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**Regional Security Agencies:NATO**

NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) is an international alliance that consists of 30 member states from North America and Europe. It was established at the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty on 4 April 1949. Article Five of the treaty states that if an armed attack occurs against one of the member states, it shall be considered an attack against all members, and other members shall assist the attacked member, with armed forces if necessary. Of the 30 member countries, two are located in North America (Canada and the United States), 28 are in Europe, one of which (Turkey) is in both Europe and Asia. All members have militaries, except for Iceland, which does not have a typical army (but it does have a coast guard and a small unit of civilian specialists for NATO operations). Three of NATO's members are nuclear weapons states: France, the United Kingdom, and the United States. NATO has 12 original founding member nation states, and from 18 February 1952 to 6 May 1955, it added three more member nations, and a fourth on 30 May 1982. After the end of the Cold War, NATO added 14 more member nations (10 former Warsaw Pact members and four former Yugoslav republics) from 12 March 1999 to 27 March 2020.

**Founding and changes in membership**

NATO has added new members eight times since its foundation, in 1949, with a total of 30 members. Twelve countries took part in the founding of NATO: Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the United Kingdom, and the United States. In 1952, Greece and Turkey became members of the Alliance, joined later by West Germany (in 1955) and Spain (in 1982). In 1990, with the reunification of Germany, NATO grew to include the former country of East Germany. Between 1994 and 1997, wider forums for regional cooperation between NATO and its neighbours were set up, including the Partnership for Peace, the Mediterranean Dialogue initiative and the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council. In 1997, three former Warsaw Pact countries, Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Poland, were invited to join NATO. After this fourth enlargement in 1999, the Vilnius group of the Baltics and seven East European countries formed in May 2000 to cooperate and lobby for further NATO membership. Seven of these countries joined in the fifth enlargement in 2004. The Adriatic States Albania and Croatia joined in the sixth enlargement in 2009, Montenegro in 2017 and North Macedonia in 2020.

United States President Donald Trump expressed interest in withdrawing from the organization during his 2016 presidential campaign, but he later stated that the United States would protect allies in the event that Article V is invoked.

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## **History**

On 4 March 1947, the Treaty of Dunkirk was signed by France and the United Kingdom as a *Treaty of Alliance and Mutual Assistance* in the event of a possible attack by Germany or the Soviet Union in the aftermath of World War II. In 1948, this alliance was expanded to include the Benelux countries, in the form of the Western Union, also referred to as the Brussels Treaty Organization (BTO), established by the Treaty of Brussels. Talks for a new military alliance which could also include North America resulted in the signature of the North Atlantic Treaty on 4 April 1949 by the member states of the Western Union plus the United States, Canada, Portugal, Italy, Norway, Denmark and Iceland.

The North Atlantic Treaty was largely dormant until the Korean War initiated the establishment of NATO to implement it, by means of an integrated military structure: This included the formation of Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) in 1951, which adopted the Western Union's military structures and plans. In 1952, the post of Secretary General of NATO was established as the organization's chief civilian. That year also saw the first major NATO maritime exercises, Exercise Mainbrace and the accession of Greece and Turkey to the organization. Following the London and Paris Conferences, West Germany was permitted to rearm militarily, as they joined NATO in May 1955, which was, in turn, a major factor in the creation of the Soviet-dominated Warsaw Pact, delineating the two opposing sides of the Cold War.

Doubts over the strength of the relationship between the European states and the United States ebbed and flowed, along with doubts over the credibility of the NATO defence against a prospective Soviet invasion – doubts that led to the development of the independent French nuclear deterrent and the withdrawal of France from NATO's military structure in 1966. In 1982, the newly democratic Spain joined the alliance.

The collapse of the Warsaw Pact in 1989–1991 removed the *de facto* main adversary of NATO and caused a strategic re-evaluation of NATO's purpose, nature, tasks, and focus on the continent of Europe. This shift started with the 1990 signing in Paris of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe between NATO and the Soviet Union, which mandated specific military reductions across the continent that continued after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in December 1991. At that time, European countries accounted for 34 percent of NATO's military spending; by 2012, this had fallen to 21 percent. NATO also began a gradual expansion to include newly autonomous Central and Eastern European nations, and extended its activities into political and humanitarian situations that had not formerly been NATO.

After the fall of the Berlin Wall in Germany in 1989, the organization conducted its first military interventions in Bosnia from 1992 to 1995 and later Yugoslavia in 1999 during the break-up of Yugoslavia. Politically, the organization sought better relations with former Warsaw Pact countries, most of which joined the alliance in 1999 and 2004. Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty, requiring member states to come to the aid of any member state subject to an armed attack, was invoked for the first and only time after the September 11 attacks, after which troops were deployed to Afghanistan under the NATO-led ISAF. The organization has operated a range of additional roles since then, including sending trainers to Iraq, assisting in counter-piracy operations and in 2011 enforcing a no-fly zone over Libya in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 1973. The less potent Article 4, which merely invokes consultation among NATO members, has been invoked five times following incidents in the Iraq War, Syrian Civil War, and annexation of Crimea.

The first post-Cold War expansion of NATO came with German reunification on 3 October 1990, when the former East Germany became part of the Federal Republic of Germany and the alliance. As part of post-Cold War restructuring, NATO's military structure was cut back and reorganized, with new forces such as the Headquarters Allied Command Europe Rapid Reaction Corps established. The changes brought about by the collapse of the Soviet Union on the military balance in Europe were recognized in the Adapted Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty, which was signed in 1999. The policies of French President Nicolas Sarkozy resulted in a major reform of France's military position, culminating with the return to full membership on 4 April 2009, which also included France rejoining the NATO Military Command Structure, while maintaining an independent nuclear deterrent.

Between 1994 and 1997, wider forums for regional cooperation between NATO and its neighbours were set up, like the Partnership for Peace, the Mediterranean Dialogue initiative and the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council. In 1998, the NATO–Russia Permanent Joint Council was established. Between 1999 and 2020 NATO incorporated the following Central and Eastern European countries, including several former communist states: the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Albania, Croatia, Montenegro, and North Macedonia.

The Russian intervention in Crimea in 2014 led to strong condemnation by NATO nations and the creation of a new "spearhead" force of 5,000 troops at bases in Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Romania, and Bulgaria. At the subsequent 2014 Wales summit, the leaders of NATO's

member states formally committed for the first time to spend the equivalent of at least 2% of their gross domestic products on defence by 2024, which had previously been only an informal guideline. NATO did not condemn the 2016–present purges in Turkey. members have resisted the UN's Nuclear Weapon Ban Treaty, a binding agreement for negotiations for the total elimination of nuclear weapons, supported by more than 120 nations.[]

## **Members**

NATO has thirty members, mainly in Europe and North America. Some of these countries also have territory on multiple continents, which can be covered only as far south as the Tropic of Cancer in the Atlantic Ocean, which defines NATO's "area of responsibility" under Article 6 of the North Atlantic Treaty. During the original treaty negotiations, the United States insisted that colonies such as the Belgian Congo be excluded from the treaty. French Algeria was however covered until their independence on 3 July 1962. Twelve of these thirty are original members who joined in 1949, while the other eighteen joined in one of eight enlargement rounds.

From the mid-1960s to the mid-1990s, France pursued a military strategy of independence from NATO under a policy dubbed "Gaullio-Mitterrandism". Nicolas Sarkozy negotiated the return of France to the integrated military command and the Defence Planning Committee in 2009, the latter being disbanded the following year. France remains the only NATO member outside the Nuclear Planning Group and unlike the United States and the United Kingdom, will not commit its nuclear-armed submarines to the alliance. Few members spend more than two percent of their gross domestic product on defence, with the United States accounting for three quarters of NATO defence spending.

## **Enlargement**

New membership in the alliance has been largely from Central and Eastern Europe, including former members of the Warsaw Pact. Accession to the alliance is governed with individual Membership Action Plans, and requires approval by each current member. NATO currently has one candidate country that is in the process of joining the alliance: Bosnia and Herzegovina. North Macedonia signed an accession protocol to become a NATO member state in February 2019, and became a member state on 27 March 2020. Its accession had been blocked by Greece for many years due to the Macedonia naming dispute, which was resolved in 2018 by the Prespa agreement. In order to support each other in the process, new and potential members in the region formed the Adriatic Charter in 2003. Georgia was also named as an aspiring member, and was promised "future membership" during the 2008 summit in Bucharest, though in 2014, US President Barack Obama said the country was not "currently on a path" to membership.

Russia continues to politically oppose further expansion, seeing it as inconsistent with informal understandings between Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev and European and US negotiators that allowed for a peaceful German reunification. NATO's expansion efforts are often seen by Moscow leaders as a continuation of a Cold War attempt to surround and isolate Russia, though they have also been criticized in the West. A June 2016 Levada poll found that 68% of Russians think that deploying NATO troops in the Baltic states and Poland—former Eastern bloc countries bordering Russia—is a threat to Russia. In contrast 65% of Poles surveyed in a 2017 Pew Research Center report identified Russia as a "major threat", with an average of 31% saying so across all NATO countries, and 67% of Poles surveyed in 2018 favour US forces being based in Poland. Of non-CIS Eastern European countries surveyed by Gallup in 2016,

all but Serbia and Montenegro were more likely than not to view NATO as a protective alliance rather than a . 2006 study in the journal *Security Studies* argued that NATO enlargement contributed to democratic consolidation in Central and Eastern Europe.

Ukraine's relationship with NATO and Europe has been politically controversial, and improvement of these relations was one of the goals of the "Euromaidan" protests that saw the ousting of pro-Russian President Viktor Yanukovich in 2014. In March 2014, Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk reiterated the government's stance that Ukraine is not seeking NATO membership. Ukraine's president subsequently signed a bill dropping his nation's nonaligned status in order to pursue NATO membership, but signalled that it would hold a referendum before seeking to join. Ukraine is one of eight countries in Eastern Europe with an Individual Partnership Action Plan. IPAPs began in 2002, and are open to countries that have the political will and ability to deepen their relationship with NATO.

The Partnership for Peace (PfP) programme was established in 1994 and is based on individual bilateral relations between each partner country and NATO: each country may choose the extent of its participation. Members include all current and former members of the Commonwealth of Independent States. The Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) was first established on 29 May 1997, and is a forum for regular coordination, consultation and dialogue between all fifty participants. The PfP programme is considered the operational wing of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership. Other third countries also have been contacted for participation in some activities of the PfP framework such as Afghanistan.

The European Union (EU) signed a comprehensive package of arrangements with NATO under the Berlin Plus agreement on 16 December 2002. With this agreement, the EU was given the possibility of using NATO assets in case it wanted to act independently in an international crisis, on the condition that NATO itself did not want to act – the so-called "right of first refusal". For example, Article 42(7) of the 1982 Treaty of Lisbon specifies that "If a Member State is the victim of armed aggression on its territory, the other Member States shall have towards it an obligation of aid and assistance by all the means in their power". The treaty applies globally to specified territories whereas NATO is restricted under its Article 6 to operations north of the Tropic of Cancer. It provides a "double framework" for the EU countries that are also linked with the PfP programme.

Additionally, NATO cooperates and discusses its activities with numerous other non-NATO members. The Mediterranean Dialogue was established in 1994 to coordinate in a similar way with Israel and countries in North Africa. The Istanbul Cooperation Initiative was announced in 2004 as a dialogue forum for the Middle East along the same lines as the Mediterranean Dialogue. The four participants are also linked through the Gulf Cooperation Council. In June 2018, Qatar expressed its wish to join NATO. However, NATO declined membership, stating that only additional European countries could join according to Article 10 of NATO's founding treaty. Qatar and NATO have previously signed a security agreement together in January 2018. Political dialogue with Japan began in 1990, and since then, the Alliance has gradually increased its contact with countries that do not form part of any of these cooperation . 1998, NATO established a set of general guidelines that do not allow for a formal institutionalization of relations, but reflect the Allies' desire to increase cooperation. Following extensive debate, the term "Contact Countries" was agreed by the Allies in 2000. By 2012, the Alliance had broadened this group, which meets to discuss issues such as counter-piracy and technology exchange, under the names "partners across the globe" or "global partners". Australia and New Zealand, both contact countries, are also members of the AUSCANNZUKUS strategic alliance, and similar regional or bilateral agreements between contact countries and NATO

members also aid cooperation. NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg stated that NATO needs to "address the rise of China," by closely cooperating with Australia, New Zealand, Japan and South Korea.[117] Colombia is the NATO's latest partner and Colombia has access to the full range of cooperative activities NATO offers to partners; Colombia became the first and only Latin American country to cooperate with NATO.

## **Structure**

All agencies and organizations of NATO are integrated into either the civilian administrative or military executive roles. For the most part they perform roles and functions that directly or indirectly support the security role of the alliance as a whole.

The civilian structure includes:

1. The North Atlantic Council (NAC) is the body which has effective governance authority and powers of decision in NATO, consisting of member states' permanent representatives or representatives at higher level (ministers of foreign affairs or defence, or heads of state or government). The NAC convenes at least once a week and takes major decisions regarding NATO's policies. The meetings of the North Atlantic Council are chaired by the Secretary General and, when decisions have to be made, action is agreed upon on the basis of unanimity and common accord. There is no voting or decision by majority. Each nation represented at the Council table or on any of its subordinate committees retains complete sovereignty and responsibility for its own decisions.
2. NATO Headquarters, located on Boulevard Léopold III/Leopold III-laan, B-1110 Brussels, which is in Haren, part of the City of Brussels municipality. The staff at the Headquarters is composed of national delegations of member countries and includes civilian and military liaison offices and officers or diplomatic missions and diplomats of partner countries, as well as the International Staff and International Military Staff filled from serving members of the armed forces of member states. Non-governmental citizens' groups have also grown up in support of NATO, broadly under the banner of t

The military structure includes:

3. The Military Committee (MC) is the body of NATO that is composed of member states' Chiefs of Defence (CHOD) and advises the North Atlantic Council (NAC) on military policy and strategy. The national CHODs are regularly represented in the MC by their permanent Military Representatives (MilRep), who often are two- or three-star flag officers. Like the Council, from time to time the Military Committee also meets at a higher level, namely at the level of Chiefs of Defence, the most senior military officer in each nation's armed forces. The MC is led by its chairman, who directs NATO's military operations. Like the Council, from time to time the Military Committee also meets at a higher level, namely at the level of Chiefs of Defence, the most senior military officer in each nation's armed forces. Until 2008 the Military Committee excluded France, due to that country's 1966 decision to remove itself from the NATO Military Command Structure, which it rejoined in 1995. Until France rejoined NATO, it was not represented on the Defence Planning Committee, and this led to conflicts between it and NATO members. Such was the case in the lead up to Operation Iraqi Freedom. The operational work of the Committee is supported by the International Military Staff
4. Allied Command Operations (ACO) is the NATO command of responsible for NATO operations worldwide.

1. The Rapid Deployable Corps include Eurocorps, I. German/Dutch Corps, Multinational Corps Northeast, and NATO Rapid Deployable Italian Corps among others, as well as naval High Readiness Forces (HRFs), which all report to Allied Command Operations.[123]
5. Allied Command Transformation (ACT), responsible for transformation and training of NATO forces.

The organizations and agencies of NATO include:

1. Headquarters for the NATO Support Agency will be in Capellen Luxembourg (site of the current NATO Maintenance and Supply Agency – NAMSA).
2. The NATO Communications and Information Agency Headquarters will be in Brussels, as will the very small staff which will design the new NATO Procurement Agency.
3. A new NATO Science and Technology (S&T) Organization will be created before July 2012, consisting of Chief Scientist, a Programme Office for Collaborative S&T, and the NATO Undersea Research Centre (NURC).
4. The current NATO Standardization Agency will continue and be subject to review by Spring 2014.

The NATO Parliamentary Assembly (NATO PA) is a body that sets broad strategic goals for NATO, which meets at two sessions per year. NATO PA interacts directly with the parliamentary structures of the national governments of the member states which appoint Permanent Members, or ambassadors to NATO. The NATO Parliamentary Assembly is made up of legislators from the member countries of the North Atlantic Alliance as well as thirteen associate members. It is however officially a different structure from NATO, and has as aim to join together deputies of NATO countries in order to discuss security policies on the NATO Council.

\*Source Wikipedia

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