



## Towards a nuclear multipolar world and its spillover effects

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### Abstract

This article analyzes the changes in the international structure after the Russia-Ukraine War and its impact on Europe's security and spillover effects. The major impact of the war on the security of Europe and the world is the serious reawakening of the nuclear dimension of international relations. This article examines the strategic documents of France and Germany, the two most important military and economic actors of the EU, and the strategic documents of the U.S.A. With the threat of Russian nuclear weapons, Sweden and Finland abandoned their neutrality and applied it to become NATO members. Finland became NATO's 31st member on 4 April 2023. The status of Sweden's NATO membership will be discussed at the NATO Summit to be held on 11-12 July. This study reviews national security and defense strategy documents and reports of U.S.A.-the most powerful state in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), France, and Germany- two powerful states in the European Union (EU) in light of neo-realism. In the post-Russia-Ukraine War analysis of 2022 documents and reports of the aforementioned countries, we will see more complicated and security-oriented international relations in the next decade because of the transition to a nuclear multipolar international structure. The new international structure seems more complicated because nuclear multipolar aspect rather than the bipolar one. States will either seek a nuclear umbrella or develop nuclear weapons in the face of the first nuclear multipolar international structure. This may also affect Türkiye, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Japan, and South Korea. This suggests nuclear proliferation risk.

### Keywords:

Ukrainian War,  
Nuclear  
Multipolar  
Structure, Neo-  
realism, Nuclear  
Risk

### JEL Codes:

F50, O38.

## Nükleer çok kutuplu bir dünyaya doğru ve bunun yayılma etkileri

### Öz

Bu makale, Rusya-Ukrayna Savaşı sonrasında uluslararası yapıda meydana gelen değişiklikleri ve bunun Avrupa'nın güvenliğine ve dünyaya etkilerini incelemektedir. Savaşın Avrupa ve dünya güvenliği üzerindeki en büyük etkisi, uluslararası ilişkilerin nükleer boyutunun ciddi bir şekilde yeniden canlanmasıdır. Bu makale, AB'nin en önemli iki askeri ve ekonomik aktörü olan Fransa ve Almanya'nın stratejik belgeleri ile ABD'nin stratejik belgelerini incelemektedir. Rusya'nın nükleer silah kullanma tehdidinin de etkisiyle İsveç ve Finlandiya tarafsız konumlarını bırakarak NATO üyesi olmak için başvurmuşlar, Danimarka ise Avrupa Ortak Savunma ve Güvenlik Politikasına katılma kararı almıştır. Finlandiya, 4 Nisan 2023'te NATO'nun 31. üyesi oldu. İsveç'in NATO üyeliğinin statüsü, 11-12 Temmuz'da yapılacak NATO Zirvesi'nde görüşülecektir. Bu makalede neo-realizm teorisi ışığında Kuzey Atlantik Antlaşması Örgütü (NATO)'nün en güçlü devleti olan ABD ile Avrupa Birliği (AB)'nin iki güçlü ülkesi olan Fransa ve Almanya'nın milli güvenlik, milli savunma strateji belgeleri ve gözden geçirme raporları incelenmiştir. Söz konusu ülkelerin Rusya-Ukrayna Savaşı sonrası 2022 yılı milli güvenlik ve strateji belgelerinde ve gözden geçirme raporlarında uluslararası yapının nükleer çok kutuplu bir yapıya evrilmesi nedeniyle gelecek on yılda daha karmaşık bir uluslararası ilişkiler gündemi ile yüzleşileceği sonucuna varılmıştır. Uluslararası yapının, iki kutuplu yapıdan çok kutuplu nükleer yapıya dönüşmesi nedeniyle yeni nükleer çok kutuplu yapı daha karmaşık ve tehlikeli görünmektedir. Tarihte ilk defa olan bu nükleer çok kutuplu uluslararası yapı karşısında devletler ya bir nükleer şemsiye altına girmek zorunda kalacaklar ya da kendi nükleer silahlarını oluşturmaya yöneleceklerdir. Nükleer yayılma riskini de artıran bu durum Türkiye, Suudi Arabistan, Mısır, Japonya ve Güney Kore'yi de etkileyebilecektir.

### Anahtar

### Kelimeler:

Ukrayna Savaşı,  
Nükleer Çok  
Kutuplu Yapı,  
Neo-realizm,  
Nükleer Risk

### JEL Kodları:

F50, O38.





## Introduction

Approximately one month after the outbreak of the war in Ukraine on March 21, 2022, the EU Commission approved the Strategic Compass related to the roadmap of the European Common Defense and Security Policy for the next decade. In his introductory press speech, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Joseph Borrell referred to Strategic Compass as a guide for common action, defense, and security due to the increase in threats and apparent costs of inertia (Council of the EU, 2022). In the foreword written by Borrell, he stated that combining and using all EU policies and opportunities as means of power to transform U.S.A.'s geopolitical awakening into a permanent strategic stance would be a good response to the Russian invasion (EU External Action, 2022:4). It was also stated that the Russian government threatened to use nuclear weapons (EU External Action: 22). Borrell added that no action was taken for years, although the requirements of the EU Security and Defense Policy were well known and the Russia-Ukraine War showed the necessity of urgent action (EU External Action, 2022, p. 5). In the meeting of the ministries of foreign affairs and the ministries of defense of EU member states, it was decided to commence the reaction force with 5000 troops by 2025. Although it was agreed to establish a reaction force with 1500 troops for similar purposes in the past, this had not been realized due to both lack of funds and not getting enough attention (Reuters, 2022). It is worth mentioning that there were also negative reactions to this document. To give an example, one article argues that declarations, global strategies, or "strategic compasses" are outdated (Dzurinda, 2022). Three months after the Russian invasion, European countries announced an approximately 200 billion Euro increase in their defense budgets. The majority of defense R&D in Europe is funded by three countries namely France, Germany, and UK. France has the largest share with 5.6 billion euros, followed by Germany and the UK which is no longer an EU member state (Finkbeiner and Noorden, 2022). The most significant change came from Germany with an additional 100 billion euros allocated to the defense budget. Scholz explained that Germany intended to create "the largest conventional army within the NATO framework in Europe." (The Defense Post, 2022a).

This article's main research question is: How does the Russia-Ukraine War challenge the European and global international order and security architecture? In the first sections of this article, the strategies of the United States of America (U.S.A.) –the most powerful state in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)– and France and Germany –two powerful states in the European Union (EU)– until the War in 2022 are analyzed. To analyze the effects of the war on the strategies and the changes, the strategy documents of U.S.A. and France published after the war and the speeches of the political decision-makers of Germany, whose strategy document has not been updated yet, were examined. The major impact of the war on the security of Europe and the world is the serious reawakening of the nuclear dimension of international relations. This finding reminds the Cold War nuclear Mutual Assurance Destruction (MAD) doctrine, but the new international structure seems more complicated because of a new both nuclear and multipolar international structure rather than the Cold War's bipolar structure.

At the 2018 NATO Summit in Brussels, US President Trump indicated that only five NATO countries, including the U.S.A., spent 2% of their Global Domestic Products (GDP) on defense in line with NATO targets, stating that this was not proper burden-sharing and that countries should double their defense spending (MacAskill and Crerar, 2018). On the same day, Trump shared a harsh criticism of his Twitter account against Germany, stating that while Germany paid billions of dollars to Russia for gas and energy, U.S.A. paid for Europe's protection and then lost billions in trade (Trump, 2018). It is acknowledged that Germany's Military Force Bundeswehr is not duly prepared for battle duties and faces unprecedented challenges (Ashburn, 2016, p.137). Germany transformed its military forces into a professional army after the Cold War. This allowed Germany to lower defense spending significantly below NATO's target rate of 2% of GDP, allowing the country to benefit from the advantage of its geopolitical position and to follow a free-rider policy in NATO.

During Trump's presidency, the President of France, Macron, and Merkel, the Chancellor of Germany, started to endorse the idea of the European Army, especially after the criticism of Germany for insufficient contributions to NATO in defense spending. Although there is a legal base for this issue in Article 42 of the Lisbon Treaty in terms of Europe's common defense and security policy and this notion is supported in principle by France - the sole nuclear power of the EU - and Germany – the wealthiest nation in the EU- the desired action could not be put into implementation. In the most recent white papers issued in the 2010s by Germany and France, each recognized that both countries enjoyed the most peaceful periods of their histories. For example, the 2013 French White Paper indicated that France did not experience a direct and open conventional military threat in its territories and it had a chance to live peacefully with its European partners for the first time in French history. (France Presidency de la Republique, 2013, p.13). In Germany's 2016 white paper, it was emphasized that Germany was no longer a front-line state, and NATO was an indispensable guarantor of Europe and the Transatlantic Region. (Germany White Paper, 2016, p.64). These two white papers indicate a focus on developing common defense projects in Germany and France, along with other European countries, and the creation of certain European defense mechanisms. However, they could not reach the desired level even in common defense industry investments that are easier to implement than creating a common defense force, such as the EU Army.



Among neo-realists' main assumptions, the international structure is accepted as the main determinant of international relations. Based on this assumption, in the first decade after the Cold War, the world evolved from a bipolar structure of the Cold War to a unipolar structure led by U.S.A. In this period, even NATO allies France and Germany opposed U.S.A. and sided with Russia when U.S.A. started a military operation in Iraq in 2003. In addition, at the Munich Security Conference in 2007, Putin stated that the total GDP of China and India was higher than that of U.S.A., and that a unipolar world had become history (Putin, 2007). Later in his speech, Putin indicated that the expansion of NATO was not accepted related to the modernization of the alliance; contrarily, it was a provocation that weakened mutual confidence. While U.S.A. was dealing with anti-terrorism operations, the unipolar international structure transitioned to a multipolar one, both with the effect of the 2008 economic crisis and the rise of new powers in Asia, mainly China. China's increasing global impact, especially on Africa --the historic backyard of France-- played a significant role in France's cautious return to NATO in 2009.

Even though U.S.A. defined Iran as a rogue state, Iran has acquired its long-range ballistic missile capability with the help of Beijing's support (Blumenthal, 2005). During the Cold War, the contingency plans of NATO included the use of nuclear power against the former Soviet Union, which conventionally had superior military power than NATO at that time. Russia-Ukraine War changed all paradigms. Russian strategists have also retained the option of nuclear weapons on the table in the case of a possible regional or major conflict with a major adversary such as NATO, as Russia's conventional power is relatively weak opposition to the Cold War conventional distribution of power (Bruusgaard, 2021). Considering Russia's conventional weakness, the possibility that it may also use nuclear weapons, especially against its neighbors, has increased. Therefore, the issue of reducing nuclear weapons has ceased to be an agenda item alone and has moved to a ground considering Russia's sensitivities would be beneficial. Russia can negotiate the reduction of non-strategic nuclear weapons if the West reduces its conventional weapons (McDermott, 2011). Putin declared Russia would halt its participation in New Start Treaty in a speech devoted to Russia-Ukraine War's first anniversary (Roth and Borger, 2023).

The nuclear security dilemma also poses a domino-effect risk. Jean-Louis Lozier, former head of the French General Staff's Office of Nuclear Forces, said, "Today, countries like Japan or South Korea might legitimately ask whether" to obtain nuclear capability and "The same is true in the Middle East of Saudi Arabia, Türkiye, and Egypt." (en.prothomalo.com, 2022). The US-Japan Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security enables Japan to feel secure under US deterrence covering also the nuclear umbrella of U.S.A., but the chairman of the LDP Party Tatsuo Fukuda claimed that Japan must not shy away to have the nuclear option (The interpreter, 2022). It is claimed that the nuclear weapons debate resurfaces also in East Asia because South Korea and Japan worry about the new nuclear debate during the Russia-Ukraine War (The Economist, 2022). This suggests the risk of nuclear proliferation.

This article examines the strategic documents of France and Germany, the two most important military and economic actors of the EU, and the strategic documents of U.S.A. The new threat perceptions after the war will contribute to the literature and provide novel insights. The remainder of this article is organized as follows. After a theoretical review of the subject, the documents and speeches of the relevant actors were examined in light of neo-realist theory. Finally, the nuclear structural dimensions of the global order and their effects on Europe's security are discussed.

## 1. Theory and Methodology

Understanding power means understanding the borders and surprises of power, along with the shocks, ambiguities, and concerns of power leading to violence (Doran, 2003). Powerful states must actively prepare for negative scenarios, as they cannot be certain of other states' current and future targets (Montgomery, 2006, p. 151). Kenneth Waltz, a well-known representative of structural realism, argues that to understand international politics, the interaction between states and the structure of the international system must be examined first (Waltz, 1959). As there is no higher authority than states to solve problems in the international system, acts of states are based on relative power distribution in the consequent anarchical structure (Waltz, 1979). The leaders and internal political differences of a state do not have a major impact on how it acts (Waltz, 1967).

In neo-realism, the international structure regulating international relations refers to both the internal relations of the actors in the system and power distribution (Brecher and Yehuda, 1985, p.17). Changes in relative power distribution create opportunities and threats to the system. In the face of threats caused by a new situation, states typically resort to internal balancing by utilizing domestic sources or external balancing by collaborating with other states as allies. The structure can change with the rise or fall of states in the previous power hierarchy (James, 1993, p.136). The polarity of the international structure based on power distribution in the world also affects the way states maintain their security (Waltz, 2000, p. 5). After the Cold War, the international structure became undisputedly unipolar (Wohlforth, 1999, p. 9). In 1991, the world entered a unipolar new era for the first time under the leadership of U.S.A. (Mowle and Sacko, 2007, p. 1). In realist terms, unipolar means that no state can balance against a unipolar state. U.S.A. withdrew from the Kyoto and Antibalistic Missile (ABM) Agreements



without the fear of a serious balancing opponent as a unipolar leader starting in 1991 (Pape, 2005). Russia and U.S.A.'s NATO allies, France and Germany, opposed the invasion of Iraq by U.S.A. without a UN decision in 2003. Some American politicians opposed the Iraqi War. Obama was not in favor of the war started by U.S.A. After Obama was elected as US President in 2008 and the economic crisis of the same year, multiple relations and interdependence became prominent (Calleo, 2009, p. 366). This created a space for countries other than U.S.A. to implement their strategies and the international structure evolved into a multipolar structure. In a document from 2006, it was stated that the rising powers of China, India, and Russia were on the verge of a turning point, and the decisions they would make play key roles in the international security of the 21st century (US Department of Defense, 2006, p. 28). It was also emphasized that among these powers, only China had the military potential to compete with U.S.A. (US Department of Defense, p. 29). Obama is argued to be the first US President to lower the "superpower" status of U.S.A. to a powerful partner with other countries (Sieren, 2014). In a speech he made in 2011, Obama declared that the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq caused an enormous loss of lives and financial resources in the last decade and it was the time to focus on the Asia-Pacific region, underlining that U.S.A. had always been an Asia-Pacific country (Obama, 2011). Posen argues that U.S.A. must limit its military operations in the world because of changes in the power distribution in the international structure (Posen, 2014). Obama indicated a return to the Asia-Pacific region for rebalancing in the 2015 U.S.A. National Security Strategy Document (The White House, 2015, p. 1).

In the bipolar Cold War era, the necessity to stop the opposite polar, the former Soviet Union, geographically in Europe directed the power structure to nuclear deterrence and unconventional warfare forces in NATO, both of which were asymmetrical methods. According to the anarchical international structure and external balancing strategy, Germany and other European states without nuclear power were dependent on U.S.A.'s nuclear umbrella against the former Soviet Union, which had the most crowded army and was the largest nuclear power in the world. When the former Soviet Union assumed a common threat by relevant actors had not been a threat anymore after the Cold War, U.S.A., France, and Germany followed different strategies. While U.S.A. insisted to use its military power unilaterally, Germany and France decreased their defense spending, reduced the size of their armies, and transformed them into professional structures. Kagan metaphorically depicted the different strategies of Europe and U.S.A. as Europeans coming from Venus and Americans coming from Mars (2004, p. 3).

According to Mearsheimer, among the five assumptions of neo-realism theory, there are also the availability of offensive capabilities, uncertainty in terms of other states' intentions, and the strategic rational thinking of the states (1994, p. 10). Although nuclear weapons appear to be a negative feature for every country, they are a powerful tool for peace because their deterrence effect is very high (Mearsheimer, 2012). Mearsheimer predicted that after the Cold War, Eastern European countries that gained independence could be exposed to nuclear blackmail by Russia (2012). Despite the territorial integrity guarantee provided to Ukraine by Russia, the Russia-Ukraine war seems to have justified pessimistic predictions such as Mearsheimer's one. Waltz argues that the more states possess nuclear weapons, the lower the likelihood of war (2012). He also emphasizes that Indian and Pakistani leaders learned from the folly of the nuclear arms race between the US and the former Soviet Union. Subrahmanyam contends that minimal deterrence is as effective as maximum deterrence and that India's 60 nuclear weapons are sufficient to deter Pakistan or China (Sagan and Waltz, 2002).

Documents published by states have been a key element in qualitative research for many years, and document analysis as a qualitative research methodology is a systematic procedure for examining and evaluating government reports, press releases, statements of state administrators, and relevant experts in newspapers (Bowen, 2009, p.28). Documents can offer critical data to be turned into meaningful sentences for the article context and help understand changes in the system (Bowen, 2009, p. 30). Document analysis refers to the analysis and interpretation of written materials by a researcher (Russell and Gregory, 2003). National security strategy documents are the most important first-hand strategy sources that project the future, both in terms of accountability to parliaments for budgets and preparations and the organization of states' military forces against perceived threats. In the 21st century, this trend can be observed in the form of strategy security documents or white paper publishing (Kagan, 2013). The most comprehensive efforts related to this topic have been conducted in U.S.A. After being elected, each US president publishes a national security strategy document on extensive possible security threats, strategies, and investments to eliminate them for their four-year term in the office. France and Germany usually publish white papers every ten years to declare their security and defense strategies. The most recent white paper by France was published in 2013, whereas Germany published a white paper in 2016. After Macron was elected, France issued strategy review reports instead of white papers at certain intervals.

After Russia-Ukraine War, U.S.A. and France, along with the EU, issued notable strategic documents. In addition, Germany's defense policy leaders, the Chancellor of Germany, and the Minister of Defense made important statements on Europe's security. In this article, related documents and announcements are studied in the light of neo-realism using qualitative document analysis to determine how the Russia-Ukraine War challenged both the



European and global order and security architecture along with the impacts of the war on Europe's present and future common defense and security policy.

## 2. Country Strategy Documents Review

### 2.1. U.S.A.

The primary threats in three significant documents published by U.S.A. after the Russia-Ukraine War were reviewed to understand the international structure of the world. In this scope, the 2022 US National Security Strategy Document approved by the US President in October 2022, Nuclear Posture Review Report published at the same time in October 2022 by the US Department of Defense and the 2022 National Defense Strategy Document were reviewed.

The most distinctive feature of the 2022 US National Security Strategy Document compared to the documents published in previous terms is the fact that in this document, the primary potential threat for U.S.A. is declared as China. In the 2010 National Security Strategy Document, which was published during Obama's presidential term, China or Russia was not mentioned as a threat. In the 2017, National Security Strategy Document for US President Trump's tenure, it was stated that U.S.A. faced threats from both China and Russia, characterized as revisionist powers in military, political, and economic terms in the context of geopolitical competition.

The 2022 National Security Strategy Document of U.S.A. indicates that Russia and China are creating various challenges. Russia ignores the basic laws of international order and poses an urgent threat to the international system, as shown by its ruthless attacks on Ukraine. China's intent to reform the international order and its unique position of growing economic, diplomatic, military, and technological capacity to pursue this goal as a competitor are emphasized (The White House, 2022, p.8). The document mentions China's position to challenge U.S.A. geopolitically and adds that it is not limited to the Indo-Pacific, but also has global dimensions. However, Russia poses an urgent and ongoing threat only to the regional security order in Europe and lacks the extensive capabilities of China to cause global instability (The White House, 2022, p. 11). When China and Russia are evaluated together, although they are stated to have become closer to each other, the threats they cause differ considerably. While Russia, still a very dangerous state, is portrayed as having limits, it is declared that China will be addressed as a priority and U.S.A. will strive to gain a permanent competitive edge (The White House, 2022, p. 23). Although Russia is regarded as a security threat, portraying it as a regional problem indicates that this issue should be solved primarily by European countries. As only China is depicted as a global threat in the international structure, U.S.A. can be able to support Europe less than it did in the past. The document states that U.S.A. builds mutually empowering relations with the Quad in the Indo-Pacific (Australia, India, Japan, U.S.A.), AUKUS (Australia, United Kingdom, U.S.A.), and I2-U2 (India, Israel, UAE, U.S.A.) to deepen the collaboration with democratic and like-minded states (The White House, 2022, p. 12). The document claims that China is not only a threat to the Indo-Pacific but also an increasing global threat and describes the US strategy against China in three pillars. The first pillar is to invest in domestic competition and innovation and the second is to align efforts with allies and partner networks (The White House, 2022, p. 24). Both correspond well to the internal and external balancing strategies of neo-realism. These statements in the document indicate that U.S.A. practices a containment strategy against China in the Asia-Pacific region, a similar strategy to that practiced against the former Soviet Union during the Cold War. Another significant issue in the document is the reference to the systemic challenge from China, indicated in the final declaration of the NATO 2022 Madrid summit. This could be interpreted as an indication of U.S.A.'s intention to utilize NATO's assets in its competition with China in the upcoming period. In addition, an extended new agenda is accepted to address systemic threats from China, along with other security risks from cyber threats to climate concerns (The White House, 2022, p. 17).

The 2022 U.S.A. Nuclear Posture Review Report during Biden's presidential term which was delayed because of the Russia-Ukraine War, consists of 25 pages. (US Department of Defense, 2022a). China and Russia were mentioned along with North Korea, Iran, and nuclear terrorism in the document. The most striking prediction in the report is that U.S.A. will have faced two nuclear powers, China and Russia, as strategic competitors and potential enemies by 2030 for the first time in American history. It is also predicted that China will have a target of 1,000 nuclear warheads by 2030. Russia is considered to use the nuclear weapons doctrine more effectively and strategically even non-strategically highlighting that Russia has 2,000 non-strategic nuclear weapons. Within the scope of balancing Russia in Europe, the NATO allies, France and England, should combine their nuclear forces. With these statements, the US positively motivated the nuclear powers of its two European allies. These statements justify Walt's perceived threat explanation in his balance of threat function (1987). Not every nuclear weapon is a threat such as France, the UK, and Israel but China, North Korea, and Russia.

Another strategy document published by the US Department of Defense is the National Defense Strategy document. On October 27, 2022, two weeks after the issuance of the U.S.A. 2022 National Security Strategy Document, the Department of Defense published it. The document indicates that the US Military Forces will



urgently act to maintain and strengthen deterrence against China's increasing challenges (US Department of Defense, 2022b, p. 20), and nuclear deterrence will continue to be the priority based on U.S.A.'s integral deterrence, as U.S.A. will have to deter two big nuclear powers simultaneously by the 2030s for the first time in its history (US Department of Defense, 2022b, p. 21). US Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin refers to US President Biden's statement where he describes a "decisive decade" with many dramatic changes, especially in geopolitical terms (US Department of Defense, 2022b). The document emphasizes the strategic competition with China, and indicates that the most extensive and serious challenge against U.S.A.'s national security is China's compelling and increasingly aggressive efforts to reform the Indo-Pacific region and international system to align with its interests and authoritarian preferences (US Department of Defense, 2022b). The Black Sea is of strategic importance to Russia, which had a vision of warm seas in the past. While China's threats to the Indian and Pacific Oceans were mentioned in the US National Security Strategy Document for the Year 2022, there was no mention of threats to the Black Sea (Michaels and Mauldin, 2022). However, it is considered that this interpretation contradicts the efforts of U.S.A. to establish and develop bases in Romania and Bulgaria for access to the Black Sea. Although this situation is explained by the fact that U.S.A. sees China as a primary threat, it should be considered that the importance of the Black Sea should not be neglected.

U.S.A.'s prioritization and containment strategy towards China, a rising power in the changing nuclear multipolar international structure, not only in the Indo-Pacific but also globally, bears similarities to Cold War strategies. However, this will not be an easy task for U.S.A., as China has considerably more economic power, population, and soldiers than the former Soviet Union. This, in turn, will direct Europe to be more active in maintaining security in the next decade. The invasion of Ukraine by Russia complicated international security, as it is an indication of the ongoing nuclear danger in the world and its potential to grow in the future. States will either try to find a nuclear umbrella or develop their nuclear weapons in the face of the first nuclear multipolar international structure. This will add a multipolar nuclear dimension to the security dilemma, another important assumption of neo-realism theory. It can be argued that, after nuclear power threats in the nuclear multipolar international structure, the strategic power of NATO and U.S.A. nuclear umbrella increased for Europe's Common Defense and Security Policy. This may also have played an active role in Sweden's and Finland's membership applications to NATO.

## 2.2. France

The 2022 National Strategic Review Report of France was announced on November 9, 2022, by President Macron on a military ship. The report includes France's defense and security agenda until 2030. The most recent white paper of France, published in 2013, refers to that period as the most peaceful time in terms of security in history and mentions the European Common Security and Defense Policy. However, the new review report reflects a more positive approach toward NATO and cautious statements about European strategic autonomy. In his previous statements, Macron said that they experienced the brain death of NATO and that it was necessary to build the European Army. The invasion of Ukraine by Russia revealed Europe's vulnerabilities and its limited resilience. After Macron evaluated each old and new threat, from conventional military aggression to hybrid war, it was understood that there was not a single country to maintain its security without NATO (Dempsey, 2022).

In Article 48 of the 2022 National Strategic Review Report, the strategic significance of U.S.A. is emphasized. It became clear that U.S.A. was the main component for the reassurance of Europe's security, considering the scale of military aid and guarantees that U.S.A. granted Ukraine in the Russia-Ukraine War (France National Strategic Review, 2022, p. 14). In Article 42 of the report, close collaboration between NATO and the EU is stated to have a vital role in the strategic autonomy of Europe and transatlantic connections (France National Strategic Review, 2022, p. 14). The report also emphasizes that the invasion of Ukraine by Russia caused a major change in strategies so that the defense and strategic autonomy of Europe could have a complementary role for NATO (France National Strategic Review, 2022, p. 14). One of the most striking points in the report is the declaration of a transition to a more irregular form in a relatively limited nuclear multipolar structure (France National Strategic Review, 2022, p. 12). Article 28 of the report indicates that the escalation of nuclear threats and the random approach of Russia, a country that owns nuclear weapons, is an important lesson to learn from the Russia-Ukraine War (France National Strategic Review, 2022, p.11). The France National Strategic Review (2022) states that a nuclear multipolar international structure has become even more difficult considering China's increasing nuclear capacity, Russia's unpredictability, North Korea's continued nuclear armament, and Iran's ambition to obtain nuclear power capability (France National Strategic Review, 2022, p. 16). In the same document, the French Minister of Defense Parly declares that France cannot determine its national interests based on only its frontier's geographical proximity because France has global interests as a nuclear weapon state (France National Strategic Review, 2022, p. 33).

In conclusion, the report describes the recommendations to create a roadmap for the next decade as follows: "Might is right" philosophy and the return of the war to Europe indicate the significance of ongoing and deepening



integration among Europeans for the future. The defense of the security interests of Europeans, especially in the immediate surroundings against potential aggression, according to a strategic plan that also developed a common strategic culture and common defense capabilities in all areas became crucial (France National Strategic Review, p.20). Another significant topic in the 2022 Report is the implication that France will stand against China. While France abandons secret competition to engage with Russia in an open conflict, it is striking that France also proceeds to increasingly stronger competition with China (France National Strategic Review, p. 20).

### 2.3. Germany

In the most recent white paper of Germany published in 2016, it was stated that Germany was no longer a front-line state, that it reduced the size of its army, number of equipment and capabilities; thus, it stopped defense spending (Germany White Paper, 2016, p. 137). Former NATO Secretary General Rasmussen emphasized that the body starts to cut fats, and after a certain point, it starts cutting into muscles (Rasmussen, 2010), which summarizes the state of German Military Forces before the Russia-Ukraine War. There is no turning back after the body cuts into muscles and bones. After leaving its position as a front-line country thanks to NATO's expansion to the East, Germany prioritized its economy, and acted as a free-rider in NATO until 2022.

Within a week after the start of the Russia-Ukraine War on February 22, 2022, German Prime Minister Scholz appealed to the German Parliament to set up a one-off 100 billion Euro fund to increase the capabilities of the German Military Forces. On June 3, 2022, the necessary two-thirds majority was obtained to pass the constitutional amendment and the appeal was approved (Moser, 2022). Germany's decision was a radical "revolutionary" change from a cautious policy toward Russia after the Cold War. Scholz also announced that Germany would meet the criteria to invest 2% of its GDP in NATO, which would end the frequent criticism of Germany for not sufficiently supporting the defense burden of NATO (The Defense Post, 2022b).

Although Germany did not publish a white paper in 2022, German Minister of Defense Christine Lambrecht announced in her speech in Berlin that a new white paper was being prepared (Germany Federal Minister of Defense, 2022). Lambert emphasized that both the international structure and U.S.A.'s strategic priority location changed. Lambert added that U.S.A. focused on the Indo-Pacific due to the issue in the Taiwan Strait in the summer of 2022 and more effort would be put into the defense of Europe in line with the Strategic Compass announced for the first time in EU history. According to Lambert, it is time for Europe to maintain its security and Germany must play the largest role in this duty. A supplementary budget of 100 billion euros was allocated to the Ministry of Defense for this purpose. Lambert explained that U.S.A. was seen as the guarantor of Europe's security and emphasized that, in the face of nuclear blackmail, there was no alternative but for U.S.A. to protect Europe in the predictable future. Another significant point from the same speech was the assessment of the European Defense Fund. According to Lambert, although funds are allocated for capability R&D, they should be used more efficiently. She announced that the ratio for common weapons purchases in the EU, which is currently only eight percent, was aimed at 35 percent.

Considering these statements, along with the 2022 National Strategic Review Report of France, it is concluded that Germany follows a Europe-centered strategy despite the statements of France against China and the implications for collaboration with U.S.A., including collaboration in the Indo-Pacific. Another different perspective from Germany is observed in Germany's preference to stay under the US nuclear umbrella using the phrase "the predictable future" to leave room for flexibility, which is a different approach than France's which includes nuclear weapons in its strategy owing to its nuclear capabilities.

## Conclusion

The vision to establish a European army was proposed, especially by France, and supported to an extent by Germany after the Cold War when the impact of NATO diminished. Currently, it is no longer on the agenda after the Russia-Ukraine War. Having endorsed the vision of the European Army in the past, France and Germany declared NATO the main component of Europe's security after the war in Ukraine and acknowledged U.S.A. as an indispensable guarantor.

The major impact of the war on the security of Europe and the world is the serious reawakening of the nuclear dimension of international relations. This finding reminds the Cold War nuclear Mutual Assurance Destruction (MAD) doctrine but the new international structure seems more complicated because nuclear multipolar aspect rather than the bipolar one. The 2022 National Security Strategy Document of U.S.A. indicates that Russia and China will create different challenges. Russia ignores the basic laws of international order and poses an urgent threat to the international system as shown by ruthless attacks on Ukraine. On the other hand, China's intent to reform international order and its unique position owning a growing economic, diplomatic, military, and technological power to pursue this goal as a competitor. The document also refers to China's position to challenge U.S.A. geopolitically and adds that it is not limited to the Indo-Pacific, but also has significant global dimensions.



However, Russia poses an urgent and ongoing threat only to the regional security order in Europe and it lacks the capabilities of China to create global instability. Although Russia is called a security threat, its image as a regional problem leads to the conclusion that the Russian threat is a geopolitical problem that should be solved primarily within the European context.

In the post-Russia-Ukraine War analysis of 2022 national security and strategy documents and review reports of U.S.A., France, and Germany, it is concluded that we will see more complicated international relations in the next decade because of the transition to a nuclear multipolar international structure. According to neo-realism, international relations are regulated by an anarchical structure, and states act based on relative power distribution. This leaves state leaders and domestic political differences with little impact on defense and security policies. The decision to increase defense spending by 100 billion euros and allocate 2% of GDP to defense by the social democratic government of Germany after Merkel confirms the assumptions of neo-realism. Regarded as the guarantor of Europe's security and the most important ally by Germany and France, U.S.A. is expected to focus on a balancing strategy against China in Asia-Pacific. On the other hand, Europe's defensive efforts are expected to increase in line with its internal balancing strategies. A surprising transformation of economic power to military power can be observed in the acquisition and transfer of lethal weapons to Ukraine by Germany and the EU with a radical change and the 100 billion euros supplementary fund of Germany to develop the capabilities of its military forces. This issue is not limited to the transformation of economic power to military power, but can also manifest as the transformation of technological power to nuclear power due to security concerns.

From the documents examined after the Ukrainian War, it is stated that by 2030, for the first time in its history, U.S.A. will face two major nuclear powers namely China and Russia as strategic competitors and potential enemies. In Article 28 of the report of France in 2022, it was emphasized that the important lesson to be learned from the war in Ukraine is the threat of nuclear escalation and the haphazard approach of Russia with nuclear weapons, which proves that the global order has returned to the nuclear multipolar structure. One of the biggest differences brought about by the war is the finding that Russia will complete its conventional military power deficiency using nuclear weapons. On the other hand, Germany's strategy of investing its defense expenditures only in conventional weapons might not be the right strategy because the power comparison has become asymmetrical due to nuclear weapons. Deterrence against nuclear weapons can only be achieved with nuclear weapons or external balancing with nuclear weapon states or military alliances. Sweden and Finland's applications for full membership in NATO are consistent in this context. Finland became NATO's the 31st member on 4 April 2023. The status of Sweden's NATO membership will be discussed at the NATO Summit to be held on 11-12 July.

The nuclear security dilemma also poses a domino-effect risk. This situation increases the risk of nuclear weapons proliferation. The fact that Iran has acquired long-range ballistic missile capability with the help of Beijing's support makes this topic more important. We will see more complicated and security-oriented international relations in the next decade due to the transition to a nuclear multipolar international structure. Ukraine's NATO membership is going to be a tough decision as it bears the potential to start a nuclear war between NATO and Russia. The fact that the decision has not yet been finalized till even 11-12 July 2023 NATO Summit confirms the sensitivity of this issue. Therefore, countries must make an unconditional truce immediately during the Russia-Ukraine War and start simultaneous negotiations to diminish medium-range nuclear weapons between Russia and Europe.

The multipolar nuclear structure encourages the use of asymmetric methods and state-sponsored paramilitary forces within the scope of special operations. The Wagner Group is considered a Russian paramilitary organization and Russian proxy forces. The coup attempt launched by this group in Russia on June 23 confirmed that these paramilitary forces are also difficult to control.

Considering the statements of the German Minister of Defense Lambert along with the 2022 National Strategic Review Report of France, it is concluded that Germany follows a Europe-centered strategy despite the striking statements of France against China and the implications for collaboration with U.S.A., including collaboration in the Indo-Pacific. Another different perspective by Germany is observed in Germany's preference to stay under U.S.A.'s nuclear umbrella using the phrase "the predictable future" to leave room for flexibility, which is a different approach than France's which includes nuclear weapons in its strategy thanks to its nuclear capabilities.



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