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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