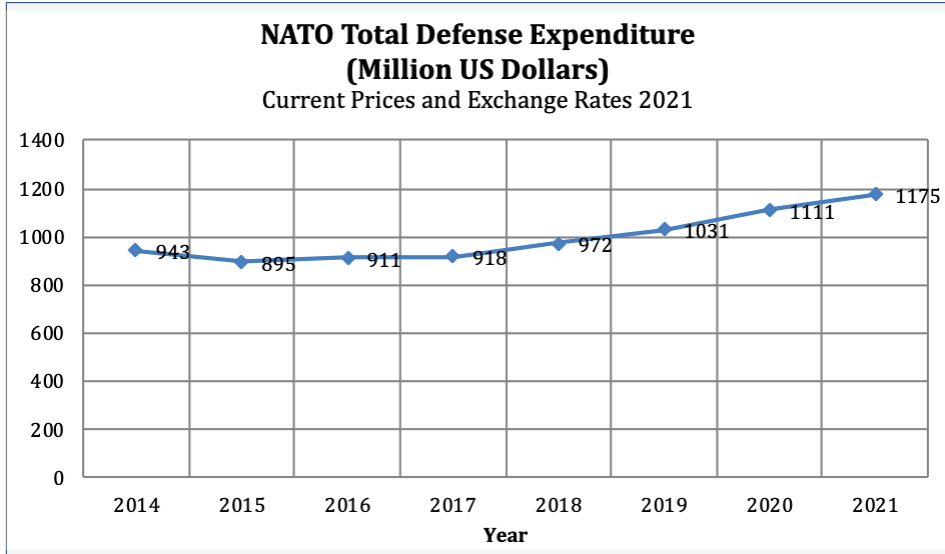
The Russian attack on Ukraine inspired a spirit of solidarity within the alliance. Several members and partner states have provided Ukraine with a significant amount of arms supplies. Among them are thousands of anti-tank weapons, anti-aircraft guns, armored vehicles, and assault rifles.⁸ Still, the nuclear-armed states within NATO adopted a cautious stance to avoid provoking Russia. The United States delayed some of its pre-arranged missile tests after President Vladimir Putin said his country is moving its nuclear forces “to special combat readiness,” a statement widely regarded as a threat of a nuclear strike.⁹ Nevertheless, the

⁷ “Emmanuel Macron warns Europe: NATO is becoming brain-dead,” *The Economist*, November 7, 2019.

⁸ “Full list of US & European weapons and military equipment delivered to Ukraine,” *Army Recognition*, May 19, 2022; John Paul Rathbone and Roman Olearchyk, “Military briefing: which weapons has Ukraine received and how many more does it need?,” *Financial Times*, June 14, 2022.

⁹ Demetri Sevastopulo, “Putin puts world on alert with high-stakes nuclear posturing,” *Financial Times*, March 7, 2022.

conventional argument still holds that says Putin's discourse on nuclear weapons is in line with Russia's so-called escalate-to-deescalate strategy.¹⁰



Source: "The Secretary General's Annual Report 2021," NATO, https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2022/3/pdf/sgar21-en.pdf, (Access date: June 22, 2022).

The war in Ukraine has increased the already alerted threat perceptions of Baltic and Eastern European states, while NATO immediately boosted its presence in the said territories. NATO has already revised its plans since 2014 and concluded that it will enhance its forward presence. Accordingly, the alliance, in recent years, deployed multinational battlegroups in several countries such as Bulgaria, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, and Slovakia.¹¹ Even before the war, NATO allies decided to send F-16 and F-35 aircraft along with frigates to the Baltic Sea as a response to the massive Russian military build-up along the Ukrainian border.¹² The defense of the Baltics, Eastern Europe, and the Balkans was strengthened by the deployment of significant land, air, and sea elements in relevant member states. Currently, eight NATO battlegroups are located in the eastern flank of the alliance, which consists of troops from 20 ally countries.¹³ Similarly, several NATO states declared military modernization programs in an attempt to remove outdated hardware and equip modern technology

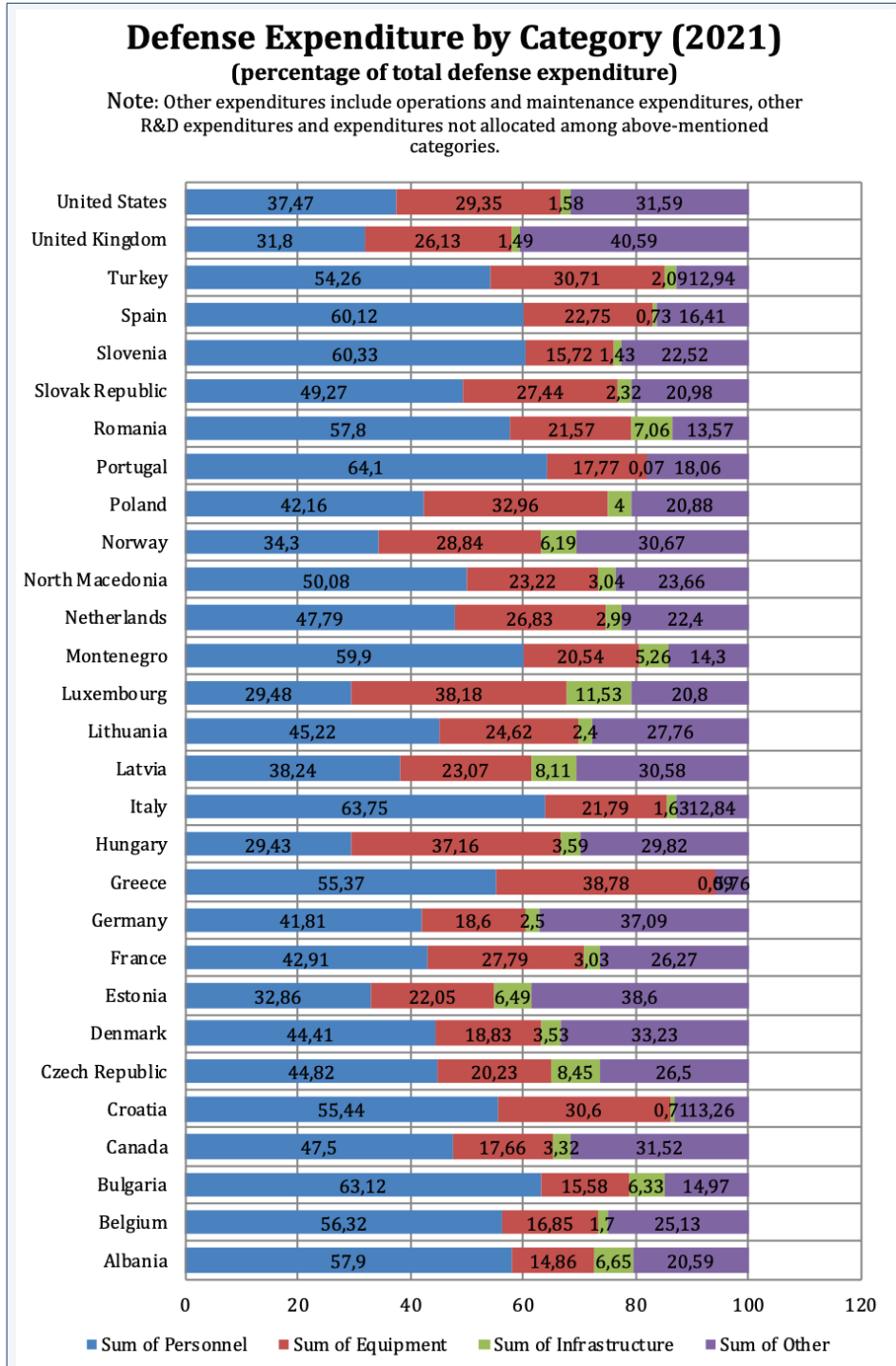
10 Rıfat Öncel, "Nükleer Silahların Gölgesinde Konvansiyonel Harp," *Kriter*, Vol: 6, No: 67, (2022), pp. 39-41.

11 "NATO's military presence in the east of the Alliance," NATO, June 1, 2022, https://www.nato.int/cps/ru/natohq/topics_136388.htm?selectedLocale=en, (Access date: June 22, 2022).

12 "NATO Allies send more ships, jets to enhance deterrence and defence in eastern Europe," NATO, January 24, 2022, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_191040.htm, (Access date: June 22, 2022).

13 "NATO's military presence in the east of the Alliance," NATO, June 1, 2022, https://www.nato.int/cps/ru/natohq/topics_136388.htm?selectedLocale=en, (Access date: June 22, 2022).

to increase readiness levels. In this respect, more countries will likely spend more on defense, and equipment expenditures are an important part of it.



Source: "The Secretary General's Annual Report 2021," NATO, https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2022/3/pdf/sgar21-en.pdf, (Access date: June 22, 2022).

How NATO is going to formulate a road map in dealing with Russia in the coming decades is a vital question and delivering a clear response seems to be a daunting task. Russia has played a key role in European security architecture for hundreds of years. The country was at the center of strategic debates on Europe's future security such as the status of nuclear weapons, disarmament efforts, and ballistic missile defense. Europe's energy dependency on Russia only exacerbates the situation. The fates of these issues seem to be thrown into uncertainty. After the Cold War, the U.S. and NATO underscored Russia as a partner because it was understood that any security design of Europe without Russia will be incomplete at best. However, after its attack on Ukraine, Russia's return to its partner role will be significantly difficult. Even if it were possible, Russia would probably have to make serious concessions in return. Nevertheless, the historical record demonstrates that the way of making peace with older enemies is a factor that strongly influences future peace and stability.

CONFRONTING OR COOPERATING WITH CHINA

Defining China has emerged as a key priority for NATO in recent years. Originally, China was not a concern for NATO as the country is clearly “out of the area.” However, China is perceived as a systemic challenge as a country that poses a threat to the so-called rules-based or liberal international order. This is a key assumption because it creates a permissive background to define China within NATO’s responsibility zone. The argument that China is a systemic challenge means that the scope of the threat is not limited to specific geography but extends well beyond it toward Europe and North America. Emphasizing the ideological nature indicates it also threatens democratic life and liberal ideas, the values NATO defends.

In the Brussels Summit Communiqué, NATO leaders argued that, “China’s stated ambitions and assertive behavior present systemic challenges to the rules-based international order and to areas relevant to Alliance security.”¹⁴ NATO underlined the coercive nature of Chinese conduct, its lack of transparency in armed forces modernization, its strategy of military-civil fusion, disinformation campaigns, as well as its increasing cooperation with Russia.¹⁵ This assessment is accompanied by the increasingly substantial military capabilities resulting from the complete overhaul of the Chinese military.¹⁶

14 “Brussels Summit Communiqué,” NATO, June 14, 2021 https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_185000.htm, (Access date: June 17, 2022).

15 “Brussels Summit Communiqué”.

16 Military and Security Developments Involving the People’s Republic of China 2021, *U.S. Department of Defense*, 2021, <https://media.defense.gov/2021/Nov/03/2002885874/-1/-1/0/2021-CMPR-FINAL.PDF>, (Access date: June 22, 2022).

China and Russia have developed close relations in several sectors that were particularly facilitated by the common vision against the United States-led order. China avoided condemning Russia in the United Nations regarding its aggression against Ukraine. In his second call to President Putin, Xi stated: “China is willing to support and strengthen strategic coordination with Russia on issues of core interests and common concern on sovereignty and security.”¹⁷ While China demonstrates its support to Russia, it seems that Xi also wants to signal his country’s strong opposition to NATO’s informal expansion into the Asia-Pacific region. At the BRICS business forum, Xi argued that the “Ukraine crisis is ... a wake-up call,” resulting from “expanding military alliances and seeking one’s own security at the expense of other countries’ security.”¹⁸ On May 24, during the last day of President Biden’s five-day visit to Tokyo and Seoul for a QUAD meeting, Russia and China conducted a joint drill in the Sea of Japan and the East China Sea, which led to condemnation from the U.S., though China stated it was a routine joint aerial strategic patrol in line with the annual plan of cooperation.¹⁹

The new strategic concept document of NATO will likely allocate China a significant amount of space as the alliance, for some time, has aimed to develop a road map to meet and respond to the challenges that would result from China, a process that the U.S. has strongly committed to. In Asia-Pacific, Japan and South Korea are traditional American allies, while Australia renounced its once-desired neutral status with the Aukus agreement. India, a long-standing customer of Russian arms, is increasingly siding with the U.S. even though it puts in an effort to balance its relations. Furthermore, India is a member of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, or the QUAD. In June, the defense ministers of Japan and Australia met twice in less than a week to further their cooperation, particularly in the defense area.²⁰ South Korea also announced that it has plans to set up a delegation for NATO headquarters in Brussels.²¹

17 Riyaz Ul Khaliq, “China will keep backing Russia on ‘sovereignty, security,’ Xi tells Putin,” Anadolu Agency, June 15, 2022.

18 “China’s Xi warns about ‘expanding military alliances’ at Brics summit,” *The Straits Times*, June 22, 2022.

19 Ellen Nakashima, Michelle Ye Hee Lee and Min Joo Kim, “Russia, China conduct first joint military drill since Ukraine invasion,” Washington Post, May 24, 2022; “China, Russia conduct joint aerial strategic patrol,” Ministry of National Defense of the People’s Republic of China, May 24, 2022, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/news/2022-05/24/content_4911446.htm, (Access date: June 22, 2022).

20 Riyaz Ul Khaliq, “Japan, Australia agree to work for ‘free, open Indo-Pacific’ region,” Anadolu Agency, June 15, 2022.

21 Soo-hyang Choi, “South Korea plans to establish diplomatic mission to NATO in Brussels,” Reuters, June 22, 2022.

It is now becoming more probable that NATO, in some form, will expand toward the Asia-Pacific region. The war in Ukraine, in fact, seems to have accelerated that policy by tightening the relations between current allies under the increasing uncertainty in the security environment. Proponents of this policy argue that joint endeavors between NATO and American allies in Asia on intelligence sharing, combined exercises, joint defense research, and joint operational planning, along with specific institutional mechanisms and the establishment of NATO liaison offices in Tokyo and Seoul are needed.²² In sum, the understanding reached with the Aukus agreement between the U.S., the U.K., and Australia would be a model for the whole region that would be supported by NATO involvement.

Nevertheless, creating a clear road map to define China is not an easy task given the doubts over the nature of the China challenge. Is China going to be a systemic adversary, competitor, or partner? While the traditional U.S. view is close to the first option, Western European countries do not want partnership opportunities to be ignored due to strong economic and commercial interests. The differing views among the two actors regarding geopolitical circumstances are not new. Until the Russian attack on Ukraine, most European states avoided taking necessary defense measures. The war in Ukraine in this respect became a wake-up call for the EU. Still, only time will tell how NATO-China relations will be shaped.

²² Hans Binnendijk and Daniel S. Hamilton, "Face it, NATO: The North Atlantic and Indo-Pacific are linked," *Defense News*, June 21, 2022.

HYBRID THREATS AND RESILIENCE

The contemporary security environment forces the expansion and broadening of the understanding of security. While the Ukraine war proves that conventional war is not obsolete contrary to some pressing suggestions, today's security threats are becoming increasingly hybrid. Now the scale, speed, and intensity of influence operations – including cyberattacks, disinformation campaigns, propaganda, and deception, along with other non-military or paramilitary tactics – have become widespread, blurring the lines between war and peace, and sowing discontent in societies.²³ Against such threats, states need to take precautionary measures for the assurance of the continuation of the government and critical government services, food, water, and energy security, strategic communication, and sufficient transportation.²⁴

In the 2014 Russian operation in Crimea, the “little green man” incident demonstrated how states can design and implement military operations that remain below the threshold of war. The event facilitated deeper cooperation in the trans-Atlantic community.²⁵ In 2017, the European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats (Hybrid CoE) was established in Helsinki, Finland in a joint meeting between NATO and the EU. On the other hand, cybersecuri-

23 “NATO’s response to hybrid threats,” NATO, June 21, 2022, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_156338.htm?selectedLocale=en, (Access date: June 23, 2022).

24 Jamie Shea, “Resilience: a core element of collective defence,” NATO, March 30, 2016.

25 Axel Hagelstam, “Cooperating to counter hybrid threats,” NATO, November 23, 2018.

ty emerged as one of the most important issues states are forced to develop and adopt robust measures against to prevent widespread cyber aggression. The coronavirus rapidly turned into a global health crisis while in the meantime stimulating new geopolitical tensions due to the declining confidence on the world stage. The Russian attack on Ukraine triggered energy and food security crises, further jeopardizing the national economies of several states. Climate change and environmental problems are still among the most important challenges. Alongside national measures, NATO includes these problems in its planning as the alliance played an important role in fighting the coronavirus pandemic by creating a special fund and aid mechanisms for members and partner states.

The hybridization of threats now requires stronger resilience. This means societies are sufficiently prepared to field shocks and have the necessary means to deflect them, which attributes societies a primary role in the defense of a nation. One of NATO's key objectives now is to counter such shocks with efforts related to intelligence sharing and creating awareness. NATO also supports allied countries in key areas, including cyber defense, the protection of civilians, the protection of critical infrastructure, strategic communications, counterterrorism, and energy security.²⁶ Therefore, achieving substantial resilience in societies in member and partner states has become a key concern.

26 "NATO's response to hybrid threats," NATO, June 21, 2022, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_156338.htm?selectedLocale=en, (Access date: June 23, 2022).

MAKING SENSE OF TURKISH NATIONAL SECURITY CONCERNS

Türkiye is surrounded by the Balkans, the Caucasus, the Middle East, the Aegean, and the Mediterranean region, including North Africa. And the large-scale intense changes in those regions have transformed Türkiye from a flank state within NATO to a front-line state. For the past three decades, Türkiye's geographic location has become the center of a zone involving most of the armed conflicts, civil wars, operations of terrorist groups, and massive irregular migration. As a result, Türkiye has been exposed to the various destabilizing effects of regional state failures, the influx of millions of refugees, and sophisticated terrorist attacks, including suicide bombings, bomb attacks, and mass shootings. Türkiye's southern borders, particularly the country's lengthy border with Syria, continue to pose a security risk due to the operations of the YPG/PYD terrorist group.

LACK OF SUPPORT FOR TURKISH COUNTERTERRORISM EFFORTS

The introductory section of this paper underlined that the level of terrorism Türkiye has been exposed to for decades and the country's strong efforts in counterterrorism are not sufficiently appreciated by its allies. The PKK terrorist group has cost tens of thousands of Turkish lives, including civilians. The YPG/PYD is the Syrian offshoot of the PKK, but it is not recognized as such by Türkiye's allies. The U.S. and most European countries have long embraced evasive language on the issue, persistently claiming that the YPG is different from the PKK and that the

YPG was the most effective military force against DAESH. Given the amount of hard evidence and long-term strategic calculations, this position is absurd, untenable, and ultimately subject to change.²⁷

On the other hand, the PKK enjoys relatively free movement in European capitals and the terrorist group for years has established extensive terrorist networks abroad for illegal activities, including drug trafficking, terrorist recruitment, and aggression against Turks and the Turkish presence.²⁸ Furthermore, several individuals from European and Nordic countries traveled into the conflict zones in Iraq and Syria, joined the ranks of the YPG/PKK, received training, and fight alongside PKK terrorists.²⁹ Recently, Türkiye has raised its objections to the NATO memberships of Finland and Sweden and is currently vetoing them due to their stance on PKK terrorism and arms embargoes. It should be underlined that, particularly in Sweden, the PKK functions in a highly permissive environment in both countries.

Due to these considerations, NATO should adopt a stricter and clearer definition of terrorism as well as a concrete road map for how the allies in NATO could contribute to Türkiye's fight against the PKK. One step in this direction should be more intelligence sharing and political consultation on the issue. NATO allies should also invest more in the Centre of Excellence Defence against Terrorism based in Ankara, Türkiye and the Allied Transformation Command in Norfolk, Virginia should strengthen its relations with the former.

It is perfectly legitimate for Eastern European and Baltic states to aim for a stronger NATO presence in the alliance's eastern flank in the newly emerged security environment in the last decade, which Türkiye highly respects and contributes to. However, the allies now also need to sufficiently grasp and appreciate Turkish national security concerns. Addressing and alleviating these concerns are now becoming even more important as the U.S. wants NATO to pivot to Asia. In the end, solidarity is not a one-way street.

27 Still, the U.S. does not renounce its policy of arming the YPG but rather intensifies its efforts. The components of U.S. special operations forces recently began another training program for the YPG, local sources reported last December. See, Mohamad Misto, Omer Koparan and Ethem Emre Ozcan, "US forces start new training for YPG/PKK terrorists in Syria," Anadolu Agency, December 3, 2021. For Fiscal Year 2023, the US is planning to recruit 3500 militants to YPG ranks while providing \$183 million for weapons and arms supply under the train and equip program. See, "US plans to add 3,500 more militants to YPG/PKK in Syria," *Daily Sabah*, April 28, 2022.

28 Ümit Tetik and Kutluhan Görücü, "The PYD/PKK's Drug Trafficking & Türkiye's War on Narco-Terrorism," *SETA Report*, No: 52, June 2019; "PKK/PYD attacks towards Turks and Turkish buildings in Europe," SETA, <https://www.setav.org/en/pkk-pyd-attacks-towards-turks-and-turkish-buildings-in-europe-from-01-01-2017-to-15-03-2017/>, (Access date: June 22, 2022). Enes Bayraklı, Hasan Basri Yalçın, and Murat Yeşiltaş, *Avrupa'da PKK Yapılanması*, (SETA Publications, Istanbul: 2019).

29 Bayraklı, Yalçın, and Yeşiltaş, *Avrupa'da PKK Yapılanması*.

GREEK-TURKISH DISAGREEMENT AND PRESERVING THE DELICATE BALANCE

Türkiye is among the non-EU member states of NATO like Canada or the U.S., which has historically raised some problems regarding reciprocity, neutrality, intelligence sharing, and joint operational planning. In the past, some EU countries tried to form a specific bloc within NATO to advance their parochial interests, sidelining Türkiye. The problem in Cyprus is a prime example. Even though the Greek Cypriots rejected the Annan Plan and Turkish Cypriots approved it, the EU accepted the former as a new member of the union. And since then, Greece, supported by some countries in the EU, has tried to integrate the Greek administration of Southern Cyprus into the NATO operational planning processes and even its membership in NATO was pushed. In recent years, Greek-Turkish tensions arose as a result of the resurfaced historical disagreements, coupled with the newly found energy resources in the region. The EU has failed to strike a balance in its approach. In its Strategic Compass document, which aims to develop a road map in achieving a more independent Europe in defense and critical economic sectors, Türkiye was accused of instrumentalizing irregular migration in the Eastern Mediterranean, provocation, unilateral actions, and violating international law and the sovereignty of Greece.³⁰ It is meaningful that the EU published that document during the Russian attack on Ukraine.

In the EU, France, in particular, adopted a staunchly pro-Greece stance and emerged as a vocal critic of Türkiye. Last year, France and Greece signed a security pact that involved mutual security guarantees that would be activated outside NATO. Similarly, Greece and the U.S. renewed the Cold War-era security cooperation agreement that also includes security guarantees. Greece is diluting NATO's *raison d'être* by making bilateral security pacts with other NATO allies (the U.S., France) against another NATO ally (Türkiye). The Greek prime minister even pressured Türkiye by asking for French nuclear weapons after his country signed a security pact with France.³¹

While the EU has historically maintained its pro-Greek stance, although some member states abstained, a remarkable shift is ongoing in the U.S. position. It poses a major risk that would become the most dangerous spoiler in balancing peace and stability in the region. In recent years, the U.S. has gradually shifted its traditional policy in the region once based on a balanced approach to the disagreements between

30 "A Strategic Compass for Security and Defence," European Union, 2022, https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/strategic_compass_en3_web.pdf p.19, (Access date: June 22, 2022).

31 Mitsotakis said, "If attacked, our country will have at its side the most powerful military on the continent, the sole European nuclear power." See, "Greece ratifies landmark intra-NATO defence pact with France," Al Jazeera, October 7, 2021.

the two countries. While Lockheed is implementing a comprehensive modernization program on the Greek F-16s, the Greek decision-makers and Greek lobbies (supported by other anti-Turkish lobby groups) in the U.S. are strongly pushing the U.S. Congress to not approve the sale of F-16 aircraft to Türkiye. In the meantime, Türkiye was removed from the F-35 program due to its purchase of the Russian S-400 system even though it was a program partner. Now, the U.S. is considering the sale of F-35s to Greece after the latter sent its letter of request for the purchase of the aircraft.³² The ongoing American policy shift in the region will be complete and will produce certain fundamental implications if the U.S. decides to sell Greece F-35s and the U.S. Congress prevents the sale of the F-16s to Türkiye. Furthermore, accompanying the EU position, it will further embolden Greek foreign policy in the region, which in turn risks causing a vicious cycle of arms races and a significant decline in confidence.³³

In sum, the EU and the current U.S. policies regarding Greek-Turkish disagreements do not reflect the reality that Türkiye is a NATO member state. NATO's political consultation and coordination mechanisms should address these problems as the alliance now emphasizes solidarity and cohesion among the allies. Furthermore, the EU should avoid unilateral actions by excluding Türkiye from the defense planning in Europe. The historical record has demonstrated that the EU's CSDP is complementary to NATO at best and whether the idea of strategic autonomy would extend it remains highly questionable. Therefore, the EU in its relations with Türkiye needs to offer more reciprocity, develop calibrated responses, and exhibit restraint in its discourse.

TÜRKİYE'S AUTONOMOUS ROLE AND ITS NEWLY EMERGED SECURITY PROVIDER STATUS

Making sense of Turkish foreign and security policy is only possible with an understanding of the country's long-sought autonomy. The desire and the dedicated effort to achieve the capacity for implementing autonomous policies originate from historical experience. The problem in Cyprus and the lack of support in the fight against the PKK are the most salient examples that led Turkish decision-makers to develop national capabilities to promptly respond to emerging threats and challenges. However, one should also note that Türkiye has translated this into the capability to produce security for its allies. Türkiye is among the

32 Paul Antonopoulos, "It's official: Greece requests purchase of 5th generation American F-35 stealth fighter jets," Greek City Times, November 16, 2020.

33 Rifat Öncel, *Greece's Unlikely Compellence: Air Force Modernization & Diplomatic Assertiveness* (SETA, Istanbul: 2021).

top countries in NATO in terms of force contribution, intelligence sharing, and commitments to out-of-area operations. Türkiye also supported its allies in Syria, Libya, and Azerbaijan in recent years, bringing stability to conflict zones.

TABLE 1. TÜRKİYE'S MILITARY ASSET AND PERSONNEL CONTRIBUTION TO NATO MISSIONS

Region	Mission	Year	Contribution
Afghanistan	ISAF-RSM	2001-2021	20,000 ³⁴
Kosovo	KFOR	1999-	351 ³⁵ , 10 F-16s ³⁶
Iraq	NMI	2021	25 ³⁷
Iraq	NMI	-	61 ³⁸
Bosnia-Herzegovina	Althea	2004-	183 ³⁹
Bosnia-Herzegovina	UN Protection Force	1993-1995	1,464 ⁴⁰
Adriatic Sea	Operation Sharp Guard	1992-1996	2 Frigates, Oil Tanker, Mine countermeasures ⁴¹
Macedonia	Operation Essential Harvest	2001	150 ⁴²
Libya	Operation Unified Protector	2011	5 Ships, 1 Submarine, 6 F-16s ^{43 44}
Aegean / Mediterranean	SNMG2	1992-	3 Ships ⁴⁵
Somalia	United Nations Operation in Somalia	1993-1994	300 ⁴⁶
Mediterranean	Operation Sea Guardian	2016-	AEW, MPA, Submarines, Frigates ^{47 48}

34 Onur Erdem, "Afganistan'da 20 yıl: Türk askerleri bugüne kadar neler yaptı, Türkiye hedeflerine ulaşabildi mi?", BBC Turkish, August 28, 2021.

35 Kosovo Force (KFOR) Key Facts and Figures, NATO, June 2022, https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2022/6/pdf/2022-06-KFOR-Placemat.pdf, (Access date: June 22, 2022).

36 "TSK'nın uluslararası görevleri", Hürriyet, September 5, 2006. "Within the scope of the operation, Türkiye kept 3 KC-135 tankers aircraft ready in Incirlik and 8 F-16s in Bandırma, and assigned a Turkish frigate and a minehunter in the Adriatic."

37 Yasemin Kalyoncuoğlu, "25 MSB personeli NATO Irak Misyonu'nda görev yapmak üzere Irak'a gitti", Anadolu Agency, January 26, 2021.

38 "NATO ülkeleri hangileridir? Türkiye NATO'ya ne zaman üye oldu?", TRT Haber, February, 24, 2022.

39 Aydın Hasan, "Mehmetçik barış için Saraybosna'da", Milliyet, April, 29, 2020.

40 Şeyma Nazlı Gürbüz, "Türkiye's NATO membership: A rocky journey since 1952", Daily Sabah, February 14, 2019.

41 "TSK'nın uluslararası görevleri", Hürriyet, September 5, 2006.

42 Uğur Ergen, "Türk askeri Makedonya'ya gidiyor", Hürriyet, August 14, 2001.

43 "Libya'ya Türkiye'den 5 gemi ve bir denizaltı", İHA, March 23, 2011.

44 Sarp Özer, "Türk Silahlı Kuvvetlerinden dünya barışına katkı", Anadolu Agency, January 1, 2018. TCG Giresun, TCG Gemlik, TCG Yıldırım, TCG Akar, TCG Yıldırım submarine, 6 F-16, 1 KC-135R aerial refueling aircraft. See, <https://turkishnavy.net/2011/03/24/turkish-contribution-to-nato-operations-off-libya-takes-shape>, (Access date: June 22, 2022).

45 TCG Barbaros, TCG Bodrum, TCG Beykoz.

46 "TSK'nın uluslararası görevleri", Hürriyet, September 5, 2006.

47 Airborne Early Warning Aircraft (AEW), Maritime Patrol Aircraft (MPA), TCG Barbaros, TCG Oruçreis, TCG Turgutreis.

48 NATO Operation Sea Guard Special Operations Command Control Element is carried out by the Naval Forces Underwater Offense and the largest ship contribution to Operation Sea Guard is provided by Türkiye. See: https://twitter.com/tcsavunma/status/1248969571777875971?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw, (Access date: June 22, 2022).

During the Cold War, NATO membership has made significant contributions to the modernization of the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF). Today, the TAF is one of the most capable armed forces due to its training, equipment, technology, and experience. The TAF, for decades, has gained substantial experience in counterterrorism, urban warfare, and asymmetric conflicts. It is among the best militaries in the world in terms of military readiness and situational awareness, which allows it to rapidly adapt to changing security circumstances and overcome emerging challenges.⁴⁹ On the other hand, the country has reached about 80 percent national contribution in the research, design, and production of defense products. It has become a drone powerhouse⁵⁰ and it conducts world-class defense research not only on unmanned aerial vehicles but also on unmanned naval and land platforms.⁵¹ As it increases its role in shaping the future battlefield environment, Türkiye will have capable instruments to counter emerging and disruptive technologies.

TABLE 2. NATO HEADQUARTERS AND FACILITIES IN TÜRKİYE ⁵²	
Headquarter/Facility	Location
Allied Land Command	Izmir
Rapid Deployable Corps (NRDC-TU)	Istanbul
Detection and Tracking Radar	Malatya
Centre of Excellence Defence Against Terrorism	Ankara
Partnership for Peace Training Center	Ankara
Maritime Security Centre of Excellence	Istanbul

Supported by its capable armed forces, Türkiye has significantly contributed to the NATO missions. It is among the top countries within the alliance in terms

49 Murat Yeşiltaş, "Where Does Türkiye Stand in the NATO 2030 Agenda?," in Gloria Shkurti Özdemir (ed.), *Experts Respond: 70-Years of Turkey-NATO Relations* (SETA Publications, Istanbul: 2022), p. 22.

50 Ash Rossiter and Brendon J. Cannon, "Türkiye's rise as a drone power: trial by fire," *Defense & Security Analysis*, Vol: 38, No: 2, (2022), pp. 210-229; James Jeffrey, "Has Türkiye become an armed drone superpower?," *ASPI*, April 19, 2022, <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/has-turkey-become-an-armed-drone-superpower/>; Arda Mevlütoğlu, "Akinci and Türkiye as a Drone Power," *Politics Today*, September 30, 2021, <https://politicstoday.org/baykar-akinci-and-turkey-as-a-drone-power>, (Access date: June 22, 2022).

51 "Türkiye's Armed Unmanned Surface Vehicle," *Defence Türkiye*, January 24, 2022, <https://www.defence-turkey.com/en/content/turkey-s-armed-unmanned-surface-vehicle-4935>; "Türkiye launches SANCAR Armed Unmanned Surface Vehicle," *Defense Here*, June 7, 2022, <https://www.defensehere.com/en/sancar-armed-unmanned-surface-vehicle-is-launched>; "Dearsan USV Salvo conducts first live-firing trial," *Janes*, May 27, 2022, <https://www.janes.com/defence-news/news-detail/dearsan-usv-salvo-conducts-first-live-firing-trial>, (Access date: June 22, 2022). "Türkiye set to embark on mass production of unmanned ground vehicles," *TRT World*, November 10, 2021.

52 "NATO Genel Bilgi Notu," T.C. Dışişleri Bakanlığı, pp. 8-9, <https://www.mfa.gov.tr/data/nato-bilgi--notu.pdf>, (Access date: June 22, 2022).

of force contribution. Turkish Armed Forces personnel have served in several crisis response operations (all military operations conducted by NATO in a non-Article 5 situation) ranging from Bosnia and Afghanistan to Iraq, Libya, and Macedonia. Türkiye hosts the Allied Land Command in Izmir, and has established the High Readiness Force Headquarters (NRDC-TU) in Istanbul, which is among the six Graduated Readiness Forces Headquarters (GRF HQ) within NATO. Türkiye also hosts the Air Component Command Headquarters in İzmir as well as the detection and tracking radar in Malatya as part of NATO's ballistic missile defense framework. The country established the Centre of Excellence Defence Against Terrorism, the Partnership for Peace Training Center, and the Maritime Security Centre of Excellence.⁵³ Türkiye also hosted and led several NATO initiatives such as the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative and by doing so played a key role in establishing and institutionalizing relations between NATO, and Middle Eastern and North African countries.

53 Compiled from Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Turkish Ministry of National Defense General Staff, and open sources.

CONCLUSION

As the alliance's Madrid Summit arrives, NATO is continuing to adapt. While it adopts a more global approach, it should not overlook its main rationale, the collective defense principle. In the past three decades, NATO has already significantly expanded its operational scope according to the idea that it will either go "out of the area or out of business." In the coming period, one of the three main missions the alliance defined in the previous strategic concept document, the cooperative security, will likely gain more prestige and priority as the alliance turns its attention toward the Asia-Pacific. However, the Russian attack on Ukraine should be a serious warning that collective defense is still the most important principle for any defense organization.

NATO is probably the most successful military organization in history and the ability to adapt plays a key role in this. The current international security landscape poses increasingly hybrid threats such as cyberattacks or misinformation campaigns that would jeopardize the availability of critical government services. Therefore, developing and boosting societal strength emerged as key objectives under the various resilience frameworks. NATO has the potential to greatly contribute to the realization of this objective, but the alliance should increase cohesion and solidarity among its members. In this respect, this paper shed light on some issues key to Türkiye's national security where the country does not receive sufficient support from its allies. Therefore, Türkiye expects its allies to address these concerns in line with the 2030 agenda the alliance is planning for stronger political consultation and coordination as well as for strengthened cohesion, solidarity, and unity.

MAKING SENSE OF TÜRKİYE'S ROLE IN THE FUTURE OF NATO

RIFAT ÖNCEL

As NATO's historically important summit arrives, the alliance is prepared to make crucial decisions and adopt its new strategic concept. While Russia's attack on Ukraine has rapidly boosted NATO's importance, the alliance was already working on its new strategic concept document under the guidance of the NATO 2030 Initiative to update the most recent version, which was published in 2010. The security environment has undergone significant changes since then and NATO needs to adapt. Türkiye, a long-standing key ally within the alliance, supports NATO's 2030 vision, which emphasizes deeper political consultation, increased defense and deterrence, and a more global approach, among other issues. Still, Türkiye has legitimate security concerns that should be addressed, particularly relating to counterterrorism efforts – including the issues recently raised due to Finland and Sweden's applications for membership in the alliance. While Türkiye will continue to demonstrate a strong commitment to NATO, the country also expects concrete support from its allies in addressing its national security concerns.

