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# NATO Collective Defence

## Introduction

Hungary became a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) on 12 March 1999. When Hungary became a member, the political goal was that the country would not only be a "consumer" of security but would also actively contribute to the operations of the Alliance. Membership radically changed the Hungarian security and defence policy, bringing new opportunities and obligations to Hungarian politics. Although Hungary relies on its own strength to maintain and develop national and allied defence capabilities, it also attaches great importance to the cooperation with allied states and their armed forces in the military defence of the country. Accordingly, the country's armed defence plan and the NATO defence plan for Hungary's military security (GRP – Graduated Response Plan) were prepared. A NATO battle group has stationed in the country from 2022, with military forces from the United States, Croatia, Hungary, Montenegro, Italy and Turkey. The National Security Strategy of Hungary states that "the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is the cornerstone of Hungary's security. Hungary is committed to acting as a member of NATO, together with the other member states, to promote Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty". The new National Military Strategy emphasises that "Hungary's strategic objective is to build by 2030 a Hungarian Defence Force that, as a member of NATO and one of the leading military forces in the region, can guarantee the security of the country, deter possible aggression, support the whole governmental approach to defend the country against military and non-military threats and challenges, furthermore fulfil its responsibilities as a member of the Alliance and the European Union" (Government Resolution 1393/2021).

NATO is a classic collective defence organisation (it defends its members against external attack), although its collective defence tasks were extended after the Cold War to include crisis management and co-operative security (Medcalf 2005; Lindley-French 2007; Szenes – Siposné Kecskeméthy 2019). The purpose, importance and content of collective defence has changed throughout NATO's history. During the Cold War, collective defence was based on the classical logic of balance of power, as the members of the North Atlantic Alliance had to defend themselves against nuclear and conventional threats from the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact. After 1990, the Alliance's purpose changed, and after the "disappearance" of the enemy, NATO had to adapt to a changed world. The tasks of collective defence were relegated to the background, only to reappear in NATO policy with elementary force after the crisis in Ukraine in 2014 and the Russian military invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

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## New security challenges

By the 2020s, a complex international security situation has emerged in Europe, the wider Middle East, and many regions of Africa. In 2014, the international community had to deal with parallel challenges: the Ukrainian crisis and the rise of the Islamic State (ISIS), followed by the European migration crisis in 2015. Since the mid-2010s, the events have accelerated (lasting migration crisis, protracted war crises, erosion of arms limitation regimes, Covid-19 global pandemic), creating complex hybrid threats that have led to a shift in the balance of power and the perpetuation of insecurity and instability in international politics. The Hungarian National Security Strategy describes this situation as follows: "The new challenges are based on the emerging multipolar world order, the drive to reshape the rules governing the relations of international actors, the changing face of security challenges, and global challenges such as the acceleration of climate and demographic change, the closely related illegal and mass migration, the depletion of natural resources, and the society-shaping effects of the technological revolution." Russia's illegal and unprecedented war in Ukraine has created a radically new security situation in Europe. NATO has continuously responded to the changes in foreign and security policy, taking decisions on more important issues at summits (Wales 2014, Warsaw 2016, Brussels 2018, London 2019, Brussels 2021, Brussels 2022, Madrid 2022, Vilnius 2023) and even adopting a new strategic concept in June 2022.

According to NATO's assessment of the strategic environment *(NATO 2030: United for a New Era),* the third decade of the 21st century will be different from the previous one, and the most important task will be to adapt continuously to the changing environment. Alongside competing powers, the decade will be dominated by the challengers to the current world order, authoritarian regimes (China and Russia) pursuing assertive, revisionist foreign policies, and aiming to strengthen their own power and influence. It will continue to be important to preserve and strengthen the geopolitical perspective (360-degree security perception), to jointly address transnational threats that shape security in the long term, and to use NATO capabilities to shape the global environment.

NATO has developed four strategic concepts over the past three decades, which have served as a compass for the Alliance's tasks, activities and development. In the past decades, the Alliance's concept of security has changed considerably, with increasing attention being paid to comprehensive security and new security challenges in addition to military security. After the Russian war that started on 24 February 2022, the focus turned again to military security, deterrence and defence (Table 1). The 1991 strategic concept changed the Cold War thinking and focused on the security of Central and Eastern Europe and the Western Balkans, but already indicated the importance of broader security challenges and risks (regional instability, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, terrorism, transnational crime). The 1999 strategic concept stated that the security of the Alliance must be seen in a global context, defined by the multiplicity of military and non-military risks from multiple directions, which are difficult to foresee. The 2010 strategic concept prioritised addressing new global security challenges (terror-

ism, cybersecurity, energy security, environmental security). The 2022 strategic concept refocused on military security but stressed the importance of the global security context (Szenes 2021: 246–251). The concept provides a picture of a strengthening deterrence and defence of the alliance, capable and ready to fight a high-intensity, multi-domain warfighting against nuclear-armed peer competitors. NATO has taken up the gauntlet against Russia's aggressive policy, which it sees as the most significant and immediate threat to the security of its allies and to peace and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area. The new strategy envisages a new evolutionary turn in NATO's life: back to the future! (Herd–Kriendler 2013).

Although new security challenges are always identified by consensus, they are reflected in strategic documents, North Atlantic Council resolutions and various political and military decisions. However, addressing them collectively is not easy because 1. they do not necessarily have the same impact on allies; 2. they may not necessarily require a military response; and 3. they require a comprehensive approach (Iklódy 2010). All three factors complicate decision-making, as every policy, action plan and implementation requires an independent decision, where nations are already trying to assert their own interests. There are threats (e.g. cyberattacks, hybrid warfare techniques) that do not automatically require federal decisions and actions, but need to be addressed primarily on a national basis. Most non-military security challenges (e.g. non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and delivery systems) require primarily political, diplomatic, or economic-technological responses, dominated by nations with the necessary capabilities and means. Today, the joint response is further complicated by the fact that challenges, risks and threats may come from abroad and from within the country, and may be simultaneous, complex and hybrid, requiring a comprehensive approach not only within the Alliance but also in coordinated action with international institutions. Therefore, new security challenges will always test NATO, each situation and solution will require "rebuilding" solidarity, the Western international community will have to act as a "team", which means a constant search for new solutions, more political consultation, greater political cooperation and trust.

NATO's strategic concept of 2022 has grouped security challenges, risks and threats in several dimensions: firstly, geopolitically (Russia, China, South, Space, Cyberspace), secondly, sectorally (energy security, climate security and environmental protection, human security and the role of women in maintaining peace and security, pandemics and natural disasters), and finally, by type of activity (breakthrough technologies, terrorism, hybrid and cyberattacks, strategic communications, publicity and disinformation).

*Table 1: Evolution of new security challenges*

| NATO document | After the Cold War | The first decade of the 21st century | Today |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1991 New Strategic Concept of the Alliance (Rome)<br>1999 Strategic Concept of the Alliance (Washington, D.C.)<br>2010 NATO Strategic Concept (Lisbon)<br>2022 NATO Strategic Concept (Madrid) | *Changes in principle*<br>a simultaneous, unexpected, large-scale attack is unlikely<br>multidirectional security risks<br>*Sources of danger*<br>regional instability in CEE, ethnic rivalry and territorial disputes can lead to military conflicts<br>broader risks (proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, obstruction of key resources, terrorism, acts of sabotage, international crime)<br>the emergence of state and non-state actors<br>*Conclusions*<br>the security of the Alliance must be seen in a global context<br>NATO's security functions remain unchanged<br>a wide range of military and non-military risks that affect security, which are multi-directional and difficult to predict | *Changes in principle*<br>threat of a conventional military attack is low<br>new global security challenges<br>*Sources of danger*<br>military threats (proliferation of ballistic missiles, WMD and delivery systems, terrorism)<br>instability outside the borders of NATO (extremism, illegal trafficking of arms, drugs and human beings)<br>cybersecurity<br>energy security<br>the impact of new technology on warfare<br>environmental security, health risks, climate change<br>*Conclusions*<br>three new basic tasks<br>new threats, new capabilities, new partners | *Changes in principle*<br>complex security perception (sectoral, territorial, global)<br>the return of competition between policy regimes<br>increasing global threats<br>*Sources of danger*<br>Russia, China<br>Southern threats, migration<br>boom in new disruptive technology<br>terrorism<br>energy security<br>climate security and green protection policy<br>human security, women, peace and security<br>epidemiological and natural disasters<br>hybrid and cyber threats<br>dangers from space<br>strategic communication, strengthening publicity and managing disinformation<br>*Conclusions*<br>new strategic concept<br>strengthening the core tasks<br>establishing NATO's new Force Model |

*Source:* Compiled by the author

The perception of Russia will not change in the near future (at least not in the Putin era), and it is likely to remain NATO's biggest military for a long term; NATO–Russian relations will continue to be managed according to the current dual-track policy, although political relations have also been severed since the launch of the Russian "special military operation". Although NATO has not abrogated the NATO–Russia Founding Act and has not abolished the NATO–Russia Council (NRC), it cannot return to business as usual if the Russia–Ukraine war continues. Until political relations are normalised, NATO must maintain the conventional and nuclear military capabilities necessary for defence and deterrence and develop the non-kinetic means necessary for hybrid warfare.

In addition to Russia, NATO now sees China also as a security challenge, which goes well beyond the "opportunity and challenge" stance of the London Declaration. The Alliance increasingly views the powerful East Asian country as a rising power and global power rival, posing a systemic challenge to Western democratic societies. China, with its growing superpower policy, requires much more political attention, strength and resources from the Alliance, a clearer security perception, the development of a political strategy and a coordinated response to hybrid threats.

However, NATO's common security perception is not only weakened by divergent Russian and Chinese policies within its membership. There are also different views on threats from the south, as terrorism, instability in North Africa and the Middle East affect member countries in different ways. Nevertheless, the new strategic concept identifies terrorism as NATO's second biggest threat and has also "included" migration among the global threats. Strengthening the strategic direction of the South in security policy implies closer cooperation with both the European Union (EU) and the African Union (AU). However, in other areas, such as new advanced technologies (EDTs), compliance with arms limitations and non-proliferation treaties, and the conclusion of new agreements (e.g. New START III), there is consensus among member states. The allies see the opportunities and tasks similarly, to address non-military security challenges and threats (energy security, climate security, pandemics, cybersecurity, strategic communications, gender issues) (Sloan 2020, 317–338). Overall, the Alliance's common concept of security has improved considerably compared to the previous period, but there are still differences between member states' policies on key issues (Russia, China).

## NATO as a collective defence organisation

NATO was established on 4 April 1949 by the North Atlantic Treaty signed in Washington, D.C., by 12 founding countries (Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Italy, Luxembourg, Iceland, Norway, the Netherlands, Portugal, the United Kingdom and the United States). NATO's legitimacy derives from international law. Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations states that it is the natural right of UN members to organise individual or collective self-defence against armed attack. The founding countries also enshrined in the treaty that NATO's members form a single community of values based on the principles of individual freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law (the title on which NATO rejected the Soviet Union's application for membership in 1954). The short document, consisting only of 14 articles, set out the basis on which the Alliance would operate, the substance of which has remained unchanged since its foundation. NATO's activities are centred on maintaining collective defence, complemented by crisis management and partnership tasks after the Cold War. Collective defence is different from collective security, which is a security arrangement, political, regional, or global, in which each state in the system accepts that the security of one is the concern of all and therefore commits to a collective response to threats to, and breaches of peace. It is more ambitious than collective defence in that it seeks to encompass the totality of states within the region or indeed globally, and to address a wide range of possible threats. Today, NATO has 31 members and, as a security community, has institutionalised relations with 39 further countries. NATO as a security community consists of 70 countries.

NATO's organisational structure and functioning is determined by its purpose (collective defence and the maintenance of democratic peace in the North Atlantic region), its nature (political and military alliance) and its evolving mission (the current three main tasks). The institutional setup was made possible by Article 9 of the Washington

Treaty, which states: "The Parties hereby establish a Council, on which each of them shall be represented, to consider matters concerning the implementation of this Treaty. The Council shall be so organised as to be able to meet promptly at any time. The Council shall set up such subsidiary bodies as may be necessary; it shall establish immediately a defence committee which shall recommend measures for the implementation of Articles 3[1] and 5.[2] The functioning of NATO is based on respect for the national sovereignty of its member states and on the mechanism of established cooperation.

The main decision-making bodies of NATO are the North Atlantic Council (NAC), the Nuclear Planning Group (NPG) and the Military Committee (MC), which are composed of senior representatives of the member states. The NAC is the principal political decision-making body which oversees the political and military process relating to security issues affecting the whole Alliance. It brings together representatives of each member country to discuss policy or operational questions requiring collective decisions, providing a transatlantic forum for wide-ranging consultation between members on all issues affecting their peace and security. The Committees are composed of representatives of member countries at the appropriate level. A wide range of committees (e.g. political, partnership, defence policy and planning, armaments, standardisation, air and missile defence, logistics, resources, operations and exercises, intelligence and counterintelligence, etc.) support consensus-based decision-making. An important body for defence management is the new Resilience Committee (RC). Decision-makers are supported by national experts and the civilian – International Staff (IS) and military – International Military Staff (IMS) apparatus at NATO Headquarters (Brussels). National and partnership delegations are also based at NATO Headquarters. Four agencies (standardisation, support and procurement, intelligence and information, science and technology) provide the non-military conditions for operations. NATO's integrated military command structure is under the leadership of two allied military level headquarters. The Allied Command Operations (ACO, Mons, Belgium) is responsible for allied military operations, the command of subordinate commands, integrated air and missile defence, and command of standing and subordinate forces. Allied Command Transformation (ACT, Norfolk, Virginia, USA) plans, coordinates and manages NATO transformation, with planning,

[1] Article 3 states that: "In order to more effectively achieve the objectives of this Treaty, the Parties, separately and jointly, by means of continuous and effective self-help and mutual aid, will maintain and develop their individual and collective capacity to resist armed attack."

[2] According to the article embodying collective defence, "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 recognised 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.
Any such armed attack and all measures taken as a result thereof shall immediately be reported to the Security Council. Such measures shall be terminated when the Security Council has taken the measures necessary to restore and maintain international peace and security".

training and education organisations, a network of excellence (including the Health Centre of Excellence in Budapest).

NATO has no army of its own except for a few standing forces (for example, the Airbone Early Warning and Control Force [AWACS]) subordinate to the Supreme Allied Commander in Europe (SACEUR). The Alliance carries out its tasks with military forces and capabilities offered by its member countries. At the same time, the Alliance has the unique advantage that, although it does not have its own forces, it has built up a permanent command structure (NATO Command Structure [NCS]) to lead its forces, which is always ready to lead subordinate national forces in peace, crisis, or war. NATO is a small organisation compared to other international institutions: 1,200 civilian staff at NATO Headquarters (with a similar number of national delegations), 5,000 at the agencies and 6,500 in the NATO Integrated Military Structure (headquarters, permanent subordinate forces [e.g. airspace control, naval forces]) (NATO SECGEN 2021: 75–100).

NATO operates on consensus (unanimous decision-making), which is perhaps the most important principle of democratic functioning. Unanimity can be traced back to Article 10 of the Washington Treaty, which states the requirement for a decision on enlargement to be "by unanimous agreement". Consultation continues until a decision is reached that is acceptable to all, although there are still cases where a member state vetoes a prepared decision (e.g. Greece's opposition to Macedonia's NATO membership at the Bucharest summit in 2009). The principle of unanimity ensures the equality of all member states and embodies the common will.

NATO's operations are financed by the member countries, which provide adequate resources for the operation (Strategic Concept, point 37), which must be used in the most efficient way possible. NATO therefore determines from time to time the level of defence expenditure (as a percentage of GDP) of its member countries, depending on NATO's level of operational ambition, Alliance tasks and defence planning requirements. Most recently, in Wales (2014), it was decided that all member states should reach 2% of GDP within 10 years and that 20% of defence spending should be spent on modernising their armed forces. Since 2014, European member states have increased their defence spending by more than 20% (50 billion EUR), with the burden-sharing ratio between the U.S. and other member states improving by 4% (NATO 2021). Defence spending has continued to grow, with a growing number of new military capabilities being developed (such as the NATO RQ-4D Global Hawk surveillance and reconnaissance unmanned aerial vehicles, which have already reached the initial military capability). Already 11 countries have reached the 2% of GDP target set at the Wales Summit and 18 member states have reached the 20% threshold for force modernisation (NATO Press Release 2022). The Eastern "front countries" (with the exception of Bulgaria) have met the requirements in both areas. Although decisions are always taken jointly, the scale and implementation are constantly under discussion and expenditure is constantly monitored and publicly published by the Alliance.

NATO has three financial mechanisms to ensure its operation: national funding, joint funding and multinational funding. Under national funding, member states pay essentially all the costs themselves ("costs lie where they fall"), which in practice means that the

member states finance their own force development, contribute to a certain proportion to NATO expenses, ensure the implementation of their own alliance tasks. Joint funding ensures that NATO runs its own organisation, financed by joint contributions from member states based on an agreed cost-sharing arrangement. Multinational funding is outside the remit of the organisation but in the interest of the Alliance, e.g. when two or more member states agree to jointly tackle a task or develop/procure military equipment. For example, such funding is used to maintain the military transport capability at the Pápa airbase. But it also includes Trust Funds or other financial schemes and procedures to assist recipient countries (Afghanistan, Iraq, Ukraine, etc.).

The cost-sharing formula for the NATO common budget is regularly adjusted in relation to the order of magnitude agreed at the time of foundation/accession. For the period 2021–2024, the largest contributions are already shared equally between the United States and Germany (16.34%), followed by the United Kingdom (11.28%) and France (10.49%) (NATO 2021). Hungary's contribution is 0.75% of the defence budget, which is 8,818 million HUF in 2023 (Act XXV 2022). From these contributions, NATO operates three budgets: a civil budget (salaries of civilian staff, development, operation of NATO Headquarters), a military budget (expenditure on the operation of the allied military structure and military activities) and a security investment budget. The Madrid Summit in 2022 decided to increase the common budgets by 10–10–30% by 2030. The civil budget is paid by the foreign ministries and the military and infrastructure contributions by the defence ministries. The size of the NATO budget in 2023 was 0.3% (3.3 billion EUR) of the total military expenditure of the member countries combined. In addition, NATO's production and logistics development programmes are jointly funded, but only the countries participating in the programme contribute to the project budget (e.g. 15 countries participate in the work of the NATO Ground Reconnaissance System Management Office). NATO's ambition is illustrated by the fact that the size of the development programmes is several times the size of the joint operational budget (20.6 billion EUR).

## NATO Article 5

The essence of collective defence – the pledge of mutual assistance – is enshrined in the famous Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, which is thus the soul (in NATO terminology, the "heart") and the most important point of the treaty. Article 5 is not an automatic aid provision, it is not enough for one country to declare that it is under attack and then the others go to help (because then Article 5 would have had to be activated several times because of the military conflicts that broke out between Greece and Turkey, for example (Kokkinidis 2022), but it requires the unanimous agreement of the member countries to be activated. The Alliance considers it the right of the member state to judge whether an attack is really an armed attack and whether it is really directed against the alliance. When this approach was developed at the time of the Alliance's creation, it was not only with a view to creating a decision-making democracy in NATO, but also considering

that the treaty would have to be approved by the member states. This was an important consideration, as the adoption of an automatic, binding formulation would have posed a problem even in Congressional approval in the United States. But it has also been useful in the complex political and security situations in NATO's history.

The Treaty provides institutional support for the individual choices of member countries. Article 4 of the treaty gives member countries opportunity to consult the Alliance if they feel that their territorial integrity, political independence, or security is threatened. Article 4 has been used several times by Turkey (in the context of the wars in Iraq and Syria) or by Poland (after the Russian–Georgian five-day war or in the context of the 2014 crisis in Ukraine). Article 5 clearly refers to an external armed attack against one or more countries of the Alliance but does not define the notion of aggression or external aggression.

Article 5 has only been activated once, following the terrorist attack on the United States on 11 September 2001, in specific circumstances. For example, it was not initiated by Washington but by the NATO Secretary General himself. Although the NAC Permanent Council decided on the activation of Article 5 on 12 September, it did not enter into force until 2 October (NATO 2001), after the United States had proved beyond reasonable doubt that the attack had come from outside, from the Al-Qaeda international terrorist organisation led by Osama bin Laden, which enjoyed the support of the Kabul regime. NATO developed a complex package for the global fight against terrorism: it granted overflight rights to U.S. aircraft in allied airspace, launched two anti-terrorist operations in October,[3] and adopted the concept, plans and measures for the anti-terrorist operation at the Prague Summit in 2002.

The need to introduce Article 5 emerged again with great political force after the five-day Russian–Georgian war in August 2008. Several politicians, experts and analysts have expressed doubts about NATO's commitment to stand by an allied member state e.g. the Baltic States, in real "war" conflict. Since then, the threat of a traditional Russian–NATO war has been a recurring theme in the international literature (Smith 2008; Shirreff 2016), especially in the U.S. and in the countries on NATO's Eastern border. The Article 5 debate has also flared up during the nearly one and a half years of preparation of NATO's new Strategic Concept for 2010. And after the 2014 crisis in Ukraine, collective defence clearly returned to the centre of NATO's activities. While the decisions taken in the period 2014–2021 have resulted in sound collective defence solutions, experience shows that maintaining the credibility of NATO Article 5 requires continuous work by the Alliance.

[3] The Eagle Assist air control operation in U.S. airspace lasted for 7 months, and the Mediterranean Maritime counterterrorism operation (Active Endeavour) ended in 2016 after 15 years.

## Collective defence in practice

In response to the Ukraine crisis, the Alliance has taken measures to strengthen collective defence on NATO's eastern flank. The leadership of the North Atlantic organisation feared that Russia was conducting hybrid warfare below the threshold of military intervention, influencing the internal politics of its Eastern European neighbours and discrediting NATO's security guarantees. There was also growing concern that Russia might launch a surprise attack to seize the unprotected Baltic territories, which would put NATO in a precarious position (Shlapak–Johnson 2016).[4] The fears of the Baltic member states were not unfounded, as their countries have a significant Russian-speaking population (especially Estonia and Latvia), and there was a huge contrast between the defencelessness of the heavily armed Kaliningrad and the Baltic, which is the wing of the alliance. The demands of the Baltic were reinforced by Poland's historical fear and Russophobia, later joined by Romania and Bulgaria's policy of greater security.

At the Wales Summit in 2014, NATO presented a major countermeasure called the Readiness Action Plan (RAP) (Table 1). The RAP included two types of measures: assurance measures and adaptation measures. In the area of security measures, the NAC in 2014–2015 focused on reassuring the European public, deploying NATO's "tangible" forces (AWACS air surveillance aircraft and the permanent Naval Force), reinforcing the air defences of the Baltic States, and organising large-scale exercises in the region and in the adjacent seas. It has also provided an opportunity for Member States to strengthen the protection of vulnerable countries on a bilateral basis, in which the United States has been particularly active. The adaptation decisions were aimed at NATO's long-term adaptation in terms of military command and control capabilities and rapid reaction forces. The strength of the NATO Response Force (NRF) was tripled to 40,000 contingency troops. The mission of the enhanced NRF (eNRF) has been expanded to include collective defence tasks. To improve the credibility of the NRF, the Welsh Summit established the Very High Readiness (2–7 days) Joint Task Force (5,000 personnel) (VJTF), which has a strong deterrent capability as a kind of "mobile wire barrier".

The NATO Response Force will be led by two operational headquarters (JFC Brunssum and Naples) in rotation, with Naples' command being the lead agency in charge in 2021. The NRF forces will be established based on national contributions (force generation), which will provide the appropriate commands and forces in the required structural and capability composition. The NRF is commanded by the NATO Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), but its employment is decided by the NAC.

[4] The U.S. research institute, the RAND Corporation has modelled how the Baltic countries could be defended against a frontal Russian attack, based on military force projections at the end of 2015. The results of the computer wargame showed that attacking Russian forces would be in Tallinn and Riga in 60 hours. Such a rapid advance would leave NATO in a difficult position, with only poor and limited options for action. The researchers concluded that the deployment of 7 brigades (plus air support) in the region could prevent Russian attack.

*Table 2: NATO collective defence measures (2014–2022)*

| No. | Measure | Features | Time |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Strengthening the NRF (eNRF) | Corps force | 2014 |
| 2. | Establishment of VJTF | "Spearhead brigade" | 2014 |
| 3. | Installation of NFIU elements | In eight countries | 2015–2016 |
| 4. | Developing new headquarters | MNC-NE (Szczecin), MND-SE (Bucharest) | 2014–2018 |
| 5. | Advancement of four ZHCS | Baltic countries, Poland | 2016– |
| 6. | NATO multinational brigade deployment | Romania | 2016– |
| 7. | Extension of operational planning | Graduated Response Plan (GRP) | 2016–2018 |
| 8. | Strengthening air and naval forces | The airspace of the wing countries and the adjacent seas | Ongoing |
| 9. | Investments and stocks brought forward | CEEC countries | Ongoing |
| 10. | Declaring cyberspace an operational space | Developing cyber defence capabilities (establishment of a Cyber Operations Centre 2020) | 2016 |
| 11. | Strengthening the command-and-control system | Establishment of new Combined Forces Headquarters (Norfolk/USA/GER), establishment of national division headquarters, establishment of operational logistics support groups | 2018 |
| 12. | Readiness initiative (4 × 30 concept) | 4 × 30 concept (30 battalions, 30 combat squadrons, 30 warships, 30 days of readiness) | 2018 |
| 13. | Establishment of hybrid warfare groups | Response to Russian hybrid threats | 2018 |
| 14. | Declaring space an operational space | Creation of a space centre in Ramstein (2020) | 2019 |
| 15. | Placement of four Battle Group | Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria | 2022 |
| 16. | New NATO force model approved | NATO Summit, Madrid (2022) | 2022–2023 (planning) 2022–2028 (implementation) |

*Source:* Compiled by the author

The reinforcement of collective defence tasks and the protection of the Northeastern flank also necessitated changes to the NATO Command System (NCS). To this end, a Corps Headquarters (MNC-NE) in Szczecin in the north and a Multinational NATO Division Headquarters (MND-SE) in the south will be responsible for the military tasks in the region. But the six NATO Force Integration Units (NFIUs) in the north, established in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Latvia, Slovakia and Hungary, as well as the two NFIUs in Romania and Bulgaria, are subordinate to these headquarters. The deployment of Battalion Battle Groups (BGCs) in the northeastern flank countries in 2017 was a spectacular reinforcement of collective defence. The four battalions, numbering between 1,000 and 1,500 troops, are not a permanently deployed force, but are deployed on a rotational basis to defend the Baltic States and Poland. The battalion's lead "framework nation" responsibilities are assumed by the United States in Poland, Great Britain in Estonia, Germany in Lithuania and Canada in Latvia. On similar principles, a NATO

brigade was created in Romania in 2020 to defend Romania and Bulgaria, in line with the situation, and was initiated by the Romanians together with Bulgaria and Poland.

At the 2018 Brussels Summit, the strengthening of deterrence and protection tasks continued. NATO adopted the Readiness Initiative Programme, which will strengthen the NATO Response Force after 2020 with the so-called 4 × 30 proposal (30 land combat battalions, 30 combat aircraft squadrons, 30 warships, 30 days of readiness). To facilitate the mobility of the standby forces between NATO member countries, the conditions for full mobility in Europe will be created by 2024. Two new operational headquarters (Naval Headquarters [JFC HQ, Norfolk], Support and Logistics Headquarters [JSEC HQ, Ulm]) have been decided and are operational today. Also important from a Hungarian point of view was the NAC decision which gave the green light to the establishment of multinational team headquarters to ensure the military command and control of the growing number of NATO formations as required.

However, the Alliance is not only developing its land forces, but also wants to increase the capacity of its naval forces to improve maritime security (Baltic Sea, Norwegian Sea, Black Sea, Mediterranean Sea) and to address hybrid threats. The Alliance leadership would like to see more ships in the NATO Naval Forces (SNMGs), for which some nations (U.S., U.K., Canada) have already offered new ships to the subordination of the Maritime Command (MARCOM). But the organisation, faced with terrorist and migratory threats from the South, wants to go further in its naval presence, plans to develop a new naval strategy, and is supporting research under the title "Maritime Alliance".

However, behind these measures, it is becoming increasingly clear that NATO is no longer just implementing a forward defence concept to the east, as it did during the Cold War, but is also improving the conditions for deterrence and defence in all operational dimensions and is defining new tasks. This was the purpose of the extension of Article 5 to cyberspace (2016) and space (2019), and hybrid warfare (2022) and the creation of Euro-Atlantic deterrence and defence plans for the first time.

The measures taken to strengthen the Readiness Action Plan (RAP) were aimed at a long-term adaptation, which NATO really benefited from when the Russian invasion of 24 February 2022 began. At an extraordinary virtual summit on 25 February 2022, proposed by 10 Eastern European member states under Article 4, the heads of state and government condemned the "brutal, unjust and unprecedented" attack and activated the NATO Response Force, reinforced air defence in the Baltic States and launched a new air defence plan. The Council tasked the Supreme Allied Commander of Europe (SACEUR) with reinforcing the NATO force defence posture. At the extraordinary summit in Brussels on 24 March 2022, NATO leadership has already activated the defence plans, deciding to create new battalion battle groups in Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria. The Heads of State and Government also decided that a defence budget of 2% of GDP should be reached as soon as possible and that preparations for the Madrid Summit should be continued in the light of the war.

## The new NATO force model

The Madrid Summit 2022 took several important decisions, adopting a new NATO Strategic Concept and a new force model. NATO's force structure and readiness system has changed continuously throughout the Alliance's history, with the greatest transformation (lower readiness, fewer commands, smaller forces) occurring in the 1990s, after the Cold War. The current new concept envisages a larger force than before (800,000 in total), with higher readiness (100,000 of which for 10 days, 200,000 for 30 days and 500,000 for 180 days) and a structure (force, weapon, combat support and service) capable of conducting multinational, integrated operations in five operational areas (land, air, sea, cyber, space). The readiness level is a major challenge for Member States, as even the current readiness levels (30–45 days for rapid response forces, 90 days for reaction forces, 180 days for low readiness forces) cannot be "surpassed" by most national forces, as we have seen from the primary results of the 2018 Readiness Initiative (RI).[5] The 4 × 30 requirement set at the Warsaw Summit could not be met by 2020, even though it would have served to reliably ensure the increased force requirements of the NATO Response Force (NRF). The new force model requires, as NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg stated, the biggest transformation of NATO forces since the Cold War (Szenes 2022: 12).

NATO wants to build up a rapid reaction force of 300,000 troops in a short time, the detailed plans for which are not yet known. For the 100,000-strong rapid reaction force, NATO is presumably calculating by considering the 40,000-strong NRF, increasing the strength of the eight battle groups in the eastern flank countries to between 4,000 and 5,000 troops per country (for a total of another 40,000 troops) and finally calculating a U.S. reinforcement of 20,000 troops. To the 200,000 troops on 30-day standby, NATO probably adds the available national forces in the eastern "frontline" countries, which number 295,000 according to a NATO statement from June. Alternatively, it could be possible to draw on the forces (pool) offered to NATO by the member countries, which will probably be combined with the ongoing DDA planning.[6] The operational plans are already being drawn up on a territorial basis of the SACEUR's military plan, which is then broken down by the operational headquarters (JFCBS, JFCNP, JFCNF)[7] into regional plans, within which the defence plans of each member country are drawn up. As in the Cold War, the territorial boundaries/lanes of the forward defences will be defined, which will be protected by local (in place) forces (NATO and national) and the forces that will enter the area from the depths will be designated. These dedicated forces (which will be in their own country, OTH[8]) will reinforce the forward defence forces to a total force strength of 200,000 troops with a maximum of 30 days readiness. The new strategic concept has defined a number of principles which should be taken as a guide for the

[5] NRI: NATO Readiness Initiative.
[6] DDA: Concept of Deterrence and Defence for the Euro-Atlantic Area.
[7] JFCBS: Joint Forces Command Brunssum; JFCNP: Joint Forces Command Naples; JFCNF: Joint Forces Command Norfolk.
[8] OTH: Over-the-Horizon Force.

development of the force model: an integrated and proportionate structure, reflecting the Alliance's 360-degree approach; its composition (nuclear, conventional, missile defence, space and cyber) should be adapted to the new strategic environment; readiness, responsiveness and deployability should be enhanced; it should have a digitalised command and control system, and should embrace and make creative use of new, emerging technologies (EDT).[9] At the Madrid Summit, 22 member states (including Hungary) established the NATO Innovation Fund, which will invest one billion euros in the development of dual-use technologies (artificial intelligence, quantum technologies, biotechnology, autonomous systems, etc.) over the next 15 years.[10] The Innovation Fund will be linked to NATO's DIANA[11] civil–military development programme, which was approved at the Brussels Summit in 2021. NATO leaders agreed to link the two programmes, to give participating startup research companies, institutes and researchers access to the DIANA institutional network (9 accelerator programmes, 63 test centres in Europe and North America) and to coordinate activities through the NATO Science Organisation.

The alliance currently has a 9,600-strong land force in the forward presence, with around 40 fighter jets always monitoring the airspace and a naval response provided by NATO's Standing Maritime Group (SNMG)[12] warships. For the first time since the Cold War, the US 6th Fleet, commanded by the aircraft carrier Harry S. Truman, has been subordinated to NATO's Maritime Command (MARCOM),[13] bringing the total number of warships patrolling the seas to 20. This is necessary, as Russian President Vladimir Putin approved on 31 July 2022 a new naval doctrine that now identifies not only NATO but also the United States as a major threat to prevent Russia from entering the world's oceans. NATO member states have started to pool their forces, with the United States leading the way. The U.S. is significantly reinforcing its presence in Europe (an additional rotational mechanised brigade, 2 squadrons, 2 destroyers, a forward command, air defence and support forces), increasing the total number of forces in the European Command by 20,000. Significant force contributions have also been made for the defence of the Baltic region (U.K., Germany, Canada). The transition to the new force model will be completed by 2028 (Szenes 2022).

## Hungary's NATO policy

Hungary's NATO membership goal has defined the Hungarian foreign, security and defence policy since the political system change (Rada–Stepper 2019: 172–194). At the end of 1998, the Parliament adopted the new security and defence policy principles, which are still in force today, by full consensus and which place Hungary's security on two

[9] EDT: Emerging Disruptive Technologies.
[10] The signatories do not include the U.S. and Canada, Iceland, which has no military force, and the Western Balkan countries.
[11] NATO DIANA: Defence Innovation Accelerator for the North Atlantic.
[12] SNMG: Standing NATO Maritime Group.
[13] MARCOM: Allied Maritime Command Northwood.

fundamental pillars: national self-reliance and Euro-Atlantic integration and international cooperation. Since then, national legislation (the Fundamental Law, the Defence Act), national security and military strategies have confirmed the importance of our NATO membership and the will to cooperate. Hungary became a member of NATO on 12 March 1999, and immediately underwent the "baptism of war": it provided inclusive national support to the NATO (US) Air Force in the air war against Yugoslavia. Upon gaining membership, the country was immediately brought under the "umbrella" of NATO's common air defence system, the national representation system in the alliance was established, Hungarian soldiers joined the NATO command system, and the Hungarian Defence Forces began their peacekeeping role in allied missions.

Although foreign, security and defence policies have changed over the past decades, depending on the governments, all governments have considered an active Hungarian contribution to the Alliance important. In 2010, the coalition government (Hungarian Civic Alliance – FIDESZ, Christian Democratic People's Party – KDNP) announced a new foreign policy (global opening), a more focused security policy (focusing on global security challenges, risks and threats) and a reassessment of defence policy (renewal of the armed forces). Although the changing security policy environment and the differences in values with the previous government have led to the rewriting of all legislation (new Fundamental Law, Defence Act, Service Act) and strategic documents, Hungary's international role has not been reduced, and the government has increased the level of peacekeeping ambition to 1,200, with a Hungarian general to head the KFOR command in Kosovo from November 2021 to October 2022. The government adopted a new foreign affairs strategy in 2011, continuously updates its national security strategy (2012, 2020) and the national military strategy (2012, 2021). Modernisation visions were published in a 10-year defence and force development programme (Zrínyi 2026 Programme) in 2017, which is being implemented at a steady pace. Defence industrial and defence-related developments and force modernisation will be coordinated initially by a Government Commissioner and after 2022 by a State Secretary. The Prime Minister announced in Madrid that Hungary will reach a defence budget of 2% of GDP in 2023.

After 2014, the security environment has changed for the worse, with Hungary being back on the "front line": while in the old world, on the western border of the Warsaw Pact, we served as a geostrategic base for the offensive doctrine, today we are part of the Alliance's new collective defence measures on NATO's eastern border. But as a border country of the EU, we must also protect the Schengen external borders in the southeastern direction, making Hungary, as the 2020 National Security Strategy puts it, a "border country". While the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation is reducing its peacekeeping activity, the European Union is launching new operations in Africa (Mali, Central African Republic) and the UN is seeking to maintain its current level of mission ambition, Hungary is strengthening its international engagement.

Hungary has been an active and useful member of NATO for almost a quarter of a century. In terms of size, it belongs to the so-called 10 million club, together with Greece, Belgium, Portugal, the Czech Republic and Bulgaria, but its weight and role is determined not only by its ranking but also by its government priorities, its participation in

the decision-making system and the extent of its contribution to operations and development. Hungary has been an important shaper of NATO's Balkans policy since before we became a NATO member, and afterwards, due to significant contributions to the accession of Croatia (2009), Albania (2009), Montenegro (2017) and North Macedonia (2020). In most of the disputes within the Alliance (fight against terrorism, war in Iraq, colour revolutions in the post-Soviet space, missile defence, membership of Ukraine and Georgia, military action against Russia, etc.), it has managed to take a position that strengthens the country's reputation or to balance pragmatic views between "harder Eastern European" and "softer Western European" members. This was particularly evident in the Ukraine policy, where the government, while continuing to support the modernisation programmes of the Ukrainian armed forces, blocked the convening of the NATO–Ukraine Commission in an attempt to restore minority rights for Hungarians in Ukraine. After the outbreak of war, Hungary is on the side of peace, providing substantial assistance to help resolve the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine, but not supplying kinetic weapons to Ukraine.

The government has always been actively involved in new NATO initiatives (most recently the NATO Innovation Fund) and has sought to link multinational capability development initiatives with regional policy, such as the activities of the Visegrád Four (V4) or the Central European Defence Cooperation (CEDC). This policy gives greater visibility to the Hungarian contribution compared to countries that have focused exclusively on cooperation with the major powers of the alliance. The country has always performed very well in peacekeeping, so we have been given a prominent role in operational matters on several occasions (a Hungarian general was the KFOR commander in 2021–2022), especially when we have made offers quickly and in a timely manner or in areas of capability that were lacking (technical, medical, logistical, special operations, etc.). The country is moving up on the list of well-performing NATO countries, coming 15$^{th}$ in terms of defence budget in 2021 (1.65% of GDP) and 8th in terms of military investment (28.3% of defence budget). NATO's footprint in Hungary is growing, with the establishment of the NATO Intelligence and Information Centre of Excellence (NATO CIS DCM) in 2012 in Székesfehérvár, Hungary, following the establishment of the Strategic Transport Capability in Pápa (Multinational Heavy Air Wing, HAW, 2008) and the NATO Military Medical Centre of Excellence (MILMED COE, 2009), and the NATO Force Integration Unit (NFIU) in 2016. In 2019, the establishment of the NATO Central European Multinational Division Headquarters (HQs MND C, Székesfehérvár) and the Regional Special Operations Component Headquarters (R-SOCC, Szolnok) started. In the field of capability development, Hungary's perception has also changed, with the procurement of the Zrínyi Defence and Force Development Programme, which has started the technical modernisation of the armed forces, coupled with the development of a new Hungarian defence industry. The modernisation and the establishment of military industrial companies is European-oriented (EADS, Rheinmetall), with strong German support, which also underpins the NATO policy, which in the last decade can be described as a shift from the previous strong Atlanticist orientation towards a continental Western European, and within this, German security policy approach.

## Conclusions

NATO, as the new Strategic Concept states, has "ensured the freedom and security of its allies for more than 70 years", thanks to its changing concept of security. If it had remained only a collective defence alliance, the realist theory would have been that NATO should have ceased to exist after the end of the Cold War, since the threat that justified its creation had ceased to exist. NATO's renewal has been successful because it has always found real goals beyond challenges, threats and dangers, and military defence, which have given it a raison d'être. It has survived because it has been highly adaptable, able to transform itself from a political and military organisation into an international organisation with a broader security function. Its adaptive mechanisms (regular decision-making meetings, agenda-setting, representation of Member States, information sharing, delaying cases, moderating and co-opting capabilities) have ensured that the best decisions for survival have been taken in the most difficult situations. Survival was also helped by the fact that a possible dissolution (the founding nations were thinking in terms of 20 years at the time of creation) would mean a loss of resources invested (sunk costs), the costs spent would be completely wasted. Therefore, even in a changed security environment, it is cheaper to maintain an adaptive NATO than to create a new security organisation.

NATO's core tasks have been constantly "in flux" throughout its existence, with the security environment, challenges, risks and threats, and the interests of member countries determining which function should take priority: collective defence, crisis management/collective security or cooperative security. The proportions, balance or shift of the security "trinity" towards one or the other function, in its entirety, emerged after the Cold War. After 1991, the new security functions were strengthened, first with the emergence of partnership and cooperation, and then, after 9/11, with the strengthening of the contribution to collective security (peace support operations). But while security community-building continues unabated today, the collective security function has been "weakened" after two decades, whereas the collective defence function has been brought back to the fore after 2014. With the Russian war in February 2022, this strategic orientation is likely to remain until 2030, as the new NATO Strategic Concept provides for long-term tasks of deterrence and defence.

Hungary has been involved in shaping the recent history of NATO, directly and indirectly. Our country plays an important role in political and military decision-making, in capability development and peace operation contributions, and in the process of integration into the military, operational and combat system. The Hungarian foreign, security and defence policy considers NATO's development "requirements" and the goals and directions of cooperation. Hungary will obviously act correctly if it incorporates these "determinations" into the country's defence plans and the development programmes of the Hungarian Defence Forces (Zrínyi Programme). The Hungarian Defence Forces must be able to fulfil their mission in the 21st century as a member of the Alliance and independently, even in the deteriorating international security environment.

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