

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0908

June 23, 2022

President Joe Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

This year's events have demonstrated the continued importance and relevance of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the largest and most successful military alliance in history. Later this month in Madrid, you and other alliance heads of state are expected to announce a new Strategic Concept to guide NATO operations for the next ten years. Even as we welcome Finland and Sweden into the alliance, it is imperative that this Strategic Concept reflects the realities of the world we live in, not the world we want.

The 2010 NATO Strategic Concept is a product of a bygone era still ruled by the hubris of a supposed "end of history" where a U.S.-led order of democracy and free market would expand across the globe. The 2010 Strategic Concept viewed Russia as a "important strategic partner." In the years since, when the U.S. was expecting to "reset" relations with Moscow, Vladimir Putin has sponsored cyberattacks against the U.S., intensified contacts with the Castro/Díaz-Canel regime in Cuba, briefly deployed nuclear capable bombers in Venezuela, threatened to provide troops to both the Cuban regime and the Maduro regime in Venezuela, assassinated dissidents in NATO states, and has waged a full-scale war against a European nation. It is only through strong U.S. leadership and the historic cohesion of NATO member states that the alliance has weathered the geopolitical storms of the last decade. We may not be so lucky in the future without a significant overhaul of the NATO Strategic Concept that reflects the acute threat posed by Russia.

The 2010 NATO Strategic Concept also lacked any mention of the dangers posed by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to the alliance. It has been clear, for some time, the CCP desires nothing more than to overthrow the international order which NATO was formed to protect. Most recently, it has engaged in cyberattacks to assist Putin's invasion of Ukraine, while in the past year it has tried to cripple the economy of Lithuania, a NATO member state, for making its own sovereign decisions on Taiwan. Right now, the CCP is attempting to form a security and economic bloc in the Indo-Pacific that threatens U.S. and French territories. NATO must be ready to address the many challenges the CCP will mount in the 21st century.

First and foremost, the new Strategic Concept should embrace the fact that the alliance has two flanks. Even as Putin continues to wage a bloody war against Ukraine near NATO's eastern flank, the alliance must prepare to deter increasing aggression by the CCP that threatens U.S. allies and NATO territory in the Indo-Pacific. The Strategic Concept should make clear that while the alliance will continue to remain united and work together, the European states should take the lead in addressing the threat posed by Russian aggression by increasing their defense

capabilities, so that the United States, Canada, and France can shore up the alliance's defenses in the Indo-Pacific to deter Beijing. We urge you to work with South Korea, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand, all expected in Madrid, to discuss how these countries can further work with NATO, including possibly using NATO's Partnership for Peace as a model.

Secondly, the Strategic Concept should reflect the new modes of conflict pioneered by the CCP and the Kremlin. Putin's invasion of Ukraine raises serious questions on the need to reorient NATO's force posture in Eastern Europe to better deter a Russian conventional attack on the alliance. This is especially timely as Sweden and Finland should figure greatly in those new plans. Just as important is the recognition that the outbreak of war in Ukraine is only the latest event in a long series of "hybrid warfare" events. From cyberattacks on critical infrastructure, to economic coercion, to isolation in international fora, there is no limit to what the CCP and the Kremlin will do to wage conflict against their enemies. Countries in both Eastern Europe and the Western Pacific know this first hand and there is much they can do to share expertise and knowledge on resisting these new modes of conflict. NATO should work to bring them together so that countries like Taiwan, Ukraine, Japan, Lithuania, and South Korea can collaborate on standing up to increased pressure from authoritarian states.

Lastly, the Strategic Concept must recognize that the alliance's enemies are increasingly working together. It is no more a coincidence that Moscow and Beijing declared a "no limits partnership" shortly before Putin's invasion on February 24 as it is that Putin and the CCP have advocated for Iran in ongoing nuclear negotiations in Vienna. For too long, individual members of the alliance have sought to counter these threats separately or ignored them outright, while our adversaries have only strengthened their cooperation. We urge you to ensure that the Strategic Concept to be released in Madrid reflects these realities.

We thank you in advance for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Marco Rubio
U.S. Senator



Joni K. Ernst
U.S. Senator



Rick Scott
U.S. Senator