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NATO Summit - Vilnius

Why in news?

The latest NATO summit held in Vilnius, Lithuania underscored the new reason for strengthening and expanding the alliance.

What is the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)?

- **NATO** - It is a 31-member alliance, with 29 European nations, and two American nations (United States and Canada).
- It was set up in 1949 by the US, Canada and several Western European nations to provide collective security against the Soviet Union.
- **Collective defence** - Laid out in *Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty* in which members of NATO are committed to mutual defence in response to an attack by any external party.
- **Aim** - To protect peace and to guarantee the territorial integrity, political independence and security of the member states.
- **Headquarters** - Brussels, Belgium.
- **India** - India is not a part of NATO, however, there are plans to include [India in NATO Plus](#).

How is this summit different from the previous summits?

- **Ukraine** - The Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy attended the summit.
- This raised anticipation around the possibility of extending NATO membership to Ukraine.
- The 3 priorities of Ukraine such as new weapons packages, security guarantees and an invitation to join NATO, went unfulfilled.
- However, the U.K. did pledge ammunition support to Ukraine.

What are the takeaways from this NATO summit?

- **New members** - Finland and Sweden applied for NATO membership soon after the Russian invasion of Ukraine.
- Finland became the 31st member of NATO in April 2023.
- NATO signed the accession protocol for Sweden to join the alliance in 2022 but their bid is being held up by Turkey and Hungary.
- **Significance of new entrants** - The new entry shows 2 things.

- The Alliance continues to practise *Article 10* of the *Washington Treaty* signed in April 1949 which states that member countries can invite other European countries to become members of NATO.
- Ukraine's potential membership conceptually continues to deter Russia from taking steps against members of NATO.
- **Sweden-Turkey** - Turkey's scaling back of its long-standing opposition to Sweden's inclusion in NATO.
- This shows Turkey's desire to mend relations with the US and improve the bipartisan relations.
- **U.S.'s stance** - U.S. President Joe Biden's speech at the summit extended unwavering support to the alliance as well as Ukraine.
- It is evident that Mr. Biden's approach to NATO is different from that of Trump's who considered withdrawing from NATO.
- This resurrects trans-Atlantic solidarity.
- **China** - The Vilnius summit did not talk directly on the challenges and threats emerging from China's stated ambitions and coercive policies.
- However, it stated that NATO faces threats from China's malicious hybrid cyber operations that pose a threat to the security of the Alliance.
- **Indo-Pacific** - The NATO summit emphasised that the developments in the Indo-Pacific have become increasingly consequential for Euro-Atlantic security.
- The expanding space for Quad countries in Indo-Pacific, along with other regional countries like New Zealand and South Korea also influences Euro-Atlantic security.
- To know about NATO Membership - [Click Here](#).

Reference

1. [The Hindu - What are the takeaways from the NATO summit?](#)



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