

# TBSRJMUN XXI

North Atlantic  
Treaty Organization



TBSRJMUN XXI

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## LETTER TO DELEGATES

Dear delegates,

As chairs of this year's NATO committee, we would like to welcome all of you to TBSRJMUN 2023! We truly hope that after this conference, you become more experienced delegates, ready to immerse yourselves in the world around you as people who share our passion for Model United Nations. Through the discussion of important events that are occurring both in the MENA region and Eastern Mediterranean, we wish to make all members of this committee more aware of issues of global concern and international law while also developing everyone's debating, public speaking, and critical thinking skills. At this conference, we will be discussing two events of significant importance in today's global landscape: The Eastern Mediterranean disputes among NATO member states and NATO's involvement in the MENA region.

Through this study guide, we wish to make delegates more familiar with the situations being discussed and help them prepare for our debates. Regarding the Eastern Mediterranean disputes among NATO member states, we will discuss how these conflicts may impact the organisation's goal of peacekeeping and unity of its members. When exploring the issue of the involvement of NATO countries in the MENA region, we will discuss the merits and extent of foreign involvement in developing countries.

Although NATO is not a part of the United Nations, we believe it is a crucial part of a delegate's MUN experience, as it encourages delegates to think diplomatically and immerse themselves in the decision-making process of NATO ambassadors.

We are very excited to see all of you at the conference!

Sincerely,

NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION (NATO) | TBSRJMUN XXI

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## Committee Description



The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is a collective political and military defence alliance composed of 31 member nations in Europe and North America. This alliance allows NATO members to consult and cooperate in the field of international defence and security and collaborate on crisis management operations. NATO was established with the signing of the Treaty of Washington on April 4, 1949, by twelve founding members and originally addressed growing tensions between the West and the East. Today, NATO plays an extremely relevant role in global peacekeeping.

NATO includes both a political and a military dimension. The political dimension is characterised by the democratic principles it seeks to promote, spread, and protect. The North Atlantic Council, NATO's main decision-making body, makes all its decisions unanimously. NATO is thus built around the dialogue process, which strengthens the Alliance's political component by allowing members to express their ideas and official stances. It also offers them an active role in preventive diplomacy by offering the resources needed to avoid conflict. When diplomatic efforts fail, NATO

possesses the military capabilities to conduct crisis management operations, which are carried out either alone or in conjunction with a UN mandate.

For the sake of debate during our committee sessions, despite NATO council resolutions requiring unanimity, our resolutions will be passed by a simple majority, like in most UN Councils.



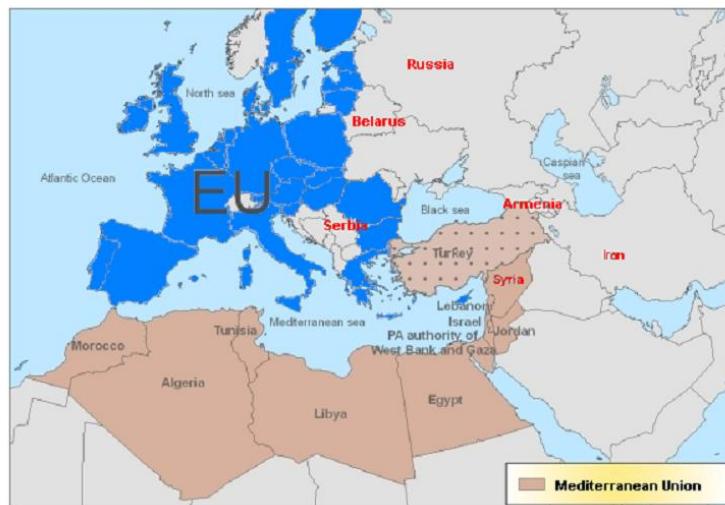
*Turkey's drilling ships continue their Operations in the Mediterranean Sea*  
[SETA](#)

## **Topic A:**

# **Discussing the Eastern Mediterranean disputes among NATO member states**

## Background Information

The Eastern Mediterranean region represents the eastern region of the Mediterranean Sea. It is bordered by Italy, Slovenia, Croatia, Greece, and Cyprus (EU nations) and Albania, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Egypt, and Libya (non-EU nations).



Nations in the Eastern Mediterranean Region. [The New Federalist](#).

However, of these nations, only Italy, Slovenia, Croatia, Greece, Albania, Montenegro, and Turkey are part of the NATO alliance; thus, only these will engage with the committee's discussions.

Although the conflict in the Eastern Mediterranean region has escalated in recent years, disputes have occurred between the above-mentioned nations for several decades. Given this, it is necessary to first comprehend the influence that both Greece and Turkey have had in conflicts dating back to the 20th century.

The Turkish-Greek dispute in the Aegean Sea is rooted in five decades of fraught relations, particularly in Cyprus. In 1974, the Athens junta orchestrated a coup d'État in Nicosia to unite Cyprus with Greece, leading to Turkey's invasion and military presence in the northern third of the island. Despite a Turkish call for independence of the northern region, attempting to establish the Turkish Republic of Northern

Cyprus, this nation is not recognized by any other members of the UN. Military tensions have been high since then, with Greece sending troops to eastern Aegean islands and Turkey creating a new army division in Izmir. Notably, in 1976, Turkey sent the Sismik I research vessel into disputed waters claimed by Greece, which prompted Greece to put its armed forces on full alert and seek recourse at the UN and the ICJ.

Washington offered military aid and removed an arms embargo on Greece, but domestic political considerations and developments in Cyprus disrupted efforts to settle. The ensuing dialogue in 1978 aimed to avoid larger confrontations and address challenges impeding the resolution of the Aegean Sea disputes. Domestic political considerations and developments in Cyprus have pushed the parties back to the brink twice more in the next fifteen years. Diplomacy aimed at moving the sides from de-escalation to talks was slow, with the "Davos process" requiring two years of dialogue to establish confidence-building measures for mutual restraint between Ankara and Athens. Ultimately, after the 1995-1996 flare-up, they recommitted to these measures and agreed on new ones. Other mediation initiatives, like the Dutch "Committee of wise men" presented a report to EU leaders, but never achieved concrete results.

Greece, a crucial geopolitical power, experienced a civil war following WWII and was granted \$400 million dollars in US funds to the new Greek government through the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan. This recognition of Greece's geopolitical importance in the Aegean and its significance in the ideological balance for the entire Cold War was validated in February 1952 when Greece was granted membership in NATO.

Cyprus, at the time a developing country and a Crown colony, sought to unite with Greece. In 1948, King Paul I sent London a petition for unification with Greece (*enosis*), but the demand was rejected. The British administration instead proposed a more liberal constitution and a 10-year program of social and economic development.

Still, the Greek Cypriots' efforts to win worldwide support led to the re-emergence of violence against the colonial power, which was fueled by the EOKA militia organisation. The EOKA campaign spread terror among British forces and

officials, leading to a State of Emergency in 1955. The Turkish Cypriots, concerned about decolonization and Britain's possible exit from the island, developed their call for partition, "Taksim." The U.N. attempted to resolve the issue through negotiations in 1957, but despite returning some exiled, they did not alleviate tensions.

Subsequently, the 1959 Zurich Agreement granted Cyprus independence and some of the country's demands, but it did not achieve cooperation between the two split communities. Within 3 years of Cyprus's independence, the legislature started to fail due to splits among the views of Greek and Turkish Cypriots. In 1964, UN peacekeepers were deployed on the island, in an attempt to maintain order in the state.

In 1967, the Greek military junta overthrew the centre-right government and established a military junta, leading to political and economic isolation from European states and blocking Greece's EU accession. This led to the invasion of Cyprus in 1974, which led to the Turkish Cypriot-controlled area changing its name to the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. In Greece, the junta regime collapsed and led to the fall of the military dictatorship in 1974. *Metapolitefsi*, or a period of political change, followed, with free elections and democracy restored. The junta leaders were sentenced to life imprisonment, and the country re-joined NATO in 1980.

Territorial disputes such as these are highly important, as the Eastern Mediterranean is made up of several valuable resources, more importantly, energy resources. The Eastern Mediterranean has become a global energy hotspot due to numerous offshore gas field discoveries, including the Tamar field off Israel in 2009 and the Zohr gas field off Egypt in 2015.

These resources could transform the region into a gas export hub and improve interconnectivity, promoting energy security, growth, and development. However, challenges like infrastructure, economic constraints, and interstate rivalry need to be overcome.

## Current Situation

Turkey's recent oil discoveries in the Eastern Mediterranean have increased its interest in hydrocarbon exploration and have resulted in a \$220 billion budget deficit over the past five years. The country aims to solve its long-term economic problems through hydrocarbon exploration, and major discoveries have been made in the region recently. It has also signed numerous oil and gas deals with countries including Azerbaijan, Iraq, Iran, and Russia. However, Turkey's relationship with its neighbours does not make this option realistic.

Turkey's energy independence led to a decline in oil supplies from Iran and Russia, while supplies from Azerbaijan increased by 23%. This situation has increased the concerns about being isolated in the energy and security order of the region. The principle of the Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum, which includes Egypt, Jordan, the Palestinian Authority, and Italy, is close to the participation of Greece, Cyprus, and Israel (excluding Turkey). However, the current project of this forum does not benefit the economy and Turkey uses a force-based approach and strong diplomacy to avoid this process.

Turkey's Libya policy serves as its eastern Mediterranean division, and the United States has signed two memoranda of understanding with Libya. Turkey's policy aims to protect its interests in Libya, the MENA region, and the Eastern Mediterranean. It is part of Turkey's ongoing power struggle with Arab forces, particularly the UAE and Egypt, and is part of its broader Eastern Mediterranean policy. The 'delimitation of maritime jurisdiction areas' deal signed with Libya's UN-recognised GNA in November 2019 aimed to undermine an energy and security order that excluded Turkey. However, this deal has been contested by European actors due to its legality and has increased tensions between Turkey, Greece, Cyprus, and France.

In November 2019, Turkey approved the Government of National Accord. The Maritime Border Agreement with Libya marks Turkey's maritime border with Libya and enables the GNA to defend against attacks by the self-proclaimed Libyan National

Army. But the deal ignores Greece's main islands, making it controversial and inconvenient for international law.

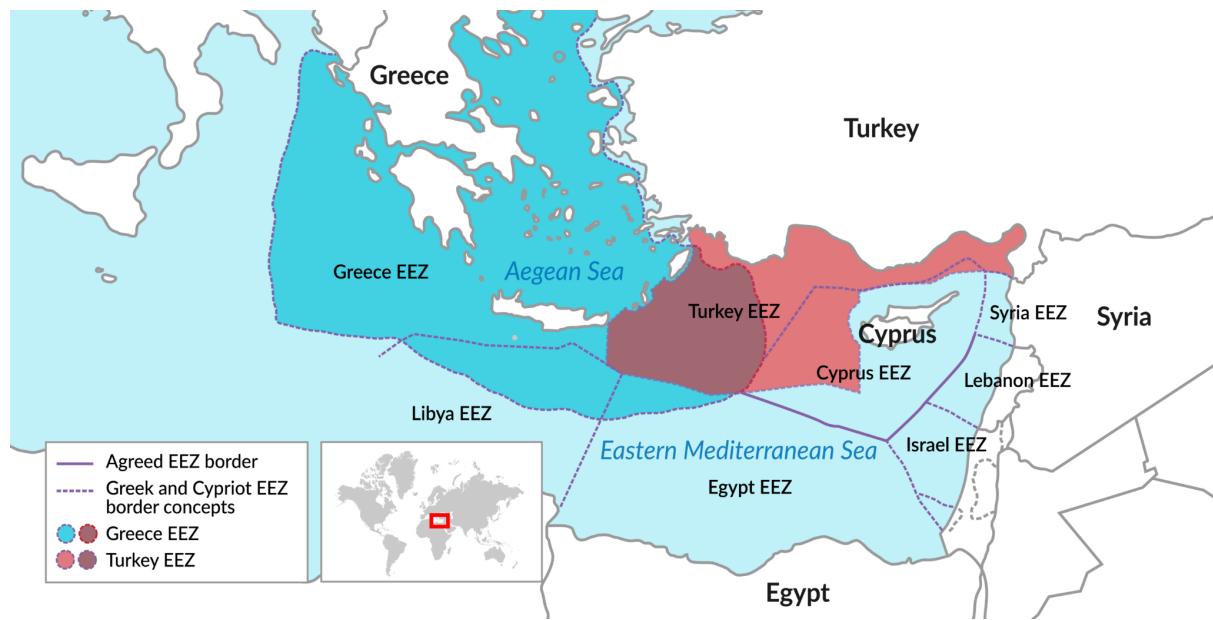
The connection between Turkey's Libya policy and its Eastern Mediterranean policy is presented by Turkey's Blue Homeland or Blue Homeism, a vague, ambiguous, and illegal geopolitical concept that dates back to the mid-2000s.

The "Blue Homeland" doctrine aims to expand Turkey's maritime borders in the Mediterranean, as seen in the maritime agreement signed with Libya. The doctrine calls on the Turkish Navy to rethink and reposition the country as a naval power in terms of the return of Turkish foreign and security policy from the West to Russia and China. Government and ethnic supporters of the doctrine agree on the first two points but disagree on the last. The conflict in Libya puts Turkey against the UAE, Egypt, and France and has major implications in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Using the threat of Turkey's "captivity" in Anatolia, the doctrine provides strong guidelines for Turkey's Eastern Mediterranean policy and seeks to venture into the Black Sea, Aegean Sea, and the Mediterranean. The dispute has created tensions between Turkey and France (due to France's economic interests in the region), and France has been more impressed by the two countries' support for the Greek Cypriot stance.

France expressed its solidarity with Greece and Cyprus and asked international law to justify its stance. This made France even more welcome, expressing dissatisfaction and disapproval of Turkey's foreign policy, in many contrasts to France's territorial ambitions of expanding its economic activity in the Eastern Mediterranean.

In addition, the disputes over the delimitation of Exclusive Economic Zones in the Eastern Mediterranean have escalated since Turkey and Libya signed a controversial deal in 2019. Greece is attempting to enforce EEZ rights around its tiny islands in the Aegean Sea, leaving Turkey with a tiny offshore stretch and little in the eastern Mediterranean.



EEZ limitations in the Eastern Mediterranean and its disputed areas by Greece and Turkey. [GIS](#).

As Ankara has the longest coastline along the eastern Mediterranean, Turkey claims this gives it the right to explore the resources in this EEZ. As a result, in 2019, Turkey reached an agreement with the GNA in Libya, granting Turkey drilling rights across a corridor of the eastern Mediterranean. However, much of which is within Greece's maritime jurisdiction., leading Greece, Cyprus, and other regional actors to denounce the Turkish-Libyan agreement as "illegal," which Turkey denies. Turkey is also prospecting for hydrocarbons in waters where Cyprus claims exclusive economic rights.

Last but not least, there are concerns about the energy security of Europe due to the Russia-Ukraine war intensifying in 2022. While this war concerns Europe due to the amount of dependency that the European countries have on Russia due to the energy that they import from the Russians, in 2021, 275.6 million tonnes of energy products were imported from Russia to EU countries. Eastern Mediterranean countries continue to develop oil in the region. Israeli Foreign Minister Yair Lapid talked about the possibility of changes in the energy market in Europe and the Middle East and asked them to review opportunities with Europe, which now has to reduce its dependence on Russian energy.

## Past NATO Actions

- ❖ On July 13th of 2008, the Union for the Mediterranean was created. The Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) is an intergovernmental organisation aiming to strengthen cooperation in the Mediterranean Region, covering political, economic, and socio-cultural issues. Its main objective is to promote peace, stability, security, and economic prosperity while enhancing regional integration through intercultural dialogue. UfM is based on principles of democracy, human rights, and fundamental rights, promoting regional integration and intercultural dialogue.
- ❖ On November 10th of 2022, the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East (EMME) Climate Change Initiative, launched by Cyprus and Egypt at COP27, aimed to coordinate a regional response to address climate change in line with the Paris Agreement goals. The initiative is based on the scientific work of 13 thematic task forces, comprising over 240 scientists, and was coordinated by the Cyprus Institute. The 18 countries in the region, including Bahrain, Cyprus, Egypt, Greece, Iraq, and Israel are particularly vulnerable to climate change, with a "business as usual" scenario putting them at risk of a 5°C increase in the mean annual temperature by the end of the century. The initiative is a key step forward in addressing the climate crisis, as it aims to put the principles of the Nicosia Ministerial Declaration adopted by the 9th Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference into practice, confirming the participants' commitment to improving environmental protection. This would also help possibly maintain and secure the Eastern Mediterranean region so natural resources, such as natural gas, aren't lost.

# Major Bloc Positions

## Türkiye

The Turkish view policy matters with a keen sense of grievance. They are provoked by Greece's perceived intransigence on maritime demarcation and territorial claims, which could deny Turkey navigation and exploitation of waters visible from its mainland. The International Court of Justice's ruling has strengthened Turkey's position, especially on the principle of equitable distance compromises. However, Greece has yet to back off its maximalist position, and the matter was exacerbated when the Republic of Cyprus, with Egypt in 2003 and Lebanon in 2007, began formally delimiting maritime zones without consultations with Turks in the northern part of the island or Turkey proper. Turkey has since submitted its arguments on maritime demarcation to the United Nations, but regional governments ignored complex legal issues while tacitly endorsing Greece's claims by pursuing joint energy projects, leading to provocation.

Turkey's official government stance is that it has responded to perceived provocations through diplomatic efforts and attempted to maintain peace in the region. The country's government further believes that Turkey's Mediterranean coastline and support infrastructure provide an effective check on objectionable military or economic activities. The Turks will not abjure their rights in the Eastern Mediterranean area.

## Greece

The Eastern Mediterranean is facing a struggle for peace and economic development amid maritime delimitation disputes. Greece, a regional country, has shown commitment to conflict resolution and cooperative partnerships to counter Turkey's expansionism and gunboat diplomacy. Greece has expanded its bilateral strategic dialogue with the US, France, and regional countries, including energy, investment, defence, and people-to-people contacts. On October 14th of 2021, Athens and Washington signed an extension of the Mutual Defense Cooperation Agreement,

stating that both countries will safeguard each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity against actions threatening peace. This agreement shields Athens from Turkish expansionism and its threat of war with Greece. Alexandroupolis, an advanced facility in Thrace, has been transformed into an advanced facility for US forces and an emerging axis toward Bulgaria, which is valuable for strategic planning in the Black Sea. Greece has also solidified relations with France and signed a defence agreement, upgrading its geopolitical footprint in Europe and strengthening its deterrence capabilities.

## France

France has long been interested in the Mediterranean, and it is one of the most powerful regional actors in the Mediterranean Basin today. Thanks to its mandates established after World War I, it managed to expand its zone of influence into territories today known as Syria and Lebanon. When examining France's interests in the Eastern Mediterranean, the first country worth looking at is Lebanon, as, having been a former French mandate along with Syria, it keeps maintaining close ties with Paris. France, however, is also working on deepening its relations with the whole of the Eastern Mediterranean, particularly Libya. On the other hand, France's dominance in the Eastern Mediterranean is challenged by several other actors, such as Italy, Turkey, and Russia. Today, the country's role seems to decline in the Middle East with the latter two emerging as new regional powers. Overall, Macron's France has two main goals to achieve in the region: first, to strengthen its political positions, and, second, to involve regional actors in the fight against terrorism.

## United States of America

The United States has lowered its military commitment and followed a strategy less likely to employ military action, but it has not totally withdrawn from the area or abandoned its allies. Instead, it has re-calibrated its participation, restricting engagement and expenses in order to reallocate resources to Asia Pacific. The United States seeks to prevent Russia and China from co-opting its allies in the Eastern Mediterranean in order to battle terrorism there. Washington seeks to preserve the present balance of regional friends while preventing Russia and China from forging

strategic relationships with regional entities. However, when comparing the results of different administrations, the United States' track record in accomplishing these goals is varied.

### **Germany**

German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas said that Germany believed Turkey should refrain from provocations in the gas dispute in the eastern Mediterranean, adding that Germany stands in solidarity with Cyprus and Greece as EU partners. Germany thinks that if the government is interested in dialogue, as it has repeatedly said, "The Turkish government must end its interaction with de-escalation and provocation," Maas said in Berlin before leaving for Cyprus and Greece on October 13 in 2020. He called on Turkey to remain open to dialogue and called on Ankara not to resume gas exploration in the disputed waters.

## TIMELINE OF EVENTS

- 1974** Turkish invasion of Cyprus resulted from a Greek nationalist coup, causing the island's de facto partition into the internationally recognized Republic of Cyprus in the south and the self-declared Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus in the north, only recognized by Turkey.
- 1983** Turkish Cypriots declared the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus independent, escalating tensions with the Republic of Cyprus.
- 2003** Territorial Waters Dispute: Turkey challenges the Republic of Cyprus's right to explore and utilise natural resources in the island's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), demanding for Turkey to have these resources.
- 2010** Noble Energy, located in the United States, discovers huge natural gas deposits in the Eastern Mediterranean off the coasts of Israel and Cyprus, escalating the conflict over resource exploitation.
- 2018** Turkey sends naval vessels to prevent multinational companies from drilling in areas claimed by the Republic of Cyprus, further exacerbating the situation.
- 2019** Turkey and Libya sign a contentious maritime pact (commonly known as the Turkish-Libyan Maritime Pact), trying to set maritime borders and increase Turkish EEZ claims in the region while ignoring Greek and Cypriot claims.
- 2020** Tensions between Turkey and Greece, making Turkey send exploratory vessels and warships into Greek-claimed seas,

raising military tensions between the two NATO allies.

# Definition of Key Terms

## ❖ **NATO**

NATO's mission is to ensure its members' independence and security via political and military means. NATO promotes democratic ideals and allows members to communicate and collaborate on defence and security matters in order to solve difficulties, create trust, and, ultimately, avert conflict. NATO is militarily dedicated to peaceful conflict resolution. If diplomatic attempts fail, it possesses the military capability to conduct crisis-management operations. These are carried out under NATO's founding treaty's collective defence provision - Article 5 of the Washington Treaty - or under a United Nations mandate, either alone or in collaboration with other nations and international organisations.

## ❖ **Exclusive Economic Zone**

A section of the ocean that extends approximately 200 nautical miles (230 miles) beyond a nation's territorial sea and over which a coastal nation has authority over both living and nonliving resources.

## ❖ **Cypriots**

Ethnic population of Cyprus is divided into two groups: Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. They share many cultural elements yet have separate identities based on race, religion, language, and close links to Greece and Turkey.

## ❖ **Military Junta**

Government led by a committee of military leaders.

## Further Research

1. The Eastern Mediterranean Conflict From Greece-Turkey Conflicts to Regional Power Struggles:

[https://www.fiaa.fi/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/bp302\\_easternmediterranean.pdf](https://www.fiaa.fi/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/bp302_easternmediterranean.pdf)

2. What's Driving the Conflict in the Eastern Mediterranean?:

<https://www.lawfaremedia.org/article/whats-driving-conflict-eastern-mediterranean>

3. Shifting East Mediterranean Tides: From Conflict to Club Med?:

<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/shifting-east-mediterranean-tides-conflict-club-med>

4. Maritime disputes in the eastern Mediterranean: Why and why now?:

<https://www.sipri.org/commentary/essay/2020/maritime-disputes-eastern-mediterranean-why-and-why-now>

5. Conflicts in the EastMed From Germany's and France's Conflicting Strategies to a Dual Approach:

[https://www.ifri.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/kabis-kechrid\\_conflicts\\_eastmed\\_2021\\_.pdf](https://www.ifri.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/kabis-kechrid_conflicts_eastmed_2021_.pdf)

6. Opportunities and Challenges in the Eastern Mediterranean: Examining U.S. Interests and Regional Cooperation:

<https://www.americanprogress.org/article/opportunities-and-challenges-in-the-eastern-mediterranean-examining-u-s-interests-and-regional-cooperation/>

## Guiding Questions

- ❖ How can delegates propose a solution to the territorial dispute, mainly between Greece and Turkey, in which both of the nations would be satisfied?
- ❖ Could this issue be resolved without any military intervention?
- ❖ Does any country have any historical background that could give them control/more control over the Eastern Mediterranean area?
- ❖ What are other NATO members' motivations to also have some control of the Eastern Mediterranean?
- ❖ How would the natural resources of the Eastern Mediterranean be beneficial for the NATO members and the EU?

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*NATO soldiers in Iraq*

[Washington Institute](#)

## **Topic B:**

**Discussing the involvement  
of NATO in the MENA region**

# Background Information

## Introduction

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization has played a significant role in international security and politics since its establishment in 1949. Over the years, NATO has expanded its focus beyond the North Atlantic region to address global challenges, including its involvement in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region which spans 19 countries covering the Middle East and Northern Africa. Since the end of the Cold War, instability in the Middle East has been a key issue for NATO so the alliance began establishing missions and discussions to promote stability, counter-terrorism, and ensure the security of NATO member states. The region's geopolitical importance, conflicts, and threats have led NATO to engage in cooperative partnerships with countries in the MENA region to address common security challenges.



Map of the MENA region. [Dahredorf Forum.](#)

## NATO's Initial Involvement in the Middle East

NATO first got involved in the Middle East after the fall of the Soviet Union and the Cold War which resulted in significant political shifts and instability in the region. One of the key initiatives that marked NATO's initial involvement in the region was the establishment of the Mediterranean Dialogue in 1994. This was a framework of cooperation between seven countries in the MENA region and the members of NATO.

The Mediterranean dialogue aimed to foster political dialogue, enhance mutual understanding and develop practical security cooperation between NATO and the MENA countries. The goal of the document was regional security, arms proliferation, and counterterrorism.

### **Operation Active Endeavour**

Operation Active Endeavour began as a response to the terrorist attacks conducted on September 11th, 2001. Under this operation, NATO ships patrolled the Mediterranean and monitored shipping to protect the world against terrorist activity. The operations aimed to protect the Mediterranean trade routes and especially the straits of Gibraltar and the Suez Canal. Throughout the 13 years the program was in place it helped enhance the alliance between NATO and the seven countries in the MENA region it cooperates with, (Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco, and Tunisia). The operation was terminated in 2016 and replaced by Sea Guardian which works in a broader scope to protect Maritime security.

### **The International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan**

NATO took the lead in peacekeeping operations in Afghanistan in 2003 after it was mandated by the UN. The primary goal of ISAF was to enable the Afghan government to have effective security throughout the country and ensure the country would not be a haven for terrorism. In 2011, responsibility for the country's security was transitioned to Afghan forces. ISAF was NATO's most challenging operation to date and at its height, ISAF had over 130,000 troops from 51 NATO and Partner countries. After ISAF was terminated in 2015 NATO continued to help train Afghan troops until the withdrawal of all RSM troops in August 2021.



Turkish soldiers in Afghanistan. [Turkish Press](#).

NATO peacekeeping efforts in the MENA Region have also expanded to include smaller missions. A request from the African Union NATO helped expand the peacekeeping mission in Darfur, providing airlift for AU peacekeepers, training and bringing additional peacekeepers. Similarly, during 2005, NATO helped provide airlift for over 5000 and peacekeepers, with these efforts continuing until 2006. This instance showed NATO's dedication to international security and strengthened its influence and position in the region. NATO has also conducted small but impactful missions in Iraq and Libya which contributed to peacekeeping and safety in these regions. In Iraq, NATO helped train, mentor, and assist the Iraqi Security Forces. This then led to discussions with the Iraqi government in ways that the alliance could develop a long-term positive relationship with Iraq. In Libya, NATO led a multi-state coalition put in place to enforce UN Security Council Resolution 1973 in response to the 2011 Libyan Cold War.

However, since the start of the alliance's involvement in the region, many countries and key players have resented NATO for its involvement in the region as some nations have perceived NATO's actions as interfering in the internal affairs of Arab nations and potentially undermining the sovereignty of these countries. Some nations have also criticised NATO's involvement in military interventions, such as the 2011 intervention in Libya, for leading to further instability and prolonged conflicts. Cultural sensitivity is also a key player in the friction between NATO and some Middle Eastern countries as some resent the Western leaders which comprise the alliance.

## Current Situation

In recent years NATO has focused on its diplomatic efforts in the Middle East with the Mediterranean Dialogue and Istanbul Cooperation Initiative continuing to promote peace and development in the region.

At the Warsaw Summit in 2016, for example, NATO announced plans to open an intelligence “fusion centre” in Tunisia. Although 7 years later, the proposal has not yet occurred due to domestic political disagreement in Tunisia about cooperation with NATO. One year later in 2017, NATO opened a Strategic Direction South Hub (NSD-S) as part of Joint Forces Command in Naples. The focus of NSD-S is to serve as a hub for closer cooperation with the alliance’s partners in North Africa.

NATO’s mission in Iraq, established in 2018 is still ongoing and has provided support to the Iraqi government in building more transparent and effective armed forces and security so that Iraqis are better equipped to fight for stabilisation in their country, counter-terrorism and avoid the return of ISIS/Daesh in the region. The Mission was expanded in 2021 and now involves several thousand personnel from NATO member nations and allies like Australia and Sweden.



However, in recent years there have been growing concerns and criticism of NATO's involvement in the MENA region. Some countries perceive NATO's actions as interfering in internal affairs and favouring particular actors. The alliance's interventions have also resulted in unintended consequences, such as the growth of extremist groups and the exacerbation of internal conflicts.

Furthermore, despite some nations in the alliance believing it is key to protect peace in the region other NATO members feel wary of involvement in the Middle East as interventions and involvement in the MENA region can be costly in terms of both finances and military resources. Consequently, NATO members may be reluctant to bear the costs associated with such operations and believe that NATO should focus its budget on other pressing issues in the European continent.

## Past NATO Actions

- ❖ In December 1994, the Mediterranean Dialogue was established to promote cooperation between NATO and countries in the MENA region. Its overall aim is to contribute to regional security and stability, achieve better mutual understanding and dispel any misconceptions about NATO in participating countries. In February 1995, the first group composed of Egypt, Israel, Mauritania, Morocco, and Tunisia joined the Dialogue, followed by Jordan in November of that year, and Algeria in March 2000.
- ❖ The Istanbul Cooperation Initiative was established at the 2004 NATO Summit in Istanbul to promote security cooperation on a bilateral basis between NATO and partner countries in the broader Middle East region. There are currently four countries participating in the Gulf Cooperation Council – Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) while Oman and Saudi Arabia participate in selected activities within the ICI framework.

# Major Bloc Positions

## United States of America

Throughout its history, the United States has actively engaged in the MENA region due to its global strategic interests, particularly in energy security and counterterrorism efforts. However, in recent times, the country has faced increased public scrutiny and political debates over the costs and effectiveness of its military interventions. Despite this, the United States remains committed to protecting regional security and its alliances with countries in the Middle East, such as Saudi Arabia and Egypt, while seeking a more nuanced approach to its involvement.

## United Kingdom

The UK has been a supporter of NATO's involvement in MENA, driven by the goals of regional stability, combating terrorism, and safeguarding British interests. Nevertheless, similar to the United States, there have been internal calls for a more cautious approach to military interventions, especially after experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan. The UK recognizes the importance of balanced engagement in the MENA region to address security concerns effectively.

## France

With historical ties to the MENA region and a vital role in counterterrorism, France maintains a long-standing presence. While supporting NATO interventions in specific instances, France advocates for diplomatic solutions and respecting national sovereignty. The country acknowledges the complexities of the region and emphasises the significance of dialogue in resolving conflicts.

## Spain

Taking a cautious stance on NATO's involvement in combat positions in MENA, Spain emphasises a focus on peacekeeping and stabilisation efforts. The country believes that diplomatic engagement and conflict resolution are essential in addressing regional challenges and avoiding prolonged conflicts.

## **Turkey**

As a key NATO member with a significant regional role in the Middle East, Turkey has actively engaged in MENA affairs. However, the country's interventions in Syria and differing views on certain regional issues have sparked internal debates within the alliance. Turkey seeks to balance its interests while navigating complex regional dynamics.

## **Belgium**

Belgium believes that Conflict prevention and humanitarian assistance are key to NATO involvement in the MENA and is extremely wary of combat assistance as Belgium believes that NATO should respect the National sovereignty of countries in the MENA region.

## Timeline of Events

<b>December, 1994</b>	Mediterranean Dialogue was established to promote cooperation between NATO and countries in the MENA region.
<b>2001</b>	NATO invoked Article 5 for the first time in response to the 9/11 attacks and contributed to the U.S.-led operation in Afghanistan.
<b>2004</b>	NATO launches the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative, offering dialogue and cooperation in the Gulf region.;
<b>2011</b>	NATO intervenes in Libya after the 2011 Libyan Civil War
<b>2014</b>	NATO establishes the Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan to aid Afghan security after the end of NATO's combat mission in the country.
<b>2016</b>	NATO announces plans to open an intelligence “fusion centre” in Tunisia
<b>2017</b>	NATO opened a Strategic Direction South Hub (NSD-S) as part of Joint Forces Command in Naples.
<b>2018</b>	NATO establishes its mission in Iraq to provide support to the Iraqi government in building more transparent and effective armed forces and security so that Iraqis are better equipped to fight for stabilisation in their country,

# Definition of Key Terms

## ❖ **NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization)**

A political and military alliance of 30 North American and European countries, established in 1949 to promote collective defence and security cooperation. NATO aims to safeguard the freedom and security of its members through political consultation and military deterrence.

## ❖ **MENA (Middle East and North Africa)**

A geographical term encompassing countries in the Middle East and North Africa, including nations in Western Asia and parts of Northern Africa. The region is diverse in culture, history, and political dynamics, and it has been affected by conflicts, geopolitical tensions, and security challenges.

## ❖ **Arab Spring**

The Arab Spring refers to a series of popular uprisings, protests, and demonstrations that took place in several Arab countries in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, starting in late 2010. The protests were largely driven by demands for political reform, social justice, and economic opportunities, as well as opposition to autocratic regimes and corruption.

## ❖ **Istanbul Cooperation Initiative**

The Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI) is a partnership program initiated by NATO in 2004 to foster cooperation and dialogue with countries in the broader Middle East region. The primary goal of the initiative is to enhance security and stability by promoting political consultations, practical cooperation, and capacity-building efforts.

## ❖ **Counterterrorism**

Political or military activities designed to prevent or thwart terrorism.

## Further Research

1. This article provides insight into NATO's position in the Middle East and North Africa, highlighting its strategic goals in the region. It is part of a series called "NATO in a New Era", which includes pertinent information about NATO's recent defining challenges:  
<https://www.gmfus.org/news/natos-sub-strategic-role-middle-east-and-north-africa>
2. This is an official publication by NATO that highlights the organisation's mission in Iraq, as well as the results of the July 2018 NATO Summit in Brussels:  
[https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_166936.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_166936.htm)
3. This article details NATO's role in the Middle East over the past 10 years, highlighting NATO's future outlook towards the region:  
<https://www.brookings.edu/articles/natos-growing-role-in-the-greater-middle-east/>
4. This article by the Carnegie Endowment focuses on the limitations that NATO has encountered in the region, but argues that increased cooperation can strengthen the security architecture of the Middle East:  
<https://carnegieendowment.org/sada/81740>

## Guiding Questions

- ❖ How has your country historically viewed NATO's involvement in the MENA region?
- ❖ What are the key strategic interests and priorities that influence your country's stance on this topic?
- ❖ Has there been any shift in your country's approach to NATO's involvement in the MENA region over time?
- ❖ What diplomatic or humanitarian efforts does your country prioritise in addressing challenges in MENA?
- ❖ What are the public and political debates surrounding your country's involvement in MENA as a NATO member?

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