NATO

GUIA DE ESTUDIO
ORGANIZACIÓN DEL TRATADO DEL ATLÁNTICO NORTE

Committee's History

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization, or NATO, is an intergovernmental military alliance that was established in 1949. The primary objective of NATO's establishment was to protect its member countries' freedoms and security by working together and conducting joint defense research. Since its founding, NATO has played a vital part in fostering transatlantic cooperation and has made a substantial contribution to the improvement of security, stability, and peace in the North Atlantic region.

After World War II, Europe was sharply divided, and numerous security concerns required to be addressed. As tensions between the Soviet Union and the Western democracies grew and the Cold War was about to break out, European countries, the US, Canada, and other countries tried to negotiate a collective defense agreement to deter future Soviet attack. NATO was founded on April 4, 1949, when the North Atlantic Treaty was signed in Washington, D.C. Among the first twelve founding members were Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the United Kingdom, and the United States. According to the treaty, an armed attack against one member state would be considered an attack against all members, and collective action would be required to restore and preserve security.

The concept of collective defense is the core of NATO's mission. Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty outlines that, requiring prompt collective action in the event of an armed strike against any member. This pledge has served as a strong deterrence and contributed to maintaining peace in the Euro-Atlantic region for more than 70 years. NATO has changed over time in response to shifting worldwide circumstances and safety concerns. When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, NATO expanded its membership base and reoriented its strategy to confront emerging challenges such as terrorism and regional conflicts. At the moment, NATO has 31 members, with the recent addition of Finland, from North America and Europe.

Evolution of the NATO

Origins and Foundation: The Cold War Era (1949-1991)

The end of World War II did not bring the expected peace to Europe, but rather a new ideological and geopolitical division. The Soviet Union, with its communist ideology and growing military might, extended its influence over Eastern Europe, causing deep concern in Western democracies. In this context of the nascent Cold War, the need for a collective defense alliance emerged.

● April 4, 1949: Signing of the Washington Treaty and Founding of NATO. Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, United Kingdom, and the United States were the founding members. These twelve countries united with the conviction that the security of one was the security of all. The primary justification was the perception of an existential threat from the Soviet Union. The Berlin Blockade (1948-1949) and the fear of communist expansion in Western Europe served as catalysts. Article 5 of the Washington Treaty establishes the principle of collective defense: an armed attack against one or more members in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all. This clause was, and remains, the core of the alliance, deterring potential aggression.

● 1950: Creation of the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE). Although NATO was founded in 1949, the invasion of Korea in June 1950 highlighted the need for a more robust and unified military structure. SHAPE was created to coordinate the alliance's military forces, develop defense plans, and conduct joint exercises. It was vital for transforming political commitments into a credible and operational military capability.

● 1952: First Enlargement. New Members: Greece and Turkey. The accession of these two countries was strategic to strengthen NATO's southern flank. Both countries were seen as key points to contain Soviet influence in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Near East, regions of vital geopolitical importance. Their incorporation extended NATO's security network, closing potential strategic gaps.

● May 9, 1955: Accession of West Germany: The integration of West Germany into NATO was a crucial and controversial decision. After World War II, there was a debate about German rearmament. However, the growing Soviet threat led Western powers to see West Germany as an indispensable partner for the defense of Central Europe. Its incorporation meant a significant gain in terms of military capability and geographical

positioning. This accession also directly provoked the Soviet Union, which founded the Warsaw Pact as its own military bloc, solidifying Europe's division.

● 1966: France's Withdrawal from NATO's Integrated Military Structure (until 2009). Although France remained a political member of the Alliance, President Charles de Gaulle decided to withdraw the country from the integrated military command structure. The main justification was France's desire to maintain greater independence in its defense and nuclear policy, and its objection to the military preeminence of the United States within NATO. This decision led to the relocation of NATO's headquarters from Paris to Brussels.

Post-Cold War: Towards a New Security Architecture (1991-2004)

The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact in 1991 marked the end of the Cold War. NATO, which had been created to face a specific threat, found itself in a new geopolitical landscape. The organization had to redefine its purpose and role, seeking a new security architecture in a unified Europe.

● 1991: Creation of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) the members: NATO countries and former Warsaw Pact members, as well as the new independent states that emerged from the disintegration of the Soviet Union. The NACC was a pioneering attempt to build bridges with former adversaries and foster mutual trust. Its creation sought to promote political dialogue and security cooperation with Central and Eastern European countries, helping with democratic transition and stabilizing the post-Cold War region. It was a crucial step to avoid security vacuums.

● 1994: Launch of the Partnership for Peace (PfP): The PfP was a practical and flexible initiative to deepen military cooperation with non-NATO countries. It allowed partner countries to participate in military exercises, training programs, and peacekeeping operations under NATO leadership. This initiative not only improved interoperability but also served as a preparatory mechanism for future enlargements, allowing aspiring members to align with NATO standards.

● 1997: Madrid Summit – Invitation to New Members: This summit marked an important milestone in NATO's open-door policy. The invitation to new members was a response to the desire of Central and Eastern European countries to integrate into Euro-Atlantic security structures. The justification was to extend NATO's zone of stability, democracy,

and security eastward, consolidating democratic and economic reforms in these countries and preventing the resurgence of old rivalries.

● March 12, 1999: Second Enlargement (First in the Post-Cold War Era): New Members: Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland. The accession of these three countries, which had demonstrated their commitment to democratic values and defense reforms, was seen as a natural step to cement security and stability in Central Europe. Their incorporation meant that NATO's Article 5 now covered these countries, providing them with an unprecedented security guarantee in their post-Soviet history. The enlargement symbolically coincided with NATO's 50th anniversary.

● 2002: Creation of the NATO-Russia Council: Despite persistent tensions, both NATO and Russia recognized the need for structured dialogue. The NATO-Russia Council was established as a forum for consultation, cooperation, and joint action in areas of mutual interest, such as combating terrorism and proliferation. It sought to foster a more constructive relationship and reduce mistrust, although deep differences over the European security vision would limit its long-term effectiveness.

● 2002: Prague Summit – Invitation to More Members: Building on the success of the first round of post-Cold War enlargement, the Prague Summit reaffirmed NATO's open-door policy. The justification was to continue extending the zone of stability and security to other parts of Europe, including the Baltic countries, which had been part of the Soviet Union, and Balkan countries. The invitation sought to strengthen security in Southeast Europe and the Baltics.

Enlargements and Challenges of the 21st Century (2004 onwards)

The 21st century has brought new challenges for NATO, from international terrorism (especially after September 11, 2001) to Russia's resurgent aggression and cyber threats. The alliance has continued to adapt, demonstrating its ongoing relevance.

● March 29, 2004: Third Enlargement (the largest in terms of number of countries): New Members: Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia. This was the largest enlargement in NATO's history. Its justification was to consolidate security in the Baltic and Black Sea, areas of growing strategic importance, and to strengthen democracies and defense sector reforms in these countries. The accession

of the Baltic countries, in particular, was a bold step given their history with the Soviet Union, and reflected NATO's commitment not to leave any security "vacuum" in Europe.

● 2009: France's Return to NATO's Integrated Military Command Structure: Forty-three years after its withdrawal, France decided to fully reintegrate into NATO's military structure. The justification was that France's full participation would benefit both NATO as a whole and France's own security interests, allowing it to have greater influence in the Alliance's strategic decisions and improving the coherence of European defense.

● April 1, 2009: Fourth Enlargement. New Members: Albania and Croatia. The incorporation of Albania and Croatia was fundamental to extend stability to the Western Balkans, a region that had experienced significant conflicts and tensions in previous decades. Their accession was a crucial step to further integrate the region into Euro-Atlantic structures and consolidate peace and security.

● June 5, 2017: Fifth Enlargement. New Member: Montenegro. Similar to previous accessions in the Balkans, Montenegro's incorporation sought to foster stability and security in a strategic region that remains sensitive. It demonstrated that NATO's open-door policy remained active for countries meeting the accession criteria.

● March 27, 2020: Sixth Enlargement. New Member: North Macedonia. North Macedonia's accession was the result of years of effort and, crucially, the resolution of a decades-long name dispute with Greece. Its incorporation was justified by the need to further strengthen stability and security in the Western Balkans, a region of strategic importance for NATO.

● April 4, 2023: Seventh Enlargement. New Member: Finland. The full-scale invasion of Ukraine by Russia in February 2022 represented a seismic shift in the European security landscape. Finland, which had traditionally maintained a policy of military non-alignment, considered that Russian aggression made its stance unsustainable. The accession was justified by Finland's need for the security guarantee of Article 5 and by the strengthening of NATO's deterrence and defense in the Baltic Sea region.

● March 7, 2024: Eighth Enlargement. New Member: Sweden. Like Finland, Russia's aggression in Ukraine prompted Sweden, another traditionally neutral country, to reassess its security posture. Sweden's accession to NATO was justified by the need for collective security in the face of the growing Russian threat and by the strategic value that Sweden's geography, military capability, and experience bring to the Alliance, especially in the Baltic Sea region.

Key Organisms Created Over Time (In Addition to SHAPE)

Beyond the enlargement of its membership, NATO has developed a complex network of bodies to fulfill its various functions.

- ● The North Atlantic Council (NAC): Since its founding, it has been the principal political and military decision-making body of NATO. Its meetings at the ambassador, ministerial, and Head of State and Government levels are the forum where all important decisions are discussed, reflecting the Alliance's principle of consensus.
- ● The Military Committee (MC): Composed of the Chiefs of Defense of member countries, this committee provides military guidance and advice to the NAC. Its function is to ensure that political decisions are translated into coherent and executable military plans.
- ● NATO Headquarters in Brussels: Over the years, countless divisions, directorates, and agencies have developed within the headquarters. These structures address a vast range of responsibilities, from defense policy and operations to intelligence, public diplomacy, science and technology, and cybersecurity, ensuring the daily functioning and strategic planning of the Alliance.
- ● The NATO Support and Procurement Agency (NSPA): Created to facilitate acquisition, maintenance, and logistical support for member countries. Its objective is to optimize resources and ensure that NATO forces are well-equipped and supported.
- ● Allied Joint Force Command Brunssum (JFC Brunssum) and Allied Joint Force Command Naples (JFC Naples): These are key operational commands responsible for the direction and execution of NATO operations and missions, from peacekeeping operations to crisis management.
- ● The NATO Defense College (NDA): Established for the education and training of military and civilian personnel from member and partner countries, it fosters a common understanding of NATO principles and strategies.

Mandate and Functions:

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) stands as a cornerstone of international security, a political and military alliance established in 1949 to safeguard the freedom and security of its members. Its enduring purpose is to ensure the collective defense of all Allies against any threat, operating through both political and military means.

NATO's mandate is rooted in the principle of collective defense, enshrined in Article 5 of the Washington Treaty. This core principle dictates that an armed attack against one or more member states in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all. This commitment binds its members together, fostering a spirit of solidarity and ensuring that no single nation is forced to rely solely on its national capabilities to meet its security objectives. Article 5 has only been invoked once in NATO's history, in response to the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the United States in 2001.

Beyond collective defense, NATO's functions encompass two other critical pillars: crisis prevention and management, and cooperative security. In an increasingly complex and unpredictable global landscape, NATO plays a vital role in addressing a wide range of security challenges, from regional conflicts and terrorism to cyber warfare and disinformation campaigns.

NATO's actions manifest in various ways. Politically, it provides a unique forum for member states to consult on security-related issues, share intelligence, and build consensus on collective responses. Decisions are made by consensus, reflecting the collective will of all member countries. Militarily, NATO maintains a robust defense posture, developing and maintaining advanced capabilities, conducting joint exercises and training to ensure interoperability among Allied forces, and deploying standing forces to enhance deterrence and defense.

In crisis management, NATO employs a comprehensive approach, leveraging both military and non-military tools. This involves analyzing and preparing for various levels of involvement, from diplomatic efforts to the potential use of force, in response to conflicts, natural disasters, or other threats to Allied security. NATO has a well-defined crisis management process, involving continuous assessment, development of response strategies, and coordinated execution of operations, often in cooperation with other international organizations.

Furthermore, NATO actively engages in cooperative security through partnerships with non-member countries and international organizations. These partnerships promote dialogue, practical cooperation, and capacity building, extending the Alliance's influence beyond its borders and contributing to broader international peace and stability.

Structure:

NATO, as a political-military alliance, possesses a complex and multifaceted structure designed to facilitate political consultation, decision-making, military planning, and the execution of operations. This structure has adapted over time to respond to evolving geopolitical challenges, from collective defense during the Cold War to crisis management and cooperative security in the 21st century. Broadly speaking, NATO's structure is divided into two main branches: the civilian (political) structure and the military structure.

Civilian (Political) Structure

NATO's civilian branch is the nerve center of political decision-making and diplomacy, primarily located at NATO Headquarters in Brussels, Belgium. The North Atlantic Council (NAC) is NATO's principal political decision-making body, with authority over all Alliance matters, and its decisions are binding for all member countries. It's composed of the Permanent Representatives (Ambassadors) of each member country, who meet at least once a week. The NAC also convenes at the level of Foreign and Defense Ministers, and at the Head of State and Government level during NATO Summits. All NAC decisions are made by consensus, with no voting or right of veto, reflecting the collective will of all member countries. This council is chaired by the Secretary General of NATO, who serves as the Alliance's senior international civil servant. Their role is key to driving the consultation and decision-making process, proposing topics for debate, mediating disagreements, and acting as NATO's primary spokesperson.

Supporting the Secretary General and the NAC is the International Staff, a group of international civilian personnel. This secretariat is responsible for preparing meetings, coordinating committee work, and implementing decisions. Key divisions include the Political Affairs and Security Policy Division, which handles security policy and relations with partners; the Operations Division, responsible for the planning, direction, and monitoring of missions; the Defense Policy and Planning Division, which addresses capability development and defense planning; the Defense Investment Division, managing common budgets; and the Public Diplomacy Division, overseeing NATO's strategic communications. Furthermore, a vast network of specialized Subordinate Committees prepares the NAC's work across all areas, regularly bringing together national experts and representatives from all member countries. A specific committee is the Nuclear Planning Group (NPG), which holds the same authority as the NAC regarding the Alliance's nuclear policy matters.

Military Structure

NATO's military branch is responsible for the planning, direction, and execution of the Alliance's military operations. The Military Committee (MC) is NATO's highest military authority and the principal military advisor to the NAC, providing guidance on the Alliance's policy and strategy. It is composed of the Chiefs of Defense (CHODs) from each member country, who meet regularly, and is chaired by the Chairman of the Military Committee (CMC). The International Military Staff (IMS), comprising military personnel from member countries, supports the Military Committee by preparing documents, analyzing information, and facilitating communication between the Military Committee and the strategic commands.

NATO possesses an integrated military command structure designed for efficiency and interoperability, consisting of two main strategic commands. The Allied Command Operations (ACO), with its Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) in Mons, Belgium, and led by the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), is the primary command for NATO operations. It's responsible for planning and executing all of the Alliance's military operations, including collective defense and crisis management. Under ACO, subordinate commands operate, such as Joint Force Command Brunssum (JFC Brunssum), Joint Force Command Naples (JFC Naples), and specific commands for maritime (MARCOM), air (AIRCOM), and land (LANDCOM) domains, along with the Standing NATO Maritime Groups (SNMGs and SNMCMGs). The other strategic command is the Allied Command Transformation (ACT), located in Norfolk, Virginia, United States, and led by the Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (SACT). This command is responsible for the transformation and modernization of NATO's military capabilities, focusing on innovation, experimentation, concept development, doctrine, education, training, and interoperability to ensure the Alliance adapts to future challenges. Under ACT are bodies such as the Joint Warfare Centre (JWC) and the NATO Defense College (NDC).

NATO Agencies and Programs

In addition to its main structures, NATO has a series of specialized agencies and programs that provide vital technical, logistical, and capability support for its functioning. The NATO Support and Procurement Agency (NSPA) is crucial for providing logistical support and procurements to member countries, optimizing resources and facilitating equipment interoperability. The NATO

Communications and Information Agency (NCIA) is essential for modern military operations, providing C4ISR (Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance) and cyber defense capabilities and services. Meanwhile, the NATO Science and Technology Organization (STO) fosters and coordinates scientific and technological research and development in support of NATO's defense and security. Also notable is the NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence (CCDCOE), a knowledge and expertise hub in cyber defense that significantly contributes to the Alliance's cyber defense capabilities. The NATO Airborne Early Warning & Control Force (NAEW&C Force) operates NATO's fleet of AWACS (Airborne Warning and Control System) aircraft, providing aerial surveillance and command and control capabilities. Furthermore, the NATO Security Investment Programme (NSIP) is critical, as it's a common funding program to provide joint military infrastructure and capabilities that benefit the Alliance as a whole.

Relations with Partners and Cooperation Programs

NATO also maintains an extensive network of relationships with non-member countries and other international organizations to foster stability and cooperative security. The Partnership for Peace (PfP) is a key cooperation program with countries in Europe and Central Asia, focusing on political dialogue, military interoperability, and security cooperation. The Mediterranean Dialogue is a forum for cooperation with seven countries from the Mediterranean basin, while the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI) establishes a similar forum with four Gulf Cooperation Council countries, seeking to address common security challenges. Finally, NATO collaborates with a number of Partners Across the Globe, which are countries from other regions of the world, such as Australia, Colombia, Japan, South Korea, New Zealand, and Pakistan, who share NATO's values and with whom cooperation occurs in areas of mutual interest.

This complex and well-organized structure enables NATO to fulfill its fundamental mission of ensuring the collective defense of its members and contributing to international peace and stability in a constantly changing world.

Topic:

Introduction:

The global security landscape has been dramatically reshaped in recent years, with the emergence of new and escalating geopolitical conflicts posing unprecedented challenges to established international orders. At the forefront of this shifting paradigm stands the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), an alliance forged in the crucible of the Cold War to ensure collective defense. However, the nature of threats has evolved significantly, moving beyond conventional state-on-state confrontation to encompass hybrid warfare, cyberattacks, disinformation campaigns, and the re-emergence of aggressive geopolitical actors.

In response to these profound shifts, particularly Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, NATO has embarked on a significant restructuring. This involves a fundamental re-evaluation of its strategic concept, a massive reinforcement of its deterrence and defense posture, and a renewed emphasis on collective security. The Alliance is adapting its force structures, enhancing its readiness, increasing defense spending, and strengthening its ability to respond across all domains – land, sea, air, cyber, and space. This introduction will explore the imperative for NATO's restructuring in the face of current geopolitical conflicts, highlighting the key changes and adaptations undertaken to safeguard the security of its members and uphold stability in an increasingly volatile world.

History of the topic:

NATO has been involved in a range of actions and interventions since its formation in 1949, primarily to ensure the collective defense of its members and, in the post-Cold War era, to contribute to broader international security and stability.

The Cold War Era (1949-1991):

- ● **1949: Formation of NATO:**   The North Atlantic Treaty is signed by 12 founding members, establishing the alliance for collective defense against the perceived threat from the Soviet Union.

● **1950s-1980s: Deterrence and Containment:** Throughout the Cold War, NATO's primary "action" was its existence as a strong deterrent to Soviet aggression. This involved:

○ **Building a unified defense structure:** Establishing integrated military commands (like SHAPE), standardizing equipment and procedures, and conducting numerous joint military exercises (e.g., Exercise Mainbrace in 1952).

○ **Deployment of forces:** Stationing Allied forces in Europe, particularly in West Germany, as a forward defense.

○ **Development of strategic concepts:** Adopting strategies like "Massive Retaliation" (initially) and later "Flexible Response" (1967), which involved a range of options from conventional defense to nuclear response.

○ **Political Consultation:** Regularly consulting on security issues and coordinating foreign policies among member states to present a united front against the Soviet bloc.

● **1955: West Germany joins NATO:** This significant expansion prompted the Soviet Union to form the Warsaw Pact.

● **1966: France withdraws from NATO's integrated military structure:** While remaining a political member, France withdrew its forces from NATO's integrated command to pursue its own independent defense policy, though it later rejoined the military structure in 2009.

Post-Cold War Era (1991-Present):

● **1990-1991: Gulf War (Operations Anchor Guard and Ace Guard):** In response to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, NATO deployed air defense packages and conducted surveillance operations from Turkey to deter Iraqi aggression and support the liberation of Kuwait.

● **1990s: Engagement in the Yugoslav Wars:** This marked NATO's first major out-of-area military interventions:

○ **1992-1995: Operation Deny Flight (Bosnian No-Fly Zone):** NATO enforced a UN-mandated no-fly zone over Bosnia and Herzegovina, escalating to using force against violations.

○ **1992-1996: Operation Maritime Guard / Sharp Guard (Naval Blockade):** NATO enforce UN sanctions and an arms embargo against the former Yugoslavia in the Adriatic Sea.

○ **1995: Operation Deliberate Force (Air Campaign in Bosnia):** NATO conducted extensive air strikes against Bosnian Serb military targets, which played a crucial role in bringing about the Dayton Peace Accords.

○ **1995-2004: IFOR/SFOR (Peacekeeping in Bosnia):** NATO deployed a large-scale Implementation Force (IFOR) and later a Stabilization Force (SFOR) to enforce the Dayton Peace Accords and maintain peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

● **1999: Kosovo War (Operation Allied Force):** NATO launched an air campaign against Serbia (then part of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia) to halt ethnic cleansing and severe human rights abuses in Kosovo. This was a controversial intervention as it was undertaken without explicit UN Security Council authorization.

● **1999-Present: KFOR (Peacekeeping in Kosovo):** Following the air campaign, NATO deployed the Kosovo Force (KFOR) to ensure stability and maintain peace in Kosovo.

● **1999-2004: NATO Enlargement (Central and Eastern European Countries):** The Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland (1999), followed by Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia (2004), joined NATO, extending the alliance's security umbrella eastward.

● **2001: Invocation of Article 5 (Post-9/11):** For the first and only time in its history, NATO invoked Article 5 of the Washington Treaty following the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the United States, signifying a collective defense against terrorism.

● **2001-2016: Operation Active Endeavour (Maritime Counter-Terrorism):** NATO conducted maritime patrols in the Mediterranean Sea to detect and deter terrorist activity.

● **2003-2014: ISAF (International Security Assistance Force) in Afghanistan:** NATO took over command of the UN-mandated ISAF mission in Afghanistan, its largest operation to date. The mission focused on security, stability, and training Afghan security forces.

● **2004-Present: NATO Training Mission-Iraq (NTM-I) / NATO Mission Iraq (NMI):** NATO has provided training and assistance to Iraqi security forces and institutions.

● **2009-2016: Operation Ocean Shield (Counter-Piracy off Horn of Africa):** NATO deployed naval forces to combat piracy in the Gulf of Aden and off the coast of Somalia.

● **2011: Operation Unified Protector (Libya):** NATO enforced a UN-mandated no-fly zone and conducted air strikes to protect civilians during the Libyan civil war.

● **2015-2021: Resolute Support Mission (Afghanistan):** Following ISAF, NATO launched a smaller, non-combat mission focused on training, advising, and assisting Afghan security forces.

● **2017-Present: Montenegro and North Macedonia Join NATO:** Further enlargement with Montenegro (2017) and North Macedonia (2020) joining the alliance.

● **2022-Present: Enhanced Forward Presence (Eastern Flank):** In response to Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, NATO significantly reinforced its Eastern Flank with additional troops and capabilities in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland.

● **2023-2024: Finland and Sweden Join NATO:** Finland (2023) and Sweden (2024) join NATO, marking a historic shift in their long-standing neutrality and further strengthening the alliance's presence in Northern Europe.

Key Words:

Conflict: Conflict refers to a disagreement or a struggle between two or more parties who have opposing interests or stances regarding an issue. In this topic the word ''conflict'' is used as the disagreement between two countries which involves political and military actions.

MAP: MAP stands for Membership Action Plan. The MAP program offers guidance, aid, and hands-on support to nations looking for membership in NATO. This assistance is given in accordance with each nation's unique requirements with respect to political, economic, defense, resource, security, and legal elements. Membership Action Plan (MAP) is the official institutional mechanism used by the alliance to guide selected applicants toward membership.

Oslo Accords: The Oslo Accords, which sought peace within five years, were signed in 1993 by Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat. It was the first time that both parties had acknowledged one another.

IDF: IDF, which stands for Israeli Defense Force, is the military force in charge of defending Israel from all types of threats by land, air, and sea. The Israeli Air Force, Israeli Air Defense Force, Israeli Navy, and Israeli Land Forces make up this group.

KFOR: KFOR stands for Kosovo Force which was established by NATO in 1999 in order to maintain peace in Kosovo during the attack of Serbian forces on Kosovo. KFOR is a force which consists of multiple forces from multiple countries who are NATO members or NATO allies. Even

though this force has left its place to Kosova police in time, by 2013 KFOR still has more than 4000 soldiers present.

NRF: NRF stands for NATO Response Force. NRF is a high-readiness force which was formed in 2003 in order to be able to deploy NATO forces in a short notice. This NATO rapid deployment force consists of land, sea, air and special forces units which are trained to provide immediate collective defense of Allied members, help relieve a disaster, aid humanitarian needs, act as an initial force deployment before a larger force unit and act as peacekeepers.

Current situation:

Conflict Between Ukraine-Russia
Historical Background

Before the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Ukraine used to be a part of the Soviet Union. Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 Ukraine declared its independence by holding a referendum. 90 percent of the voters endorsed independence and Lenoid Kravchuk was elected as the president while the Communist Party dissolved. After this dissolvement and the establishment of the new government, a separate Ukrainian army force started forming. Although these crucial developments were taking place, Ukraine was still under the pressure of Moscow, trying to convince the countries who were separated from the USSR to reconsider their independence and change their course into a reconstructed Soviet Union. Ukraine endured these oppressive acts and after the referendum of independence the leaders of Russia, Ukraine and Belarus agreed on establishing a new political block called the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). After this establishment the USSR was officially disbanded. After the declaration of independence, Ukraine started to become powerful enough to catch up with European countries in the aspect of economy and prosperity.

Even though Kravcuk started off strong by integrating Ukraine to European standards, at the end of the 20th century the economy of Ukraine had faltered aggressively. The efforts to reach the standards of Europe fell short of expectations with inadequate economy, social and political change. In this time period Ukraine suffered an 8 year recession. Following the big crash in the economy, Ukraine started working on its relations between Europe and neighboring countries. These political efforts resulted in absolute success and Ukraine made crucial steps in the process of democratization. These acts helped Ukraine to establish itself as a strong member of

the international community. These rapprochement policies were taken into account by the Russian Government and subsequently Russia developed a political stance against the newly formed Ukrainian government and its political stance.

Holodomor Incident

The conflict between Ukraine and Russia started even before the declaration of independence of Ukraine. In 1928 Stalin endorsed a policy on agriculture called "Policy of Collectivization" which meant that the individual farm owners were being forced to combine their harvests with the collective farms. By all means this meant that all of the farms were now state property. Since farm owners started to lose their profits notwithstanding working more hours, Ukrainian farmers started resisting this policy. This rebellion damaged the faith in unity of the USSR in Ukraine. This national movement intimidated the government in Moscow and Josef Stalin ,who was the leader of the Soviet Union, started implying harsh punishment for those who objected to surrender, and by time these punishments were put into effect all across Ukraine. In the end these punishments manifested as a devastating incident called ''The Holodomor''.

The Holodomor is accepted as a man-made famine in Soviet Ukraine made by Stalin. Even though scholars are in consensus about The Holodomor being a man made genocide, some still do accept that it was an unavoidable consequence of rapid Soviet industrialization and collectivization of agriculture. The emotional effects of the lives that were lost remained alive for hundreds of years in the Ukrainian Nation and this fueled the idea of nationalism and independence.

Different Governments-Different Stances in Ukraine

In 2004 Ukraine experienced a revolution called ''Orange Revolution'' that included a series of protests and political events following the presidential elections. The elections took place between Viktor Yanukovch ,who was more prone to being an ally to the Russian Federation, and Viktor Yushchenko ,who pursued a more pro European integration policy.

Initial results showed that Yanukovych was the winner but these results were not accepted by the people ,especially the supporters of Yushchenko, due to the allegations of electoral fraud and voter intimidation. In response to these allegations Ukranians started massive protests in

the streets and maintained a continuous presence in Kiev's Independence Square (Maidan Nezalezhnosti) with peaceful intentions and they used the color orange as the symbol of the movement. These movements gained international attention and various Western countries expressed their concerns over the fairness of the elections. With international support for the revolution, the Supreme Court of Ukraine felt under pressure and decided on declaring the results invalid and the second round of the presidential election was ordered. At the end of the second round Victor Yushchenko was declared president, marking a significant victory for the Orange Revolution.

This victory created tension in Moscow since Russia has experienced similar ''color revolutions'' in the past. The Russian government responded to the Orange Revolution by taking measures to demolish all of the similar intentions that may fire a political upheaval in Russia. President Vladimir Putin ordered tightening the control over political opposition, media and civil society within Russia. The Russian authorities also criticized the Western intervention that influenced the course of the revolution and put pressure on the Supreme Court of Ukraine. Even though Russia maintained the opposition stance against Western countries, the new Ukrainian government pursued a more pro-Western and pro-European integration policy which strained the relations between two parties. After 5 years of presidential term, Yushchenko lost the next election to his previous opponent, Viktor Yanukovych. With the establishment of a pro-Russian policy of Yanukovych, Ukraine started to strengthen its relations with Russia again with different measures. Yanukovych suspended the signing of an EU association agreement with the European Union in order to strengthen the economic relations with Russia.

Following these acts Ukrainian people who support the idea of a pro-Western Ukraine started Euromaidan protests to dissuade the government from a pro-Russian stance. The initial protests started off with peaceful gatherings in Maidan Nezalezhnosti but the police crackdowns and use of force led to escalation of the protests. As a result of the violent clashes from 100 to several hundred protestors were killed under the name of law enforcement. In February 2014 some members of the party, which is led by Yanukovych, voted for the removal of Yanukovych from the presidency. After his removal his own party issued a warrant for his arrest. With this warrant Yanukocyvh fled to Russia and an interim government was formed. Seeing the pro-western movements in Ukraine, Russia saw the power vacuum caused by the protests as an opportunity to show power and they responded by annexing Crimea in March 2014.

This move was condemned internationally and it led to strained relations with Ukraine. After an early presidential election in May 2014, Petro Poroshenko was elected as the new president and the conflict in eastern Ukraine continued. In September 2014 and February 2015 two agreements were made under the name of ''Minsk Agreements''. These agreements referred to two separate ceasefire agreements in order to resolve the conflict in Eastern Ukraine. Even though these agreements were intended to provide a framework for a peaceful political resolution, on account of the lack of implementation these agreements failed to reach their intended purposes. Due to the challenge of the implementation of the Minsk agreements which included withdrawal of the heavy weapons, ceasefire of hostilities and facilitation of a political settlement the situation remained tense. In response to Russia's aggressive actions in Ukraine, the European Union and the United States imposed sanctions on Russia which fueled the aggression.

From the beginning of Euromaidan protests the conflict between Ukraine and Russia has never been solved completely. Although the tension cooled down after the Minsk agreements, upon the order of Putin to station the Russian tanks and military personnel across the Ukrainian frontier in 2021 the tension got heated once again.

Current Status: The Russian Attack

Even though Putin declared that there was no intention of striking while the Russian military were stationed across the Ukrainian border, Russia ultimately attacked the country without issuing an official "war declaration." President Putin's declaration of "exceptional military activity" on February 24, 2022, marked the beginning of Russia's invasion on Ukraine. According to Russia, the attack was carried out for the purpose of "protecting the people in the motherland" and "demilitarizing and denazifying Ukraine." The intrusion included rocket strikes, air strikes, and ground attacks on a few fronts. This was the biggest attack on any European country since World War II.

The president of Ukraine ,Volodymyr Zelenskyy, declared martial law in Ukraine and ordered a general mobilization throughout Ukraine immediately after the invasion began. First invasion resulted in tens of thousands of Ukrainian civilian casualties and much more military casualties for both sides. Russian troops occupied around %20 of Ukrainian territory until the end of June

2022. Opposition and counter-offensives by Ukrainian powers prompted Russian military losses and kept Russia from taking the capitol, Kyiv.

International Responses

Universally, the intrusion was denounced as a conflict of hostility and was condemned deeply. The United Nations General Assembly condemned the intrusion and demanded a full Russian withdrawal and the Council of Europe removed Russia. Sanctions forced on Russia had ramifications for the worldwide economy and the Russian economy but still, the sanctions remained or even increased.

The International Court of Justice requested a stop to military tasks and started investigations on Russia due to possible crimes against humanity, genocide and abduction of children. In March 2023 the court issued a warrant for the arrest of Putin for keeping him responsible for the unlawful deportation of children. Compassionate and military aid was provided to Ukraine by multiple countries all around the world. Volodymyr Zelenskyy declared on December 1, 2023, that the Ukrainian counteroffensive had failed due to a lack of ground troops and weaponry. Numerous foreign media sources reported in December 2023 that the Ukrainian counteroffensive had fallen short of all of its strategic goals and had not succeeded in regaining any appreciable amount of land. As of August 2023, almost 500,000 Russian and Ukrainian troopers have been killed and in excess of 10,000 civilians have been killed. The attacks continue still on this day resulting in serious international emergency, numerous casualties and a huge influx of displaced people resulting in a huge refugee crisis.

Asserting that peace talks to terminate the Russo-Ukrainian conflict were "not possible at this moment," UN Secretary-General António Guterres stated in May 2023 that both Russia and Ukraine were "completely absorbed in this war" and "convinced that they can win.". Even though some countries such as China have proposed peace plans for both parties, In June 2023, the minister of defense for Ukraine underlined that Beijing's efforts to persuade Russia to hand over its seized lands is a must for Ukraine to accept China as a mediator.

Actions Taken by NATO

Especially in the times of Euromaidan protests and Eastern Ukraine conflicts, NATO has been known to aid Ukraine with different actions. NATO has supported Ukraine with political statements declaring the support for the territorial integrity of Ukraine and independence, aiding with non-lethal supplies such as medical supplies and humanitarian aid, deploying NATO military advisers in Ukraine in order to assist the enhancement of the capabilities of Ukrainian military forces, imposing sanctions on Russia with the goal of prevailing Russia to enter the path of peace. Keeping in mind that NATO is an organization it does not have a direct military role in the conflict but individual member states ,especially those who are located in the conflicted region, have taken military and other actions under their own name.

Following Russia's unlawful attempt to seize Ukrainian land in September 2022, Ukraine renewed its application to join NATO. Considering the goal of entering NATO of Ukraine, NATO has been facilitating the way into the organization for Ukraine. Normally members are required to commit to a membership action plan, or MAP, in order to join NATO. In order to facilitate the way, NATO members have agreed on the removal of the Membership Action Plan requirement for the entrance of Ukraine to NATO. After Russia invaded four Ukrainian territories in September, Ukraine officially submitted its application for fast-track NATO membership. The Allies maintained their commitment to Ukraine's NATO membership during the Vilnius Summit.

Conflict Between Israel-Palestine
Historical Background
Israel Before 1948

After the Ottoman Empire, which had ruled the mentioned region of the Middle East, was defeated in World War One, Britain took control of the area now known as Palestine. A majority of Arabs and a minority of Jews resided in the region, along with many smaller ethnic groups. The global community entrusted the UK with establishing a "national home" for Jews in Palestine. This was a result of the 1917 Balfour Declaration, which was a promise given to the Jewish people in Britain by then-foreign secretary Arthur Balfour. The proclamation was accepted by the newly established League of Nations, which served as the model for the United Nations, in 1922 and embodied in the British administration over Palestine. Palestine was the ancestral home of the Jews, but the Arab Palestinians also claimed the land and were against the relocation. Jews began to arrive in greater numbers between the 1920s and the 1940s; many of them were escaping persecution in Europe, particularly the Nazi Holocaust during

World War II. There was also a rise in violence against British rule and between Jews and Arabs. The UN agreed in 1947 to divide Palestine into Jewish and Arab states, with Jerusalem becoming a global metropolis. Even though the Jewish officials approved this proposal since the Arab side rejected the idea, it was never carried out.

Conflict in 1948

Jewish leaders declared the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 shortly after Britain withdrew because of its failure to resolve the conflict. It was intended to serve as both an independent homeland and a haven of safety for Jews escaping persecution. Months of fighting had escalated between Arab and Jewish militant groups, and five Arab nations launched an attack on Israel the day it became a state. Israel managed to occupy most of the region by the time the conflict came to an end in a truce the following year. Egypt occupied Gaza, and Jordan occupied the area now known as the West Bank. Israeli soldiers invaded the West of Jerusalem, while Jordanian forces occupied the East.

Israel emerged victorious at the end of the war in 1949. There was a "Catastrophe" known to the Palestinians as Al Nakba, when 750,000 Palestinians were forced to flee their homes and the land was split into three sections: the Gaza Strip, the West Bank (across the Jordan River), and the State of Israel. Whilst the Palestinians claimed East Jerusalem as the capital of an imagined future Palestinian state, Israel continued to occupy the West Bank and claimed the entire city as its capital. The United States was among the few nations that acknowledged the city as the capital of Israel. In the decades that followed, there were further disputes and attacks since there was never a peace treaty.

Gaza Strip

Gaza is a tiny region of land with a short southern borderline with Egypt, but it is surrounded by Israel and the Mediterranean Sea. Slightly less than 41 kilometers in length and 10 km in width, it is home to almost two million people, making it among the world's most densely populated regions. Following the 1948–1949 conflict, Egypt occupied Gaza for 19 years.

During the 1967 conflict, which is also known as the six day war, Israel invaded Gaza and remained there until 2005, during which time it established Jewish settlements. In 2005

Palestinian forces invaded the Gaza Strip. Israel established a temporary embargo on Gaza in 2005, unilaterally removed its armed troops from the region, and dismantled its settlements there. Israel kept control over its shared border, coastline, and airspace even after it removed its settlers and military. The UN Security Council and the UK government, among others, maintain the view that settlements are illegal under international law, but still Israel opposes this statement.

Hamas's Rise to Power

After Hamas overthrew the long-standing dominant party Fatah in the Palestinian Authority's 2006 legislative elections, partisanship among Palestinians erupted. This handed control of the Gaza Strip to Hamas, a political and militant movement influenced by the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood.

The election triumph of Hamas was not recognized by the US and the EU as the group has been viewed as a terrorist organization by western governments since the late 1990s. Following the ascent to power of the Hamas organization, Israel altered its embargo to a permanent one on Gaza in 2007. Even now, the siege is still ongoing. Additionally, Israel controls East Jerusalem and the West Bank, which the Palestinians hope to be a part of their future state. Following a surprise strike by Hamas within Israel, which took the lives of at least 1,200 people, Israel shut off the Gaza Strip's supply of petroleum, food, water, and power on October 9 and enforced a complete embargo. Israel has been asked to remove the embargo by the UN multiple times. While rights organizations and Palestinians argue that Israel's blockade of the Gaza Strip has exacerbated already dreadful living circumstances, Israel has justified its actions by stating the need to stem the flow of weapons into the region.

After the embargo, violence broke out between Hamas and Fatah after Hamas took over. A ceasefire was reached in 2011 after an extended period of failed peace negotiations and violent clashes. In 2014, Fatah and Hamas formed a unity government. Clashes in the Palestinian territories in the summer of 2014 led to a military confrontation between the Israeli military and Hamas. In response, Hamas fired around 3,000 missiles into Israel, and Israel launched a massive attack in Gaza. Fatah President Mahmoud Abbas declared that the boundaries imposed by the Oslo Accords would no longer bind the Palestinian people. A cease-fire mediated by Egypt brought the skirmish to a conclusion in late August 2014. Following a court

decision in favor of evicting many Palestinian families from houses in East Jerusalem, riots broke out in early May 2021, with Israeli police using force to disperse the protesters. Following many days of unrelenting fighting, hundreds of rockets were fired into Israel territory by Hamas, the terrorist organization that controls Gaza, and other Palestinian militant organizations.

In response, Israel launched airstrikes and artillery bombardments that resulted in the deaths of over twenty Palestinians and damaged both military and civilian infrastructure. Eleven days later, both Israel and Hamas claimed victory and reached an agreement to a cease-fire. The biggest concerns around these times have been these questions: What is the appropriate course of action for Palestinian refugees? Whether Jewish settlements in the West Bank should remain under occupation or be evacuated? Should the two sides coexist in Jerusalem? But the most challenging issue of all is probably whether or not Israel and the Palestinian state ought to be neighbors.

Current Status

In September 2023, tensions between Israel and Hamas escalated when Israel discovered explosives concealed in a shipment of jeans and suspended all exports from Gaza. Hamas responded by placing its troops on high alert. Following these incidents, on September 13, five Palestinians were killed at the border of Israel. The Washington Post claimed that the Palestinians were attempting to set off an explosive device. This incident fueled the ascending tension between two parties.

October Attack

On October 7 2023, at around 6:30 a.m Hamas declared that "Operation Al Aqsa Flood" had begun, claiming to have fired over 5,000 missiles into Israel in less than 20 minutes from the Gaza Strip. Commander Mohammad Deif of Hamas issued a call to arms, urging "Muslims everywhere to launch an attack" and "kill them wherever you may find them". While conflict broke out between Palestinians and Israel Defense Forces at the Gaza border line, Palestinian terrorists opened fire on Israeli vessels.

Later that night, Hamas fired 150 more missiles in the direction of Israel. At the same time, over three thousand Hamas fighters used trucks, motorbikes, speedboats, and paragliders to get into

Israel from Gaza. They overran the Kerem Shalom and Erez checkpoints and broke over the border barrier in five additional locations. In the words of Hamas, the assault was a reaction to several factors, including the embargo of the Gaza Strip, the growth of unauthorized Israeli settlements, an increase in settler violence in Israel and recent unrest at Al-Aqsa. Hamas militants burned down houses, murdered civilians, and abducted hostages. The first day of the attack has been called the worst day in Israel's history and the worst single-day killing of Jews since the Holocaust.

According to Hamas, Hamas has indicated this attack in order to force Israel to release Palestinian hostages under coercion. Videos showed that the captives were being taken across the street barefoot. Additionally, during an open-air music event next to Re'im, Hamas slaughtered at least 325 people, wounded a great number, and took at least 37 hostage. According to reports from Israel, there were incidents of rape and sexual abuse against Israeli women in private residences, an Israeli military base, and during the Re'im music festival slaughter. The Palestinian Authority and Hamas denied the massacre, claiming that the large number of casualties was caused by Israeli fighter planes and helicopters.

Initial Israeli Counter-Attack

It took hours for the Israeli military to respond with a counteroffensive after Palestinian militants had first overrun the Gaza Strip. They quickly ran into difficulty identifying which settlements and outposts were under occupation and differentiating between Palestinian militants and the soldiers and civilians who were present in the area. During the first four hours, the helicopter crews attacked about 300 targets at a rapid rate of fire. Journalist Josh Breiner of Haaretz reports that an IDF helicopter that started fire on Hamas terrorists "apparently also hit some festival participants" in the Re'im music festival slaughter, according to a police source cited in the police probe. The Haaretz report was denied by the Israeli police. At first, the Israeli crews were selecting their targets carefully in order not to harm civilians. Investigations later revealed that Palestinian militants had been told not to run in order to fool the air force into believing they were Israelis. For a while, this strategy worked, but eventually pilots realized what was going on and started to disobey the restrictions. Amidst the commotion and chaos, several helicopters began setting fire without permission. The Security Cabinet of Israel decided to take action overnight in order to ensure the "destruction of the military and governmental capabilities of

Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad". The Gaza Strip lost power due to an outage caused by the Israel Electric Corporation, which provides 80% of the region with energy.

Invasion of Gaza Strip

The IDF began a massive ground operation into northern Gaza on October 27. Israel's declaration that its forces remained in Gaza the following day verified the invasion of the Gaza Strip. The al-Quds hospital was the target of Israeli bombardment, which filled several areas of the building with smoke and dust and forced personnel to distribute breathing masks to some patients. It was estimated that 14,000 civilians were taking shelter in or close to the hospital. According to the Associated Press, Israeli airstrikes also damaged the roads that led to the Al-Shifa hospital, making it harder to get there. The heavily populated Jabalia refugee camp was bombed by the Israeli Defense Forces, according to the Gaza Health Ministry, which is run by Hamas.

The bombardment caused 150 wounded and 50 Palestinians dead. Attackers in subterranean tunnels, including a senior Hamas official, were the target, according to Israel. At least 15 people were killed and 60 injured in an Israeli strike on an ambulance convoy outside Al-Shifa Hospital two days later. The Israeli Defense Forces confirmed the strike against a Hamas target but did not offer any supporting evidence. The IDF claimed terrorists utilized civilian infrastructure without giving evidence, in the light of this statement a video showed an Israeli tank firing at a cab flying a white flag, supposedly indicating surrender, which can be seen as a war crime. Concerns over possible war crimes were stated by the UN Human Rights Office saying there has been "disproportionate attacks that could amount to war crimes" after the Jabalia refugee camp was struck twice in the same day. A temporary ceasefire deal between Israel and Hamas was agreed upon on November 22.

It called for a four-day "pause" to enable the release of the hostages held in Gaza. Additionally, the agreement called for the release of 150 Palestinian women and children who were detained by Israel. Even though the deal was confirmed by the Israeli cabinet, The Israeli Prime Minister's Office declared that Israel intends to carry on with the war. At the end of the four-day pause the attacks on both parties continued. In a December 25 Wall Street Journal interview, Netanyahu stated that Israel aimed to "destroy Hamas, demilitarize Gaza, and deradicalize the whole of Palestinian society."

Actions Taken by NATO

Since NATO stands for the maintenance of peace, NATO has not been directly involved in the conflict. NATO thrives for peace and the alliance has stated that diplomatic efforts to achieve a humanitarian cease-fire is backed by NATO. The head of NATO encourages parties in conflict to uphold international law and take precautions to safeguard civilians. NATO members underline that efforts to find a lasting, political, peaceful resolution to the Israel-Palestine problem must never be abandoned by the international community. Although NATO has not been involved directly, allies showed their support for Israel by stating that Israel has the right for a reasonable defense against these immoral acts of violence.

They demanded the utmost security for civilians and the prompt release of all hostages by Hamas. Additionally, allies made it clear that no country or organization should try to exploit or deteriorate the situation. Israel continues to get practical help from a number of NATO Allies as it responds to the ongoing crisis. Notwithstanding the fact that NATO is an alliance of numerous nations, not all of them have the same views on the issue at hand. Every country approaches the crisis differently, and Türkiye has been taking a slightly opposing position. Türkiye has withdrawn its ambassador from Israel due to the humanitarian crisis that is emerging in Gaza as a result of Israel's continuous strikes against civilians and Israel's rejection of a ceasefire. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan told reporters that Netanyahu was "no longer someone we can talk to" and that he was personally responsible for the passing away of civilians in Gaza.

Syria and Turkey Conflict
Historical Background

Relations between Syria and Türkiye have been tense ever since both countries emerged as modern states after World War I. The initial point of conflict was a territorial dispute over the present-day Turkish province of Hatay. Hatay was included in the French mandate of Syria until 1938, even though Ankara claimed it under the terms of the Turkish National Pact of 1920. Even so, Syria never approved of the autonomous parliament's 1939 vote to join Türkiye, which strained ties for a lengthy period. Another enduring issue was brought about by the sharing of water. Resentment arose from Türkiye's damming of the Euphrates and Asi rivers, which restricted the flow across the frontier.

The relationship between the two parties took a major turn for the worse in the 1980s and 1990s when Hafez, the father of Bashar Assad, gave the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) strongholds and support during their fight against Türkiye. When Türkiye decided to take action against Syria in 1998 to stop supporting the PKK, the situation shifted, and Damascus ended the sanctuary it had provided to PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan under fear of military invasion. To put a stop to hostilities, the two nations signed the Adana Protocol.

The Syrian Civil War

Another shift in the two governments' relationship was the outbreak of the Syrian civil war. Türkiye publicly supported the overthrow of Assad and aligned itself with the popular movement after delaying for several months in the hopes of reaching a solution. Türkiye decided on suspending all of the trade relations and agreements between Türkiye and Syria. Rebel organizations were granted access to Turkish bases and borders, and the opposition Syrian National Council was permitted to convene there. As a result of this stance, there was an influx of two million refugees into Türkiye, and there were security issues due to fighters and weapons congregating along the border. Following the granted access to the borders ,as foreseen, Syrian rebels opened fire across the border with Türkiye and Syrian military shot an RF-4E reconnaissance aircraft operated by the Turkish Air Force in 2012, in close range to the Syrian border. This move was allegedly made due to the airspace violations by the plane, according to the Syrian military. As a consequence, Türkiye and the United States started having high-level meetings over plans to overthrow the Syrian government, which showed the severity of the situation.

The Erdogan administration was forced to reevaluate its strategy as ISIL grew both militarily and geographically, bringing the Kobani conflict closer to Türkiye's borders and even initiating attacks there. Türkiye has long sought to establish an international community-monitored buffer zone and a no-fly zone over Syria. However, all attempts to form an international operation in Syria have been thwarted by Russia and China, and other partners are hesitant to pay for it or jeopardize the lives of their troops.

Türkiye has conducted numerous military operations in northern Syria against the Kurdish YPG militia forces since August 2016. Every operation has a distinct purpose and was created to

react to situations on the ground that were changing quickly. The main objectives that have shaped Türkiye's Syria policy over time may be determined. Fundamentally, the Turkish government's involvement in Syria has been motivated by internal political issues, aiding in the political survival of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and his Justice and Development Party (AKP). Overall, Ankara's engagement in Syria has not only caused friction or reconciliation with its longstanding allies and neighbors in the area. Additionally, it has given Türkiye new means of pursuing a more assertive and nationalistic foreign policy.

Current Situation

Since the beginning of the conflict Türkiye has been dealing with suicide bombers and attacks masked with civillian vehicles in highly populated places. Due to the inability to differentiate the attackers from the civilians Türkiye has been trying to pave the way into political peace meetings, return of the millions of refugees and normalization of the strained relations. When Syrian Foreign Minister Faisal Mekdad and Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu met in October 2021 during the Non-Aligned Movement summit, ties between the two countries' intelligence agencies were once again restored. While the Syrian government listed five requirements for the resumption of diplomatic ties, Ankara simply required from Damascus the complete clearance of the YPG territories, the safe return of refugees, and the conclusion of political and military collaboration between the opposition and the government. There was a recent meeting between the heads of Turkish and Syrian intelligence in Damascus, according to a September 2022 Reuters story. Significant progress was made during the talks, and they additionally paved the way for higher-level meetings.

Even though the attacks from both sides still do continue occasionally, the peace talks between Syrian and Turkish officials keep making significant progress too. Türkiye sees the way into a peaceful solution as negotiating with other country officials about the conflict and trying to normalize the ties between two parties by easing the economic sanctions on Syria. The biggest concern of Türkiye abides as North Syria which is controlled by separatists and the security issues on the border. The dispute still remains to be resolved.

Actions taken by NATO

In late 2019, there were signs of disagreement between Türkiye and members of NATO, with NATO feeling "powerless" to restrain Turkish interventions on Syria. Due to Türkiye's strategic placement between Europe and the Middle East, the NATO members were limited to mild criticism. But at the same time NATO was also concerned about Türkiye's increasing sympathies with Russia due to Türkiye's purchase of the Russian S-400 air defense system which led to strained relations between allies ,particularly the United States of America, and Türkiye. The NATO summit in London shed light on a number of topics related to conflict resolution.

Türkiye proposed to create a safe zone which was proposed to be controlled by NATO where Syrian refugees may be transferred. Nevertheless due to the notion that the migrants could only be moved voluntarily, NATO members rejected the proposal. The EU kept arguing about the political, social, humanitarian, and legal essentials of protecting migrants, rather than applying the agreement on a shared refugee and sanctuary policy. The German chancellor, Angela Merkel, led a campaign to detain refugees and migrants in Türkiye in order to prevent them from traveling through Greece and Bulgaria to enter the allied countries.

The EU promised to pay Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan €6 billion for their maintenance in exchange. At least 3 million refugees have maintained residency in Türkiye ever since. This provided Erdoğan with several opportunities to use the refugees as a tool of blackmail, threatening to abandon the refugee agreement if either the EU didn't defray more or if NATO didn't fulfill its obligations. On February 28, 2020, Erdoğan made a demand that they cooperate. There are clear ethical criterias for NATO. NATO is designed to be a political and military alliance of democratic nations that share the same set of principles. The organization's reputation has been damaged by Türkiye's disregard for these principles with disrespect as a significant NATO member and potential EU member. Although NATO member states have been restless about the stance of Türkiye, alliance has called on Syria to adhere to international law and has publicly condemned the airstrikes executed by the Assad government, but expressed that Türkiye shouldn't be anticipating the activation of Article 5, which is the collective military response mechanism of NATO.

The allies made the decision to help improve Türkiye's air defense capabilities in order to support Türkiye in protecting its territory. NATO has been helping Türkiye to improve air surveillance and strengthen its naval presence. NATO has also provided Türkiye with funds to

enhance its military installations totaling about US$5 billion (£3.8 billion) in recent years. Despite the struggles, NATO partners remain committed to help the key ally Türkiye in accordance with Article 4, even though the current circumstances cannot lead to Article 5. In reality, Article 4 meetings invoked by Türkiye would make it possible for NATO to assist Türkiye without provoking a collective military response, strengthening the alliance's claim for ongoing conflict's significance.

Bloc Positions:

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) finds itself at a crossroads, facing a constantly evolving geopolitical landscape. Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine has undoubtedly been the most recent catalyst for a deep debate about the need to adapt the Alliance to 21st-century challenges. However, the positions of its member countries regarding these necessary modifications are far from unanimous, reflecting their national security priorities, geographical ties, and strategic perspectives.

At one end of the spectrum are NATO's eastern flank countries, especially the Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania), Poland, and more recently, Finland and Sweden. For them, the Russian threat is existential and palpable. Their stance is unequivocal: they advocate for a massive military strengthening of the Alliance, a robust and permanent presence of NATO forces on their territories, and significant investment in collective defense capabilities. Their justification is based on their geographical proximity to the Ukrainian conflict and their historical experience of Soviet domination, which drives them to seek maximum deterrence and defense.

On the other hand, the United States, the largest contributor to NATO's defense, has reaffirmed its commitment to Article 5 but has also consistently pressured European allies to increase their own defense investments and share more of the burden. While the current administration has prioritized Alliance cohesion against Russia, the long-term prospect of greater European strategic autonomy is a recurring theme in Washington.

Western European countries like Germany, France, Italy, and Spain, while condemning Russian aggression and supporting NATO's strengthening, often balance the need for deterrence with other priorities. Germany, for example, has initiated a "turning point" (Zeitenwende) in its defense policy, but its decisions are made with an eye on its economic recovery and the need to maintain some stability in international relations. France, for its part, continues to advocate for a more pronounced "European strategic autonomy" that complements, but does not supplant,

NATO's role. For these countries, NATO's modification involves not only increasing military capability but also strengthening social resilience, energy security, and the ability to address hybrid challenges like cyber warfare and disinformation.

Finally, there are also nuances in how countries approach challenges outside the Euro-Atlantic area, such as terrorism or instability in the Sahel. Some, like France or the United Kingdom, have a more direct interest in these regions due to their historical ties or national security interests, while others may view them as secondary challenges compared to the Russian threat.

Ultimately, NATO is moving towards adapting to new challenges, but it does so with the complexity of the differing security visions of its 32 members. Achieving consensus and cohesion under these circumstances is a testament to the Alliance's durability, but also a reminder that its future evolution will depend on the willingness of all its members to strike a balance between their national interests and the collective good of transatlantic security.

QARMAS

1. What specific changes have been made to NATO's military posture and command structure since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, and how do these changes reflect the Alliance's updated strategic concept?

2. Beyond conventional military adjustments, what new or significantly enhanced capabilities is NATO developing or emphasizing to address emerging and hybrid threats in the current geopolitical landscape?

3. How has the shifting geopolitical environment, particularly Russia's aggression, influenced NATO's "open door" policy and the accession processes of new members like Finland and Sweden?

4. What are the current trends in defense spending among NATO member states, and how are these linked to the Alliance's restructured deterrence and defense posture?

5. How is NATO balancing its core task of collective defense against Russia with its other strategic priorities, such as crisis management, cooperative security, and addressing the rise of China as a systemic challenge?

NATO

Recommendations and Final Remarks

Esteemed delegates, NATO's current dynamic, driven by emerging geopolitical challenges, demands continuous reflection and renewed commitment. It's imperative that we prioritize cohesion and unity, recognizing that the Alliance's strength lies in its ability to act as a collective. Your negotiation skills are key for this to be accomplished, considering the diverse positions of each member state of the organization and the controversial statements made by them in the past year. At the same time, defense investments must go beyond merely meeting spending targets, focusing instead on multifaceted and technologically advanced capabilities that enable a more credible organization position and defense across all domains, focusing on adaptive yet realistic proposals regarding the reestructuring of the NATO, its organisms, strategies, goals and priorities. Regarding this, we must continue to adapt our strategies to address not only conventional threats but also hybrid and asymmetric ones, fostering resilience within our societies. Finally, it's crucial to maintain the open-door policy, but with a pragmatic and merit-based approach that strengthens Euro-Atlantic security without compromising internal cohesion. NATO has proven to be a fundamental pillar of collective security; our duty is to ensure it remains relevant and effective in the face of an uncertain future.