

NATO 2024

BEYOND THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY

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High-Level Conference
Co-organised by the NATO Defense College Foundation
with the Centro Alti Studi per la Difesa (CASD)
under the High Patronage of the President of the Republic

NATO 2024. Beyond the 75th anniversary

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Gruppo di Lavoro

Alessandro Minuto Rizzo Alessandro Politi (editor) Benedetta Maria Papale Lorenza Santarelli Noemi Cautiero

NATO Defense College Foundation

Via Alessandro Serpieri, 8

Roma 00197

web: www.natofoundation.org email: info@natofoundation.org twitter: @NATOFoundation

facebook: NATO College Foundation

linkedin: NATO Defense College Foundation

instagram: @natofoundation youtube: NATO Foundation

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NATO Defense College Foundation

The NDCF is a unique think-tank: international by design and based in Rome, due to its association with the NATO Defense College. Its added value lies in the objectives stated by its charter and in its international network, which make the Foundation a body with considerable freedom of action, transnational reach and cultural openness. The charter specifies that the NDCF works with the Member States of the Atlantic Alliance, its partners and the countries that have some form of co-operation with NATO. Through the Foundation the involvement of USA and Canada is more fluid than in other settings. The Foundation was born in March 2011 and is rapidly expanding its highly specific and customer-tailored activities, achieving an increasingly higher profile, also through activities dedicated to decision makers and their staffs. Currently, the Foundation is active in three areas: high-level events, strategic trends research and specialised decision makers' training and education.





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GIACINTO OTTAVIANI President, Centro Alti Studi per la Difesa, Rome

WELCOME REMARKS

Ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon and welcome to the *Centre for Higher Defence Studies* (CASD) an institution that combines the traditional role of high-level military education with that of a brand-new university. A few days ago, the Minister of University and Research, along with the Minister of Defence and Minister of Public Administration, signed the final decree officially recognising this Centre as a university¹. In this new dual role, advanced courses are provided for both civilian and military leaders from Italy, NATO and other partner nations.

At CASD, leaders are trained to address the complex global challenges of our time. As both an educational centre and a newly established university, CASD is actively engaged in numerous European Union and NATO education initiatives, including the NATO Defence Education Enhancement Programme (DEEP)², that promotes cooperation between the Alliance and North Africa, as well as other strategic EU and NATO courses for military and civilian personnel. The primary focus of all our programmes is on the principles of collective defence and security.

Organised by CASD in collaboration with the NATO Defence College Foundation on the occasion of NATO's 75th Anniversary³, this event is primarily intended to analyse various challenges that may impact and threaten the Alliance. The discussion will centre on topics of strategic importance, issues integral to CASD's identity. Additionally, matters of both national and NATO interest related to common defence and security will be explored.

Common deterrence and defence that are increasingly threatened by many external factors such as countries that make international balances unstable. Therefore, before leaving the floor to the NDCF President, Ambassador Minuto-Rizzo, let me take the opportunity to welcome you all again and thank you for your attention and for being here. Good afternoon.

¹ https://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2024/09/11/24A04629/SG.

² https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_139182.htm.

https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/224100.htm.

Admiral **Giacinto Ottaviani** is a distinguished officer of the Italian Navy with a career spanning over four decades. He attended the Italian Naval Academy from 1983 to 1987, beginning his journey in the armed forces. Early in his career, he served as the Navigation and Communications Officer aboard the frigate Euro, where he participated in the Persian Gulf Operation. In 2009-2010, Admiral Ottaviani commanded the destroyer Andrea Doria, leading Operation TUCANO. He later served as President of the Centro Alti Studi della Difesa (CASD), an advanced university-level institution, from 2021 to 2024. On July 29, 2024, Admiral Ottaviani assumed the prestigious role of Deputy Chief of Defense Staff, consolidating his position as a key figure in Italy's military leadership.



ALESSANDRO MINUTO-RIZZO President, NATO Defense College Foundation, Rome

FOREWORD

Welcome to this event marking a significant anniversary and examining future perspective, including a strategy for the South that holds particular importance from an Italian standpoint. It is a privilege to be here at the Centro Alti Studi per la Difesa among esteemed colleagues and experts, with sincere gratitude extended to Admiral Ottaviani for his kind hospitality. A warm welcome is also offered to today's speakers, moderators, and attendees.

Why focus on this subject today? While anniversaries are familiar occasions, this one holds unique significance: the Atlantic Alliance, founded 75 years ago, stands as the longest-lasting civilian-military alliance in history. This initiative, with its historical vision, unites Europe and North America, representing some of the world's most significant democracies. The ambition of this endeavour extends well beyond military matters. The preamble of the founding treaty declares that the Alliance is established to promote the stability and well-being of the North Atlantic area, its people, and its partners. Today, the Alliance includes 32 members and has successfully adapted across generations. The transatlantic bond has worked well, proving that Europe and North America are a winning ticket. Americans, Canadians, Europeans have acted together, becoming fully interoperable and able to confront any challenge.

The current international landscape differs significantly from the traditional one. This gathering offers an opportunity to reflect on the present state of global affairs and, if possible, to establish guiding principles for the future. We are witnessing a fragmented world, marked by the rise of new actors and dangerous non-state entities: from the Russian aggression against Ukraine and the protracted conflict in Gaza, to attacks in the Red Sea and rising tensions in the Indo-Pacific. Now, more than ever, the international community needs reliable security providers.

The first session will address issues concerning NATO, now expanded to 32 members. NATO must remain a significant political actor, yet it is essential to

preserve its cohesion. A new Secretary General has been appointed, and the concept of defence now encompasses a much broader scope than in the past. The second panel will consider NATO's external dimension, an area that must be strengthened. While approaches from the past may offer guidance, it is imperative to envision a different future.

North Africa and the Middle East require particular attention. Twenty years ago, the Mediterranean Dialogue (MD)¹ and the Istanbul Cooperation Initiatives (ICI)² were established as frameworks for mutual engagement, centered on concrete projects. In recent years, however, this cooperation has diminished in visibility, and time has come to reassess these initiatives.

The Council has been assigned this responsibility, and it is hoped that the South will again be prioritised. Finally, today, two leading defence industries will present their key priorities, as the defence sector has become more vital than ever. Gratitude is extended to the Centro Alti Studi per la Difesa. Appreciation is also expressed to the NATO Defence College, our longstanding partner, the Hanns-Seidel-Stiftung, the International Council on Environmental Economics and Development, Fondazione Compagnia di San Paolo, Rheinmetall Italia, Leonardo, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean, and our media partners, AGI, Agenzia Nova, and Difesa Online.

After having served at the Italian Embassy in Washington DC and as Commercial Counsellor at the Embassy of Italy in Prague, Ambassador Alessandro Minuto-Rizzo worked as Head of the External Relations Office of the EEC from 1981 to 1986. In the following years, his career focused on Europe and Space Policy. In 1997 he was appointed Diplomatic Counsellor of the Minister of Defence Beniamino Andreatta, then of his successors Carlo Scognamiglio and Sergio Mattarella. In 2000, Minuto-Rizzo held the position of Italian Ambassador to the Western European Union and to the Political and Security Committee of the EU, of which he was among the founding members. He was Deputy Secretary General of the Atlantic Alliance between 2001 and 2007. His mandate was mostly carried out in the strategic-political industrial area and in the relations with sensitive countries such as those in the Gulf and the Southern Mediterranean. He is the author of the books: The road to Kabul (II Mulino-Arel, 2009); A political journey without maps. Diversity and future in the Greater Middle East (Rubbettino, 2013); and NATO and the Middle East: The Making of a Partnership (New Academia Publishing, 2018).

https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_52927.htm.

² https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_52956.htm.



MAX A.L.T. NIELSEN Commandant, NATO Defense College,

WELCOME REMARKS

Ladies and gentlemen, buongiorno, and welcome to this significant celebration of the 75th Anniversary of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. It is an honour to be here representing NATO. Today, we unite not only just as Allies but also as steadfast partners who have shared 75 years of strategic cooperation, enduring peace, and mutual respect.

We convene to reflect on a journey that commenced in 1949, when our nations committed to safeguarding the freedom and security of all its members through political and military means. This commitment stands as a testament to NATO's foundational principles; despite various challenges, we have thrived and adapted to an ever-changing global landscape. While the world has changed dramatically since NATO's inception, the Alliance has remained a cornerstone of international stability.

Our ability to evolve and respond to new threats has been nothing short of remarkable. From the Cold War era to the challenges of today's global environment, NATO has remained steadfast in its commitment to protect democracy, promote stability, and maintain peace. As we look to the future, let us reaffirm our commitment to strengthening our bonds and continuing our cooperation.

Together, we will confront any challenges that arise with the same courage and unity that have characterised our Alliance for the past 75 years. As we gather here today, we reflect not only on the illustrious history of NATO but also on the dynamic future that lies ahead. In navigating the complexities of the 21st century, NATO's role remains indispensable in fostering global stability and peace.

In the years to come, NATO will continue to innovate and adapt to the new challenges facing our world. From cyber threats to the effects of climate change, our Alliance will expand its capabilities to address and mitigate these risks. The integration of advanced technology and the strengthening of cyber defences will be paramount in maintaining the security of our member nations.

Furthermore, the expansion of our partnerships, both within and beyond our

current borders, will enhance collaborative efforts and reinforce our collective defence. Strengthening ties with global institutions and emerging powers will be crucial in promoting worldwide peace and stability. As we prepare for the future, let us reaffirm our commitment to the principles of unity and collective defence. These principles have guided us through past challenges and will illuminate our path through future uncertainties. Together, we will ensure that NATO continues to be a beacon of hope, stability, and security for all its members.

I extend my sincere gratitude to all the attendees for being here today to commemorate this significant milestone. Your presence reaffirms the strength of our partnership and the enduring value of NATO in our lives and in the lives of future generations. Let us move forward with confidence and determination toward a secure and prosperous future for all our nations.

Lieutenant General Max A.L.T. Nielsen joined the armed forces in 1983 and graduated from the Royal Danish Air Force Academy in 1988. In 1996, he completed the US Air Command and Staff College in Montgomery, Alabama, and then served as Chief of the Air Operations Branch at Tactical Air Command Denmark. In 2002, he became Chief of Operations Branch at Defence Command Denmark. In 2005, he was deployed to Baghdad as Military Assistant to the Deputy Commander of NATO Training Mission – Iraq. In 2011, he graduated from the NATO Defense College (NDC) and served as Deputy Danish Military Representative to NATO in Brussels. He then became Senior Military Assistant to the Chairman of the NATO Military Committee and Head of the CMC's Office. Promoted to Major General in 2014, he held several senior positions before becoming Vice Chief of Defence in 2017 and Danish Military Representative to NATO and the EU in 2019. In July 2023, he became the 32nd Commandant of the NATO Defense College. His leadership emphasises hard work, engagement, listening, and clear communication. General Nielsen has received numerous honours, including Commander of the Order of Dannebrog.



WOLF KRUG

Director, Institute for European and Transatlantic Dialogue, Hanns Seidel Stiftung, Munich

WELCOME REMARKS

Ladies and Gentlemen, on behalf of the Hanns-Seidel-Stiftung foundation, it is a pleasure to welcome you to this significant occasion. I would like to express my gratitude to all distinguished international experts for taking the time to join us in celebrating NATO's 75^{th} Anniversary on the eve of the NATO Summit in Washington.

Additionally, I wish to extend my appreciation to our esteemed partners at this conference for their cooperation. First and foremost, the NATO Defence College Foundation which has provided invaluable expertise to the Hanns Seidel Stiftung Foundation in this occasion. Furthermore, it is a privilege to host this conference in this remarkable venue. I thank Admiral Ottaviani for his generous hospitality.

Unlike Italy or France, Germany was not one of the 12 founding member states of NATO. Chancellor Konrad Adenauer formally signed the accession of the Federal Republic of Germany to the North Atlantic Treaty in 1955, ten years after the conclusion of the Second World War. During the Cold War, the Alliance's territory was defended along the former inner German border. Germany functioned as a frontline state, akin to Poland today. NATO is vital for both Germany and Europe, as it provides a framework for collective security framework, deterring potential aggression and ensuring stability. For Germany, NATO membership enhances national security and enables the country to contribute to international peacekeeping and crisis management efforts.

Europe benefits from NATO's integrated defence structure, which fosters political unity, military cooperation, and the capacity to respond collectively to global threats. While Germany has committed to increasing its defence spending to meet NATO's target of 2% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP)¹, there remains room for improvement in fulfilling this commitment and enhancing its military capabilities. Given the current security challenges facing the region, it is imperative

¹ https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_49198.htm.

that all European partners, particularly Germany, assume greater responsibility within the collective defence alliance. It is because of this conviction that the Hanss Seidel Stiftung Foundation is supporting today's event.

For those who may not be familiar with the Hanns Seidel Stiftung Foundation, we are a political foundation based in Munich, Bavaria. We are a hybrid organisation that integrates the characteristics of a think tank, a public policy trust, and a private diplomacy institution. Our core values are encapsulated in our motto: «In the Service of Democracy, Peace and Development». We have been active in the international arena for over 40 years and are currently engaged in more than 60 countries around worldwide.

Two years ago, it was my privilege to inaugurate our office here in Rome, and I am particularly pleased that we are now celebrating this significant Anniversary together with esteemed experts and partners under the patronage of the President of the Republic. This celebration serves as an opportunity to emphasise the solidarity and shared values that unite NATO member states. It reminds us that the security of one member state is intrinsically linked to the security of all. In the face of new and complex threats, NATO's role is more crucial than ever. Let us utilise this 75th Anniversary of NATO as an occasion to reaffirm our commitment to working together for a more secure, stable, and peaceful world.

Dr **Wolf Krug** is the Director of the Institute for European and Transatlantic Dialogue at the Hanns Seidel Stiftung Foundation in Munich. His professional work centres on promoting dialogue and cooperation between Europe and the transatlantic community, particularly in the context of European integration, geopolitical dynamics, and security policy. Dr Krug gained significant experience in foreign policy and international relations. He has been involved in various initiatives that focus on fostering understanding and partnerships across regions, including Southern Europe, the Mediterranean, and transatlantic relations.



ALESSANDRO POLITI Director, NATO Defense College Foundation, Rome

POLITICAL SUMMARY

The conference, despite the fast change of events and the flurry of news before the US presidential inauguration, shows essential trends for the Alliance that need to be tackled with political clarity and effectiveness.

The first issue that emerged was internal political cohesion, beyond the clear success of a political-military alliance enduring three quarters of a century and adapting beyond the world war for which it was conceived. Today, 36 years after the end of the Cold War, we begin to be aware that it was in reality the III World War, externalised outside the Global North of the free world and the Soviet bloc (covered by nuclear deterrence), fought without mercy and with an estimated toll of 20-30 million people. The wars in Ukraine, Nagorno-Karabakh, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Israel, Libya, Sudan, Yemen and several African countries are a stark reminder about the costs of non-deterrence and non-dialogue.

And yet, the fading political memory of the past horrors and the complacency about the vigilance for democracy and freedom, under a rule-based international security, create cracks within NATO's political fabric. Despite the impulse given by Putin's invasion of Ukraine, the EU-NATO debate on security and defence risks to stall. In the past Madeleine Albright's three Ds (no duplication, no discrimination, no de-linking, then translated into decoupling) were intended to stave off improbable European break-outs; two decades after it seems that the idea of de-linking has migrated away from Brussels, that duplication is carried by procurement outside the Euro-Atlantic armament framework and that discrimination is employed from too many important countries in a complex 32-members organisation.

In this difficult situation, leadership, commitment and political will are the obvious ingredients, together with an appropriate internal strategic communication, to keep united the Alliance, but in too many governments they are either missing or distorted. European allies have shown unity, commitment, determination, but all the Russian hybrid operations are less damaging than the usual sniping on burden

sharing: one ally spends just 0,86% of its defence/GDP ratio in Europe, while all others spend more, but appear to give less. A transactional, bookkeeping approach has nothing to do with political and strategic considerations, even less with shared values, but it fosters resentment and easily exploitable divisions. If one adds the very worrying internal erosion experienced by many democracies, one can gauge the challenge that the allies are up to.

Operationally the needs are since long recognised: rebuilding a credible conventional leg of deterrence, preserving the credibility of nuclear deterrence by France and UK against an impending loss of technological edge and spending better by standardising the equipment among European allies.

Ukraine is the litmus test not of NATO itself, but of the possibility to rebuild a functioning security system in Europe and, by extension, Eurasia; it needs to be faced with realism. The time for Ukrainian offensives is over, the military priority is a robust defence-in-depth to avoid further Russian advances and the time for diplomacy is ripe, already at a very high cost. The next question, before any practical execution of an "open door" policy, is how to extend credible and affordable security guarantees to Ukraine, without risking an escalation to war. A freezing of the conflict or a longer peace are not impossible, but they depend also from guarantees outside article 5 of the Atlantic Treaty.

It is interesting to see that, after a long neglect of the region by NATO, the same issue comes forward in the area defined as Southern Neighbourhood, which includes Mediterranean Dialogue and Istanbul Cooperation Initiative countries. While some North-Eastern analysts became fixated on hypothetic Russian attacks against the Baltic countries since 2008, by 2011 Russia has outflanked NATO in the South, starting with Libya and Syria and continuing ruthlessly in Africa vis-à-vis a crumbling Françafrique.

The Gulf countries, today the pivotal strategic constellation in the area adjacent to the Levant and North Africa, appreciate the progress done since 20 years, but they also are unsatisfied with the current NATO multi-bilateral approach. What they envisage is a NATO Plus" arrangement, under which, NATO and the GCC countries could work towards a security umbrella agreement, while avoiding full membership in the Alliance, and, possibly in the future, extend this accord to Israel, in order to form a more comprehensive regional security architecture.

Ar-Riyadh with its Gulf partners feels the urge of fundamentally rethink existing approaches. Democracy and international institutions are increasingly questioned, and universal values appear to be faltering: it is high time to reconsider how one can ensure safety and stability on a global scale, build closer alliances, and address the Gulf's specific needs for defensive capabilities to protect them. In short, a tangible security guarantee, towards which the NATO liaison office may be a first step in the right direction.

Alessandro Politi is a global political and strategic analyst with 30 years of experience. Director since 12 years of the NATO Defense College Foundation. He teaches geopolitics and intelligence at the SIOI. He was senior researcher for the Italian MoD on Latin America, leading also the Global Outlook project. He has worked with four Defence Ministers, while consulting for other three major decision makers and several governmental bodies. Mr Politi has published in various roles 50 books on strategic and security matters. Latest book: "Goodbye Merkel". His last report "IHEDN, Pole Luxembourg, Quelles postures de l'Union Européenne, jeu d'échecs ou jeu de rôles, vis-à-vis de l'Alliance du Traité de l'Atlantique Nord?". Most recent podcast: "NATO and China in the Global Disorder", achieving 10.000 listeners in one week.







CARLO MUSSO Head, Strategic Studies, Leonardo Company, Rome

SPECIAL INTERVENTION

To begin, I would like to extend the greetings of Leonardo Chairman Stefano Pontecorvo, who regrets that he is unable to attend this conference in person, as he is currently in Washington, D.C., alongside leaders of major defence companies from NATO countries. It is a privilege to represent him here today, particularly as Leonardo is one of the founding members of the NATO Defense College Foundation. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Ambassador Minuto-Rizzo for his outstanding commitment to the Foundation over the past year and to acknowledge the work of the Director Alessandro Politi and the entire Foundation team.

Since the end of the Second World War, the defence industry and the Atlantic Alliance have followed a shared path to secure stability and security to the West and beyond. Along this journey, they have supported each other's growth and adapted to evolving challenges on the global stage. Through continuous technical advancements, the defence industry has played a critical role in enhancing the operational capabilities of the Alliance and its member states, enabling NATO to respond effectively to a range of complex crisis over time by maintain technological superiority in its military assets.

This is evident today in Ukraine, where, with the weapon systems provided in the years following the Russian annexation of Crimea (and to an even greater extent after the invasion on the 24th of February 2022) a much smaller nation has successfully resisted what was once considered the world's second-largest military power!. Additionally, NATO's increasingly rigorous interoperability standards, essential to building a cohesive, multi-national military force, have driven defence companies within member states towards stronger, more effective industrial collaborations and technological sharing. This impetus has proven invaluable in fostering the necessary level of cooperation within a highly competitive environment, where private

¹ https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_192648.htm.

companies, understandably, seek to secure advantages in innovation and market share.

Achieving the right balance between competition and collaboration is essential to maintaining a Western Defence industrial base that can outperform international competitors while also developing supranational programmes beyond the capabilities of individual state. NATO and Leonardo, in fact, share a parallel history, with Leonardo celebrating its own $75^{\rm th}$ Anniversary last year.

Together, NATO and Leonardo have traversed the latter half of the 20th century, confronting the Cold War, the dissolution of the Soviet Union, and the conflict in the former Yugoslavia, as well as the first quarter of the 21st century, marked by 9/11 and the subsequent war on terrorism, the global economic crisis, the pandemic, and most recently, Russia's invasion of Ukraine, followed by the tragic events of October 7 and the ensuring conflict in Gaza. In a sense, it can be said that NATO and Leonardo have developed in tandem. NATO has steadily expanded its membership, increasingly integrating European nations, with the addition of former Warsaw Pact countries, and more recently, Sweden and Finland².

Leonardo has transformed from a conglomerate of national companies involved in diverse sectors – such as aeronautics, defines, transport, energy, and electronics – into a high-tech multinational focused on aerospace, Defense, and security. Over these 75 years, NATO and Leonardo have frequently intersected in areas of programmes and technologies. Leonardo has supplied NATO with most of its air and missile defence radars³, developed the NATO Computer Incident Response Capability-Full Operational Capability (NCIRC-FOC)⁴ to enhance Alliance cybersecurity, established the satellite ground segment on European territory, and actively participated in the 30-year NATO Alliance Ground Surveillance (AGS) programme⁵.

To be truly significant, anniversaries should not solely commemorate the past but also serve as a moment for reflection to shape the future. At last year's European Union Summit, a strong consensus emerged within the Alliance on the necessity of maintaining a technological edge over adversaries. In pursuit of this goal, NATO has recently established key mechanisms to foster the development of emerging and disruptive technologies by within the defence sector.

² https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_49212.htm.

 $^{^3}$ https://www.leonardo.com/en/press-release-detail/-/detail/19-06-2023-nato-assegna-leonardo-contratto-radar-difesa-aerea-rat-31-dlm.

https://uk.leonardo.com/en/news-and-stories-detail/-/detail/defending-nato-in-the-cybersphere.

⁵ https://uncrewed.leonardo.com/it/products/nato-ags.

The NATO Innovation Fund (NIF)⁶ and the Defence Innovation Accelerator for the North Atlantic (DIANA)⁷ were created with the purpose of promoting collaboration among traditional defence industries, dual-use start-ups, and venture capital funds, as well as financing the early stages of emerging technologies of interest to NATO. These initiatives focus on areas such as artificial intelligence, big data processing, quantum technologies, autonomy, advanced materials, energy propulsion, and space. Leonardo shares these objectives and is fully aligned with these strategic priorities.

The recently introduced 2024-2028 Industrial Plan⁸ outlines a strategy to reinforce core business areas through targeted investments in research and development, particularly within technologically advanced sectors. These include digital continuum, cloud computing, computational power, resilient broadband communication, security-by-design, and artificial intelligence. Recent events have prompted numerous EU member states to increase their defines budgets. Reflecting this trend, the share of European countries' contributions to NATO's overall defence spending has risen from 27% in 2021 – prior to Russia's invasion of Ukraine – to 32% this year⁹.

The advancement of a cohesive European defines strategy has also gained substantial momentum. The EU is rolling out a series of initiatives aimed at supporting research, development, and innovation within the defence and security sectors, while also working to standardise operational requirements and harmonise military procurement at the national level. If effectively sustained, this process could drive integration within the EU's defines industrial base, enhancing both its efficiency and competitiveness.

Strengthening the European pillar within NATO, particularly from an industrial perspective, is essential in today's climate of significant uncertainty, where even democratic institutions face challenges in managing nationalist and populist pressures. A stronger, more cohesive European defence framework will enhance NATO's capacity to fulfil its role as the guarantor of collective security. At the same time, a modern and dependable European defines industry will equip NATO with the tools and capabilities necessary to address both current and future challenges effectively.

⁶ https://www.nif.fund/.

⁷ https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_216199.htm.

⁸ https://www.leonardo.com/it/press-release-detail/-/detail/12-03-24-industrial-plan.

⁹ https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_67655.htm.

Mr Carlo Musso holds a degree in Theoretical Physics from the University of Genoa and began his career at the National Research Council (CNR), where he served as Calibration Manager for the EPIC consortium. He later joined the Italian Space Agency (ASI), where he coordinated scientific programs, among other roles. Mr Musso has been a contract professor at the LUISS Business School and a member of the executive committee of the Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI). He is currently Head of Strategic Analysis at Leonardo and a Board Member of the NATO Defense College Foundation.

How can NATO
ensure that political will
and commitment from
member states remain
consistent?

What steps can be taken to improve the EU's strategic capacity and coordination in defence matters?



CHAIR



DANIELA IRRERA

Professor of International
Relations, CASD, Rome

Dr Daniela Irrera is a Full Professor of Political Science at the CASD in Rome, previously an Associate Professor of International Relations at the University of Catania. Dr Irrera has held leadership roles in various academic organisations, including ECPR and ISA. An accomplished scholar, she is the editor of multiple journals and book series and has received prestigious fellowships such as Fulbright and DAAD. Her research spans international relations, global terrorism, and civil society. Dr Irrera has authored numerous publications and contributed to prominent international academic initiatives.

In the name of collective security,
NATO members must increase
their commitment,
coordinate their actions and
set aside individual interests.



THOMAS ERNDL Deputy Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, Bundestag, Berlin

THE FORGING OF A NEW ALLIANCE CONSENSUS IN AN ENLARGED NATO

NATO remains the cornerstone of our freedom, making it essential not only to celebrate our achievements but also to anticipate and prepare for future challenges. NATO's founding mission was to counter the threat posed by the USSR (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), Communist Europe, and the Warsaw Pact: a mission proven effective by the end of the Cold War. Following this period, numerous Central and Eastern European countries expressed a strong desire to join NATO due to the ongoing threat of Russian imperialism, which remains a significant, if not the greatest, challenge today.

The principles of NATO remains highly relevant today, and it is imperative that we promote these ideals and ensure they are effectively aligned with future challenges. To that end, I propose three key elements for our advancement: *leadership*, *commitment*, and *political will*. We must communicate signals of our strength without compromise. This political will, leadership, and commitment must be evident, particularly considering the challenges we face from countries such as Slovakia, Hungary and Turkey, that may not always contribute fully to conveying unity and strength within the Alliance.

Given these challenges, it is even more crucial that the larger members states convey strong signals of unity, particularly the United States, especially as we anticipate potential challenges starting in November. As a German, I must critically acknowledge that we too need to contribute meaningfully to this strength proposition. While our government recognises the necessity of the *Zeitenwende*¹ and the need to increase investment, which is entirely accurate, it is essential that these commitments translate into tangible actions in real life and politics. There is often a

¹ "Pivotal time" is a new German word (2022) indicating a fundamental change in German and European defence and security policy marked by the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

discrepancy between governmental rhetoric and actions, even though we have made significant progress, particularly when considering our historical context and past defensive behaviour. Nonetheless, there remains room for improvement, and it is vital to ensure that our words and actions are fully aligned. Therefore, I reiterate the importance of leadership, commitment, and political will.

Moving forward, NATO's effectiveness cannot be measured solely by the quantity of weapons, tanks, and other military assets; it also encompasses how we transport and demonstrate this strength. Thus, strategic communication is paramount. We must convey our unity not only within each member state but also across the Alliance as a whole. The internal messaging should emphasise that NATO serves as our overarching insurance, necessitating continued investment and commitment. It is essential to incorporate this aspect into our future framework, ensuring that NATO maintains a robust presence in strategic communication both within member states and in addressing external challenges and adversaries.

Thirdly, I assert that Ukraine's NATO membership is essential for our European collective security. There can be no arrangements that excludes Ukraine's eventual accession to NATO. I recognise that the current reality is complex and that this Summit may not be the appropriate moment to issue further signals regarding this matter. However, we must ensure that the pathway towards Ukraine's NATO membership is actively reinforced; failing to do so jeopardises stability and peace throughout Europe, and thus, no compromise on this issue is acceptable.

Ultimately, while all politics may be local, our fundamental security should not be a platform for populism or merely responding to the immediate preferences of the public. It necessitates a long-term vision, sustained stability, and consistent contributions from all member states. Therefore, we must all stand firmly behind the NATO Treaty and its values. NATO serves as our collective security assurance, and it is imperative that we communicate this to our citizens.

As we engage in discussion among experts, it is essential to consider whether the citizens of all our member countries truly comprehend the significance of NATO. In Germany, for instance, there are regions where public conviction may be lacking, necessitating greater efforts to communicate the Alliance's value. This challenge is further compounded by the rise of populist, anti-NATO parties in several countries, which have gained electoral success and are disseminating scepticism regarding NATO. Thus, effectively communicating NATO's importance to the public is crucial for the Alliance's future and serves as the foundation for all our political and expert endeavours.

MP (MdB) **Thomas Erndl** completed his education at the LLR secondary school in Osterhofen, followed by training as an energy electronics technician. After finishing his studies, Mr Erndl served in the military, becoming a time-limited serviceman and completing training as a reserve officer. He then pursued further studies in electrical engineering, specializing in microelectronics. Since 2002, he has served as a councillor in his hometown of Künzing, and since 2020, as a district councillor for Deggendorf. In 2017, he was elected to the Bundestag. He is a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee and serves as the spokesperson for the CSU Ostbayernrunde.



JAMIE SHEA
Professor, Strategy and Security Institute,
University of Exeter

REDEFINING NATO'S POSTURE UNDER THE NEW SECRETARY GENERAL

As I considered what to convey today, I found myself revisiting Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. There is a scene in which the ghost of Banquo, whom Macbeth and his wife have murdered, appears at Macbeth's coronation banquet, utterly disrupting the celebration. I reference this moment as it seems apt for NATO as it prepares for its Summit in Washington tomorrow. Four figures, in various capacities, will make their presence felt: one, Zelensky, will be there in person, while three others — Trump, who still likes to call himself president, Putin, and Xi — will loom in spirit. Much like Banquo's ghost, these sometimes-uninvited figures are the ones NATO must consider most carefully in the Summit is to achieve success.

What would be a viable NATO strategy to bring a more optimistic outlook from Zelensky? Given that this Summit cannot offer Ukraine a concrete accession date, defined conditions, or a clear timeline, it is essential for NATO to develop a coherent strategy to address this fundamental dilemma. On the one hand, the Alliance cannot invite Ukraine to join while it is still at war, as that would mean entering a direct conflict with Russia. However, stating that NATO membership is only possible in peacetime essentially gives Putin an incentive to prolong the war. So, what path forward can be established?

Furthermore, it is crucial now (at a time when NATO is finally establishing a command in Wiesbaden¹ to oversee the daily coordination of military support and training) to ensure this initiative becomes a transformative step. How can NATO elevate support levels beyond what has been provided thus far? Reducing Ukraine's

 $^{^{\}rm 1}$ https://www.euronews.com/2024/07/15/nato-launches-command-centre-for-ukraine-ingermany.

reliance on its current 140 different weapons systems to a more manageable and interoperable arsenal could significantly improve maintenance efficiency. The Ukrainian army is becoming fatigued, having been entrenched in this struggle for over two and a half years.

How can NATO swiftly train and deploy half a million new Ukrainian troops? In the short term, efforts must focus on enabling Ukraine, over the summer and autumn, to repeal Russian advances and regain a strong defensive position. But how do we transition from this immediate objective to the longer-term aim of transitioning Ukraine's military into a fully Western-equipped and NATO-standardised force? This would require through integration into NATO structures. Encouragingly, there is progress on air defence, with the delivery of seven Patriot systems², alongside additional funding discussions.

An essential step will be moving from the current \$40 billion in annual funding level to a multi-year financial commitment, establishing a reliable bridge to Ukraine's future within NATO³. The Summit will be a success if it diminishes Putin's confidence by demonstrating NATO's robust capacity to defend every inch of its territory against any form of Russian aggression. But clearly there's still work to be done.

Last year in Vilnius, General Cavoli introduced his Regional Defense Plan[†], which major exercises like Steadfast Defender, with Italian participation, have tested for NATO's implement capacity. These plans assign specific roles and capabilities to each member country. However, they also conclude that NATO requires an additional 35 to 50 brigades, expanded air defence, enhanced cyber defence, increased artillery, and greater data-processing capabilities⁵. The question now is how to translate these requirements into a comprehensive set of capabilities packages for NATO. Such packages could serve as the impetus for establishing a new spending target – potentially 2,5% – to be discussed in the Netherlands next year.

Moreover, to counter Russian influence, NATO and the EU must strengthen their collective resilience against hybrid threats, which remains a significant challenge. Over the past year, approximately 20 distinct Russian hybrid warfare campaigns have been directed at the West. Effectively responding to these multifaced threats would send a clear message of strength and diminish President Putin's confidence in

² https://www.ft.com/content/89fe9d6b-3a0f-42a5-af50-cff7f457a126.

 $^{^3}$ https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/nato-members-agree-40-billion-euro-financial-pledge-ukraine-diplomats-say-2024-07-03/.

⁴ https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/nato-must-win-up-front-but-be-re-ady-to-win-long-in-modern-warfare-says-general-christopher-cavoli/.

 $^{^5\} https://www.reuters.com/world/nato-will-need-35-50-extra-brigades-under-new-defence-plans-source-says-2024-07-08/.$

his ability to destabilise NATO states.

In Washington, NATO will address a key aspect of defence: the protection of underwater maritime cables. Recently, in the presidential debate, President Trump appeared indifferent when Biden questioned him on his commitment to keeping the USA in NATO. How do we ensure that Trump, and by extension the USA, remains fully engaged with NATO in the future? A significant factor lies in Europe's sustained efforts over the past two and a half years to strengthen its defence capabilities and enhance European defence cooperation. By continuing these initiatives, Europe can demonstrate its commitment to collective security and solidify transatlantic ties. Trump values strength, and thus a strong Europe is essential for him to recognise NATO's importance. Contrary to common belief, European strategic autonomy does not weaken the transatlantic link but rather reinforces it.

It is my hope that the new European leadership, once in place, will embrace the concept of Eurobonds to finance increased production capabilities in Europe's defence industry. This includes advancing key programmes, especially the European Defense Industrial Strategy (EDIS)⁶, and enabling public financing options through the European Investment Bank (EIB)⁷. Reducing stringent criteria, such as those on environmental sustainability that often restrict private investment in the European defence sector, would also be advantageous. Additionally, continued support for the European Peace Facility (EPF)⁸ in helping Ukraine will only serve to strengthen NATO. And if the worst ever did happen, at least Europe would not be left defenceless.

Finally, President Xi: how can we encourage a more cooperative stance? Why focus on President Xi? Because the financial and material support for Putin's war effort in Ukraine largely comes from Asia, not Europe. A recent CIA report indicates that Russia receives 70% of its machine tools and 90% of its microelectronics from China⁹, including essential components like nitrocellulose for missile propellants, various microprocessors, and other critical electronic parts. The growing association between China and Russia is increasingly enabling Putin's ambitions.

We are now also facing the emerging alliance between North Korea and Russia. The 11.000 containers North Korea has supplied to Russia 10 contain more

 $^{^6\} https://defence-industry-space.ec.europa.eu/eu-defence-industry/edis-our-common-defence-industrial-strategy_en.$

⁷ https://european-union.europa.eu/institutions-law-budget/institutions-and-bodies/sear-ch-all-eu-institutions-and-bodies/european-investment-bank-eib_en.

⁸ https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/european-peace-facility/.

⁹ https://www.gisreportsonline.com/r/china-russia-america/.

 $^{^{10}\,}https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/10/24/reports-of-north-korea-training-in-russia-to-fight-in-ukraine-serious-us.$

ammunition than all that Europe and the US have provided to Ukraine over the past two years. This is, indeed, a sobering reality. Of course, leaders from Asia-Pacific nations, NATO partners, will be present in Washington. But how can NATO increasingly align European and Asian security within a unified strategic framework?

To conclude, both as a NATO historian and as someone who has spent many years working with NATO, I would be honoured to celebrate the achievements of the past 75 years. However, these past accomplishments hold value only if we ensure a successful future. The legacy of the past is secured only through the success of the next 75 years, and it is my hope that the Washington Summit will help move us toward the goal.

Dr Jamie Shea is a distinguished expert in international relations and security policy, with a long and impactful career at NATO and in academia. He served as NATO's Deputy Assistant Secretary General for Emerging Security Challenges until his retirement in September 2018. Dr Shea gained global recognition during the 1999 Kosovo War as NATO's spokesperson, a role in which he communicated complex military and political developments to the world. Shea's career at NATO spanned nearly four decades, during which he held various high-level positions, including: Deputy Assistant Secretary General for External Relations and Director of Information and Press. In addition to his NATO service, Dr Shea is a seasoned academic.



AMÉLIE ZIMA

Head, European and Transatlantic Programme, Institut Français des Relations Internationales, Paris

THE EUROPEAN PILLAR: FROM WISH TO CAPABILITIES

NATO's European pillar will be my topic and to start it is worth recalling that, during the Cold War, there was no formal relationship between NATO and the EU. After the Cold War ended, NATO faced a moment of uncertainty. Should it continue its mission or should it dissolve, due to the collapse of the USSR (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics)?

In the 1990s, a formal link was established with the EU, which proved valuable for NATO, helping to reaffirm its relevance in a post-Cold War Europe. This partnership demonstrated NATO's continuing role in European security by engaging a new partner as significant as the EU. At that time, there was much discussion around a European Security and Defence Identity (ESDI), combined joint forces, and "separable but not separate" capabilities¹.

There was also the Berlin Plus agreement², but in practical terms, this cooperation yielded limited outcomes. And it all ultimately resulted in very little, primarily due to the complex relationship between Cyprus and Turkey, which has complicated NATO-EU cooperation significantly. Furthermore, if we assess the EU's defence effort, 25 years after the Helsinki Summit, European defence can be seen as largely ineffective: a conclusion I take no pleasure in acknowledging. This lack of progress is evident in the EU's consistent reduction in its ambitions. At Helsinki (2001), the commitment was to maintain a force of 60.000 soldiers for a full range of missions, including combat operations. Now, however, the goal has shifted to a force of merely 5.000 soldiers, with a primary focus on capacity-building tasks (2024)³.

 $^{^{\}rm 1}$ https://www.nato.int/docu/review/articles/2000/07/01/esdi-separable-but-not-separate/index.html.

 $^{^2\} https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2004_2009/documents/dv/berlinplus_/berlinplus_en.pdf.$

³ https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/eu-strengthens-military-capabilities_en#:~:text=In%20

The EU has consistently lowered its ambitions in defence, struggling not only to coordinate but also to effectively develop armed forces. However, it has made strides in financing and advancing the European defence industry. Perhaps it is time to recognise that EU member states may not truly aim at developing robust armed forces within the EU framework. Instead, they seem to favour building and cooperating through NATO. With this in mind, it may be unproductive for the EU to pursue the development of military capacities independently. The recent European conflict has exposed significant gaps within European armies, underscoring the necessity for enhanced cooperation among European nations and revealing stark disparities between them. For instance, twelve European countries currently lack tanks altogether.

Currently, fourteen European countries have no fighter aircraft, underscoring the need for cooperation to develop the necessary capabilities. Collectively, Europe does possess tanks, artillery, ships, and submarines. However, it lacks key enablers such as satellites, tanker aircraft, and surveillance aircraft. Europe's combined defence spending, slightly above \$300 billion⁴, is relatively modest compared to the US, which allocates \$850 billion to defence⁵. Given this lower expenditure, European nations must cooperate more effectively. Finally, Europe must recognise the shift in US grand strategy — a change that is not recent but continues to impact the transatlantic relationship. The US pivot to Asia is not a response to recent events or specific administrations, but rather a strategic shift initiated during the Obama administration. For over a decade now, Europe has not been the central focus of US foreign policy, and European leaders must recognise an act accordingly.

Lastly, when considering the development of a European pillar within NATO, we must address the structure of NATO command. Currently, three of the six commands – Izmir (LANDCOM, General Darryl A. Williams)⁶, Ramstein (AIRCOM, General James B. Hecker)⁷ and Naples (JFC, Admiral Stuart B. Munsch)⁸ – are led by Americans, in addition to the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR)⁹ position. Greater European involvement in these kay NATO roles could facilitate a more balanced alliance. If the USA expect Europe to assume more responsibility, it is essential to grant Europe a stronger presence within NATO command structure.

the%20wake%20of%20current,marks%20a%20shift%20in%20politico%2D.

 $^{^4\} https://www.intereconomics.eu/contents/year/2024/number/4/article/the-challenges-of-defence-spending-in-europe.html.$

⁵ https://www.armed-services.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/fy24_ndaa_conference_executive_summary1.pdf.

⁶ https://lc.nato.int/about-us/mission.

⁷ https://ac.nato.int/about.

⁸ https://jfcnaples.nato.int/page5714813.

⁹ https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_50110.htm.

A Research Fellow at IFRIS's Security Studies Centre since March 2024, **Amélie Zima** earned her PhD in political science from Paris-Nanterre University. Her dissertation, which examined NATO's first post-Cold War enlargement, received the prestigious first prize from the Institut des Hautes Etudes de Défense Nationale (IHEDN). Her research primarily focuses on NATO and the Polish political system. Dr Zima served as a research associate at the French Centre for Research in Social Sciences in Prague and at the Institute of Political Studies within the Polish Academy of Sciences. She also held a postdoctoral position at the French Centre of Warsaw University. Most recently, Dr Zima was a researcher at the Institute for Strategic Research at the Military School. In addition to her research roles, she has taught political science, European studies, and international relations at Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, Paris-Nanterre, and Sciences Po.



VINCENZO CAMPORINI Former Italian Defence Chief of Staff, Istituto Affari Internazionali. Rome

THE ALLIANCE BETWEEN UNKNOWNS AND NEEDS

Speaking about the issue of NATO and the Alliance in this specific Anniversary, optimism would be preferred, but current circumstances make that challenging due to the numerous issues we face. The crucial point is that recognising our problems is the first step towards finding solutions. However, when we overlook these issues, solutions remain elusive. Let's start with capabilities.

There are areas where progress can be made, and where capabilities are already strong. But there are also areas where effective action is currently not possible. One key example is the production of weapon systems and ammunition. The production of these items is delayed due to a lack of confidence in consistent funding. This uncertainty discourages investment, as there is insufficient assurance of stable economic returns from these activities.

In our system, economic returns and dividends for stakeholders are essential. Therefore, the issue of funding must be addressed. The target of 2% or even 2,5% of GDP for defence spending are a step forward, but they are not the only factor to consider. It is not just about how much is spent, but how effectively those funds are utilised. In experience, significant room for improvement in the quality of spending remains, which continues to be inadequate. This inadequacy stems from each country prioritising its national interests and supporting its own industries.

The result is a lack of interoperability. While some efforts are underway to address this, true interoperability is still lacking. For example, the barrels of the Challenger and Leopard tanks differ and cannot use the same ammunition. This creates a serious operational challenge for users, such as the Ukrainians forces. The issue of funding also relates to burden-sharing, which remains a complex topic. It is true that the USA spend two to three times more on defence than many European countries, raising further questions about equitable contributions.

Here is another consideration: how much of European defence spending ultimately goes to American companies? This is a factor that should be taken into account, as it represents a political issue. From an operational perspective, this may be acceptable in some contexts. For example, the Starfighter was used by many European countries, allowing for true interoperability. There was an instance when I had to make an emergency landing in Belgium. The aircraft was parked and the following day I was able to take off again. This is no longer possible today. Perhaps some countries with the F-35 might have such capabilities, but the commonality of systems that we once enjoyed has been almost entirely lost. It is imperative that this interoperability is restored.

Finally, a couple of points. When political leaders speak of the concept of a "European army", the immediate reaction is to question: "Do we even have a NATO army?" because, the reality is, NATO does not have an army of its own. NATO has a command structure in which member countries contribute forces to carry out operations. A similar approach could be adopted in Europe. The key issue, however, is the absence of political leadership.

NATO is effective because its role and mission are clearly understood, whereas the EU lacks a clear sense of direction. A small but symbolic example of this is Operation Artemis in the Red Sea¹. After a prolonged debate, the EU recognised a shared problem that could be addressed using European military forces. It was then decided that under the European flag, naval vessels would be deployed to the region to manage the issue. While this operation was limited in scope, it demonstrates the kind of approach that could be replicated. Unfortunately, this example is not widely considered.

Furthermore, the issue of political cohesion must be addressed. As mentioned, challenges are currently faced within NATO itself. The situation with Hungary, for instance, cannot be ignored. It is surprising that no significant action has been taken beyond statements. Measures are available to encourage the Hungarian leadership to reassess its stance. For example, regading the Papa airbase², the siting of this base could be changed. No proposal or pressure has been exerted on countries that jeopardize NATO solidarity. This issue requires political will to address. Unfortunately, that political will may be in short supply.

 $^{^{1}\} https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/services/operations/military-operations/current-operations/operation-artemis.html.$

² https://installations.militaryonesource.mil/in-depth-overview/papa-air-base.

General **Vincenzo Camporini** is a distinguished Italian Air Force officer and defence expert who enrolled at the Italian Air Force Academy in 1965 and rose to the highest ranks of the Italian Armed Forces, serving as Chief of Staff of the Italian Air Force and Chief of Defence Staff. General Camporini holds degrees in Aeronautical Sciences and in International and Diplomatic Sciences. His academic work focuses on international relations, particularly the political-military dimensions of the EU and its use of military tools in external relations. Throughout his career, he also served as President of the Centre for Advanced Defence Studies (CASD) and Vice President of the Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI), contributing significantly to Italian military strategy and European defence policy.







ALESSANDRO ERCOLANI CEO, Rheinmetall Italy, Rome

SPECIAL INTERVENTION



In our view, three key areas are emerging that will redefine how the defence industry must adapt to the current landscape. First is the *business model*. The industry is evolving to support a vastly different environment. The second point concerns *technology* which now drives global strategies and is fundamentally reshaping the way militaries are preparing for the future. The third area involves *culture*, and I will provide some examples that may illustrate this effectively.



Starting with the first point, the industry challenge: previously, regions like the Middle East presented promising opportunities for the development of defence

industry. Today, however, the context has changed. The demand exists, and the market is in place, but dynamics are fundamentally different. How can we respond with the right supply and appropriate proposals to support the current situation?

The second point to address is delivery. For those familiar with the defence industry, standard delivery times for major projects have traditionally ranged from 24 to 50 months, as in the case of submarines. However, current contracts now demand delivery within days or just few months. The implications for business models are substantial, as these timelines require major adjustments.

The third point concerns the shift from suppliers to partners. Given the current demands, it is essential to recognise suppliers as strategic partners to effectively meet these new requirements. Finally, the focus on Return on Capital Employed (ROCE) remains crucial. To achieve a strong ROCE – a key metric for any financial analyst, especially in the context of the stock exchange – focus is typically placed on reducing inventory levels. However, to meet rapid-response demand, maintaining a higher inventory is now essential. This shift presents a significant departure from traditional market expectations and introduces new drivers shaping the current approach to business operations. Although we are not entirely in wartime, certain procedures now reflect a wartime urgency.



The defence industry is currently undergoing a major transformation. The capital market's perspective on the defence sector has shifted significantly over the last two years. For instance, Rheinmetall has emerged as a key winner, not as an isolated case but as an indicator of broader market trends. This evolution has attracted new investors, stakeholders, and targets, all of which must now be integrated into strategic planning.

Rheinmetall, among other countries, has been a significant supporter of the Ukrainian efforts. However, what happens if one of their systems experiences a failure in Ukraine? Under current employment contracts, civil personnel cannot be deployed to Ukraine. Consequently, the industry is working to establish

logistical centres in Poland to support operations in Ukraine from a closer location. The implications for the industry are substantial, as this requires creating new infrastructure. Poland, as a result, is becoming central to this logistics strategy, a shift in operational focus that represents a significant change from past practices. This approach is particularly new for Italy. For instance, if armaments are deployed on the battlefield, they may be exposed to chemical agents. When systems that have operated in such environment return to a factory for repairs, they must now follow newly established safety procedures to address contamination risks.

In Italy, industries are revising their health and safety procedures and restructuring the role of the *organismo di vigilanza*, the internal supervisory board responsible for overseeing these matters. This shift in governance is essential because, until now, Italian companies had not previously sent armament to an active battlefield. Drawing from the Italian experience, there are only a limited number of specialists and companies with the capability to detect chemical or nuclear hazards. This shortage is now a critical bottleneck, as it is essential to ensure that maintenance personnel can safely handle equipment that may have been exposed to such environments.

On the matter of delivery timelines, a recent example illustrates the shift in expectations. Italy has supplied Ukraine with air defence systems, covering both long-range and short-to medium-range capabilities. Typically, we anticipated a contract timeline of 24 to 36 months, but this was recently condensed to 12 months. The accelerated timeline was feasible primarily because the factory in Rome has sufficient inventory on hand. This example underscores how the current situation is fundamentally reshaping the defence industry's business model.



Moving on to the second major point: technology. It is evident that no single entity can achieve these goals alone. We aim to establish a unified European defence framework. European defence requires industrial integration and collaborative efforts. This goal somewhat contrasts with current European policies, where the competition commissioner is working to facilitate such integration. However, to

meet today's demands, it is clears that within the European NATO context, no nation or industry can independently bear the burden, as the required level of investment will be substantial.

Last week, we took a step forward with Leonardo S.p.A. In partnership with Leonardo in the land defence sector — offers an illustrative example. General Camporini may recall this context: initially, threads in Iraq came from below, specifically from improvised explosive devices (IEDs). The entire industry focused on addressing this issue, developing technology to protect tanks and other vehicles from threats originating beneath them.

Now, however, the threat comes from above, posing a completely different challenge. Europa has largely unprepared for this shift. The pressing need now is for counter-drone technology, specifically to detect and address low, slow-flying objects. Existing technology has proven highly effective in supporting current operations, but this has introduced a new challenge for the industry: the need to respond swiftly, delivering technological solutions and expertise to protect personnel in active operations.



And now, a note on culture, with a light-hearted reference. This is Marilyn Monroe, and she is assembling drones. During the Second World War, she worked in a drone manufacturing plant. Ms Monroe was a factory worker and at that time people faced similar challenges to those we encounter today. In 1942, as the US entered WWII, there was also the challenge of convincing the public that defence spending was justified. To address this, the US Army tasked its photographer with capturing images inside a military drone factory. Naturally, a photograph of a young Marilyn Monroe was included, and this image was subsequently featured in the Army's annual calendar. Within weeks, her popularity soared from a modest weekly income to one of widespread recognition and significant earnings.

This brings us back to the cultural aspect and its impact on defence budgeting today. People is familiar with the debate surrounding the 2% defence spending

target. Additionally, in interviews with potential recruits, we now hear individuals asking if joining the industry means they will be "going to war". While this may seem unusual to some, it reflects a new cultural perspective that significantly influences perceptions and the defence sector's approach to public engagement.



However, however, it is crucial to foster a heightened sensitivity and awareness of current global issues. In 2022, the most frequently searched terms in Italy included "Ukraine", "Queen Elizabeth" (following her passing that year), "Russia". One trending question on Google was "Why does Russia want to invade Ukraine?" which demonstrates the Italian public's strong focus on these specific topics.



In 2023, the trending searches shifted, with terms such as "Hamas", "abdominal diastasis" (interestingly), "kibbutz", and again questions related to conflict, such as "Why is there war?". Each time individuals search for these terms, related topics like air defence systems, the Patriot missile¹, Skynet², military strategy, and geopolitics

 $^{{}^{1} \}qquad https://www.rtx.com/raytheon/what-we-do/integrated-air-and-missile-defense/global-patriot-solutions.}$

 $^{^2} https://www.rheinmetall.com/en/products/air-defence/air-defence-systems/networked-air-defence-skynex. \\$

also come into focus. However, without sufficient understanding or contextual tools, people may develop inaccurate perceptions of these complex issues.

To summarise, it is evident that the three key areas – business model, technology, and culture – are transforming our industry. In this climate, alliances between state and industry, military and industry, and political institutions and industry are essential to guide public understanding in the right direction.

Mr Alessandro Ercolani is a seasoned executive with over 25 years of experience in publicly traded international groups in the industrial and defence sectors. He holds a degree in Electronic Engineering, an MBA from Bedfordshire University, an Executive MBA from LUISS Business School, and a Master's in Global Strategy and Security. He has authored numerous scientific articles and books. Mr Ercolani began his career at Bombardier in Canada before moving to Elettronica Spa. Since 2008, he has served as Technical Director of the EURODASS consortium, a partnership involving Leonardo, Airbus, Elettronica, and Indra. From 2014 to 2015, he was CEO of ELT GmbH, and in 2016, he became a Board Member of Sigen, a consortium between Elettronica and Thales Group. In 2018, he joined Iveco Defense as Vice President. Since 2020, Ercolani has been the CEO of Rheinmetall Italy. In 2022, he also assumed the role of CEO of Rheinmetall Immobilien Roma, overseeing the management of the company's industrial assets.

How can NATO
enhance its strategy
and partnerships
in the Southern
Region amid evolving
security threats?

How should NATO address southern partners' priorities and concerns for a stronger regional strategy?



CHAIR



IAN LESSER

Distinguished Fellow and

Advisor to the President,

The German Marshall Fund of

the United States, Brussels

Dr lan Lesser is a distinguished fellow and adviser to the president of the German Marshall Fund (GMF), where he leads the Brussels office and directs GMF South, a programme focused on Southern Europe, Türkiye, the Mediterranean, and transatlantic North-South relations. Dr Lesser previously served as GMF's acting president from 2020 to 2021. He also holds the Chair in Transatlantic Trade and Economy at the College of Europe in Bruges. Before joining GMF, he was a public policy scholar at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars and vice president at the Pacific Council on International Policy. From 1994 to 1995, he served on the U.S. Department of State's policy planning staff. Lesser holds a doctorate from the University of Oxford and has studied at the University of Pennsylvania, the London School of Economics, and the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy.

The strategy focused on the Southern Region has often taken a back seat, functioning as a subordinate theatre. While partnerships in the area have been highly visible, the question of a cohesive strategy remains unresolved.



AHMAD MASA'DEH

Former Secretary General, Union for the Mediterranean, Amman

THE DIALOGUE WITH ARAB COUNTRIES AFTER THE LAST CRISES IN THE LEVANT AND THE GULF

Allow me to begin by linking the narrative we have seen over the past 40 to 50 years with the fundamental principles of the North Atlantic Treaty, especially in light of current events unfolding in my region. Today, I will share thoughts that I believe reflect not only my own perspective but also those of many within Jordan, my country, at both political and grassroots levels.

In this opening statement, I wish to remind everyone, especially as we approach tomorrow's NATO summit in Washington, of Article 1 of the North Atlantic Treaty of 1949. This article reaffirms the commitment of NATO member states to settle international disputes peacefully, ensuring that neither international peace nor justice in endangered. I would like to underscore the importance of this commitment to uphold international justice. Similar principles have been enshrined in the United Nation Charter, in European Union treaties, and across various international forums.

The narrative that has emerged in the West since the end of World War II — centered on human rights, the right to life and liberty, freedom from slavery and torture, and the protection of human dignity — has been presented as a universal framework and extended to other regions, including ours. Yet, in light of the tragic events of the past ten months, particularly in Gaza, I must pose this question to NATO member states and to this distinguished audience: what remains of this universal value system that has been promoted by the North and the West and taught to, as some call us, the South?

I ask this question especially within the context of our session today, "How to Augment and Strengthen Partnerships with the South". Earlier, the Ambassador of Macedonia posed an important question: what shocking event would it take from the South to prompt greater engagement? My response is this: what more shocking

event do you need than what has occurred in Gaza over the past ten months? According to UN statistics, 35,000 lives has been lost, including women, children, and the elderly. More than 100,000 people have been injured or disabled. There is widespread famine, and destruction has been total.

And yet, we still question what would compel NATO member states to act. I am not speaking here of NATO as an institution, which we know often responds that it is a security organisation, not one tasked with political and humanitarian issues. Rather, I am addressing the member states individually — what else is needed for you to engage and bring an end to the atrocities of the past ten months? I will be candid: by remaining inactive or taking a "grey" approach, NATO member states risks complicity, whether actively or passively, in the events that have transpired in Gaza.

For example, consider the Biden administration's decision to accept a five-day truce to facilitate the release of Israeli hostages, while simultaneously refusing to enact a permanent ceasefire, thereby enabling the continuation of Palestinian deaths¹. A straightforward interpretation of this could be that Israeli lives are valued while Palestinian lives are disregarded. This brings us back to the very principles of the value system that the West has espoused: human rights, freedom, liberty, and democracy. The so-called "free world" has spoken about these ideals for decades, but I must ask again, what remains of this system in practice?

H.E. Dr **Ahmad Masa'deh** is a distinguished lawyer, diplomat, and government leader with extensive experience in international relations, public administration, and legal affairs. He is currently the Managing Partner at Khalaf Masa'deh LLC Attorneys & Counselors, a position he has held since April 2011. Based in Amman, Jordan, he has led the firm for over 13 years. H.E. Dr Masa'deh served as the Secretary General of the Union for the Mediterranean, where he worked to enhance cooperation and development across member states. Prior to that, he was Jordan's Ambassador to the European Union, NATO, Belgium, Norway, and Luxembourg. H.E. Dr Masa'deh held the role of Minister of Public Sector Reform in Jordan, focusing on modernizing governance and enhancing efficiency in public administration. He holds a PhD in Law from King's College London, an LL.M. in Law from the University of Virginia, and an LL.B. in Law with First Honours from the University of Jordan.

¹ https://www.politico.com/news/2023/11/21/biden-hostage-israel-hamas-war-00128351.



ABDULAZIZ SAGER President, Gulf Research Center, Jeddah

THE GCC AND NATO: WHAT KIND OF DEVELOPMENT FOR THE ICI?

In 2002, I initiated discussion on potential cooperation between the Gulf Cooperation Council and NATO during a conference organised by RAND and NATO at the Red Suite in Doha. I believe this contribution deserves some acknowledgement as an early step toward fostering a significant relationship between the Gulf states and NATO.

In 2004, I attended the Istanbul Summit where the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI) was launched: a welcome development. Since then, the Gulf Research Center has published an important magazine, Araa: Views from the Gulf. This month's issue focuses on "20 Years Post-ICI", reflecting on the outcomes of the initiative over the past two decades. Naturally, there are various perspective on this topic. Kuwait, for its part, has made notable contributions, especially in establishing the NATO-ICI Regional Centre (NIRC). Since day one, Kuwait's national security institutions have dedicated significant time and resources to this effort. The UAE, Bahrain, and Qatar have also shown strong commitment.

Looking ahead, we expect NATO to adopt a distinct strategy toward what it terms the "South". This is closely tied to the North Atlantic security, given that the Gulf remains crucial both as a source of energy and for its strategic location. Security challenges in the Red Sea, for instance, directly impact NATO member states. This underscores the strategic link between the Strait of Hormuz, Bab-el-Mandeb and the Red Sea, which are all vital to NATO's security interests. In light of NATO's 2030 vision, it may be time to reassess its strategy in the Gulf region.

The ICI has offered benefits in terms of training and cooperation, but the time has come to move beyond dialogue toward a framework for intelligence sharing and, especially, maritime security. For the Gulf, maritime security is of critical importance. To date, however, there has been more political dialogue than concrete action toward establishing a robust security framework.

At a recent NATO Academy Foundation conference, I discussed the concept of a "NATO Plus" arrangement. Under such a framework, NATO and the GCC countries could work towards a security umbrella agreement. This would include a key point of concern for NATO: the potential for expanding membership, which some may see as risking individual members' veto power over the accession of others. For example, should the GCC become part of a NATO Plus framework, this could potentially open the door for Israel to join as well, forming a more comprehensive regional security architecture. With Turkey already a NATO member, this model could offer a viable path forward, despite the complexities involved.

However, real progress requires more than political dialogue. We need to transition from discussion to concrete actions toward a security framework that truly provides the necessary support and protection. There is a prevailing sense that Gulf countries, such as Saudi Arabia, or even my own country, will find it challenging to reach any substantial agreement outside of bilateral arrangements, such as the one between Bahrain and the USA. While that agreement was a positive starting point, it falls short of the full security commitment the Gulf is seeking.

If NATO and the Gulf are to establish a strong partnership, both sides must make concrete commitments. We require more than expressions of goodwill — we need a tangible security guarantee. It may be time to fundamentally rethink our approach. Democracy and international institutions are increasingly questioned, and universal values appear to be faltering. The time has come to reconsider how we can ensure safety and stability on a global scale, build closer alliances, and address the Gulf's specific needs for defensive capabilities that protect our territories.

Dr **Abdulaziz Sager** is a Saudi expert on Gulf politics and strategic issues. He is the founder and Chairman of the Gulf Research Center, a global think tank based in Saudi Arabia with a well-established presence and worldwide network of partners and offices in both the Gulf region and Europe. In addition to having authored and edited numerous publications, Dr Sager frequently contributes on major international media channels such as Al Arabiya, France 24, CNN and BBC. Dr Sager has also chaired and moderated the Syrian opposition meetings in Riyadh in 2015 and 2017. He holds a PhD in Politics and International Relations from Lancaster University, with a focus on Gulf security affairs.



SHEIK FAWAZ MESHAL AL-SABAH Former Assistant Undersecretary National Security Bureau, Kuwait

THE GULF SECURITY NEEDS BETWEEN BILATERAL COOPERATION AND MULTILATERAL SECURITY GUARANTEES

After such a powerful speech, I am not sure I can match the intensity of the frustration so eloquently conveyed by my colleague from Jordan. His words underscore that we in the region sometimes perceive matters differently from those across the Mediterranean, who often refer to us as the "Southern flank" or the "South-Eastern flank".

Allow me to take you back to 2004, when we made our first visit to NATO. At that time, it quickly became evident to our delegation that NATO's implementation of the International Cooperative Initiative (ICI) was still somewhat undefined. Then we visited NATO headquarters and understood three key aspects: first, that practical cooperation was the core of this relationship; second, that the initiative would be structured bilaterally; and third, that this was not intended to be a multilateral endeavour. Essentially, it was a "26 + 1" approach — NATO with one individual country at a time, not as a collective arrangement.

In that context, questions were raised about the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), which is inherently multilateral. However, given NATO's "plus one" model, each relationship was bilateral. Throughout this process, it became clear that each country would work independently with NATO, leveraging its own resources and learning NATO's various mechanisms. We also recognised that NATO's mechanisms operate at a slow pace, requiring time and patience.

The pinnacle of the relationship between Kuwait and NATO has undoubtedly been the establishment of the NATO ICI Regional Centre (NIRC). This centre was, from the outset, a Kuwaiti initiative. Kuwait proposed the concept to NATO,

presenting the location as a potential gateway to the region. NATO accepted, and at the 2012 Chicago Summit, the establishment of the centre was approved, with the facility formally inaugurated in January 2017.

One of the challenges we encountered was that there was no established blueprint for implementing such a centre. Kuwait and NATO needed to innovate and exercise patience, returning to the foundation of our relationship: practical cooperation. Looking at where we are today, I believe the centre has been, to a significant degree, a success. It has trained over 2.500 personnel and hosted more than 90 courses and events; all fully funded by NATO.

Sheik Fawaz Al-Sabah is a senior government official with extensive experience in international relations and strategic affairs. Sheik Al-Sabah has served as Assistant Undersecretary in the Government of the State of Kuwait from January 2018 to June 2024, contributing to the country's governance and policy-making for over six years. Prior to this, he worked as a Manager in the Kuwaiti government for 11 years, during which he became the Head of the International Relations Department, overseeing critical diplomatic and strategic initiatives. Earlier in his career, he served as an Analyst in the Office of the President from 2004 to 2007. Sheik Al-Sabah holds a bachelor's degree in international relations and affairs from Boston University and a Master of Arts in International Security & Strategy from King's College London. He also completed an Executive Education Certificate in National and International Security at the Harvard Kennedy School in 2014, enhancing his expertise in global security dynamics. With a career spanning over two decades, Sheik Fawaz Al-Sabah has played a vital role in shaping Kuwait's international relations and security policies.



SERGIO PIAZZI Secretary General, Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean, Naples

DEVELOPING REGIONAL COOPERATION IN THE INDO-MEDITERRANEAN

As Secretary General of this Parliamentary Assembly International Organisation, an international organisation distinct from others represented here today, I would like to provide some context. My background is with the United Nations, where in 2005, alongside Ambassador Minuto Rizzo, I had the pleasure of signing the UN-NATO cooperation agreement for support in humanitarian operations in peace time. This initiative originated at the end of the Iraq-Kuwait conflict (1991 or 2003? There is a problem with dates.), when I served as political assistant to Martti Ahtisaari (when he was a high-level UN diplomat). In that role, we observed that the UN alone could not have deployed the 60.000 personnel needed to provide humanitarian assistance and protection to populations stranded in the north of Kuwait, thus paving the way for this cooperation.

This concept has since evolved. When this Assembly was established by the national parliaments of Southern European and MENA countries over 20 years ago, we quickly developed constructive cooperation with NATO, thanks in part to my background. This collaboration includes working with the NATO Secretary General and the recently established NATO Southern Hub in Naples, which has proven to be a valuable partner. Today, witnessing NATO political officers and uniformed personnel addressing our parliamentary meetings, which include representatives from 34 countries, is a testament to this productive partnership – something unimaginable a few years ago, but now widely accepted.

As an organisation, we are unique. Unlike other parliamentary institutions, we are highly operational and actively engaged in the field. We also function as an information channel, for instance, facilitating communication between Damascus and Ankara, or between Brussels and Damascus. We were part of the consultations

around the Abraham Accords and continue to play a role in areas where Gulf countries request our support, including the development of software platforms, and have even collaborated with Tehran on certain initiatives.

In our operational capacity, we are the only parliamentary body invited to meet with heads of security services in New York, including an invitation from Russia's FSB to attend its security summit. This is due to our active role in counterterrorism and our focus on the link between counterterrorism and transnational organised crime — a field in which we are proud to collaborate closely with NATO, exchanging a substantial amount of non-classified information.

Currently, we are also involved in consultation with NATO in preparation for the upcoming Summit of the Future, scheduled to take place in New York on 22-23 September 2024, just before the General Assembly. This initiative, led by Secretary General Guterres, will address five key areas, including Security Council reform and global governance. We are particularly focused on issues of trust and reputation in governance.

Ambassador **Sergio Piazzi** holds an Honors Doctorate Degree in International Political Sciences and a master's degree in economics and foreign trade. He also attended the Italian Diplomatic Academy. Ambassador Piazzi started his career as Political Officer at the US State Department, and then joined through the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs the United Nations. He conceived and managed the UN Programme on the use of international Military and Civil Defense Assets in crisis operations. Ambassador Piazzi served as Head of the UNDHA Regional Desk for Europe and former USSR, and Chief UNOCHA's External Affairs. In 2008, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM) elected him to establish and direct its Secretariat, and lead the strategic planning for the Assembly.



MARIA LUISA FANTAPPIÈ

Head, Mediterranean, Middle East and Africa Programme, Istituto Affari Internazionali, Rome

NEGOTIATING WITH THE GLOBAL SOUTH

It seems to me that we are facing an extreme challenge as we navigate this moment of shifting global order. The two conflicts mentioned (Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the Israel-Hamas war) both occurred in quick succession and have had significant consequences. On one hand, the Russian invasion of Ukraine has, in a sense, brought Europe back to a post-1945 moment. At the same time, both the Israel-Hamas war and the Ukraine-Russia conflict have revealed that the global order we once knew is no longer in place, it is shifting. We have witnessed numerous instances in the aftermath of these conflicts where many countries, especially those in the Global South, have not aligned with the so-called "West" or the Atlantic Alliance in opposing Russia.

In fact, we have seen that many countries in the Global South have adopted a different approach to Russia, sometimes maintaining their relationships with Russia or even strengthening them. While the Atlantic Alliance has focused its attention on the East following the invasion of Ukraine, Russia has succeeded in consolidating its position in the South, particularly across the Middle East and Africa.

Overall, I believe we must adapt to the evolving global landscape. We must acknowledge these shifts in the global order and recognise that while Russia's invasion of Ukraine has indeed drawn us back to a 1945-situation, the world is changing. The so-called Global South is requesting that the Atlantic Alliance listen to its concerns and take them into account. I believe there are several key steps we must take to lay the foundation for any cooperative partnership with the Global South.

First, we need strategic clarity, which is currently lacking. We have yet to decide whether we are open to engaging with the South, even if it continues to maintain relations with Russia. Are we willing to engage with countries in the South under these circumstances, or not? This is a critical question that needs to be addressed. Sometimes, the perception of double standards voiced by the Global South is not

simply a critique of our principles and values but is more often a request for strategic clarity. They are asking, "Where do you stand? Where are you heading?".

The second point is the need to understand the threat perceptions of the South, which may differ from our own. The way countries in the South perceive and respond to threats is distinct, and there are varied ways to approach these perceptions. For instance, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) has been at the forefront of embracing multipolarity. While continuing its security partnership with the USA, the GCC also seeks to maintaining relations with other global powers.

Furthermore, the GCC's approach to security is a mix of defence, which is essential, as well as deterrence through diplomacy and dialogue. A case in point is the Saudi-Iran agreement, which, through still evolving, serves as a compelling example of how diplomacy has helped reduce threats on the Arabian Peninsula by engaging with a former adversary.

Another important element is the tendency of many countries in the region to pursue bilateral security agreements, rather than multilateral ones. This is evident in the numerous bilateral agreements between Middle Eastern countries and the US.

One key issue that may be overlooked, but which I believe is essential, is political dialogue. There is a great deal of people-to-people diplomacy that needs to be invested in to better understand how the Global South perceives threats and responds to them. This should be an area of significant investment.

Additionally, despite differences on certain issues, especially those related to engagement with Russia, there are areas where we share common interests. It is crucial that we focus on these areas of convergence. One such area is maritime security. By prioritising cooperation on shared issues, we can lay the groundwork for a productive partnership with the South.

In summary, the key to a successful cooperative partnership with the South lies in our ability to listen carefully, navigate our differences, and focus on areas where we can work together to achieve common objectives.

Dr Maria Luisa Fantappiè is the Head of the Mediterranean, Middle East, and Africa Programme at the Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI). She has served as a Special Adviser for the Middle East and North Africa at the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue in Geneva and the International Crisis Group in Brussels. In these roles, Dr Fantappiè has engaged with senior political leaders across Europe, the United States, and the Middle East. Her research focuses on the Middle East, European diplomacy, and the dynamics of great-power competition in the region, as well as conflict mediation. She has been a Visiting Scholar at the Carnegie Middle East Center and is currently affiliated with the Middle East Centre at the London School of Economics and the Institut Français du Proche-Orient. Among her key publications are "Politicians, Officers and Political Transition in Post-2003 Iraq", Third World Quarterly (2023) and "The Routledge Handbook of EU-Middle East Relations" (2022).







CHARLES KUPCHAN Senior Fellow, Council on Foreign Relations, Washington DC

SPECIAL INTERVENTION

This occasion, marking NATO's 75th Anniversary, is a special one and I will begin with an optimistic assessment of NATO's current status as one of the most formidable military alliances in history and conclude with a consideration of the challenges that lie ahead, issues that NATO must address to secure its future.

At 75 years, NATO's very existence and vitality are remarkable. Historically, most alliances dissolve one the threat that prompted their creation subsides. Yet NATO defied this trend. Instead of disbanding at the end of the Cold War, the Alliance adapted. It embraced new missions, expanded its memberships, engaged in out-of-area operations, and evolved into a multipurpose mechanism for safeguarding the collective interests and values of North Atlantic democracies.

Moreover, NATO has experienced a renaissance in recent years, largely spurred by Russia's aggressive actions, first in 2014 and then more dramatically in 2022. These events have reinforced NATO's relevance, unity, and strategic focus. Today, NATO is arguably more dynamic, robust, and cohesive then it was even during the Cold War.

This revival reflects, in part, the nature of the Cold War itself, which eventually normalised into a state of managed confrontation. During that period, initiatives like Ostpolitik¹ and direct dialogue between NATO member states and the Soviet Union contributed to a predictable, if tense, equilibrium. By contrast, today's geopolitical environment is far less stable, particularly in Europe, where frontlines states such as the Baltic nations and Poland face acute security concerns. For those countries, Russia's actions have created a renewed sense of existential threat, driving urgency in NATO's strategic planning and political discourse.

Interestingly, this has also shifted the dynamics within the Alliance. For perhaps the first time in NATO's history, Europe is playing a more assertive role in shaping

¹ https://www.britannica.com/event/Ostpolitik.

the Alliance's trajectory and pressing the US for enhanced commitments. This evolution signals not only NATO's enduring relevance but also the possibility of a more balanced transatlantic partnership moving forward.

In 2003 or 2004, following the US invasion of Iraq, Robert Kagan famously remarked that Americans are from Mars and Europeans are from Venus², implying that Americans understood geopolitics while Europeans had detached themselves from the realities of history. Yet today, it is Europe that is advocating for F-16s, expanded operations targeting Russian territory and the provision of thanks and advanced missile systems. Europe is now driving the push for more decisive action, while the US has, in some respects, adopted a more cautious approach. This shift is both significant and unprecedented.

Consider, for instance, that two-thirds of NATO members are now meeting or exceeding the 2% GDP benchmark for defence spending — a dramatic change from just a few years ago. Political developments that many feared would fracture NATO's unity have not materialised. Apart from Hungary under Prime Minister Orbán and the new government in Slovakia, elections across NATO member states have largely reinforced the consensus that emerged in February 2022.

In the United Kingdom, a change in government has not altered its strong stance on Ukraine. France, even amid potential challenges in its National Assembly, is unlikely to deviate significantly from its current trajectory. Similarly, in Italy, concerns that Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni's government might soften its position on Ukraine have proven unfounded; she has remained a steadfast member of the coalition supporting Ukraine's right to self-defence.

Even if former President Trump were to be re-elected in the US, I do not believe he would withdraw from NATO. Why? Because Trump consistently evaluates matters through the lens of "What's in it for me?". Dismantling the Western alliance would yield little benefit, even from his transactional perspective. While he may seek deal with President Putin on Ukraine or pressure European allies (such as Italy) to increase defence spending, the revitalisation and solidarity within NATO over the past two years are likely to endure, at least as long as President Putin remains in power. Given the geopolitical realignment in Europe, symbolised by NATO's expanded border with Russia following Finland's accession, the Alliance's salience and urgency are unlikely to wane. This is, fundamentally, good news. As discussion unfold this week in Washington, there is much to celebrate regarding NATO's achievements and its renewed strength in the face of significant challenges.

https://www.politico.eu/article/time-to-face-reality-americans-come-from-mars-europe-ans-are-from-venus/.

I would like to briefly address three key concerns that, in my view, NATO, as a community of shared values and common interests, must confront in the coming months and years.

First, Ukraine. The resilience of Ukraine is nothing short of extraordinary. Against the odds, it has withstood aggression from a far larger adversary in what can only be described as a David versus Goliath struggle. Despite the immense challenges, Ukraine remains in control of approximately 81% of its territory. My assessment is that when the fighting eventually concludes, historians will likely regard this conflict as an irreversible strategic defeat for Russia.

In essence, Russia has lost Ukraine. A future analysis of "Who Lost Ukraine?" would be brief: the responsibility lies squarely with Vladimir Putin. His actions have transformed a country that was previously divided and lacking a cohesive national identity into a unified nation that unequivocally rejects any association with Moscow. It is difficult to envision Ukraine ever returning to a position within a Russian sphere of influence.

The path to achieving a favourable outcome in Ukraine remains uncertain. In my view, NATO currently has a policy toward Ukraine (providing a political underpinning for arms, financial support, and assistance to help Ukraine defend itself), but it lacks a comprehensive strategy. By this, I mean NATO does not yet have clearly defined war aims that are aligned with the available means. We often speak of Ukraine "winning", launching successful offensives, and regaining territories such as Donbas or Crimea in the near future. However, this is unlikely to materialise. The most realistic objective, in my estimation, is for Ukraine to hold its defensive lines, establish robust defence-in-depth systems, and focus on rebuilding and securing the 81% of its territory still under Kyiv's control.

The challenges facing Ukraine in this regard are significant. The recent mobilisation order passed in its parliament highlights the difficulty of sustaining sufficient troop numbers to support the war effort. The prospect of Ukraine mobilising the necessary resources and manpower to achieve complete territorial reclamation seems remote. Therefore, it is imperative that, in the near future, we engage in an honest and open dialogue about realigning our war aims with the resources at our disposal.

Ultimately, this may require redefining success, not as the complete military defeat of Russia or the expulsion of its troops from all Ukrainian territory, but as ensuring that the Ukraine of today emerges as a secure, defensible, prosperous, and liberal democracy. This would represent the most effective long-term strategy to counteract Russia's ambitions.

If we fail to recalibrate our objectives and match them with available resources, we risk jeopardising Ukraine's future. It is important to recognise that President Putin's goals are either to defeat Ukraine military or to subjugate it by destabilising

the country and reducing it to a failed state. Avoiding such outcomes must be our guiding priority.

If this war continues for another decade, with tens or even hundreds of thousands more Ukrainians losing their lives, and Russia relentlessly targeting Ukraine's energy infrastructure (already 50% of the electrical grid is reported to be down), then the country could face catastrophic consequences. This winter is set to be particularly dark and cold for the Ukrainian people. Under these conditions, President Putin might succeed in his objective of turning Ukraine into a failed state. This is precisely why it is imperative to develop a clear strategy aimed at defending the Ukraine that remains, ensuring it evolves into a stable, secure, and defensible nation over the long term.

The second issue relates to NATO enlargement and Ukraine's potential membership. Since the 2008 Bucharest Summit, where NATO declared that Georgia and Ukraine would one day become members, there has been little substantive debate on the practicalities of this commitment. Instead, we have continued to move forward without fully addressing the complexities or implications. It appears contradictory: if we have collectively decided not to directly intervene militarily in Ukraine to prevent escalation into World War III (a decision I believe is prudent) then we must critically examine the rationale for extending a future security guarantee to Ukraine. Such a commitment would obligate NATO members to intervene militarily in the event of future aggression.

This raises a fundamental question: if leaders such as President Biden, Prime Minister Meloni, Chancellor Scholz, and President Macron have all determined that avoiding a direct war with Russia over Ukraine is the correct course of action now, why would we formalise a security guarantee that could later compel such a response? These are difficult, complex questions that demand an honest and open debate. Simply adhering to the 2008 declaration without critically reassessing its feasibility and implications is not a sustainable approach.

Allow me to conclude with an observation that deviates somewhat from the primary focus of this discussion. It does not concern NATO's core functions: aircraft carriers, military strategy, or defence budgets. Instead, I am increasingly alarmed by the internal threats to Western democracies, which I believe pose a greater danger than external adversaries. What keeps me awake at night is not Vladimir Putin but the internal erosion of democratic institutions and norms, exemplified by figures such as Donald Trump. Watching the recent political debates, I was struck by a profound sense of despair. This is nothing short of a political emergency.

I am deeply concerned that the political centres on both sides of the Atlantic are under severe strain, if not on the verge of collapse. Elections increasingly yield outcomes that veer toward extremes (whether far-right of far-left) while

any resurgence of centrist politics appears tenuous and fleeting. The trajectory is troubling. While our focus on external threats (such as those posed by Xi Jinping, Vladimir Putin, or regional crises in Ukraine and Gaza) is entirely appropriate, we cannot afford to neglect the internal threats posed by illiberal populism. If the erosion of political moderation continues, and if illiberal populists gain greater influence on both sides of the Atlantic, the consequences will be profound and destabilising.

To be candid, if President Biden were to call me this evening seeking final thoughts on the agenda for the upcoming NATO discussions, I would suggest expanding the conversation to include a few critical issues that, while not traditionally within NATO's remit, are central to the defence of liberal democratic values: economic security for workers, what strategies will ensure that workers can earn a living wage in the coming decade? How do we address the economic displacement of individuals who once earned \$32 an hour in manufacturing jobs and now struggle to provide for their families on \$12-an-hour retail or warehouse jobs? Immigration policy, what concrete measures can be implemented to regain control over immigration systems? Many citizens perceive a loss of border control, and to some extent, this perception reflects reality. This issue has already led to significant policy shifts, including executive actions that seemed unlikely just a few years ago. Regulation of social media and Artificial Intelligence, how can we mitigate the harm caused by unregulated social media platforms and the unchecked proliferation of AI? These technologies, to date, have often exacerbated social divisions and misinformation rather than fostering constructive dialogue or progress.

While these issues may fall outside the typical purview of a NATO summit, they are nonetheless integral to the broader mission of defending liberal democracy. The challenges emanating from within our societies are, at present, more pressing and immediate than those posed by external threats. If we do not address these foundational concerns, the very fabric of the democratic world that NATO seeks to protect will continue to fray.

Dr Charles Kupchan is a Senior Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) and a professor of international affairs at Georgetown University, where he teaches in the Walsh School of Foreign Service and the Department of Government. From 2014 to 2017, Dr Kupchan served in the Obama administration as special assistant to the president and senior director for European affairs at the National Security Council (NSC). He also held the position of director for European affairs at the NSC during the first Clinton administration. Prior to his tenure at the Clinton NSC, Dr Kupchan was a member of the policy planning staff at the U.S. Department of State. He is the author of several notable works, including "Isolationism: A History of America's Efforts to Shield Itself From the World" (2020) and "No One's World: The West, the Rising Rest, and the Coming Global Turn" (2012).







GIULIO TREMONTI President of the Foreign Affairs Committee, Chamber of Deputies, Rome

CONCLUDING REMARKS

"The situation appears irreversible, with only a few months, or perhaps even less, remaining before a potential catastrophe" - Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić, in a recent interview with the Swiss weekly Die Weltwoche, expressed this grim outlook. Reflecting on transportation metaphors, he stated that "the train has left the station, and no one can stop it".

On the 15th of April 2024, it was revealed that an agreement had been signed between Leonardo, a leading defence industry company, and the Italian Railway Network². This accord pertains to military mobility: a symbolic intersection of two trajectories.

The first trajectory can be described as the "national station", inhabited by individuals with a dystopian outlook, who see their future tied inexorably to the past. The second trajectory is the "European station", characterised, until recently, by globalist sleepwalkers and historical tourists, seemingly unaware of the risks they face. The EU, however, has now begun to awaken to the gravity of these threats.

The "national station" emerges from a troubling historical precedent. The infamous Mein Kampf circulated widely before it was taken seriously, far too late to prevent the consequences. Similarly, what could be called "Putin's Mein Kampf" was published a few years ago in the Financial Times. It is imperative that we take his words at face value and acknowledge their significance.

Putin's vision for Russia's future is deeply rooted in the past, invoking Russian history, its traditions, and borders that now overlap with those of Europe. On the 14th of June, Putin declared that "the entire system of North Atlantic security is crumbling before our eyes", advocating instead for a Eurasian vision of the

¹ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AZIDLlqh-Oc&t=47s.

² https://www.leonardo.com/it/press-release-detail/-/detail/15-04-2024-leonardo-and-i-talian-railway-infrastructure-manager-rete-ferroviaria-italiana-sign-an-agreement-for-military-mobility.

continent's future. Whether Putin has drawn inspiration from George Orwell's 1984 or Dostoevsky's Demons in unclear. However, in Orwell's dystopian narrative, "Eurasia" encompasses Northern Asia, continental Europe, Turkey, and Central Asia: a superstate vying for global domination alongside "Oceania" and "East Asia".

In such scenario, even if the war in Ukraine were to conclude, there is little doubt that Putin would persist in his aggression, albeit through different means and in new locations. Europe must, therefore, adopt a fundamentally different policy to counter this threat effectively.

Recent reports on Europe's future have tended to emphasise economic consideration, focusing on markets and trade. However, in the present moment and for the foreseeable future, the true priority must be political unity. Historically, European policy has centred on gradual and progressive enlargement, extending from west to east. Yet today, Russia is pursuing its own form of expansion — this time from east to west.

The EU can no longer afford to rely on a piecemeal, incremental approach. What is urgently required is a comprehensive union, one that spans from north to south, and from west to east. This "all-in" approach would necessitate postponing the so-called "national homework" traditionally required of new member states. While challenging, this strategy is essential.

If the EU continues with the gradual and paternalistic model of enlargement, it risks enabling Russia to exploit divisions, foster competition and sow disillusionment among member states. This danger is particularly acute in the Balkans — a region Churchill once described as producing "more history than it can consume locally". Such historical exports have proven destabilising, with Sarajevo serving as a tragic example.

To implement this "all-in" vision, Europe must undergo significant constitutional reforms, including the adoption of a new voting system that eliminates the current veto mechanism. Beyond structural changes, the EU must also update its "political software", accommodating traditions in the East that may not yet align perfectly with the democratic norms of the West. In this critical moment, unity must take precedence over perfections.

Pope Francis, during his address at Budapest University while gazing upon the Danube River, highlighted the importance of bridges as symbols of cultural and political unity. This sentiment underscores the need for a renewed commitment to the principles of solidarity and integration.

For all these reasons, the creation of a "new Europe" is both necessary and achievable. Europe must reclaim its historical role as the master of its own destiny, rather than succumbing to the catastrophic scenarios envisioned by its adversaries. The time to act is now.

Honourable **Giulio Tremonti** has been a university professor since 1974, teaching at the law faculties of the Universities of Macerata, Parma and Pavia. An accomplished author, Honourable Tremonti has published numerous influential works, including "Rinascimento" (2017) and "Mundus Furiosus" (2016). He has held the position of Visiting Professor at the Institute of Comparative Law at Oxford University. Over the years, he has participated in prominent debates and delivered lectures at prestigious institutions worldwide, including the Oxford Union Society and the Cambridge Union Society. From 1984 to 1994, prior to entering politics, Honourable Tremonti served as a columnist for Corriere della Sera. He has been a member of the Italian Parliament since 1994 and currently serves as President of the Foreign Affairs Committee. Over the course of his political career, he has held several key positions, including Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance, Minister of Economy and Finance, and Deputy Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies.





















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Rome, | Centro Alti Studi per la Difesa — Sala Multimediale (Piazza della Rovere, 83) 8th of July 2024

15,00 - 15,20 Welcome Remarks

- · Giacinto Ottaviani, President, Centro Alti Studi per la Difesa, Rome
- Alessandro Minuto-Rizzo, President, NATO Defense College Foundation, Rome
- Max A.L.T. Nielsen, Commandant, NATO Defense College, Rome
- Wolf Krug, Director, Institute for European and Transatlantic Dialogue, Hanns Seidel Stiftung, Munich

15,20 – **15,30** *Special Intervention*

Carlo Musso, Head, Strategic Studies, Leonardo Company, Rome

Session I Political and Strategic Challenges. A Focus on the Future Towards Change

Chair: Daniela Irrera, Professor of International Relations, CASD, Rome

- Thomas Erndl, Deputy Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, Bundestag, Berlin
- Jamie Shea, Professor, Strategy and Security Institute, University of Exeter

- Amélie Zima, Head, European and Transatlantic Program, Institut Française del Relations Internationales, Paris
- Vincenzo Camporini, Former Italian Defence Chief of Staff, Istituto Affari Internazionali, Rome

Q&A Session

16,40 – 16,50 *Special Intervention*

• Alessandro Ercolani, CEO, Rheinmetall Italy, Rome

16,50 – 17,30 *Coffee Break*

Session II Reinforcing the Partnerships in the South. A Renewed Strategic Outlook

Chair: **Ian Lesser**, Distinguished Fellow and Advisor to the President, The German Marshall Fund of the United States, Brussels

- Ahmad Masa'deh, former Secretary General, Union for the Mediterranean, Amman
- Abdulaziz Sager, President, Gulf Research Center, Jeddah
- Sheik Fawaz Meshal Al-Sabah, former Assistant Undersecretary National Security Bureau, Kuwait
- Sergio Piazzi, Secretary General, Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean, Naples
- Maria Luisa Fantappiè, Head, Mediterranean, Middle East and Africa Programme, Istituto Affari Internazionali, Rome

Q&A Session

18,45 – **18,55** *Special Intervention*

 Charles Kupchan, Senior Fellow, Council on Foreign Relations, Washington DC

18,55 – **19,15** *Concluding Remarks*

• **Giulio Tremonti**, President of the Foreign Affairs Committee, Chamber of Deputies, Rome





