

# MP-IDSA

## *Issue Brief*

# Decoding NATO's 75<sup>th</sup> Summit

*Rajorshi Roy*

July 30, 2024

## **S***ummary*

NATO appears to have shaken-off the perceived drift in its purpose amidst a renewed intent on collective security. Its '360-degree' approach is a vital bulwark in tackling the multitude of threats that are increasingly washing up on NATO's shores. Headwinds though could test the organisation's resilience, readiness and responsiveness in the future.

## Introduction

The 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary Summit of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) took place in Washington D.C. on 9–11 July 2024.<sup>1</sup> The highlight of the event was the release of the Washington Summit Declaration. The document spells out the threats, challenges and risks to NATO’s collective security. It also re-emphasises the organisation’s three core tasks of ‘deterrence and defence, crisis prevention and management, and cooperative security’.<sup>2</sup>

This enduring US-led trans-Atlantic military alliance has grown in strength from 12 to 32 members since its inception in 1949.<sup>3</sup> In effect, NATO handles the collective security of a billion people.<sup>4</sup> It also represents 50 per cent of the global GDP and half of the world’s military might.<sup>5</sup> Its durability is reflected in its unique distinction of zero withdrawals in membership in its 75-year-old chequered history.<sup>6</sup>

Incidentally, it appears that the wheels of NATO have come a full circle in finding a rallying cause for its members to truly commit to collective security. The rationale of NATO’s creation in 1949 was to counter growing Soviet footprints in Europe.<sup>7</sup> Conflicting political ideology with the USSR had led the US and its western European partners to view the Soviet Union as an existential threat. This inevitably led to the ‘East-West divide’ in the European heartland. The US-led NATO versus Soviet-led Warsaw Pact marked a period of acute hostility between the two opposing camps in Europe during half-a-century of Cold War rivalry.<sup>8</sup>

Today, NATO recognises the Soviet Union’s successor in Russia as its ‘most significant and direct threat’ amidst Moscow’s invasion of Ukraine in 2022.<sup>9</sup> Fears of Kiev being the domino in eastern Europe has energised the organisation. This is reflected in NATO’s ongoing resolve to stop the Russian juggernaut. The renewed sense of purpose is in sharp contrast to the prolonged drift NATO experienced post the disintegration of the Soviet Union. The drift had even led French President Emmanuel Macron to question the organisation’s relevance while terming it ‘brain dead’ in 2019.<sup>10</sup>

Unsurprisingly, the 75<sup>th</sup> Summit took place under the overhang of the biggest military conflict in Europe since 1945. In a show of unity, NATO committed to

---

<sup>1</sup> [“Washington Summit Declaration”](#), NATO, 10 July 2024.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> [“What is NATO”](#), NATO.

<sup>4</sup> [“Vilnius Summit Communiqué”](#), NATO, 11 July 2023.

<sup>5</sup> Jens Stoltenberg, [“What NATO Means to the World”](#), *Foreign Affairs*, 3 July 2024.

<sup>6</sup> [“NATO’s 75th Anniversary”](#), NATO.

<sup>7</sup> [“A Short History of NATO”](#), NATO.

<sup>8</sup> [“NATO’s 75th Anniversary”](#), no. 6.

<sup>9</sup> [“Washington Summit Declaration”](#), no. 1.

<sup>10</sup> [“Emmanuel Macron Warns Europe: NATO is Becoming Brain-dead”](#), *The Economist*, 7 November 2019.

Ukraine’s ‘irreversible’ membership.<sup>11</sup> It also pledged additional resources for Ukraine’s pushback against Russia. Similarly, the Summit marked a traditionally neutral Sweden’s first participation in NATO’s apex annual gathering as a full member. In a show of flexibility, the organisation outlined a robust strategy to deal with other emerging challenges beyond Russia, including hybrid and non-traditional threats.<sup>12</sup> These developments led the US President Joe Biden to declare NATO as “more powerful than ever”.<sup>13</sup>

The Summit also stood out for NATO’s tough stance on China. Moreover, the incipient attempts to fuse the Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific theatres as areas of common concern underlined a new dimension to the organisation’s global outlook. Incidentally, the upcoming Presidential elections in the US seemed to be the proverbial albatross around NATO’s neck amidst growing speculation of the return of a Trump presidency. Trump’s radical position on Russia as well as scepticism of NATO appeared to hang uncomfortably in the air.

## NATO and the War in Europe

Russia’s war in Ukraine has upended the European security architecture. This conflict, however, is not only about territory but also about Russia’s perception of its place in the European order. It is also not just a face-off between Russia and Ukraine but involves Moscow’s shadow boxing with the West. As such, the confrontation lays bare existing fault-lines in Europe. This includes trust deficit and insecurities of the key stakeholders. It also highlights the repercussions of the failure to find a *modus vivendi* between the two warring sides who cannot wish each other away due to their geographical proximity.

Incidentally, NATO’s eastern expansion is seen by many<sup>14</sup> as *casus belli* of this full-blown hostility. Its outreach in the post-Soviet space since 1999 has apparently fuelled Moscow’s insecurity.<sup>15</sup> NATO has today expanded right up to Russia’s doorstep. Tallinn and Riga are closer to St. Petersburg than what St. Petersburg is to Russia’s seat of power in Moscow. NATO also continues to court countries in Russia’s perceived ‘sphere of influence’. This includes Central Asian Republics, Georgia and Moldova.<sup>16</sup> Unsurprisingly, fears of NATO being a Western tool to encircle, contain and isolate Russia in its neighbourhood run deep in the Kremlin.

---

<sup>11</sup> [“Washington Summit Declaration”](#), no. 1.

<sup>12</sup> [“Emmanuel Macron Warns Europe: NATO is Becoming Brain-dead”](#), no. 10.

<sup>13</sup> [“Biden Underscores NATO’s Enduring Strength as Alliance Marks 75 Years”](#), U.S. Department of Defense, 10 July 2024.

<sup>14</sup> John J. Mearsheimer, [“Why the Ukraine Crisis is the West’s Fault: The Liberal Delusions That Provoked Putin”](#), *Foreign Affairs*, 18 August 2014.

<sup>15</sup> [“Expanded Meeting of Defence Ministry Board”](#), President of Russia, 19 December 2023; [“Speech and the Following Discussion at the Munich Conference on Security Policy”](#), President of Russia, 10 February 2007.

<sup>16</sup> [“Washington Summit Declaration”](#), no. 1; [“Vilnius Summit Communiqué”](#), no. 4.

This flows from Russia’s perception of the West rebuffing its overtures towards jointly shaping the European security architecture.<sup>17</sup> It appears that Ukraine’s growing embrace of NATO was the last straw which broke the camel’s back, given the geo-strategic and geo-economic relevance of Kiev for Moscow.

Conversely, Russia’s perceived assertiveness in its ‘near abroad’ has accentuated the anxieties of smaller neighbours.<sup>18</sup> They have in turn sought to balance Moscow by engaging with NATO. It is also a moot point if Russia can claim its sphere of influence for eternity. Russia’s calls for exclusivity with its neighbours goes against the grain of an independent country’s freedom of choice.

Nevertheless, the conflict highlights the inability of warring sides to achieve mutual accommodation. It also puts the spotlight on not only being cognizant of the adversary’s red-lines but also being accurate in the impact assessment of crossing them, irrespective of its justification or lack thereof.

### ***NATO’s support to Ukraine***

Today, the West seems all-in for supporting Ukraine against Russian aggression while avoiding a direct military confrontation with the Kremlin. NATO appears to be a key bulwark in this calculus. This is borne out by the Washington Summit with its focus on reinforcing the ‘comprehensive assistance package’ (CAP) for Ukraine.<sup>19</sup> CAP is a multi-pronged strategy aimed at addressing the gaps in Ukrainian defence. It includes boosting procurement, interoperability and training.

Other decisions taken at the Summit include:<sup>20</sup>

1. Strengthen Joint Analysis, Training and Education Centre (JATEC) in Poland. JATEC is a training school aimed at learning lessons from the ongoing war.
2. Collaborate on a joint Strategic Defence Procurement Review with Ukraine. This is designed to strengthen interoperability, thereby creating a pathway for Ukraine’s integration with NATO. NATO will also provide technical inputs on Ukraine’s future integrated air and missile defence architecture.
3. Establish NATO Security Assistance and Training for Ukraine (NSATU) to coordinate military training and access to equipment.
4. Launch NATO-Ukraine Innovation Cooperation Roadmap to boost innovation in defence technologies.

---

<sup>17</sup> [“Statement in Connection with the Situation Concerning the NATO Countries’ Missile Defence System in Europe”](#), President of Russia, 23 November 2011.

<sup>18</sup> [“NATO”](#), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Moldova; [“NATO-Georgia Relations”](#), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia.

<sup>19</sup> [“NATO Allies Continue Ukraine Support through Comprehensive Assistance Package at Washington Summit”](#), NATO, 17 July 2024.

<sup>20</sup> [“Statement of the NATO-Ukraine Council”](#), NATO, 15 July 2024.

5. Reinforce NATO Representation to Ukraine (NRU). This will lead to the appointment of a senior NATO representative to NRU to liaise the organisation’s engagement with Kiev.
6. Provide €40 billion within the next year as part of Long-Term Security Assistance for Ukraine.

These decisions will complement the long-term bilateral security agreements signed by a few NATO members with Ukraine.<sup>21</sup> The countries include the US, UK, France, Germany and Poland. Similarly, the announcement of five new air defence systems as well as imminent induction of F-16 fighter jets, are expected to boost Ukrainian firepower.<sup>22</sup>

Incidentally, NATO is also taking steps to strengthen its own readiness to deal with the ‘all domain’ threat from Russia. These include:<sup>23</sup>

1. Boost members’ defence production anchored to the Industrial Capacity Expansion pledge.<sup>24</sup>
2. Launch Virtual Cyber Incident Support Capability (VCISC) to deal with cyber threats.<sup>25</sup>
3. Establish Maritime Centre within NATO’s Maritime Command (MARCOM) for security of critical undersea infrastructure.<sup>26</sup>
4. Set-up Space Centre of Excellence to tackle militarisation of space.
5. Reinforce Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) operational capability.
6. Fast-track Defence Innovation Accelerator for the North Atlantic (DIANA) programme to deal with emerging and disruptive technologies (EDTs).

The Washington Summit, however, failed to identify a timeline for Ukraine’s elusive NATO induction. While the wording ‘irreversible path to membership’ reflects a consensus in the organisation to firewall Kiev’s entry into NATO from any peace deal with Russia, yet it inevitably falls short of Ukraine’s expectations. This is despite NATO waiving the mandatory Membership Action Plan (MAP).<sup>27</sup> The time-consuming MAP aims to assess and align an applicant’s domestic defence, security and legal policies in line with NATO benchmarks. As such, it appears that Ukraine’s membership will be kept in abeyance as long as the war continues. Kiev’s induction

---

<sup>21</sup> [“Washington Summit Declaration”](#), no. 1.

<sup>22</sup> [“US Says F-16s to Fly Over Ukraine ‘this summer’”](#), *Euractiv*, 10 July 2024.

<sup>23</sup> [“Washington Summit Declaration”](#), no. 1; [“Vilnius Summit Communiqué”](#), no. 4.

<sup>24</sup> [“NATO Industrial Capacity Expansion Pledge”](#), NATO, 10 July 2024.

<sup>25</sup> [“Cyber Defence”](#), NATO, 16 July 2024.

<sup>26</sup> [“NATO Officially Launches New Maritime Centre for Security of Critical Undersea Infrastructure”](#), NATO, 28 May 2024.

<sup>27</sup> [“Vilnius Summit Communiqué”](#), no. 4.

during the conflict, otherwise, will likely drag NATO into a direct military confrontation with Russia under collective self-defence which is the heart of the North Atlantic Treaty. There does not appear to be an appetite for such an outcome.

### ***Future of the war***

The war has impacted all stakeholders. Neither side appears better off today than at the beginning of the conflict. However, it is unlikely that a return to business as usual is in the offing amidst an increasing battle of attrition. This is notwithstanding the growing war fatigue and a rise of the far-right in the EU who appear to have a more benign view of Russia.<sup>28</sup> The future, therefore, appears grim. Adoption of maximalist positions can undermine any peace efforts. This includes NATO’s ‘open door policy’ as well as seeking a full return of Ukrainian territories occupied by the Kremlin. NATO’s declaration ‘we will never recognise Russia’s illegal annexations of Ukrainian territory, including Crimea’<sup>29</sup> aptly sums up the Western position. Similarly, Sweden and Finland’s NATO membership has opened up potential new fronts in northern Europe and Baltics. Nuclear sabre-rattling, meanwhile, runs the risk of devastating consequences.

Interestingly, a study by eminent political scientist Kenneth Waltz on probable US reaction in the event of its defeat in the Cold War throws light on the phenomenon of major powers reacting in identical ways. If tables were to be turned today, the Warsaw Pact’s expansion in the Americas under the guise of bringing stability to the continent would likely be met with an equally fierce resistance in D.C. as it is in Moscow today *vis-à-vis* NATO’s expansion in eastern Europe. Waltz emphasised that understanding the plight of a defeated adversary is crucial in preventing it from making a comeback.<sup>30</sup>

Incidentally, an outright victory in the ongoing war for either side can have its own repercussions. A win may embolden Moscow to expand its sphere of influence—the worst-case scenario for eastern European countries bordering Russia. Similarly, the defeat of Russia can lead to more instability in the region. History is replete with humiliation breeding the quest for revenge.

## **Tough Talk on China**

The NATO Summit stands out for its tough stance on China. This includes a forceful rebuke of Beijing for being a ‘decisive enabler of Russia’s war against Ukraine’.<sup>31</sup> The declaration even explicitly outlines China’s vexed defence exports in the form of dual-

---

<sup>28</sup> [“How Will Gains by the Far Right Affect the European Parliament and EU?”](#), Chatham House, 11 June 2024.

<sup>29</sup> [“Washington Summit Declaration”](#), no. 1.

<sup>30</sup> Kenneth N. Waltz, “NATO Expansion: A Realist’s View”, *Contemporary Security Policy*, Vol. 21, No. 2, pp. 23–38.

<sup>31</sup> [“Washington Summit Declaration”](#), no. 1.

use material used by Russia to up the ante. In fact, China is equated with the traditionally rogue states such as North Korea and Iran in undermining Euro-Atlantic security. Perhaps, the harshest criticism has come from NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg. Highlighting the Russia–China axis, he wrote, “they wish to see the United States fail, Europe fracture, and NATO falter”.<sup>32</sup> The Washington Summit, therefore, appears to bring European perception of China in sync with that of the US. The EU countries have often been viewed as taking a much less malign view of Beijing than the United States.

Today, NATO appears determined to raise the cost of China’s support to Russia. This is highlighted in the Summit declaration—‘the PRC cannot enable the largest war in Europe in recent history without this negatively impacting its interests and reputation’.<sup>33</sup> Incidentally, several NATO countries, including those who are part of the European Union (EU), are exploring measures to counter perceived Chinese unfair trade practices.<sup>34</sup> Notably, China is EU’s largest partner for import of goods.<sup>35</sup>

In a sign of Beijing’s falling equities with NATO, the declaration omits previous years’ references of collaborating with China to deal with common challenges, including climate change. Instead, it focusses on tackling ‘sustained malicious cyber and hybrid activities, including disinformation’ emanating from China. This potentially draws new dividing lines and strengthens friction between rival camps not just in Europe but also at the global level.<sup>36</sup>

## Focus on Indo-Pacific

A key takeaway of the Washington Summit is NATO’s increasing focus on the Indo-Pacific (IP). This stems from the logic of indivisibility of security. From here flows the growing inter-connectedness between the Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific theatres. A vital feature of this is stakeholders in one theatre taking steps which can shape the security landscape in the other. China and North Korea’s support to Russia amidst Japan<sup>37</sup> and South Korea’s<sup>38</sup> aid to Ukraine is the new normal in Europe. Incidentally, China conducted military drills with Belarus in Brest bordering Poland and Ukraine during the NATO Summit.<sup>39</sup> In the same vein, Russia building new

---

<sup>32</sup> Jens Stoltenberg, [“What NATO Means to the World”](#), *Foreign Affairs*, 3 July 2024.

<sup>33</sup> [“Washington Summit Declaration”](#), no. 1.

<sup>34</sup> [“China Opens Tit-for-Tat Investigation Into EU Trade Barriers”](#), Bloomberg, 10 July 2024.

<sup>35</sup> [“China-EU - International Trade in Goods Statistics”](#), Eurostat, February 2024.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> [“Signing of the Accord on Support for Ukraine and Cooperation between the Government of Japan and Ukraine”](#), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 13 June 2024.

<sup>38</sup> [“‘Anything’ South Korea Can Do for Ukraine’s Defense Ability Will Be ‘Warmly Welcomed: NATO Official’](#), *The Korea Herald*, 10 July 2024.

<sup>39</sup> [“Concern Over Belarus-China Military Drills, Near NATO Border”](#), *DW*, 13 July 2024.



equations with North Korea<sup>40</sup> can embolden Kim Jong-Un to intensify his sabre-rattling in North-East Asia. Russia and China have also frequently conducted naval drills in the Indo-Pacific.<sup>41</sup>

As such, NATO’s focus on cultivating shared interests with Indo-Pacific countries is reflected in its growing engagement with the region. This includes a renewed outreach with Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand. Notably, these four countries have participated in the last two annual NATO Summits.<sup>42</sup>

The rationale and scope of NATO’s Indo-Pacific engagement is aptly highlighted by Stoltenberg in his recent article<sup>43</sup>:

Europe’s security affects Asia, and Asia’s security affects Europe...Together, we will stand up to authoritarianism, uphold global rules, and protect our democratic values, now and into the future. We will build on practical cooperation through flagship projects on Ukraine, cyber, disinformation, new technologies, and defense industrial production.

However, the devil as always lies in the details. NATO’s Indo-Pacific outreach may not be smooth sailing. One can expect a major pushback from China which looks at NATO through the prism of US grand strategy of containing rivals and adversaries. The Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson appeared to issue a warning to NATO by stating “to see China as NATO’s imaginary enemy will only backfire on NATO itself”.<sup>44</sup> He further added:

As a Cold War legacy and the world’s biggest military alliance, NATO claims itself to be a regional defensive alliance on the one hand, but on the other hand keeps breaching its boundary, expanding its mandate, reaching beyond its defense zone, and stoking confrontation, which reveals its deeply embedded Cold War mentality and ideological bias. This is the real source of risks threatening global peace and stability. NATO should stay within its role as a regional defensive alliance, stop creating tensions in the Asia-Pacific, and stop peddling Cold War mentality and bloc confrontation. NATO should not try to destabilize the Asia-Pacific after it has done so to Europe.<sup>45</sup>

As such, China’s insecurities may lead to new military hostilities in the Indo-Pacific. And Beijing is likely to pin the blame on the US ‘bloc mentality’ for the ensuing

---

<sup>40</sup> [“Message to Chairman of State Affairs of the DPRK Kim Jong-un”](#), President of Russia, 24 June 2024.

<sup>41</sup> [“China, Russia Carried Out Live-fire Naval Exercises in South China Sea”](#), *Reuters*, 17 July 2024.

<sup>42</sup> [“Washington Summit Declaration”](#), no. 1.

<sup>43</sup> Jens Stoltenberg, [“What NATO Means to the World”](#), no. 5.

<sup>44</sup> [“Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Lin Jian’s Regular Press Conference on July 12, 2024”](#), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, 12 July 2024.

<sup>45</sup> [“Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Lin Jian’s Regular Press Conference on July 8, 2024”](#), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, 8 July 2024.



regional instability. This may not sit well with the regional stakeholders who have linkages with both US and China. In fact, several Indo-Pacific countries have balked at the idea of being presented with binary choices. It is also not in the DNA of countries like India to be part of any military alliance. Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s visit to Russia in July 2024 juxtaposed with External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar’s participation in the Quad Foreign Ministers meeting in Tokyo in the same month is a reflection of India placing a premium on multi-alignment. Others too have preferred issue-based partnerships rather than hitching their wagons to competing ‘blocs’.

In fact, NATO’s presence in the Indo-Pacific can even make regional countries view increasingly acceptable formats like Quad and Quad Plus, in which the US is a key stakeholder, with suspicion. India has promoted these groupings as viable instruments of meeting the region’s developmental needs.<sup>46</sup>

In the same vein, Biden’s clarion call of NATO building an alliance of democracies<sup>47</sup> may not fit well with the region marked by diverging models of governance. As such, regional stakeholders may not be very forthcoming in their acceptance of NATO in the Indo-Pacific.

Incidentally, NATO may also need to align its incipient Indo-Pacific outlook with its charter. The North Atlantic Treaty identifies NATO’s area of operation as limited to Europe and North America. Article 6 states:<sup>48</sup>

For the purpose of Article 5, an armed attack on one or more of the Parties is deemed to include an armed attack:

- on the territory of any of the Parties in Europe or North America, on the Algerian Departments of France<sup>2</sup>, on the territory of Turkey or on the Islands under the jurisdiction of any of the Parties in the North Atlantic area north of the Tropic of Cancer;
- on the forces, vessels, or aircraft of any of the Parties, when in or over these territories or any other area in Europe in which occupation forces of any of the Parties were stationed on the date when the Treaty entered into force or the Mediterranean Sea or the North Atlantic area north of the Tropic of Cancer.

In this context, any expansion in geographical scope will require updating NATO’s consensus driven constitution. Amidst members’ predominant focus on the war in the European mainland, a modification may prove to be a herculean task for what is perceived to be a distant land. In fact, European members of NATO have not always

---

<sup>46</sup> [“Question No-2186 Quad Summit 2024”](#), Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 15 December 2023.

<sup>47</sup> [“Remarks by President Biden on the 75th Anniversary of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Alliance”](#), *The White House*, 9 July 2024.

<sup>48</sup> [“The North Atlantic Treaty”](#), NATO, 19 October 2023.

shared the US assessment of China in the Indo-Pacific. French President Macron’s statement<sup>49</sup> last year that France should not get caught up in escalation between the US and China especially over Taiwan reflects the dissonance in the NATO camp over the Indo-Pacific. Incidentally, the Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson called on NATO to “stop disrupting China–Europe relations”.<sup>50</sup>

## Shadow of US Elections

The shadow of a potential Trump 2.0 presidency seemed to loom large over the Summit. With the US continuing to be the backbone of NATO, American political developments inevitably have a major bearing on NATO. Trump’s radical views on Russia<sup>51</sup> as well as burden sharing in NATO can lead to a major recalibration in the US policy. This perhaps led Ukrainian President Zelenskyy to plead with NATO “to make strong decisions work, to act and not to wait for November or any other month”.<sup>52</sup> His fears of a US–Russia grand bargain at the cost of Ukraine were further reflected in his statement:

If Trump knows how to end this war he should tell us today...because if there are risks to Ukraine's independence, if there are risks that we lose statehood, we want to be prepared for this.<sup>53</sup>

Similarly, NATO members appeared to have gone on an overdrive to project that the majority of European countries are spending 2 per cent of their GDP on defence. Non-compliance of this benchmark has been a major Trump grouse. Notably, today, 24 out of 32 NATO members meet this threshold.<sup>54</sup> Similarly, members also sought to address Trump’s sensitivity on doing good business. A consistent narrative was centred on growing European purchase of US military equipment, thereby augmenting the American exchequer. Stoltenberg’s statement aptly summed up this sentiment:

European Allies doing far more for their collective security... They are investing a lot more in defence and spending a lot of this money in the US... since 2022, over two-thirds of European defence acquisitions were

---

<sup>49</sup> [“Macron Doubles Down on Taiwan Comments, Says France Won't be US 'Vassal'”](#), *France24*, 12 April 2024.

<sup>50</sup> [“Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Lin Jian’s Regular Press Conference on July 11, 2024”](#), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, 11 July 2024.

<sup>51</sup> [“Trump Says He Would Encourage Russia to ‘Do Whatever the Hell They Want’ to Any NATO Country That Doesn’t Pay Enough”](#), *CNN*, 11 February 2024.

<sup>52</sup> [“Together with America, the World is Capable of Doing the Right Things – Speech by Volodymyr Zelenskyy at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation and Institute”](#), President of Ukraine, 10 July 2024.

<sup>53</sup> [“Zelenskiy Challenges Trump to Reveal Plans for Ending War”](#), *Bloomberg*, 3 July 2024.

<sup>54</sup> The eight Countries not meeting the 2 per cent threshold include Croatia, Portugal, Italy, Canada, Belgium, Luxembourg, Slovenia and Spain. See [“A Record Number of NATO Allies are Hitting their Defense Spending Target During War in Ukraine”](#), *AP*, 18 June 2024; [“Funding NATO”](#), *NATO*, 26 July 2024.

made with US firms... NATO is good for US security, good for the US industry, and good for US jobs.<sup>55</sup>

It is, therefore, unlikely that the US will withdraw from NATO. This military organisation remains a key instrument of American global power projection. It also enables the US to shape the geo-politics of Europe. Incidentally, the US leadership of NATO is seen as balancing latent security competition among European powers. US presence helps prevent the rise of a European hegemon.<sup>56</sup>

Notably, the American Congress appears to have already ‘Trump-proofed’ US membership of NATO. The National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) of 2023 debars the US President from withdrawing from NATO without ‘two-thirds of the Senators present concurring, or pursuant to an Act of Congress’.<sup>57</sup>

In conclusion, NATO remains an enduring military alliance for its members. Today, it appears to have truly shaken-off the perceived drift in its purpose amidst a renewed intent on collective security. Its ‘360-degree’ approach is a vital bulwark in tackling the multitude of threats that are increasingly washing up on NATO’s shores. While headwinds could test the organisation’s resilience, readiness and responsiveness in the future, the Washington Summit has reinforced NATO’s relevance for its 32 members across the Euro-Atlantic space.

---

<sup>55</sup> [“Secretary General in Washington: NATO Makes America Stronger”](#), NATO, 17 June 2024.

<sup>56</sup> Kenneth N. Waltz, “NATO Expansion: A Realist's View”, no. 30.

<sup>57</sup> [“H.R.2670 - National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2024”](#), Congress, 22 December 2023.

## About the Author



**Dr. Rajorshi Roy** is Associate Fellow at the Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, New Delhi.

**Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses** is a non-partisan, autonomous body dedicated to objective research and policy relevant studies on all aspects of defence and security. Its mission is to promote national and international security through the generation and dissemination of knowledge on defence and security-related issues.

*Disclaimer:* Views expressed in Manohar Parrikar IDSA's publications and on its website are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Manohar Parrikar IDSA or the Government of India.

© Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (MP-IDSA) 2024