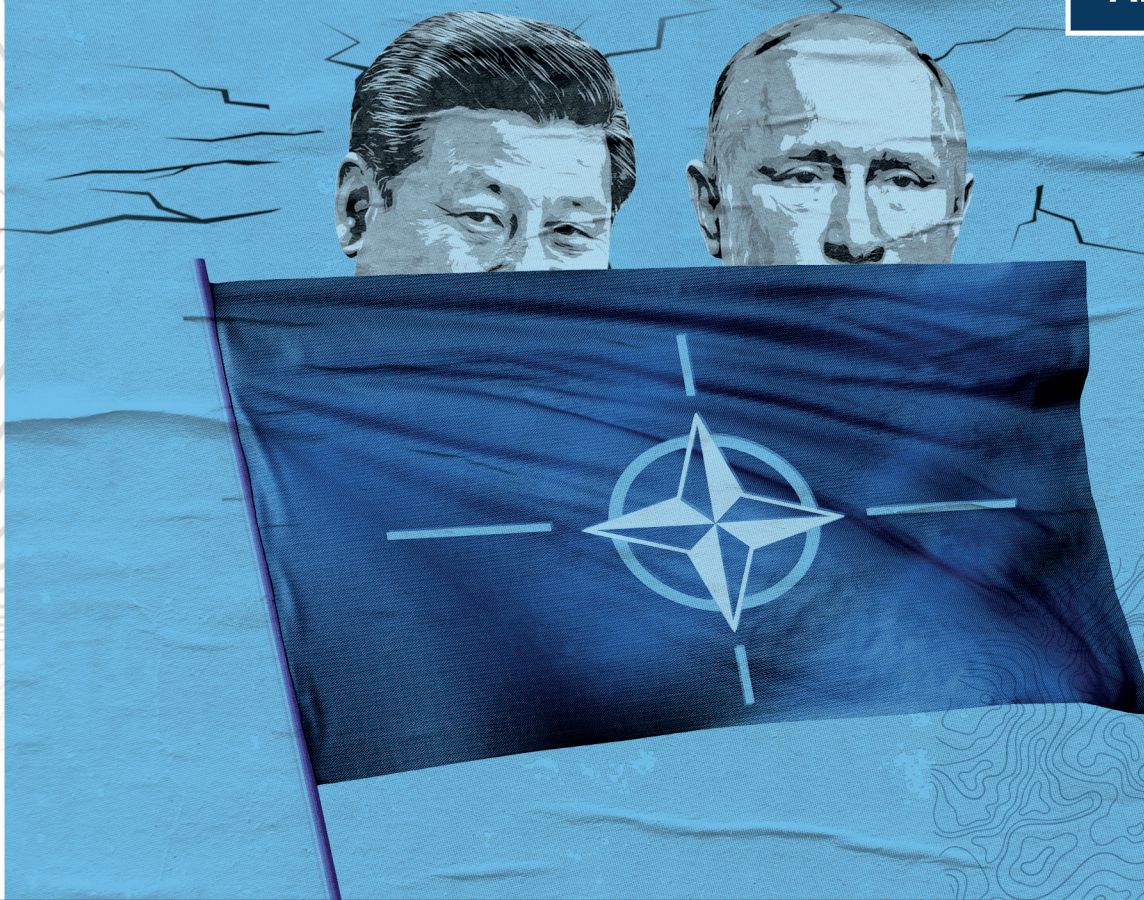




Dimensions
for Strategic Studies

Analytical Report



«NATO»

makes strategic shifts in its policy

**Strengthening Capacities for Confronting
Russia and China**

**Prepared by:
Roman Haddad**

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Dimensions for Strategic Studies

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At the conclusion of its summit held in the Spanish capital Madrid on 29 and 30 June 2022, NATO agreed to announce a **new strategy document** is the first time since 2010, when Russia went from being a long-term partner country to becoming the 'biggest direct threat' to NATO members, reflecting the dramatic deterioration in NATO's relations with Moscow over the past decade. The transformations in the new strategic document did not stop at that point,



but extended to China, which was viewed by the Alliance as a friendly trading partner and a supporting manufacturing base for the alliance. Today, Beijing is a challenge to its security, interests and values with its strategy, intentions and military reinforcements remaining ambiguous.

In the new strategic document, NATO accuses Russia of seeking to establish regional and international “spheres of influence” and direct control through coercion, sabotage, aggression and annexation, using conventional military, electronic, and hybrid means to achieve these goals, against the Alliance and its partners. The document identified Moscow's military build-up, including in the Baltic, Black Sea and Mediterranean regions, as well as its military integration with Belarus, as a security challenge for its member States.

The document expressed the rejection by Member States of Russian threats to use nuclear weapons against NATO members, as well as the Alliance's concern about Russia's updates of its nuclear forces and its development of new and destructive dual-capable delivery systems, referring to Moscow's development of hypersonic weapons capable of carrying nuclear warheads that could transfer them to other States, which could extend the danger to other regions.

The new document accused China of using malicious hybrid and electronic operations, as well as confrontational rhetoric and disinformation, to target NATO members and harm NATO security and interests.

The strategic document demonstrates NATO's concerns about Beijing's economic ambitions, stressing that the latter seeks to control key technological and industrial sectors, critical infrastructure, strategic materials, and supply chains, by using its economic influence to create its own strategic subordinates to enhance its influence.



The strategic document also expressed concern about the close relations between Moscow and Beijing and the strengthening of each other to undermine the rules-based international order, stressing the Alliance's openness to constructive dialogue with China, with the readiness of Member States to confront its coercive methods and the efforts exerted by them to divide the Alliance.

In the new document, NATO pledged to significantly strengthen the deterrence and defence of its members by deploying more robust and combat-ready forces on its eastern border, closer to Russia, in response to Moscow 's expansionist moves, while stressing that it seeks not confrontation but dialogue.

It should be noted that Finland and Sweden are in the process of formally joining NATO upon completion of (1) the ratification by member States, which will increase NATO's presence on the border with Russia, although Ukraine and Georgia (2) have remained open (3) for accession , which will further increase pressure on the Russian border.



During the summit, US President Joe Biden announced his intention to deploy additional US troops by land, sea and air across Europe, from Spain in the west to Romania and Poland on the border with Ukraine. That included the establishment of a permanent US army headquarters with a battalion of troops in Poland, in the first permanent US deployment on the eastern border of NATO (4) .

(1) Ratification of Finland and Sweden's Accession to NATO, Finland & Sweden Accession, NATO Parliamentary Assembly: nato-pa.int/content/finland-sweden-accession

(2) «Relations with Ukraine», NATO, 2022/07/08: nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_37750.htm

(3) «Relations with Georgia», NATO, 2022/07/14: nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_38988.htm

(4) “First U.S. model troops arrive in Poland, more expected”, Reuters, 2022/02/05: reut.rs/3LgCUBE



During a panel discussion on the sidelines of the summit, US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken announced that NATO would face China if it challenged the world order in one way or another, noting that its inclusion in the new strategic document for the first time in NATO's history is not an attempt to create a crisis, but an affirmation of the unity of member states in preserving the principles of the world order, and facing any threat that may arise from China (5) or others.

It will be recalled that a day before the NATO summit in Madrid, the spokesman for the United States National Security Council, John Kirby, stated that NATO members had growing concerns about China's unfair trade practices, the use of forced labour, theft of intellectual property, and bullying and coercion, not only in the Indian and Pacific Oceans, but around the world (6).

In light of what was included in the new strategic document about the continuity of channels of dialogue with Moscow and Beijing, and the NATO's assertion that the Alliance does not want direct confrontation with Russia, it seems that the targeting of the latter and China will not only be limited to their borders, but in the places of their influence throughout the world, and that this new strategy will not confront the head of the octopus, but will target its arms, until the links between them and the central mind in Moscow fall, which will lead to its paralysis.

It must be pointed out that the Russian role on the brown continent continues to have a distinctive presence. For example, Chad, which is viewed as the most prominent strongholds of the French presence on the continent, witnessed demonstrations at the end of February 2022, demanding the exit of French troops who maintain several military bases in the country, the hoisting of the Russian flag alongside the Chadian flag by hundreds of protesters, and chanting slogans calling for the support of the Russian role in Chad (7).



(A Russian flag is carried during a demonstration in N'Djamena on February 26, 2022. (Photo by DJIMET WICHE/AFP

(5) Secretary Antony J. Blinken And Spanish Foreign Minister Jos» Manuel Albares At the NATO Public Forum, US Department of State, 2022/06/29: bit.ly/3ROLB8z

(6) On-the-Record Press Call by NSC Coordinator for Strategic Communications John Kirby and Assistant Secretary for Defense Celeste Wallander, The White House, 2022/06/29: bit.ly/3BG5Xve

(7) “Demonstration in Chad against the military junta and France”, France 2022/02/26 .24.: bit.ly/3RZ6Bcg



Recently, Moscow made an important breakthrough in one of the most prominent French spheres of influence in the African coast/Sahel, specifically in Mali, by supporting the ruling military junta. Despite the war against Ukraine, Russia has provided the Council with military equipment, combat helicopters and modern counter-terrorism radars.

Concerning military matters, the Malian authorities prefer to deal with the Russians rather than with the French, because Russian military equipment is cheaper; and Paris controls the movement of any military equipment sold to the Malian army.

In light of Western sanctions imposed on Russia by the military operation against Ukraine, and NATO's new strategy, the alliance must confront Moscow and its extended influence in Chad and Mali. The Spanish Minister for Foreign Affairs, José Manuel Álvarez, referred to this issue, when he talked about the possibility of the intervention of the “Atlantic” forces in Mali, if necessary, under the pretext of fighting terrorism, which may pose a threat to the security of the coalition countries, (8) the same terrorism that NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg spoke about, when he pointed out that NATO's mission in Iraq was aimed at preventing the recurrence of ISIS (9).

The concept of terrorism in the new strategic document may differ from its traditional conception of NATO. Despite the announcement by US President Joe Biden that Russia should not be described as a state sponsoring terrorism (10), in line with the position of French President Emmanuel Macron in this regard, (11) the concept of terrorism that the alliance will fight wherever it is, in Chad, Mali, Iraq, Syria and Libya, may be a justification for fighting Russia's foreign influence in addition to that of China's.

The move to counter Russian influence abroad began the day after the announcement of the new strategic document. After the Spanish Foreign Minister's statements about fighting terrorism in Africa, and Stoltenberg's statements about combating ISIS, London announced that it would send military experts to Bosnia and Herzegovina to confront Russia's influence and its efforts to fuel separatism and sectarianism there, and to strengthen NATO's mission and enhance stability and security in the region (12).

(8) «Spain's foreign minister does not rule out NATO intervention in Mali», Reuters, 2022/06/30:

<https://reut.rs/3dqDUXk>

(9) «NATO to expand Iraq mission to around 4,000 personnel», France 2021/02/18, 24: bit.ly/3dnhuWI

(10) «Russia should not be branded terrorism sponsor, Biden says», Reuters, 2022/09/5: reut.rs/3S83XBP

(11) «Macron refuses to designate Russia 'sponsor of terrorism'», RT, 2022/06/28: bit.ly/3xrHyab

(12) «UK deploys military experts to counter Russian malign influence in Bosnia and Herzegovina», UK Government, 2022/06/30: bit.ly/3Dyt387



The President of Russia, Vladimir Putin, hinted to a reciprocal response to NATO if it deployed troops or military infrastructure in Finland and Sweden, but at the same time considered that the latter's joining of NATO was quite different from that of Ukraine (13) for his country.

In a related context, the Russian Deputy Foreign Minister, Sergey Ryabakov, described NATO's further expansion as destabilizing and would not bring security to its members, considering that NATO's orientation to contain Russia would in no way affect its potential power (14).

It should be noted that differences still exist among NATO countries regarding how to deal with China, as some members want to ensure a continued direct focus on Russia, while the United States, the most powerful member of the organization, has classified China as "the most serious long-term challenge to the international system", ranking above the Russian danger. Stoltenberg has pointed to the need to strengthen the partnership between NATO and Pacific partners (15), signaling primarily American desire to strengthen alliances to curb China's influence.

Chinese President Xi Jinping quickly sensed the danger of the new NATO strategic document on his country's influence and the messages sent by the Alliance to Moscow and Beijing. He embarked on a visit to Hong Kong to prove its territorial integrity. During his statements from there, he affirmed the principle of "one country, two systems", in a message to the Alliance that Hong Kong is Chinese, and that Taiwan is also Chinese, and no external party will be allowed to dispute with China or interfere in (16) its affairs.

Former officials of the US Department of Defense argued that the confrontation between NATO and China is not necessarily military, and can be economic, and that the alliance is not unanimous on a single opinion on the way to deal with Beijing, and towards Taiwan as well, as France and Germany have a different approach in this regard. These former officials stressed that all decisions taken by NATO must be unanimous, which means that action against China may not be military.

(13) Andrew Roth, «Putin issues fresh warning to Finland and Sweden on installing Nato infrastructure», The Guardian, 2022/06/29: bit.ly/3eXPvvr

(14) « Calling NATO exclusively defensive alliance is ridiculous, disgraceful — Lavrov», Tass News Agency, 2022/07/01: <https://bit.ly/3qMHbmH>

(15) Press conference by NATO Secretary General, NATO, 2022/06/29: bit.ly/3S2R3o6

(16) Theodora Yu and Christian Shepherd, «China's President Xi arrives in Hong Kong for handover anniversary», The Washington Post, 2022/06/30: wapo.st/3xAEYyz



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