

# NATO's new Strategic Concept: our blueprint for navigating a more dangerous and competitive world

Jens Stoltenberg

**President Putin's war of aggression on Ukraine has shattered peace in Europe and shaken the entire international order. It is not just an unprovoked and unjustified attack on a sovereign, independent nation. It is an attack on the whole system of global rules on which our peace and prosperity depend.**

The consequences of Russia's aggression go far beyond Europe's borders. Moscow is weaponizing food, fuel and other critical commodities, to create wider instability and threaten some of the world's most vulnerable people. Other authoritarian regimes, notably China, have refused to condemn Russia's invasion. In fact, Beijing has pledged to deepen its partnership with Moscow, while persistently seeking to challenge our interests, security and values by any means – political, economic and military. At the same time, we face the persistent threat of terrorism, cyberattacks, nuclear proliferation, and climate change. As we have always done, NATO is adapting to this more dangerous and competitive world. At our historic Madrid Summit in June, we took bold decisions to continue to strengthen our Alliance and keep our one billion people safe.

In Madrid we agreed NATO's new Strategic Concept, our blueprint for ensuring our security in the years to come. Next to our founding Washington Treaty, the Strategic Concept is NATO's most important document. It reaffirms NATO as the cornerstone of our collective defense, and reiterates NATO's three core tasks as deterrence and defense, crisis prevention and management, and cooperative security with our partners. First and foremost, it demonstrates our strength and unity – standing together as Allies to defend our freedom, promote human rights and international law, and contribute to a more peaceful world.

Our 2022 Strategic Concept reflects the fundamental changes to our security environment in the 12 years since our previous Concept was agreed. Far from being the "strategic partner" which we hoped for, our new Concept defines Russia as the "most significant and direct threat" to Allies' security, given its increasingly aggressive attempts to re-establish spheres of influence and use conventional, cyber and hybrid means against our own nations and our partners. It also addresses, for the first time, the systemic challenges China's stated ambitions and coercive policies pose to our security, and it recommits to tackling existing and emerging challenges, including climate change, cyber and hybrid attacks, and terrorism.

At the Summit we took other important decisions to strengthen our Alliance and accelerate its adaptation. Since 2014, NATO has implemented the largest reinforcement of our collective defense in a generation. In Madrid, we agreed a further fundamental shift, building on our significantly enhanced posture, to strengthen our deterrence and defense for the long term. We have already doubled the number of battlegroups from the Baltic to the Black Sea. We will deploy additional combat-ready forces and scale the existing battlegroups up to brigade level. We will increase the number of high-readiness forces across the Alliance to well over 300,000 troops, and pre-position more stocks and equipment to enable rapid reinforcement. We will continue to strengthen our posture across all domains– land, sea, air,



**NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg** (photo: NATO North Atlantic Treaty Organization)

space and cyber, and defend every inch of Allied territory from any aggression at all times.

We also took further actions to tackle new threats and challenges. We inaugurated a new one-billion-euro NATO Innovation Fund which, together with our Defense Innovation Accelerator for the North Atlantic (DIANA), will ensure we harness cutting-edge transatlantic technology for our security. We set an ambitious target to cut greenhouse gas emissions from NATO bodies and commands by at least 45% by 2030, and to net zero in 2050. Allies recommitted to investing at least 2% of GDP on defense and increasing NATO's common funding to provide the resources we need to deliver our higher levels of ambition. Finally, we continued to enhance our cooperation with like-minded nations and organizations, including a comprehensive package of support to Ukraine and other partners at risk of Russian aggression, strengthened relations with our Indo-Pacific partners, deeper NATO-EU cooperation, and a historic invitation to Finland and Sweden to join NATO.

As a founding member of our Alliance and the EU, the Netherlands has always been an advocate of a strong and forward-looking NATO as the ultimate guarantor of European security. The Netherlands makes many important contributions

to our Alliance, not least to our multinational battlegroups in Lithuania and Romania, and through its recent decision to increase defense spending, with the aim of meeting the 2% GDP target by 2024. The Netherlands also actively contributed to the development of our new Strategic Concept, hosting one of four preparatory seminars on enhancing our partnerships in The Hague. The articles in this special edition of the *Atlantisch Perspectief* reflect many of the key themes of NATO's new Strategic Concept. I thank the Netherlands Atlantic Association for everything it does to support a strong transatlantic bond.

Our democratic nations are facing the most serious security situation in decades. As we have always done, NATO is rising to today's and tomorrow's challenges with unity and resolve: Europe and North America standing strong together in NATO. The historic decisions we took in Madrid will ensure that our Alliance remains ready, strong and agile to preserve peace, prevent conflict, and protect our people and values.

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**Would you like to react?**

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