Weekly Briefing

Latvia external relations briefing:

Notable Decisions for Latvian State Safety

Post-NATO Summit in Vilnius

Institute of Economics of the Latvian Academy of Sciences

Notable Decisions for Latvian State Safety
Post-NATO Summit in Vilnius

Summary

The 2023 NATO[1] Summit held in Vilnius, Lithuania, was a significant event that shaped NATO's strategic direction and had implications for the security and safety of Latvia. The summit resulted in the approval of defense plans aligned with a new strategy, the establishment of new regional defense plans, and the implementation of new command and control arrangements. These decisions mark essential milestones in ensuring collective defense and security in the region and beyond.

Several priority actions were outlined to reinforce NATO's defense posture. These actions include improving mobility capabilities, establishing a sustainment initiative, building partnerships with the private sector for cybersecurity, and exploring the use of unmanned vehicles. One of the notable decisions made during July was Canada's pledge to double its troop deployment in Latvia. This commitment reinforces NATO's dedication to ensuring the security of the Baltic states and acts as a strong deterrent against potential aggression. Other decisions included enhancing air and missile defense and strengthening cooperation with Ukraine.

Introduction

The 2023 NATO Summit in Vilnius, Lithuania, proved to be a pivotal event that has far-reaching implications for the security and safety of Latvia and the entire Baltic region. Leaders from NATO member countries convened to address evolving security challenges and strategize on matters of collective defense and deterrence. This briefing delves into the notable outcomes of the summit and how they will reinforce Latvia's security posture in the face of potential threats.

---

[1] The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was founded in 1949 and is a group of 31 countries from Europe and North America that exists to protect the people and territory of its members.

Strengthening NATO's Defense Posture: Six Priority Actions for Collective Security [1]

The 2023 NATO Summit in Vilnius, Lithuania, resulted in crucial decisions aimed at bolstering NATO's defense capabilities and enhancing collective security. The summit's report outlined six priority actions that will serve as essential milestones in ensuring the safety and readiness of member states which are as follows:

1. Enhancing Mobility: NATO should improve its mobility capabilities by prepositioning military equipment, conducting regular training and exercises with forward-deployed forces, creating new training areas, and increasing support from host nations.

2. Establishing Sustainment Initiative: NATO needs to establish a sustainment initiative to ensure sufficient stocks of resources for extended conflicts, and the defense industry should be capable of timely replenishment.

3. Building Private-Sector Partnerships: Effective relationships with key private-sector companies are crucial, particularly in cybersecurity for critical infrastructure, ensuring uninterrupted information technology and communication networks, and utilizing private-sector space capabilities.

4. Utilizing Unmanned Vehicles: NATO should define requirements for low-cost unmanned air and maritime vehicles, including those with artificial intelligence capabilities, and explore the potential role of mines as a deterrent.

5. Revising Command and Control Structures: The command-and-control structures at Joint Forces Command Brunssum and Joint Forces Command Naples need revision to direct high-intensity warfare, with a focus on the east/north and the south regions, respectively. The adoption of commercial technology for prompt multidomain operation is essential.

6. Securing Adequate Funding: NATO nations should commit to spending 2.5[2] percent of their gross domestic product (GDP) on defense, and support the European Union's creation of a security and defense budget to enhance mobility, sustainment, and critical-infrastructure resilience.

These actions will bolster NATO's ability to effectively respond to security challenges and uphold its commitment to safeguarding member nations.

---

[2] In 2006, NATO Defence Ministers agreed to commit a minimum of 2% of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to defence spending to continue to ensure the Alliance's military readiness.

Strengthening Baltic Security: Notable Decisions for Latvia [2]

Here are some notable decisions for Latvian state safety post-NATO summit in Vilnius:

1. **Increased NATO presence in the Baltic states.** The summit saw a commitment from NATO members to increase the number of troops stationed in the Baltic states, including Latvia. This is a significant boost to Latvian security, as it will deter any potential aggressors from attacking the country.
2. **Enhanced air and missile defense.** NATO also agreed to enhance air and missile defense in the Baltic states. This includes the deployment of Patriot missile batteries and other air defense systems. This will further strengthen Latvia's defenses against air and missile attacks.
3. **Closer cooperation with Ukraine.** NATO leaders also agreed to strengthen cooperation with Ukraine. This includes providing Ukraine with more military assistance and training. This will help Ukraine to defend itself against Russian aggression.
4. **Reaffirmation of Article 5.** NATO leaders reaffirmed Article 5 of the NATO treaty, which states that an attack on one member is an attack on all members.

These decisions are a significant boost to Latvian security and will help to deter any potential aggressors. They also demonstrate NATO's commitment to the security of its member states.

These measures are a clear sign that NATO is taking the security challenges posed by Russia seriously. They will help to deter any potential aggression and ensure that NATO can defend itself against any attack.

NATO's Cybersecurity Priorities [1]

At the Vilnius Summit, NATO placed a strong emphasis on countering the escalating threat of cyberattacks. Recognizing the criticality of safeguarding essential infrastructure for effective military operations, the alliance aimed to ensure member nations have robust cybersecurity support from the private sector. This encompasses crucial elements like the electric grid, pipelines, air, rail, ports, and information and communications networks.

Additionally, the alliance is exploring the potential role of capabilities like the "hunt forward"[3] approach employed by US Cyber Command in enhancing the resilience of critical infrastructure against cyber threats.

NATO's Mobility Priorities and their Implication for the Baltics [1]

It has been highlighted that crucial infrastructure improvements are required in the Baltic countries to bolster their defense capabilities. There is an urgent need to enhance rail lines connecting key military bases and potential staging areas, as well as improve the capacity of roads and bridges to accommodate heavy military vehicles. However, the limited capacity of the Baltic nations' training areas to conduct brigade-level exercises and live-fire training should be noted.

Presently, none of the Baltic states possess the necessary infrastructure to accommodate full brigade forces in the near future. Their training grounds and barracks infrastructure are inadequate and in need of significant development. While Lithuania has pledged to complete relevant investments by 2026, Estonia is working to align with London's agreement to develop its military infrastructure to accommodate an entire brigade. Similarly, Latvia's NATO battlegroup is currently utilizing military installations to the fullest extent, with steps taken to expand these facilities.

To address these critical gaps, it is imperative for NATO and its member nations, including Latvia, to prioritize and allocate sufficient resources for the development of vital military infrastructure in the region. By doing so, the Baltic states can enhance their defensive capabilities, ensure readiness, and bolster security in the face of potential threats.

Canada pledges to double its troops for NATO reinforcement in Latvia [3]

Canada has pledged to double its NATO-mandated deployment in Latvia by sending up to 1,200 more troops to bolster the security of the vulnerable Baltic region against potential Russian aggression. The move comes as part of NATO's efforts to strengthen its presence in the region since Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014. Currently, NATO has multinational

---

[3] Hunt Forward Operations (HFOs) are strictly defensive cyber operations conducted by U.S. Cyber Command (USCYBERCOM) at the request of partner nations. Upon invitation, USCYBERCOM Hunt Forward Teams deploy to partner nations to observe and detect malicious cyber activity on host nation networks.

battlegroups of around 1,000 troops stationed in each of the Baltic states. With the additional Canadian personnel, the battlegroup in Latvia will be reinforced and enhanced, with other NATO members also increasing their presence.

The three Baltic republics - Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania - have seen a surge in military spending since 2014, but their economies and militaries remain relatively small. Canada's investment of C$2.6 billion ($2 billion) will be used to renew and expand the Latvian mission over the next three years, starting in 2023-24. The funding will be allocated for critical weapons systems, intelligence, and cyber activities. The commitment underscores NATO's collective effort to enhance the defense capabilities of the Baltic region and deter potential threats.

Conclusion

NATO currently faces the most dangerous and unpredictable security environment since the Cold War. The NATO Summit in Vilnius marked a significant step forward in strengthening the security and defense capabilities of the alliance. The commitment to bolster mobility, cybersecurity, and regional partnerships demonstrates NATO's adaptability to emerging security challenges. Canada's pledge to increase its troop presence in Latvia showcases NATO's collective resolve to safeguard the Baltic region against potential threats.

With these outcomes, Latvia can expect increased security and support from NATO, reaffirming the alliance's commitment to safeguarding its member states. As NATO continues to address evolving security landscapes, it is vital for member nations to invest in critical military infrastructure to enhance their readiness and preparedness in the face of potential threats. The decisions made at the summit underscore NATO's unwavering commitment to upholding democracy, the rule of law, and regional security, strengthening the alliance's position as a bulwark against aggression and instability.

References

1. Six Priority Actions for Defense and Deterrence, NATO's Cybersecurity Priorities, and NATO's Mobility Priorities (2023). Retrieved from
https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/in-depth-research-reports/issue-brief/nato-summit-military-priorities/

2. Vilnius Summit Communiqué, and Notable Decisions from the Summit (2023). Retrieved from https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_217320.htm

3. Canada pledges to double its troops for Latvia in NATO reinforcement (2023). Retrieved from
https://www.reuters.com/world/canada-latvia-sign-agreement-increase-troops-baltics-2023-07-10/