



North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

What is NATO?

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

What are the Objectives of NATO?

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

How does NATO Function?

- NATO has an **integrated military command structure** but very few forces or assets are exclusively its own.
 - Most forces **remain under full national command** and control until member countries agree to undertake NATO-related tasks.
- All 30 allies have an equal say, the Alliance's decisions must be unanimous and consensual, and its members must respect the basic values that underpin the Alliance, namely democracy, individual

liberty and the rule of law.

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

Why did NATO Originate?

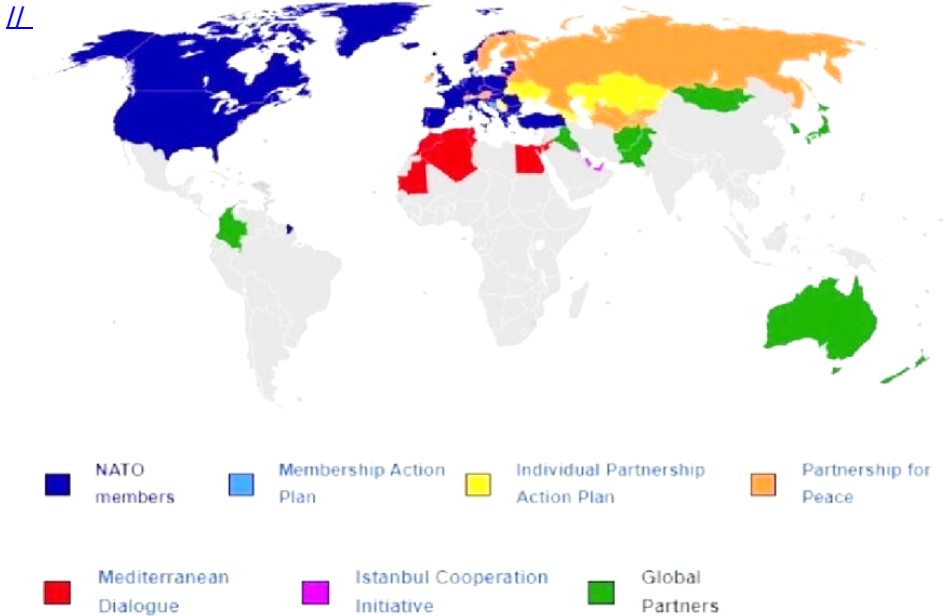
- After World War II in 1945, western Europe was economically exhausted and militarily weak (the western Allies had rapidly and drastically reduced their armies at the end of the war).
- In 1948 the United States launched the **Marshall Plan**, which infused massive amounts of economic aid to the countries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

What are the Alliances of NATO?

- NATO participates in three alliances that expand its influence beyond its 30 member countries.
 - **Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC):** It is a 50-nation multilateral forum for dialogue and consultation on political and security-related issues among Allies and partner countries.
 - It provides the overall political framework for NATO's cooperation with partner countries in the Euro-Atlantic area, and for the bilateral relationships developed between NATO and individual partner countries under the **Partnership for Peace (PfP) programme**.
 - The Partnership for Peace (PfP) is a programme of practical bilateral cooperation between individual Euro-Atlantic partner countries and NATO.
 - It allows partners to build up an individual relationship with NATO, choosing their own priorities for cooperation.
 - Established in 1997, the EAPC succeeded the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC), which was set up in 1991 just after the end of the Cold War.
 - **Mediterranean Dialogue:** It is a partnership forum that aims to contribute to security and stability in NATO's Mediterranean and North African neighbourhood, and promote good

relations and understanding among participating countries and NATO Allies.

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



PDF Refernece URL: <https://www.drishtias.com/printpdf/north-atlantic-treaty-organization-nato>