



**FROM ARTICLE 5
TO 360 DEGREES:
EXPANDING NATO'S
DEFINITION OF
SECURITY OVER
75 YEARS**

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About Istanbul Policy Center

Istanbul Policy Center (IPC) is a global policy research institution that specializes in key social and political issues ranging from democratization to climate change, transatlantic relations to conflict resolution and mediation. IPC organizes and conducts its research under three main clusters: the Istanbul Policy Center-Sabancı University-Stiftung Mercator Initiative, Democratization and Institutional Reform, and Conflict Resolution and Mediation. Since 2001, IPC has provided decision-makers, opinion leaders, and other major stakeholders with objective analyses and innovative policy recommendations.



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PREFACE

To commemorate NATO's 75th anniversary, Istanbul Policy Center (IPC) hosted a one-day panel discussion on November 7, 2024, at IPC Karaköy as part of the project "From Article 5 to 360 Degrees: Expanding NATO's Definition of Security over 75 Years." Sponsored by NATO's Public Diplomacy Division, this event brought together policy-makers, decision-makers, academia, civil society, students, and the public to reflect upon NATO's remarkable history and explore its evolving role in the contemporary world order. It also served as a continuation of IPC's growing focus on NATO and its role in addressing emerging global challenges.

The event first set out to trace the evolution of NATO's definition of security over its 75-year history with a view toward better comprehending the challenges NATO faces today. Over the past 75 years, NATO has faced a myriad of conflicts and threats, from the Cold War to conflicts in the Balkans, from the War on Terror to Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. In today's increasingly unstable world, threats to NATO stem not only from traditional conflicts but everyday life and practices, threatening not only governments and militaries but also societies and individuals. To effectively combat these threats, in 2016, NATO adopted a 360-degree security approach to take a comprehensive look at security from every direction—both literally and figuratively. This holistic approach has put hybrid, emerging, and human-centric threats at the center of NATO's security strategy alongside its three core tasks and marked a massive expansion of NATO's definition of security.

To better understand NATO's evolving security approach, the panel discussions at IPC took up the topics of dis/misinformation, climate change,

and the Women, Peace, and Security agenda as a lens from which to better understand NATO's response to today's security environment. As these topics are rarely viewed in Türkiye through a security lens, let alone as priorities for NATO, this event sought to encourage participants to think about NATO specifically and security more generally in a broader context in line with NATO's 360-degree security approach. The breadth of the discussion ranged from NATO's cooperative security approach to the spread of foreign information manipulation and interference from Russia and China, from climate and energy security in the Black Sea and Eastern Mediterranean to women's roles in the war in Ukraine, among many other issues.

The following report captures the key discussions and thematic issues raised during the event, complemented by additional research to provide deeper context and analysis. While the panelists offered valuable insights into NATO's priorities, this report aims to further explore the topics discussed. Links to the panel recordings, available on IPC's YouTube channel, can be found in the appendix.



NATO AT 75

The history of NATO begins with allies' adoption of the Washington Treaty on April 4, 1949, which established the Alliance's commitment to individual and collective defense as enshrined in Article 5.¹ Although Article 5 has been invoked only once in the Alliance's history—following Al-Qaeda's attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001—the principle of collective defense underlined in this article has functioned as NATO's *modus operandi* for consensus-based decision-making since its founding. While NATO's threat perception and strategies have greatly evolved over the years, as will be outlined in this section of the report, this fundamental principle has remained constant throughout NATO's history.

As stated by NATO's first Secretary General Lord Hastings Lionel Ismay and quoted during the panel discussion, NATO was originally designed to “keep the Soviet Union out, the Americans in, and the Germans down.”² While this largely remained an apt explanation of the Western security Alliance throughout the second half of the 20th century as the Cold War brewed between the West and the Soviet Union, the end of the Cold War dramatically changed this paradigm. The collapse of the Berlin Wall marked the end of the bipolar international

order and ushered in a unipolar order in which the United States and the post-war security architecture it had built—including NATO—became the singular power guiding the new world order. Therefore, as this monumental change dramatically shifted the security landscape for the West, the fall of the Soviet Union brought about debates regarding NATO's relevance: chiefly, it was questioned that without the existence of a common enemy, against who or what was NATO meant to be defending.

Fortunately, NATO's identity crisis in the early 1990s remained short-lived as NATO found renewed focus in preserving its collective defense apparatus to meet future threats. As aptly argued by former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and quoted during the panel discussion, the logic prevailed within NATO that “You do not cancel your home insurance policy just because there have been fewer burglaries in your street in the last twelve months.”³ Therefore, even without an overarching common enemy such as the Soviet Union, NATO continued forward to protect its founding principles while embarking on new missions.

In 1991, NATO adopted a new Strategic Concept, the first one released to the public. It reiterated NATO's commitment to collective security despite a reduction in NATO forces. More importantly, it expanded NATO's cooperation with its newly independent neighbors and outlined its commitment to improving cooperation with former Warsaw Pact states. With communist authoritarian regimes

1 Article 5 of the Washington Treaty states the following: “The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all and consequently they agree that, if such an armed attack occurs, each of them, in exercise of the right of individual or collective self-defence recognized by Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, will assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking forthwith, individually and in concert with the other Parties, such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force, to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area...” See, “The North Atlantic Treaty,” NATO Archives, https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/history_pdf/20161122_E1-founding-treaty-original-tre.pdf.

2 “Lord Ismay,” NATO, accessed December 27, 2024, https://www.nato.int/cps/pt/natohq/declassified_137930.htm

3 “Margaret Thatcher Speech to North Atlantic Council at Turnberry,” Margaret Thatcher Foundation, June 7, 1990, accessed December 27, 2024, <https://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/108106>.



in Europe firmly defeated upon the end of the Cold War and subsequent pro-democracy movements throughout Eastern Europe, NATO's political role as a league of democracies took on greater importance in the post-Cold War era as it looked to protect its four principles—individual liberty, democracy, human rights, and rule of law—and to function as a “transatlantic forum” preserving transatlantic cooperation and consultation under Article 4 of the Washington Treaty.⁴ As related by one panelist, during this period, strategic planning had become more political than ever before: in contrast to NATO's Cold War-era planning led by Allied generals, this new era ushered in a shift toward civilian-led “effects-based” planning that focused on “achieving more with less” in peacetime.

The end of the Cold War also precipitated a new age of transatlantic cooperation, including partnerships with the Russian Federation and other Eastern bloc states and the broad expansion of NATO under Article 10. In 1994, NATO launched the Partnership for Peace (PfP) program and the Mediterranean Dialogue to further cooperation with non-member Euro-Atlantic states and Mediterranean countries. In 1995, NATO initiated its “Study on Enlargement,” determining that new members could join NATO provided they fulfill certain democratic criteria.⁵ Four years later, in 1999, NATO completed the first of what would become seven rounds of enlargement since the

end of the Cold War, with Czechia, Poland, and Hungary becoming the first group of new member states. With NATO's enlargement into Central and Eastern Europe, the Alliance's borders began to dramatically change, leading to new opportunities as well as challenges, including to its consensus-based framework.

During this period, NATO faced dramatically different threats than it had in the Cold War, such as ethnic wars in the Balkans and terrorism. In its search for a new role in the post-Cold War era, NATO determined that it must go “out of area or out of business,” which led the Alliance to carry out peacekeeping missions outside of Western Europe for the first time in its history. Although it was maintained during the panel discussion that NATO had informal experience with out-of-area operations due to its involvement in the crisis management process of the 1956 Suez Crisis, NATO's peacekeeping operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina marked a sea change for NATO operations moving away from the Cold War order. While Allies struggled to reach a consensus on how to approach its missions in the new geography of the Balkans,⁶ both in Bosnia and Herzegovina and later in Kosovo, NATO's peacekeeping operations ultimately helped the Alliance charter its course for the new era. Following the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the United States and NATO's invocation of Article 5 under the leadership of Secretary General Lord Robertson,⁷ NATO expanded its out-of-area operations, taking over the UN-mandated International Security Forces Operation (ISAF) in 2003. It was

4 “The Alliance's New Strategic Concept (1991), agreed by the Heads of State and Government participating in the Meeting of the North Atlantic Council,” NATO, November 7–8, 1991, last updated July 1, 2022, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_23847.htm, paragraph 20. ll.

5 These include: “a functioning democratic political system based on a market economy; the fair treatment of minority populations; a commitment to the peaceful resolution of conflicts; the ability and willingness to make a military contribution to NATO operations; and a commitment to democratic civil-military relations and institutional structures.” See, “Enlargement and Article 10,” NATO, last updated October 3, 2024, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_49212.htm.

6 William Tuohy, “MILITARY: NATO After the Cold War: It's ‘Out of Area or Out of Business,’” *Los Angeles Times*, August 13, 1993, <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1993-08-13-mn-23409-story.html>.

7 See Lord Robertson, “9/11 and Article 5 with former NATO Secretary General Lord Robertson,” NATO through Time Podcast, hosted by Jamie Shea, September 11, 2024, <https://open.spotify.com/episode/6DWrwkONQgFfZkGZFbxDkv?si=7d56b536051d490d>. It was also pointed out during the discussion that the invocation of Article 5 was led by Europe rather than the United States.



thus NATO's out-of-area operations that defined NATO missions throughout the early 2000s.

During the panel discussion, the 2008 Bucharest Summit was highlighted as another inflection point in NATO's post-Cold War history. While NATO and Russia had increased cooperation over the past decade and a half—with Russia becoming the first member of NATO's PfP, the establishment of the NATO-Russia Founding Act in 1997, and the creation of the NATO-Russia Council in 2002 as evidence of closer ties—the proposition of Georgian and Ukrainian membership in NATO put Russia at loggerheads with the Alliance. Eventually, the Alliance's decision—largely at the urging of Germany and other European allies—not to extend membership invitations to Georgia and Ukraine at the Bucharest Summit prioritized growing cooperation with Russia over Georgia's and Ukraine's membership aspirations. This, however, did not stop Russia's occupation of the Abkhazia and South Ossetia regions of Georgia one month following the summit, in August 2008. While NATO initially suspended formal meetings of the NATO-Russia Council after the invasion, NATO ultimately decided to resume official talks with Russia the next year, during the 2009 Strasbourg-Kehl Summit. Thus, NATO continued its policy of building a “strategic partnership” with Moscow—as outlined in its 2010 Strategic Concept⁸—opening “a new stage of cooperation towards a true strategic partnership.”⁹

By the early 2010s, NATO had begun to expand its perception of threats to new areas. Reflecting on the past decade of security challenges, NATO began to take stock of the unique lessons learned during its out-of-area operations, largely in the Middle East, while maintaining that the Euro-Atlantic area was at peace. The 2010 Strategic Concept, titled “Active Engagement, Modern Defence,” identified NATO's three core tasks for the new decade—collective defense, crisis management, and cooperative security—adding the last of these tasks for the first time.¹⁰ The document not only reflected NATO's increasing role in combatting terrorism and weapons of mass destruction as the first Strategic Concept following the 9/11 attacks but also reflected the growth of new threats and challenges such as cyberspace, the environment, and emerging and disruptive technologies (EDTs). It further maintained that there was a low “threat of a conventional attack against NATO territory.”¹¹ It also emphasized increased cooperation with NATO partners and new areas of cooperation such as NATO-EU cooperation. Furthermore, the 2010 Strategic Concept also highlighted NATO's Open Door Policy, reinforcing NATO's “firm commitment to keep the door to NATO open to all European democracies that meet the standards of membership.”¹² Over the 2000s, NATO had rapidly expanded to include nine new members over two rounds of enlargement—Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia. This growth, again, shifted the Alliance's borders and thus its understanding of threats, especially in the case of post-Soviet states such as the Baltic countries, which remain some of the most vociferous allies in sounding the alarm on increasing threats from the Alliance's East.

8 “Active Engagement, Modern Defence,” Strategic Concept for the Defence and Security of the Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation adopted by Heads of State and Government in Lisbon,” NATO, November 19, 2010, last updated July 1, 2022, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_68580.htm, paragraph 33.

9 “NATO-Russia Relations: The Background,” NATO Media Background-er, March 2020, https://www.nato.int/nato_static_f12014/assets/pdf/2020/4/pdf/2003-NATO-Russia_en.pdf.

10 NATO, “Active Engagement, Modern Defence.”

11 *Ibid.*, para. 7.

12 *Ibid.*, para. 5.



Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014 marked an abrupt shift from an Alliance at peace to an Alliance realizing that it must be increasingly ready to counter threats from every direction. It was put forth during the panel discussion that this moment is when NATO began thinking about its 360-degree security approach, seeing that NATO would now not only encounter threats from the South but also the East. New threats from Russia, such as the proliferation of disinformation campaigns and increasing hybrid attacks, necessitated broader conceptions of security, as such attacks were designed not only to harm physical infrastructure but also disrupt democratic debate. It was thus clear that NATO needed new defenses not just from all physical sides but in all non-traditional security areas.

To better prepare for NATO's new posture, the 2014 Wales Summit kicked off major debates about burden sharing within NATO, with every ally committing to spend 2% of GDP on defense in the coming years. NATO members also agreed to launch its Readiness Action Plan (RAP) at the summit, pledging to increase the Alliance's deterrence and defense posture. At the Warsaw Summit in 2016, NATO announced its enhanced forward presence (eFP), improving its forward posture by stationing four multinational battlegroups on the Eastern Flank of the Alliance, in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland, led by Western member states, the United Kingdom, Canada, Germany, and the United States, respectively.¹³ It also expanded its strategy for the South, opening a new "Hub for the South" under Allied Joint Force Command Naples in 2017. In 2017, in response to a growing number of attacks across the Alliance

from the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), NATO became a member of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS, primarily supporting the coalition with AWACS surveillance aircraft. During this period, NATO also added two domains of operation, cyber and space, expanding on its traditional areas of operation, land, air, and sea. Meanwhile, NATO also remained committed to its Open Door Policy, admitting Montenegro (2017) and North Macedonia (2020) as member states.

Although it would take many years—i.e., until Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022—for the majority of Allies to reach 2% and to fully recognize the major threats stemming from Russia, NATO had begun to lay the groundwork for the changing international security order during the second half of the 2010s. While this was not enough to help deter Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine—a criticism that participants levied at Allied member states' weak response to the annexation of Crimea—it had become clear within NATO that the world that NATO had envisaged in the first half of the decade was far from the present reality. NATO needed to adapt or risk "brain death" in the words of French President Emmanuel Macron.¹⁴ Therefore, debates about a new security framework for NATO had to begin, or NATO once again risked going out of business.

In the lead-up to its new Strategic Concept for the 2020s, coupled with rapid changes in NATO's threat perception over the past decade, NATO, at the behest of member state leaders, set out to build a new agenda for the next decade, commissioning an independent panel of experts to lead a review of NATO's strategy and consult with an extensive list of government, business, military, and scholarly

13 "NATO's military presence in the east of the Alliance," NATO, last updated November 29, 2024, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_136388.htm. NATO's enhanced Forward Presence has since expanded to also include multinational battlegroups in Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia.

14 "Emmanuel Macron warns Europe: NATO is becoming brain-dead," *The Economist*, November 7, 2019, <https://www.economist.com/europe/2019/11/07/emmanuel-macron-warns-europe-nato-is-becoming-brain-dead>.



actors, in order to build a list of recommendations for NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg. This process was the first of its kind for the Alliance and led to what would become known as NATO's 2030 Agenda, which was endorsed by the Heads of State and Government at the 2021 Brussels Summit. In the Agenda, NATO Leaders agreed to deepening political consultation and coordination, strengthening deterrence and defense, improving resilience, preserving NATO's technological edge, upholding the rules-based international order, boosting training and capacity building, combatting and adapting to climate change, preparing the next Strategic Concept, and investing in NATO.¹⁵

Following on this agenda, in 2022, NATO Leaders remained committed to the above list of pledges in drafting its new guiding document, the 2022 Strategic Concept. Although Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022 dramatically reshaped the Alliance's outlook toward 2030—with the Strategic Concept identifying Russia as “the most significant and direct threat” to an Alliance that is “not at peace”¹⁶—the tenets of NATO's 360-degree approach cultivated over the latter half of the 2010s and its 2030 process remained important features of NATO's new Strategic Concept. To preserve its broadening approach to security, the Alliance committed to “integrating climate change, human security and the Women, Peace and Security agenda across all our core tasks.”¹⁷ While the inclusion of terrorism, identified as the “most direct asymmetric threat,” and China, identified as a “challenge” for transatlantic security, into the Strategic Concept precipitated the most discussion, NATO's pledge

to integrate more human-centric issues across the Alliance is no small commitment and, therefore, requires further attention. It is from this point of departure that the following sections examine the themes of dis/misinformation; the Women, Peace, and Security agenda; and climate security.

15 “NATO 2030 Factsheet,” NATO, June 2021, https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2021/6/pdf/2106-factsheet-nato2030-en.pdf.

16 “NATO 2022 Strategic Concept, Adopted by the Heads of State and Government at the NATO Summit in Madrid 29 June 2022,” NATO, June 29, 2022, <https://www.nato.int/strategic-concept/>.

17 Ibid.



DIS/MISINFORMATION

Although disinformation operations against NATO have been around since the Alliance's founding, the volume and proliferation of such threats against NATO in recent years has become a gargantuan task for allies to tackle as its citizens are increasingly interconnected. NATO has seen a huge uptick in the spread of disinformation operations since Russia's 2014 invasion of Crimea and the subsequent proliferation of Russian disinformation operations.¹⁸ While NATO has put an increased focus on this threat over the past decade, the 2022 Strategic Concept is the first Strategic Concept to identify disinformation as a threat from NATO's adversaries, namely Russia and China. As the threat of disinformation continues to loom large in face of an ever-growing list of conflicts, NATO and its member states' response is imperative for creating societies that are resilient to this threat.

NATO defines disinformation as “false or inaccurate information that a hostile actor uses deliberately to deceive people.”¹⁹ As highlighted during the panel discussion, disinformation can take form in a number of ways, including psyops, fake news, and foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI), the last of which was frequently cited during the panel discussion. Related to disinformation, the proliferation of “misinformation,” or false information spread without any intent to harm, was also viewed as an equivalent threat within this discussion.

18 “NATO's approach to countering disinformation,” NATO, last updated November 8, 2023, https://www.nato.int/cps/cs/natohq/topics_219728.htm.

19 Ibid.

Disinformation is most rapidly spread through online channels, most notably social media. While foreign adversaries are often the creators of disinformation, many actors make the proliferation of dis/misinformation possible. To this end, it was put forth by one panelist within the discussion of foreign information operations that “without domestic support, FIMI doesn't succeed.” Disinformation from foreign adversaries is intentionally designed with the local context in mind to target and influence an emotional response from local actors. As social media often elicits kneejerk reactions to such information, politicians, businesses, and citizens, among others, play a crucial role in spreading—whether intentionally or unintentionally—false information. Therefore, it is often everyday people rather than foreign adversaries who are guilty of actually spreading the false information that these bad actors create. Another panelist pointed out that even established newsrooms are sometimes guilty of spreading dis/misinformation as factchecking and other methods of verification are sometimes overlooked in order to keep pace with the rapid-fire news cycle.

Although more precise strategies to combatting disinformation vary among member states, NATO's strategy against combatting disinformation is two-pronged: understand and engage.²⁰ Under the first prong—understand—NATO works to monitor and analyze the information space, identifying where disinformation stems from and how it is spread. Under the second prong—engage—NATO aims to connect with the public, member states, and partners through clear, effective communication, projects, events,

20 Ibid.



and media. NATO's engagement strategy also includes NATO's "pre-bunking" efforts, which has proven to be an active deterrent to dispelling disinformation. In contrast to "debunking," or using fact-checking to prove already proliferated narratives false, "pre-bunking" enables individuals to cultivate the knowledge and skills necessary to proactively identify disinformation.²¹ One example of pre-bunking in action is the *Bad News* game, which situates users within a fictional online environment to challenge participants to become the creators of bad news in order to better understand how disinformation is spread.²²

During the panel discussion, several strategies and projects for countering disinformation were put forth. First, the DE-CONSPIRATOR project, funded by the European Union's Horizon project grant, was outlined as one example.²³ The project aims to investigate the psychological and cognitive drivers behind the spread of disinformation and, to this end, studies the actors creating FIMI, examines how FIMI is spread, identifies vulnerable groups, and creates a database of FIMI operations. While the project is limited to disinformation from Russia and China and its effects on EU and partner countries, the project aims to gain a better understanding of FIMI more broadly, which is applicable to the whole of the transatlantic alliance.

A second example that was mentioned is the StopFake campaign, which has focused on fact-checking disinformation on Ukraine following the

annexation of Crimea in 2014.²⁴ The project is a collective of Ukrainian journalists who work to dispel fake news and images through creating a database of fakes that can be used to identify future disinformation operations. The group also provides media literacy and training for Ukrainian journalists.

While the challenges stemming from disinformation are only likely to increase in the age of rapidly developing artificial intelligence (AI), which continues to produce enhanced image and video programs capable of creating dangerously accurate fakes, the more that media literacy needs to be a security priority. Moving forward, similar projects that not only debunk but also help pre-bunk fake news and teach media literacy skills, an idea that was put forth by one panelist, should be widespread and receive more attention on the international, national, and local levels. NATO should consider providing additional small grants to related projects and funding further research on combatting the spread of disinformation.

21 For more information on pre-bunking strategies, such as inoculation theory, see Rakoén Maertens, Jon Roozenbeek, Melisa Basol, and Sander van der Linden, "Long-Term Effectiveness of Inoculation Against Misinformation: Three Longitudinal Experiments," *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Applied* 27, no. 1 (2021): 1–16.

22 M. Basol et al., "Good News about Bad News: Gamified Inoculation Boosts Confidence and Cognitive Immunity Against Fake News," *Journal of Cognition* 3, no. 1 (2020): 1–9.

23 DE-CONSPIRATOR Homepage, <https://deconspirator.eu/>.

24 StopFake Homepage, <https://www.stopfake.org/en/main/>.



WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY

NATO adopted United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) over two decades ago, on October 31, 2000. The resolution recognizes the unique role that women play not only in conflict and combat but in all NATO domains. It works to ensure gender equality across all areas of the Alliance and is integrated across all of NATO's core tasks, as outlined in NATO's 2022 Strategic Concept.²⁵ The basis of NATO's WPS agenda is twofold. First, the agenda recognizes that conflict has a disproportionate effect on women. Second, it recognizes that women are not only victims but also play unique roles in conflict settings. Thus, it adopts a holistic perspective of women and their roles in democratic societies.

Since the adoption of UNSC Resolution 1325, NATO has adopted nine other UNSC resolutions on WPS, expanding the agenda's visibility within NATO. This year, NATO adopted an updated policy on Women, Peace, and Security, which was endorsed by NATO Heads of State and Government at the Washington Summit.²⁶ This updated policy reflects lessons learned over the past 24 years of the WPS Agenda not only in NATO member states and operations but also those learned by partners and civil society organizations.

While the WPS agenda is implemented across NATO, one of the chief ways in which the agenda is implemented is through the creation of NATO offices dedicated to the implementation of the WPS agenda, including military gender advisors and the Secretary General's Special Representa-

tive for Women, Peace and Security. Among other programs, NATO also provides gender advisory training to member state militaries. Although NATO itself has been carrying out these programs for years, it was highlighted during the discussion that few of these programs and the WPS agenda itself have been implemented by individual member states. Thus, there is a gap between the NATO level and some member countries.

Within NATO, women make up nearly 13% of all NATO armed forces on average and 44% of international staff. Although women have been a significant part of NATO since its founding, it was highlighted during the panel discussion that women are rarely seen in NATO—a point maintained by one panelist who is currently conducting a research project on NATO's WPS Agenda. While women have been promoted to many leadership roles within NATO, including the role of Deputy Secretary General and Assistant Secretary General for various NATO departments, NATO has yet to appoint a female Secretary General, which is by and far the most visible representation of NATO. As another example of the lack of visibility of women in NATO, the same panelist pointed out that a recently edited volume on NATO did not include any chapter on NATO's WPS agenda or even gender issues more generally.

As the war in Ukraine has put the spotlight on women and their role in conflict, the subject of women in the war in Ukraine, a NATO partner country and aspiring member state, was taken up in the panel discussion by a prominent Ukrainian human rights defender who has been documenting Russian war crimes in Ukraine. Since the beginning of the conflict in Ukraine in 2014, Russia has been committing acts of torture, sexual violence, and

²⁵ NATO, "2022 Strategic Concept."

²⁶ "NATO Policy on Women, Peace and Security (2024)," NATO, last updated July 11, 2024, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_227578.htm.



extrajudicial executions of Ukrainian citizens held as prisoners of war and illegally detained civilians. While this has affected all citizens, the majority of documented cases are from women. While Ukraine has seen the massive mobilization of women over the last decade—with over 4,000 Ukrainian women in combat positions—women have been performing a myriad of roles including political, diplomatic, civil, combat, and caretaker roles as well as documenting war crimes. In addition to facing the disproportionate effects of violence, women have faced gendered issues within the Ukrainian Armed Forces such as the absence of uniforms tailored for women. Initiatives such as the Invisible Battalion,²⁷ which has been advocating for gender equality within the Ukrainian army since the annexation of Crimea in 2014, was brought forth in the discussion as an example of how Ukrainian women are working toward a more equal future in the armed forces. It was maintained that while major progress has been made over the last decade, more work needs to be done to achieve gender equality within Ukraine's armed forces. As Ukraine will undoubtedly continue its struggle toward gender equality during the extent of the war, it will continue to provide best practice examples and lessons learned for other states and NATO.

Although the UNSC has continuously worked to update and improve upon the WPS agenda, both NATO and Ukraine's adoption of the WPS agenda have been frequently criticized by feminist scholars. Many of these arguments and critiques were outlined in the panel discussion. At the center of one argument, it is maintained that because international relations, peacebuilding, and the military domain operate within male-dominated systems of hegemonic masculinity, the WPS agenda cannot break from a patriarchal system. Most recently, NATO's heightened defense spending has also

been criticized by feminist scholars, who argue that the purchase of more weapons can never benefit the role of women in conflict.

In the case of Ukraine, feminist scholars have criticized the heavy militarization of the WPS agenda, arguing that during wartime women in combat are prioritized above women's social rights and peacekeeping. Furthermore, Ukraine has been criticized for reinforcing a form of nationalist feminism that prioritizes security and defense over the "right" feminist goals. During the panel discussion, one speaker provided an apt metaphor to illustrate the unfair criticism levied at Ukraine: if one breaks their leg while on their way to buy shoes, one generally does not continue their quest to buy shoes but instead goes to the hospital. While Ukrainian feminists had been working toward achieving gender equality and securing more social rights for women prior to the war, Ukrainians now first need to ensure their freedom from Russia in order to then continue to fight for greater social rights for women.

It was also highlighted that while Ukraine has been an active conflict zone since 2014, it has published two national action plans to implement the WPS agenda, with the second updated in light of the full-scale invasion and active conflict setting.²⁸ While it was conceded during the panel discussion that there is often a gap between the WPS agenda on paper and how it is implemented in practice in the field, Ukraine will prove to be a viable testing ground for how the WPS agenda can be implemented while in an active state of combat. As NATO will continue to increase its focus on the WPS agenda across all domains over the next decade, this practical experience may help prepare NATO strategies for adapting its agenda to future conflict scenarios.

27 Invisible Battalion Homepage, <https://invisiblebattalion.org/en/home-2/>.

28 For more information, see "Ukraine," 1325 NAPS, accessed December 20, 2024, <https://1325naps.peacewomen.org/index.php/ukraine>.



CLIMATE SECURITY

NATO recognizes climate change as both a “crisis and a threat multiplier.”²⁹ Like the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda, NATO aims to integrate climate change across all its core tasks. Climate change is a part of NATO’s efforts toward building individual and collective resilience, maintaining NATO’s technological edge, its strategy for the South, crisis management and counterterrorism, and its partnership with the EU, among other areas of cooperation and operation.

While the threats stemming from climate change are viewed differently among Allied member states, with each member state facing unique threats, it was maintained during the panel discussion that climate change is a global problem that needs to be dealt with cooperatively on a global scale, as the threats stemming from climate change do not respect borders or territorial divides. While the UN has been leading the global effort to combat climate change through the implementation of major climate decisions at its annual Conference of the Parties (COP), NATO has expressed its desire to become the leading international organization on climate change and security. To this end, it has been increasing its efforts to combat climate change and to raise its profile in the area of climate security on the international stage. Under the leadership of former Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, for example, NATO participated in three COP events (COP 26, 27, and 28).

NATO has been working on environmental security projects since establishing the Committee on the Challenges of Modern Society (CCMS), a predecessor of the Science for Peace and Security (SPS) Programme, in 1969. However, its

work on climate change accelerated in the 2010s following the implementation of the 2010 Strategic Concept—which for the first time recognized climate change as a security challenge—and, later, the implementation of NATO’s Green Defence Framework in 2014.³⁰ During this period, NATO began to recognize the significant impact that armed forces have on the environment as well as the wide-ranging nature of the threats stemming from climate change across multiple domains.

NATO’s climate security efforts have been rapidly expanding in the 2020s, as the climate crisis has become far more entrenched. In 2021, NATO leaders agreed at the Brussels Summit to implement a Climate Change and Security Action Plan,³¹ reinforcing the Climate Change and Security Agenda that had been endorsed by NATO foreign ministers three months prior. These plans were adopted with a view toward adapting NATO’s 360-degree approach for climate change as well as NATO’s 2030 process. The Plan also announced the first NATO Climate Change and Security Impact Assessment, which assesses NATO’s climate impact and the integration of the climate perspective into its operations on an annual basis, with the first assessment published in 2022. In 2023, Allied leaders at the Vilnius Summit moved to establish an accredited NATO Centre of Excellence for Climate Change and Security in Montreal, Canada, which opened in May 2024.

²⁹ NATO, “2022 Strategic Concept.”

³⁰ “Green Defence Framework,” Approved by the North Atlantic Council in February 2014, NATO, https://natolibguides.info/ld.php?content_id=25285072.

³¹ “NATO Climate Change and Security Action Plan,” NATO, last updated June 14, 2021, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_185174.htm.



Although NATO is striving to implement clear, forward-looking plans to combat climate change with a 360-degree approach, many challenges remain in combatting climate change and determining the full scope of this issue within the security field. This sentiment was echoed during the panel discussion, in which one panelist maintained that because of the diverse threats stemming from climate change that it is difficult to conceive of a “systematic and rational way to interlink all the [NATO] hardcore security threats that emanate from climate change.” While the nexus of climate change and hard security is often not definitive, some threats are clearer than others. Today, for example, we can see a clear threat to military personnel, who are affected by operating in extreme heat or cold; military installations, which are subject to the surrounding climatic conditions; and energy infrastructure, which is vulnerable to extreme weather. It was also pointed out during the discussion that climate change has proven extremely harmful to the global economy. According to one estimate, the total damages from climate change reached USD 2.8 trillion from 2000 to 2019.³² In the first 11 months of 2024, the United States alone experienced 24 climate incidents each costing over USD 1 billion.³³ Further, in addition to these known challenges, there is a degree of uncertainty around what the future threats stemming from climate change will look like and how they will manifest—let alone what they will cost. To this end, U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin’s comments were refer-

enced in which he identifies climate change as an “existential” security threat.³⁴

In preparing its climate security strategy, NATO must not only address today’s threats but also forecast and prepare for future threats stemming from the changing climate. Security threats such as rising sea levels and the melting ice in the Arctic, for example, will precipitate both anticipated and unanticipated security threats for the future. In the Arctic, melting ice will expose new resources and elements that can be mined for energy and technological resources. Melting sea ice may also open up new trade routes in the High Seas, where China has already planned to utilize these perspective sea lanes as part of its Polar Silk Road. Competition for access to these resources will undoubtedly further inflame geopolitical tensions in an already unstable global environment. Additionally, future scenarios such as climate-induced migration will also threaten human security and domestic stability, as well as that of supranational organization such as the EU, as nations form political decisions on migration.

The challenges pertaining to the transformation of the energy sector, including the ongoing energy transition away from fossil fuels as well as European efforts to achieve energy independence, were highlighted in the discussion as essential components of climate security for NATO. While NATO has continued to widen its climate security agenda since Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, the war in Ukraine has placed increased political focus on energy security rather

32 Paige Bennett, “Climate change is costing the world \$16 million per hour: study,” World Economic Forum, October 12, 2023, <https://www.weforum.org/stories/2023/10/climate-loss-and-damage-cost-16-million-per-hour>.

33 “Overview: Billion-Dollar Weather and Climate Disasters,” National Centers for Environmental Information, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, accessed December 27, 2024, <https://www.ncei.noaa.gov/access/billions/>.

34 David Vergun, “Defense Secretary Calls Climate Change an Existential Threat,” DOD News, U.S. Department of Defense, April 22, 2021, <https://www.defense.gov/news/news-stories/article/article/2582051/defense-secretary-calls-climate-change-an-existential-threat>.



than climate security.³⁵ Germany's decision to reignite its old coal-fired power plants (despite its nuclear energy capacity) in effort to wean itself off Russian natural gas following the latter's full-scale invasion of Ukraine is one example in which energy security has been prioritized over climate security for geopolitical reasons. Another example that was highlighted during the discussion is that of the increasing energy resources needed for the development of AI, which will be needed to ensure the Alliance's technological edge. Amid global efforts to reduce energy usage in face of the climate crisis, projected energy usage from AI giants such as Google and Microsoft have already increased significantly from 2023 to 2024, posing a challenge to global emissions reduction targets.³⁶

Although NATO is rarely involved in the geopolitical decisions related to member states' energy needs, NATO's mediation efforts between Greece and Türkiye in 2020 was brought forth during the panel discussion as one example in which physical and energy security became intertwined directly within NATO in recent years. As tensions between the two NATO member states heightened due to disputes over drilling for hydrocarbon resources and exclusive economic zones (EEZ) in the Eastern Mediterranean, NATO—which in the past has been reluctant to intervene in bilateral conflicts between member states—set up a de-escalation mechanism to help prevent incidents between

the two members at sea and in the air.³⁷ Amid the de-escalation process, Türkiye abandoned its exploratory missions in the Eastern Mediterranean and turned to its ongoing search for natural gas in the Black Sea—a mission that has largely proved successful, as was posited by one panelist. Although NATO's effectiveness in resolving bilateral disputes between member states was widely debated at the time of the Eastern Mediterranean crisis,³⁸ the success of this mediation effort has proved that NATO can be an active mediator in potential energy and climate-related disputes in the future.

While NATO faces an uphill battle in responding to the future threats stemming from climate change, the Alliance's view toward integrating a climate perspective across all tasks will undoubtedly help future-proof NATO amid the ongoing climate crisis. However, as the political consensus around climate change is in flux—with incoming U.S. President Donald Trump promising to withdraw from the UN's Paris Climate Accords—NATO will need to develop creative ways to convince all actors to agree to decisions on climate security. Although mitigating the effects of climate change and cutting emissions are essential to a more resilient future for NATO, increased cooperation on energy security may prove more attainable in the coming years.

35 Heidi Hardt and Jacqueline Burns, "NATO wants to be a leader on climate security. Here are the next steps to get there," *New Atlanticist*, The Atlantic Council, August 19, 2024, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/nato-wants-to-be-a-leader-on-climate-security-here-are-the-next-steps-to-get-there/>.

36 Dara Kerr, "AI brings soaring emissions for Google and Microsoft, a major contributor to climate change," NPR, July 12, 2024, <https://www.npr.org/2024/07/12/g-s1-9545/ai-brings-soaring-emissions-for-google-and-microsoft-a-major-contributor-to-climate-change>.

37 "Military de-confliction mechanism between Greece and Turkey established at NATO," NATO, last updated October 1, 2020, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_178523.htm.

38 Judy Dempsey, "Judy Asks: Is NATO Paralyzed Over the Greece-Turkey Conflict?" Carnegie Europe, September 3, 2020, <https://carnegieendowment.org/europe/strategic-europe/2020/09/judy-asks-is-nato-paralyzed-over-the-greece-turkey-conflict?lang=en>.



CONCLUSION

NATO's 75th anniversary provides a valuable opportunity to reflect on its legacy as well as how it is addressing the unprecedented challenges of today. Over the last seven and a half decades, NATO has become the most successful alliance in history, largely owing to its remarkable resilience and ability to adapt to the changing global threat environment. As seen through the first section of this report, NATO has successfully leveraged its consensus-based decision-making and protected its democratic framework to continue its core mission of collective defense well beyond the Cold War. Its purpose has remained intact despite major shifts in the international order, a move toward out-of-area operations, and the reawakening of the Russian threat on its borders.

While it could have easily slipped into bipolar logic following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, solely focusing on hard security threats from Russia, NATO has instead proven its commitment to its updated security posture. In its new Strategic Concept, NATO increased its commitment to integrating climate change, human security, and the Women, Peace and Security agenda within its core tasks and has followed through with updated policies such as the adoption of a new policy on Women, Peace, and Security and the establishment of the NATO-accredited Centre of Excellence for Climate Change and Security. However, as the global security environment continues to remain unstable and liberal democracy within the Alliance remains under threat, it is incumbent upon NATO to remain vigilant in upholding and implementing these tasks.

In the coming years, NATO should increase the visibility of projects related to dis/misinformation, climate security, and the Women, Peace, and

Security agenda in order to amplify the importance of these issues across its core tasks. While during the celebration of NATO's 75th anniversary, these issues became increasingly visible, it remains to be seen if they will remain as visible in NATO's agenda in future when the security threats facing the Alliance become more pervasive and NATO's Article 5 might be undermined as several future NATO heads of state have indicated their lack of full support for it.

For NATO to remain relevant and maintain its strength in future, it must not merely rest on its laurels but face the new challenges ahead with flexibility and determination.

APPENDIX

EVENT PROGRAM

From Article 5 to 360 Degrees: Expanding NATO's Definition of Security over 75 Years

Date: Thursday, November 7, 2024**Venue:** IPC Karaköy, 2nd floor (Minerva Han, Bankalar Caddesi No:2, Karaköy)**Program**

09:00 – 09:30 Arrival of Participants

09:30 – 09:40 Welcoming Remarks

09:40 – 10:30 Panel I: NATO at 75

Speakers:**Ahmet Uzumcu**, Former Permanent Representative of Türkiye to NATO, 2002–2004**Fatih Ceylan**, Former Permanent Representative of Türkiye to NATO, 2013–2018**Huseyin Dirloz**, Former NATO Assistant Secretary General for Defense Policy and Planning**Moderator:** Megan Gisclon, Istanbul Policy Center

10:30 – 11:15 Q&A

11:15 – 11:30 Coffee Break

11:30 – 12:15 Panel II: Dis/misinformation

Speakers:**Akin Unver**, Associate Professor of International Relations at Ozyegin University**Gaiana Iuksel**, Associate Professor of Journalism at Istanbul University**Marlon Sendker**, Lawyer and Journalist**Moderator:** Samuele Carlo Ayrtan Abrami, 2024/25 Mercator-IPC Fellow

12:15 – 13:00 Q&A

13:00 – 14:00 Break

14:00 – 14:45 Panel III: Women, Peace and Security

Speakers:**Oleksandra Matvichuk**, Centre for Civil Liberties (Online)**Selver Sahin**, Co-founder of SDG5 Research Network**Yuliya Biletska**, Associate Professor of International Relations at Karabuk University**Moderator:** Esra Dilek, Instructor at Ozyegin University; 2022/23 Mercator-IPC Fellow

14:45 – 15:30 Q&A

15:30 – 15:45 Coffee Break

15:45 – 16:30 Panel IV: Climate Security

Speakers:**Matthew Bryza**, Managing Director, Straife**Mithat Rende**, Former Chief Negotiator for Climate Change, Turkey (Online)**Moderator:** Basar Baysal, Associate Professor of International Relations at Ankara Science University; 2023/24 Mercator-IPC Fellow

16:30 – 17:15 Q&A

17:15 – 17:30 Closing Remarks

PANEL RECORDINGS

NATO AT 75:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3NqmGt-biESs&list=PL7tbDtVxk41NSewhmzOGSutqa-qMYIf1CK>

DIS/MISINFORMATION:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uRtyb3Gh-Q3Y&list=PL7tbDtVxk41NSewhmzOGSutqaqMYIf1CK&index=2>

WOMEN, PEACE, AND SECURITY:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AHVAIKPTZ-Kk&list=PL7tbDtVxk41NSewhmzOGSutqaqMYIf1CK&index=3>

CLIMATE SECURITY:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q2oL_ztnQ5I&list=PL7tbDtVxk41NSewhmzOGSutqa-qMYIf1CK&index=4



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