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EUROPEAN SECURITY IN THE CONTEMPORARY ERA: NATO EXPANSION AND EMERGING FAULT LINES, OPTIONS WITH EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

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ORGANISED BY CENJOWS
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The guest lecture provided a comprehensive discussion on the evolving landscape of European security and the changing role of NATO in a period marked by complex geopolitical developments. The session was led by Professor Jeganaathan, who offered a thoughtful analysis of how recent global events are reshaping the security architecture of Europe. His remarks placed particular emphasis on the strategic consequences of the Russia Ukraine war and the broader implications for transatlantic relations and European defence cooperation.

By outlining the historical foundations of NATO and its long standing role as the cornerstone of European security since the end of the Second World War. He explained that NATO's expansion after the Cold War significantly altered the strategic environment of the continent. While enlargement strengthened collective defence for many states in Central and Eastern Europe, it also contributed to heightened tensions with Russia. This historical trajectory, according to him, is essential for understanding the current security climate.

A key theme of the discussion was the transformation of threat perceptions across Europe following Russia's aggression against Ukraine. The conflict has fundamentally reshaped strategic thinking within European capitals. Many countries now view territorial defence and military preparedness with renewed urgency. The war has also revived the importance of alliances and collective security mechanisms. NATO, in this context, continues to remain central, yet its functioning and priorities are being reassessed in light of new realities.

He highlighted the emergence of new fault lines within Europe's security architecture. Differences between Eastern and Western European states were noted as particularly significant. Countries located closer to Russia tend to perceive a more immediate and direct military threat and therefore advocate stronger deterrence measures and deeper NATO engagement. In contrast, several Western European states approach the issue with a broader strategic lens that includes diplomatic, economic, and political considerations. These differing perspectives sometimes complicate policy coordination within the alliance.

Another important aspect discussed during the meeting was the growing debate surrounding European strategic autonomy. For decades, the United States has provided the backbone of Europe's security guarantees. However, changing global priorities in Washington and the evolving nature of international politics have encouraged European leaders to reconsider the extent of their dependence on

American military power. As a result, there is an increasing recognition that Europe must develop stronger defence capabilities and a more coordinated security framework of its own.

At the same time, internal divisions within Europe continue to present challenges. Achieving consensus among numerous states with distinct political priorities and security concerns is not always straightforward. Professor Jeganaathan noted that debates over defence spending, technology dependence, and migration policies often intersect with broader security discussions. Several European leaders have expressed concern that reliance on non-European technologies in defence and infrastructure could affect both credibility and strategic independence.

Socio economic pressures were also identified as influencing the security debate. Rising nationalism in various parts of Europe, combined with disputes over migration management, has contributed to political fragmentation. These developments can shape national priorities and complicate cooperative approaches to collective security.

In conclusion, the lecture underscored that Europe is undergoing a significant strategic transition. The Russia Ukraine war has accelerated debates about defence preparedness, alliance structures, and political unity. While NATO remains a central pillar of the continent's security system, European states increasingly recognise the need to invest more in defence and to strengthen internal coordination and emphasised that the future stability of Europe will depend on its ability to balance transatlantic cooperation with greater strategic responsibility within the region itself.