



# North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

Last Updated: July 2022

## What is NATO?

- **North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)** is a **military alliance established by the North Atlantic Treaty** (also called the **Washington Treaty**) of **April, 1949**, by the United States, Canada, and several Western European nations to provide collective security against the **[Soviet Union](#)**.
- There are currently **30 member states**.
  - Its original members were Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the United Kingdom, and the United States.
  - Joining the original signatories were **Greece and Turkey** (1952), **West Germany** (1955, from 1990 as Germany), **Spain** (1982), the **Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland** (1999), **Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia** (2004), **Albania and Croatia** (2009), **Montenegro** (2017), and **[North Macedonia](#)** (2020).
  - France withdrew from the integrated military command of NATO in 1966 but remained a member of the organization, it resumed its position in NATO's military command in 2009.
    - Recently, **Finland and Sweden** have shown interest to join NATO.
- **Headquarters:** Brussels, Belgium.
- **Headquarters of Allied Command Operations:** Mons, Belgium.

## What are the Objectives of NATO?

- NATO's essential and enduring purpose is to **safeguard the freedom and security of all its members by political and military means**.
  - **Political objectives:** NATO promotes democratic values and enables members to consult and cooperate on defense and security-related issues to solve problems, build trust and, in the long run, prevent conflict.
  - **Military Objectives:** NATO is committed to the peaceful resolution of disputes. If diplomatic efforts fail, it has the military power to undertake crisis-management operations.
    - These are carried out under the collective defence clause of NATO's founding treaty - **Article 5 of the Washington Treaty** or under a United Nations mandate, alone or in cooperation with other countries and international organisations.
    - NATO has only once invoked Article 5, on September 12, 2001 following the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center in the US.

## How does NATO Function?

- NATO has 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.

- All 30 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's protection **does not extend to members' civil wars or internal coups**.
- NATO is **funded by its members**. The U.S. contributes roughly three-fourths of NATO's budget.

## Why did NATO Originate?

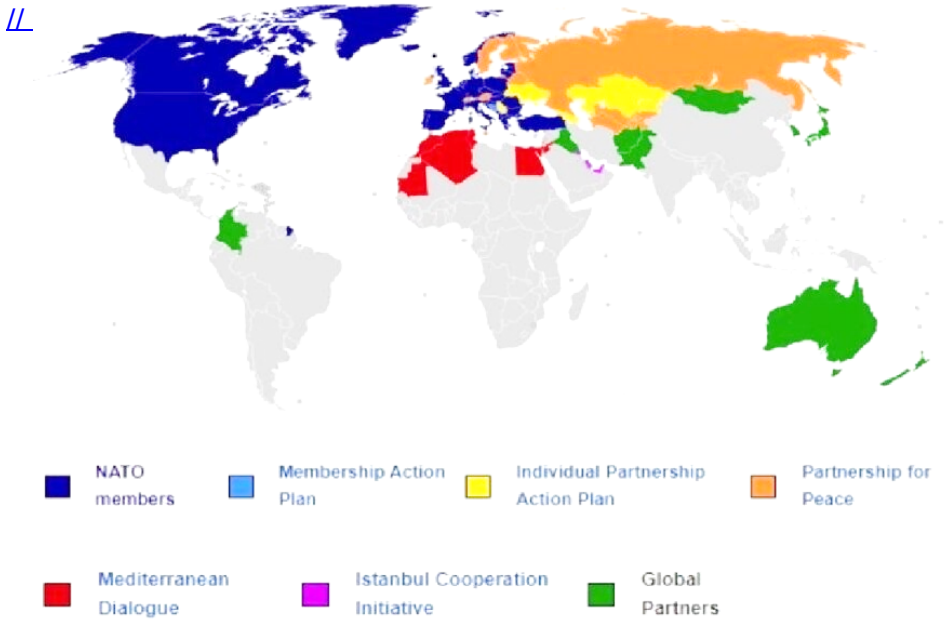
- After World War II in 1945, western Europe was **economically exhausted and militarily weak** (the western Allies had rapidly and drastically reduced their armies at the end of the war).
- In 1948 the United States launched the **Marshall Plan**, which infused massive amounts of economic aid to the countries of western and southern Europe on the condition that they cooperate with each other and **engage in joint planning to hasten their mutual recovery**.
  - As for military recovery, under the Brussels Treaty of 1948, the United Kingdom, France, and the Low Countries—Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg—concluded a collective-defense agreement called the Western European Union.
    - It was soon recognized, however, that a more formidable alliance would be required to provide an adequate military counterweight to the Soviets.
    - In March 1948, following a virtual communist coup d'état in Czechoslovakia in February, the three governments began discussions on a multilateral collective-defense scheme that would enhance Western security and promote democratic values.
    - These discussions were eventually joined by France, the Low Countries, and Norway and in April 1949 resulted in the North Atlantic Treaty.
- At the end of [World War 2](#), the deteriorating relations between the United States and the USSR eventually **led to the Cold War**.
  - The USSR sought to expand its influence in Europe through the spread of communism, while the US saw the ideology of the USSR as a threat to its way of life.
- In 1955, when the [Cold War](#) was gaining momentum, the **Soviet Union signed up socialist republics of Central and Eastern Europe to the Warsaw Pact (1955)**. The Pact, essentially a **political-military alliance**, was viewed as a direct **strategic counterweight to NATO**.
  - It included Albania (which withdrew in 1968), Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Poland, and Romania.
  - The Pact was **officially disbanded in early 1991** after the dissolution of the Soviet Union itself.

## What are the Alliances of NATO?

- NATO participates in three alliances that expand its influence beyond its 30 member countries.
  - **Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC)**: It is a 50-nation multilateral forum for dialogue and consultation on political and security-related issues among Allies and partner countries.
    - It provides the overall political framework for NATO's cooperation with partner countries in the Euro-Atlantic area, and for the bilateral relationships developed between NATO and individual partner countries under the **Partnership for Peace (PfP) programme**.
      - The Partnership for Peace (PfP) is a programme of practical bilateral cooperation between individual Euro-Atlantic partner countries and NATO.
      - It allows partners to build up an individual relationship with NATO, choosing their own priorities for cooperation.
- Established in 1997, the EAPC succeeded the **North Atlantic Cooperation**

**Council (NACC)**, which was set up in 1991 just after the end of the Cold War.

- **Mediterranean Dialogue:** It is a partnership forum that aims to **contribute to security and stability in NATO's Mediterranean and North African neighbourhood**, and promote good relations and understanding among participating countries and NATO Allies.
  - Currently, the following non-NATO countries take part in the Dialogue: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia.
- **Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI):** It is a partnership forum that aims to contribute to **long-term global and regional security** by offering non-NATO countries in the broader Middle East region the opportunity to cooperate with NATO.
  - Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates currently participate in the Initiative.



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