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NATO AT THE CROSSROADS

Editor: MURAT YEŞİLTAS



SETA

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MURAT YEŞİLTAŞ

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ABSTRACT

In this collection of essays, we discuss how NATO can overcome strategic challenges and recalibrate the strength of the alliance under the new geopolitical circumstances. The essays in this report focus on NATO's transformations after the Ukraine war and attempt to understand Türkiye's foreign policy alternatives within the context of its relations with the West, Russia, and NATO.

**MURAT YEŞİLTAŞ**

INTRODUCTION

The new geopolitical landscape that emerged after the Russian invasion of Ukraine forced all actors to reconsider their positions. Before the Ukrainian war, the international system underwent a significant transformation in which major powers, including the U.S., China, and Russia, followed a strategy to transform the international system for their interests. Under the Biden administration, the U.S. aimed to preserve American primacy in the international system by restoring international institutions and recalibrating U.S. leadership. The discourse of “America is back” is the manifestation of this U.S. strategy, which aims to reconsolidate the American role in the international system, prevent China’s military rise in the Asia-Pacific, and contain Russian geopolitical expansion. At the same time, Biden tried to prevent a trans-Atlantic geopolitical fragmentation in the trans-Atlantic region by repairing mutual relations. Undoubtedly, NATO emerged as a strategic instrument that could prevent strategic divergences between the alliance members. It was constantly emphasized that the organization is a comprehensive political project that includes political values as well as being a defense organization.

Before the war, the primary strategic orientation of Europe was to boost the EU's strategic autonomy and to develop a higher degree of "European sovereignty." Strategic autonomy aims to consolidate independence, self-reliance, and resilience in a wide range of fields such as defense, trade, economy, industrial policy, and the operational military cohesion of the EU. While Russia was perceived as a challenge because of its increasing geopolitical influence and its military orientation abroad, the EU tried to appease Russia by maintaining the "engagement policy" in security, economic and diplomatic domains. However, the Russian invasion of Ukraine altered the strategic calculations and geopolitical orientation of the EU by retaking NATO as the backbone of the EU's security architecture. It is now clear that the EU will change its strategic engagement with Russia.

Now, NATO is at a crossroads. By adopting a new enlargement policy toward Sweden and Finland, both the EU and NATO are changing their dual-track (deterrence and dialogue) policy toward Russia. Two significant strategic changes should be taken into consideration. The first is the policy change against Russia within the context of NATO's new strategic concept. After the war, Russia will be a central component of NATO and Euro-

pean countries' threat perception, eventually transforming the post-Cold War geopolitical status quo between NATO and Russia. By redefining Russia as the leading conventional military threat against European security, the strategic landscape will also transform the interactions between Russia and European countries.

So, what do these points tell us in terms of near-term developments? First, placing Russia within the threat perception could result in the emergence of competitive and restrictive regional politics in Europe. This competitiveness and restrictiveness may lead to a more aggressive foreign policy orientation for NATO member states and Russia. The second issue is the changing dynamics of armament and defense policies of NATO countries. This may deepen the "security dilemma" and arms race between NATO countries and Russia and increase the risk of conflict.

In this collection of essays, we discuss how NATO will overcome the strategic challenges and recalibrate the strength of the alliance under the new geopolitical circumstances. The essays in this report focus on NATO's transformations after the Ukraine war and attempt to understand Türkiye's foreign policy alternatives within the context of its relations with the West, Russia, and NATO.

**MURAT ASLAN**

STRATEGIC CONCEPT FOR THE ALLIANCE: A ROCKY ROAD FOR THE PRIORITIES

NATO, as the most established collective security coverage, is a source of stability in the trans-Atlantic region with its deterrence and combat readiness. The semi-academic meetings usually witness the circulation of repetitive narratives like “resilience” or “resolute commitment to the goals of the alliance”. Given NATO’s goal of unity, with its active security architecture, NATO pursues a method of preparing itself for defense missions within the framework of the Washington Treaty. In this sense, an overall capacity of NATO exists to coordinate the members and organic assets for crisis response in the event of worst-case scenarios.

Per the complexity of the lengthy and grueling process, the Strategic Concept (SC) of the alliance, approved by the heads of states or governments via the consent of all, drives the efforts of micro, mezzo, and macro security architectures in NATO. In this

context, the SC shapes the mission prioritization and budgeting of the alliance with a precise focus on the perceived risks and threats. Nevertheless, it is not an easy process to draft and abstract the SC since it may (and does) take years to come to a shared understanding. Each member state attempts to inject its own priorities to “impose” a recognition of specific threat types. That is why the latest SC was approved in 2010 after long-term discussions. It may be speculated that the Russian aggression in Ukraine has manufactured the new Concept this year. But the SC is an output of a long preparatory and persuasion process that the Russian challenge contributed to speeding up the approval procedures, transformation, and scope into more appropriate terms of the day.

The SC is one of the prominent documents that leads the overall alliance in planning, directing, implementing, or appropriating a disposition of force posture or acts. Using the NATO Summit of Madrid in June 2022, this analysis scrutinizes the preceding and forthcoming SCs in regards to their ought-to-be scope, the one approved in 2010 and the new Concept to be validated by the Madrid Summit.

The Scope of the Strategic Concept (SC)

SCs are the referent guides to design the goals of strategic and operational undertak-

ings that affect the collective intentions of the heads of the states. NATO’s strategic leadership and operational commands observe the identified political and military goals delineated in the Concept to be more focused on a shared objective. On the other hand, the SC defines the security environment that NATO could face. This depiction supports the processes of contingency planning, force disposition and structure, and peace-time but combat-oriented operational activities (intelligence, strategic communications, etc.). The constituting features of the security environment are a matter of competition among the member states, which seek to include their threat perceptions as if the overall alliance has to deal with them. On the other hand, the alliance tends to predict threats and strategic assessments to pinpoint the expected challenges and long-term trends. In this sense, actors and patterns are to be clarified specifically as part of expectations.

The SC stresses the principles to be observed by the alliance as a constraint of the hierarchy. In this context, the Concept puts forward the basics of the *modus operandi* on a very strategic level. For instance, energy security may be a priority for the alliance, which could facilitate relevant tasks for the military commands via the contribution of the allotted forces by the member states. It, then, justifies such a military mission as a previously agreed upon operation type by referencing the intention of the al-

ready agreed upon SC. Hence it associates the decision-making process of the leaders with previously agreed on threat types, security environments, or guiding principles that require collective action.

The Strategic Concept of 2010

The motto of the SC 2010 is “Active Engagement, Modern Defense” and emphasizes a resonating posture of military mobility with enhanced capabilities of the NATO forces. In this sense, a “change” for the “new” had become the primary motivation of the SC 2010. The text of the SC 2010¹ clearly underlines the political goals of the alliance within the framework of untouchable words such as “freedom, integrity, independence or security” as mentioned in the Washington Treaty, bearing the “reform, modernization and transformation” in the agenda.²

The core tasks identified in the SC 2010 are “collective defense, crisis management, and cooperative security”.³ It actually depicts the pillars of engaging the “foreseen” security threats in the 2010s. Nevertheless, this Concept coincided with varying conflicts and societal upheav-

als of the era such as the Arab Spring of 2011, NATO’s inclusion in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the emerging conflict types (proxy, hybrid, etc) of the 2010s. In this sense, the SC 2010 reflects what had been experienced in the 2000s, mainly after 9/11 and concurrent escalations, but was short of envisaging the developments after the Arab Spring. The threat assessment for a conventional attack against NATO territory was assessed as “low” in the SC 2010⁴, though conventional concerns of the new members of the alliance on the eastern front were resonated by a potential Russian threat. In this scope, Russia was counted as the country that should be managed in mutual relations based on the NATO – Russia Founding Act and Rome Declaration. China, on the other hand, was not a point of concern in the SC 2010.

Chart 1 delineates features of the SC 2010 under the categorization of the three essential tasks:

The SC 2010, with its concise definition of the security environment and how to respond to it, was a milestone at the very beginning of the 21st century. The context complied with the prerequisites of the 2000s after a lengthy bargaining process of abstracting a Security Concept. On the other hand, the alliance has already drafted another updated Concept

1 “Strategic Concept 2010”, NATO, November 2010, www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_publications/20120214_strategic-concept-2010-eng.pdf, (Access date: June 23, 2022).

2 “Strategic Concept 2010”, November 2010.

3 “Strategic Concept 2010”, NATO, 3 February 2012, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_82705.htm, (Access date: June 23, 2022).

4 “Strategic Concept 2010”, 3 February 2012.



Chart 1 Categorized Context of NATO's SC 2010

Source: NATO SC 2010.

after two decades although it was escalating with a high resonance of security situations. Hence the SC 2010 fell short of addressing the new threats in a more volatile security environment that pushed the secretary-general to enhance the need of preparing a new Concept.

NATO 2030

NATO General-Secretary Jens Stoltenberg formed a 10-person reflection group “to look at NATO’s current and future role and suggest recommendations on how to reinforce alliance unity, political consultation between allies, and NATO’s political

role”.⁵ It was to expand the security perception of NATO prior to designing a new Security Concept. In this sense, the product of the expert group signaled how NATO could be transformed to promote its readiness for the emerging trends by 2030. The policy recommendation pointed out Russia and China as the challenging state actors of the new era due to Russia’s military capacities and China’s “very different kind of challenge,” respectively.⁶

The policy brief lists the commonly accepted security risks in the relevant

5 Thierry Tardin ed., “NATO 2030. United for A New Era: A Digest”, NDC Policy Brief, No: 23, (December 2020).

6 “NATO 2030. United for A New Era: A Digest”. p. 2.

Security Environment in NATO 2030 Policy Brief
•Systemic rivalry •Geopolitical competition •Political environment: disputes between allies. •Proactive and preventative role for NATO in resolving the disputes between the allies. •Emerging threats for a New Strategic Concept •Russia and China •Emerging disruptive trends •Terrorism •The South •Arms control and nuclear deterrence •Energy security •Climate and green defense •Human security, women, peace, and security •Pandemics and natural disasters •Hybrid and cyber threats •Outer space •Strategic communication

Chart 2 The Security Concerns in the NATO 2030 Policy Brief

Source: NATO 2030 - A Transatlantic Agenda for the Future

literature while analyzing them with the realities of potential disputes among the allies. In this sense, the policy brief is more focused on listing two competitors, like ones that should be coopted but also competed in accordance with the mood of international politics. Furthermore, functional and sectoral concerns of the experienced era inspired the experts to underline the themes of security situations (Chart 1).

The NATO 2030 is a preliminary draft of the Strategic Concept that will replace the one of 2010. In this context, NATO General-Secretary Stoltenberg emphasized this policy brief in the agendas of the summits in 2021 and afterward to psy-

chologically persuade the leaders. Russian aggression in Ukraine, on the other hand, pushed the alliance to review the already drafted Strategic Agenda that was expected to be discussed at the Madrid Summit. Per the new developments in international politics, the Strategic Concept will reflect the already witnessed and expected risks/threats of the coming decade.

The New Strategic Concept

Indicators of the new strategic concepts were reflected in the words of Secretary-General Stoltenberg in the virtual event on June 4, 2021, of the German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP) and

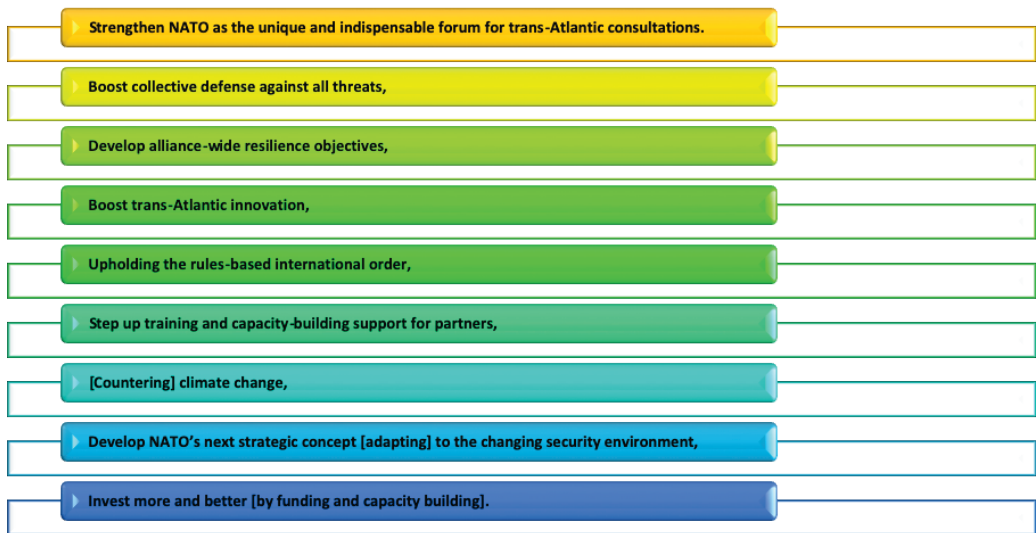


Chart 3 The Aims of NATO Prior to SC 2022

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pHuj0bj-0Aw>

The Brookings Institution.⁷ Stoltenberg repeated the policy brief prepared by the group of experts through the NATO 2030. With the same motto, but complemented by the narrative “A Transatlantic Agenda for Future,” Stoltenberg counts NATO as a political and military alliance, adding diplomacy as the third dimension of NATO’s response to threats. Russia and China remain the actors of concern, though the geography of interest has been wider than the traditional trans-Atlantic coverage. Stoltenberg’s main highlights are worth listing to see the aims of the alliance

under nine categories⁸, as can be seen in Chart 3.

The speech of Stoltenberg indicates a more flexible and adaptable NATO posture to respond not only to intangible threats, mainly circulated after the Cold War but to more complex and contested ones. The unpredictability of the threats apparently pushes NATO to expand the area of geographical coverage and preparedness for shapeless threats. In this sense, Russia’s aggression in Ukraine resembles the re-emergence of conventional warfare with a potential usage of weapons of mass destruction. China’s economic

7 “NATO 2030: A Transatlantic Agenda for the Future - Keynote Speech by the NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg”, YouTube, June 4, 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pHuj0bj-0Aw>, (Access date: June 29, 2022).

8 “NATO 2030: A Transatlantic Agenda for the Future”, NATO, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_184636.htm, (Access date: June 23, 2022).

domination, mainly designating the supply-demand chain, does have the potential to escalate the financial markets prior to the vital realization of Chinese interests through the military. On the other hand, the means that both state and non-state actors (including terror networks) may exploit and the environment where the emerging conflict types may suddenly erupt are the parameters to be observed. In this context, NATO considers both state and non-state actors and terror networks as potential actors in addition to newly emerging entities like proxies and private military companies in a hybrid, irregular or asymmetric environment.

Conclusion

A challenging actor of any sort does have the potential to defeat the powerful via “small – asymmetric” wars by benefitting from the most favorable environment and assets. In this sense, NATO’s defense understanding needs to be flexible and multi-dimensional to secure the alliance. The course of the preceding concepts and agendas of the NATO summits indicate the efforts of complying with the pre-

requisites of the experienced era. On the other hand, it is apparent that the strategic concept, which clarifies the priorities and general direction of the force structure, cannot be adapted to the emerging threat types in transforming security environments. It has taken 20 years to change the strategic concept of 2010 after a lengthy persuasion process in the NATO bureaucracy to push a new strategic concept through the NATO 2030 Agenda.

The new SC 2022 has not been publicized yet. But the context is expected to align with the words of Secretary-General Stoltenberg that underlined the shared aims of the alliance. The NATO 2030 policy brief appears as the base of this pattern that NATO bureaucracy, as wise men/women of the NATO HQ, pushed the leaders to be more flexible and quick to update and upgrade the SC 2010. In this sense, a mixture of old and new conflict types, actors, and environments will be on the new agenda of NATO. The differentiation of the capacities of the potential warring parties and threat types, either soft or hard, makes NATO more diversified and committed even though intra-alliance disputes will persist.

**TALHA KÖSE**

NATO ENLARGEMENT AND EUROPEAN SECURITY

It has been more than three months since Russia launched its operation on Feb. 24 to expand the occupation of Ukraine. What has happened during this period and what will happen in the future will yield significant consequences for the European security architecture and political structure, as well as global geopolitical competition in general. For years, Russia has regarded the membership of Ukraine and the countries of the former Soviet geography in NATO as an unacceptable development and has not hesitated to express this opinion on many platforms. On the other hand, the idea that world politics is becoming multipolar and that Western hegemony is being balanced has been voiced by many countries, especially Russia and China. The attempt to invade Ukraine, however, is increasingly supporting the exact opposite of Russia's target scenario and strategic objectives.

The differences of opinion and the new geopolitical fault lines that have formed in Europe over the years have begun

to disappear. The question marks and critical view of the U.S. and NATO, developed during former U.S. President Donald Trump's administration and the first year of Joe Biden's presidency, were suddenly dispelled. The Europeans began to unite again around the United States through NATO. As long as the war in Ukraine continues, it is inevitable that this transformation will continue. Therefore, the United States and Britain do not want the Ukraine crisis to fade away quickly. On the other hand, the Ukrainian people are the ones suffering the most from the ongoing confrontation. The negotiations, which occupied the agenda in the first weeks of the war, have fallen off the agenda in recent weeks. As the occupation deepens, the losses of both Ukraine and Russia increase. The winners of this lose-lose scenario are the defenders of the project of bringing Europe together again on the axis of defense and security.

Support for Russia Weakens Russia

The fact that Sweden and Finland have expressed their willingness to join NATO and that NATO's position on European security is once again becoming unquestionable is a development that could have important consequences for Europe. The fact that the strategies to counter the in-

vasion of Ukraine are being determined under the leadership of the U.S. and Britain is causing grumbles in some European capitals. But the continued strong Russian military threat and the possibility that the current war could cause unexpected flare-ups make the tone for such discontent weak. The fact that Russia is occasionally talking about the nuclear scenario option also makes it easier for the United States to carry out its agenda in Europe. The consequences for the European security of NATO and the U.S. playing such a decisive role in this crisis have already become important items on the agenda. However, Russian President Vladimir Putin's attitude has completely united Europe vis-à-vis Russia, and Russia's gains in the Ukrainian war have already produced enormous costs in other areas.

The U.S. has increased Russia's interest in occupation by saying that NATO will never directly militarily take part in the war in Ukraine. On the other hand, by providing military, diplomatic, political, and economic support to Ukraine, Western support enables Kyiv to resist Russia and defend itself more effectively. The support for Ukraine is not enough to completely reverse the fate of the war, but it does increase the cost Russia is paying and pushes Russia to use more aggressive methods.

Will NATO's enlargement make Europe and the European Union (EU)

safer or will it increase Europe's security vulnerabilities? To answer this question, it is necessary to correctly read and evaluate the security threats and risks that the world and Europe, in particular, may face in the medium and long term. Russia, which has invaded Ukraine for the time being, has become the main security threat to Europe. Especially Bulgaria and Romania, which are littoral to Poland, the Baltic republics, the Black Sea region, and Moldova, which is isolated and has an ambiguous stance in Europe, feel more threatened in this regard. However, it should not be forgotten that there are still important segments in these countries who are sympathetic to Russia and express their opinions on the development of positive relations with Russia. Although the current occupation of Ukraine and the decisions made by Russian President Vladimir Putin have strained relations with Russia, a political transformation within Russia may lead these countries to more constructive relations with Moscow once again. Russia still has soft power in the eyes of the people and politicians of these countries, but Moscow's reckless use of its military power has significantly weakened this influence. After achieving its strategic goals in Ukraine, Russia will take steps to restore its soft power, but the escalation of the war makes such an option more difficult every day.

Efforts to Create and Fill a Russia Vacuum

The complete demonization of the Russian president in the West, and even the total demonization of Russia, will prevent European actors from establishing a more balanced relationship with Moscow. As a result, Russia, which has been turned into an outsider and excluded actor by the West, may shift to a strategy that is completely China-oriented in global geopolitical competition. This shift will not be preferable for Russia, which aims for a more balanced position on the geopolitical plane. For China, it would reduce the cost of positioning Russia on its geopolitical axis. Although the winner of this exclusion may seem to be the United States at first, in the long run, it may actually be China. U.S. President Joe Biden's hasty visit to Asia amid the Ukrainian war and the messages issued at the QUAD meeting (which includes the U.S., Japan, India, and Australia) confirm this opinion.

Initially, the irreparable deterioration of Russian-European relations will have very negative consequences for Russia. The correct formula will be to manage complex relationships in a balanced way by categorizing them. The role played by the United States and Britain in the Russian-Ukrainian War completely eliminates the possibility for Europe to establish a balanced relationship with Russia.

It is mostly the European actors who will pay the price in the medium and long term. While expanding its military spending and security structures, Europe will be deprived of the advantages of trade with Russia on the one hand, and its dependence on Russia for energy will lead to greater costs in the short and medium term. On the other hand, the restriction of trade in agriculture and raw materials may cause greater difficulties in the medium and long term. At the end of the day, Russia can sell its agricultural products and underground resources in other markets. Although Russia has experienced some commercial losses, its products will continue to be needed in global markets. The U.S. will try to fill the gap that will be created in Europe's trade. Especially in terms of agriculture and energy needs, the United States seems to be eager to fill the vacuum left by Russia. In this way, the U.S. can reduce security finances in Europe and make European actors more dependent on Washington in the context of NATO, while on the other hand, it can gain commercial advantages in the areas in which Russia will no longer exist.

In any case, the continuation of the Russian threat is an important trump card that will benefit the United States. The U.S. will not want to give up this trump card easily. Yet, the United States, which is preparing for a more comprehensive geopolitical competition with China in the

medium and long term, will have more European actors in its orbit. European actors will start to cooperate more closely with NATO and within the U.S. axis out of fear of Russia.

The World Will Look for a Scapegoat

When the tension of the war begins to calm down, the economic, political, and strategic costs of the crisis will become more visible. The rising costs of energy, food, and security in Europe will lead to further questioning of the perpetrators of the war. Almost every segment will blame Russia to a certain extent, but a number of actors will begin to look more critically at the Ukrainian leader and the roles played by the U.S. and the U.K.

The public opinion of Finland and Sweden is sympathetic to the hasty move toward NATO membership at a time when the Russian threat is felt more closely. But as NATO-Russia friction begins to be felt more along the border lines and airspace, the questioning will increase. NATO's existing members are calculating that the accepting of new members, especially those close to the Russian border, into the alliance will reduce the pressure and the security costs incurred on them. However, expanding its competition fronts will introduce new risks for Europe. All these developments are being imple-

mented without sufficient discussions in European public opinion.

Türkiye has expressed reservations about NATO enlargement, especially when it comes to the fight against terrorism. This attitude of Türkiye disrupts the calculations of the actors who are trying to include these two countries in the alliance with a *fait accompli*. Expanding NATO will not produce more security and more prosperity for Europe. In the current situation where tensions with Russia continue, the cost of security has not been calculated; however, this calculation will be made sooner or later and different voices in Europe will certainly emerge. The interests and perspectives of the U.S., Britain, and the EU regarding European security will differ in the medium and long term. The U.S. and Britain are trying to implement their own strategic moves when this difference is not yet clear. The biggest loser of this equation will undoubtedly be Ukraine, followed by Russia in the long run. Another major loser of the current crisis is the idea of strategic autonomy within Europe. There will be a change in the expression “economic giant, military worm” that we use to describe Europe. Europe will be adversely affected economically, and it will have to expand militarily. However, all this change will not contribute constructively to Europe’s strategic autonomy. Therefore, one loser of the current crisis is Europe.

Confrontations are being played out over Ukraine. The negotiations in the first weeks of the war have fallen off the agenda. The U.S. and Britain do not want the crisis to fade away quickly. As the occupation deepens, the losses of both Ukraine and Russia increase. The winners of this lose-lose scenario are the defenders of the project to bring Europe back together on the security axis.

Will NATO enlargement make Europe and the European Union (EU) safer or will it increase Europe’s security vulnerabilities? To answer this question, it is necessary to correctly read and evaluate the security threats and risks that the world and Europe, in particular, may face in the medium and long term.

The fact that the strategies for the invasion of Ukraine are being determined under the leadership of the U.S./U.K. is causing grumbles in some European capitals. But the continued strong Russian military threat and the possibility that the current war could cause unexpected flare-ups leave the tone for such discontent weak.

The differences of opinion and the new geopolitical fault lines that have formed in Europe over the years have begun to disappear. The question marks and critical view of the U.S. and NATO, developed during former U.S. President Donald Trump’s administration and the first year of Joe Biden’s presidency, were suddenly set aside. As long as the war in

Ukraine continues, it is inevitable that this transformation will continue.

Russia, which has been turned into an outsider and excluded actor by the West, may shift to a strategy that is completely China-oriented in the global geopolitical competition. This shift will not be preferable for Russia, which aims for a more balanced position on the geopolitical plane. For China, it would reduce the cost of positioning Russia on its geopolitical axis.

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strategy by categorizing them. The role played by the United States and Britain in the Russian-Ukrainian War eliminates the possibility for Europe to establish a balanced relationship with Russia.

When the tension of the war begins to calm down, the economic, political, and strategic costs of the crisis will become more visible. The rising costs of energy, food, and security in Europe will lead to further questioning of the perpetrators of war. Almost every segment will blame Russia to a certain extent, but many actors will begin to look more critically at the Ukrainian leader and the roles played by the U.S. and the U.K.

**VIŞNE KORKMAZ**

THE ANXIOUS REVISIONIST: WHAT DOES NATO ENLARGEMENT MEAN FOR RUSSIA?

In the post-Cold War period, NATO expanded in five waves of enlargement to include Central and Eastern Europe, the Black Sea, and some of the member countries of the former Eastern Bloc and the Soviet Union. The enlargement has become intertwined with developments related to Western security, which we cannot directly address within the framework of NATO enlargement, as they have also become part of Russia's post-Cold War security and threat perceptions. One of the most important of these developments was the following: Since NATO's enlargement took place within a process that began with the Partnership for Peace (PfP) and the Membership Action Plan (MAP), it represented a development in which socialization and the construction of interoperability began before the membership. This process has become inseparable as NATO has evolved from being a

purely common defense organization to a common security and collaborative security organization. In short, in the post-Cold War era, Russia has had to confront the fact that NATO was at the center of the emerging European security architecture.

For the Kremlin, this meant two things. First, for Russia, NATO's centralization of the European security architecture meant an increased influence of the United States on European security. The rise in U.S. global power, combined with Washington's drive to pursue unilateral policy, has made Russia even more uncomfortable with the status quo in European security, which it was already not very happy with as it is based on its post-Cold War conventional and political weaknesses. The most symbolic development in this regard was the U.S.' unilateral withdrawal from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABMT) in 2002. Following this symbolic step, the Bush administration's plan for the National Missile Defense System to be deployed in Europe was shared with the international community. The system, which was removed from being a national defense system under the Obama administration, was integrated into the NATO defense system with the 2010 Lisbon Summit. We understand from the steps taken by Moscow that it interprets both the 2002 and 2010 decisions as a deterioration of the status quo in Europe in favor of armaments. This became clear

with its declaration that it will not comply with the restrictions imposed in the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) and from its warnings that the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) could be broken. The result was the arming of Kaliningrad on behalf of Russia and the creation of an area control bubble (A2/AD bubble) through Kaliningrad between Eastern Europe and the Baltics – two areas that NATO reached with its 1999 and 2004 enlargement.

1997 Consensus

Second, NATO's positioning at the center of the post-Cold War European security architecture undermined the arguments of the foreign policy elite in Russia, who believed that Russian-Western cooperation would be the basis of the new European security architecture. The idea of extending the scope of European security from Vancouver to Vladivostok was also voiced by U.S. representatives in the 1990s. The adoption of this type of discourse by Western capitals from time to time gave hope to a certain political faction in Russia. It is hard to believe that the pro-Western foreign policy elite in Russia is naïve. For Moscow, it was necessary to realize that it had to negotiate with the West for the new status quo and Russia's equal place in it, rather than merely relying on Western capitals. In the 1990s, when the first wave

of NATO enlargement was discussed, the negative impact of NATO enlargement on Russia and the possibility of Moscow withdrawing from cooperating with Washington were also evaluated within the United States. At this point, the answer to the following question was being sought: “As NATO expands, can some security guarantees be created for Russia?” When it came to guarantees, Moscow was looking for more institutional guarantees than the vague promises it had made when the two Germanys were united, and Russia decided to withdraw its troops from East Germany. The result was the NATO-Russia Council, which operated perfunctorily until the invasion of Crimea, and the Russia-NATO Founding Act, signed in 1997. According to this non-binding agreement, NATO and Russia decided not to accept each other as enemies and promised a common exchange of ideas. This meant that Russia had a voice in NATO security but was not seen as a veto power. Brussels was also acknowledging that it had no intention or reason to deploy nuclear weapons to new NATO member states, that it would not change NATO’s nuclear situation and policy, and would refrain from permanently deploying military forces to these countries for the foreseeable future.

With the 1997 treaty, Russia’s assessment of NATO enlargement as a threat seemed delayed for a decade. Indeed, after 2007, we see that the Russian foreign and

security policy elite, especially Putin, made NATO’s enlargement and NATO security structure an issue, and this was clearly mentioned in official documents published after 2014. Therefore, we can say that the consensus reached in 1997 was not satisfactory enough for Moscow, both in terms of Russia’s quest for status and its search for security, and that it was not considered reliable enough. The main reason for this was that this consensus was based on Russia’s conventional weakness. Moscow was well aware of two issues. First, it was weakened in terms of conventional forces after the dissolution of the USSR. For Russia, the post-Soviet period meant shrinkage and restraint. Under these circumstances, it was very difficult for Moscow to achieve equal status with the United States in Europe and to turn into an actor in the NATO-centered European security architecture. Second, given these conventional challenges, the NATO-centric policies of the United States, and the orientation of the former Eastern Bloc countries toward Western institutions (NATO and the EU accession processes following NATO), it was not possible for Moscow to halt NATO’s expansion.

Russia’s Strategic Choices

For this reason, Russia has turned to a two-pronged strategy rather than a position to directly block NATO enlarge-

ments. First, the Kremlin tried to control the buffer zones between the West and Russia via the most cost-effective method. This meant that buffer areas could be controlled or divided through limited area control bubbles (A2/AD), even if they were not entirely under Russian control. It is not difficult to draw a direct link between Poland's entry into the alliance in 1999 and Russia's development of Kaliningrad-based field closure capabilities. Similarly, after the great enlargement in 2004, Russia risks the inability of its forces to move beyond the areas it has closed in the Baltic and Black Seas, both for Kaliningrad with the accession of three Baltic states to NATO and for the Russian presence in the Black Sea with the accession of Romania and Bulgaria to the alliance. This risk lies less in the military contribution of new NATO member states to the alliance or the strength of their armed forces, but rather in their geopolitical position and as an entry point for the alliance. Considering that Türkiye is a member of NATO, that the Turkish Straits are under Ankara's control, and that the possible alliance membership of Ukraine and Georgia was mentioned at the 2008 Bucharest Summit, we understand that the Kremlin is faced with the difficulty of eliminating the risk of Russia's Black Sea navy being left in the Black Sea. To overcome this difficulty, Russia created problems related to territorial integrity by using force within Georgia

and Ukraine, as well as limiting the assets of Georgia through Abkhazia and Ukraine in the Black Sea through Crimea.

Secondly, Russia tried to show that it would not be possible to limit it in the Baltic and Black Seas and that it had the capacity to circumvent this limitation. This meant that Russia would have freedom of movement in the Arctic Sea-Atlantic and Black Sea-Mediterranean connections, continue to have the means of territory control in the Arctic, Eastern Mediterranean, and South Caucasus, maintain its alliance with Belarus for Kaliningrad, and ultimately, keep the Polish-Lithuanian border (the Suwalki Gap) under pressure. In the face of NATO's post-2009 expansion of the Black Sea-Mediterranean line to fill the gaps on the European continent (Albania, Croatia, Montenegro, and North Macedonia), Russia attempted to maintain the pressure through Republika Srpska in Bosnia.

Revisionist Born with the Ukrainian War

The annexation of Crimea paved the way for the use of mutual force in Russian-Western relations through sanctions, rendered the consensus of 1997 unworkable, strengthened the alliance's conventional deterrence following NATO's Wales Summit, and strengthened the U.S. military presence in Europe. Despite this, until

the 2022 Ukraine crisis, Western-Russian relations continued to be defined mainly through the balance between NATO's enhanced deterrence against Russia's limited control of territory on the periphery of Europe. Russia used the ongoing crisis before the 2022 Ukrainian War to put pressure on the United States and Brussels through Ukraine and demand an overhaul of the European security architecture. This was not just the search for equal status with the United States in European security. At the same time, this meant that Moscow wanted to get rid of the costs incurred in the case of NATO increasing its permanent military presence by expanding into buffer zones, as well as to demand a kind of sharing of spheres of influence (more limited for Russia). Russia has failed to achieve its demands from Brussels and Washington, but that does not mean that Moscow has abandoned its demand to revise European security architecture.

Post-Cold War Expansion

Finland and Sweden's acceptance as NATO members means strengthening the alliance's presence in the Baltics, the North Sea, and the Arctic, while Russia is restricted to the North Sea, the Arctic, and the Atlantic connection. Considering Russia's nuclear powers in the Kola Peninsula and the Arctic Sea, one can certainly expect Moscow to be uncomfortable with the freedom of

movement that NATO will have through the quartet of Britain, Norway, Sweden, and Finland. In addition, the increase in the number of NATO member countries in the Arctic Council and the lack of a buffer area on the Russian border on the West-North line can be read as a transition from limiting Russia to containment. For this reason, the Kremlin also threatened to use force on these two northern countries when the first rumors of membership were heard. However, no one expects that given the current state of Russia's war in Ukraine, Moscow could stop Finland and Sweden from joining NATO.

On May 23, the Kremlin raised legal issues related to Finland's membership, particularly regarding the Åland Islands and the Saimaa Canal. Apart from this, Russia seems to have retreated to a cautious "wait and see" policy. The Kremlin has said that the membership of these two countries will not make a big difference for Russia, but that if the NATO military presence is deployed to the two countries, it will respond in another way. This statement can be read as an admission that Russia has no power to prevent NATO enlargement, rather than a search for a guarantee. However, this also increases the expectation that Russia will deploy forces, including tactical nuclear weapons, on the northern Euro-Russian border, which will also affect the balance in the Baltics. At this point, there is also

an expectation that the United States will increase its military support to Northern European countries with or without NATO membership. In short, the Ukraine War and the orientation of the neutral states of Northern Europe toward NATO show us that Russia is clearly seen as a revisionist actor and that the buffer zones between Russia and NATO have somehow melted away. In these circumstances, not only those confronted with revisionist Russia but also Russia itself will continue to remain anxious. This new normal of European security is likely to continue to be effective until the new iron curtain falls.

The Ukraine War and the orientation of the neutral states of Northern Europe toward NATO show us that Russia is clearly seen as a revisionist actor and that the buffer zones between Russia and NATO have somehow melted away. In these circumstances, not only those confronted with revisionist Russia but also Russia itself will continue to remain anxious.

Post-Cold War Russia had to confront the fact that NATO was at the heart of the emerging European security architecture. For the Kremlin, this meant two things: the growing influence of the United States in European security and the undermining of the arguments of the foreign policy elite, who thought that Russian-Western cooperation would be the basis of the new European security architecture.

With the 1997 Treaty, Russia postponed its assessment of NATO's enlargement as a threat by directly mentioning NATO's name. After 2007, the Russian foreign and security policy elite, especially Putin, made NATO's expansion and force restructuring an issue and made this clear in official documents published after 2014.

Russia has moved toward a two-pronged strategy rather than a position to directly block NATO enlargements. While trying to control the buffer zones between the West and Russia in the most cost-effective way, it also tried to show that it would not be possible to limit it in the Baltic and Black Seas, and that it had the power to overcome this limitation.

Russia used the ongoing crisis ahead of the 2022 Ukrainian War to put pressure on the U.S. and EU over Ukraine and demand an overhaul of the European security architecture. Moscow has not been able to achieve results in its demands from Brussels and Washington, but this does not mean that Russia has abandoned its demand to revise its European security architecture.

Finland and Sweden's NATO membership would mean that the alliance's presence in the Baltic, North Sea, and the Arctic will be strengthened, while Russia's North Sea, Arctic, and Atlantic connections will be limited. Given Russia's Kola Peninsula and its nuclear instruments in the Arctic Sea, Moscow would be uncom-

fortable with NATO's freedom of movement through Scandinavia.

The Kremlin has said that Sweden and Finland's NATO membership will not make a big difference for Russia, but that it will respond somewhere

else if the NATO military presence is deployed to the two countries. This statement can be read as Russia's acknowledgment that it lacks the power to prevent NATO enlargement, rather than a search for a guarantee.

**MEHMET AYFER KANCI**

THE PATH TO NATO ENLARGEMENT

Sweden and Finland's applications for NATO membership, which were seemingly related to the Russian-Ukrainian war, created an important opportunity for Türkiye. This opportunity has two dimensions. The first is to provide the global support that Türkiye seeks in the fight against terrorism, and the second is to establish the "Equal Allies" position within NATO, which has been abused for almost 40 years. It is time for the main members of the alliance, especially the United States, who demand equal responsibility at the military and financial levels, to face the fact that they should treat Türkiye as an "Equal Ally." The realities of Türkiye, which has been forced to intervene in Cyprus in line with its obligations under international treaties and has been subjected to arms embargoes by its allies for 40 years, first in the southeastern and eastern Anatolia regions and then in the north of Iraq and Syria, need to be discussed with NATO allies in this very process. Following the 9/11 attacks, Article 5, which forms the core of the NATO Treaty for the fight against terror-

ism, was implemented for the U.S. while it has not been put into effect for Türkiye; moreover, there is no better timing than today to account for the consequences of “allies” aiding and abetting various terrorist organizations.

The most serious obstacle in front of Türkiye in managing this process will be the Western world’s habit of setting aside the cause-and-effect relations and the historical background as they point to Türkiye as the source of the problem. One of the most typical examples of this habit and tradition of bias can be seen in the title of an analysis by Jomana Karadesh published on CNN International on May 19: “Why is Türkiye causing problems for Finland and Sweden’s plans to join NATO?”

This headline, which is a typical manifestation of the Western world’s mentality that sees itself as a hammer and Türkiye as a nail instead of taking into account Türkiye’s theses and objections, reflects the attitude toward Turks in the West since the 1856 Treaty of Paris that ended the Crimean War of 1853. Although the Treaty of Paris made the Ottoman Empire, which allied with France and Britain in the Crimean War, an equal member of the European system of states on paper, it did not allow the Ottoman Empire among the victorious states to gain superiority over Russia in the Black Sea, and the attempt to get rid of the capitulations saw no results.

If we examine the root of the Western world’s tradition of arm-in-arm against the terror carried out against Türkiye and the Turks, it is sufficient to analyze the actions of the Etniki Hetaireira and the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (DashnakSutyun) organizations established in 1890 for the independence of Greece and the restoration of the Eastern Roman Empire.

Türkiye’s ambassador to Paris, Ali Onaner, demonstrated the double standard that Europe applies when it comes to Türkiye, in a TV program on La Chaine Info on May 19, with the following words: “*Our allies should understand that they cannot escape their responsibilities by referring to the PKK with other names, such as the PYD or YPG.*” Ambassador Onaner also raised the question of how the Elysee Palace would react to the attempt of a country, which would grant asylum to those responsible for the 2015 terrorist attack in Paris that killed 130 people, to ally with France.

In 1914, the Ottoman Empire’s ambassador to Washington, Ahmed Rüstem Bey, responded similarly to the double standard approach of the West. In response to reports in the U.S. press that Armenians were massacred in Ottoman territory, he made a statement to the Evening Star newspaper, and after presenting examples of the distorted policies of France, Russia, and Britain targeting Ottoman lands, he drew attention to the torture of

the local people by the United States while occupying the Philippines. Ambassador Ahmed Rüstem Bey did not stop there, he stated that if one day the United States went to war with Japan, it was unimaginable what would happen to the blacks who are humiliated and lynched on U.S. soil every day if they cooperated with Japan. Ambassador Ahmed Rüstem Bey, who was asked to apologize to then-U.S. President Wilson for his statement, rejected this request and returned to his country. Twenty-eight years after this statement, during the U.S.-Japan war that began with the Pearl Harbor Raid, 120,000 US citizens of Japanese descent were to be imprisoned in concentration camps with the resolution 9066, signed by the then-U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Türkiye's struggle against this mentality, which has been perceived as a "problem" for nearly 200 years, also serves to reveal the facts in Swedish politics.

The Swedish Government Influenced by a Terrorist Group

The rhetoric adopted by the members of the Swedish government against Türkiye's reaction after their application to NATO demonstrated that they were caught red-handed. *"We will send a group of diplomats to hold discussions and have a dialogue with Türkiye so we can see how this can be resolved and what this is really about,"* De-

fense Minister Peter Hultqvist said, acting as if it was the first time he was hearing about Türkiye's discomfort with the support given to the PKK/YPG, while Foreign Minister Ann Linde claimed that disinformation was being spread about on the PKK-Sweden relationship. One of the most objective assessments from the Stockholm front was led by General Micael Byden, Supreme Commander of the Swedish Armed Forces, during this period. *"Contrary to popular belief, I never thought that Sweden's NATO accession process would go very quickly and smoothly. Whoever predicted that our NATO application would proceed at a high speed on a straight track, I think, has very high expectations. There will be problems, some problems will be discussed and then we will have to solve them,"* he said, clearly revealing the impasse his government is facing.

Thanks to this membership application, the Swedish public now knows how the government established in Sweden in November 2021 was taken hostage by the PKK/YPG terrorist organization. Peter Magnus Nilsson, the political editor of Sweden's *Dagens Industri* newspaper, points out that the government headed by Magdalena Andersson owes the vote of confidence it received in parliament on Nov. 29, 2021, by a margin of 1 vote to Amineh Kakabaveh, an independent MP with ties to the PKK/YPG. Nilsson also points out that the agreement that allowed

Kakabaveh's government to give a vote of confidence in the Andersson government in exchange for deepening relations with the PKK/YPG is unconstitutional. As a matter of fact, as a price to be paid, Swedish Defense Minister Peter Hultqvist and Foreign Minister Ann Linde held meetings with the so-called leadership cadres of the PKK/YPG via videoconference in March and April 2021, and Linde continued these contacts in 2022 and hosted the so-called leadership cadres of the terrorist organization in Stockholm.

Clearly, Türkiye has nothing to negotiate with the current government in Sweden, which has made it clear beyond a shadow of a doubt that it is negotiating with terrorists to form a government and that it is mired in terrorism. The most reasonable option for both sides would be to wait for the parliamentary elections to be held in Sweden on Sept. 11, 2022, to create a clean slate in both the relations between the two countries and the NATO membership process with a new government that has been cleared of terror-collaborating politicians.

NATO's Future Plans and the Question on the Table: Are We Equal Allies?

On the eve of the NATO leaders summit in Madrid, the steps that gained momentum in 2018 toward the global-

ization goal set forth by the alliance at the 1999 Washington summit are at an important juncture. These steps planned by the Western world to establish global security are not only implemented by NATO. The regional alliances formed by the United States and Britain, sometimes individually and occasionally jointly, indicate that the North Atlantic Alliance's sphere of influence is on the path to expansion in one way or another on a global scale. QUAD with Japan and India, and AUKUS-based alliances with Australia will serve to make NATO visible in the Asia-Pacific in the near future. At the same time, we are watching the U.K. sign independent defense agreements with Poland, Ukraine, Finland, and Sweden. Under these circumstances, it is not possible to claim the NATO membership applications of the two Scandinavian countries are based only on the threat of Russia. With these memberships, NATO will take control of the entire Scandinavian Peninsula and increase its control over the Arctic Circle, which has rich underground resources, and the Northern Maritime Trade Route, which opened due to the rapidly melting glaciers affected by global climate change.

In 2022, NATO is building the foundation for a paradigm shift beyond a mere conceptual change. This foundation aims to create a "security complex" that is very different and more complex

than the structure built in 1949 to ensure the security of Europe. Undoubtedly, this restructuring at the military level will be followed by a U.S.-U.K. joint economic restructuring similar to the “Truman Doctrine-Marshall Plan.” While the inclusion of Sweden and Finland in the North Atlantic Alliance is a part of a process that cannot be reduced into an ordinary expansion move, Türkiye’s demand for an “Equal Alliance” cannot be postponed due to its timing. In the run-up to the Madrid summit, NATO needs to move away from the notion that “the enemy of the United States is the enemy of NATO” and adopt the understanding that all threats to alliance members are NATO’s enemies.

Does NATO Have a Plan to Counter Russia’s Response?

Finland and Sweden’s NATO membership will mean the complete disappearance of the agreements reached between Russia and NATO after 1991 and the conditions that lasted until 2022. Undoubtedly, if these memberships are realized, Russia will not be satisfied with taking measures only on the Finnish border and the Baltic region. It has not been revealed what kind of response NATO is preparing against the military responses that Russia may bring to the agenda in the Black Sea and Caucasus regions.

Why Does Türkiye Want a Written Guarantee?

It was underlined by President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan himself that Türkiye will not repeat the mistake it made in 1980 when Greece returned to NATO’s military wing. In 1976, U.S. attempts in this direction were met with justified objections from Turkish politics and diplomacy. It was only after the Sept. 12 coup d’état that the U.S. achieved its goal of re-incorporating Greece into NATO’s military wing, in a record time of 45 days. When we look back at the developments of those years in chronological order, it would not be wrong to say that one of the reasons why the U.S. gave the green light to the coup was to bring to power an administration that would bypass Turkish politics and diplomacy regarding Greece. This concession, which paved the way for Greece with concepts such as the “Soldiers’ Promise” that has no correspondence in international diplomacy, constitutes an important part of the problems we face today in the Aegean Sea and the Eastern Mediterranean.

Following the 9/11 attacks, Article 5, which forms the core of the NATO treaty for the fight against terrorism, was implemented for the U.S. while it has not been put into effect for Türkiye; moreover, there is no better timing than today to account for the consequences of “allies” aiding and abetting various terrorist organizations.

Clearly, the government in Sweden, which has demonstrated beyond a doubt that it is mired in terrorism, and Türkiye have nothing to negotiate. The most conceivable option for both sides would be to create a clean slate in relations between the two countries with a new government in Stockholm cleared of terrorist collaborators after next September's elections.

It is not possible to base the NATO membership applications of the two Scandinavian countries only on the threat of Russia. With these memberships, NATO will take control of the entire Scandinavian Peninsula, increasing its control over the Arctic Circle, which has rich underground resources, and the Northern Maritime Trade Route.

The regional alliances formed by the United States and Britain, sometimes individually and occasionally jointly, indicate that NATO's sphere of influence is on the path to expansion in one way or another on a global scale. QUAD with Japan and India, and AUKUS-based alliances with Australia will serve to make NATO visible in the Asia-Pacific in the near future.

Finland and Sweden's NATO membership means that the conditions that existed after 1991 and lasted until 2022 will also disappear. If these memberships are realized, Russia will not be satisfied with taking measures only in this region. It is unclear what NATO is preparing to counter the military responses that Russia will launch in the Black Sea and the Caucasus.

**HAKAN ÇOPUR**

A NATO STORY AND THE UNFINISHED US-RUSSIA SHOWDOWN

The new National Security Strategy Document prepared by the U.S. administration last year defined China as the most important global competitor in the medium and long term while describing Russia as a closer “threat” in the short and medium term. As a natural extension of this approach, Washington has promised to increase military power around the South China Sea and political encirclement steps against Beijing, such as QUAD, as well as intensify its military presence in Eastern Europe and strengthen NATO. In this new approach, in which the importance of the Middle East was relatively diminished, Russia was seen as a “close military power” near Europe and the Western alliance. The Russia-Ukraine war in such an atmosphere and the NATO re-enlargement approach that came to the agenda in this process raised certain questions: “Where is the U.S. in this process?”, “To what extent will the U.S. be able to ensure coordination with European capitals?” and “Where will this new challenge carry the

U.S.-Russia tension in the big picture?” In this context, the prolongation of the war and the accession of Sweden and Finland to NATO can be seen as extensions of the U.S. aim of “weakening Russia as much as possible.” The U.S. is willing and insistent on NATO enlargement. However, both the relations of countries, which are dependent on Russia in energy, such as Germany, with Moscow and the process of meeting Ankara’s justified demands show that there are still important topics that Washington needs to overcome.

NATO-Russia Conflict: A 30-Year-Old Story

It is necessary to understand that the Russia-Ukraine war that marked 2022 is based on a story that began 30 years ago. The story of NATO’s eastward expansion in the ‘90s after the collapse of the Soviet Union was a choice of the Western alliance that wanted to corner Russia. Russia, which began to object to this story after Putin came to power, first through Georgia and Crimea, and now through Ukraine, has made it clear especially to the U.S. that it does not accept being “cornered.” In recent years, Ukraine has become an “opportunity” for the U.S., which has been looking for ways to stop Moscow’s growing military activity both in its own region and beyond its borders. In other words, in this part of the

30-year-old story, Ukraine has become an arena where two giants are flexing their muscles. To see the outcome of the story, it is necessary to wait a little longer.

When it became clear that Russia’s military capabilities in Ukraine were not as superior as they seemed from the outside and that it could not take Kyiv within 72 hours, the United States began to rapidly take all steps that could prolong the war. The nearly \$40 billion defense package, which amounts to a balance between “supporting Ukraine/keeping it on a Western line” and “weakening Russia,” demonstrates the will of Congress as well as the Biden administration. The war will probably not have a single winner or loser, but in this context, the membership of Sweden and Finland in NATO will mean a fundamental overhaul of the European security architecture and will push the Russian-NATO tension one step higher.

How Possible Are Sweden and Finland’s NATO Memberships?

Looking at the current conjuncture, while there is no strong objection to the membership of these two countries within NATO other than Türkiye (partly Hungary also has objections), it seems possible that this problem will be solved by Sweden and Finland taking some concrete steps. Therefore, if Türkiye’s national security concerns about the PKK are addressed,

it is quite possible that Sweden and Finland will join the alliance very quickly. Following Russia's attack on Ukraine, the Biden administration's significant success has been to survive as a union and alliance with EU countries against Moscow. Of course, not everyone agrees on energy dependence, but I believe that there is a strong unity and consensus on being militarily under the NATO umbrella against the "Russian threat." Therefore, although some countries, especially Germany, still have strong comments on how this process is managed and energy dependence, I believe that there will be no divergence in the United States and within NATO regarding the joining of these two countries to NATO. Unlike Russia's previous actions, Ukraine becoming a more integrated country in Europe and the resulting wave of migrants have provided Europeans with a strong motivation to "stop Moscow" and the United States with an "opportunity not to be missed."

Is the U.S. Ready for NATO Enlargement?

The weakening U.S.-NATO ties in the Trump era, which in his September 2019 U.N. speech declared, "The future belongs to patriots, not globalists," were widely discussed at the time. One of the main promises of the Biden administration, which came to power after a period in

which Trump questioned U.S. ties with its allies through various codes, was to repair the "U.S.-European alliance" and "ties between the U.S. and NATO." In this context, Biden and his team, who held various summits and meetings over one year, did not achieve any substantial results until the Ukraine war began. But the new situation that emerged after the Ukraine war created a new reality in which the United States could come to a faster consensus with its allies in Europe. The reflection in Washington of this atmosphere, in which NATO as a whole is trying to oppose Moscow's steps, has created a political image in which both Republicans and Democrats are largely united against Putin. Setting aside the Republicans' comments on the method and Trump's statements that "Putin would not have attacked" if he was in power, it is possible to say that the decision-makers in the U.S. and Congress favor the NATO memberships of Sweden and Finland.

The main promise of Biden, who hosted Swedish Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson and Finnish President Sauli Niinistö at the White House, was to complete the application process as soon as possible and to ensure that it was accepted by the U.S. Congress. Congressional leaders have also announced their readiness for a ratification process at this point. How Türkiye's justified objections are addressed will determine the course and speed of this

process, but the U.S. administration seems to be eager for the expansion of NATO in general and in principle. At the moment, the prevailing mood in Washington is focused on how Putin's playing field could be narrowed a bit more, rather than talking about how such an expansion would mean provoking Moscow more. If this process is extended until November, then the congressional midterm elections may have some side effects and repercussions. However, in the current conjuncture, the U.S. administration wants to ensure that Sweden and Finland enter NATO as soon as possible and to strengthen the military presence that will be shaped in the north after the east of Europe. In such a scenario, the Biden administration dreams of strengthening its NATO alliance against Russia, which it sees as an imminent military threat, and focusing a little more on how it can deal with China in the medium term. But the current and potential issues here are not challenges that will be overcome in a short time. There are also approaches claiming that a little more NATO enlargement could make Europe's security architecture more fragile rather than strengthen it, and the scenarios here are directly related to how Russia will get out of the war in Ukraine. Moreover, there are capitals in the EU that do not think like Washington in relations with Russia and China on various issues, especially energy and trade. Ultimately, for the U.S.

administration, achieving this goal would mean transversing a rugged terrain rather than a flat highway.

Global Implications of the New NATO Enlargement

While whether the mistakes of history or human societies are repeating themselves is debated, the question of whether the U.S. and U.K.'s expansionary approach will make the European security architecture safer at the end of the day remains a legitimate one. Germany, which does not want to set aside its national security to answer this question, has already increased its defense budget significantly. What will the U.S. administration, which has so far managed to keep European allies together in the face of Russia, say to its allies, who will pay the price for the lingering process? In fact, with the prolongation of the war, how will the pressure on Biden be eliminated as the U.S. inflation, gasoline, and food prices keep rising? No one yet knows the clear answers to these questions. Thus, as we enter an area of uncertainty, NATO's enlargement with Sweden and Finland will not reduce the security problems in the region but will likely increase the potential for more conflict and an arms race.

It may be enough to review the 1990s to predict the medium and long-term results of this step, which is seen as essential in the short term. While the Americans want

to see their own calculations with the Russians and weaken Putin, European capitals that do not want to pay the bill may well emerge. Therefore, it is necessary to wait and see how far the campaign of “standing together and side by side against Putin” that emerged with Russia’s attack on Ukraine will last. The U.S. may gain another position by including Sweden and Finland in the alliance in this process motivated to weaken Russia in the short term. However, in the medium term, there are too many variables that the U.S. administration cannot control (even domestically) and these are the elements that can directly and adversely affect regional security. So in the context of NATO enlargement, the U.S. is close to scoring a point, but the Washington-Moscow arm wrestling in Eastern and Northern Europe will last longer.

It is necessary to understand that the war that marked 2022 is based on a story that began 30 years ago. The story of NATO’s eastward expansion after the collapse of the Soviet Union was the choice of the West, which wanted to corner Russia.

The Russia-Ukraine war and the NATO re-enlargement approach that came to the fore in this process raised major questions such as “Where is the U.S. in this process?”, “To what extent will the U.S. be able to ensure coordination with European capitals?” and “Where will this new challenge carry the U.S.-Russia tension in the big picture?”

On NATO’s enlargement, the U.S. is willing and insistent. However, both the relations of countries, which are dependent on Russia in energy, such as Germany, with Moscow and the process of meeting Ankara’s justified demands show that there are still important topics that Washington needs to address.

The U.S. may gain another position by including Sweden and Finland in the alliance in this process, which is motivated to weaken Russia in the short term, but in the medium term, there are too many variables that the U.S. administration cannot control (even within itself) and these are elements that can directly and adversely affect regional security.

The U.S. administration seems to be eager for NATO enlargement in general and in principle. At the moment, the prevailing mood in Washington is focused on how Putin’s playing field could be narrowed a bit more, rather than talking about how such an expansion would mean further provoking Moscow.

What will the U.S. administration, which has so far managed to keep European allies together in the face of Russia, say to its allies, who will pay the price for the lingering process? In fact, with the prolongation of the war, how will the pressure on Biden be eliminated as the U.S. inflation, gasoline, and food prices keep rising? No one yet knows the clear answers to these questions.



RIFAT ÖNCEL

NATO MADRID SUMMIT AND TÜRKİYE

NATO, facing a significant challenge with Russia's attempt to invade Ukraine, will hold one of the most important summits in its history in Madrid on June 28-30. It seems that the summit will have two main agenda items. The first is the new strategic concept document that the alliance will adopt around the NATO 2030 initiative, and the second is the strategies to be followed in the coming period amid the war in Ukraine. The two issues are already intertwined. Compared to 2010, when the previous strategic concept document was announced, the security environment has undergone a significant change. Although the civil wars in the Middle East and North Africa and the emergence of various terrorist organizations do not directly concern NATO, the process that began with Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014 has revealed a fundamental change in European security and therefore in the perspective of NATO. On the other hand, the view that the era of strategic competition has returned amid China's rise and that NATO cannot remain indifferent to it has

become the dominant idea. In this sense, the collective defense, crisis management, and collaborative security tasks assigned to NATO in the previous strategic document are considered insufficient for today's security environment.

New Strategic Concept

To better respond to the changing security environment, NATO has been seeking a new vision since December 2019 and has identified adaptation priorities by adopting the 2030 initiative. Accordingly, the alliance aims to increase its military and political power and demonstrate a more global approach. More specifically, increasing military defense spending, improving political consultation and coordination, and globally adopting a more focused approach to the Asia-Pacific region. In this sense, it advocates closer relations with traditional American allies such as South Korea, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand against China. In this sense, it would not be wrong to expect that more emphasis will be placed on collaborative security, which was defined as the third primary task in the previous document, that is, NATO will enter into more relations and security partnerships beyond its borders.

In the new strategic concept document, one of NATO's priorities will be to clearly define its strategy toward China. It is currently unclear how the bal-

ance between the perception of China as a systemic challenge or a partner will be shaped. While the traditional U.S. view is close to the first option, Western European countries do not want the possibility of partnerships to be ignored. The difference in the way the U.S. and the EU approach international power competition is not new. When it comes to Russia, until the Ukraine attack took place, the U.S. could not draw the EU sufficiently to its own line. Moreover, even the current situation that has emerged already shows that European states will not be able to take adequate measures when it comes to defense. For example, the debates in Germany, which attracted attention with its announcement of a military modernization budget of 100 billion euros, showed that it is not ready for such an initiative. Various political parties and civil society want resources to be used for social issues, not military spending. In this sense, it is still doubtful that Europe, accustomed to living under American security guarantees, will be able to make a serious defense breakthrough.

In the new strategic concept document, there will be an attempt to clarify an approach toward Russia. NATO member and partner states provided significant military assistance to Ukraine against Russia's attempt to invade Ukraine. The alliance has strengthened the defense of the Baltics, Eastern Europe, and the Balkans

by deploying significant land, air, and sea elements on its eastern and southeastern flanks. On the other hand, since Ukraine is not a member of NATO, there has been no direct confrontation with Russia and a cautious approach has been taken against Vladimir Putin's nuclear threats. The U.S., for example, has postponed some of its routine missile tests. Meanwhile, the end of the war in Ukraine remains unclear. The possibility of the war spreading over a long period will be one of the main issues to be addressed in the new strategic document. In this sense, the future of many fundamental international security issues in Europe, such as nuclear weapons, disarmament efforts, and ballistic missile defense, in which NATO and Russia are the main actors, has been thrown into uncertainty.

The fact that the threat perception emanating from Russia and China is defined by NATO not only militarily but also politically shows the approach that the alliance will adopt in the coming period. It has now become a widely accepted view that China, along with Russia, is a threat to the rules-based international order, and that these actors pursue strategies to erode democratic values and open societies. In this context, it is thought that election interference, disinformation campaigns, and cyberattack practices aim to create various instabilities within allied countries and disrupt harmony between allies. Priority is given to strengthening so-

cial immunity to such hybrid or grey zone tactics and ultimately positioning societies as a leading civilian force in national defense. But NATO's work on elasticity risks the alliance increasingly adopting an ideological agenda and at the same time focusing more on civilian rather than military missions.

In addition to the above points, it can be expected that the new document will give more space to various problem areas, especially health and energy. COVID-19, which has turned into a global health problem since 2019 that has strained states' capacities, has quickly become a geopolitical competition tool. In the fight against the epidemic, the armed forces contributed to the civilian effort, especially by carrying out transportation and construction activities. Likewise, NATO has created a special fund within its structure and created an aid mechanism for member and partner states in need. Türkiye has also made an important contribution to this aid. On the other hand, the energy supply, which has traditionally become a security issue, has reached a much more problematic dimension with Russia's invasion of Ukraine. In addition to such problems, many issues are added from time to time, including climate change and environmental problems, and the scope of NATO's contribution in these areas is also being discussed. However, as mentioned in terms of social elasticity, the effort to

find solutions to such problems within NATO risks eroding the alliance's collective military identity.

NATO's Alliance Duty Toward Türkiye

When NATO's new strategic concept document is evaluated from Türkiye's point of view, the assessment of two issues emerges as a priority area because these issues directly concern Türkiye's national interests and its influence within the alliance. In the fight against terrorism, which is the first of these, Türkiye insists that it does not receive enough support from its NATO allies and that the allies even play a role in facilitating PKK terrorism. Most recently, this discontent, which has been clearly expressed during the membership applications of Finland and Sweden, is one of Türkiye's most important priorities. Despite the fact that the PKK operates freely in European countries and the aid provided to the PKK has been brought up many times, concrete steps have not been taken by Türkiye's interlocutors. On the contrary, due to Türkiye's operations against the terrorist organization in northern Syria, many NATO allies have imposed arms embargoes on Türkiye.

Türkiye's second priority is to prevent the formation of a European Union bloc within NATO, as the experience gained in

the past has shown that EU member states want to shape NATO around their own interests. In particular, Greece used EU membership as a trump card in all possible issues against Türkiye and tried to narrow Türkiye's room for action within the alliance. Similarly, in the period after the Greek Cypriot administration of Southern Cyprus became a member of the EU, an intense effort was made to integrate the actor into NATO mechanisms, and efforts were made to create a *fait accompli*. The EU has already long lost its impartiality and credibility in the disputes between Türkiye and Greece by incorporating the Greek Cypriot administration into the union. Accordingly, it is not surprising that France made a defense agreement with Greece last year, including security guarantees. In the strategic compass document, which was designed to make the EU stronger and more independent, especially in the field of defense and critical technologies, Türkiye was accused of instrumentalizing irregular migration in the Eastern Mediterranean, provocation, unilateral actions, as well as violations of international law and Greece's sovereignty. It is also significant that the EU published the document containing these statements during Russia's liberation of Ukraine. This attitude will only exacerbate the Greek problem within NATO.

As a result, with the Madrid Summit, one can expect a NATO that has adopted

a more global orientation with more tasks and responsibilities. Similarly, the alliance seems to continue its evolution from being a narrow defense alliance based on collective defense to becoming an international organization, the defender of the liberal international order. On the other hand, it is not possible to say that a serious defense breakthrough can be made in Europe or that concrete solutions have been produced for the problematic areas that Türkiye has drawn attention to.

When NATO's new strategic concept document is evaluated from Türkiye's point of view, evaluations on two issues emerge as a priority area: First, Türkiye emphasizes that it does not receive support from NATO allies in the fight against terrorism, and the second priority is to prevent the formation of a European Union bloc within NATO.

NATO, which has been seeking a new vision since December 2019, aims to increase its military and political power and

create a more global approach with the 2030 initiative. More specifically, increasing defense spending militarily, improving political consultation and coordination, and globally adopting a more focused approach to the Asia-Pacific region.

The difference in the way the U.S. and the EU approach international power competition is not new. When it comes to Russia, until the Ukraine invasion took place, the U.S. could not draw the EU sufficiently to its own line. Moreover, even the current situation already shows that European states will not be able to take adequate measures in terms of defense.

As a result, with the Madrid Summit, one can expect a NATO that has adopted a more global orientation with more tasks and responsibilities. Similarly, the alliance is likely to continue its evolution from being a narrow defense alliance based on collective defense to becoming an international organization, the defender of the liberal international order.

**KEMAL İNAT**

COUNTERTERRORISM AND TÜRKİYE IN NATO'S SECURITY CONCEPT

The issue of how much security is provided by NATO, which was founded by 12 countries in 1949 and has expanded to 30 members so far, has always been a subject of debate, albeit from different angles. One dimension of these discussions focuses on whether each member state will benefit from the same level of support provided by the defense obligation set out in Article 5. Another dimension has been the level of solidarity among members in the field of security. Although Article 5 explicitly stipulates that all member states will enjoy the support of other members if attacked, some members have always been concerned about this. Since political history is full of examples where solidarity commitments have not been fulfilled, it is not possible to say that these concerns are unfounded.

The topic of this article is more of a debate on the dimensions of security solidarity within NATO. In this context, it is a matter of debate whether NATO should have a duty only to

protect the territory of member states against external attacks or whether it is necessary to impose certain obligations on member states, for example in the fight against terrorism as well. Those who advocate for keeping NATO within the limits of its classical defense obligation refer to the founding treaty of the organization. On the other hand, those who argue that new threats have emerged globally, especially terrorism, after the Cold War, and that NATO should act jointly against these threats, say that defense obligations should have a wide scope.

Debate on NATO's Duty Dimension

NATO, which was established during the Cold War in the post-World War II environment, has the legitimacy of international law in accordance with Article 51 of the United Nations Charter. In the post-war international political system, also called the U.N. System, the use of force was generally prohibited, while self-defense was considered an exception. Article 51 emphasizes this concept of self-defense and states that the U.N. members that are attacked can make the defense individually or jointly. NATO has thereby emerged as an organization formed by some countries from Europe and the Americas to be prepared for the "joint" defense expressed here. NATO, which promoted a

security approach to nuclear deterrence with strategies such as "massive retaliation" and "flexible response" throughout the Cold War, has been focusing on new threats with the dissolution of the Soviet Union after the Cold War. Among these threats, which are presented as a source of legitimacy for NATO's continued existence, international terrorism has increasingly been introduced to the agenda of the organization. In the 1990s, when "Out of Area" missions were carried out, the debates intensified between those who advocated that NATO should stick to the classic concept of defense and act only in self-defense when there was an attack on its members' territory and those who argued that it should expand the scope of self-defense and resort to pre-emptive measures to prepare the organization for new threats. Within the framework of the concept of "humanitarian intervention," which is increasingly finding a place for itself in international law, there have been those who have tried to assign a role to NATO, which was seen during the intervention against Serbia in the territory of the former Yugoslavia in 1995 and 1999. However, although the issue of international terrorism was raised at NATO summits as one of the new threats of the post-Cold War era, no significant steps were taken in the 1990s for the organization to develop a collective defense approach to this threat.

Disputed Concepts

NATO's concrete initiatives within the framework of the fight against terrorism and the fundamental introduction of this issue to the organization's agenda occurred as a result of the events known as the 9/11 attacks against the United States, the largest NATO ally, at the beginning of the 2000s. In this context, NATO members operationalized Article 5 of the alliance agreement and supported the protection of U.S. airspace with AWACS troops until May 2002 as part of the "Operation Eagle Assist," established for the protection of American airspace. The operation carried out in Afghanistan after the attacks was a kind of counterterrorism operation under the roof of NATO, according to the U.S. and its close allies. Although the operation later turned into a mission in support of the government in the capital Kabul, the U.S. and its allies saw ISAF mainly as a mission against terrorism. The developments in Afghanistan in the aftermath of the Sept. 11 attacks have shown that NATO was able to go beyond the classical understanding of defense and act when its most powerful member was exposed to terrorist attacks and did not withhold the necessary solidarity from the member state that was the target of terrorist attacks. The "Military Concept for Defense against Terrorism" adopted at the NATO summit in Prague in November 2002 was another indication that NATO was able to take ac-

tion to fight terrorism when Washington wanted to.

In the aftermath of the Charlie Hebdo attack in France in January 2015, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg invited alliance members to cooperate more in the fight against terrorism. Similarly, when it comes to the Daesh terrorist organization, it has been seen that NATO members can establish very wide and effective cooperation in the fight against terrorism. After Daesh seized major cities first in Syria in 2013 and then in Iraq in 2014, the U.S.-led NATO members formed the main core of the coalition against this terrorist organization and carried out numerous operations within the scope of the fight against Daesh.

These developments show that NATO's leading actors prefer to leave the issue of cooperation and solidarity in the fight against terrorism as a flexible non-rule-bound space. In other words, if they had extended their defense obligation under NATO to include the fight against terrorism, they would have had to support member states within the framework of the fight against terrorism even if they did not want to. However, the concepts of terrorism and the fight against terrorism are not concepts that everyone agrees on. The problems Türkiye is experiencing within the framework of the fight against terrorism with its "allies" under the NATO roof, especially the United States, stem from this difference in approach to these concepts.

Instead of assisting their ally, Türkiye, in its fight against terrorism, the U.S. and some other NATO members are openly and/or covertly supporting certain terrorist organizations that target Türkiye's security. Particularly, in the fight against the PKK/YPG terrorist organization, Ankara is witnessing the support of many NATO members to this terrorist organization and has not received the same support that NATO gave to the United States after the 9/11 terrorist attacks. This discrepancy suggests a clear double standard within NATO when it comes to counterterrorism.

While Türkiye has not found the solidarity it expects within the framework of the fight against terrorism from its existing NATO allies, it is now faced with the membership issue of Sweden and Finland, two countries with problematic policies on terrorist organizations. The rule of unanimous decision-making within the alliance has given Ankara the opportunity to draw attention to mistakes committed by Stockholm and Helsinki, and also the alliance members who want them to become NATO members, in the fight against terrorism, and it seems that President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan intends to use this opportunity to the fullest.

Not all NATO members have agreed on the concept of terrorism. The problems Türkiye has been experiencing with its NATO "allies," especially the U.S., within the framework of the fight against ter-

rorism are a direct result of discrepancies in approaching the concept of terrorism. Some NATO members, especially the U.S., are openly and/or covertly supporting terrorist organizations targeting Türkiye's security instead of helping Türkiye in its fight against terrorism.

Particularly, in the fight against the PKK/YPG terrorist organization, Ankara is witnessing the support of many NATO members to this terrorist organization, let alone receiving the same support that NATO gave to the U.S. after the 9/11 attacks. This suggests a clear double standard within NATO when it comes to counterterrorism.

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