

## North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is an intergovernmental military alliance based on the North Atlantic Treaty which was signed in 1949. This article talks about NATO and its importance for the [IAS Exam](#).

International organisations and groupings are an important part of the International Relations section of the General Studies paper-2 in the [UPSC Syllabus](#). International relations is a very dynamic part and is crucial for multiple papers in Prelims and Mains. Students preparing for UPSC 2022 and other [Government Exams](#) must be aware of the topic.

**Latest News:** Following the Russian Invasion of Ukraine, NATO Chief Jens Stoltenberg announced on 25th February, 2022 that the alliance would be deploying its rapid response force to bolster Ukraine defences. In addition, to this several members such as France and Germany have stepped up in sending arms and ammunition to Ukraine.

Sweden considered joining NATO recently. The announcement was met with a harsh response from Russia who threatened military and political consequences if that was to happen.

### What is the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)?

- NATO stands for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization which is also called the North Atlantic Alliance.



- It is an intergovernmental military alliance based on the North Atlantic Treaty which was signed on 4 April 1949.
- The organization constitutes a system of collective defence whereby its member states agree to mutual defence in response to an attack by a non-member external party.
- NATO's headquarters are located at Boulevard Leopold III in the city of Brussels, Belgium, where the Supreme Allied Commander resides.

## Why was NATO formed?

The organisation was formed as a means to ensure collective security in western Europe. Even though World War 2 had come to an end, the deteriorating relations between two former allies, the United States and the USSR would eventually lead 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. Hence it saw the need to form NATO.

## NATO - A Brief Background

- The Treaty of Brussels, signed on 17 March 1948 by Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, France, and the United Kingdom, is considered the precursor to the NATO agreement. This treaty established a military alliance, later to become the Western European Union
- North Atlantic Treaty, which was signed in Washington, DC on 4 April 1949, was a result of the talks for the military alliance. It included the five Treaty of Brussels states, United States, Canada, Portugal, Italy, Norway, Denmark and Iceland
- Three years later, on 18 February 1952, Greece and Turkey also joined
- The incorporation of West Germany into the organisation on 9 May 1955 was described as “a decisive turning point in the history of our continent” by Halvard Lange, Foreign Minister of Norway at the time
- One of its immediate results was the creation of the Warsaw Pact, signed on 14 May 1955 by the [Soviet Union](#) and its satellite states as a formal response to this event, firmly establishing the two opposing sides of the Cold War

## Pre and Post Cold War Impact

- During most of the duration of the [Cold War](#), NATO maintained a holding pattern with no actual military engagement as an organisation. On 1 July 1968, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty was opened for signature
- On 30 May 1978, NATO countries officially defined two complementary aims of the Alliance, to maintain security and pursue détente
- However, on 12 December 1979, in light of a build-up of Warsaw Pact nuclear capabilities in Europe, ministers approved the deployment of US Cruise and Pershing II theatre nuclear weapons in Europe. This policy was called the Dual Track policy
- The end of the Cold War, the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact in 1991, removed the de facto main adversary of NATO. This caused a strategic re-evaluation of NATO's purpose, nature and tasks
- The first post-Cold War expansion of NATO came with the reunification of Germany on 3 October 1990, when former East Germany became part of the Federal Republic of Germany and the alliance

- On 24 March 1999, NATO saw its first broad-scale military engagement in the Kosovo War, where it waged an 11-week bombing campaign against what was then the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The conflict ended on 11 June 1999, when Yugoslavian leader Slobodan Milošević agreed to NATO's demands by accepting UN resolution 1244
- The expansion of the activities and geographical reach of NATO grew even further as an outcome of the September 11 attacks

## NATO Members

NATO has 30 member countries with Montenegro as its newest member. It became a part of NATO in 2017.

### NATO Member Countries

Albania (2009)	Greece (1952)	Poland (1999)
Belgium (1949)	Hungary (1999)	Portugal (1949)
Bulgaria (2004)	Iceland (1949)	Romania (2004)
Canada (1949)	Italy (1949)	Slovakia (2004)
Croatia (2009)	Latvia (2004)	Slovenia (2004)
Czech Republic (1999)	Lithuania (2004)	Spain (1982)
Denmark (1949)	Luxembourg (1949)	Turkey (1952)
Estonia (2004)	Montenegro (2017)	The United Kingdom (1949)
France (1949)	Netherlands (1949)	The United States (1949)
Germany (1955)	Norway (1949)	



## NATO – Latest Updates (2020-2021)

1. Jens Stoltenberg, NATO secretary-general, stressed that 2020 would be the sixth consecutive year in which total defence spending by European allies and Canada would rise, this time by 4.3 per cent in real terms.
2. Defence ministers of ten Nato allies have launched a multinational initiative to explore a ground-based air defence (GBAD) modular solution. The project is part of the expanding multinational High Visibility Projects (HVPs) portfolio, which is supported by Nato to deliver defence capability for alliance security. It will be able to counter very short range, short-range and medium-range threats.
3. Russian recently gave out a statement that they are open for constructive work on minimizing the negative consequences of the collapse of the INF [Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces] Treaty on the basis of the principles of equal and indivisible security and the respect for the balance of the parties' interests.
4. NATO allies France and Turkey traded angry recriminations as international tensions mounted over the fiercest clashes between Azerbaijan and ethnic Armenian forces since the mid-1990s. Some of Turkey's NATO allies are increasingly alarmed by Ankara's stance on [Nagorno-Karabakh](#), a breakaway region inside Turkey's close ally Azerbaijan that is run by ethnic Armenians but is not recognised by any country as an independent republic.
5. Tensions between Russia and NATO reached new heights when satellite images discovered Russian forces massing near the Ukraine border. Although the Russian government has claimed that their forces were conducting a military exercise in the region, NATO allies have remained wary of the claim.

## Multiple Choice Question

### Consider the following statements

1. NATO stands for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization which is also called the North Atlantic Alliance. It is an intergovernmental military alliance based on the North Atlantic Treaty which was signed on 4 April 1949. NATO's headquarters are located at Boulevard Leopold III in the city of Brussels, Belgium, where the Supreme Allied Commander resides.
2. In 1985, Mikhail Gorbachev rose to become the leader of the USSR. He initiates capitalist reforms known as perestroika and glasnost. He also let the Berlin Wall crumble on October 30, 1989. Finally, in 1991, the Soviet Union was disbanded and new countries Russia and others emerged as independent nations.
3. The NAM is an international forum of 120 developing countries that believe in the idea of non-alignment with the major power blocs. It was established in 1961 in Belgrade, former Yugoslavia under the leadership of the then Indian Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, President of Egypt Gamal Abdel Nasser and the President of Yugoslavia Josip Broz Tito.

4. The most recent member state to be added to NATO was North Macedonia on 27 March 2020. NATO currently recognizes Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, and Ukraine as aspiring members. An additional 20 countries participate in NATO's Partnership for Peace program, with 15 other countries involved in institutionalized dialogue programs. The combined military spending of all NATO members constitutes over 70% of the global total.

Choose the correct answer from the below-given options

- A. All the above statements are true.
- B. Only statements 2, 3, and 4 are true.
- C. Only statements 1, 3, and 4 are true.
- D. None of the above statements are true.

Answer: A

### Frequently Asked Questions on NATO

Q 1. What is the purpose of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization?

Ans. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is established as an intergovernmental military alliance based on the North Atlantic Treaty which was signed on 4 April 1949. NATO's essential and enduring purpose is to safeguard the freedom and security of all its members by political and military means. Collective defence is at the heart of the Alliance and creates a spirit of solidarity and cohesion among its members.

Q 2. Is India a NATO ally?

Ans. In September 2011, the NATO alliance invited India to be a partner in its ballistic missile defence (BMD).

Q 3. Which country recently joined NATO?

Ans. Montenegro became NATO's latest member in the year 2017. North Macedonia is expected to enter the alliance as the 30th member in the first quarter of 2020. Spain has still yet to ratify the accession protocol.