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Analysis on the 2026 Ankara NATO Summit and Future Security Issues

The 2026 Ankara NATO Summit was held between 7–8 July. The summit focused on, defence spending responsibilities, the war between Russia and Ukraine, and NATO's future strategy. According to NATO's official summit declaration, strengthening deterrence, supporting Ukraine, and improving alliance capabilities were among the main priorities.

Ukraine was a big issue in the summit. According to Reuters, Donald Trump had separate phone calls with Vladimir Putin and Volodymyr Zelenskyy on 4 July. This also showed the continuing diplomatic efforts to address the war. NATO leaders agreed upon €70 billion financial support for Ukraine. They agreed to continue military support by giving additional assistance, such as air defence systems, ammunition, and other critical equipment. This decision shows that NATO still considers Russia's war against Ukraine as a direct threat to European security. Russia was also discussed as the main state-based security threat. NATO focused on strengthening

its eastern borders and improving their preparedness. The alliance plans to prevent more future aggression by increasing military presence and defence capabilities in vulnerable regions. Defence spending was another major discussion. European allies were encouraged to take more responsibility for their own security, but increasing defence budgets also causes economic pressure for many ally countries. The summit also focused on defence industry development. According to NATO declaration, improving the capacity of production became a priority after the Ukraine war showed the weaknesses in the industry. NATO announced the agreements on a more than \$50 billion plan to increase defence production and strengthen military cooperation, but the implementation is expected to take time. NATO leaders also reagreed on Article 5, which guarantees collective defence between allies. This was an important political message, because discussions about the role of United States on Europe's security are still going on. So, NATO wanted to show that their cooperation as an alliance is still strong. In addition to traditional risks and conflicts, NATO also discussed cyber attacks, hybrid threats, energy security, and the protection of critical infrastructure. These issues show that modern security challenges are not limited to traditional conflicts anymore and they now include technology, information, and infrastructure. China's growing influence and strategic economic competition were also discussed in the summit. Issues such as



technology, supply chains, and economic dependence are becoming more important because they directly affect NATO's security and strategic decisions. This shows that NATO's security concerns are expanding beyond Europe and Russia. Meanwhile, Türkiye's role as the host country of the summit was extremely important. Ankara signaled the importance of cooperation within the alliance and Türkiye's strategic position in NATO. Hosting the summit increased Türkiye's diplomatic visibility and showed its continuing role in regional issues and security challenges.

The Ankara NATO Summit showed NATO's effort to adapt to a changing international security environment. The decisions about Ukraine, defence capabilities, and new security threats showed that NATO is trying to strengthen its capacity to respond to threats, but issues such as defence spending, Europe's burden-sharing responsibility, and the future role of the US are still important issues for the alliance.



Trump-Zelensky Route In Ankara Summit

The bilateral meeting between US President Donald Trump and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy at the NATO Summit in Ankara on July 8, 2026, revealed a significant tactical shift on the allied front as the war entered its fifth year. The summit resulted in a commitment of €70 billion in aid to Ukraine. This figure aligns with NATO's 2026 goals of increasing member states' defense spending.

The highlight of the meeting was Trump's announcement that he would grant Ukraine a license to produce Patriot air defense systems domestically. This step can be seen as both a reflection of Washington's strategy to strengthen Kyiv's defense capabilities without directly bearing the financial burden, and a response to the global shortage in production capabilities. Zelensky's prior statement that the need for ammunition for systems effective against ballistic missiles was Russia's last major advantage also clarifies the background to this move.

Trump's description of Putin as a difficult character, while simultaneously using the same expression for Zelensky, who was sitting directly beside him, is important in terms of a particular approach at the rhetorical level. This symmetrical framing can be interpreted as a conscious linguistic strategy aimed at strengthening Trump's mediating position. Instead of positioning one side as difficult and the other as reasonable, he presents both leaders as equal obstacles in the negotiation process.



Zelensky's repeat of the demand for NATO membership at the summit, and his question, 'Do you really believe it is right to leave a country and people with this level of defense capability outside of NATO?' can be seen as an attempt to maintain symbolic pressure despite the membership process being effectively 'not in the cards' at the moment. However, the absence of a concrete membership timetable in the summit declaration indicates that this demand is unlikely to be met in the short term.

Developments on the ground, however, are casting a shadow over diplomatic optimism. The deaths of at least three people in Russian missile attacks on Kyiv while the summit was underway highlight the space between Trump's rhetoric of progress and the military reality on the ground. Consequently, the Ankara Summit, while revealing the US tendency to shift its support for Ukraine from aid to capacity transfer, has failed to offer a concrete roadmap for a lasting ceasefire or peace framework.



US–Iran Tensions Escalate Again

In recent days, the diplomatic contacts between the United States and Iran have entered another uncertain period. Although both sides continue to hold negotiations, they also continue to make strong statements against each other. At the same time, tensions in the Strait of Hormuz continue to increase between the two countries and across the region. The events of the last two days have affected not only the Middle East but also the global energy market and international security. Any security problem in the region could directly have a serious impact on global oil prices and international trade. The tension became even more serious after the strong statements made by United States President Donald Trump on July 6. Trump said that Iran would either "reach an agreement or the United States would finish the job," showing that Washington intends to continue putting pressure on Iran. At the same time, the United States has not completely given up on a diplomatic solution and appears to be using military deterrence together with diplomatic negotiations. However, the Iranian government announced that it would not return to peace talks as long as the United States continued its threatening language, showing that the lack of trust between the two sides still remains. Tehran stated that negotiations should be based on mutual respect and said that it would not make any concessions while under pressure. Although diplomatic contacts have not completely ended, the strong statements from both sides show that the process remains very fragile.



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The most important event that increased tensions was the attack on two commercial ships in the Strait of Hormuz on July 7. According to Reuters and AP News, one of the attacked ships was carrying liquefied natural gas from Qatar, while the other was transporting oil from Saudi Arabia. After the incident, oil prices increased, creating new uncertainty in the energy markets. This event clearly shows that the Strait of Hormuz has great importance not only for the region but also for the global energy market.

As a result, the increasing pressure by the United States on Iran and Iran's strong response make it difficult for the two sides to reach a lasting agreement in the short term. These developments show that US–Iran relations have once again entered a critical period. Trump's strong statements, Iran's announcement that it would not continue negotiations until the threats end, and the attacks on commercial ships in the Strait of Hormuz all show that regional tensions have not yet come to an end. The developments in the Strait of Hormuz have once again turned the attention of the international community to the Middle East before the NATO Summit, which will begin in Ankara. The diplomatic steps taken by both sides in the coming days will be important not only for the future of the Middle East but also for global energy markets and international security.



The Financialization of Defence: The Defence, Security and Resilience Bank

The meetings held within the framework of the NATO Summit on 7–8 July resulted in the decision by nine countries, including Türkiye, to establish a new defense bank, with its head office to be located in Canada. However, according to a recent statement, Türkiye has temporarily withdrawn from participating in this initiative. In its current form, the initiative consists of Canada, Albania, Belgium, Greece, Latvia, Luxembourg, Romania, and Ukraine. The bank has been named the Defense Security and Resilience Bank (DSRB). Although the main focus of the initiative is the establishment of a new financial institution, it would be insufficient to evaluate it just as a financial project.



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This is because its focus on the defense sector is equally significant. As is well known, the concept of hard power has recently gained increasing prominence and importance. Therefore, many countries have been strengthening their military capabilities. This initiative can also be seen as a reflection of the transformation taking place in the defense industry. The Russia–Ukraine War and the Iran–Israel–US conflict proved that the issue is not only the quantity of military power, but also the sustainability of this power, while simultaneously highlighting Europe’s vulnerabilities in this area.

The defense bank initiative can be regarded as a cooperative effort aimed at addressing these deficiencies. The Defense Security and Resilience Bank is expected to serve as an infrastructure mechanism in the reconstruction of European security. On the other hand, it also represents a manifestation of the financialization of security. In this way, the transformation of the security structure has led to a closer integration between the economy and the defense sector, making the impact of economic capacities on defense capabilities more visible.

In conclusion, this initiative has been established with the aim of providing sustainability in the defense industry and filling the financing gap in this field.



Artificial Intelligence Summit in Geneva: The Search for “Global Control” in the Cyber World

Global leaders, technology companies, and scientists gathered in Geneva under the leadership of the United Nations to start an important summit about defining the limits of artificial intelligence technologies in military and cyber fields. The meeting aims to prevent the destructive risks that uncontrolled development of technology may create for cybersecurity systems. This summit has brought discussions about digital sovereignty to the center of international diplomacy. The main goal is to keep artificial intelligence under human control and create a global monitoring system. Different scenarios are being discussed about how the decisions made at the summit may shape the defense strategies of countries.

The first possibility discussed is that this global control system, which is expected to be established in Geneva, may increase the digital gap between powerful technology countries and developing countries. It is argued that strict legal



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regulations on artificial intelligence could slow down innovative projects and new software companies. If the rules become too strict, the development speed in the cyber field may decrease, and this could lead to a long-term slowdown in the global technology sector. Another possibility is that this summit may create a global protection system against cyber crimes and networks spreading false information. Creating international standards to prevent artificial intelligence from becoming a cyber weapon could make countries' critical infrastructures more resistant to data leaks and autonomous cyber attacks. It is suggested that a possible international committee established in Geneva could create a global data-sharing network in cyber defense and make the digital world a safer place.

The third possibility is that the institutional decisions made at the summit may not have a major effect on real-world situations. It is claimed that major global powers may secretly continue developing artificial intelligence for cyber intelligence and defense systems. Therefore, similar to past disarmament agreements, signed protocols may not be enough to stop hidden competition between countries. As a result, the crisis may remain only as a diplomatic agreement written on paper rather than creating real change. In conclusion, the artificial intelligence summit in Geneva is considered one of the most comprehensive steps taken by the international community to create rules for the digital age.

The conflict between the desire to prevent technological risks and countries' ambitions for digital power creates uncertainty about the future of global cyber politics. In the coming years, it will become clear how much leaders will follow these common rules and whether artificial intelligence will become a safe tool for humanity or open the door to new power struggles.



Sudan's Genocide Findings and the Limits of International Action

A United Nations Fact-Finding Mission has concluded that crimes committed by Sudan's Rapid Support Forces (RSF) against civilians in Darfur amount to genocide. According to the report, the RSF carried out mass killings, widespread sexual violence, forced displacement, abductions, and deliberately blocked humanitarian aid, using starvation as a weapon against civilians. The investigation found that these attacks were systematic and mainly targeted the Masalit community. The findings mark one of the strongest international assessments of the conflict since Sudan's civil war began in April 2023.



The report is significant because the term genocide carries serious legal and political weight. Under international law, it is considered one of the gravest crimes and creates a stronger expectation for the international community to respond. However, history has repeatedly shown that recognizing atrocities does not automatically stop them. Sudan is becoming another example where documentation has moved faster than international action. The conflict has created one of the world's worst humanitarian crises. Millions of people have been displaced, famine is spreading across several regions, and humanitarian organizations continue to warn that access to food and medical assistance remains extremely limited. Despite the scale of the crisis, Sudan has received far less international attention than conflicts such as Ukraine or Gaza. This difference reflects an uncomfortable reality of global politics: international responses are often shaped not only by humanitarian concerns but also by strategic and geopolitical interests.

The UN findings also raise important questions about the effectiveness of international institutions. Investigations, reports, and legal findings are essential for documenting crimes and preserving evidence, but they cannot protect civilians on their own. Without stronger diplomatic pressure, coordinated sanctions, and effective judicial mechanisms, even the strongest reports risk becoming records of past failures rather than tools for preventing future crimes.

Recent developments at the International Criminal Court (ICC) suggest that accountability efforts are continuing, with prosecutors reporting progress in investigations related to Darfur. While this is an important step, justice remains a long process. Holding those responsible accountable will depend not only on legal procedures but also on sustained political support from states and international organizations.

The Sudan case also highlights the limits of the international principle of "Never Again." The warning signs of mass atrocities were visible long before the UN reached its conclusion. Yet the international response remained slow and fragmented. This raises broader concerns about whether the global system is capable of preventing genocide or whether it mainly reacts after irreversible damage has already occurred.

The UN report is therefore more than a legal finding. It is a test of the international community's willingness to act when the evidence is clear. If genocide can be recognized but still fail to trigger meaningful collective action, confidence in international law and global institutions will continue to weaken. For Sudan's civilians, recognition is important, but protection and accountability remain far more urgent than acknowledgment alone.



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The Balance of Power in East Asia Is Being Reshaped: China–North Korea Relations and Regional Security Competition

The diplomatic developments that took place in East Asia during the first week of July show that security competition in the region is becoming stronger. While the exchange of friendly messages between the leaders of China and North Korea has encouraged closer security cooperation among South Korea, the United States, and Japan, Japan's efforts to strengthen its defense capabilities have also brought regional security debates back to the agenda. Although there has not been a direct crisis between the parties, these recent developments suggest that a new strategic balance is emerging in the Asia-Pacific region.

On July 5, Chinese President Xi Jinping stated that relations with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un should continue to develop in a "long-term, stable, and strong" manner. This statement also shows that Beijing still sees Pyongyang as an important part of its regional strategy. According to Yonhap News and the Korea JoongAng Daily

the message not only reinforces the traditional friendship between the two countries but also aims to create a political balance against the growing military presence of the United States in the region. Considering North Korea's increasing military cooperation with Russia, it is clear that China wants to maintain its influence over Pyongyang.

At the same time, the foreign ministers of South Korea, the United States, and Japan met during the NATO Summit to discuss North Korea's nuclear program and regional security issues. This meeting shows that the three countries are working more closely together not only in response to North Korea but also to China's growing strategic influence. For South Korea, this situation is particularly important because Seoul is trying to strengthen its security alliance with the United States while also maintaining its economic ties with China. This balancing policy continues to be one of the key elements of South Korea's foreign policy.

Security debates surrounding Japan have also gained momentum again. According to a Reuters report published on July 7, North Korea described Japan's efforts to increase its long-range missile capabilities and defense spending as a form of "remilitarization." Similarly, The Japan Times noted that the changes in Japan's defense policy are driven not only by the threat from North Korea but also by China's military activities in the East China Sea and around Taiwan. On the other hand, Chinese media argue



that Japan's expanding defense capabilities could create new risks for regional stability. Overall, these developments suggest that a new bloc structure is gradually taking shape in East Asia. While China and North Korea continue to strengthen their strategic relationship, South Korea, Japan, and the United States are expanding their security cooperation. Although a direct military conflict does not seem likely in the short term, the increasing focus on deterrence by all sides is making the regional security dilemma even deeper. Possible crises in Taiwan, the Korean Peninsula, and the East China Sea could affect not only the countries in the region but also global supply chains, the semiconductor industry, and the international economy.



Myanmar and ASEAN Relations After Five Years of Crisis

Myanmar has been one of the biggest challenges for Association of Southeast Asian Nations-ASEAN since the military coup on 1 February 2021. Military removed the democratically elected government. After the coup, protests turned into a nationwide armed conflict

involving the military, pro-democracy groups, and ethnic armed organizations. Since then, ASEAN has tried to manage this crisis with based on the Five-Point Consensus-5PC adopted in April 2021. These were the immediate end of violence, constructive dialogue between all parties, the appointment of an ASEAN Special Envoy, humanitarian assistance by ASEAN, and a visit by the Special Envoy to meet all relevant stakeholders. The aim was to create a peaceful and widely effective political solution, but the military's refusal to accept the 5PC slowed its implementation and caused debates over ASEAN's influence.

After the 2021 coup, ASEAN banned Myanmar's military leaders from attending high-level political meetings because of their failure to implement the 5PC, but avoided taking stronger measures because of the member states' different views on the issue and ASEAN's traditional principles of consensus and non-interference in domestic affairs, and also because of Myanmar's relations with countries such as China and Russia reduced the effectiveness of ASEAN's diplomatic pressure. According to the ASEAN Leaders' Review and Decision on the Implementation of the Five-Point Consensus adopted on 26 October 2025, ASEAN shared deep concern about the lack of progress and stated that the 5PC would continue to be their main approach to this crisis. ASEAN began reconsidering its approach to Myanmar, in 2026. Reuters reported that



Thailand proposed to act as a bridge between Myanmar and ASEAN, also rementioned the necessity of complying with the 5PC. From late 2025-early 2026, Myanmar's pro-military government strengthened its political position with elections and institutional changes. Opposition parties were mostly suppressed, so the pro-military USDP won the majority of seats in the election. Min Aung Hlaing the coup leader became president in the presidential election in April 2026. Analysts criticized this process as a strategy to hide military authoritarianism under a civilian appearance. After that, Min Aung Hlaing stated that Myanmar wanted to fix relations, but ASEAN made clear that relations could not return to normal without progress on the 5PC. According to Reuters, ASEAN foreign ministers planned an informal meeting with Myanmar's foreign minister in Bangkok on 12 July 2026. It will be the first in-person meeting with Myanmar's foreign minister since the coup. This meeting could become an important turning point for ASEAN's future policy on Myanmar. Despite these diplomatic efforts, major problems remain. The Myanmar government has continued to reject ASEAN pressure and requests to access to the imprisoned former leader Aung San Suu Kyi. Analysts argue that Myanmar wants ASEAN's recognition but does not accept ASEAN's involvement in its internal affairs. The situation forces ASEAN into a

dilemma. The organization wants to maintain ties with Myanmar, but is also pressured to respond to the military government's refusal to comply.

The future of ASEAN's role will depend on whether it can create a more united approach while encouraging change in Myanmar.