



Ministero degli Affari Esteri
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ELTGROUP

NATO 2023

Balancing priorities after the Vilnius Summit

Friday, the 6th of October 2023, from 3 to 7.15 PM (CEST)

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation – *International Conference Hall, Rome*

Conference organised by the **NATO Defense College Foundation**

in cooperation with the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation**,
the **NATO Defense College**, **Fondazione Compagnia di San Paolo**, and **Elettronica S.p.A.**

Gathering **18 international specialists** and about **250 people** among the public (both in-person and online) within the institutional framework of the **Italian MFA**, the event represented the 7th edition of the annual NDCF conference dedicated to the Atlantic Alliance and international security. On the agenda, some of today's most discussed topics: the **future of NATO**, from emerging challenges to internal reforms; **policies and investments** to ensure a strong **deterrence and defence**; how to project **security at 360°**; possible evolutions for essential **partnerships in the South, even more after the recent crises**.

A selection of quotes from our speakers follows below.

Alessandro Minuto-Rizzo, *President, NATO Defense College Foundation, Rome*

«NATO is sailing towards its 75th anniversary proving to be the most resilient Alliance in history, while the concept of looking at international security at 360° is more relevant than ever, meaning that security is global. It is necessary to look in all directions keeping the guard high and the security dialogue alive. [...] History is unfolding rapidly before us with new threats as well as potential opportunities. Therefore, we need to take a decisive action towards the South and to consider options regarding the East».

Riccardo Guariglia, *Secretary General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Rome*

«It is exactly now, while war has made its return to Europe, that we must confirm our determined resolve to deal with all threats and challenges facing the Euro-Atlantic community, no matter where they stem from, adopting a comprehensive approach. Collective defence remains crucial to provide security over the allied territory, to its more than one billion people».

Florence Gaub, *Director, Research Division, NATO Defense College, Rome*

«I find that NATO is not brain-dead at all. On the contrary, I find an organization that is actually vitalised and energised by the gigantic task ahead of it [...]. Regarding our Southern flank, I invite you to stop seeing this region as a backyard of Europe that needs some capacity building or perhaps to be stopped from coming to Europe, and instead consider it as a geopolitical entity in its own right, which is being currently heavily courted by Russia, and China, and others».

Nicolò Russo Perez, *Head, International Affairs, Compagnia di San Paolo, Turin*

«I would like to stress the importance of the cooperation between public and private entities: with the NATO 2030 process, the organization had an opportunity to embed contributions by experts from the scientific community and the private sector, all engaged in the challenging task of supporting the design of the future NATO. [...] Also, the launch of DIANA and the NATO Innovation Fund promise opportunities for applied research centres and start-ups, which must be valued».

Stefano Pontecorvo, *Chairman, Leonardo Company, Rome*

«The European Security system needs major investments in the near future: either to rebalance the relationship with the US or because we do not know where future threats will come from. [...] In the current phase of uncertainty, we must aim at strengthening mechanisms for cooperation between countries in science, technology transfer and industrial innovation. [...] We must have the ability and courage to collaborate on new systemic competencies and strengthen the North-South technological cooperation, through agreed modalities and dedicated industrial programmes capable of protecting the strategic needs of the partners involved».

Oana Lungescu, *Distinguished Fellow, Royal United Services Institute; and former NATO Spokesperson, Brussels*

«We need to look at policy options, policy solutions and, most importantly, action. Indeed, in terms of facts and figures, Russia this year intends to spend almost 30% of its budget this year on the military, while China has set its objective to become a world class military power by 2029. These figures explain the world of geo-strategical competition we are operate in as NATO, as an alliance that keeps peace and security for one billion people in Europe and North America and ultimately preserves our way of life».

Karl-Heinz Kamp, *Associate Fellow, German Council on Foreign Relations, Berlin*

«The EU has proven to be very united and efficient in implementing the sanctions on Russia, supporting Ukraine, the energy policy, etc. Hence, it became a key security policy player. And yet, not a military player. This proves that the idea of an autonomous, sovereign body, able to take care of its own military issues, was not very realistic in the first place, and now it is fairly dead. This means that the future lies not in an independent EU, but in the cooperation between EU and NATO».

Camille Grand, *Distinguished Policy Fellow, European Council on Foreign Relations, Brussels*

«We now see the consequences of more than a decade of decline in defence spending, with reduced combat readiness and forces [...]. Thus, the strengthening of conventional deterrence is a long-term endeavour: it will entail spending more, producing more ammunitions, recurring to much more training, planning and exercises, so that NATO can remain technologically advanced».

Giovanni Soccodato, *Managing Director, MBDA Italy, Rome*

«In the European context, in particular, cooperation is essential to better face emerging threats, with an increasingly sophisticated technological response and in increasingly compressed timeframes. Pooling skills and resources between the various countries, at the industrial level and also in terms of technological skills, is fundamental: only through a continuous and constant exchange between transatlantic allies can we increase our capabilities and accelerate innovation processes».

Marco Peronaci, *Permanent Representative of Italy to the North Atlantic Council, NATO HQ, Brussels*

«The Vilnius Summit marked a further step forward in the Alliance's reflection towards the South. Thanks to an Italian strong push at the highest political level, the leaders approved the specific mandate requesting a NATO fresh recommitment on challenges and opportunities stemming from its Southern flank. Indeed, there is a common arc of instability running from the north-eastern boundaries of the Alliance to its immediate southern neighbourhood. And there is clear symmetry of threats in both flanks».

Ian Lesser, *Vice President; and Executive Director, Brussels Office, The German Marshall Fund of the United States, Brussels*

«There is a nexus between the Eastern and Southern theatres. Even if the South was some kind of a subordinate theatre for NATO during the Cold War, today we have a different situation. We have a war in the East, and if we consider its escalatory potential, we tend to think about to the Baltics and the Black Sea. Yet, there are also things that can be escalatory with Russia on Turkey's borders, in Syria, in Libya, in the Sahel, in the Med itself. There is a nexus. And our partners in the South are of course stakeholders in this».

Abdulaziz Sager, *President, Gulf Research Center, Jeddah*

«One of the reasons why Gulf countries look East is that we have felt neglected, marginalised by the West – and this despite our global contributions to the global economy (in terms of energy supplies). What I would propose is to look at the NATO Plus framework: can we bring the Gulf countries in the security framework of NATO, without the need of including them into the voting process? If the West could provide us with a security umbrella, then we would not have interest in turning East: the West is where our oldest economic relations have roots, it is where we buy the majority of our weapons from».

Giulio Terzi di Sant'Agata, *President of the Senate Committee on European Union Policies, Rome*

«I am ever more convinced of the great importance of the wide array of partnerships between NATO and countries that are not members of the Alliance. NATO is a security organization with a global mission nowadays. The war in Ukraine gives us a sense of what that means, but there is also a key security challenge, which is first and foremost political: how can we keep our public opinions together and engaged? Multiple crises generate uneasiness, that works against our need for resilience and deterrence. This reminds us that our primary mission should be to promote a positive and effective communication strategy against disinformation».

The **full recordings** of the event are available on the [NDCF YouTube channel](#).

For any further information, please contact us at: ndcf.pressmediarelations@gmail.com (Sofia Mastrostefano, +39 366 254 20 29)

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