

# NATO 2.0 APPOINTS NEW GENERAL TO EUROPE

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Plunged in what looks to be a new cold war, NATO has been making a flurry of manoeuvres, of which the general's appointment is only the latest.

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To help NATO navigate a world—post the war in Ukraine—the military block [has turned to](#) a new Supreme Allied Commander. Hopes are high that under U.S. General Christopher Cavoli's leadership, its strength on the European continent will deter Russia from pursuing grander ambitions.

Plunged in a new cold war (and [space race](#) to boot), NATO has been making a flurry of manoeuvres. Mere days after the [Madrid Summit concluded](#) on June 30th, as well as [signing on of Finland and Sweden into its accession protocol](#), the military alliance enlisted the services of Cavoli. Born on a U.S. army base in West Germany, the decorated combat vet has 35 years of experience under his belt, and possesses a fluency in French, Italian and—most useful—Russian.

The 58-year old had [already received a May nomination](#) to take over from General Tod Wolters, who had been there since 2019. Cavoli led the development and execution of NATO's reconfiguration, culminating in the adoption of the '[Strategic Concept 2022](#)' at the Madrid Summit.

During a ceremony at the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe in the Belgian city of Mons on July 4th, Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg congratulated him on being "quite simply the right leader, at the right post, at the right time." The Secretary General proceeded to award him with the NATO Meritorious Service Medal.

Since it was July 4th (Independence Day for Americans), Cavoli's assumption of command of Allied Command Operations held special significance. Welcoming Cavoli, Stoltenberg lauded him for "having overseen the largest reinforcement of U.S. presence in Europe in decades, [with over 100,000 troops](#)."

At the NATO Summit days before, American President Joe Biden had [pledged two warships](#), which are to be deployed on a permanent basis in Spanish waters. Instead of

four, its destroyer fleet there would increase to six. To bolster NATO's land forces, the POTUS wants to [establish a permanent military base in Poland](#). Not wanting to be overly reliant on its ally overseas, the EU is committing to [raise its expenditure on defence by €200 billion](#) in the following years.

NATO Secretary General Stoltenberg, on his end, made public a plan to have 300,000 high-readiness troops stationed on the continent at all times. It currently has about 40,000. He had not informed NATO members of his intentions however, which left them flummoxed. As to how such a large force could be amassed and from where, [several European security policymakers and analysts racked their brains over](#). According to a February report by *Statista*, in terms of raw numbers alone, the combined force of all NATO member states (from all parts of the world), however, does [outmatch](#) Russia's.

Well aware of the importance of Cavoli's anointing, Stoltenberg made note of the history that is unfolding. "You join us at a turning point for transatlantic security, marked by rising strategic competition and the return of brutal conflict to Europe," he said. "I know you will continue to serve NATO with the same leadership and dedication you have always shown."

<https://twitter.com/NATOpres/status/1543884057985048577>

Since Allied Command Operations is responsible for the planning and execution of all NATO operations, the position of its head, the Supreme Allied Commander Europe, is a pivotal one. It is now Cavoli's task to translate, in the words of Stoltenberg, this "blueprint for the Alliance in a more dangerous and competitive world" into reality.

NATO's competitors did not take kindly to some of the rhetoric coming from the alliance. Its 'Strategic Concept 2022' [document](#) is predictable enough in describing Russia as "the most significant and direct threat" to the alliance's peace and security. Yet for the first time, China is declared a security challenge as well, with accusations levelled at its military ambitions, confrontational rhetoric towards Taiwan and increasingly close ties with Moscow. These pose "systemic challenges," the document reads.

In response, a riled Beijing said it “firmly” opposes NATO’s declaration, labelling it as a “completely futile” warning. “NATO’s so-called new strategic concept document disregards facts, confuses black and white ... [and] smears China’s foreign policy,” [foreign ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said](#).

In an opinion piece for the *EU Observer*, the Mission of People’s Republic of China to the EU [criticises NATO for its hypocrisy](#). It goes on to flatly reject NATO’s “attempts to impose its own rules:”

*NATO claims to be a defensive organisation, but what we have seen is that it waged wars against sovereign states, creating huge casualties and leaving tens of millions displaced. Has the UN Security Council authorised those actions? If not, hadn't Nato distorted and abused the right to self-defence? Don't such actions constitute a breach of international law?*

Other regional players are observing NATO’s entrenchment with wariness. North Korea [feels especially threatened](#) by the U.S., South Korea, and Japan strengthening their military cooperation. This, it describes, is an attempt to form a “NATO-like military alliance in Asia.”

And so we find ourselves needling (in word and deed) great powers on two fronts at the same time. One hopes divinely gifted mortals have done their due diligence in war-gaming all possible scenarios—to the layman, it shows either admirable boldness or fantastical vainglory.