

# HELSINKI SECURITY FORUM

2023

DETER, DEFEND AND SECURE  
— EUROPE IN THE ERA OF  
RADICAL UNCERTAINTY

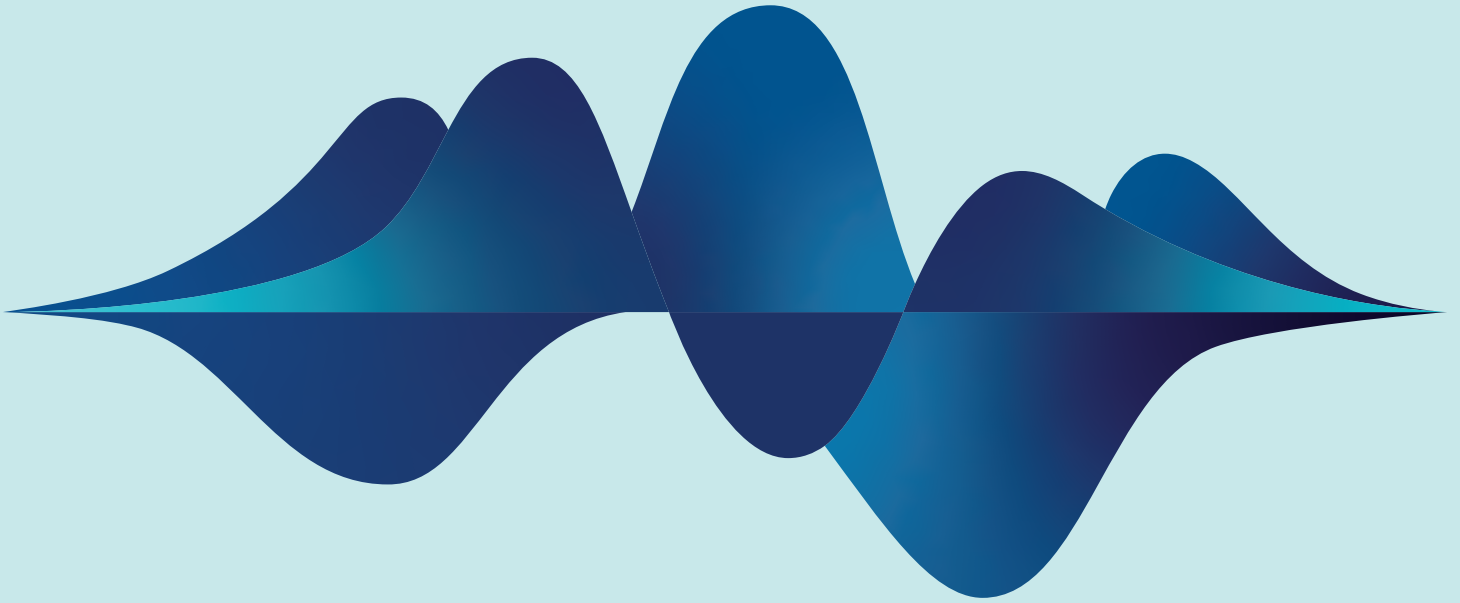


HELSINKI  
SECURITY  
FORUM

**FIIA**

FINNISH INSTITUTE  
OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS





**29.9.–1.10.2023**

**DETER, DEFEND AND  
SECURE – EUROPE IN  
THE ERA OF RADICAL  
UNCERTAINTY**

# FOREWORD

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## SAULI NIINISTÖ

PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF FINLAND

The era of rapid change we are living in requires informed discussion, debate and analysis. Helsinki Security Forum makes an important contribution to the global network of security conferences, providing a unique platform for discussion at the intersection of the Baltic Sea, Europe, and the Arctic region.

This year's Helsinki Security Forum will be held under the theme of "Deter, Defend and Secure – Europe in the Era of Radical Uncertainty". This is a timely reflection of the changes we are living through both in Europe and globally.

Russia's illegal attack on Ukraine brought about a renewed focus on security in Europe. Many European countries took swift action to ramp up defence spending and enhance cooperation. It became clear that we could no longer take peace and security for granted and that we had to be prepared to defend our freedom and values.

Finland, and our allies, must constantly address the question of how best to defend and secure Europe now and in the future. And as Ukraine continues to be covered by the fog of war, we need to cut through it and stand firm in our support for Ukraine and for a just and lasting peace.

Finland has never forgotten the importance of national defence. Throughout the years, we invested in our security and built up a dense network of defence cooperation, but the new situation warranted more. Finland's NATO membership increases not only our security but that of the whole Alliance. With Sweden's membership, the Alliance will cover nearly the entire Baltic Sea region.

Our work is not done. Finland must stand ready at all times to act decisively to meet the demands of this new and ever-changing reality. The most important thing we gain from NATO membership is the preventive effect of the Alliance's joint deterrence. Yet we will continue to bear the final responsibility for our own security.

In these times of uncertainty, many things will nevertheless remain constant. Finland is and will remain a stable and predictable Nordic country. Finland will continue to maximise its own security, making sure we have the capabilities needed to keep our border secure and, in doing so, also contributing to the deterrence and joint defence of NATO and the security of our allies.



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**FINLAND MUST STAND READY AT ALL TIMES  
TO ACT DECISIVELY TO MEET THE DEMANDS  
OF THIS NEW AND EVER-CHANGING REALITY.**

# WELCOMING WORDS



**KAI SAUER**  
AMBASSADOR,  
CHAIRMAN OF FIIA BOARD

## Dear colleague,

Last year, when the Helsinki Security Forum was launched, the Russian invasion of Ukraine had shattered not only peace in Ukraine, but also the European security architecture. Today we can observe that one of the consequences of war's return to Europe is the unity and sense of purpose it has created among partners – transatlantic and beyond - in their political, economic and military support to Ukraine. At the same time, Europe finds itself in a situation in which it must take more responsibility for its own security. It is not only Germany facing the *Zeitenwende*, but Europe as a whole.

Our time is characterised by an exceptional pace and scope of change, that requires political unity and determination – both on domestic and foreign policy fronts – in reinforcing our societies' resilience and equipping ourselves to protect our borders and democratic values.

As the Russian invasion continues to violate Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty – two key principles of the UN Charter – Europe and its allies are faced with the fact that there is no unequivocal, or global, condemnation of the Russian attack on its sovereign neighbour. Hence, Russia's aggression has led to a challenge to the existing rules-based international order and a re-evaluation of relationships with several

partners in the so-called Global South. The expansion of the BRICS group – of which Russia is one founding member – is proof of the shifting international landscape.

Russian aggression has affected Finland's position as well. This year, as we meet for the second Helsinki Security Forum, the conference takes place on NATO territory. It is safe to say that with its military capabilities and Nordic political tradition, Finland will remain a regional security provider and an asset to NATO. We made our choice to maximise our security. In order to maximise the Alliance's security, we support Sweden to become a member without delay.

For over 60 years, the Finnish Institute of International Affairs (FIIA) has shaped Finnish public debate on foreign and security policy. FIIA has contributed, through its research and publications, to well-informed decision-making in Finland. Now, we are aiming to do the same in the framework of our international Helsinki Security Forum. With the clouds hanging low, it may feel like navigating in a fog, but with this experienced crew we hope to map the right course.

On behalf of FIIA and the HSF team,  
Welcome to Helsinki Security Forum!



## JUHANA VARTIAINEN

MAYOR OF HELSINKI

### Dear friends,

Cities, such as Helsinki, play a pivotal role in promoting safety, both in terms of physical well-being and the overall quality of life for our residents and visitors. As urbanisation continues, with more people living in cities than ever before, ensuring safety has become a critical aspect of urban planning and development.

Helsinki is a vibrant ecosystem where diverse communities come together, the economy thrives, and culture flourishes. Within the tapestry of urban life, the concept of security takes centre stage. Thus, a secure city is one where residents feel safe in their daily lives, where businesses can prosper without fear of disruption, and where visitors are welcomed with open arms. In Helsinki, children can walk safely to school, people have fewer traffic accidents, and tourists can enjoy a safe and relaxing holiday.

We foster an environment where safety is inherent in every aspect of urban living. Addressing the root causes of safety issues often involves providing access to social services such as affordable housing, mental health support, addiction treatment and education. Cities that invest in these services help individuals lead stable lives. Good quality of life, equality, and possibilities for citizen participation are our greatest tools for keeping the city safe in the future. This is a significant part of national security.

In addition to their domestic roles, cities also play a significant role on the international stage. Cities are already working together in various ways. For example, they are assisting Ukraine with rebuilding efforts, accommodating asylum seekers, tackling climate change, and managing the effects of the pandemic.

Helsinki is a city where the harmonious blend of history, innovation, freedom, and diplomacy converges. Our capital has been an arena for numerous high-level meetings and political events, and we are once again proud to provide the platform for the Helsinki Security Forum. I would like to think that the very name of the forum communicates the importance of the role of cities as a fundamental component of the international security environment. At the same time, the name of Helsinki is associated with the famous Helsinki Accord from 1975, an element in the long march towards the fall of communist dictatorships in Europe.

Now, for the first time as the capital of a new NATO ally, I am extremely pleased that the City of Helsinki is such a visible part of the Helsinki Security Forum. It is my great pleasure to warmly welcome you all to Helsinki!

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# DETER, DEFEND AND SECURE

## — EUROPE IN THE ERA OF RADICAL UNCERTAINTY

**Europe has been moved to a new era of radical uncertainty. Thinking about future security architectures, needed military capabilities, and cooperation to address geopolitical changes has never been more important.**

In the following pages, researchers from the Finnish Institute of International Affairs offer their expert perspectives on the themes of Helsinki Security Forum 2023.





**CHARLY SALONIJS-PASTERNAK**

LEADING RESEARCHER, FIIA

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# EUROPE IN THE ERA OF RADICAL UNCERTAINTY

In multiple spheres of global activity, from diplomacy to business and military affairs, the concept of an era of radical uncertainty has gained increasing currency. The fundamental idea is that it has become increasingly difficult to comprehend the possibilities of various futures, never mind the probabilities and paths we ought to take to reach them. The concept suggests that not only are outcomes uncertain, but so are the nature of the variables, the parameters, and the relationships that shape those outcomes. The increasingly obvious effects of climate change, a global pandemic and the rapid development of technology seem to support this view. Implicit in the concept is that it is difficult to implement strategies – there are just too many butterflies flapping their wings around the world.

Europeans are expected to contribute to global security. In the future, they must bear the primary responsibility for building credible defence capabilities in Europe that contribute to a sufficient deterrence. At the same time, we must also analytically ask whether we are in an era of radical uncertainty vis-à-vis deterrence, defence and broader security, or whether the concept merely offers justification for decision-makers to avoid implementing necessary, but politically difficult policies.

Regarding defence, the characteristics of any war will always differ slightly from others, but from the perspective of developing military capabilities or using

them, these differences do not necessarily support the idea of radical uncertainty. On the ground in Ukraine, the war is largely being fought using technologies developed between the 1950s and 1990s: artillery, anti-tank weapons, armor, and small infantry units. These harken back to a kind of war the character of which has been well understood for decades – though forgotten by some. Constant jousts between offensive and defensive cyber actions, drones, rapid targeting cycles enabled through the creative combination of various technologies have impacted the war and added layers of complexity, but have not radically changed the variables or parameters that ultimately decide the outcome of the war. Militaries across Europe understand what needs to be done at national and collective levels to develop the capabilities needed for Europe to defend itself within a broader collective defence framework. Radical uncertainty does not necessarily apply here, and political decision-makers must acknowledge this.

In a conceptual sense, deterrence, and more specifically the fact that it happens in the minds of the deterred, has remained unchanged. The parameters of nuclear deterrence are understood, even if the actions of several states have complicated the calculus. Aside from Russia's highly irresponsible nuclear rhetoric, the war in Ukraine has actually underscored the reality of nuclear deterrence, both for Russia as well as NATO

and the US. China's development of a nuclear triad capability to ensure mutually assured destruction also suggests an understanding of this dynamic. In the realm of broader conventional deterrence, NATO's shift towards a deterrence by denial posture is a fact, even if implementation is still a work in progress. Here again it seems that radical uncertainty may be too sweeping an expression of reality.

Security of the broad societal variety is, however, clearly marked by radical uncertainty. Societies are contending with a global pandemic, major war in Europe, tangible effects of climate change, shifting political and trade winds, mounting societal challenges, and the specter of rapid simultaneous development of technologies with significant implications for humanity. Social and national security have combined to cause real and understandable concern for many citizens and decision-makers in Europe. Many have also been reminded of the reality that only states can be the ultimate guarantors of societal or national security. This is the case even if the work to secure societal, national and individual rights must be a collaborative undertaking with actors ranging from the private sector to NGOs and other states.

It seems then, that when discussing radical uncertainty, we must be sure to specify clearly to what or whom we are referring. Despite some positive societal developments in terms of child mortality, education,

access to healthcare and clean water, much of the world has continued to live in uncertainty during the past few decades. It is perhaps only in the minds of some decision makers on both sides of the Atlantic that the post-Cold War years cultivated a sense of chimerical certainty generated by using increasing volumes of data to generate the illusion of scientific certainty or validity. Perhaps a brief respite from history also reflects an ahistorical understanding of the preceding eras as having been less uncertain. For many in Europe and elsewhere on the globe, the work of deterring, defending, and securing Europe was not necessarily any less uncertain during the 20th century. Considering the events that occurred between 1900-1925-1950-1975-2000, one could argue that this was in fact a century of uncertainty, for individuals, societies, and states.

Paradoxically, this should provide succour to both citizens and decision-makers; Europe has the material and human resources necessary to defend itself and deter potential adversaries. In addition, Europe has a record of being able to rise to the occasion in previous eras of uncertainty. In 2023, this means implementing what is needed for defence and deterrence, and ensuring a comprehensive approach to societal security. Together these improve national and European resilience and provide us the flexibility needed to meet the surprises that await us.

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## GOING FORWARD:

- » **Decision-makers must be clear-eyed about what is genuinely and radically uncertain, and what is simply a tough decision which must be made. Political decision-makers have a solid understanding of what is needed to develop Europe's defence and deterrence. However, they must develop the courage and political will to take necessary action on this front.**
- » **Europe must develop a collective societal security approach, that includes education, provision of healthcare, employment opportunities and a sense of personal ownership – ensuring everybody feels they have a stake in the success and security of their community. This is the foundation for societal resilience, and thus contributes centrally to deterrence.**





**TUOMAS ISO-MARKKU**  
SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOW, FIIA



**IRO SÄRKKÄ**  
SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOW, FIIA

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# ENHANCING EUROPE'S MILITARY CAPABILITIES

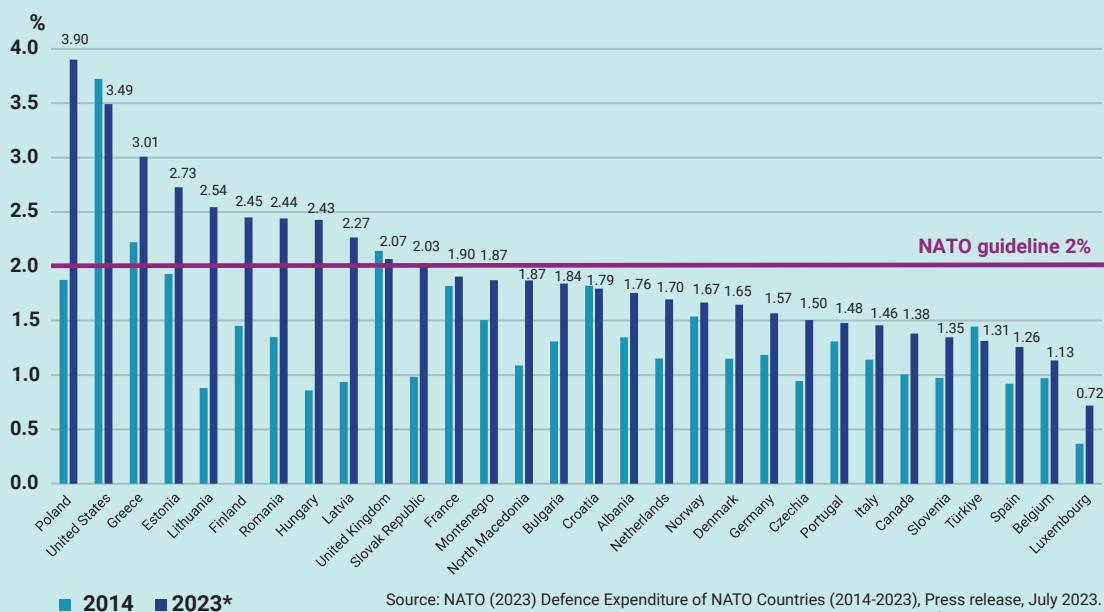
Russia's brutal war of aggression against Ukraine has emphasised how important maintaining a credible deterrence and defence posture is – and how unprepared for this task most European states have long been. Against the backdrop of the war, the state of European defence has become a matter of genuine public interest. Consequently, there is rare political momentum to enhance Europe's defence capabilities. However, for that to succeed, significant challenges need to be overcome.

The starting point for European defence is a difficult one. From the end of the Cold War until Russia's first invasion of Ukraine in 2014, economic and security policy rationales led to major downscaling of European militaries in terms of both materiel and personnel.

International crisis management was prioritised over territorial defence, and with the US providing the bulk of the necessary assets, Europeans were mostly content to play a small supporting role. Successive military operations duly revealed major shortfalls in European capabilities in critical areas such as command and control; intelligence, surveillance, and target acquisition; strategic airlift; as well as air-to-air refuelling.

On top of these long-known gaps now come the needs highlighted by Russia's war in Ukraine. The war has shown the importance of long-range and precision fires, air and missile defence, electronic warfare, and drones. It has also served as a reminder of how resource-consuming long military campaigns are, emphasising the role of stockpiles, supply lines, and

## Defence expenditure as a share of GDP (%) (based on 2015 prices and exchange rates)



Source: NATO (2023) Defence Expenditure of NATO Countries (2014-2023), Press release, July 2023.  
\*Figures for 2023 are estimates.

military industrial production capacity. Additionally, the Ukrainian experience has underscored the value of skilled and motivated military personnel.

Europeans have rightly committed themselves to supporting Ukraine’s legitimate fight against the invader. Being able to supply Ukraine while simultaneously bolstering their own defences will require massive efforts from all European states. At the same time, Europeans must also be better prepared to support security and prevent conflicts further afield. While military means alone are not the solution in conflict regions like the Sahel, enhanced capabilities could increase Europeans’ credibility and agency in places where they currently have little say.

Enhanced European capabilities are also needed for a more balanced and viable transatlantic relationship. Europe’s military weakness is a long-standing concern for the US and has gained even more importance recently, as the US strategic focus has shifted to the Indo-Pacific. While US capabilities and leadership remain essential for European security, the best way to secure continued US engagement is for Europe to adopt

a bigger share of the burden. This would also make Europeans less vulnerable to potential changes in US domestic politics.

There are thus compelling reasons for European states to strengthen their capabilities. But this requires at least three things:

First, European states must commit adequate financial resources to defence and do so over the long term. European defence budgets have been on the rise since 2014, and the latest developments suggest that this trend will continue – but there remain significant differences between European states and justified doubts about the durability of their commitments.

Second, Europeans need to agree on clear priorities and a fruitful division of labour. Enhancing European capabilities is a long-term undertaking, and all issues cannot be addressed at once. Moreover, it does not make sense for everyone to focus on the same things. Instead, European defence needs to be seen as a collective effort in which different actors can assume different roles.

# BEING ABLE TO SUPPLY UKRAINE WHILE SIMULTANEOUSLY BOLSTERING THEIR OWN DEFENCES WILL REQUIRE MASSIVE EFFORTS FROM ALL EUROPEAN STATES.

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Third, Europe's defence industry needs to be brought up to speed. Currently, it is characterised by both fragmentation and inefficiencies, which result from the European states' tendency to favour national solutions. The industry also faces a shortage of skilled workforce and limited access to the necessary materials and components. Ramping up production will thus take time and sustained efforts.

To tackle all the mentioned challenges, cooperation and coordination between governments, armed forces, and defence companies in Europe and across the Atlantic are a necessity. Both NATO and the EU have a central role to play in all of this.

NATO's renewed defence investment pledge (2% of GDP not a ceiling but a floor) remains the most important political instrument to usher European states to provide the necessary funds for enhancing their capabilities. Meanwhile, NATO's Concept for Deterrence and Defence of the Euro-Atlantic Area (DDA) as well as its Defence Planning Process (NDPP) should guide the Europeans' efforts to do so, laying out concrete priorities and requirements.

The EU, for its part, provides useful institutional and policy frameworks like Permanent Structured

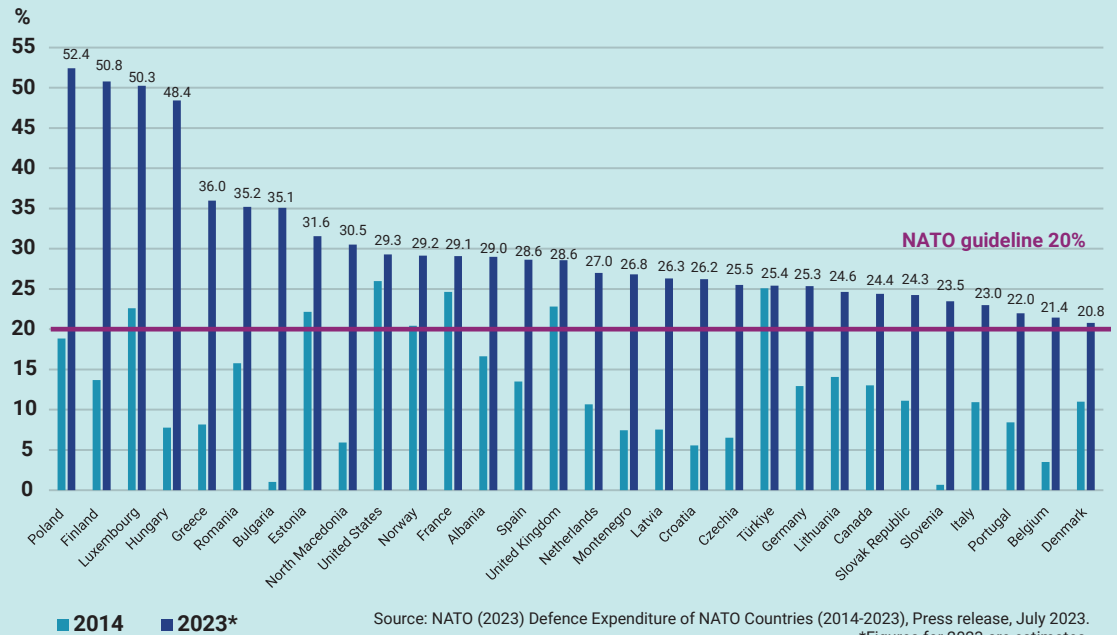
Cooperation (PESCO) as well as potentially helpful financial instruments, such as the European Defence Fund (EDF), the European Defence Industry Reinforcement through Common Procurement Act (EDIRPA), and the European Defence Investment Programme (EDIP). Through these, the EU can incentivise cooperation among European governments and defence companies. Furthermore, the Union possesses regulatory power to influence the European defence industry and market.

Finally, various bilateral, trilateral, and minilateral formats of defence cooperation can make an important contribution to enhancing European capabilities as well. As for the US, it can best support this process by remaining engaged in European defence while simultaneously pushing Europeans to do more for their own security, as well as by adopting a pragmatic attitude towards European defence cooperation efforts.

Together, it is possible for Europe to make the most out of the current momentum and solve its long-standing capability predicament.



**Equipment expenditure as a share of defence expenditure (%)**  
(based on 2015 prices and exchange rates)



## GOING FORWARD:

- » In the context of Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine, there is rare political momentum to address the existing shortfalls in European defence capabilities.
- » Europe needs enhanced defence capabilities to strengthen its deterrence and defence posture while simultaneously meeting Ukraine’s urgent military needs, to support security and prevent conflicts in other regions in and beyond Europe, and to contribute to a more balanced and viable transatlantic relationship.
- » Three issues will be of crucial importance in the quest for enhancing European defence capabilities: committing adequate financial resources to defence over the long term; agreeing on clear priorities and a rational division of labour among European countries; and solving the multiple issues that hamper the functioning of the European defence industry.
- » For Europe to succeed in its efforts, cooperation and coordination between governments, armed forces, and defence companies in Europe and across the Atlantic are a necessity.
- » Both NATO and the EU have a crucial role in strengthening Europe’s defence. NATO remains the primary organisation for collective defence and deterrence for the Euro-Atlantic area. The EU, for its part, offers useful institutional frameworks, financial instruments, and regulatory power to shape the European defence industry and market.



**JYRI LAVIKAINEN**  
RESEARCH FELLOW, FIIA

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# NATO'S NUCLEAR DETERRENT AND LESSONS FROM UKRAINE

Russia's invasion of Ukraine marks the first time in world history when a state uses its nuclear arsenal as coercive leverage in a war of conquest. The reverberations are felt throughout the world. Countries without an equivalent deterrent must question their chances of survival, should a similar fate befall to them. NATO, for its part, will have to review the requirements of deterrence and defence.

NATO has been a nuclear alliance since its inception. Its members are protected by the extended deterrence provided by the United States and the United Kingdom, alongside the independent deterrent of France. Neither Russia nor the Soviet Union has ever tested this deterrent with an overt military attack. On the other hand, Russia shares a land border with three European countries outside NATO's defensive perimeter: Ukraine, Georgia and Belarus, all of which Russia has either attacked or managed to succumb under its dominance without war. Countries under the nuclear umbrella have been safe from aggression, while those outside the nuclear umbrella have not had the means to prevent themselves from becoming targets.

The effects of nuclear deterrence manifest every day. Nuclear weapons give their possessor greater freedom to maneuver and enact a foreign and security policy of their choosing. NATO's Strategic Concept acknowledges this by assigning prevention of coercion as one of the fundamental tasks of its nuclear capability. The logic is simple. Coercive nuclear threats ring hollow if one has the power to respond in kind.

To grasp the importance of this task, one can ponder what the European response to Russia's second invasion of Ukraine would have looked like if the concept and capabilities of extended deterrence did not exist. Without NATO's nuclear capability, Russia's coercion would likely have been much more effective and Ukraine's fate dire.

Yet, it would be premature to conclude that Russia's coercion has altogether failed. Russia can claim a partial success, because even under NATO's nuclear umbrella, many member states hesitated for a long time before supporting the delivery of advanced capabilities to Ukraine.

One could claim that hesitation was in fact responsibility in the face of the risk of escalation. However, it is worth contemplating whether supporters of Ukraine may have acted with greater confidence if Russia did not hold a significant advantage in theater nuclear capabilities.

After the Cold War, the US withdrew almost all of its nuclear weapons from Europe. Only a small arsenal of B61 gravity bombs that are currently being modernised remains. The US also decided to retire the nuclear-tipped Tomahawk cruise missile in 2010. The reductions were based on post-Cold War logic that did not account for Russia as a serious military threat. At the same time, those hoping that Russia would reciprocate or that reductions would serve to reduce tensions have been proven wrong time and again.

Although Russia, too, reduced the size of its non-strategic nuclear arsenal in the 1990s and 2000s, it did so to a much lesser extent than the US. Currently Russia has an estimated 10:1 advantage over the US in non-strategic nuclear weapons. During the Putin era, Russia also began the modernisation of this arsenal, and developed nuclear-capable high-precision weapons based on ground, naval and air platforms. The much-improved precision facilitates the use of lower yields for the purposes of calibrating the scope and effects of nuclear use. Russia has replaced its legacy systems with modern ones that are more usable in scenarios where the use of nuclear weapons is expected to be limited.

Consequently, Russia's regional nuclear superiority allows it a certain coercive leverage on the lower rungs of escalation ladder. As Putin noted in June 2023, having more non-strategic nuclear weapons than NATO countries is Russia's "competitive advantage". Accordingly, if one of the tasks of NATO's nuclear capability is to prevent coercion, the current composition of the US theater nuclear forces may no longer be fit for purpose. If not reversed by the decisions of the US and possibly NATO, Russia's nuclear superiority on a regional level will likely persist, with its attendant consequences. Arms racing or an increased reliance on nuclear weapons is not in NATO's interest. Yet, removing Russia's competitive advantage with a moderate enhancement of capabilities, including exercises, may well be.

However, despite being an advantage, the war in Ukraine has again demonstrated that nuclear arsenals do not guarantee their owner a victory in war. It is not even uncommon that a nuclear power loses a war, as the US learned in Vietnam and the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. Nuclear weapons are unique in their destructive power, but their use is subject to a powerful taboo and is limited by the deterrent power of other nuclear forces, while taking and holding territory always requires ground forces.

Conventional military power, therefore, remains the bedrock of successful prosecution of high-intensity warfare. At the event of an invasion of one or more NATO-members, the Alliance would also rely on conventional forces. Although nuclear deterrence is the ultimate guarantor of the security of NATO, its greatest utility during war is facilitating victory by persuading the adversary that it is in its best interests that the war does not escalate beyond the level of conventional warfare.

Nuclear deterrence has historically caused discomfort for many in NATO. Russia's imperialist war should, however, result in a sober assessment of the situation we find ourselves in. A strong nuclear deterrent makes NATO and its members more secure, and freer to act in the international arena.

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## GOING FORWARD:

- » **Russia's use of nuclear weapons as a coercive tool in a war of conquest is a unique event in history that should result in a review of the requirements of deterrence.**
- » **Nuclear deterrence is key to preventing nuclear coercion. States outside the nuclear umbrella live in a much more perilous world after Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine.**
- » **The US and NATO may need to invest in new nuclear capabilities to counter Russia's advantage in theater nuclear forces.**
- » **Arms racing or greater reliance on nuclear deterrence is not in the interests of NATO. Deterrence and defence continues to require powerful conventional forces.**

# RAPID TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIETAL SECURITY

One of the fields that has seen rapid technology development during the past few years has been artificial intelligence, particularly large language models (LLMs). FIIA decided to interview each of the large LLMs publicly available in Europe on rapid technology development and societal security. Each language model has its own peculiarities. Supported by Google's BARD, FIIA researcher Charly Salonijs-Pasternak interviewed OpenAI's ChatGPT. The transcript follows.

HSF

**What are the key rapidly developing technologies that have the potential for having the greatest influence on societal or national security?**

AI

Key rapidly developing technologies with significant potential to impact societal and national security include artificial intelligence (AI), quantum computing, biotechnology, and cyber warfare tools. These technologies can revolutionize industries, enhance military capabilities, and disrupt critical infrastructure. AI-powered autonomous systems may transform warfare, while quantum computing could undermine encryption and secure communications. Biotechnology advancements offer both medical breakthroughs and potential biosecurity threats. Additionally, the escalating use of digital networks increases vulnerabilities to cyberattacks, affecting economies and sensitive information. Balancing innovation with security measures is essential to navigate these evolving challenges.

HSF

**When combined, all of these technologies can multiply each other's effects. All of them are also technologies where private sector actors have a large or even dominant role. How should we think about the role that private sector companies and states have in ensuring that rapid technology development does not adversely affect individual, societal or national security?**

AI

The roles of private sector companies and states in managing the impact of rapid technology development on security are vital and complementary. Private sector companies drive innovation, but their primary focus is profit and market competition. States, on the other hand, are responsible for safeguarding public interests and security.

Collaboration is key: States must establish regulatory frameworks to ensure ethical and safe technology deployment. They can incentivize private sector companies to prioritize security through regulations, standards, and incentives. Companies should conduct thorough risk assessments and adhere to ethical guidelines.

Information sharing and cooperation: States can encourage private sector companies to share threat intelligence and vulnerabilities, facilitating a collective defense against cyber threats. Private firms can offer insights to governments on emerging technologies' potential risks and benefits.

Research and development: Governments can fund and direct research efforts in areas crucial for security, such as AI ethics and encryption. Companies should incorporate security features into products and services, minimizing vulnerabilities.

International cooperation: Given technology's global nature, international collaboration is essential. States can engage in dialogues to establish common norms and regulations. Companies should operate within these frameworks to avoid security breaches across borders.

Transparency and accountability: States must demand transparency from private sector actors regarding technology development and deployment. Companies should be held accountable for any adverse effects on security.

Ultimately, a balanced partnership between private sector innovation and state security measures is essential. Effective coordination will help mitigate potential threats and ensure that rapid technological advancements contribute positively to societal and national security.

HSF

**What threats to national security may emerge with the current era of rapidly developing technologies? Are there differences in how different states perceive these potential threats and opportunities, for example a large superpower like the United States or a small country in southeast Asia?**

AI

Different states perceive these threats differently based on their geopolitical context, technological capabilities, and strategic priorities. Large superpowers like the United States often have extensive resources for both offensive and defensive cyber operations, while smaller countries in regions like Southeast Asia may be more vulnerable due to limited cybersecurity infrastructure and expertise.

Smaller countries might focus on safeguarding critical infrastructure, building alliances for information sharing, and investing in cybersecurity capacity-building. Superpowers might prioritize technological dominance, international norms and regulations, and managing strategic competition with other major players.

In summary, while the core threats to national security from rapidly developing technologies are consistent, the specific concerns and strategies to address them can vary significantly based on a country's size, capabilities, and geopolitical considerations.

HSF

**Thank you for these insights into potential impacts of rapid technology development on societal and national security. Any final thoughts you'd like to share with us?**

AI

Certainly, as we navigate the ever-changing landscape of rapid technology development, it's crucial to approach innovation with a balanced perspective. While these advancements offer incredible opportunities for progress, they also carry complex challenges for societal and national security. Collaboration between states, private sector actors, academia, and civil society is essential to address these challenges effectively.

Transparency, ethical considerations, and responsible practices should be at the forefront of technological innovation. Striking the right balance between technological advancement and security requires continuous vigilance, adaptive strategies, and a willingness to learn from both successes and failures.

Ultimately, the choices we make today will shape the future of our societies and nations. By fostering a multidisciplinary dialogue, setting clear ethical standards, and embracing a proactive approach to security, we can harness the benefits of technology while safeguarding our shared well-being.

Send a message





**ARKADY MOSHES**  
PROGRAMME DIRECTOR, FIIA



**KRISTIINA SILVAN**  
POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW, FIIA

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# REJECTING RUSSIAN SPHERES OF INFLUENCE

For decades, Western officials and spokespersons have repeated the mantra that all states, large and small, have the right to make their own foreign policy choices. To this end, the EU has rejected the very language of spheres of influence in favour of an international order based on common rules rather than the power of the strongest.

However, when it comes to the policy towards Russia, this rejection has been more evident in words than deeds. Since the decisions on EU and NATO eastern enlargement in 2004, the West has been aiming to avoid a direct collision with Moscow in the so-called “shared neighbourhood”.

At the 2008 NATO summit in Bucharest, the prospect of Ukraine and Georgia joining the Alliance was effectively ruled out. Even after Russia attacked Georgia in August of the same year and recognised the independence of breakaway regions Abkhazia and South Ossetia, Russia was designated and treated as a strategic partner of the European Union. The EU’s Eastern Partnership, launched in 2009 with Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine, was swiftly deprived of its potential transformative character and became a vehicle for technical assistance at best, much to the satisfaction of the Kremlin.

The EU once again demonstrated its unwillingness to clash with Moscow in January 2014 when it was brokering an agreement which, if implemented, would keep Ukraine’s pro-Russian President Viktor Yanukovich in power until a new election – despite the popular pressure for his resignation. Although the West did introduce some sanctions against Russia after its annexation of Crimea a few months later, the Kremlin had little reason to worry as long as Germany continued to go forward with the construction of the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline. In February 2015, the Minsk 2 agreement rewarded Russia’s military escalation in Eastern Ukraine. Neither the EU nor the US were willing to confront Russia over Belarus, as demonstrated by their lukewarm reaction to the violent crushing of protests against the fraudulent election of 2020. As for Central Asia, debates in the West focused on whether Turkey or China could challenge Russia’s influence in the region, which showed that there was little recognition of the agency of those states and societies in determining their foreign policy orientation.

All in all, while seeking a workable approach with an increasingly assertive Moscow, the West was making concessions at the expense of countries willing to come closer to the West. What was achieved by the EU and the US in the region, inertially called the Former

Soviet Union (FSU), was more to the credit of those segments of the respective societies that disagreed with this approach. In Ukraine, the 2014 Revolution of Dignity and the ensuing national mobilisation in defence of the country led to the formation of the pro-NATO majority and an aspiration for the country's full integration into the West. In Georgia, public sentiment slowed down the authoritarian turn of the country's leadership and its rapprochement with Russia. In Moldova, Maia Sandu won the 2020 presidential campaign, running on an explicitly pro-EU platform. In Armenia, Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan has been seeking to complement the country's close relations with Russia with enhanced ties with the West, as demonstrated by the entry into force of the EU-Armenia Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement in 2021. Meanwhile, Kazakhstan has consistently been trying to strengthen cooperation with the West and thus balance the relationship with Russia.

Of course, not all political contestation in the region stems from geopolitical orientations. Despite a strong pro-European sentiment in Belarusian society, the

massive wave of protests in 2020 was not about going West, even though one reason for that was precisely people's disappointment with the much-publicised prior engagement between the Lukashenka regime and the West and the lack of trust in the willingness of the latter to intervene on behalf of the protesters. In turn, in Central Asia, political crises are best explained by intra-elite quarreling and public frustration with corruption rather than grievances about the direction of foreign policy. However, this is no excuse for the passive and conflict-averse regional approach taken by the West until recently.

Only the Russian aggression against Ukraine in 2022 seems to have affected this approach and brought about policy shifts, the most notable of which was the granting of EU candidate status to Ukraine and Moldova in June 2022. But only if the West stays the course and finally lets go of the very concept of the post-Soviet space, which implies the central role of Russia in the region, and learns to act accordingly, will "a zone of Russia's privileged interest" become a thing of the past.

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## GOING FORWARD:

- » **It is of the utmost importance that the West guarantees continued support for Ukraine. A protracted war should not be a reason to negotiate a deal with Moscow that the people of Ukraine cannot accept.**
- » **Moldova and Ukraine must be supported on their road towards EU membership. However, the conditions for accession should be fully met in order to ensure the strength and cohesion of the Union.**
- » **The respective promises about EU and NATO membership for Moldova and Ukraine must be seen as a firm commitment. Only institutional integration will give these countries the necessary guarantees of both security and transformation.**
- » **Belarus should become a policy priority for the West. The country has strong potential for democratisation and Europeanisation. This implies, among other things, increasing pressure on the Lukashenka regime.**
- » **The West must adopt a transparent policy of carrots and sticks towards all other states in the region. This applies in particular to the states of Central Asia, which should not become channels helping Russia to circumvent Western sanctions.**



**BART GAENS**  
SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOW, FIIA



**MIKAEL MATTLIN**  
RESEARCH PROFESSOR, FIIA

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# REVERBERATIONS IN THE INDO-PACIFIC OF THE WAR IN UKRAINE

Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine has had significant ripple effects in Indo-Pacific security dynamics and ongoing great-power competition. It has brought to the fore fears over a Taiwan contingency and has led to a closer entwinement of European and Indo-Pacific security.

The war has profoundly impacted power dynamics in the Indo-Pacific and perceptions of the global order as well as of China. In recent years, the global visions of China and Russia have aligned. Although their interests have often differed in practice, they have aimed to challenge the post-Second world war liberal international order and diminish US influence and hegemony. The war in Ukraine has also emboldened North Korea to bolster "strategic cooperation" with Russia and China, and to reap economic, political, and military benefits.

Since the start of the war in Ukraine, one important realisation has been that the Western-created rules-based order is not shared by all. Numerous countries have refused to follow Western sanctions against Russia or even condemn its invasion of Ukraine. Instead, many in the so-called Global South reject the predominantly

American logic of dividing the world into "democracies versus autocracies". Instead, many countries have conducted a hedging strategy. One emerging power and aspiring voice of the Global South has been India. Since the start of the Ukraine war, New Delhi has boosted trade ties with Russia and retained close links as for arms supplies.

At the same time, India has been aligning itself more with Western countries. It has cooperated with the US, for example through the Quad. At present India remains multi-aligned, implementing issue-based cooperation rooted in national self-interest and pragmatism. Reciprocally, reinforcing cooperation with countries from the Global South, not least India, will remain key for the West in preserving the rules-based order.

A second ramification of the war in terms of Indo-Pacific security dynamics is heightened tensions surrounding the Taiwan question, with important consequences for policymakers in the region. The US remains formally committed to a One China policy, i.e., recognising the People's Republic of China as the legal government of China, but not recognising the PRC's claim to sovereignty



over Taiwan. The US has also retained a degree of “strategic ambiguity” regarding the possibility of military intervention in case of a conflict. However, Washington has recently de facto strengthened and upgraded its ties with Taiwan economically, politically, and militarily. President Joe Biden has also signalled readiness to defend Taiwan in the event of a Chinese invasion.

In Japan, the US’s closest ally in the region, the possibility of a Ukraine scenario playing out over Taiwan has gained more traction and fears have strengthened that Japan could become embroiled in a potential future conflict. In addition to concerns over China emulating Russia’s behaviour, Japan has become increasingly uneasy about China’s expanded military presence close to its territorial waters, surrounding the Senkaku islands, as well as about the modernisation of China’s capabilities. Combined with the North Korean threat, there is a growing sense of urgency in Tokyo. As its new national security strategy shows, Japan aims to boost deterrence, for example by raising the annual defence spending from 1% to 2% of GDP, and by acquiring counterstrike capabilities.

Third, the war has led to an increased involvement of Europeans and North-Atlantic structures in the Indo-Pacific and has drawn East Asians into European

security matters. Japan and South Korea have increasingly aligned themselves with Euro-Atlantic politics, supplementing existing political dialogue with joint military exercises and capacity building. Clear common concerns include China’s military growth and perceived more assertive stance in the Indo-Pacific, as well as North Korea’s missile tests and nuclear program.

Russia’s breach of state sovereignty and its challenge to the rules-based international order have further pushed Japan to seek closer alignment with NATO. The idea of a NATO liaison office in Tokyo was floated, and Australia, New Zealand, Japan, and South Korea attended the latest NATO summits in June and July this year. South Korea, one of the world’s leading arms exporters, struck a major arms deal with Poland in 2022. The involvement of the UK in the trilateral structure AUKUS, together with Australia and the US, is a further example of growing entwinement. At the same time, China has inserted itself into European security matters in an unprecedented manner by becoming actively involved in efforts to bring the war in Ukraine to an end. Security structures in the Indo-Pacific and Europe are becoming interwoven in ways that may bring unforeseen consequences down the road, necessitating close consultation between all parties involved.

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## GOING FORWARD:

- » **The war in Ukraine has laid bare an intensifying rift between the West on the one hand, and a wide range of countries refusing to take sides, on the other. The West must bolster ties with countries from the Global South in an inclusive way, as their collective role in, and influence on, the rules-based order have increased.**
- » **In order to work, credible deterrence needs to be coupled with (re)assurance. Both the United States and China need to reassure the other that they are not threatening each other’s vital security interests, unless the other side unilaterally does something drastic to alter the status quo.**
- » **European and Indo-Pacific security have become increasingly interlinked. Japan, South Korea and other countries seek to align themselves more with transatlantic structures. Europe also has an increasingly strong stake in security in the Indo-Pacific, which will require stronger commitment in the near term.**
- » **Multilateralism is in decline, and so-called minilateralism is on the rise, as is obvious in functional and structural issue-based coalitions, such as AUKUS and the Quad.**



**MIKAEL WIGELL**  
RESEARCH DIRECTOR, FIIA

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# MANAGING THE NEW ECONOMIC SECURITY DILEMMA

The era of unfettered globalisation is over. In the 1970s, policymakers began giving business actors more freedom in deciding where they would operate. As a result, corporations globalised their production and supply chains to take advantage of specialisation and maximise efficiency, giving rise to a deepening economic interdependence across the globe.

Policymakers took a benign view of this deepening interdependence for both economic and political reasons. Economically, interdependence was assumed to foster synergies and economies of scale, maximising gains for states by increasing efficiency within and across their economies. Politically, interdependence was assumed to incentivise cooperation and constrain conflicts between states.

Western policymakers in particular believed that growing interdependence would encourage states to abandon power politics in favour of cooperation and integration into the liberal world order and global marketplace, benefitting the countries involved proportionally to their participation. This belief has now been broken.

Today, economic interdependencies are increasingly viewed as vulnerabilities in a remarkable reversal of the earlier liberal view of globalisation. Dependence on

foreign actors for the provision of strategic goods and services is seen as a risk to be kept in check. The shift has precipitated a new focus on economic security.

The European Commission – long a harbinger of free trade and liberal integration – provides a telling example with its new economic security strategy. It actively seeks to minimise “the risks arising from economic linkages that in the past decades we viewed as benign” but that now are identified as possibly threatening the EU’s national security. In Australia, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States, economic and security policies are similarly becoming intertwined in a manner unseen for quite some time.

The old liberalising logic is being supplanted by a new geoeconomic logic with profound, albeit uncertain, effects on the international economy. What is clear is that the notion of economic security as national security is fundamentally altering economic policymaking. Faced with the prospect that economic dependencies might be weaponised by foreign powers, states seek to identify the assets and capabilities they consider strategic, and which warrant protection from foreign control, or which should be developed within the national economy. They pursue a strategy of “balancing dependence” on foreign actors by measures such as investment restrictions to prevent rivals from acquiring

critical technologies or rolling out new industrial policies to promote local development.

The quest for economic security risks catalysing a geoeconomic chain reaction of protectionist measures around the globe. States on the receiving end of these measures react by similarly employing measures aimed at balancing their respective dependencies. Such a spiral has been visible in Sino-US relations already for some time. Yet, these pressures are weighing on transatlantic relations, too.

These new economic security policies are ultimately coupled with a new security dilemma. Traditional security dilemmas are activated by geopolitical balancing. States strengthen their military preparedness in response to others doing the same, thus catalysing an arms race. Similar dynamics are at play in geoeconomics. Balancing dependence generates an economic security dilemma as states seek to adjust their level of dependence in relation to similar efforts by others. In the process, the

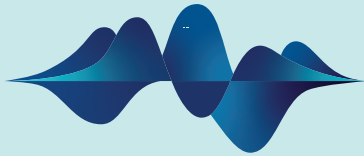
interdependent fabric of current economic relations starts coming apart with far-reaching reverberations for the international system.

For the future of transatlantic relations, managing this economic security dilemma should be of the utmost concern. Sustained transatlantic efforts are needed to reconcile interests to protect and enhance economic security without triggering a geoeconomic chain reaction of protectionism. Both the EU and the US are dependent for their economic resilience on the continuity of international flows of critical goods, products and services. Neither of them will find it easy to be self-sufficient in many critical sectors but together they have many complementarities. They also share many of the economic threats currently facing them, including disruptions in microchip supply chains. Together with partners like Australia, Japan and South Korea, the EU and the US can collectively best strengthen their economic security and resilience. In interdependent systems, the key to economic security lies in cooperation.

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## GOING FORWARD:

- » **The EU and the US need to establish a strategic-level dialogue to harmonise economic security measures, for which a wholly new joint mechanism may be needed to assist with information sharing and assessments. At present, differing views on how to respond to economic security challenges undermine economic cooperation and hamper effective action. Establishing a Center of Excellence on Transatlantic Economic Security may be a way forward.**
- » **Managing de-risking is far from straightforward and will require addressing a number of questions and what it takes to reshore and ramp up domestic production of them. Governments will also need to think hard about their level of willingness to bear the costs associated with the removal of assets from the free interplay of market forces.**
- » **Implementing any economic security strategy will require better economic intelligence and close cooperation with the private sector. Private sector actors operate critical supply lines, and own the majority of strategic economic assets, infrastructure and services. It remains to be determined, how the private sector can commit to building redundancies and sharing information on supply chain vulnerabilities with the government.**



**HELSINKI  
SECURITY  
FORUM**

# ABOUT HSF

**Helsinki Security Forum (HSF) brings together foreign policy experts and decision-makers to discuss topical issues related to international security and defence policy questions from a Northern European perspective. HSF is organised by the Finnish Institute of International Affairs (FIIA).**

In 2022, FIIA established HSF in direct response to the rapid changes and emerging challenges in our security environment. Now in its second year, the HSF stage hosts a diverse range of discussions on global security, enhancing defence capabilities, global reverberations of the war in Ukraine, emerging technologies, and deterrence in the era of radical uncertainty.

HSF is a high-level, invitation-based event, bringing together approximately 150 decision-makers, experts, and influencers relevant to international security and to the changing theme of each year. HSF contributes to a global network of security conferences and spotlights issues of international security which are especially pertinent to Finland. President of the Republic of Finland, Sauli Niinistö, acts as patron of the Helsinki Security Forum 2023.

HSF 2023 is organised with support from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, Ministry of Defence of Finland, the City of Helsinki and Patria.

# ABOUT FIIA

The Finnish Institute of International Affairs (FIIA) is an independent research institute that works in connection with the Finnish Parliament. The Institute produces high-quality academic research on a broad range of topics related to international relations, security, the global economy and the European Union.

## FIIA'S PRINCIPAL TASKS ARE TO

- » **conduct scientific research**
- » **support political decision-making**
- » **participate in public debate**

FIIA supports political decision-making by producing research of a high academic standard and producing analysis for public use. The institute's staff take an active role in public debate on international affairs, sharing their expertise and providing commentary on the rapidly changing global order. These times of radical uncertainty have underscored the importance of FIIA's role as a source of reliable, evidence-based analysis.

From 1961 to 2006, FIIA functioned as an independent research institute run by a private foundation. In 2006, the Institute was established by the Parliament of Finland in its centennial plenum. The Parliament provides funding for the primary operations of the Institute. FIIA is autonomous in its research activities and is governed by a nine-member board, assisted by an advisory council and a scientific advisory council.

# PARTNERS



Ministry for Foreign  
Affairs of Finland

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**The Ministry for Foreign Affairs** concentrates on foreign and security policy, trade policy and development policy as well as on significant foreign policy issues and international relations in general. The Ministry also assists other branches of government in the coordination of international affairs.

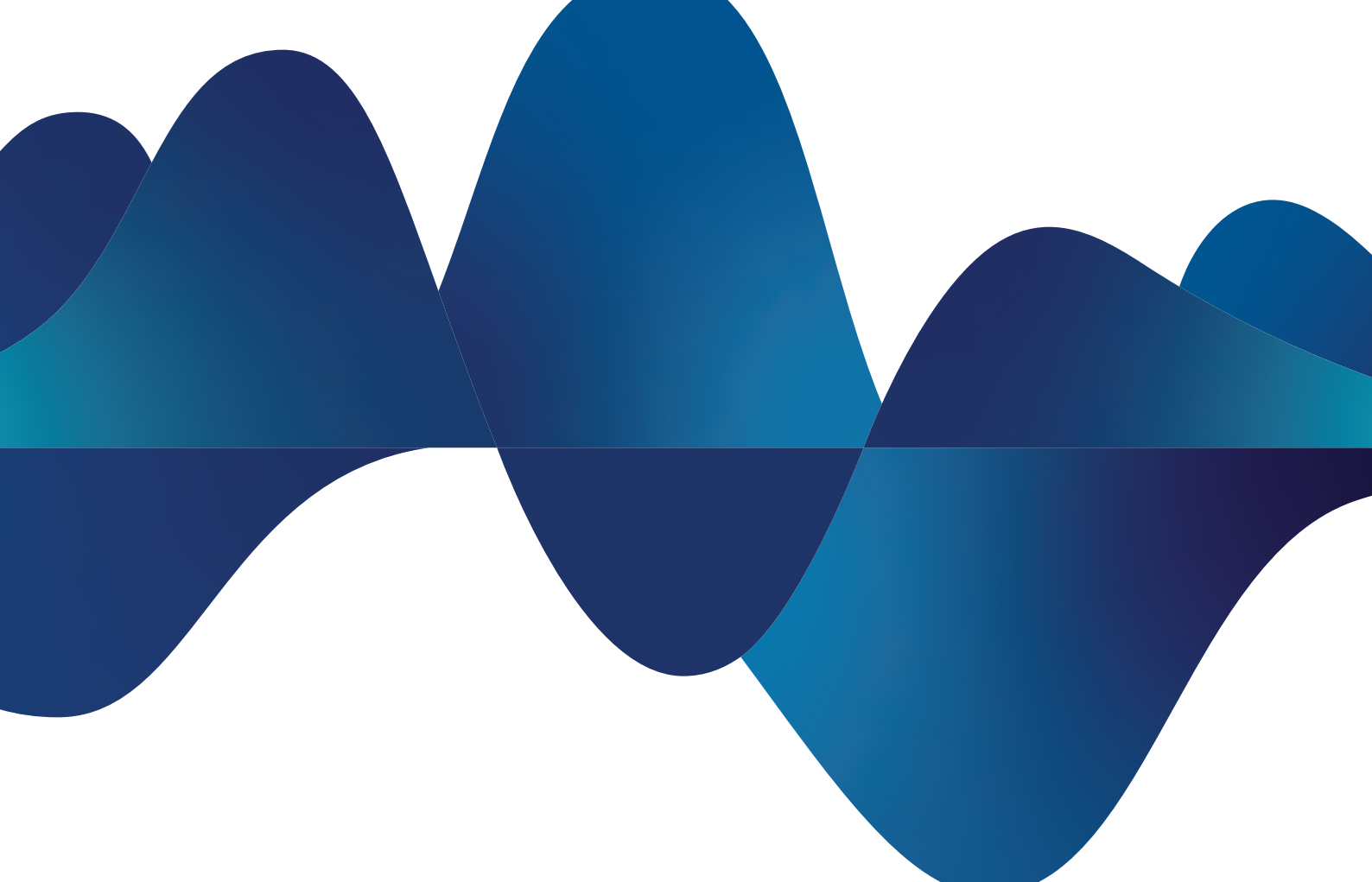
The Finnish Foreign Service – the Ministry and approximately one hundred diplomatic and consular missions – focuses on serving Finns, the Finnish economy and society at large, the country's political leadership and Parliament.



Puolustusministeriö  
Försvarsministeriet  
Ministry of Defence

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As one of the Ministries of the Finnish Government and leading authority in the area of national defence, the **Ministry of Defence** is in charge of national defence policy and national security as well as of international cooperation in defence policy matters.



## Helsinki



**Helsinki** is a clean, stable and secure capital with a very high standard of living and welfare. It is a compact city that is known for its unique combination of urban culture and the calm of nature.

It is Helsinki's goal to be a city where residential areas have no significant socio-economic differences, meaning that it is possible to live safely and comfortably everywhere, in neighbourhoods with distinctive identities. As the capital of Finland, Helsinki promotes security and the residents' experiences of safety in close cooperation with the regional and national authorities.

Helsinki is a city for all, a place for good life.



## Patria

**Patria** is an international provider of defence, security and aviation life cycle support services, technology solutions and pilot training. Patria's mission is to give its customers confidence in all conditions, and the vision is to be the #1 partner for critical operations on land, sea and air. Patria has several locations including Finland, Sweden, Norway, Belgium, the Netherlands, Estonia, Latvia and Spain. Patria is owned by the State of Finland (50.1%) and Norwegian Kongsberg Defence & Aerospace AS (49.9%).

