

OPINION

NATO's New Security Architecture

Friday 8 July 2022, by [CHENOY Anuradha M](#) (Date first published: 8 July 2022).

NATO has put its stamp on a new Cold War. The Madrid meeting of this military bloc (June 30, 2022) outlined its vision and tasks for the Euro-Atlantic geo strategy. Since this is a highly inter-connected world, these decisions impact the international security architecture. These moves come in the wake of the Russian aggression on Ukraine, and NATO will ensure that Ukraine fights on in this war of attrition, regardless of the costs. NATO's new Strategic Concept 2022 [1] provides the narrative on how they plan the construction of the world order for the next ten years.

NATO outlines three major threats: Russia as 'the most significant and direct threat' to the Euro-Atlantic. The second threat is China because its: 'coercive policies challenge our interests, security and values' and it is a long term strategic competitor. Of particular concern to NATO is China's attempts to 'project power' globally (only NATO has legitimate rights to do this). The deepening strategic partnership between the PRC and Russia is viewed with consternation. Implicit is that the strategic partnership across the Atlantic is benign. The third threat is terrorism, left over from the earlier phase of the 'global war on terror'. Other smaller threats like Iran, North Korea, Syria are the extras that can be dealt with.

The Madrid meeting following on the heels of the G-7 displayed unity of bloc members. All members are ready for gung ho militarism and renewed nuclearization. NATO proposes the numbers of forces for Europe be increased to over 300,000 (a seven fold increase). Large numbers of high alert forces and new bases will be developed in the enthusiastic Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia and a new permanent NATO headquarters in Poland. This implies there will be a division of responsibility amongst NATO allies, whereby the European Union will be responsible for decimating Russia with US additional funding to their own. The US will take on its favorite bug bear China across the Indo-Pacific, while the threat of terrorism gives the allies free play across the global South. There is preparation to keep the war in Europe going for as long as it takes.

Of particularly importance was the endorsement for NATO entry of Sweden and Finland, who eagerly give up their position of neutrality (once Turkey gives the green signal). This means defense installations on two more of Russia's immediate borders. Russian reaction to this has been cool as President Putin stated that Russia has no boundary or any dispute with these two neighbors as opposed to their red line with Ukraine, so no problems with this. This is a victory for NATO.

NATO considers maritime security as key, and see the security of Europe and Indo-Pacific inseparable. To tie this up NATO allies like Japan, New Zealand, Australia South Korea attended the Madrid events. There can be no NATO equivalent in the Indo-Pacific as countries of Asia have diverse interests and do not want to enter into any confrontational competitive terrain with China. But NATO sponsored events like the Rim of the Pacific Military exercise (RIMPAC) will rev up as will smaller groupings like AUUKUS, Five Eyes, Quad.

What NATO Implies

NATO strategy meeting and document indicate that the European leaders agree that US national interests are also their national interests. And these are the common interests of all democracies as opposed to the autocracies who want to differ and in any case do not believe in a rule based order.

NATO policies mirror completely the US neocon documents and several US national security documents that advocate US primacy over land, sea, space, cyberspace and everything in between. For this Russia needs to be isolated and China needs to be contained. NATO says this in so many words. It insists it is ready for a hybrid contest.

In material terms, it was EU that has been gaining with energy trade with Russia. The control of oil and the wars around it has always been a US forte. Hydrocarbon control was behind the US interventions in the conflicts in West Asia. Now these wars have come to Europe itself. The expensive US fracked oil will replace Russian energy supplies.

US strategic documents under Biden state that they have moved away from the 'forever wars'. The truth is that a new and more dangerous phase of the forever wars has started. The earlier 'forever wars' were against bedraggled, former colonial, poor, one resource rich countries. The new wars-Cold to start with are against major challengers.

China has not been seen as a threat in Europe, unlike the US that has deep Sinophobia the last few years. This is evident from the earlier Lisbon NATO document. It was on this basis that Europe welcomed the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative enabling Chinese manufacturing. Now NATO commands that these supply chains be changed. Similarly, Europe has primarily trade deals with the Indo-Pacific. This document proposes militarized maritime linkage between the Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific.

NATO's intentions are a strategic mirroring of US hegemony. Despite all their talk of a unipolar world, US strategists realize that multipolarity is emerging. That is the reason that sanctions are failing, and much of the Global South has opted for neutrality I Ukraine, as they will in the new Cold War. A polarized world order goes against the interests of development and sovereignty. With the latest NATO commitments, the US now has the European shoulders to stand on to achieve their aims of primacy.

The US has effectively curbed the desires of some powerful European states for strategic autonomy, that the EU Strategic Compass 2022 tried to project. The Russian aggression has provided the US with the perfect alibi for these aims. It is difficult to ignore the arguments of several mainstream strategists from Kissinger, Mearsheimer, Jeffery Sachs, apart from Chomsky and others that the Russians have bitten the bait. But then so have the Europeans. Even if this is conspiracy theory, it is clear that it is primarily the Americans alone who gain from the new NATO commitments, militarisms and nuclearism.

Europe is bearing the human security cost of a ravaged Ukraine. NATO is ignoring the human and material cost of this war on Ukraine and the collateral costs the sanctions are causing on millions in the Global South. Even if they talk of green militarization, securitize the climate weaponize trade, The cost will be heavy on people worldwide. Sadly NATO leadership is once again turning its back on people.

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P.S.

- The Citizen. 8 July 2022:
<https://www.thecitizen.in/opinion/biden-counts-oil-lucres-as-european-economies-go-down-on-their-knees-287351?infinitemscroll=1>

Footnotes

- [1] <https://www.nato.int/strategic-concept>