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Russia Will Remain 'Chief Threat' to NATO Through 2030, Report Says

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NATO suspended relations with Russia following its 2014 annexation of Crimea, while Moscow views the alliance's eastward expansion as a threat to national security. **Vagram Bagdasatyan / Photolure / TASS**

Russia will continue to pose one of the main threats to NATO in the next decade, a high-level report for the Western military alliance said Tuesday.

"While Russia is by economic and social measures a declining power, it has proven itself capable of territorial aggression and is likely to remain a chief threat facing NATO over the coming decade," it noted.

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"Russia maintains a powerful conventional military and robust nuclear arsenal that poses a threat across NATO territory, but is particularly acute on the eastern flank," the report said.

The U.S.-led alliance commissioned the "NATO 2030: United for a New Era" report, which was presented to NATO's foreign ministers and will be submitted to its leaders at a 2021 summit, from a group of experts led by former U.S. State Secretary Madeleine Albright. NATO suspended relations with Russia following its 2014 annexation of Crimea, while Moscow views the alliance's eastward expansion as a threat to national security.

Continued Russian aggression in Ukraine and Georgia has been accompanied by air and naval build-ups in and around the Barents, Baltic and Black seas, the report said. In the Mediterranean Sea and Africa, it said Russia has been using proxies and private military companies to establish footholds.

NATO allies' sovereignty is also threatened by Russia's "broader hybrid toolkit including offensive cyber, state-sanctioned assassinations and poisonings — using chemical weapons, political coercion and other methods," the report said.

The experts urged NATO to continue pursuing "the dual-track approach of deterrence and dialogue," evolving it to "raise the costs" of conventional and hybrid Russian aggression while supporting arms control and risk reduction talks.

The report also urged NATO to "play a larger part in an international order" by tackling climate change, future pandemics and terrorism with an eye on security threats from China and Russia.

"NATO must adapt to meet the needs of a more demanding strategic environment marked by the return of systemic rivalry, persistently aggressive Russia, the rise of China" and emerging or disruptive technology, it said.

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