

ENGLISH

AARAMBH CHECKLIST PRE

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CHECKLIST 210



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Directions (1-10): Given below a short passage has been given. Read the following passage carefully and answer the questions.

For anyone who is piqued by US President Donald Trump's deceptive diplomacy, where 'strategic ambiguity' is a policy choice, his volte face on North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) offers key insights. During the recently-held NATO summit in The Hague, perhaps the biggest development was Trump's **metamorphosed** views that NATO remains relevant for the US. A strong signal from the NATO countries that its European members have reached a near unison on spending close to 5% of their GDP on defence, compelling a change of heart in Trump. In what has been seen as very encouraging by member countries, Trump referred to NATO as not a '**rip off**' anymore and reaffirmed US' commitment to it. These developments provided a positive appraisal of the transatlantic relations, especially against the stark background of a consistent broadside since the beginning of the second Trump administration, inflected by Vice President JD Vance's Munich Security Conference speech earlier this year. Whether this sentiment from the Oval Office will remain consistent for the remainder of Trump's term may be anyone's guess but the Hague summit's new promise on burden sharing across the Atlantic is historic and marks a new era in NATO's evolution as a leading collective security organisation. The Hague defence commitment this year promises to increase defence spending by NATO member countries to 5% of GDP by 2035, out of which 3.5% will be allocated to core defence needs and the rest to related aspects of security such as infrastructure, intelligence, cybersecurity, etc. By the end of this year, NATO expects all allies to meet or exceed at least 2% of GDP expenditure on defence. These commitments are broadly distributed across three domains—deterrence and defence, crisis prevention and management, and cooperative security. Perhaps the single most important trend coming out of the Hague summit was how Europe's intentions to spend more on collective defence resonated with global spending trends. Beside political signalling and repercussions for transatlantic ties, the NATO summit this year is reflective of a broader trend – the surge in global defence spending. Compared to the Cold War period between 1970-1990, global defence spending as a percentage of GDP halved from 3.6% to 1.9% between 2010-2019. This trend, however, is reversing rapidly, with global military expenditures crossing \$2700 billion in 2024. In 2024, global defence spending, which increased by more than 8% and was backed by augmented European commitments, is likely to scale further. While much of this trend has been churned and fuelled by the ongoing wars in Europe and the Middle East, the former's aim for an ambitious defence package through its ReArm Europe or Readiness 2030 plan and the US' decision to increase its defence budget to almost \$1 trillion may hasten the end of the 'era of the peace dividend.' Trump's report card that the summit was 'a very historic milestone' and the Hague defence commitment, 'a monumental win for the United States....and a big win for Europe..' seems to suggest that Europe may have been able to put behind one of the most nagging issues that marred transatlantic ties in recent months—defence spending. As such, the

Hague summit this year provides the opportunity to mark new European imprint on the NATO in several ways. The allies' step up in their financial commitments towards boosting collective defence may be Europe's moment of renaissance in restoring the transatlantic politico-security equilibrium. Besides, the ability to spend more by NATO members could also mean greater leverage in deciding the course of such expenditure. For instance, in the context of the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict, Europe's trajectory would have been completely different, had NATO members been spending at 5% of their GDPs on defence. The other question for Europe, as for the US, is managing fiscal sustainability and nursing high levels of public debt internally alongside increased spending on defence and security. Despite a positive appraisal by Trump and increased defence spending, Europe's woes are far from over. The Hague defence commitment takes a long arc in seeking to achieve the stated 5% mark with some countries like Spain and Italy remaining somewhat sceptic. Riding on these concerns is Trump's inconsistency and unpredictability, which could hyphenate Washington's other impediments apropos of Europe, with its collective security commitments and the lack thereof, bringing ties back to the drawing board. The Hague summit spurred a critical moment in the evolution of NATO and collective security. Trump's ire, after all, is not seen as a negative development for Europe entirely, but rather a jolt that Brussels needed. However, by aligning itself with the world more closely with increased defence spending, Europe may well be on its course to change its image as a peaceful continent—an image led by a vibrant economic union like no other. At the global level, these changes converge with NATO's emerging intent to pivot eastward and deepen engagement with countries in the Indo-Pacific, albeit not directly in the realm of defence and security. While Trump may have framed NATO's budget realignments as a victory for the US, the political, security, and economic recalibrations underway within the alliance could significantly reshape NATO's profile, particularly from a European standpoint. Over the next decade, efforts to consolidate transatlantic security are likely to reverberate along opposing axes, with China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea coordinating strategies to counter the West. NATO's growing defence expenditure is poised to intensify a range of geopolitical dynamics in the years ahead—chief among them being escalating great power competition, rapid innovation in defence and technology, and the deepening fracture of the world order.

Question 1:

Which of the following **best expresses the meaning** of the phrase "**rip off**" as used in the sentence below?

"In what has been seen as very encouraging by member countries, Trump referred to NATO as not a 'rip off' anymore and reaffirmed US' commitment to it."

- (A) an administrative burden
- (B) a political stalemate
- (C) a diplomatic triumph

- (D) a strategic liability
- (E) a symbolic gesture

Question 2:

Which of the following statements is/are **True** according to the passage?

- I. NATO's 5% GDP defence commitment will be achieved by the end of 2024.
- II. Trump's speech at the Hague marked a dramatic reversal from his previous stance on NATO.
- III. Global military spending increased in 2024, driven partly by European rearmament efforts.

- (A) Only I
- (B) Both II and III
- (C) Only III
- (D) Both I and II
- (E) All I, II, and III

Question 3:

What is the **primary concern** expressed regarding Europe's increased defence spending?

- (A) It will distance Europe from US-led initiatives.
- (B) It may compromise fiscal sustainability due to internal public debt.
- (C) It could escalate tensions between NATO members.
- (D) It will dilute NATO's traditional focus on the Atlantic.
- (E) None of the above

Question 4:

What can be **inferred** from the passage?

- I. Europe's increased defence spending has led to a shift in NATO's global strategic interests.
- II. NATO's eastward pivot is primarily driven by its desire to counter China militarily.
- III. Trump's changing stance was influenced more by political pressure than genuine commitment.

- (A) Only I
- (B) Both I and III
- (C) Only III

- (D) All I, II, and III
- (E) None of the above

Question 5:

What is the **tone** of the passage?

- I. analytical
- II. polemical
- III. cautiously optimistic

- (A) Only I
- (B) Both I and III
- (C) Only II
- (D) All I, II and III
- (E) Both II and III

Question 6:

In the following question, an emboldened word is provided, followed by four options. Select the pair containing a **synonym and antonym** of the bold word respectively.

*“During the recently-held NATO summit in The Hague, perhaps the biggest development was Trump’s **metamorphosed** views that NATO remains relevant for the US.”*

- (A) transformed, unchanged
- (B) conflicted, resolved
- (C) hardened, softened
- (D) oscillated, stabilized
- (E) None of the above

Question 7:**Dialogue-based Tone and Idiom Identification**

J: With this 5% target, are we really preparing for collective security or just pouring money into an arms race?

K: I get your concern, but think about the broader deterrence value. In geopolitics, underplaying your hand can be risky.

J: Still, funneling resources into defence while austerity bites at home sounds irresponsible.

K: Sometimes safeguarding peace demands foresight. Besides, long-term stability might reduce future costs.

The tone of **J** is _____ and the idiom best capturing **K**'s view is:

- (A) cynical; penny wise, pound foolish
- (B) apprehensive; a stitch in time saves nine
- (C) pragmatic; barking up the wrong tree
- (D) dismissive; Rome wasn't built in a day
- (E) idealistic; burning the candle at both ends

Question 8:

In the following question, an emboldened word is provided. Select the word that is the **closest antonym** of the bolded word "**ire**" as used in the sentence below:

*"Trump's **ire**, after all, is not seen as a negative development for Europe entirely, but rather a jolt that Brussels needed."*

- (A) aplomb
- (B) amity
- (C) indignation
- (D) wrath
- (E) vehemence

Question 9:

Which of the following best summarizes the **central idea** of the passage?

- (A) Trump's new support for NATO demonstrates a complete shift in US foreign policy.
- (B) The Indo-Pacific engagement of NATO signals a reduced focus on the US-Europe alliance.
- (C) NATO's pivot to the Indo-Pacific will result in new economic challenges for Europe.
- (D) Europe's failure to reach defence targets earlier reflects a broader weakness in transatlantic ties.
- (E) The Hague Summit marked a milestone in reshaping NATO's defence posture and European agency.

Question 10:

Which of the following **most accurately describes** Trump's portrayal in the passage?

- (A) A leader hesitant but ultimately convinced by European commitment.
- (B) An authoritarian figure forcing Europe into militarization.
- (C) A passive observer of global defence trends.
- (D) A consistent supporter of NATO's goals.
- (E) A critic turned peacemaker with unilateral goals.

ANSWER**1.Ans: (D)**

Explanation: In this context, "rip off" refers to something that was previously seen as **unfair, disadvantageous, or not worth the cost** — essentially a **strategic liability** for the US. Trump's reversal means he no longer sees NATO as draining or unfair — thus, not a "rip off" anymore.

- (A) Administrative burden focuses on paperwork/management, not value or fairness.
- (B) A political stalemate implies inaction, which isn't the meaning of "rip off."
- (C) A diplomatic triumph is too positive and opposite in tone.
- (E) A symbolic gesture misses the financial/strategic dissatisfaction implied in "rip off."

2.Ans: (B)**Explanation:**

I – False: The passage states that the 5% target is by **2035**, not 2024.

The passage clearly says: *"The Hague defence commitment this year promises to increase defence spending by NATO member countries to 5% of GDP **by 2035**, out of which 3.5% will be allocated to core defence needs..."*

Also: *"By the end of this year, NATO expects all allies to meet or exceed **at least 2%** of GDP expenditure on defence."*

So, the **5% target is for 2035**, not 2024. Hence, Statement I is incorrect.

II – True: Trump had earlier called NATO a "rip-off" but changed his position, calling it a "monumental win."

The passage states: *"Trump's metamorphosed views that NATO remains relevant for the US" and "Trump referred to NATO as not a 'rip off' anymore and reaffirmed US' commitment to it."*

This clearly shows a **volte-face** (dramatic reversal) from his earlier, more critical stance.

III – True: The passage attributes the 2024 rise in global defence spending (over \$2700 billion) to European and other efforts.

"In 2024, global defence spending, which increased by more than 8% and was backed by augmented European commitments, is likely to scale further."

Therefore, the rise was **partly driven by Europe's increased defence efforts**.

3.Ans: (B)

Explanation: The passage notes that **Europe's increased defence spending** raises the issue of **managing fiscal sustainability and high levels of public debt**. Specifically, it says:

"The other question for Europe, as for the US, is managing fiscal sustainability and nursing high levels of public debt internally alongside increased spending on defence and security."

This shows the primary concern is financial strain, not distancing from the US or tensions within NATO.

4.Ans: (A)

Explanation:

Statement I is correct. The passage states that Europe's increased defence spending aligns it more closely with global trends and contributes to **NATO's intent to pivot eastward** and engage more with the Indo-Pacific. This implies a shift in NATO's **global strategic focus**.

Statement II is incorrect. The passage says NATO aims to deepen engagement in the Indo-Pacific but **"not directly in the realm of defence and security,"** so it's **not primarily driven by a military desire to counter China**.

Statement III is not supported. The passage mentions Trump's **"metamorphosed views"** and his positive appraisal, but it does **not directly indicate** that his change in stance was due to **political pressure rather than genuine commitment**. So this is speculative.

Thus, only **Statement I** can be reasonably inferred.

5.Ans: (B)

Explanation:

Analytical: The passage critically examines NATO's evolving dynamics, Trump's policy shift, defence spending trends, and their geopolitical implications. It presents data, historical comparisons, and future projections — all characteristics of an analytical tone.

Cautiously optimistic: The passage acknowledges positive developments like Europe's stronger role in NATO and improved transatlantic ties but also highlights concerns such as fiscal pressure, Trump's unpredictability, and long-term challenges. This blend reflects cautious optimism.

Polemical: This term refers to a strongly argumentative or controversial tone. The passage does not take an aggressive or combative stance against any side, so this tone does **not** apply.

6.Ans: (A)

Explanation:

Metamorphosed means **transformed or changed significantly**.

Its synonym here is **transformed**, and its antonym is **unchanged**.

Other options either do not fit the exact meaning or pair unrelated words.

7.Ans: (B)

Explanation:

J's tone is *apprehensive*: J questions the wisdom of heavy defence spending during domestic economic strain. This shows worry and unease, not outright cynicism or dismissal.

The idiom that best reflects **K's view is "*a stitch in time saves nine*"**: K argues that spending now on defence is an act of foresight that could prevent greater costs or conflict later. This idiom means **taking timely action to avoid bigger problems**.

Other options don't fit:

(A) "penny wise, pound foolish" implies the opposite of K's argument.

(C) "barking up the wrong tree" means misdirecting efforts, which isn't relevant here.

(D) "Rome wasn't built in a day" suggests patience, not preventive action.

(E) "burning the candle at both ends" implies overexertion, not strategic foresight.

Thus, the best fit is **(b) apprehensive; a stitch in time saves nine**.

8.Ans: (B)

Explanation: Ire means intense anger or wrath. Amity means friendship, goodwill, or peaceful harmony, which is the closest antonym here.

The other options are incorrect:

aplomb: Means confidence or composure, not an antonym of anger.

indignation: Means righteous anger, similar to ire, so it's a synonym.

wrath: Means intense anger, a direct synonym of ire.

vehemence: Means intensity or forcefulness, often of emotion (like anger), so also a synonym.

9.Ans: (E)

Explanation: This option best captures the **central idea** of the passage, which discusses:

Trump's changing stance and its implications,
Europe's increased defence commitments,
NATO's evolving role and future direction,
Broader global defence trends,

And how these developments reflect **Europe's growing role** in shaping NATO.

The Hague Summit is portrayed as a **turning point**, not just in terms of funding, but also in **strategic influence and transatlantic recalibration**.

Other options focus too narrowly or inaccurately:

- (A) overstates Trump's change as a total policy reversal.
- (B) misrepresents NATO's Indo-Pacific interest as a replacement for US-Europe focus.
- (C) exaggerates economic issues not central to the passage.
- (D) points to past failure rather than present momentum and future promise.

10. Ans: (A)

Explanation: The passage describes how **Trump initially held critical views of NATO** but **changed his stance** after Europe pledged to increase defence spending: *"Trump's metamorphosed views that NATO remains relevant for the US..."*

"Trump referred to NATO as not a 'rip off' anymore and reaffirmed US' commitment to it."

This suggests he was **hesitant at first** but **shifted his position due to Europe's stronger defence pledges**, making option (A) the most accurate.

Other options are inaccurate:

- (B) misrepresents his role as coercive.
 - (C) is incorrect—Trump was active and vocal.
 - (D) is false—he was not consistent in his support.
 - (E) overstates his transformation and implies peacemaking motives that aren't clearly shown.
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