

With
(Rear Admiral Retired)
Simon Hardern



How NATO Works



My Experience



My Experience



It's About

The NATO logo, a shield with a blue field and a white compass rose, is centered behind the three text boxes.

NATO's Basic
Principles

NATO's
Organisation

NATO's
Operations
and Missions

In a Nutshell

A Political and Military Organisation

Shared Values of Democracy

Underpinned by the Principle of Collective Defence

Comprehensive Vision of Security

Maintains the Euro-Transatlantic Link

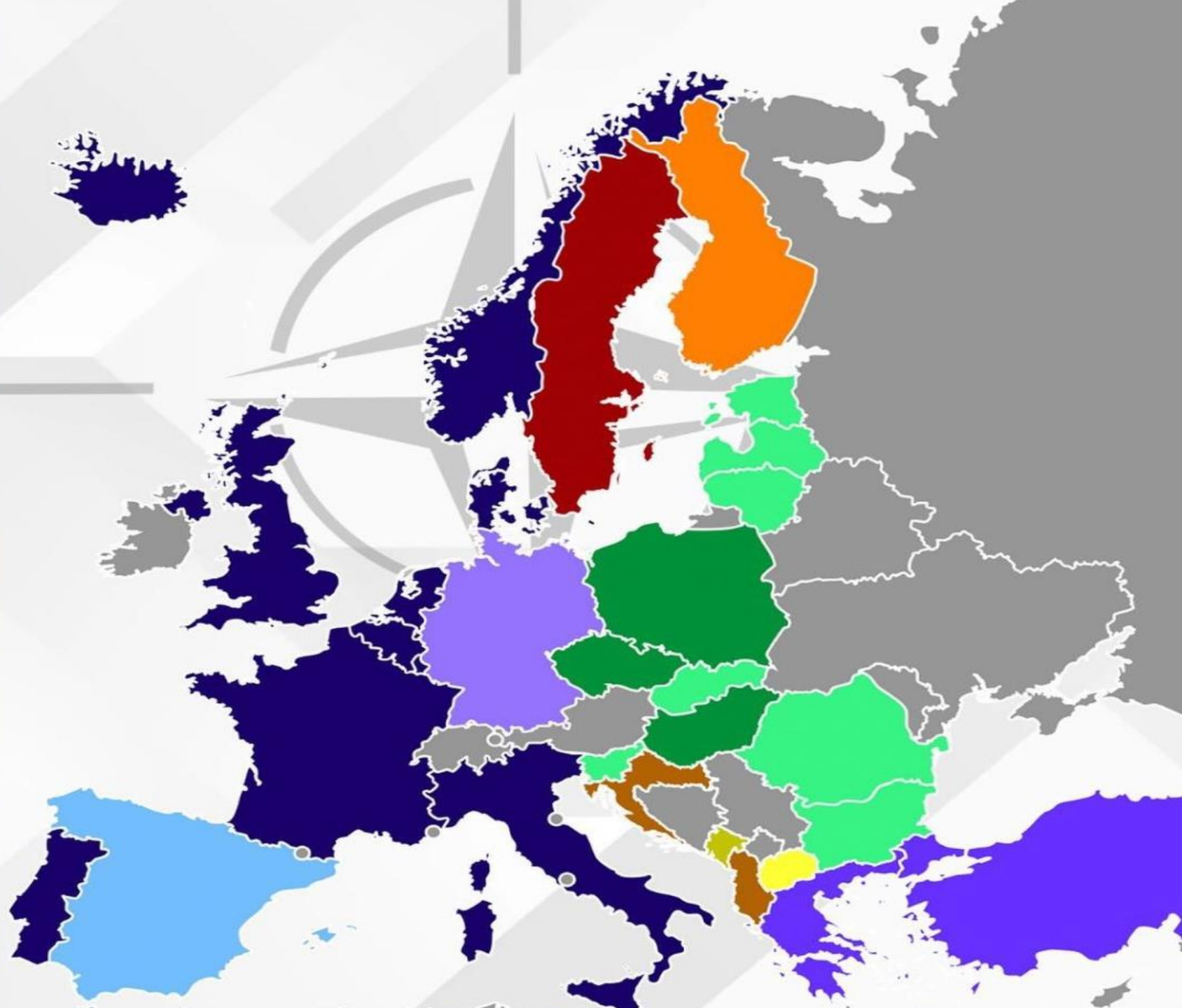
The Washington Treaty - 1949

Founding of the Alliance



- Twelve Founding members:
- **Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, United Kingdom and United States**
- Now 32 members and 40 partners

How NATO Has Grown



It's About Common and Shared Interests



Member Nations Today



2009
Albania



1949
Belgium



2004
Bulgaria



1949
Canada



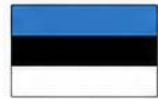
2009
Croatia



1999
Czechia



1949
Denmark



2004
Estonia



2023
Finland



1949
France



1955
Germany



1952
Greece



1999
Hungary



1949
Iceland



1949
Italy



2004
Latvia



2004
Lithuania



1949
Luxembourg



2017
Montenegro



1949
Netherlands



2020
North
Macedonia



1949
Norway



1999
Poland



1949
Portugal



2004
Romania



2004
Slovakia



2004
Slovenia



1982
Spain



2024
Sweden



1952
Türkiye

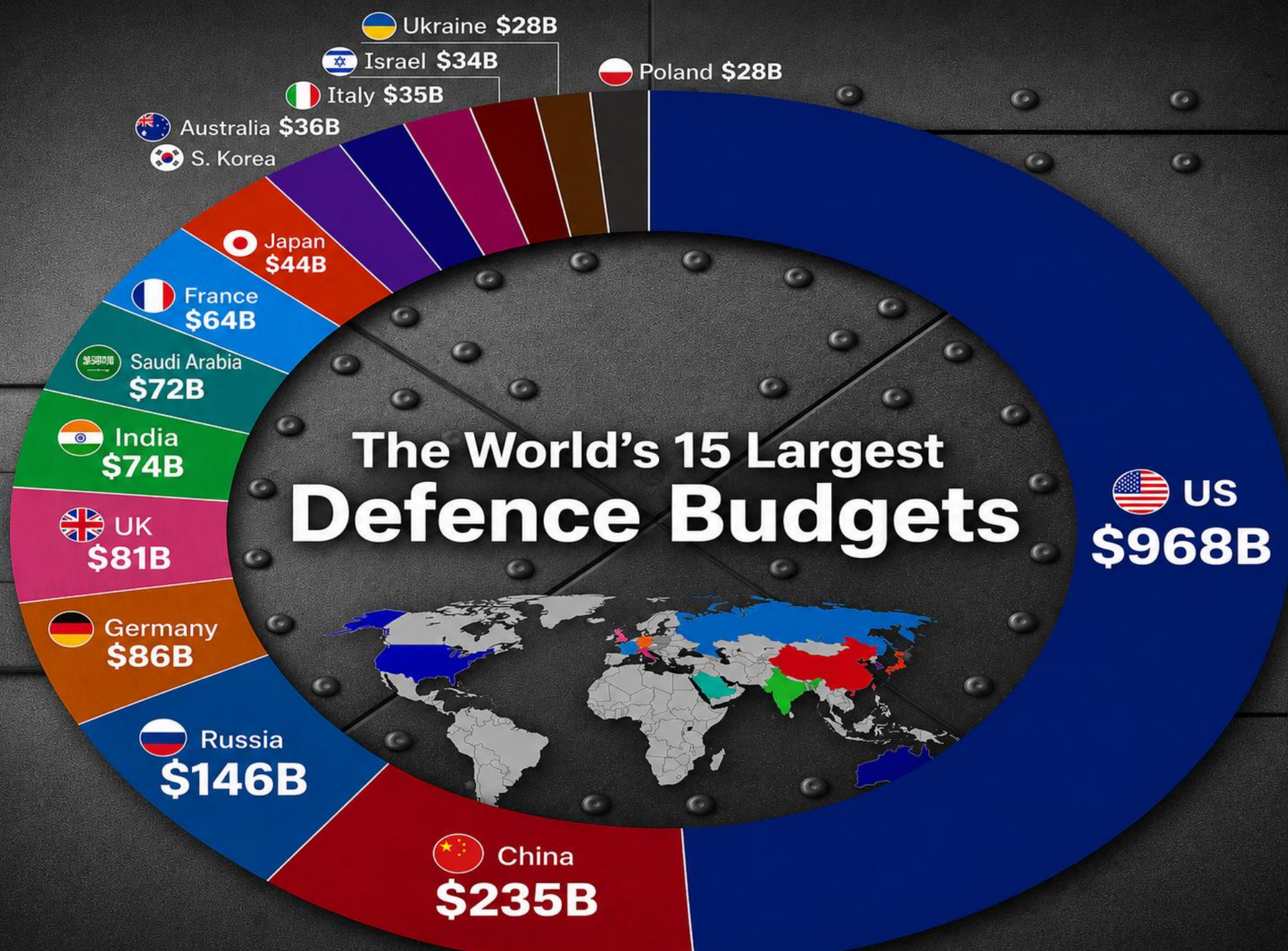


1949
United
Kingdom



1949
United
States

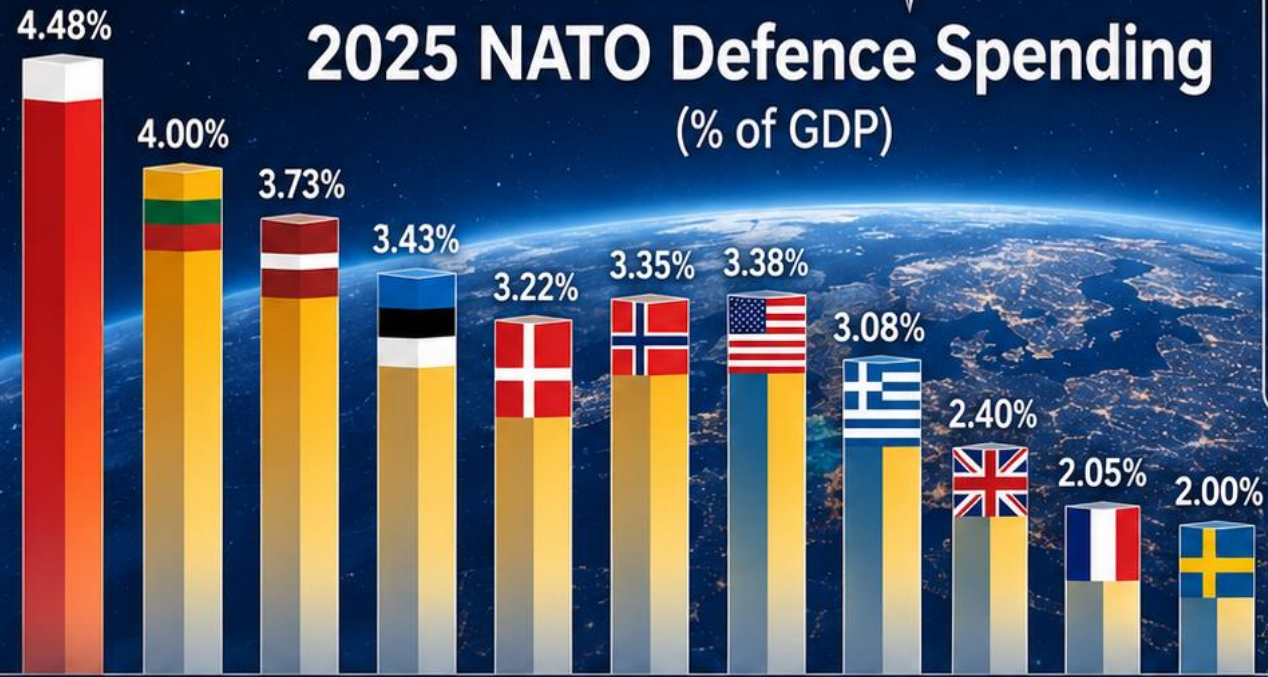
Global Defence Funding



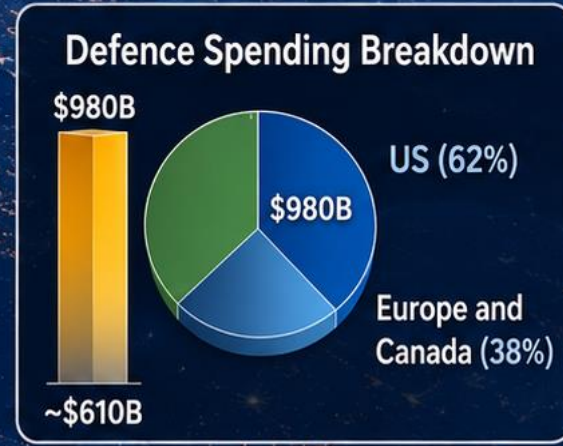
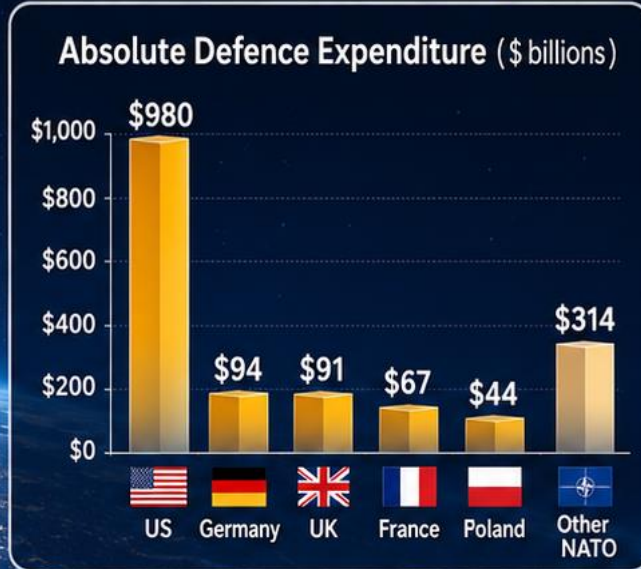
NATO Defence Spending



2025 NATO Defence Spending (% of GDP)



- Poland
- Lithuania
- Latvia
- Estonia
- Denmark
- Norway
- US
- Greece
- UK
- France
- Sweden
- Albania
- Belgium
- Bulgaria
- Canada
- Croatia
- Czechia
- Finland
- Germany
- Hungary
- Italy
- Italy
- Luxembourg
- Montenegro
- Netherlands
- Portugal
- Romania
- Slovakia
- Türkiye



The (2022) Strategic Concept

The Strategic Concept is NATO's official roadmap that defines the Alliance's enduring purpose and core tasks, assesses the current global security environment, and sets the strategic direction for its political and military evolution over the next decade

Russia - the most significant and direct threat to Allies' security

China - ambitions and coercive policies challenge our interests, values and security

Terrorism - the most direct asymmetric threat to the security of its citizens



Threats to NATO in 2026 - **Looking to the Future**

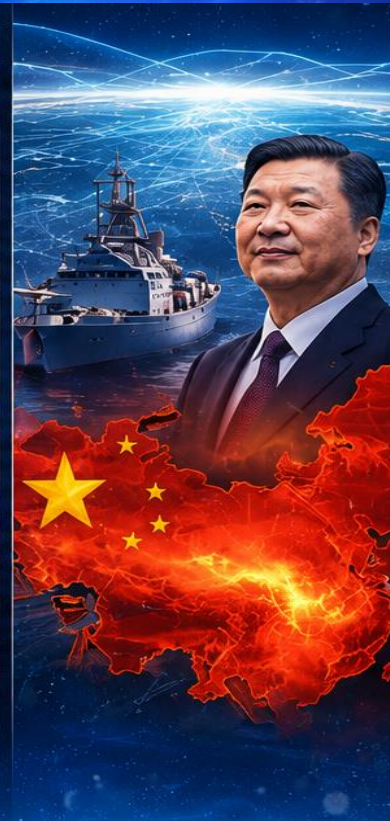
The Security Threat



Russia



Terrorism and Instability



China



Emerging Challenges

(AI, Climate, Space, Disinformation)



Cyber Attacks and Hybrid Threats

Population and GDP

NATO (32 nations)

Russia

Population

953 million

NATO 6.6x larger

144m

GDP - Nominal

~\$56 trillion

NATO 22x larger

~\$2.6T

Russia's GDP as % of NATO

4.6%

Russia's Economy smaller than...

Italy or Canada

Russia Defence % of GDP

~9%

Conventional Military Capability

NATO

Russia

Active Personnel

3.45 million

1.32 million

Military Aircraft

~22,400

~4,960

Military Ships

~1,143

~419

Main Battle Tanks

~11,500

~5,750

NATO Defence Spending 2025

~\$1.4 Trillion

Russia Defence Spending 2025

~\$145 billion (NATO Advantage 10:1)

The Security Threat - Russia

The Security Threat – Strategic Summary

32 Nations (with the US)

Population

6.6 : 1

NATO Advantage

GDP (Nominal)

22 : 1

NATO Advantage

Defence Spending

~10 : 1

NATO Advantage

Active Personnel

2.6 : 1

NATO Advantage

Military Aircraft

4.5 : 1

NATO Advantage

Nuclear Warheads

Parity

Russia ~= NATO

31 Nations (without the US)

Population

4.3 : 1

NATO advantage

GDP (Nominal)

10 : 1

NATO advantage

Defence Spending

~4 : 1

NATO advantage

Active Personnel

1.6 : 1

NATO Advantage

Military Aircraft

~2 : 1

NATO Advantage

Nuclear warheads

11 : 1

Russia Advantage

Basic Principles

Article 5 - An armed attack against one ... shall be considered an attack against them all

Article 4 - Mutual Consultation - it has been invoked three times by Turkey

Article 3 - Mandates that Member States, through continuous self-help and mutual aid, maintain and develop their individual and collective capacity to resist armed attacks

Trans Atlantic Link - US as a European power or indispensable power

Nuclear Deterrence - As long as nuclear weapons exist, NATO will remain a nuclear alliance. NATO does not define exactly how or when it would use nuclear weapons, keeping adversaries guessing

Article 5

Invoked only once on 12 September 2001

Included the following measures:

Intelligence Sharing: Enhanced cooperation on terrorist threats

Increased Security: Protecting US and other Allied facilities on European soil

Backfilling Assets: NATO forces took over duties in the Balkans to free up US resources for Afghanistan.

Overflight Clearances: Permission for US and Allied aircraft to use all member airspace

Access to Ports/Airfields: Full access for forces involved in counter-terrorism



The Art of Consensus

It works on the basis of **Consensus**. The principle of Consensus is applied at every Committee Level

No majority vote - decision only if all 32 members are in agreement

Each Nation should keep each other informed on their intentions and policies

Core Functions

There are Three



Deterrence and Defence
Protecting the Alliance



Crisis Prevention and Management
Managing Emergencies



Cooperative Security
Building Partnerships

Core Functions

Collective Defence - An attack on one member is considered an attack on all

Crisis Management - NATO responds to crises through diplomacy, military force, and humanitarian aid are in agreement

Cooperative Security - NATO works with partners to address shared security challenges

NATO HQ (Brussels)

Total personnel: ~ 3,500

International Staff (IS) and International Military Staff (IMS)

32 Allied Delegations

17 Partner Embassies

4 NATO Agencies

Hosts over 5,000 meetings per year

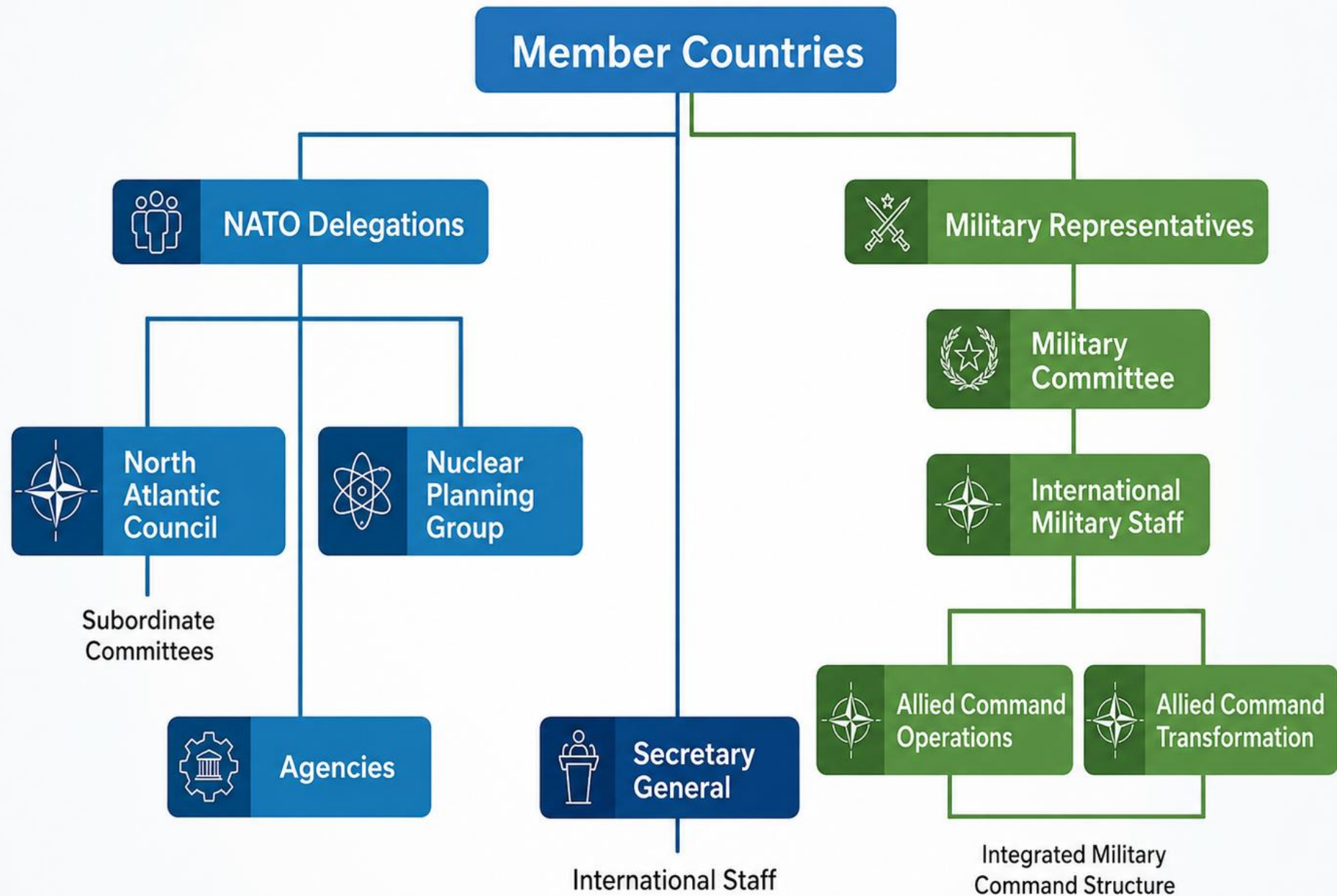
Two NATO Languages - English and French (simultaneous translation)



Ministerial Session



Basic Organisation



Who Does What

North Atlantic Council

Political
Guidance and
Direction

Military Committee

(Strategic)
Military Advice

Strategic Commands

Planning,
Coordination
and Execution



Secretary General



International Staff

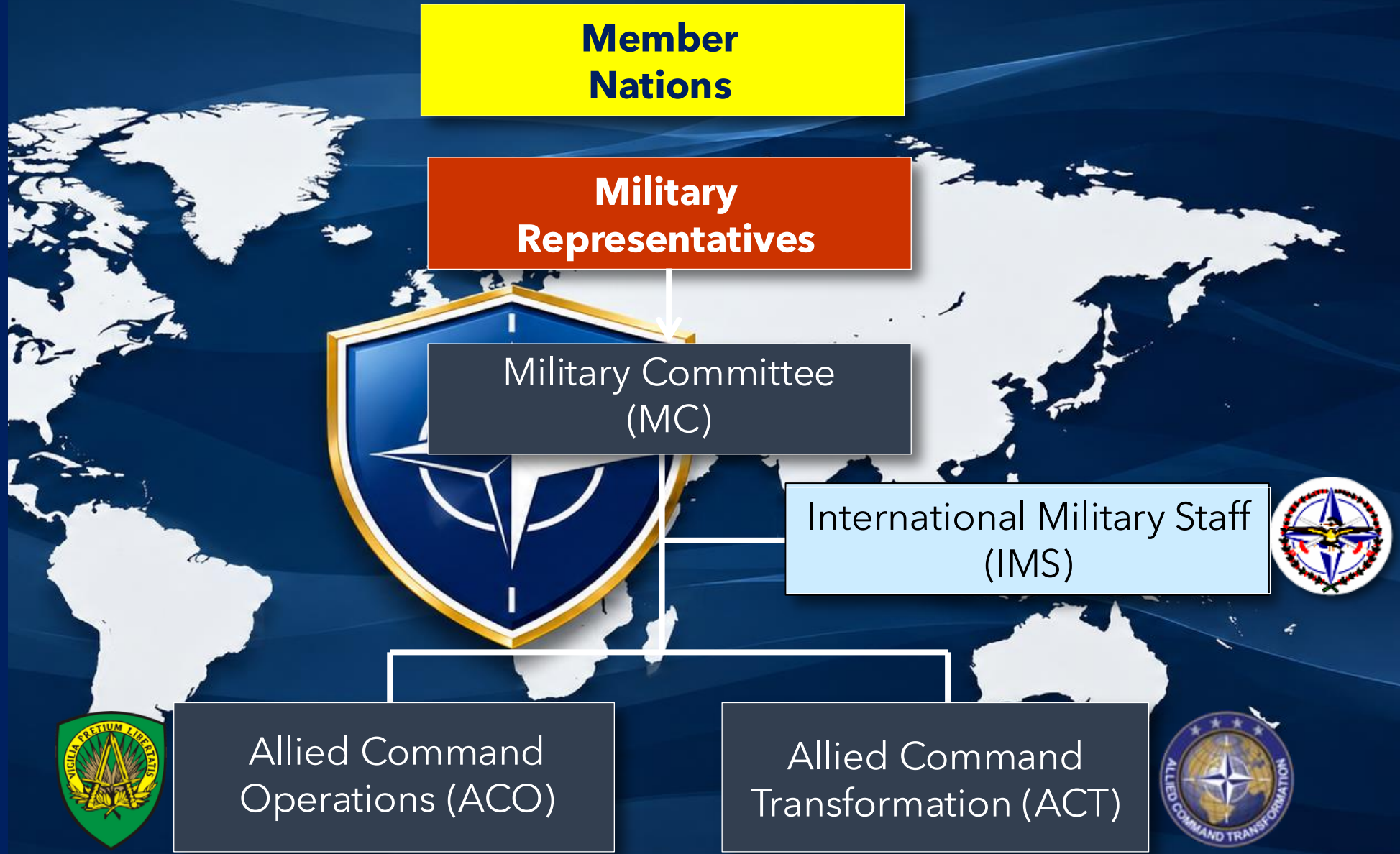
- Some 1,000 civilians (reducing to 800 under a current purge) work within NATO's International Staff, which is composed solely of nationals from NATO member countries
- The International Staff provides advice, guidance and administrative support to the **national delegations** at NATO Headquarters
- It helps implement all decisions taken at any committee level
- The International Staff is headed by the NATO Secretary General



ANIMUS IN CONSULENDO LIBER



NATO Military Structure



NATO Strategic Commanders



Allied Command
Operations (ACO)



Supreme Allied Commander Europe
General Alexis Gregory Grynkwic USA Air Force

Allied Command
Transformation (ACT)



Supreme Allied Commander Transformation
Admiral Vandier French Navy





Strategic Command HQ Locations



SACT
(Norfolk, Virginia)

SHAPE
(Mons, Belgium)



The Military Committee's Make-Up

The Chairman (Italian)(Dutch/British/Czech/Danish)

The Deputy Chairman (always US)

Members: All National Military Representatives (32)

MC advises and assists the NAC and NPG on military matters

The Military Committee Meetings

- Military Committee in **Chief of Defence Session** usually occur 3 times a year
- Military Committee in **Permanent Session** generally occur one to three times a week



International Military Staff

- Some 400 military personnel which is composed solely of nationals from NATO member countries
- Provides the best possible strategic military advice for the Military Committee
- It helps implement all decisions taken at any committee level
- The International Military Staff is headed by Director General

In Reality



Strategic Military Commanders tell us what is **Needed**



Nations tell us what is **Possible**



International Military Staff finds out what is **Achievable**



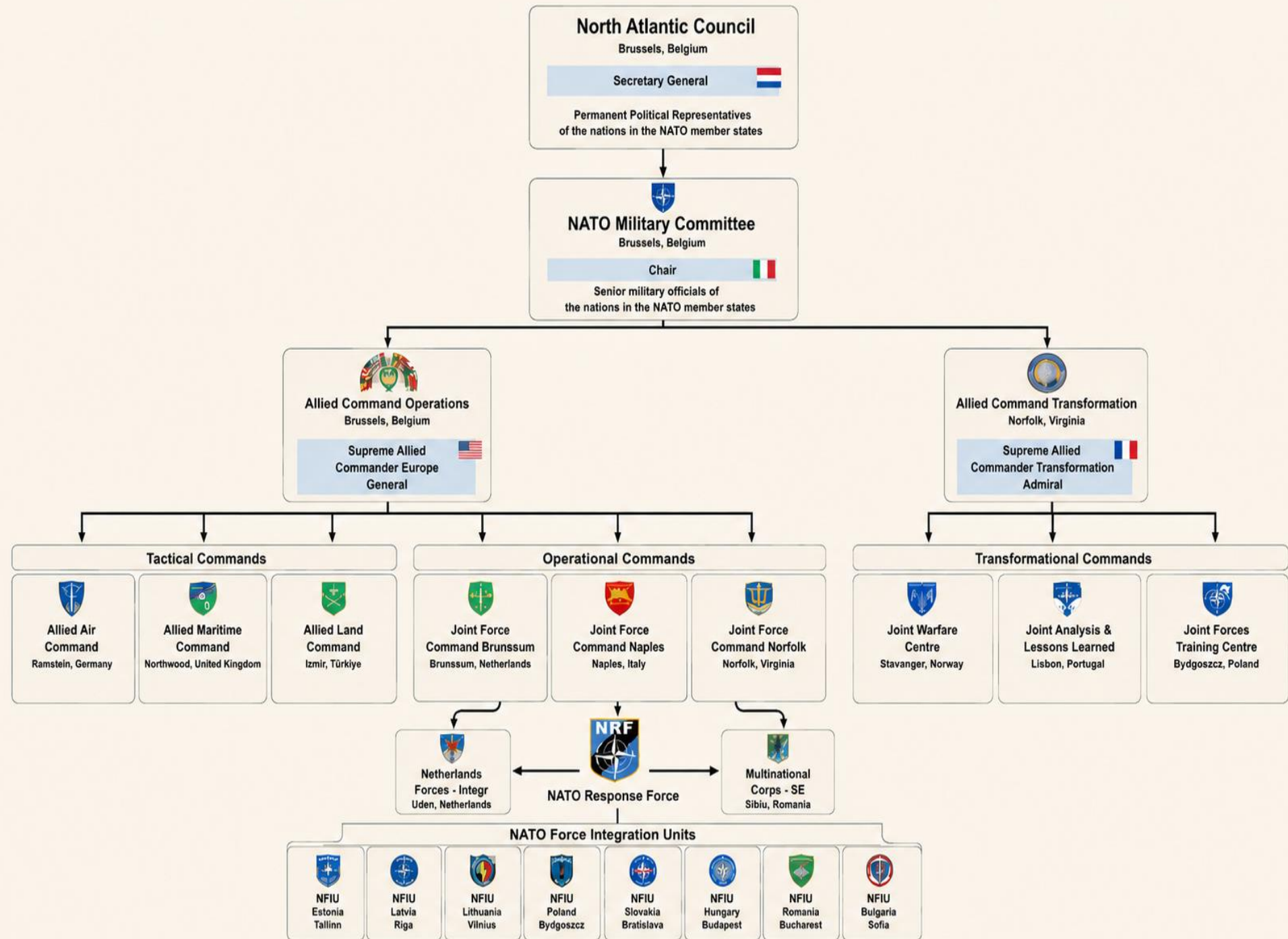
Military Committee provides **Advice**



North Atlantic Council takes **Decisions**



NATO Military Structure





CLIMATE CHANGE AND SECURITY (CCAS)

MONTREAL

COMBINED JOINT OPERATIONS FROM THE SEA (CJOS)

NORFOLK

NATO-ACCREDITED CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE LOCATIONS



MARITIME GEOSPATIAL, METEOROLOGICAL AND OCEANOGRAPHIC (MGEOMETOC) COE

LISBON

MADRID

COUNTER-IMPROVISED EXPLOSIVE DEVICES (C-IED)

LISBON

COLD WEATHER OPERATIONS (CWO)

ELVERUM

COOPERATIVE CYBER DEFENCE (CCD)

TALLINN

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS (STRATCOM)

RIGA

VILNIUS

ENERGY SECURITY (ENSEC)

CIVIL-MILITARY COOPERATION (CIMIC)

OPERATIONS IN CONFINED AND SHALLOW WATERS (CSW)

KIEL

MILITARY POLICE (MP)

BYDGOSZCZ

COMMAND AND CONTROL (C2)

THE HAGUE

STRECH

KALKAR

JOINT AIR POWER COMPETENCE CENTRE (JAPCC)

JOINT CHEMICAL, BIOLOGICAL, RADIOLOGICAL AND NUCLEAR DEFENCE (JCBRN DEFENCE)

COUNTER INTELLIGENCE (CI)

KRAKÓW

NAVAL MINE WARFARE (NMW)

OOSTENDE

INGOLSTAAT

MILITARY ENGINEERING (MILENG)

VYŠKOV

EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE DISPOSAL (EOD)

TRENCÍN

AIR OPERATIONS (AO)

LYON

MOUNTAIN WARFARE (MW)

POLJCE

MILITARY MEDICINE (MILMED)

BUDAPEST

ORADEA

HUMAN INTELLIGENCE (HUMINT)

SPACE COE

VICENZA

STABILITY POLICING (SP)

MODELLING AND SIMULATION (M&S)

ROME

SECURITY FORCE ASSISTANCE (SFA)

CRISIS MANAGEMENT AND DISASTER RESPONSE (CMDR)

SOFIA

MARITIME SECURITY (MARSEC)

ISTANBUL

DEFENCE AGAINST TERRORISM (DAT)

INTEGRATED AIR AND MISSILE DEFENCE (IAMD)

CHANIA

ANKARA

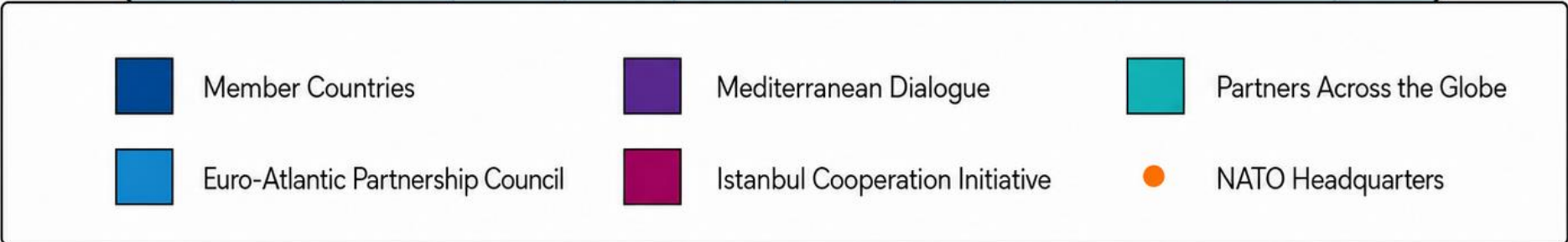
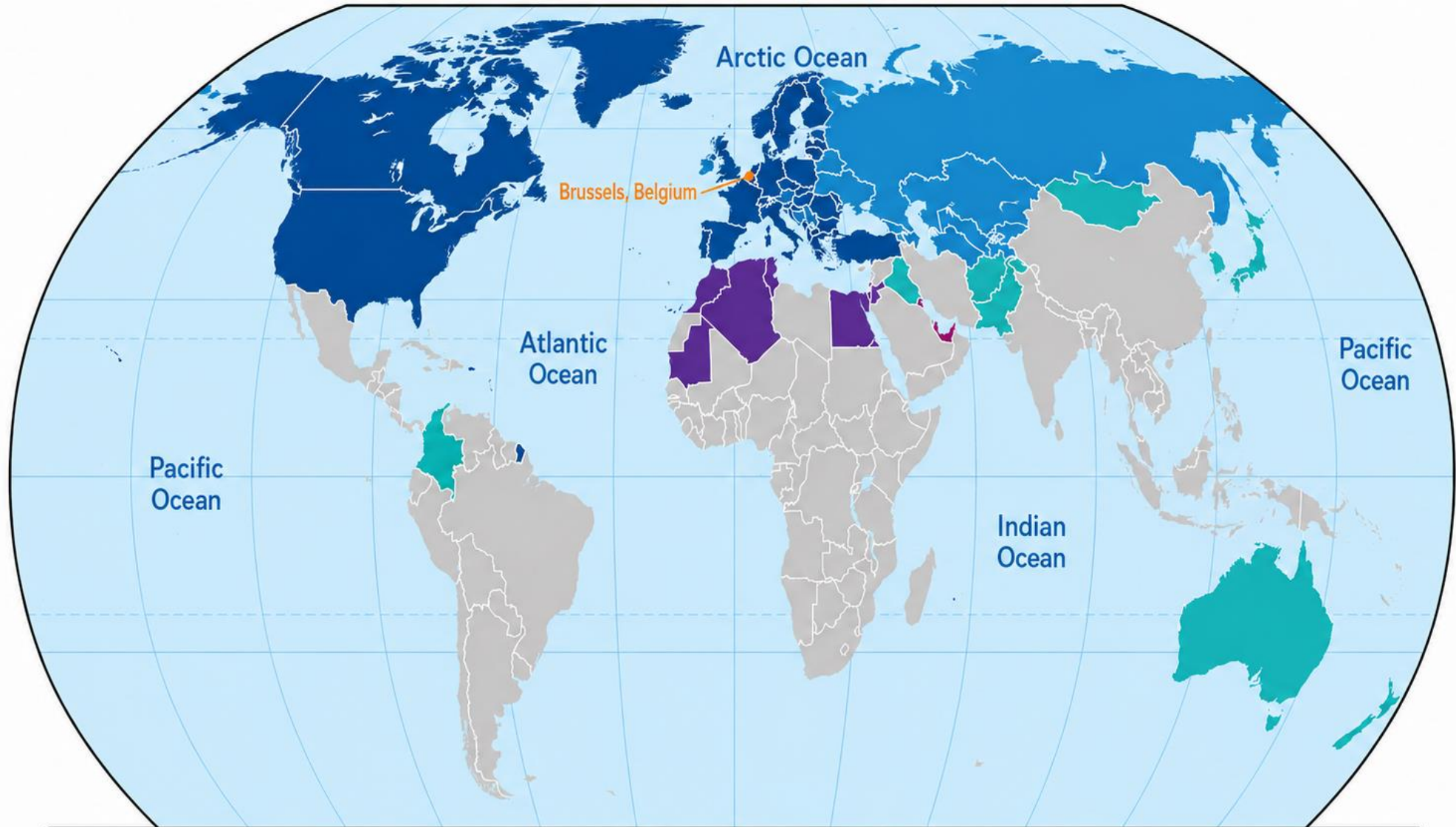
NATO Defense College



NATO Partnership Structure



NATO Partnership Structure



NATO And Ukraine



NATO And Ukraine

Close Partnership - Had a NATO-Ukraine Commission since 1997

In 2008, NATO indicated that Ukraine (and Georgia) 'will' become NATO members (some day!)

Russian invasion of Ukraine, was a turning point. NATO reinforced Baltics as 'reassurance'

NATO as an organisation is not directly involved in the war in Ukraine - individual Allies are giving indispensable support

NATO is providing a forum for coordination and projection of deterrence

No third world war

Current NATO Operations and Missions

Deterrence and the Eastern Flank

The Balkans

Middle East and Africa

Maritime

The Arctic

Deterrence

Multinational Battle Groups: Eight Combat-Ready Deployments



Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland,
Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria



Multinational Infantry Unit is:
Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria

Air Policing: 24/7 Alert & Interception



Protecting Allied Airspace,
Intercepting Unauthorized Flights



NSATU: NATO Security Assistance and Training for Ukraine



Long-term Equipment & Training
Coordination. Sustainable Support

The Balkans

The region remains a priority for regional stability, with NATO maintaining a presence to prevent the resurgence of conflict

Kosovo Force (KFOR):

~4,500 troops from nearly 30 countries provide a safe and secure environment and freedom of movement for all communities in Kosovo



Operation ALTHEA (Support):

Under the 'Berlin Plus' agreement, NATO provides planning, logistics, and command support to the EU-led mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina to maintain stability and prevent renewed violence





NATO's missions focus on training local forces to handle their security challenges

Cooperative Security



Middle East and Africa



NATO Mission Iraq (NMI):

Advisory & Capacity-Building

Launched in 2018 at Iraq's request, this non-combat advisory and capacity-building mission helps professionalize Iraqi security institutions and forces to prevent the return of ISIS/Daesh



NATO Mission Iraq (NMI):

Advisory & Capacity-Building

NATO provides the AU with technical, logistical, and airlift support for its peacekeeping missions, as well as assistance in developing the African Standby Force

Middle East and Africa

NATO Mission Iraq (NMI): Advisory & Capacity-Building

- Coalition and Iraqi personnel conducting map-based planning and advisory activities
- Iraqi and NATO personnel engaged in mentoring and capacity-building activities



Support to the African Union (AU): Logistics & Training

- Strategic airlift support using a large military transport aircraft
- Classroom-based training and instruction involving African Union personnel and NATO-supported trainers



NATO maintains a constant presence in the seas to secure trade routes and monitor threats



Maritime (Presence)



Operation Sea Guardian

A standing maritime security operation in the Mediterranean Sea. Focuses on maritime situational awareness, counter-terrorism, and capacity building for regional navies



Aegean Sea Activity

NATO ships provide real-time information and surveillance to help Greece, Türkiye, and the EU's Frontex agency manage the refugee and migrant crisis



Operation Baltic Sentry

A newer initiative focused on protecting critical undersea infrastructure, such as data cables and gas pipelines in the Baltic Sea, which has become a high-priority area for preventing sabotage

Operation SEA GUARDIAN



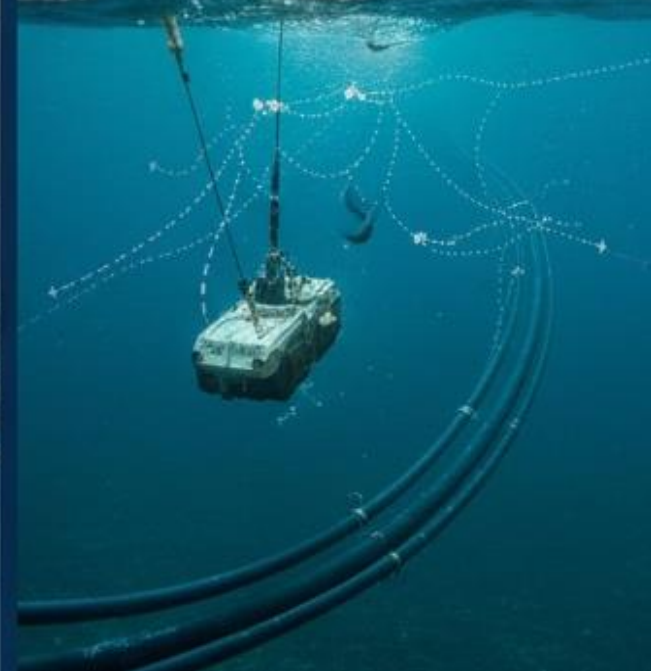
Aegean Sea Activity



Operation BALTIC SENTRY



Maritime (Presence)



The Arctic

Russia's Arctic buildup has prompted increased attention from NATO and its northern members

- NATO countries are expanding Arctic training, exercises, and cold-weather readiness
- Norway and Canada play key frontline roles in Arctic security
- The United States is modernising Arctic infrastructure and ice-capable forces
- Sweden and Finland's NATO membership strengthens the Alliance's Arctic presence

The Arctic is becoming an area of renewed strategic focus for the transatlantic alliance

Stood-Up ARCTIC Sentry on 11 Feb 26

Designed to coordinate NATO Arctic Security Presence

Command and Control from Norfolk, USA

Coordinates:

Aims to deter and stabilise High North security
Surveillance and Patrols

Allied Exercises and Training, building on Allied operations like Arctic Endurance

The Arctic



75th Anniversary



DEFENDING OUR FUTURE

DÉFENDRE NOTRE AVENIR



The Near Future

At the 2026 Munich Security Conference, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio delivered remarks about NATO and the trans-Atlantic alliance that tried to reset relations with Europe after a turbulent period of US policy under the Trump administration

The United States and Europe 'belong together - Washington does not seek to pull away from its partners or unravel the post-World War II security order. The US wants strong allies because, otherwise, that would weaken collective security

US and Europe should work together to revitalise NATO, addressing what he characterised as a 'broken' status quo caused by factors like over-reliance on international bodies or shifts in global power

Western leaders had fallen for a 'post-war delusion' of a forever peaceful era, outsourcing too much sovereignty and undermining their own defensive capabilities. That critique was framed in the context of urging allies to be strong and self-reliant within the NATO framework

Next (36th) Heads of State and Government Summit

Ankara – 7-8 July 2026

Commitment and Solidarity - Discussions will focus on strengthening this capability with more advanced command-and-control systems

Defence Spending and Industrial Production - European allies and Canada spent a record \$574bn in 2025, 20% more than the previous year, with Poland, the Baltic states, Nordic allies and Germany leading the way. The Summit will focus on how investment can be converted into capabilities faster and at greater scale

Security and Energy Cooperation with the Middle East - The US-Israeli strikes against Iran and the resulting Strait of Hormuz crisis have highlighted the Middle East's importance for European security. The 'North Atlantic' alliance is now expected to engage more closely with Middle Eastern affairs. Ankara is also reportedly seeking to invite four Gulf states - Qatar, the UAE, Kuwait, and Bahrain - as observer participants

The Black Sea and NATO's Eastern Flank - Russia's war in Ukraine has demonstrated that Black Sea security is a crucial link between NATO's Eastern and Southern flanks. Türkiye's existing agreements with Romania and Bulgaria on mine-clearing operations are relevant here, with Ankara's red line being preservation of the Montreux Convention

After a long detour, NATO is has gone back to its roots - Defence and Deterrence

NATO has proven to be Adaptive and Resilient - it presents no threat to Russia despites Putin's rhetoric

NATO remains a formidable military alliance with deep integration, substantial readiness, and unmatched capabilities. Ongoing modernisation and spending commitments signal that the Alliance is still evolving to meet rising security challenges ahead

Alliance unity is more critical than ever. Leaders need to maintain cohesion by shifting toward a more European Alliance while keeping America engaged



A World
On Fire



Conclusion

**Thank
You**

