



**Enhancing and balancing  
relations between NATO and  
other military powers**



**NATO**

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## Introduction

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), formally composed of 31 member countries, is an alliance that includes 29 European nations and 2 North American countries. Currently, the civil budget is set at €438 million, and the military budget €2.1 billion. Within recent developments, NATO's budget has increased by 18.2% and 12% in 2023 alone. As the world's leading intergovernmental military, its impact on the global stage is unprecedented. NATO's military scale surpasses even the formidable armed forces of China and Russia, which are individually considered the largest in the world.

NATO's dominant position provokes great tension globally, as many military powers and regional alliances feel threatened or marginalized by the extent of their power. One of the most notable is tensions between NATO and Russia, particularly in the context of Eastern Europe. After the end of the Cold War, NATO expanded its membership and presence eastward, incorporating former Warsaw Pact countries and former Soviet republics into its treaty. This expansion, viewed by Russia as encroachment into its sphere of influence, has led to heightened tensions and periodic confrontations.

One perspective towards maintaining the legitimacy of the world's military hegemonic power could be to argue that having a dominant military force can provide stability and security by deterring potential aggressors, maintaining order, and responding effectively to global security challenges. On the other hand, concerns about the potential abuse of power, dominance, and the erosion of sovereignty for smaller nations. It may also create a power imbalance that fuels resentment, distrust, and conflicts, particularly if such military treaty power pursues unilateral actions perceived as detrimental to other countries' interests.

In light of these concerns, it's important to collectively come to some form of consensus that things may not be able to remain the same, given the everchanging power distribution globally. By acknowledging the need for change and embracing the principles of inclusivity, transparency, and accountability, it can pave the way for a more balanced and secure world order, where no single entity wields disproportionate influence or power.

## Definition of Key Terms

### **Hegemony:**

The dominance or leadership of one entity, such as a state or NGO over others. Typically within the context of economic, political or military strength and may be achieved through direct coercion or establishment of norms.

### **Sovereignty:**

The supreme authority of a state to govern itself independently, free from external interference. It encompasses the notion of self-rule, autonomy, and the ability to make decisions within its borders.

### **Iron Curtain:**

The symbolic and physical division of Europe between Western and Eastern blocs during the Cold War. It represented the ideological and geopolitical divide between Soviet-dominated communist states in Eastern Europe and Western democracies.

### **Collective Defense:**

Article 5 of the NATO treaty in which member states of an alliance agree to defend one another in the event of an attack. It ensures that an attack against one member is considered an attack against all, requiring a unified response from the alliance.

### **Transatlantic:**

Transatlantic refers to the region encompassing countries on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean, particularly Europe and North America. It often denotes political, economic, and cultural relations between these regions, especially within the context of organizations like NATO.

### **Encroachment:**

The unauthorized intrusion or extension of a political body beyond established conditions typically refers to another state's territory or rights. Encroachment involves intrusion of cultural factors, military presence or territorial claims from a sovereign nation onto another.

### **Satellite State:**

Also known as a "puppet state", a political term that refers to a sovereign nation that is heavily controlled by a dominant state. These states typically maintain a degree of independence, such as government. Although foreign policy and military are usually dictated and influenced.

## **General Overview**

### **Formation of NATO and Global Security**

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization was created in 1949, and formed by 12 founding Western nations which included the United States, Canada, Belgium, France and several others. The treaty was signed in Washington D.C, and consisted of 14 articles that outlined the principles, objectives and organizational structure of the intergovernmental organization. One of the major aims of the treaty was, and still is to provide collective security against the Soviet Union following World War II. Each state that signed the treaty have agreed to give up a degree of their sovereignty, to abide by Article 5 which highlights "An attack on one is an attack on all" (NATO). If one member were to face an invasion or have their sovereignty threatened, each member would be required to aid that state under the pledge of "collective defense". It is argued that because of the implementation of this article, world order and peace has been maintained for over 80 years.

After World War II, the global power structure shifted with the emergence of two superpowers, the Soviet Union and the United States, leading to the Cold War. Germany was divided into Western and Eastern zones of occupation, with denazification efforts and economic stagnation initially. However, Western Germany's recovery began with a currency reform in mid-1948, aided by the liberalization of European economic policies, including support from initiatives like the Marshall Plan in 1948–1951.

The 'iron curtain' represents the ideological and physical divide between Soviet-dominated Eastern Europe and Western-influenced regions, symbolizing the Soviet Union's efforts to isolate itself and its satellite states from the West. This division led to the formation of opposing military

alliances, the Warsaw Pact and NATO, and was manifested physically by border defenses, most notably the Berlin Wall (UNC).

NATO's establishment aimed chiefly to prevent the expansion of communism in Europe, particularly in the Western region. Central to the transatlantic partnership were common values such as democracy, individual freedoms, and the rule of law. With the United States taking a prominent role in its formation and being the main provider of military and economic assistance to its European allies, it wielded significant influence in shaping policies and strategies. Consequently, NATO played a pivotal role in curtailing Soviet influence, serving as a vital instrument in safeguarding Western ideals and principles.

After the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, NATO had begun shifting its focus to adapt to the everchanging security dynamics on the global stage. They had begun to significantly expand their membership, especially in Central and Eastern Europe. This transformation into a broader Euro-Atlantic security alliance spreads the influence of Western ideals. There is now a demanding shift into cooperative security with non-member states and other IGO's. This includes the "Partnership for Peace", promoting military cooperation and diplomacy, and involving member states more in the United Nations and European Union. Article 5 has only ever been invoked once- in response to the 9/11 attacks on the United States in 2001, which led to the war in Afghanistan.

### Hegemony and Sovereignty

The primary criticisms of NATO are its implications on sovereignty and shifts of power. Due to the nature of the treaty, it's difficult for countries to exercise the full extent of their sovereignty, by constraining their ability to make independent decisions on matters of defense and security. This can include engaging in conflicts using military defense or being burdened by costs and decision-making. This was prominent in conflicts, such as those in Afghanistan or Libya, which compromised the sovereignty of member states by compelling them to participate in military operations without full control over the objectives.

Some also argue that the United States has too much influence within NATO. This is because they are the only ones who maintain and control the conventional and nuclear capacity to deter and defend against existential threats to the alliance. However, In Olson and Zeckhauser's article "An Economic Theory of Alliances" they state "This fact leads to the paradoxical conclusion that a decline in the amity, unity, and community of interest among allies need not necessarily reduce the

effectiveness of an alliance [...] The United States, at least, should perhaps not hope for too much unity in common ventures with other nations. It might prove extremely expensive." This passage refers to the fact that a decrease in solidarity or unity among alliance members may not necessarily diminish the alliance's effectiveness in achieving its objectives. Similarly, Plumper and Neumayer note in reference to non-US allies, "Unless the interests of alliance members are independent, the existence of NATO allows the smaller allies to free-ride to some extent." NATO, for example, allows smaller allies to benefit from the security umbrella provided by the alliance even if they do not bear the same level of defense burdens as larger or more powerful members.

Nevertheless, it's undeniable other major military powers feel threatened by the existence of NATO. This is prominent within Russia, China and other major countries in the Middle East. The enlargement of NATO in former Soviet Bloc countries, for example, is an important point behind this. Russia perceives this as a direct challenge to its strategic position, and as an attempt to further the containment of Russian influence and values. Hence, only furthering the tensions and drawing further from ever fostering a more diplomatic and peaceful solution.

### Tensions and Conflicts

NATO has various partnerships with 40 non-member countries, addressed as the "NATO partners". This partnership network permits the strengthening of security and cooperation outside of the confinements of the treaty. These alliances promote dialogue and diplomacy, helping to address global challenges such as terrorism and climate change.

Yet, many do not consider this partnership to be legitimate, or have other intentions. This includes the Collective Security Treaty Organization in Eurasia, which prefers to focus on regional security arrangements instead of global security arrangements. This emphasis on strategic autonomy and independence creates the divide that still exists globally. Especially in Asia, participation in NATO can be politically sensitive, particularly if it is perceived as aligning with Western powers or antagonizing neighboring countries. For instance, if Asian countries were to join the treaty, it could be seen as a counterbalance to the growing influence of China and other regional powers, potentially leading to increased tensions and competition. As a result, sanctions of trade could imply huge economic disparity for the state.

Some states wish to limit their involvement in any major conflicts as a whole. This is under the basis of strategic autonomy, and desire to make decisions independently. That's to say, if any

major conflict or war were to break out, the respective country would be free from the obligations and limitations that come with military alliances.

With the most recent conflicts, highlighted through the Russo-Ukrainian war and the Israel-Hamas conflict, NATO has been assertive about their viewpoints. According to their official website and various speeches made by current NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, most if not all NATO countries stand with Ukraine. Relations between the two entities date back to the early 1990's and have since developed into one of the most substantial partnerships. Since 2014, considering Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea, cooperation has increased in critical areas. Following Russia's full-scale invasion in 2022, NATO has provided unprecedented levels of support. (NATO) This, although has sparked further conflicts with Russia due to the expansion.

In 2017, Israel established a permanent and official mission to NATO headquarters, in which prior for more than 20 years had been an active partner. This was bounded by the Mediterranean Dialogue, which is the only security forum that brings together NATO Allies with Israel and other Arab countries. NATO's secretary General has stated that "Israel does not stand alone" following the October 7th attacks in 2023. NATO condemns the attacks, but recently has only called for a humanitarian pause to allow critical aid to enter Gaza.



Israel's Prime

Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and NATO's Deputy Secretary General Mircea Geoană reaffirming partnership.

<https://www.gov.il/en/departments/news/epmnatodsg>

## Timeline of Key Events

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> of September 1945</b>	End of World War II
<b>12<sup>th</sup> of March 1947</b>	Beginnings of the Cold War
<b>4<sup>th</sup> of April 1949</b>	Treaty of the North Atlantic Organization signed in Washington, DC between 12 founding members
<b>18<sup>th</sup> of February 1952</b>	Greece and Turkey join NATO in response to growing security threats in Europe, marking the first NATO expansion
<b>14<sup>th</sup> of May 1955</b>	Warsaw Pact formed
<b>9<sup>th</sup> of November 1989</b>	Fall of the Berlin Wall following the reunification of Eastern and Western Germany
<b>30<sup>th</sup> of October 2001</b>	War is declared on Afghanistan after 9/11 attacks
<b>27<sup>th</sup> of March 2020</b>	North Macedonia becomes a member of NATO, marking the 30th member

## Major Parties Involved

### North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

NATO, being the largest military alliance globally, sets precedence for most of these contemporary issues. NATO allies itself with various partners or “globe partners”, in which they state they are taking on increasing importance in a complex security environment, where many of the challenges the Alliance faces are global and no longer bound by geography. The 2030 agenda for NATO seeks to strengthen NATO’s global cooperation with like-minded partners, including its global partners, to defend the “rules-based international order and institutions” (NATO).



### **The United States of America (USA)**

The United States is one of the biggest financial contributors to NATO, and played a major role in the formation of the transatlantic treaty. Nowadays, the relationship between the two remains multifaceted, as NATO serves as a cornerstone of U.S. foreign and security policies. Under the Biden administration, the United States has reaffirmed its commitment to NATO and emphasized the importance of transatlantic unity and cooperation in addressing shared security challenges, including threats from Russia, terrorism, and cyber warfare.

### **Russian Federation**

Russia has always had a complex relationship with NATO and its partners, considering the basis in which it was established. Relationships remain strained, and are only heightened after the beginnings of the invasion with Ukraine, and NATO standing with the latter country. Russia views NATO's expansion and increased presence near its borders as a security threat and has accused the alliance of encroaching on its sphere of influence. Russia has also expressed concerns about NATO's missile defense system and its potential to undermine Russia's strategic deterrent.

### **The People's Republic of China (PRC)**

With the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, China has supported Russia in response to Western economic and political pressure. This support includes diplomatic backing, economic assistance, or other forms of cooperation aimed at countering Western efforts to isolate or sanction Russia. While NATO's primary focus remains on Euro-Atlantic security, some members, particularly the United States, have sought to engage NATO in discussions about the implications of China's rise for global security. Within the context of enhancing relations, or any further expansion, the Chinese mission said Beijing opposed NATO's "eastward movement into the Asia-Pacific region" and warned: "Any act that jeopardizes China's legitimate rights and interests will be met with a resolute response." (Aljazeera)

### **The United Nations (UN)**

The United Nations, the world's largest intergovernmental organization, recognized NATO as a vital regional security organization and acknowledged its role in promoting stability and security in the Euro-Atlantic region. The UN and NATO have cooperated multiple times, such as in peacekeeping missions, humanitarian interventions, and efforts to combat terrorism and piracy, due to common/shared goals. The UN is frequently invited to attend NATO ministerial meetings and

summits; the NATO Secretary General participates in the UN General Assembly; and staff level meetings, covering the broad range of cooperation and dialogue, take place on an annual basis between the secretariats of NATO and the UN (UN)

## Possible Solutions

One of the largest concerns highlighted by the expansion of NATO, and balancing relations is the transparency of the initiatives. Many member states and other paramilitaries reject NATO as they view it as “portraying the alliance as a tool of American interests and a source of conflict rather than stability.” Provided, NATO does follow Western ideals, which is an unappealing standard for most member countries. Possibly fostering diplomatic engagements between member countries could help re-emphasize NATO’s goals towards world peace and security: provided they strive to enhance transparency in its decision-making processes. Through initiatives such as regional dialogue with common goals between member states, agreeance upon human rights and conflict preventative measures, and stagnating political ideologies, could help improve relations communally.

In light of NATO’s goals, there can be further discussions about the creation of further treaties to help reinforce both parties' security initiatives. Provided, by advocating for a rules-based approach to international security that promotes respect for sovereignty, human rights, and international law. By upholding these principles and promoting adherence to international norms and standards, member states can build credibility, legitimacy, and support for their initiatives among partner militaries.

Overall, it’s important to recognize the question of sovereignty, and uphold it to the highest degree. If any member state’s sovereignty were to be threatened, it would violate the very act that the NATO treaty was established for.

## Further Reading

Further reading on NATO goals, initiatives and member states:

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