

North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

[UPSC Notes]

What is NATO?

NATO is an acronym that stands for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization; it is also known as the North Atlantic Alliance. NATO is an intergovernmental military association that is based on the North Atlantic Treaty that was signed on April 4th, 1949. NATO consists of some countries which have constituted a system of collective defense in order to respond to and counter an attack by a non-NATO member. NATO is headquartered on Boulevard Leopold III in Brussels, Belgium.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization was formed to provide collective security to Western Europe. This is because relations between the United States and the USSR continuously deteriorated even after World War 2. The USSR was looking to expand itself in Europe by spreading communalism. The United States saw this move by the USSR as a threat to the defense system of their country and hence decided to form NATO.

History of NATO

Before we start to learn about the working style of NATO, let's take a brief look at its history.

- World War 2 happened in 1945. Soon after that, western Europe underwent a financial and military crisis.
- In 1948, the United States granted the fund to some countries in Europe on the condition that they would cooperate with each other and accelerate their mutual recovery.
- By the end of the Second World War, the United States and the USSR had developed certain clashes that eventually led to the cold war between them. Because the USSR wanted to expand its arms in Europe by spreading communalism, whereas the United States saw this as a threat to their military.
- In 1955, the cold war geared up between the USSR and the United States. As a result of this, the Soviet Union signed a pact. This pact was called the Warsaw Pact, which was purely a military-political alliance. This pact was seen as a direct counterbalance to NATO.

Objectives of NATO

The prime objective of NATO is to provide security and safeguard its members from non-NATO members in terms of defense and political attack. Other objectives of NATO include:

- NATO promotes democratic values and allows the members to have discussions after intervals to have a word on the issues related to security and defense, which may help to prevent the long-term conflict.
- NATO ensures the safeguarding of its member countries and provides a peaceful resolution to any dispute (if any). The initial level to sort out the problems is on diplomatic grounds. Later, if required, military power can also be used to solve the crisis.
- These activities are conducted pursuant to NATO's founding Treaty Article 5 of the Washington Treaty or pursuant to United Nations mandates which are alone or in cooperation with other international organizations.
- Article 5 has been voted on only once by NATO following the attacks of 9/11 on the World Trade Centre in 2001.

Purpose of NATO

NATO is an alliance of 30 countries that guarantees freedom and security to its members through military and political means. The main purpose of NATO includes:

- NATO aims to provide a long-lasting peaceful environment in European countries based on the individual values of liberal democracy, human rights, and the rule of law.
- NATO personifies the transAtlantic link that helps to secure Europe from North America.
- NATO provides a common platform for many countries that they can use to have discussions over political and military issues and take decisions on the problems that may affect their security.
- NATO responds to nonmember threats by utilizing collective defense and proper crisis management by encouraging cooperative security, as outlined in the 2010 strategic concept.

NATO Members

NATO is an organization that is an association of 30 member countries. North Montenegro has recently become part of NATO in 2020. Other countries of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization include:

Belgium (1949)	The United States (1949)	Estonia (2004)
Canada (1949)	The United Kingdom (1949)	Latvia (2004)
Denmark (1949)	Greece (1952)	Lithuania (2004)

France (1949)	Turkey (1952)	Romania (2004)
Iceland (1949)	Germany (1955)	Slovakia (2004)
Italy (1949)	Spain (1982)	Slovenia (2004)
Luxembourg (1949)	Czech Republic (1999)	Albania (2009)
The Netherlands (1949)	Poland (1999)	Croatia (2009)
Norway (1949)	Hungary (1999)	Montenegro (2017)
Portugal (1949)	Bulgaria (2004)	North Mecedonia (2020)

Out of all these countries, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the United States, and the United Kingdom were the founding member countries of NATO.

Alliances of NATO

NATO participates in three alliances that expand its influence beyond its 30 member countries, which include:

- **Mediterranean Dialogue:** It is a partnership forum that aims to contribute to security and stability in NATO's Mediterranean and North African neighborhood and promote good relations and understanding among participating countries and NATO Allies. Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco, and Tunisia take card in this dialogue.
- **Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI):** Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates currently participate in the Initiative. ICI 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.
- **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) program.

Latest News on NATO

- Finland and Sweden submitted their application to join North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Although Finland and Sweden have a non-alignment policy, they were always close to NATO. The 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine prompted them to join NATO and seek its safety net.
- Leaders of G7, NATO, and the European Union gathered for the NATO summit in Brussels, Belgium, in March 2022.
- The military exercise 'Cold Response 2022' has been organized by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in Norway starting from 14th March till 1st April 2022. This exercise is held biennially in Norway and NATO Allies and partner nations take part.

