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INTEGRATION

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THE VILNIUS SUMMIT: A PLATFORM FOR FEMALE LEADERSHIP AND FLEXIBILITY IN EUROPE'S SECURITY INFRASTRUCTURE

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This paper examines the strategic evolution of Europe's security framework in the context of the Russo-Ukrainian War and the concluded Vilnius Summit — a critical juncture, with the possibility of selecting a new Secretary General. Among the nominees was Kaja Kallas, Estonia's Prime Minister, whose innovative vision advocated a departure from traditional models. Kallas promoted a more inclusive and flexible NATO membership structure, more active and robust support for Ukraine against Russian aggression, increased roles for women in security architecture and policymaking, and the utilisation of public diplomacy and strategic communication in novel ways. The summit culminated in the reappointment of the well-respected Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, deferring the transformative opportunity represented by Kallas's candidacy for the future. Kallas's bold yet strategic approach effectively rallied support, justifying the paper's focus on her. This reappointment underscores a missed-for-now chance to evolve Europe's security architecture, leaving Kallas as a promising future prospect. The paper employs a mixed-methods case study on Kallas's approach, recognising the Summit as both a reflection of continuity, and a beacon for potential future transformation.

Introduction

Since its founding, NATO has proven a stalwart force upholding international security. However, today's landscape reveals a new set of complex strategic challenges. The emergence of disruptive hybrid warfare and grey zone aggressions signal concerning shifts. While NATO's long-time principles remain relevant, these opaque dangers demand policy evolution. The alliance now faces vexing threats shrouded in uncertainty. Still, NATO possesses the insight and resolve to adapt its frameworks to meet challenges. By carefully understanding the technological forces reshaping conflict, NATO can

confidently confront the future. Renewed strategies are needed to meet testing new realities. With cohesion and vision, NATO can craft an innovative path that is true to its enduring purpose.

The Russo-Ukrainian War exemplifies these challenges, and underscores the urgency for a responsive NATO framework. The Vilnius Summit in July 2023 presented an opportune moment to address these pressing matters, with a specific focus on Ukraine's security needs. Among the nominees for Secretary General was Kaja Kallas, Estonia's Prime Minister, who possesses a historical, geopolitical, and

empathetic understanding of the war. A savvy digital operator, Kallas recognises the need for informational sovereignty, and has actively advocated for a more inclusive and flexible NATO structure to support Ukraine against Russian aggression. Although the summit culminated in the reappointment of the respected Jens Stoltenberg, deferring transformative changes, Kallas's candidacy symbolised a missed-for-now opportunity for NATO's evolution. This paper explores the two most urgent issues highlighted at the summit, positioning Kallas's insights and vision as a reflection of continuity within NATO's framework, and as a beacon for potential future transformation in support of Ukraine¹.

NATO must undergo organisational reframing and adaptation to effectively address the new security challenges of the rapidly changing global landscape. The Vilnius Summit provided a crucial opportunity to tackle two critical areas². Firstly, there was a pressing need for a specific and time-bound pathway to NATO membership for Ukraine. As Ukraine grapples with an ongoing Russian aggression, NATO membership can offer the much-needed protection and stability it seeks. Secondly, the selection of a new Secretary General is paramount³. The

chosen candidate should possess a deep understanding of the Russian threat and the complexities of ambiguous postures that have contributed to the current war. By addressing these areas, NATO can ensure its continued relevance and effectiveness in promoting security and stability in the Euro-Atlantic region.⁴

Lastly, the paper advocates for a leadership transition within NATO, emphasising the importance of selecting a candidate who embodies qualities essential for navigating the challenges ahead. This includes a nuanced understanding of Russian intentions, expertise in managing hybrid warfare, and proficiency in risk communication. Estonian Prime Minister Kaja Kallas exemplifies these qualities and has been presented as a suitable candidate for the leadership role. By appointing a leader with such attributes, NATO can strengthen its ability to address emerging security threats, and effectively communicate its objectives and strategies⁵. The paper thus presents Kallas as a suitable candidate to succeed Jens Stoltenberg, the current Secretary General of NATO⁶. Kallas, along with Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg and EU President Ursula von der Leyen, has consistently articulated the need for increased support for Ukraine throughout the Russo-Ukrainian

1 NATO, NATO Heads of State and Government to meet in Vilnius on 11-12 July 2023, 16.06.2022, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_208802.htm

2 NATO, NATO Secretary General announces dates for 2023 Vilnius Summit, 9.11.2022, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_208802.htm

3 Barry, C., & Skaluba, C., Defining success for NATO's Vilnius summit: A primer. Atlantic Council, 11.04.2023, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/in-depth-research-reports/issue-brief/defining-success-for-natos-vilnius-summit-a-primer/>

4 France 24. Estonia PM Kaja Kallas: 'At the end of the war in Ukraine, the only guarantee for peace is NATO', 18.05.2023, https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2023/05/18/estonia-pm-kaja-kallas-at-the-end-of-the-war-in-ukraine-the-only-guarantee-for-peace-is-nato_6027124_4.html

5 Guardian. Kaja Kallas: Russia is a threat to us all, NATO must be ready for war, 01.03.2022, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/mar/01/kaja-kallas-russia-is-a-threat-to-us-all-nato-must-be-ready-for-war>

6 Kauffmann, S., & Jacqué, P. P., Estonia PM Kaja Kallas: 'At the end of the war in Ukraine, the only guarantee for peace is NATO'. Le Monde, 18.05.2023, https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2023/05/18/estonia-pm-kaja-kallas-at-the-end-of-the-war-in-ukraine-the-only-guarantee-for-peace-is-nato_6027124_4.html

war. Estonia, under Kallas's leadership, is setting a striking example for the alliance, by providing more military aid relative to its GDP than other nations⁷.



the paper advocates for a leadership transition within NATO, emphasising the importance of selecting a candidate who embodies qualities essential for navigating the challenges ahead. This includes a nuanced understanding of Russian intentions, expertise in managing hybrid warfare, and proficiency in risk communication

During a joint appearance in Estonia, in February 2023, Stoltenberg, von der Leyen, and Kallas expressed a unified stance on the objectives and strategy for the European Union and NATO partnership⁸. They also recognised the significant contributions made by Estonia, highlighting its role in the alliance. Stoltenberg further emphasised that, although concerns about potential escalation associated with supporting Ukraine might exist, it is essential to acknowledge that there were no risk-free options in this intricate situation. Stoltenberg underscored the fact that the greatest risk was if President Putin prevailed,

as this would present a more substantial threat to global stability and increase the vulnerability of the alliance. This is precisely why the NATO allies are banding together to provide extraordinary assistance to Ukraine, as it strengthens our common security and ability to counter possible threats⁹.

The Russian war in Ukraine has underscored the need to reassess NATO's current policies and consider more flexible approaches to alliance membership¹⁰. Moreover, there is a growing recognition of the unique contributions of female leaders, like those of Estonia's Prime Minister, who can bring to the table fresh perspectives and innovative approaches.

A Dynamic Approach to NATO Membership and Leadership

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization is a cornerstone of security and stability for Europe and North America. As the global security environment is constantly transformed, NATO acknowledges the necessity to adapt its policies and practices accordingly¹¹. A central element of NATO's overarching approach involves promoting its expansion, and facilitating the inclusion of new member states, emphasising the organisation's commitment to collaboration and growth¹². Contemporary academic discourse and policy conversations have emphasised the need for a more versatile

7 Stoltenberg, J., This is NATO's role in defending Ukraine from repeated Russian attacks, Washington Post, 17.05.2022, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2023/05/17/ukraine-nato-membership-russia-attacks/>

8 Stoltenberg, J., Kallas, K., & von der Leyen, U., Joint press conference. NATO Official website, 24.02.2023, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_212277.htm

9 Kononenko, V., Novikova, L., & Pushchaienko, O., Joining NATO as a guarantee of Ukraine's national security. Current situation and prospects. Uzhhorod National University Herald. Series: Law, 2022

10 Kononenko, V., Novikova, L., & Pushchaienko, O., Joining NATO as a guarantee of Ukraine's national security. Current situation and prospects. Uzhhorod National University Herald. Series: Law, 2022

11 Poast, P., Measuring War Planning and Negotiation Outcomes. In *Arguing about Alliances: The Art of Agreement in Military-Pact Negotiations* (pp. 45–63). Cornell University Press, 2019, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7591/j.ctvfc52c5.7>

12 Dinicu, A., NATO's Nordic Expansion, A Decision at Stake. Consequences Upon the European Security Landscape. International Conference Knowledge Based Organization. Volume 28 (2022) – Issue 1 (June 2022). pp. 21 – 28. <https://doi.org/10.2478/kbo-2022-0004>

NATO membership framework, to respond effectively to changing security dynamics.¹³ The open-door policy functions as a mechanism to evaluate potential new members and broaden the alliance's scope, which is essential for achieving the desired adaptability¹⁴. By welcoming new members, NATO can bolster its collective defence capabilities, and contribute to upholding peace and security in Europe¹⁵.

The strategy of expanding NATO and welcoming new member states has been seen as vital for adapting to evolving security dynamics and fortifying the alliance's collective defence. However, some argue that these moves have exacerbated tensions and irritated Russia¹⁶. Critics contend that by steadily increasing its membership and "intruding on Russia's traditional sphere of influence", NATO has heightened tensions, and fuelled the perceptions of a Western threat¹⁷.

While NATO portrays its open-door policy as promoting stability and strengthening collective defence, some contend it

has contributed to a more adversarial relationship with Russia¹⁸. They argue that the alliance's development has produced a sense of encirclement and uncertainty for Russia, prompting it to adopt a more assertive and defensive stance¹⁹. Additionally, critics believe that NATO's expansion has strained relations with Russia, and hampered constructive conversation and cooperation prospects²⁰. Instead of expanding its membership, they argue that NATO should have focused on establishing a more inclusive and cooperative security architecture in Europe that includes Russia as a partner rather than as an opponent²¹.

Moreover, the acknowledgment of women in senior leadership roles within NATO is growing in importance, due to their contributions to decision-making processes, incorporating diverse experiences, expertise, and viewpoints. Both scholars and practitioners recognise that the strategic development of Europe's security infrastructure can be enriched by amplifying female leadership within NATO's organisational framework²².

13 Barry, C., & Skaluba, C. Defining success for NATO's Vilnius summit: A primer. Atlantic Council, 11.04.2023, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/in-depth-research-reports/issue-brief/defining-success-for-natos-vilnius-summit-a-primer/>

14 Makarenko, N. New prospects for Ukraine's accession to the European Union: the influence of the Russian-Ukrainian War of 2022 on European integration. *Analytical and Comparative Jurisprudence*, 2022

15 Wintour, P. NATO members may send troops to Ukraine, warns former alliance chief. *The Guardian*, 7.06.2023, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/jun/07/nato-members-may-send-troops-to-ukraine-warns-former-alliance-chief>

16 Koronacki, J. (n.d.). NATO Expansion. *The Palgrave Encyclopedia of Imperialism and Anti-Imperialism*. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-29901-9_300681

17 Brodfuehrer, J., & Sergejeva, Z. How NATO can take a 360-degree approach to the Vilnius summit. Atlantic Council. *The Atlantic Council*, 17.05.2023, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/commentary/event-recap/how-nato-can-take-a-360-degree-a>

18 Poast, P., & Chinchilla, A. Good for democracy? Evidence from the 2004 NATO expansion. *Int Polit* 57, 471–490 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41311-020-00236-6>

19 Marten, K. Reconsidering NATO expansion: a counterfactual analysis of Russia and the West in the 1990s. *European Journal of International Security*, 3(2), 2018, 135–161. <https://doi.org/10.1017/eis.2017.16>

20 Gautam, A. Russia's evolving military strategy in response to NATO expansion: Continuity and changes. *International Journal of Political Science and Governance*, 2022. <https://doi.org/10.33545/26646021.2022.v4.i2a.170>

21 Megoran, N., "Russian Troops Out! No to NATO expansion!" A pacific geopolitics for a new Europe. *Political Geography*, 2022, 102699–102699, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2022.102699>


22 Driving diversity at NATO, Official NATO website, 7.03.2019, <https://www.nato.int/docu/review/articles/2019/03/07/driving-diversity-at-nato/index.html>

It is important to first acknowledge the exceptional credentials of several notable women under consideration for leadership roles in NATO. The distinguished list includes Kaja Kallas, Prime Minister of Estonia; Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission; Zuzana Caputova, President of Slovakia; and Kolinda Grabar-Kitarovic, former president of Croatia (2015-2020), who has served as Croatia's ambassador to Washington and worked within NATO as assistant secretary general for public diplomacy. Also worth acknowledging are Mette Fredericksen of Denmark and Ingrida Simonyte of Lithuania. These women have demonstrated their capabilities as influential change-makers in Europe's security landscape.

Their leadership roles have been pivotal in shaping the NATO membership structure, with each woman proving to be a trailblazer. A case in point is the transformative effect on NATO's collective security and the Vilnius Summit of Kaja Kallas's approach to public diplomacy, alongside von der Leyen's significant influence within the European Union's foreign policy. This analysis highlights the potential for a strategic evolution in Europe's security architecture, underscoring the significance of their leadership within the current geopolitical climate.

Estonian Prime Minister Kaja Kallas has emerged as a singular voice in the discourse concerning Ukraine's potential accession to NATO, emphasising the need for a flexible and inclusive membership framework. Her geopolitical insights and understanding of the Russo-Ukrainian War, and her innovative approach to public diplomacy and digital security have established her as the sole subject of investigation for a short case study. The NATO summit in Vilnius presented a vital juncture for advancing these critical discussions, including Ukraine's possible NATO membership, and the exploration of transformative leadership figures such as Kallas.

These discussions in Vilnius emphasise NATO's commitment to inclusivity and flexibility in membership considerations, reinforcing the alliance's pledge to assess prospective entrants and broaden its influence in a swiftly evolving security environment. Kallas's advocacy for maintaining robust deterrence and collective defence within NATO has been conspicuous. Her leadership is demonstrated in diverse public diplomacy strategies, ranging from fortifying the physical infrastructure to fostering resilience in the digital realm.



the acknowledgment of women in senior leadership roles within NATO is growing in importance, due to their contributions to decision-making processes, incorporating diverse experiences, expertise, and viewpoints

Her leadership in promoting digital innovation has notably positioned Estonia as a frontrunner in this field, reflecting a broader understanding of the new dynamics of strategic competition. Kallas's participation in the joint press conference with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen on February 24, 2023, further illuminated her central role in shaping the dialogue around Ukraine's potential NATO membership. This engagement with key NATO leaders, alongside her steadfast support for Ukraine, reflects a broader vision for an adaptable and resilient NATO, capable of meeting contemporary challenges.

While Kallas's role is undeniable, this article focuses on her more assertive, potentially hawkish approach to security issues. It seeks to draw attention to the potential risks

of such an aggressive stance, which could instigate unnecessary confrontations and even destabilize the region.

This investigation, supported by a linguistic analysis of Kallas's rhetoric, strives to validate or contest claims of her employing extreme rhetoric²³. Grasping these dynamics is critical for ensuring NATO's sustained relevance and efficacy in navigating modern security challenges. This analysis highlights a critique often directed at Kallas – her possibly hawkish approach to international relations. By focusing on Kallas, this piece invites an exploration of her decisive and sometimes contentious leadership style. It sparks debate on whether this perceived hawkishness serves NATO's objectives and regional stability²⁴.

The emphasis on Kallas as a case study, in contrast to the other leaders, is mainly due to her pronounced defence and security stance. This stance contrasts starkly with the more balanced and diplomatic approaches of her counterparts. Moreover, as the Prime Minister of Estonia, a Baltic state on NATO's Eastern frontier, Kallas's policies and rhetoric carry substantial weight.

This article tackles these issues by surveying the historical context, relevance, and implications of a more flexible NATO membership structure, and the rise of women to leadership positions within the alliance. By scrutinising the interplay between the open-door policy, the Vilnius Summit, and

Kaja Kallas's approach to public diplomacy, this study aims to spotlight the potential for strategically reshaping Europe's security architecture. Understanding these dynamics is indispensable to effectively guaranteeing NATO's sustained effectiveness and relevance in addressing today's security challenges.

Kallas and Female Leadership at NATO

The discourse analysis of the Estonian Prime Minister's public diplomacy reveals her direct and powerful communication style and skill in leveraging language to garner support for her positions²⁵. In an opinion piece published in *The New York Times*, Kallas argues that NATO's focus should be on helping Ukraine in every possible way and demonstrating to the aggressor that NATO is prepared to defend itself and engage in conflict if necessary²⁶. She emphasises the imperative to strengthen the collective defence, particularly on the alliance's eastern flank that borders Russia. Kallas suggests that all NATO countries should allocate a minimum of 2% of their GDP to defence spending, ensuring collective safety.

In her address to the Estonian parliament in March 2022, Kallas further reinforces her stance: "We Estonians are acutely aware of what it means to live under the shadow of Russian aggression. This threat has been a part of our lives for centuries. We're all in on the fact that Russia will not think twice about using force to achieve its objectives.

23 Hall, B., Calls for ceasefire in Ukraine are 'premature', Estonia's PM warns, *Financial Times*, 6.06.2022, <https://www.ft.com/content/8296294b-6684-4e32-a467-ba4e4ba11b36>

Sytas, A., Estonia PM focused on defence spending and same sex marriage law. *Reuters*. 12.04.2023, <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/estonia-pm-focused-defence-spending-same-sex-marriage-law-2023-04-12/>

24 VOA News. NATO Chief Stoltenberg Departure Plan Relaunches Succession Race. *VOA News*. 13.02.2022, <https://www.voanews.com/a/nato-chief-stoltenberg-departure-plan-relaunches-succession-race/6959854.html>

25 Brittain-Hale, A., *She Speaks for Millions: The Emergence of Female Diplomatic Voices in the Russo-Ukrainian War*. Paper presented at the 21st Annual International Conference on Politics & International Studies organized by the Politics & International Affairs Unit of ATINER, Athens, Greece. 2023

26 *The New York Times*, NATO's Next Leader: Who's on the Shortlist? 14.06.2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/14/world/europe/nato-leader-shortlist.html>

That's precisely why we're all in on NATO membership. NATO is our guarantee of security. It's our insurance against the menace of Russian belligerence".

Kallas's discourse integrates historical references to underscore the importance of NATO membership to Estonia's security, aligning with her call to strengthen collective defence and support Ukraine. Her direct and powerful communication style, policy proposals for defence spending, and focus on assisting Ukraine make her a notable advocate for NATO's strategic evolution. Within this context, the paper's exploration and analysis are centred around Kallas, through a mixed-methods case study that emphasises the pivotal role she could play in integrating a more adaptable NATO membership framework and elevating the role of female leadership within the alliance. The findings of this study could offer valuable insights for policymakers and strategists who attended the Vilnius Summit, contributing to the broader discourse on the future of Europe's security infrastructure.

The research methodology employed in this study was a mixed-methods case study approach, integrating both qualitative and quantitative techniques. The initial research stage involved data collection from Kallas's Twitter account, @kajakallas (n.d.). This was achieved using Tweepy (n.d), a Python²⁷ library for accessing the Twitter API (Twitter Developer, n.d), and the developer tools provided by Twitter. This approach allowed for the comprehensive mining of tweets for further analysis.

Subsequently, a qualitative contents analysis was conducted, manually reading and coding Kallas's tweets. The coding focused on identifying tweets that emphasised Ukraine and NATO, providing insights into the themes central to Kallas's public diplomacy.

Following the qualitative analysis, the study proceeded with a quantitative evaluation of Kallas's Twitter contents. This phase was carried out using LIWC-22, a natural language processing tool designed to measure the emotional and cognitive tone of the text²⁸.

This section compares the LIWC summary variables scores²⁹ for Kaja Kallas's tweets to average tweets³⁰. The analysis reveals notable differences across several categories, providing valuable insights into the linguistic characteristics of Kallas's public discourse. By examining the scores in analytical thinking, clout, authenticity, and emotional tone, we enable understanding of Kallas's communication style and its potential implications for effectively conveying her positions and engaging with her audience. The results show that Kallas's tweets exhibited a significantly higher score in analytical thinking than average tweets, indicating a substantial increase in her use of logical reasoning and critical thinking in her public discourse³¹. Furthermore, Kallas's tweets scored higher in clout, suggesting a language style that conveys influence and power. These findings point to a tendency towards more analytical and influential language in Kallas's tweets, aligning with her strategic approach to communication.

27 Python. (n.d.). *Welcome to python.org*. <https://www.python.org/>

28 Pennebaker, J.L., Boyd, R.J., Ashokkumar, A., & Francis, M.E. (n.d.). *Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count LIWC22*. Pennebaker and Associates. <https://www.liwc.app>

29 Boyd, R. L., Ashokkumar, A., Seraj, S., & Pennebaker, J. W. *LIWC-22 descriptive statistics and norms, 2022*, <https://www.liwc.app>

30 Kallas, K. [@kajakallas]. (n.d.). Twitter. Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/kajakallas>

31 Boyd, R. L., Pasca, P., & Lanning, K., The personality panorama: Conceptualizing personality through big behavioral data. *European Journal of Personality*, 34(5), 2020, 599–612. <https://doi.org/10.1002/per.2254>

On the other hand, the analysis reveals lower authenticity and emotional tone scores for Kallas's tweets compared to average tweets. This indicates a different style in terms of perceived genuineness and emotional expression. Kallas's tweets demonstrate a more controlled and measured approach, focusing on delivering strategic messages rather than emotional appeals.

The analysis of LIWC summary variables scores for Kaja Kallas's tweets compared to average tweets reveals significant differences across several categories:


- Analytical Thinking: Kallas's tweets ($M = 83.46, SD = 19.87$) showed a marked increase in analytical thinking compared to the average tweets ($M = 42.86, SD = 27.28$), representing a 94.64% increase.
- Clout: Kallas's tweets exhibited a 63.45% increase in clout ($M = 80.26, SD = 12.33$) compared to average tweets ($M = 49.10, SD = 28.36$).
- Authenticity: Kallas's tweets were found to have a decrease of 32.04% in authenticity ($M = 35.55, SD = 12.81$) compared to average tweets ($M = 52.33, SD = 25.58$).
- Emotional Tone: Emotional tone in Kallas's tweets ($M = 31.68, SD = 21.64$) exhibited a decrease of 46.37% compared to average tweets ($M = 68.00, SD = 26.36$).

These findings contribute to our understanding of the linguistic features of Kallas's public discourse, and shed light on her potential role within NATO leadership. Further discussion will elaborate on the implications of these findings for Kallas's public diplomacy strategies, and their alignment with the Vilnius Summit goals.

Discussion

The research findings comparing the linguistic characteristics of Kaja Kallas's public diplomacy to average discourse offer valuable insights that could be important

for her potential NATO leadership role. The higher scores in analytical thinking indicate a tendency towards more thoughtful and analytical language in Kallas's public diplomacy. This suggests that she approaches her communication strategically, employing logical reasoning and critical thinking to convey her messages effectively. This characteristic can be crucial for NATO leadership, as it requires individuals to assess complex security challenges, make informed decisions, and communicate them persuasively.



While the contributions of major powers like the U.S. and Germany are essential, the Vilnius Summit provides an opportunity to explore how leaders from smaller member states can also shape the alliance's direction

Similarly, the higher scores in clout suggest that Kallas's public diplomacy conveys a sense of influence and power. This implies that she uses language that commands attention and portrays a strong presence. In a leadership position within NATO, having the ability to project influence and assertiveness is essential for advancing the alliance's goals, promoting unity, and effectively engaging with external actors.

On the other hand, the lower scores in authenticity and emotional tone indicate that Kallas's public diplomacy may come across as less genuine and less emotionally expressive compared to average discourse. This finding suggests that she prioritises a more controlled and measured approach to her communication, focusing on delivering strategic messages rather than emotional appeals. While authenticity and emotional expression can be important for establishing trust and rapport with the public, Kallas's

style may reflect a deliberate effort to maintain a professional and objective tone in her official communications.

These findings broaden our understanding of the dynamics within NATO and Europe's security infrastructure, particularly in a landscape where U.S. and German leadership have played outsized roles. The selection of Kallas as the subject of this case study is not arbitrary; rather, it serves as a poignant exemplification of an emerging style of European leader whose foreign policy and diplomacy are historically informed, geographically nuanced, and digitally innovative.

Estonia's unique geopolitical position, coupled with its advanced digital infrastructure, provides Kallas with perspectives that are both deeply rooted in the Baltic region's history, and sharply attuned to the demands of contemporary international relations. Her leadership exhibits a synthesis of traditional diplomacy and modern digital governance, rendering her a compelling figure in the broader discussion of NATO's evolving structure.

Furthermore, the emphasis on Kallas serves to highlight the multifaceted nature of leadership within a complex alliance such as NATO. While the contributions of major powers like the U.S. and Germany are essential, the Vilnius Summit provides an opportunity to explore how leaders from smaller member states can also shape the alliance's direction. This perspective is critical for a more adaptable NATO membership framework, and for elevating the role of female leadership within the alliance.

The analysis of Kallas's public diplomacy, set against this rich backdrop, provides insights into her linguistic characteristics and communication style — key components of leadership. By understanding these characteristics, policymakers and strategists

can assess how Kallas's communication style sits alongside their goals and priorities for NATO's strategic evolution, while also recognising the importance of diverse and nuanced approaches in shaping Europe's security architecture.



The unrelenting aggression from Russia and the critical need to support Ukraine unequivocally underscore the vital necessity for resolute leadership within multinational security organisations like NATO

Building on the broader context of Kallas's historical, geographical, and digital influences, we can further delineate the specific attributes of her communication style that align with the goals at the Vilnius Summit. The analytical data reveals that Kallas's higher scores in analytical thinking and clout reflect a communication style that emphasises informed decision-making, strategic planning, and the effective representation of NATO's interests. These qualities coincide with NATO's drive for a more responsive and adaptable structure, embodying a leadership style that can navigate both traditional diplomatic channels and emerging challenges.

Conversely, the lower scores in authenticity and emotional tone may not necessarily be limitations but rather indicators of a communication approach focused on professionalism and objectivity. This can be seen as conducive to enhancing diplomatic interactions, fostering constructive dialogue, and furthering the goals of alliance cohesion and collaborative action. Kallas's ability to merge the robustness of analytical thought with the finesse of diplomatic objectivity underlines her suitability as a leader

and highlights the importance of diverse leadership styles within NATO's complex, multi-national framework.

In summary, these findings shed light on the linguistic characteristics of Kallas's public diplomacy, highlighting her strengths in analytical thinking and clout while pointing to a different style regarding authenticity and emotional tone. Understanding these characteristics can be valuable for the NATO leaders, as they consider the role of female leadership and the strategic evolution of the alliance, particularly at the Vilnius Summit, where discussions about NATO's membership framework and the appointment of leaders like Kallas were likely to occur.

Conclusion

The unrelenting aggression from Russia and the critical need to support Ukraine unequivocally underscore the vital necessity for resolute leadership within multinational security organisations like NATO. Prime Minister Kaja Kallas's visionary diplomacy and steadfast commitment to progressive foreign policy initiatives reveal a leader well-equipped to navigate these complex challenges. Her focus on analytical thinking, technological innovation, and digital

infrastructure security resonates with the demands of modern security management. Kallas's leadership not only exemplifies the significance of embracing female leaders' unique contributions, but also illuminates a path for NATO to follow to fortify its strategies and effectiveness in a rapidly changing global landscape. By integrating diverse perspectives and fostering innovative approaches, NATO can further solidify its pivotal role in upholding security and stability in the Euro-Atlantic region, and present an unyielding and assertive stance in support of Ukraine

Amber Brittain-Hale, PhD, is a co-founder of BrainStates Inc. and a strategic advisor known for her expertise in geopolitics, digital diplomacy, and leadership. With a particular focus on Eastern Europe, notably Ukraine, her work skilfully combines business acumen and academic prowess. She holds a Ph.D. in Global Leadership and Change from Pepperdine University, and her extensive scholarly contributions have enriched the fields of public diplomacy and infopolitik. Dr. Brittain-Hale's 2023 research explores digital diplomacy and infopolitik, gender roles in diplomacy, narrative analysis within the Russo-Ukrainian War context, and geopolitical responses to conflict-induced challenges in Ukraine.

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