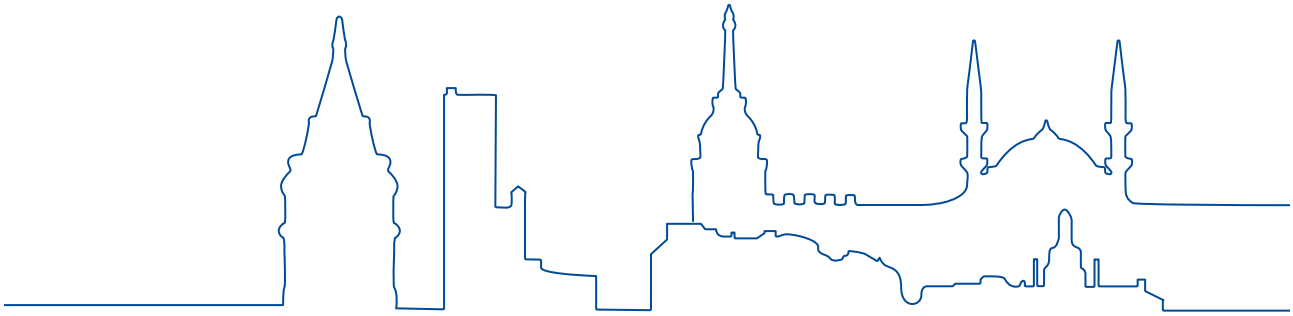


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DISPATCH FROM WARSAW: TRANSATLANTIC SECURITY AFTER ANKARA

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A new wave of unity has swept the transatlantic alliance since this summer's NATO Summit in Ankara, in which all 32 Allies reaffirmed their commitment to Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty. Building on the announcements in the Turkish capital in July, unity has been the strongest message coming from the Alliance over the past three months. This sense of cohesion was also reflected in this year's theme for the Warsaw Security Forum (WSF): #UnitedWeStand. While the two-day conference touched on a myriad of themes that are common in today's security debates—from cyber and energy security to defense financing and industrialization—a few key messages stood out as crucial indicators of how transatlantic security is being shaped today.

The highlight of this year's Forum was Supreme Allied Command Europe (SACEUR) Alexus Grynkewich's "Theory of Victory" speech, in which he outlined NATO's strategy to block, blunt, and then break enemy forces and their supporting systems in case of an attack. Although this is the first time that NATO has publicly shared this theory, the strategy is not entirely revolutionary: NATO has been a defensive alliance since its founding and, therefore, such a defensive strategy is in some sense business as usual. Rather, the novelty in SACEUR's speech is the message it sends about NATO's unity, its readiness, and its willingness to fight back if faced with a conventional attack. Such a clear announcement of this theory is most importantly a warning to adversaries and reinforces the message of unity that the Alliance must continue to project amid a period in which the Euro-Atlantic Alliance is no longer at peace.

Another key takeaway is that energy and critical infrastructure are more vital than ever to the defense of Allied nations. Since the advent of the U.S.–Iran war in February 2026, the global scramble to seek new energy routes and secure those in use has redefined the global economy and trade. This, of course, is compounded by Europe's decoupling from Russian oil and gas after the full-scale invasion of Ukraine four years prior and continued hybrid attacks on critical infrastructure across Allied territory, such as the Russian drone attack on Leipzig airport in August.

While relatively few panels at WSF directly addressed protecting energy and infrastructure, urgent calls to do so were echoed across almost every panel. Most notable in this regard was Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky's opening address at the forum highlighting the importance of energy and critical infrastructure in wartime, especially amid U.S. President Donald Trump's announcement

of a possible Russia-Ukraine energy ceasefire (the details of which have yet to be given to Kyiv) and the U.S.-Russia diesel deal in the background.

Lastly, the concept most overtly shaping the discussions in Warsaw was NATO 3.0—or, as NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte more often describes it, "a stronger Europe in a stronger NATO." The majority of the panels on the main stage were focused on advancing European security specifically amid Europe's drive to strengthen its own defense. Several of these panels even included members of the U.S. Congress, all of whom voiced support for European states taking additional ownership of their own security irrespective of their party affiliation—notably, in the run-up to the U.S. midterm elections. However, despite truly transatlantic support for NATO 3.0, the idea of what was truly "European" and how to advance Europe's collective security was somewhat contested.

The Minister of Defense of Norway, both this year's WSF country partner and a non-EU NATO member, criticized protectionism in the European defense industry and proposed countering EU-dominated projects with cooperation among blocs of countries ready to work on developing specific capabilities, such as the 11-country bloc working on anti-ballistic capabilities formed in July. Similarly, Poland's Secretary of State and Head of the National Security Bureau criticized the EU's SAFE mechanism for excluding both the United States and Turkey. In another shift away from EU-centered defense initiatives, the official report of the Warsaw Security Forum, *Securing Europe from the Eastern Flank to the High North*, focused on developing a Nordic-Baltic-Polish Group within the Alliance to solve the most pressing regional security issues in their shared geography.

While it was clear from the Forum that NATO Allies are unified in their resolve to work together to advance transatlantic security, further action is still needed. Harkening back to last year's theme at WSF, #DividedWeFall, the general mood in transatlantic affairs is to many degrees more optimistic this fall. However, as always in our current period of uncertainty, much work lies ahead in continuing to defend the Alliance from 360 degrees.