



INSTITUT  
BARCELONA  
ESTUDIS  
INTERNACIONALS



GOBIERNO  
DE ESPAÑA

MINISTERIO  
DE ASUNTOS EXTERIORES, UNIÓN EUROPEA  
Y COOPERACIÓN



# INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR THE MADRID SUMMIT AND THE FUTURE OF NATO

Event Summary

In collaboration with:

**len**  
Fundació  
Institut d'Estudis  
Nord-americans

More information  
[www.ibei.org](http://www.ibei.org)

# International Seminar **The Madrid Summit and the Future of NATO**

In collaboration with the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, IBEI hosted an international seminar on the upcoming NATO Madrid Summit. The event consisted of three substantive expert panels, preceded by an [introduction](#) from IBEI President Narcis Serra, UPF Vice Chancellor Pablo Pareja, the Ambassador on Special Mission to the NATO Summit Álvaro Iranzo, and Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs José Manuel Albares.

In the opening remarks the importance of promoting public policy debate on current and emerging challenges to European security and the need to challenge longstanding conceptions of security were noted.

Whilst the new NATO Strategic Concept to be approved at the Summit will highlight Russia's aggression against Ukraine, it was crucial not to ignore security challenges on Europe's southern periphery.





# First roundtable

## European security and the crisis of the international order

**Moderator: Carme Colomina**

Barcelona Centre for International Affairs  
(CIDOB)

**Sven Biscop**

Egmont Institute

**Hugo Meijer**

Sciences Po

**Pol Morillas**

Director, Barcelona Centre for International Affairs  
(CIDOB)

**Federico Torres Muro**

Director General of Foreign Policy and Security,  
Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs,  
European Union and Cooperation

► Video recording is available [here](#)

# First roundtable

## European security and the crisis of the international order

The first panel on 'European security and the crisis of the international order' was composed of Sven Biscop (Egmont Institute), Hugo Meijer (Sciences Po), Pol Morillas (CIDOB) and Federico Torres Muro (Spanish Foreign Ministry). The discussion opened with the observation that we live in a multipolar world in which interests rather than values dominate. It is therefore unsurprising that Transatlantic perceptions of, and responses to, the conflict in Ukraine are not universally shared.

**Europe can potentially play a much more prominent role in this multipolar world, such as by enhancing initiatives such as the Global Gateway, rather than playing second fiddle to the United States**

Largely as a result of the Ukraine war, there has been a geopolitical reawakening in Europe leading to changed perceptions of the security threats posed by Russia and China. Prior to Russia's renewed aggression against Ukraine, the EU was not interested in pursuing a clear, coherent, multidimensional and geopolitically-informed policy. Although the EU is only beginning to move in this direction, that it is doing so reflects a major mindset

change. However, sustaining this movement will require being less reliant on the US for military capabilities, strategically utilizing multiple non-military levers of power, as well as ensuring political unity within the EU. The inevitability of the future reintegration of Russia was also mentioned. As for the EU's role in relation to China, especially with respect to a future international crisis in the Indo-Pacific, the limited nature of European military capabilities was underscored, although it was observed the EU's primary role would be economic rather than military. Regarding the future of Ukraine, the EU will almost certainly play a central role in rebuilding the country. The prospect of Ukrainian membership of the EU and NATO was described as a mistake. On the other hand, leaving Ukraine as buffer state is also highly problematic.

Ministerio de Asuntos exteriores, Unión Europea y Cooperación)





# Second roundtable

## **Between war and peace: increasingly blurred boundaries?**

**Moderator: Jeffrey Michaels**

Senior Researcher IEN,  
Institut Barcelona d'Estudis Internacionals (IBEI)

**Isabelle Duyvesteyn**

Leiden University

**Natividad Fernández Sola**

Universidad de Zaragoza

**Tim Sweijns**

The Hague Center for Strategic Studies

**Nicolás Pascual de la Parte**

Ambassador on Special Mission  
for Hybrid Threats and Cybersecurity

► Video recording is available [here](#)

# Second roundtable

## Between war and peace: increasingly blurred boundaries?

The second panel entitled 'Between War and Peace: Increasingly Blurred Boundaries?' included the following speakers: Isabelle Duyvesteyn (Leiden University), Natividad Fernandez Sola (University of Zaragoza), Tim Sweijs (The Hague Centre for Strategic Studies) and Nicolás Pascual de la Parte (Ambassador-at-large for Cybersecurity and Hybrid Threats). The panel opened with a discussion about the politicized and confusing terminology that is often used to describe contemporary international security issues. For example, Russia refuses to call its military actions in Ukraine a 'war', instead labelling it a 'special military operation'. NATO and the EU have their own share of difficulties with terminology. Despite advocating for democracy, the rule of law and related norms and values, the experience of recent military interventions in Afghanistan, Mali, Libya and Syria have called these objectives into question.

**The analytical utility of terms such as 'war' and 'peace' has declined. Meantime, terminology has been weaponized, as can be seen with Putin's references to Ukraine committing 'genocide' and the official description of Russia's objective being 'denazification'**



Other aspects of our discourse are increasingly problematic, such as the idea of being 'victorious' in war. At the moment there is a need for a new shared understanding about what terminology is appropriate.

A related topic discussed was hybrid warfare. These activities include the spreading of disinformation and misinformation, as well as different types of psychological warfare, sanctions, and cyber threats. Although these types of activities were increasingly utilized prior to Russia's renewed aggression against Ukraine, Moscow's inability to wage a successful conventional war is likely to



result in more reliance on hybrid methods once the large-scale military operations cease. It was argued that NATO is not well-equipped to deal with this multi-domain challenge. Whereas NATO focuses on these types of threats on its eastern flank,

and has had some limited success dealing with them, it has paid less attention to those emanating from the south. More generally, there are two dominant perspectives on hybrid war. Traditionalists believe hybrid wars are not new and therefore should not be treated as if they are. In contrast, futurists emphasize novel aspects of contemporary hybrid wars due to changes in society and technology, such as the growing role of social media, and in the years ahead, hologram technology.

**A major challenge will be communicating to adversaries the types of activities that are considered fundamentally unacceptable. In this sense, it will be essential to establish clear rules of the game**

The use of hybrid methods can be considered a means for the weak to fight against the strong but it is also utilized as part of great power competition. A race to master and weaponize new technologies in the hybrid domain is currently underway between the US and China. Meanwhile, both NATO and the EU are unable to think and act in terms of offensive operations. This leaves both extremely vulnerable and unable to react to quickly. Attributing responsibility for cyber-attacks is a particularly thorny problem. To deal with these issues a new mind-set is needed. Likewise, stronger links between government and the IT sector will be essential. Differing opinions were expressed about the scale of the hybrid threat. Despite any major successes in changing the policies of governments and international organizations, numerous tactical successes demonstrated that hybrid activities remain a challenge that cannot simply be ignored. New laws are needed to deal with this challenge so that it will be possible to punish international actors, including states, for perpetrating cyber-attacks.

# Third roundtable

## NATO today: a Southern European perspective

### **Moderator: Pere Vilanova**

Emeritus Professor of Political Science, Universitat de Barcelona;  
Affiliated Professor, Institut Barcelona d'Estudis Internacionals (IBEI)

### **Chloe Berger**

NATO Defence College

### **Rubén-Erik Díaz-Plaja**

Policy Planning Unit, Office of the Secretary-General, OTAN

### **Luis Simon**

VU, Bruselas – Instituto Elcano

### **Nina Wilen**

Egmont Institute

► Video recording is available [here](#)

# Third roundtable

## NATO today: a Southern European perspective



Speakers on the final panel -- 'NATO Today: A Perspective from Southern Europe' -- included Luis Simon (VU, Brussels and Elcano Institute), Ruben-Erik Diaz Plaja (NATO HQ), Nina Willen (Egmont Institute) and Chloe Berger (NATO Defense College). The panel opened with a discussion about the relative emphasis NATO places on great power politics versus threats from the Southern flank. A key issue for the new Strategic Concept will be finding the right balance. Notably, Alliance goals in the South have not changed a great deal. Ensuring freedom of navigation, for instance, remains a priority for NATO. Nevertheless, the character of the problems the Alliance faces in the south are changing. For one thing, great power rivalry has increasingly featured. Russia has become particularly active in the region and has employed Wagner Group mercenaries and engaged in disinformation campaigns intended to push the French and EU forces out of Mali. In addition, climate change will exacerbate migration to Europe. In light of these changing dynamics, the Alliance will need to reconsider how it deals with the Southern flank. On a more critical note, it was pointed out that European concerns about the Sahel give too little consideration to the views and needs of the people living there.

**Emphasis should be placed on how NATO works with the EU and partner countries to deal with problems in this region, including how it assists vulnerable countries**

Dealing with the issue of food security will be a major challenge (countries such as Niger and Chad produced 40% less food in the last five years), especially as food shortages are set to further increase due to the war in Ukraine.

### **Migration should be viewed as a political problem rather than as a security problem**

Evidence of growing political instability can be found in the recent rise in the number of military coups. With the growing power of Jihadi groups in the Maghreb and Sahel, an indirect threat to Europe will be posed due to the spread of their ideology in migrant communities. Thus far, European policies in the region have not addressed the root causes of security issues, such as poverty, poor governance and climate change. To deal with these regional challenges it will be essential to have a coordinated approach to the Sahel, involving NATO, the EU, and local stakeholders, a greater investment in monitoring and analysis, the deployment of more naval assets, and reinvigorating lackluster capacity building programs.

Due to the different competencies of the EU and NATO, it was proposed that an appropriate division of labor should feature in NATO's new Strategic Concept, with the EU focusing on the South whilst NATO focuses on the East.





The seminar was brought to a close by IBEI Director Jacint Jordana and Álvaro Iranzo (Ambassador-at-Large for the NATO Summit, Spanish Foreign Ministry).

They stressed the importance of maintaining dialogue between government officials, academics, and the broader public on international security issues.





INSTITUT  
BARCELONA  
ESTUDIS  
INTERNACIONALS



GOBIERNO  
DE ESPAÑA

MINISTERIO  
DE ASUNTOS EXTERIORES, UNIÓN EUROPEA  
Y COOPERACIÓN

In collaboration with:



Publishes: Institut Barcelona d'Estudis Internacionals (IBEI)  
Ramon Trias Fargas, 25-27  
08005 Barcelona (Spain)  
+34 93 542 30 30  
[ibei@ibei.org](mailto:ibei@ibei.org)  
[www.ibei.org](http://www.ibei.org)

Barcelona, June 2022

© Institut Barcelona d'Estudis Internacionals (IBEI), of this edition

Event Summary prepared by Humaira Anjum, Leo Harris, Leo Houtman and Jeffrey Michaels