What is NATO?

An introduction to the transatlantic Alliance

What is NATO?

"We, the political leaders of NATO, are determined to continue renewal of our Alliance so that it is fit for purpose in addressing the 21st Century security challenges [...] Our Alliance thrives as a source of hope because it is based on common values of individual liberty, democracy, human rights and the rule of law, and because our common essential and enduring purpose is to safeguard the freedom and security of its members. These values and objectives are universal and perpetual, and we are determined to defend them through unity, solidarity, strength and resolve."

Strategic Concept
Lisbon Summit,
November 2010

Foreword

"The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all and consequently they agree that, if such an attack occurs, each of them, in exercise of the right of individual or collective self-defence recognized by Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, will assist the Party of Parties so attached by taking forthwith, individual and in concert with the other Parties, such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force, to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area."

Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty
4 April 1949, Washington, DC

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization's fundamental purpose is to safeguard the freedom and security of its members through political and military means. NATO brings together 28 member countries from Europe and North America, consulting and cooperating in the fields of security and defence. In this respect, NATO provides a unique transatlantic link for political and security cooperation.

Although much has changed since its founding in 1949, the Alliance remains an essential and unique source of stability in an unpredictable geopolitical environment. NATO members now confront a far broader spectrum of security challenges than in the past. Threats such as the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and ballistic missile technologies, cyber attacks and terrorism know no borders. NATO has also found itself called upon to help protect civilian populations from government repression.

In response, NATO is developing the necessary means to react quickly to the most demanding and complex crises. The Alliance is modernising its defence and deterrence capabilities, promoting a comprehensive approach to crisis management involving political, civilian and military instruments. NATO is also pursuing a cooperative approach to security through greater interaction with a wider range of partners, countries and international organizations.

While the nature of the threats faced by member states and the way in which NATO deals with them are changing, the basic tenets of solidarity, dialogue and cooperation remain true to the principles of the Washington Treaty. As a political and military Alliance, NATO is also a community of shared interests and values. NATO countries are more secure and the Alliance more effective because they consult in a shared forum, hold the same principles, and act together.

References in this publication to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia are marked by an asterisk (*) referring to the following footnote: "Turkey recognizes the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name."

Overview

What is NATO?

NATO is a political and military alliance whose primary goals are the collective defence of its members and the maintenance of a democratic peace in the North Atlantic area. All 28 Allies have an equal say, the Alliance's decisions must be unanimous and consensual, and its members must respect the basic values that underpin the Alliance, namely democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law.

NATO has a military and civilian headquarters and an integrated military command structure but very few forces or assets are exclusively its own. Most forces remain under full national command and control until member countries agree to undertake NATO-related tasks.

Who does NATO represent?

The following countries are members of the Alliance:

Albania, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

Family portrait – NATO Lisbon Summit 2010 © NATO

Who are NATO's partners

NATO is forging a growing network of partnerships.

The Alliance provides a unique forum for member and partner countries to consult on security issues to build trust and help prevent conflict. Through practical cooperation and multilateral initiatives, Allies and partners are addressing new security challenges together.

Partner countries engage with the Alliance in ways that are individually tailored to their specific interests and requirements. While they have a voice and offer valued political and military contributions, they do not have the same decision-making authority as a member country.

Partnerships encompass not only countries in the Euro-Atlantic area, the Mediterranean and the Gulf region but also countries across the globe including Australia, Japan, the Republic of Korea, New Zealand, Iraq, Afghanistan and Mongolia.

In addition, NATO cooperates with a range of international organizations including the United Nations and the European Union.

What is NATO doing?

NATO has three core tasks:

- collective defence,
- crisis management and
- cooperative security through partnerships.

The Alliance is committed to protecting its members through political and military means. It promotes democratic values and is dedicated to the peaceful resolution of disputes. If diplomatic efforts fail, it has the military capability needed to undertake collective defence and crisis-management operations alone or in cooperation with partner countries and international organizations.

The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission in Afghanistan is currently NATO's main priority. There, NATO's core role is to assist the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in exercising and extending its authority across the country while helping create a stable and secure environment in which reconstruction and development can take place.

Lord Ismay
1952-1957

Paul-Henri Spaak
1957-1961

Dirk U. Stikker
1961-1964

Manlio Brosio
1964-1971

Joseph Luns
1971-1984

Lord Carrington
1984-1988

In addition, NATO has four other ongoing missions and operations:

- NATO has been leading a peace-support operation in Kosovo since June 1999.
- The Alliance's ships patrol the Mediterranean, monitoring shipping to deter terrorist activity.
- The Alliance helps combat maritime piracy in the Gulf of Aden and off the Horn of Africa.
- At the request of the African Union (AU), NATO is providing assistance to the AU Mission in Somalia and capacity-building support to its long-term peacekeeping capabilities.

Beyond its operations and missions, NATO engages in a wide variety of other activities with Allies and partners. Areas of cooperation include defence and political reform, military planning and exercises, scientific collaboration and research, information sharing, and humanitarian crisis relief.

How does NATO work?

The North Atlantic Council (NAC) is the Alliance's principal political decision-making body. The Council and a network of committees provide the framework for Allies to consult, cooperate and plan for multinational activities both political and military in nature.

The Council meets weekly at the level of Allied ambassadors, and more frequently when needed. Regular meetings of the Council also take place at the level of foreign or defence ministers. Every year or two, NATO holds a Summit where Allied Heads of State and Government decide on strategic questions facing the Alliance. Regular meetings also take place with representatives from NATO's partners.

Within NATO Headquarters in Brussels, each Ally has a permanent representative with the rank of ambassador. He or she is supported by a national delegation consisting of diplomatic staff and defence advisers, who either attend committee meetings themselves or ensure that national experts participate.

Each Ally's sovereignty must be respected and a final decision must have the full backing of all members. For this reason, NATO's decision-making process is based on unanimous consent, so extensive discussions are often required before an important decision can be taken. This process ensures that when NATO decides to take action, all Allies stand behind the decision.

Manfred Wörner 1988-1994 | Willy Claes 1994-1995 | Javier Solana 1995-1999 | The Rt. Hon. Lord Robertson of Port Ellen 1999-2003 | Jaap de Hoop Scheffer 2004-2009 | Anders Fogh Rasmussen 2009-

Political aspects of these decisions are implemented through NATO's civilian Headquarters in Brussels, Belgium. Military aspects are implemented, under the political oversight of the Council, through NATO's Military Committee. This Committee liaises with NATO's two strategic commands: Allied Command Operations located in Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) near Mons, Belgium, and Allied Command Transformation, located in Norfolk, Virginia, in the United States.

NATO has a Secretary General who is appointed for approximately four years. He or she is a senior politician from one of the member countries. The Secretary General chairs meetings of the North Atlantic Council and other important NATO bodies, helps to build consensus among members, and serves as the principal spokesperson of the Alliance. In managing day-to-day activities of the Alliance, he or she is supported by an international staff of experts and officials from all NATO countries.

The current Secretary General is Anders Fogh Rasmussen, formerly Prime Minister of Denmark.

"When I took office as Secretary General of the North Atlantic Alliance I could not even receive the ambassador of any of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe in our headquarters. Our states were adversaries even if our peoples did not have this feeling of animosity. Three and half years later, here we are sitting around the same table celebrating the inaugural meeting of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council. If ever history witnessed a profound turn-around this is such a unique moment. A moment not only of high symbolic but also of eminent practical value. Europe will not be the same after our meeting today."

Manfred Wörner
Then NATO Secretary General
21 December 1991

Responding to change

Alliance origins

In 1949, when ideological clashes between East and West were gaining momentum, ten Western European states, the United States and Canada signed the North Atlantic Treaty. The primary aim was to create an alliance of mutual assistance to counter the risk that the Soviet Union would seek to extend its control of Eastern Europe to other parts of the continent.

At the time, Europe was still recovering from the devastation caused by the Second World War. However, between 1947 and 1952, the US-funded Marshall Plan afforded the means to stabilize Western European economies. By committing to the principle of collective defence, NATO complemented this role by helping to maintain a secure environment for the development of democracy and economic growth. In the words of then US President Harry S. Truman, the Marshall Plan and NATO were “two halves of the same walnut”.

By the early 1950s, international developments, culminating in the outbreak of the Korean War, appeared to confirm Western fears of the Soviet Union’s expansionist ambitions. Accordingly, NATO member states increased their efforts to develop the military and civilian structures needed to implement their commitment to joint defence. The presence of North American forces on European soil, at the request of European governments, helped to discourage Soviet Union aggression. As time passed, more states joined NATO.

Under NATO’s defensive umbrella, Western Europe and North America soon achieved an unprecedented level of stability that laid the foundation for European economic cooperation and integration.

Family portrait – May 1957

NATO during
the Cold War © NATO

Fall of Berlin Wall – 9 November 1989 © Sue Realm

The end of the Cold War

During the Cold War, NATO's role and purpose were clearly defined by the existence of the threat posed by the Soviet Union. By the early 1990s, the Warsaw Pact had been dissolved and the Soviet Union had collapsed. The Alliance actively contributed to overcoming the old East-West divide of Europe by reaching out to former enemies and proposing a cooperative approach to security. This sea change in attitudes was enshrined in a new Strategic Concept for the Alliance, issued in November 1991, which adopted a broader approach to security.

> "Now that the Cold War is over, we are faced not with a single all-embracing threat but with a multitude of new risks and challenges."
>
> Javier Solana
> Then NATO Secretary General
> 25 January 1999

With the disappearance of its traditional adversaries, some commentators believed that the need for NATO had also been removed and that future defence expenditure and investment in armed forces could be dramatically reduced. Many NATO Allies started cutting their defence spending, some by as much as 25 per cent.

However, it soon became apparent that although the end of the Cold War might have removed the threat of military invasion, instability in some parts of Europe had increased. A number of regional conflicts, often fuelled by ethnic tensions, broke out in the former Yugoslavia and in parts of the former Soviet Union and threatened to spread beyond their region of origin.

New forms of political and military cooperation were now required to preserve peace and stability in Europe and prevent the escalation of regional tensions. For that reason, NATO created new mechanisms for Euro-Atlantic security cooperation with non-member countries. It also underwent major internal reforms to adapt its military structures and capabilities to new tasks. In addition to its traditional task of collective defence, the Alliance

Flag of Honor in memory of victims of 9/11 terrorist attacks © Paola Sansao

soon became engaged in crisis management as well as partnership with a diverse set of countries and organizations cooperating in the wider field of security.

NATO adapted quickly to the post-Cold War security environment. Within a few years, it found itself conducting its first "out-of-area" operations beyond NATO territory in support of international efforts to end conflict in the western Balkans. NATO deployed its first peacekeeping operation to Bosnia and Herzegovina in December 1995. A few years later, the Alliance conducted an air campaign to help prevent the violent repression of the population in Kosovo and deployed a peacekeeping force there in 1999.

September 11

The 1999 Strategic Concept incorporated the lessons of NATO's new missions, changes in the post-Cold War security environment, and a cooperative approach to security. The new Concept also highlighted that future threats would be "multidirectional and often difficult to predict". Events quickly brought home how prescient the Allies had been.

On 11 September 2001, terrorists used passenger airliners as weapons of mass destruction against targets in the United States. The shocking brutality of the attacks and the means used to achieve them demonstrated the vulnerability of open and democratic societies to a new form of asymmetrical warfare. The next day, for the first time in the Alliance's history, the Allies invoked Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, NATO's collective defence provision, thereby affirming that an attack against one constituted an attack against them all.

The Alliance subsequently adopted measures to support the United States. It rapidly deployed vessels to the Eastern Mediterranean to board and search ships suspected of terrorist activity. This deployment continues today as Operation Active Endeavour, which now encompasses the entire Mediterranean.

In addition, individual Allies deployed forces to Afghanistan in support of the US-led operation against al Qaida – the terrorist group responsible for the 9/11 attacks – and the repressive Taliban regime that harboured it. The Alliance has been leading the follow-on peacekeeping mission, the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), since August 2003.

Consecutive NATO summits in Prague (2002) and Istanbul (2004) sought to

Vessels of Operation Active Endeavour © NATO

accelerate NATO's transformation into a dynamic Alliance capable of mounting operations outside NATO's traditional area of operations.

In addition to the international threat of terrorism, NATO leaders soon recognized that large-scale economic trends, technological and geopolitical developments, and environmental challenges could have major global effects that would impact NATO's future role and responsibilities.

The nature of the unconventional security challenges facing the Alliance in the 21st century are highlighted in NATO's current Strategic Concept, adopted at the Lisbon Summit in November 2010.

Firstly, the proliferation of nuclear weapons, other weapons of mass destruction, and their delivery systems threaten incalculable consequences for global stability and prosperity.

Secondly, terrorism poses a direct threat to the security of the citizens of NATO countries, and to international stability and prosperity more broadly, particularly if terrorists acquire nuclear, chemical, biological or radiological weapons.

Thirdly, instability or conflict beyond NATO's borders can directly threaten Alliance security by fostering extremism, terrorism, and transnational illegal activities such as trafficking in arms, narcotics and people.

Fourthly, cyber attacks are becoming more frequent, more organized and more costly. Foreign militaries and intelligence services, organized criminals, terrorists and extremist groups can all be the source of such attacks. Laser weapons and technologies that impede access to space are also sources of concern.

In addition, all countries are increasingly reliant on the vital communication, transport and transit routes on which international trade, energy security and prosperity depend. As a larger share of world production is transported across the globe, energy supplies are increasingly exposed to disruption.

Key environmental and resource constraints, including health risks, climate change, water scarcity and increasing energy needs will also shape the future security environment and have the potential to significantly affect NATO planning and operations.

Finally, the conventional threat, once seemingly forgotten, has since re-emerged. Many regions and countries are acquiring modern

military capabilities with consequences for Euro-Atlantic and international security that are difficult to predict. The proliferation of ballistic missiles poses a particularly serious challenge.

The 2010 Strategic Concept states that the Alliance should be capable of defending its members against new threats and managing even the most challenging crises. Where conflict prevention proves unsuccessful, the Alliance must be prepared to manage hostilities. In a conflict's aftermath, NATO must help create lasting conditions for peace and security.

> Taking the political decision to deploy military force is never easy. But the rapid and careful application of force can often prevent a crisis from developing into a more serious one.
>
> Anders Fogh Rasmussen
> NATO Secretary General
> 30 May 2011

A major player in crisis situations

NATO cannot confront the challenges of the 21st century by itself. Lessons learned from NATO-led operations have taught the Allies that military means are not enough to manage crises and conflicts.

The transatlantic Alliance is helping to develop a comprehensive political, economic, and military approach to crisis management, including stabilization and reconstruction efforts, by working together with a growing range of actors including non-governmental and international organizations such as the United Nations, the European Union, and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. NATO partners will also be offered more political engagement with the Alliance in dealing with all stages of a crisis – before, during, and after.

NATO considers a broader range of tools to be more effective across the crisis management spectrum. Measures pursued include the formation of a modest civilian crisis management capability, the enhancement of integrated civilian-military planning, and better training of local forces in crisis zones.

As of end 2011, over 140,000 military personnel are engaged in five ongoing NATO-led missions and operations on three continents: crisis management and peace-support operations in Afghanistan and the Balkans; a counter-terrorism operation in the Mediterranean; a counter-piracy operation off the Horn of Africa and in the Gulf of Aden; and a support mission for the African Union.

Managing crises
Kosovo – 2008

Afghan National Civil Order Police students stand in formation as they prepare to graduate © ISAF

Afghanistan

In the immediate aftermath of the September 11 attacks, the United States launched Operation Enduring Freedom, a counter-terrorist operation in Afghanistan. This operation's purpose was to oust from power the repressive Taliban regime that had harboured al Qaida, the terrorist group responsible for the attacks.

Concern arose that Afghan security forces could not stabilize the country on their own. The Bonn Conference was therefore organized in December 2001, requesting that the United Nations approve a force that would assist in the establishment and training of security forces. On 20 December 2001, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1386 that provided for the creation of an International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and its deployment to Kabul and surrounding areas.

Initially, ISAF was neither a NATO nor a UN force but a coalition of the willing deployed under the authority of the UN Security Council. In August 2003, the Alliance assumed strategic command, control and coordination of the mission, allowing for the creation of a permanent ISAF headquarters in Kabul. ISAF's mission is to assist the Afghan Government in creating a secure environment across the country, and by doing so, to minimise the possibility that violent extremists could once again plan their attacks while using Afghanistan as a safe haven.

In late 2003, ISAF numbered less than 10,000 troops and its mandate was limited to the capital city of Kabul and surrounding areas. Gradually, its mandate has expanded to cover Afghanistan in its entirety: first to the north, then the west, the south, and finally the east and southwest of the country – the most dangerous and volatile regions of Afghanistan. The emergence of a Taliban-inspired insurgency complicated these tasks. In response to this insurgency, the Allies resolved upon a troop build-up that saw ISAF troop strength increase to more than 130,000 troops. Fifty countries are currently contributing to the operation.

A new comprehensive civil-military counterinsurgency campaign – or 'COIN' strategy – sought to isolate extremists by building relationships with the Afghan people and government. Launched in early 2010, the strategy reversed the insurgency's momentum in many areas. ISAF's strategy of protecting local populations has reduced the number of accidental civilian casualties, even if the Taliban continue to target civilians.

As Afghan security forces continue to grow in strength and capability, they increasingly take the lead in conducting security operations. In consequence, the role of NATO and ISAF is gradually evolving, with emphasis shifting from combat to support. This transition to Afghan security leadership started in early 2011, with the end of 2014 as the target date for Afghan leadership over

US Army soldier shares a laugh with an Afghan boy in Rajan Qala village
© ISAF

all provinces and districts. In 2011, over half the Afghan population saw their army and police beginning to take the lead in providing security; overall enemy-initiated attacks decreased and the insurgency was weakened.

The Alliance is collaborating closely with the Afghan government and other international organizations and actors on remaining tasks. They include the long-term development of the Afghan National Security Forces, the consolidation of Afghan democracy, more forceful measures to combat corruption and the drug trade, and the peaceful reintegration of former insurgents into their communities. Irrespective of when ISAF troops depart, the long-term partnership between NATO and Afghanistan, which was formalized at the 2010 Lisbon Summit, will endure.

> "The Afghan people are at the heart of our mission – we must continue to place them at the centre of everything we do and say in Afghanistan."
>
> James G. Stavridis
> NATO Supreme Allied Commander
> 29 November 2010

The Balkans

NATO's operation in Afghanistan built upon lessons learned in peace-support and stabilization operations in the Balkans. In the wake of the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia that began in 1991, NATO intervened militarily to halt or head off conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1995, in Kosovo in 1999 and in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia* in 2001.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

NATO's involvement in Bosnia and Herzegovina began in 1992. In October of that year, NATO Airborne Warning and Control System aircraft, or AWACS, monitored operations in support of United Nations Security Council Resolution 781, imposing a no-fly zone over Bosnia and Herzegovina. Later NATO and the Western European Union began to enforce sanctions and an arms embargo imposed by UNSCR 787.

In August and September 1995, NATO Allies conducted air operations against Bosnian Serb forces. This action helped persuade the Bosnian Serb leadership to accept a peace settlement. NATO-led peacekeepers arrived in Bosnia and Herzegovina in December 1995 under the Implementation Force (IFOR) to implement the military aspects of the peace accord.

A Belgian SFOR soldier talks to a local man, while on patrol in Bosnia and Herzegovina © Belgian MoD

IFOR was succeeded by the Stabilization Force (SFOR), in December 1996. Forty-three different countries from NATO and around the world, including Russia, contributed to this force. Thanks in part to SFOR's presence, one million wartime refugees returned to their homes. Improvements in the security situation led to gradual reductions in troop numbers from the original 60,000 to 7,000.

> "We must build on the remarkable cooperation between the UN and SFOR in Bosnia to further refine the combination of force and diplomacy that is the key to peace in the Balkans, as everywhere. The success of the NATO-led mission operation under a United Nations mandate is surely a model for future endeavours."
>
> Kofi Annan
> Then UN Secretary-General
> 28 January 1999

On 2 December 2004, SFOR was brought to a successful end and NATO handed over its peacekeeping responsibilities to a European Union forces. This EU operation continues with NATO support.

Kosovo

NATO's military intervention in Kosovo built upon the Alliance's experience in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In particular, the Alliance understood that any peacekeeping effort's success would be linked to close cooperation with international organizations. Before the intervention, NATO worked closely with the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe to monitor the situation and develop contingency plans, while putting pressure on the Yugoslav regime to comply with international demands for an end to the violent repression of the largely ethnic Albanian population.

In March 1999, the Alliance decided to launch an air campaign against the military and paramilitary structures of the Yugoslav government responsible for the repression. The decision was reached after all other options had been exhausted and peace talks had again failed to resolve the dispute.

A Dutch KFOR soldier calms tensions during Kosovo conflict © NATO

Refugees from Kosovo at NATO camp in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia* © NATO

The air campaign was to last 78 days and resulted in an end to all military action by the parties to the conflict; the withdrawal from Kosovo of the Yugoslav Army, Serbian police and paramilitary forces; agreement on the stationing in Kosovo of an international military presence; agreement on the unconditional and safe return of refugees and displaced persons; and assurance of a willingness on all sides to work towards a political agreement for Kosovo.

The mandate of the NATO-led Kosovo Force (KFOR) comes from a military-technical agreement signed by NATO and Yugoslav commanders and from UN Security Council Resolution 1244, both adopted in June 1999. KFOR was made responsible for deterring renewed hostility, establishing a secure environment and demilitarizing the Kosovo Liberation Army. In addition, KFOR supports the international humanitarian effort and works together with the international civilian presence, the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, to create a stable environment for Kosovo's future development.

Initially, KFOR counted some 50,000 men and women in its ranks from NATO member and partner countries under unified command and control. Following Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence on 17 February 2008, NATO reaffirmed that KFOR's mandate remained unaffected and that peacekeepers would remain in Kosovo on the basis of UNSCR 1244, unless the Security Council decides otherwise.

As the security situation has improved, NATO has gradually adjusted KFOR's force posture to a "deterrent" presence: a smaller force relying more on flexibility and intelligence than on troop strength. The pace and level of troop reductions is decided according to the security situation on the ground. In 2011, some 5,000 soldiers remained in KFOR. Over-the-horizon reserve forces can be deployed if needed, as was the case in August 2011, when some 600 soldiers were deployed to boost deterrence in the north of Kosovo following clashes sparked by a customs dispute.

The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*

In August 2001, the president of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia* requested the support of NATO to disarm ethnic Albanian groups. NATO agreed, on the condition that the government reinstate certain minority rights. Special envoys from various countries and international organizations, including NATO, brokered a political settlement between the government and representatives of the country's ethnic Albanian community. This opened the way for NATO to deploy some 3,500 troops on a 30-day

Canadian fighter during NATO Libya campaign © MoD Canada

mission to disarm ethnic Albanians on a voluntary basis. These initiatives helped lay the groundwork for reconciliation and reconstruction in the country.

At Skopje's request, NATO troops remained in the country providing protection for monitors from the European Union and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe until the end of March 2003, when the mission was taken over by the European Union.

KFOR is now the only remaining large-scale Allied force deployment in the Balkans, although NATO maintains headquarters in Sarajevo and Skopje to assist the host governments in defence reform.

Over the years, NATO's policy in the Western Balkans has shifted from peacekeeping and crisis management towards developing partnership with and promoting the Euro-Atlantic integration of the region. In accordance with its Open Door policy, NATO has welcomed several countries from the region as members (*see page 35*).

Libya

In 2011, NATO conducted a seven-month operation to protect civilians from attack or the threat of attack in Libya. Following widespread and systematic attacks by the regime of Libyan President Qadhafi on civilians pro-democracy protestors in Libya in the spring of 2011, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolutions 1970 and 1973 that, among other measures, called for an arms embargo and a no-fly zone. Resolution 1973 further authorized member countries and regional organizations to take "all the necessary measures" to protect civilians and population centres in the country from the threat of attack. An international coalition soon began enforcement of the Security Council's mandate.

In March 2011, NATO Allies decided to take on all military operations regarding Libya under UN mandate. The purpose of NATO's Operation Unified Protector was to implement all military aspects of UN Security Council Resolutions 1970 and 1973. Allies moved swiftly to enforce the arms embargo and the no-fly zone, and took all necessary measures to protect civilians and civilian-populated areas under attack or threat of attack, as mandated by the resolutions.

To implement the arms embargo, NATO warships and aircraft patrolled the approaches to Libyan territorial waters. NATO verified the shipping in the region separating out legitimate commercial or humanitarian traffic

Patrolling the Mediterranean © Italian Navy

from suspicious vessels that warranted closer inspection. If weapons, related materials or mercenaries were found, the vessel and its crew could be denied the right to continue to their destination.

To protect civilians and civilian-populated areas, NATO conducted reconnaissance, surveillance and information-gathering operations to identify those forces that presented a threat to the Libyan people. NATO air and maritime assets could then engage military targets on the ground, at sea or in the air. The Qadhafi regime's forces were gradually degraded to a point that they could no longer carry out their campaign countrywide. Airstrikes were carried out with the greatest possible care and precision to minimize civilian casualties and damage to civilian infrastructure, as well as to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid.

As soon as conditions permitted, the North Atlantic Council successfully terminated NATO's operation to protect Libyan civilians on 31 October. The fall of the Qadhafi regime opened a new chapter in Libya's history. The Allies have expressed their willingness to support the interim Libyan authorities with defence and security sector reforms, should Alliance support be requested and provide added value.

The Mediterranean

Launched in the wake of the September 11 attacks, Operation Active Endeavour is a maritime surveillance operation led by NATO's naval forces to detect, deter and protect against terrorist activity in the Mediterranean. It is NATO's first Article 5 operation. NATO vessels deployed to the Eastern Mediterranean and started patrolling the area as early as 6 October 2001. In view of its success, it was expanded to the Straits of Gibraltar in early 2003 and subsequently to the entire Mediterranean a year later, in March 2004.

While the operation is limited to terrorism-related activities, it has beneficial effects on the overall security of the Mediterranean.

The Gulf of Aden

Growing piracy in the Gulf of Aden and off the Horn of Africa threatens to undermine international humanitarian efforts in Africa and disrupt vital sea lines of communication and commerce in the Indian Ocean.

At the request of UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, NATO has escorted UN World Food Programme

An Italian carabinieri trains Iraqi Federal Police in Camp Dublin, Baghdad © NATO

Airlift for almost 5,000 AU peacekeepers © NATO

vessels transiting through dangerous waters and has helped to increase security in the area by conducting counter-piracy operations since 2008. In 2011, NATO had an average of 4-5 ships deployed as part of the operation, as well as three maritime patrol aircraft. Operation Ocean Shield also offers training to regional countries to develop their own capacity to combat piracy. The Alliance operates in full complementarity with relevant UN Security Council Resolutions and with actions against piracy by other actors.

Assistance to Iraq

From 2004 to 2011, NATO supported the Iraqi Government through the NATO Training Mission-Iraq. The Alliance helped the country provide for its own security by training Iraqi military personnel; by supporting the development of the country's security institutions; by coordinating the delivery of equipment donated by individual NATO member countries; and, more generally, by providing support for defence reform in Iraq. Over 5,200 commissioned and non-commissioned officers of the Iraqi Armed Forces and around 10,000 Iraqi police were trained under the Training Mission.

Cooperation with Iraq took place in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 1546, which requested support from international and regional organizations to help meet the needs of the Iraqi people upon the Iraqi Government's request.

The Training Mission was permanently withdrawn from Iraq on 31 December 2011, when the mandate of the mission expired and agreement could not be reached on the legal status of NATO troops operating in the country. However, the Allies remain fully committed to long-term partnership and cooperation with Iraq, which is being pursued through a Structured Cooperation Framework.

Support for the African Union

Between 2003 until a tentative ceasefire agreement in February 2010, the inhabitants of the Darfur province of Sudan were the victims of a brutal civil war. The conflict caused a humanitarian crisis that led to the killing of tens of thousands and the displacement of millions. At the request of the African Union (AU), NATO started providing support to the African Union's Mission in Sudan from July 2005 until the completion of

Pakistan, a Dutch nurse reassures a little boy, victim of the earthquake © NATO

this mission on 31 December 2007. When this mission became a UN-AU hybrid mission in January 2008, NATO expressed its readiness to consider any additional requests for support.

Somalia has been without effective government since 1991 and has suffered from years of fighting between rival warlords as well as famine and disease. In June 2007, NATO agreed to a request from the African Union to provide strategic airlift support for the deployment of its peacekeeping troops for the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM).

NATO is also providing capacity-building support to the AU's long-term peacekeeping capabilities, in particular the African Standby Force, also at the request of the AU. Finally, NATO also escorts UN chartered vessels in support of AMISOM.

NATO's assistance is coordinated closely with other international organizations – principally the United Nations and the European Union – as well as with bilateral partners.

Disaster and humanitarian relief

NATO's Euro-Atlantic Disaster Relief Coordination Centre (EADRCC) is a "24/7" focal point for coordinating disaster relief efforts among NATO member and partner countries. The Centre has guided consequence-management efforts in more than 45 emergencies, including flooding, forest fires, and the aftermath of earthquakes.

Operations have included support to the US in response to Hurricane Katrina in August 2005 and – following requests from the Government of Pakistan – assistance in coping with the aftermath of the devastating October 2005 earthquake and the massive July 2010 floods. The Centre has also been tasked with dealing with the consequences of chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear attacks.

The Centre's efforts are performed in close cooperation with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, which retains the primary role in the coordination of international disaster-relief operations.

"The promotion of Euro-Atlantic security is best assured through a wide network of partner relationships with countries and organizations around the globe. These partnerships make a concrete and valued contribution to the success of NATO's fundamental tasks."

Strategic Concept
Lisbon Summit,
November 2010

Extending security through partnerships

Since the early 1990s, NATO has been developing a network of partnerships with non-member countries in the Euro-Atlantic area, the Mediterranean, the Gulf region and beyond. These partnerships provide frameworks for political dialogue and cooperation in the field of security and defence. They are essential to the success of many NATO-led operations and missions and contribute to promoting the values that underpin the Alliance.

A focused effort to reform NATO's partnerships policy was launched at the 2010 Lisbon Summit to make dialogue and cooperation more inclusive, flexible, meaningful and strategically oriented. This led to the adoption of a new partnership policy in April 2011.

The new policy allows NATO to strengthen cooperation with existing partners and to develop political dialogue and practical cooperation with any nation across the globe that shares the Alliance's interest in international peace and security. NATO's new offer to partners will include more political consultation on security issues of common concern, a simpler and more streamlined set of partnership tools, and a role for partners in shaping strategy and decisions on operations to which they contribute.

Under the new policy, all partners with which NATO has a partnership programme – whether they be Euro-Atlantic partners, partners in the Mediterranean Dialogue, the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative, or global partners – are offered the opportunity to develop and adopt an Individual Partnership and Cooperation Programme. In developing their respective programmes, all partners have access to the new Partnership and Cooperation Menu. This menu comprises some 1,600 activities, ranging from military cooperation and training, defence reform and planning, civil-military relations, through preparing for participation in crisis management and disaster-response operations, to cooperation in the field of science and environment. Partners choose their own priorities for cooperation according to their needs and interests.

Some partners may choose to deepen cooperation and sharpen the focus of activities to better support reform efforts by developing an Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) with NATO. Such partners would also be encouraged to participate in the Planning and Review Process (PARP), which provides a structured basis for identifying forces and capabilities that could be available to the Alliance for multinational training, exercises and operations, and also serves to guide and measure progress on defence and military reform. Previously, the opportunity to develop an IPAP or to join the PARP was only open to Euro-Atlantic partners participating in the Partnership for Peace (see over). But under NATO's new partnerships policy, these tools can be offered to any interested partner on a case-by-case basis.

Meeting of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council © NATO

Dmitry Medvedev, President of Russia, and Anders Fogh Rasmussen, NATO Secretary General, arriving at NATO Lisbon Summit, 2010 © NATO

Partners in the Euro-Atlantic area

The Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) brings together the 28 Allies and 22 partner countries in a multinational forum for dialogue, consultation, and cooperation. Established in 1997, the EAPC succeeded the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC), which was set up in December 1991 just after the end of the Cold War.

EAPC members meet monthly at the ambassadorial level, regularly at the ministerial level, and occasionally at the summit level. Partners regularly exchange views on current political and security-related issues, including the evolving security situations in Afghanistan and Kosovo, where partners are contributing to NATO-led operations.

The EAPC provides the overall multilateral political framework for NATO's bilateral relationships with partner countries under the Partnership for Peace programme (PfP), which was launched in 1994. Based on a commitment to democratic principles, the purpose of the PfP is to increase stability, diminish threats to peace and build strengthened security relationships between individual partner countries and NATO, as well as among partner countries. The PfP programme allows partner countries to build an individual relationship with NATO, choosing from the wide range of activities on offer in the Partnership and Cooperation Menu, according to their own priorities for cooperation.

Relations with Russia, Ukraine and Georgia

Among its Euro-Atlantic partners, NATO has developed special frameworks for its relationships with Russia, Ukraine and, more recently, Georgia.

NATO's relations with Russia began in the early 1990s, when Russia joined the NACC in 1991 and the Partnership for Peace in 1994. Russia was also the largest non-NATO troop contributor to the peacekeeping operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In 1997, the bilateral relationship was given a more formal basis and the NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council (PJC), was established to develop dialogue and cooperation. Lingering Cold War stereotypes prevented the PJC from achieving its full potential and differences over NATO's Kosovo air campaign also impacted on the NATO-Russia relationship, although Russia contributed peacekeepers to the Kosovo Force.

In the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the relationship was strengthened. The Allies and Russia replaced the PJC in 2002 with the NATO-Russia Council (NRC), chaired by the NATO Secretary

Ukrainian soldier participating in NATO exercise © NATO

Meeting of NATO-Georgia Commission © NATO

General. All NRC countries participate as equals and decisions are taken by consensus. The NRC has proved to be a valuable instrument for building practical cooperation and for political dialogue.

While differences between the Allies and Russia remain on some issues, the driving force behind the NRC's pragmatic spirit of cooperation is the realization that NRC members share common challenges, including Afghanistan, terrorism, piracy, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and natural and man-made disasters. At the November 2010 Lisbon Summit, NRC leaders pledged to work towards achieving "a true strategic and modernized partnership" and to develop further practical cooperation in key areas of shared interests.

> "We have stated the fact that indeed the period of cooling relations and claims is over. Now we are optimistically looking forward and we are trying to develop relations between Russia and NATO in all directions."
>
> Dmitry Medvedev
> President of the Russian Federation
> 20 November 2010

Bilateral relations with Ukraine, already a PfP partner, were given a more formal basis in 1997 with the establishment of the NATO-Ukraine Commission. Dialogue and cooperation have become well established in a wide range of areas. Key priorities are Allied support for democratic defence and security-sector reform, and Ukraine's contributions to NATO-led operations.

While an Intensified Dialogue was launched with the country on its membership aspirations and related reforms in 2005, Ukraine is not presently seeking full membership of the Alliance. This has not had any impact on Ukraine's practical cooperation with NATO. At the Lisbon Summit, Allied leaders stated their respect for Ukraine's policy of "non-bloc" status.

Relations with Georgia, also a partner country since the early

Maritime exercise with Jordan in the context of the Mediterranean Dialogue © NATO

Sheik Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah of the National Security Bureau of Kuwait during "NATO and Gulf countries conference", Kuwait, 2006 © NATO

1990s, intensified after the "Rose Revolution" in 2003, with support for Georgia's domestic reform process as an important priority. In 2006, an Intensified Dialogue was launched on the country's membership aspirations. At the Bucharest Summit in April 2008, Allied leaders agreed that both Georgia and Ukraine would one day become members of the Alliance.

In the wake of the country's conflict with Russia a few months later, NATO and Georgia established the NATO-Georgia Commission in September 2008 to oversee NATO's post-conflict assistance to Georgia and to play a central role in helping the country work towards realizing its membership aspirations.

The Mediterranean Dialogue

The PfP initiative was complemented by the 1995 establishment of a Mediterranean Dialogue with six countries – Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia – in the wider Mediterranean region. The programme, which was joined by Algeria in 2,000, is aimed at creating good relations and improving mutual understanding with the countries of the Mediterranean area, as well as promoting regional security and stability. In 2004, the Dialogue was elevated to a genuine partnership to promote greater practical cooperation, for example through assistance in defence reform, cooperation in the field of border security, and measures to improve interoperability. The enhanced partnership also focused on the fight against terrorism.

Some Dialogue countries have contributed troops to NATO-led peace-support operations in the Balkans and cooperate with NATO in Operation Active Endeavour by providing intelligence about suspicious shipping operating in their waters. NATO's Mediterranean partners were fully consulted on the NATO-led operation in Libya, and Jordan and Morroco actively supported the operation.

The Istanbul Cooperation Initiative

The launching of the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI), in 2004 showed the Alliance's willingness to reach out to Middle Eastern countries that are not involved in the Mediterranean Dialogue. The initiative aims to contribute to long-term global and regional security by offering

Australian Lieutenant Colonel Jason Blain, Commanding Officer of the First Mentoring Task Force, meets with Afghan elders at a Shura in Sajawu
© Australian MoD

countries of the Gulf region practical bilateral cooperation with NATO.

At present, Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates are members of the ICI. Saudi Arabia and Oman have also shown an interest in the initiative. Qatar and the United Arab Emirates actively supported the NATO-led operation in Libya, further highlighting the strong regional support for the operation.

Working with global partners

In addition to its more structured partnerships, NATO cooperates with a range of partners across the globe that are not part of these frameworks. These currently include Australia, Japan, the Republic of Korea, New Zealand, Iraq, Afghanistan and Mongolia. The extent of cooperation varies greatly. Some countries are troop contributors to NATO-led operations or contribute to these operations in other ways. Others have expressed an interest in intensifying political dialogue, or in developing relations with NATO in other areas of common interest.

> "The Arab Spring has underlined the need to elevate our dialogue and partnerships to a new level. Our new Strategic Concept calls for such enhanced cooperation."
>
> Anders Fogh Rasmussen
> NATO Secretary General
> 1 June 2011

Working with other international organizations

Today's security challenges call for a comprehensive approach involving a wide range of actors and civil-military instruments. Building on its experiences in Afghanistan and the Balkans, the Alliance has pledged to engage with other international actors before, during and after crises to maximize the coherence and effectiveness of the overall international effort. Such actors include the United Nations and its agencies, the European Union, and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, as well as a number of other institutions and non-governmental organizations.

The United Nations is at the core of this framework, a principle enshrined in NATO's founding treaty, which refers to the UN Charter. The two organizations

Signature of a "Declaration on Enduring Partnership" by Hamid Karzai, the President of Afghanistan, and Anders Fogh Rasmussen, NATO Secretary General, in the presence of Ban Ki-moon, UN Secretary-General
© NATO

share a commitment to maintaining international peace and security. Over the years, cooperation has broadened to include consultations on issues such as crisis management, terrorism, civil-military cooperation, de-mining, civil emergency planning, human trafficking and the role of women in peace and security. In September 2008, the UN and NATO established a framework for expanded consultation and cooperation to help both organizations address threats and challenges more effectively.

> "Let me stress that the United Nations will continue to work closely with the government and people of Afghanistan, with ISAF and other partners. We all share the same goal: stability, reconciliation, good governance, respect for human rights, and harmonious relationships between Afghanistan and her neighbours."
>
> Ban Ki-moon,
> UN Secretary-General
> 20 November 2010

With 21 members in common, NATO attaches great importance to its relationship with the European Union, which has evolved in response to changing circumstances.

In the early years of the Alliance, NATO's European members were highly dependent on the United States, both in terms of security and economic growth. Since then, Europe has grown stronger and more united. The European Union began to develop a common foreign and security policy in the early 1990s and is gradually positioning Europe as a more prominent actor in international affairs.

In December 1999, the European Union decided to develop its capacity to take on crisis-management tasks and took steps to create the political and military structures required. In March 2003, NATO and the EU announced the so-called "Berlin-Plus" arrangements as part of a framework for cooperation that allows the European Union to have access to NATO assets and capabilities for EU-led operations. This framework paved the way for the European Union to assume command of NATO's missions in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia* in March 2003 and in Bosnia and Herzegovina in December 2004.

NATO and the European Union are working together to prevent and resolve crises and armed conflicts in Europe and beyond. While this

Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Anders Fogh Rasmussen, NATO Secretary General, during joint press point at NATO Headquarters © NATO

important partnership has yet to fulfil its potential, the 2010 Strategic Concept notes that "the EU is a unique and essential partner for NATO", and close cooperation between them is an important element of the "Comprehensive Approach" to crisis management and operations. For this and other reasons, Allied leaders believe that a strong European Security and Defence Policy can only benefit NATO and foster a more equitable transatlantic security partnership.

Science for Peace and Security

The Science for Peace and Security Programme (SPS) is a policy tool for enhancing cooperation and dialogue with all partners, based on civil science and innovation, to contribute to the Alliance's core goals and to address the priority areas for dialogue and cooperation with partners.

Research priorities are linked to NATO's strategic objectives and focus on support to NATO's operations, enhancing the defence against terrorism and addressing other threats to security. As such, projects include explosives detection; physical protection from chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear agents; emergency preparedness; cyber defence; and environmental security.

Originally founded as the NATO Science Programme in the 1950s, the SPS Programme now offers grants for collaboration projects, workshops and training involving scientists from NATO member states and partner countries.

Pursuing an Open Door policy

At a relatively early stage, the founding members of the Alliance – Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the United Kingdom and the United States – extended the membership of the Organization to include Greece and Turkey (1952), and West Germany (1955). Spain joined in 1982.

The next round of enlargement occurred after the end of the Cold War, when a number of Central European countries decided that their future security interests could best be met by joining NATO and voiced their intention to seek membership. Three former partner countries – the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland – became members in March 1999, bringing the number of member countries to 19. At the end of March 2004, seven more countries – Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia – joined the Alliance in what was NATO's largest wave of enlargement.

More recently, in April 2009, Albania and Croatia became members. NATO's door remains open to any European democracy that is willing and able to assume the responsibilities and obligations of membership. This 'Open Door' policy is aimed at promoting stability and cooperation, while building a Europe united in peace and founded on democratic principles.

NATO governments have made clear that the enlargement of the Alliance is not an aim in itself, but a means of extending security further afield and making Europe as a whole more stable. The very prospect of membership serves as an incentive for aspiring members to resolve disputes with their neighbours and push ahead with reforms and democratization. New members should not only enjoy the benefits of membership as security consumers. They should also contribute to the overall security of all member countries by becoming providers of security.

1 NATO members sign Protocol to the North Atlantic Treaty on the Accession of Greece and Turkey, which became members on 18 February 1952 © NATO
2 Accession of Germany – 1954 © NATO
3 Accession of Spain – 1982 © NATO

Membership Action Plan

The Membership Action Plan (MAP) is a NATO programme of advice, assistance and practical support tailored to the individual needs of countries wishing to join the Alliance. Aspiring members are expected to meet certain key requirements, including a functioning democratic political system based on a market economy; the fair treatment of minorities; a commitment to the peaceful resolution of disputes with neighbours; the ability and willingness to make a military contribution to the Alliance; and a commitment to the democratic control of their armed forces. Participation in the MAP does not offer any guarantee of future membership, but it does help countries to adapt their armed forces and to prepare for the obligations and responsibilities that Alliance membership would bring.

Since the programme's launch in 1999, nine countries have joined the Alliance as full members through participation in the Membership Action Plan. Current MAP participants are Montenegro and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*. The latter has been assured that it will be invited to join NATO once a mutually acceptable solution to the issue of the country's official name has been found with Greece. In April 2010 Allies formally invited Bosnia and Herzegovina to join the MAP, with the condition that NATO will only accept the country's first Annual National Programme under the MAP once a key remaining issue concerning immovable defence property has been resolved.

> "To my country, this is one of the most important moments. For the first time ever, it is becoming part of a great security Alliance, which is based on the equality of its members, solidarity amongst them, and a shared determination to defend their shared values."
>
> Václav Havel
> Then President of the Czech Republic
> 23 April 1999

4 Accession of Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland – 1999 © NATO
5 Accession of Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia – 2004 © NATO
6 Accession of Albania and Croatia – 2009 © NATO


4


5


6

"We are confronted with a new, radically altered, strategic environment. Terrorism, weapons of mass destruction and "failed states" all confront us with challenges that are different from anything we have witnessed in the past."

Jaap de Hoop Scheffer
Then NATO Secretary General
17 November 2004

Tackling new threats with new capabilities

Allied forces are engaged in operations and missions on several continents, and the Alliance faces security challenges that include the spread of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), the proliferation of ballistic missile technology, the fight against terrorism, strengthening cyber security, and reinforcing energy security.

To face these challenges, NATO must modernize its military capabilities while having sufficient resources – financial, military and human – to carry out its missions. Those resources must be used in a way that maximizes the deployability of NATO forces, ensures coherence in defence planning, develops and operates capabilities jointly, preserves and strengthens common capabilities and standards, and improves working methods and efficiency through a process of continual reform.

Preventing WMD proliferation

As stated in NATO's 2010 Strategic Concept, "the proliferation of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, and their means of delivery, threatens incalculable consequences for global stability and prosperity." In response, the Alliance will further develop its capacity to defend its populations and its territory against these weapons.

Specifically, NATO will seek to prevent the proliferation of WMD, to protect against a WMD attack, and to recover from an attack. This will require supporting traditional measures of proliferation prevention that can dissuade or impede proliferant states and terrorist networks from acquiring these weapons. It will also require a balanced mix of forces, response capabilities and strengthened defences to deter and defend against the use of WMD. Finally, when efforts to prevent an attack do not succeed, NATO must be prepared to recover from the consequences of their use against its populations, territories, and forces.

Developing ballistic missile defence

Over 30 countries currently have or are acquiring ballistic missiles that could carry conventional warheads or WMD. While the possession of these weapons does not necessarily indicate an intent to attack NATO countries, the Alliance does have a responsibility to protect its populations.

The Alliance is now conducting three missile defence-related activities. In early 2010, NATO acquired the first phase of an initial capability to protect Alliance forces against missile threats through an Active Layered Theatre

Patriot Missile Launcher
© NATO

Ballistic Missile Defence (ALTBMD). When completed, the ALTBMD system will protect NATO forces against short- and medium-range ballistic missiles.

At the Lisbon Summit, NATO leaders decided to expand the Theatre Missile Defence Programme to include the protection of NATO European populations and territories. In June 2011, a ballistic missile defence action plan was approved, outlining how to achieve the NATO territorial ballistic missile defence – an interim capability is expected to be declared in 2012. NATO has also invited Russia to cooperate on ballistic missile defence, extending ongoing cooperation under the NATO-Russia Council on theatre missile defence. While trying to build trust, progress in this area has been limited. Work continues on a comprehensive joint analysis of the future framework for broader ballistic missile defence cooperation at a slow pace.

Fighting terrorism

NATO's operations in the Mediterranean and Afghanistan have a strong focus on counter-terrorism. In addition, under NATO's Defence Against Terrorism Programme of Work, individual Allied nations lead projects to develop advanced technologies that meet urgent security needs. One example is the Stand-Off Detection of Explosives (STANDEX) Programme, developed under the auspices of the NATO-Russia Council. This programme seeks to develop means to detect and prevent terrorist attacks by improvised explosive devices on individuals circulating in large public areas such as airports or metro stations. Another important project with Russia, the Cooperative Airspace Initiative, aims to help prevent terrorist attacks which use civilian aircraft, such as the 9/11 attacks against the United States. The operational readiness of the new airspace security system was declared in December 2011.

Other measures include a Terrorist Threat Intelligence Unit, set up at the end of 2003, and civil-emergency planning activities that focus on enhancing national capabilities in the event of attacks using chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear agents.

Strengthening cyber security

After Estonia experienced a series of major cyber attacks in April and May 2007, NATO's focus broadened to help bolster the cyber security of individual

Allied nations. According to the new Strategic Concept, "Cyber attacks… can reach a threshold that threatens national and Euro-Atlantic prosperity, security and stability."

In June 2011, NATO approved a new cyber defence policy and an action plan that will upgrade the protection of NATO's own networks and bring them under centralized management. The new policy also makes cyber defence an integral part of NATO's defence planning process, offering a coordinated approach with a focus on preventing cyber attacks and building resilience. It also sets out the framework for how NATO will assist Allies, upon request, in their own cyber defence efforts, with the aim to optimize information sharing and situational awareness, collaboration and secure interoperability based on NATO agreed standards. Finally, the policy sets the principles for NATO's cyber defence cooperation with partner countries, international organizations, the private sector and academia.

> "Globalization, for example, offers our societies the opportunity to become more creative and prosperous, but it also makes them more vulnerable."
>
> Javier Solana
> Then NATO Secretary General
> 15 October 1999

Reinforcing energy security

In the new Strategic Concept, Allies agreed that all countries are increasingly reliant on the vital communication, transport and transit routes on which international trade, energy security and prosperity depend. Greater international efforts are therefore required to ensure these routes are resilient against attack or disruption.

NATO is working with partners to contribute to energy security, concentrating on the five key areas agreed at the 2008 Bucharest Summit. These areas include sharing and fusing information and intelligence, projecting stability, advancing international and regional cooperation, supporting consequence management, and protecting critical infrastructure.

NATO is also cooperating with partners through the Euro-Atlantic Partnership

NRF exercise "Loyal Midas" 2005 Spanish soldiers, return to their base camp © NATO

Council, the Mediterranean Dialogue, and the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative. These fora bring together energy producers, transit countries and energy consumers in a dialogue on issues of mutual concern.

Modernizing military capabilities

At the Lisbon Summit in November 2010, the Allies endorsed a package of capabilities representing NATO's most pressing needs.

Current priorities include the improvement of information sharing within the International Security and Assistance Force in Afghanistan; a programme for countering improvised explosive devices; improving air- and sea-lift capabilities, so that forces and equipment can be deployed quickly to wherever they are needed; and a programme for collective logistics contracts. In addition, a concerted effort to build capabilities more efficiently through multinational and innovative approaches is under way.

Longer-term commitments include information superiority through networked information systems that support NATO's two Strategic Commands; an integrated Air Command and Control System; a Joint Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance capability; and an Alliance Ground Surveillance System that can detect and track vehicles such as tanks, trucks or helicopters moving on or near the ground, in all weather conditions.

The NATO Response Force

The NATO Response Force (NRF) is a technologically advanced multinational force that is kept at a high state of readiness. It is made up of land, air, maritime and special forces components.

The NRF has the overarching purpose of providing a rapid military response to an emerging crisis, whether for collective defence or for other crisis response operations. It gives NATO the means to respond swiftly to various types of crises anywhere in the world. The NRF also serves as a catalyst for NATO's military transformation.

Robot against improvised explosive devices, Herat, Afghanistan © NATO

Centres of Excellence

Centres of Excellence (COEs), are institutions used to train and educate leaders and specialists from NATO member and partner countries. They assist in doctrine development, identify lessons learned, improve interoperability and capabilities, and test and validate concepts through experimentation. They offer recognized expertise that is of benefit to the Alliance and supports the transformation of NATO, while avoiding the duplication of assets, resources and capabilities already present within the NATO command structure.

COEs are considered to be international military organizations that work alongside Allied Command Transformation in Norfolk, Virginia, in the United States. Although not part of the NATO command structure, they are part of a wider framework supporting NATO Command Arrangements. COEs cover a wide variety of areas, with each one focusing on a specific field of expertise to enhance NATO capabilities.

The Alliance does not fund COEs. Instead, they receive national or multinational support for the operating costs of the institutions. Twenty-one COEs have either received NATO accreditation or are in the development stages.

One example is the Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence in Tallinn, Estonia. This Centre conducts research and training in cyber defence. It was accredited as a NATO Centre of Excellence in 2008.

> Through all of these meetings at NATO the member states of the Alliance communicate regularly, they share disagreements in a structured format, they develop common positions through regular negotiations and they then cooperate on the implementation. In many ways the committees are the fora where consensus, the basic operating principle of the Alliance, is developed.

Lord Robertson
Then NATO Secretary General
23 April 2001

Organization dynamics

Consensus

One of the keys to NATO's longevity is its decision-making process based on consensus. Consensus decision-making means that there is no voting at NATO. Consultations take place until a decision that is acceptable to all is reached. In practice, this means that any member country, no matter how large or small, can effectively veto any prospective NATO decision. It also means that a unanimous "NATO decision" represents the collective will of all member countries.

In general the negotiation process is rapid since member countries consult on a regular basis and therefore often know each other's position in advance. Facilitating the process of consultation is one of the Secretary General's main tasks.

The consensus principle has been the sole basis for Alliance decision-making since NATO's creation in 1949. It applies for all bodies and committees.

Organization

The North Atlantic Council (NAC) has effective political authority and powers of decision. It is not, however, the only body within NATO that carries a high degree of authority. The Nuclear Planning Group, the Military Committee, and other NATO committees also play important roles in the decision-making process. All are supported by NATO's civilian International Staff and the International Military Staff.

The Nuclear Planning Group (NPG) takes decisions on the Alliance's nuclear policy. It is the supreme authority within NATO with regard to nuclear issues, as is the NAC on matters within its competence. It includes all NATO member countries with the exception of France. Its discussions cover a broad range of nuclear policy matters, including the safety, security and survivability of nuclear weapons, communications and information systems, as well as deployment issues. It also covers wider questions of common concern, such as nuclear arms control and nuclear proliferation.

While the Alliance's nuclear forces are maintained as part of NATO's policy of deterrence, their role is fundamentally political and they are no longer directed towards a specific threat.

The Military Committee (MC) is the senior military authority in NATO and the oldest permanent body in NATO after the North Atlantic Council. It provides military advice to the North Atlantic Council and the Nuclear Planning Group. It also provides military guidance to the Alliance's two Strategic Commanders and assists in developing overall strategic policy. The MC is therefore an essential link between the political

Carme Chacón Piqueras (Minister of Defence, Spain) with General David Petraeus (then Commander of ISAF) at meeting of NATO Defence Ministers, Brussels, 2011 © NATO

decision-making process and NATO's military structure.

A wide range of other NATO committees form an indispensable part of the Alliance's decision-making process. They facilitate exchanges of information and consultation that lead to decisions taken on the basis of consensus. Each member country is represented at every level of the committee structure in the fields of NATO activity in which they participate.

Finally, some 1,200 civilians work with NATO's International Staff (IS) at NATO Headquarters in Brussels, Belgium. An advisory and administrative body, the IS works under the authority of the Secretary General and helps to implement the decisions of NATO member delegations within their respective committees.

The International Military Staff (IMS) works with the International Staff to ensure that appropriate NATO bodies implement decisions on military matters. The IMS comprises some 330 military personnel supported by around 90 civilian personnel.

Staff members are either recruited directly by the Organization or seconded by their governments.

NATO Parliamentary Assembly

The NATO Parliamentary Assembly (NATO PA) brings together legislators from NATO member countries to consider security-related issues of common interest and concern. Institutionally independent and separate from NATO, the Assembly provides a link between the Alliance and the parliaments of its member countries, helping to build parliamentary and public consensus around Alliance policies. Since the 1980s, the Assembly has also incorporated partner country parliamentarians into its discussions.

Reform

NATO is committed to a continuing process of reform, so that the Alliance becomes more flexible, efficient, and effective. The Alliance's three essential 'core tasks' – collective defence, crisis management, and cooperative security – require the continued adaptation of the Organization. Military budget cuts in an age of austerity require that the Alliance do more with less, while not sacrificing its capabilities. In 2011, NATO began pursuing a new way of

acquiring and maintaining capabilities, captured by the term “smart defence”. The way forward lies in prioritizing the capabilities needed the most, specializing in what Allies do best, and seeking multinational solutions to common challenges where it is efficient and cost-effective.

At the 2010 Lisbon Summit, NATO leaders built upon previous efforts with an ambitious package of reform measures, including review of the military command structure, agencies, and resource management. These measures included a framework for a new NATO Command Structure that will be more effective, affordable, and deployable on operations. In June 2011, NATO Defence Ministers agreed a revised structure that will reduce manning by one third, from over 13,000 to 8,800. The new NATO Command Structure should reach initial operational capability by end 2013 and be fully implemented by end 2015.

NATO Agencies employ some 6,000 military and civilian personnel working in seven countries. They provide critical support to current operations and manage the procurement of major capabilities. At Lisbon, Allied leaders approved the consolidation and rationalization of 14 current NATO Agencies into three, focusing on communications and information; support; and procurement. The new agency structure should be set up by mid 2012.

NATO Headquarters is also being reformed with a review of multinational acquisition processes, a reduction in the number of committees, and the establishment of a new Division for Emerging Security Challenges. In particular, the new Division brings together various strands of expertise within NATO Headquarters to provide an ability to monitor and anticipate international developments that could affect Allied security. Against a backdrop of changing priorities and real budgetary pressures, efforts are also underway to ensure that the International Staff evolves towards a leaner, more flexible workforce sharply focused on NATO’s priority areas. All of these changes are designed to ensure that a new NATO will move into a new headquarters, when the building is inaugurated in 2016.

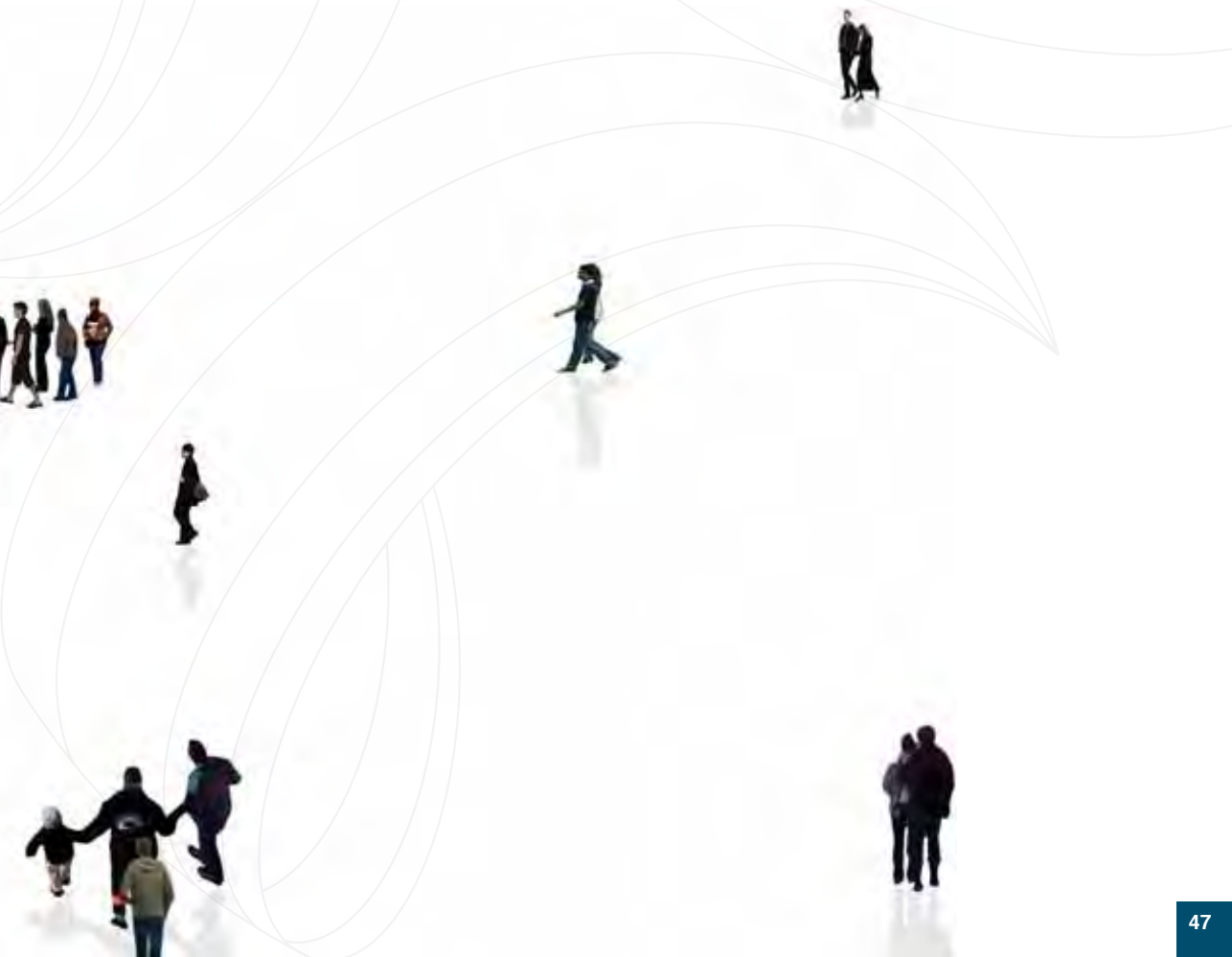
"Individual liberty releases human creativity and enterprise. Democracy promotes accountable governance. Human rights guarantee that democracy is not just the right of the majority to rule, but also the right of minorities to be protected. The rule of law protects the individual from indiscriminate abuse by the authorities. These fundamental principles have created progress and prosperity for people in our nations."

Anders Fogh Rasmussen
NATO Secretary General
16 June 2011

An Alliance that is fit for purpose

Based on common values and common interests, the transatlantic Alliance must be “fit” for its fundamental purpose: safeguarding the freedom and security of its members while addressing 21st century security challenges.

Citizens of the NATO countries rely on the Alliance to help defend their countries, to deploy robust military forces where and when required for their security, and to help promote security with our partners around the globe. While the world is changing and the Alliance is evolving, NATO’s essential mission is unchanged: to ensure that the Alliance remains a united community of freedom, peace, security and shared values.



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