



VMUN 2019

North Atlantic Treaty Organization

BACKGROUND GUIDE



VANCOUVER MODEL UNITED NATIONS

The Eighteenth Annual Session | January 25–27, 2019

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Dear Delegates,

My name is Anson Yu and it brings me great pleasure to welcome you to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. I will be serving as your Director alongside your Chair, Eli Lee, and your Assistant Director, Helen Yang. Our dais team looks forward to watching the committee employ eloquence and knowledge to resolve the issues at hand.

Throughout the last two years, I can say with the utmost confidence that Model UN is the most multifaceted activity I have pursued. MUN expands beyond the workings of a three-day conference to a network linking the most motivated youth in the province. This involved activity will not only challenge you, but also improve your speaking, writing, and critical-thinking abilities. Additionally, MUN can connect you to life-long friends with whom you will create memories for years to come. While you may initially feel uncertain, I strongly encourage you to step outside your comfort zone and immerse yourself in this unique experience.

Throughout the conference, this committee will be discussing the Enlargement of NATO and Securing the Nordic-Baltic region; each topic holds unique significance in the future direction of the organization. That being said, researching both the topics and your country's stances is essential. Accordingly, delegates are also strongly encouraged to write position papers; preparation is imperative for success in this committee. Indeed, beyond a mere document, a position paper can be key in unlocking a more enriching and rewarding experience—one not of passive absorption but of active engagement.

Eli, Helen, and I look forward to a wonderful weekend of debate, diplomacy, and leadership. If you have any questions regarding the Background Guide, topics, committee, or Model UN in general, please do not hesitate to email me. I look forward to meeting each and every one of you in January!

Sincerely,

Anson Yu
NATO Director

Position Paper Policy

What is a Position Paper?

A position paper is a brief overview of a country's stance on the topics being discussed by a particular committee. Though there is no specific format the position paper must follow, it should include a description of your positions your country holds on the issues on the agenda, relevant actions that your country has taken, and potential solutions that your country would support.

At Vancouver Model United Nations, delegates should write a position paper for each of the committee's topics. Each position paper should not exceed one page, and should all be combined into a single document per delegate.

For the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, position papers are not mandatory but highly recommended, and required for a delegate to be considered for an award.

Formatting

Position papers should:

- Include the name of the delegate, his/her country, and the committee
- Be in a standard font (e.g. Times New Roman) with a 12-point font size and 1-inch document margins
- Not include illustrations, diagrams, decorations, national symbols, watermarks, or page borders
- Include citations and a bibliography, in any format, giving due credit to the sources used in research (not included in the 1-page limit)

Due Dates and Submission Procedure

Position papers for this committee must be submitted by midnight on January 13, 2019.

Once your position paper is complete, please save the file as your last name, your first name and send it as an attachment in an email, to your committee's email address, with the subject heading as your last name, your first name — Position Paper. Please do not add any other attachments to the email or write anything else in the body.

Both your position papers should be combined into a single PDF or Word document file; position papers submitted in another format will not be accepted.

Each position paper will be manually reviewed and considered for the Best Position Paper award.

The email address for this committee is *nato@vmun.com*.

Enlargement of NATO	6
Overview.....	6
Timeline.....	6
Historical Analysis	8
Creation of NATO	8
Cold War Era.....	8
Post-Cold War Era.....	9
Past Expansion	10
Case Study: Ukraine.....	10
Past NATO/International Involvement	11
Current Situation.....	12
Georgia	12
Ukraine.....	13
Finland and Sweden.....	13
Possible Solutions and Controversies	14
Revising the MAP Framework	14
Enforcing Accession Terms.....	15
Reviving the NATO-Russia Council	15
Bloc Positions.....	16
Western European and North American States	16
Balkan States	16
Baltic States	16
Discussion Questions.....	17
Additional Resources	17
Bibliography	18
Securing the Nordic-Baltic Region	21
Overview.....	21
Timeline.....	21

Historical Analysis	23
Creation of NATO	23
Cold War Era.....	23
Post-Cold War Era.....	24
Past NATO/International Involvement	24
Current Situation.....	25
Security Infrastructure	25
Energy Markets	26
Possible Solutions and Controversies.....	27
Increasing Air Policing.....	27
Reducing Energy Dependence	27
Combatting Covert Influence.....	28
Bloc Positions.....	28
Nordic-Baltic States	28
Eastern European States.....	29
Western European States	29
United States of America	29
Discussion Questions.....	29
Additional Resources	30
Bibliography.....	31

Enlargement of NATO

Overview

Since 1949, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO, the Alliance) has served as an aegis of mutual Western defence, providing additional guarantees of security to states transatlantically. NATO was formed to strategically delineate the East and the West during the Cold War, conceived with undertones of communist containment. Throughout its 70 years of existence, the Alliance has expanded to include a multitude of new states; all of whom benefit from the Alliance's safety and security. However, as the presence of communism has diminished, the organization's focus has turned to growing Russian aggression; in the present day, emerging events reminiscent of the Cold War colour the intentions of NATO.

With its "open door policy" and accelerated accession plans, NATO is now looking to expand. However, Russia views such expansion as an intensification of military activities by its neighbouring countries; Russian reprisals threaten prospective NATO states such as Sweden, Finland, Georgia, and Ukraine. For nations that share economic ties to Russia, retaliation could be far more significant; NATO membership may jeopardize trade relations and temporarily undermine national security. Members must evaluate the process of accession and NATO's place in the international sphere to preserve the stability of the alliance and its members.

Both fluid and evolving, the issue at hand is becoming a pendulum of escalation; both sides introducing retaliatory measures to counter perceived threats. Amidst this, potential and existing members alike are beginning to question the fundamental efficacy of the Alliance; wavering support of NATO's most influential members exemplifies this insecurity.¹ Worryingly, internal divisions concerning the enlargement of NATO are deepening to crack the integral idea of collective defence. Ultimately, if not addressed, international conflict and regional instability may be engendered.

Advancing into the future, nations of the Alliance find themselves in a precarious position: NATO must now circumvent intrinsic differences to propel the future of the alliance in the right direction. Chiefly, the role of the committee is to ensure past success carries on into the future. Solutions proposed should consider the different contexts that surround each state, be it Iceland, Finland, or Ukraine. Through discussion, nations must construct a holistic approach to ensure that the Alliance's actions serve to further its underlying values and ideals.

Timeline

April 4, 1949 — NATO is formed as Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the United Kingdom, and the United States sign the *North Atlantic Treaty*. Of its 14 articles, Article 5 is the most widely recognized: "The parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all."²

¹ Kimberly Marten, "Reconsidering NATO Expansion: A Counterfactual Analysis of Russia and the West in the 1990s," Cambridge Core, November 01, 2017, <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/european-journal-of-international-security/article/reconsidering-nato-expansion-a-counterfactual-analysis-of-russia-and-the-west-in-the-1990s/356448EA9D5C63C53BE1EC6B33FE470A/core-reader>.

²NATO, "The North Atlantic Treaty," April 9, 2018, https://www.nato.int/cps/ie/natohq/official_texts_17120.htm.

March 31, 1945 — Russia offers to join NATO on the condition that Western nations join the Soviet security agreement, the intent being to establish “indivisible security” throughout the wider European region.³ However, strong opposition to the idea is brought forth by the France, the UK, and the U.S.

October 22, 1945–May 14, 1955 — Despite not having a standing army, West Germany joins NATO. The Soviet Union, East Germany, Bulgaria, Poland, Hungary, Romania, and Albania form the Warsaw Pact in response.

November 9, 1989 — The Berlin Wall falls, symbolizing the collapse of communism throughout Europe. The destruction of the wall paves the way for the reunification of Germany the following year.

1992 — Albania is the first former Warsaw Pact country to request to join NATO. The request follows the collapse of the Soviet Union and of communist regimes in the Balkans.

January 10, 1994 — NATO formally launches the Partnership for Peace (PfP), a program aimed at building trust between the Alliance and countries across Europe, especially previous members of the Soviet Union. The program is used as a track to NATO membership.

December 10, 1996 — In light of its expansion, NATO takes formal steps to reassure Russia that it has no plans to move nuclear weapons into new members’ territories. These actions momentarily ease tensions until 1999, when Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic join the Alliance as part of the fourth enlargement.

March 29, 2004 — Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia join NATO in what is known as the fifth enlargement.

September–October 2006 — The Parliament of Georgia unanimously votes for a bill admitting Georgia to NATO’s Partnership for Peace programme. Georgia’s accession damages relations with Russia, which imposes sanctions and deports hundreds of Georgians as a result.⁴

August 2008 — Tensions run high as Russian military forces advance into Georgia in response to the attempted Georgian reclamation of South Ossetia. NATO calls for a cessation of hostilities, but Russia halts all military cooperation with the Alliance. Although only lasting 5 days, the standoff displaces approximately 192,000 civilians. Eventually, Russia signs a ceasefire agreement and withdraws its troops.

April 1, 2009 — Albania and Croatia join the Alliance in the sixth enlargement, respectively becoming its 27th and 28th members.

March 18, 2014 — Russia annexes Crimea, partially due to the threat of Ukraine breaking its historical ties with Russia to join NATO. NATO foreign ministers agree to suspend all cooperation with Russia and look to strengthen defences to reduce the unease of Eastern European countries. The international community condemns Russia’s actions as a blatant breach of international law.⁵

June 26, 2016 — Russia signs a joint declaration with representatives of Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, and Macedonia to refrain from joining NATO and remain as “neutral sovereign states.”

³ Richard Weitz, “The Rise and Fall of Medvedev’s European Security Treaty,” Foreign Policy and Civil Society Program, May 2012, www.gmfus.org/file/2657/download.

⁴ NAOC, “A Recent History of Russian Aggression,” September 2015, <http://natoassociation.ca/a-timeline-of-russian-aggression/>.

⁵ Dave Majumdar, “Newly Declassified Documents: Gorbachev Told NATO Would not Move Past East German Border,” The National Interest, December 13, 2017, <https://nationalinterest.org/blog/the-buzz/newly-declassified-documents-gorbachev-told-nato-wouldnt-23629>.

June 5, 2017 — Montenegro joins NATO in a seventh enlargement, making it the Alliance's newest member. In response, Russia postures against further NATO expansion, alleging concerns for its own national security.⁶

Historical Analysis

Creation of NATO

By 1945, the European continent was under intense communist pressure. Nation by nation, the Soviet Union unravelled remaining German institutions in Eastern Europe, replacing them with pillars propping up communist states. Slowly, Western Europe and North America united against this common threat. In 1948, Belgium, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom created an alliance known as the Brussels Pact. However, more was needed to establish regional dominance over the Soviets. In Washington in 1949, the group expanded to include Canada, Denmark, Iceland, Italy, Norway, Portugal, and the United States; thus, NATO was born.

Amidst clouds of political turmoil, the organization fortified national security from external threats. Lord Hastings Ismay, the first Secretary General, promulgated the three-pronged philosophy upon which the alliance was built: to subdue the Germans, to isolate and protect against the Soviet Union, and to incorporate the U.S. into the workings of the "Western world."⁷ All members were thus unified; an attack on one was an attack on all. Since then, the focus of NATO has become far less militaristic; rather than fighting fascist regimes, the Alliance must now contend with 21st-century Russian-posed geostrategic challenges.

Cold War Era

The decades following invited tumultuous times. With nuclear proliferation, the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the Space Race, the presence of NATO seemed more critical than ever.⁸ Throughout the Cold War, NATO began to focus primarily on the Soviet threat. In 1955, the formation of the Warsaw Pact, a military alliance comprising the Soviet Union and its allies, cemented this shift.⁹ Nearly all European countries fell into one of the two coalitions, formalizing the decades-old political partition of the continent. The first incident pitting NATO directly against its communist counterparts was the Korean War in the 1950s.¹⁰ Divided by the 38th parallel, the USSR supported the North, and the U.S. and its allies backed the South. Time and time again, the ideological blocs competed for influence in the international sphere.

In 1991, Mikhail Gorbachev took control of the Soviet Union. New policies and fundamental flaws in the regime dissolved the USSR into its 15 Union Republics; Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan. Without opposition, the Warsaw Pact disbanded, and the Cold War came to an end.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ NATO, "Lord Ismay, 1952 - 1957," July 2, 2015, https://www.nato.int/cps/us/natohq/declassified_137930.htm.

⁸ NATO, "North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), 1949," Office of the Historian, September 18, 2015, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/nato>.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Patrick Allan, "A Brief History of the Conflict Between North and South Korea," Lifehacker, May 1, 2018, <https://lifehacker.com/a-brief-history-of-the-korean-war-1825653259>.

Post-Cold War Era

Gradually, relations between Eastern and Western Europe improved. This period of détente defined co-existence and engagement as the path forward. NATO shifted from a defensive security organization to a cooperative one. Its reformed mandate contained two primary objectives: “to foster dialogue and cooperation with former adversaries in the Warsaw Pact and to manage conflicts in areas on the European periphery, such as the Balkans.”¹¹ To foster dialogue, NATO established the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) in 1991 and the Partnership for Peace (PfP) programme in 1994. In 1995, NATO entered Bosnia and Herzegovina to establish long-term peace following the Bosnian War. Relations reached a positive and constructive peak after dozens of meetings between U.S. President Clinton and Russian President Yeltsin, during which the foundation for further dialogues, cooperation, and consultation was laid.¹² For nearly a decade, the blocs cooperated to foster bilateral economic and military agreements.

On March 24, 1999, however, this progress was quickly erased. The U.S. sought to appease growing tensions between the ethnic Albanians and Serbs; however, without consulting Russia or the UN, NATO bombed Serbian military positions to suppress the conflict in Yugoslavia.¹³ The attack killed over 2,000 civilians, including 88 children, injuring thousands more.¹⁴ In total, several hundred thousand ethnic Serbs fled their homeland in Kosovo to neighbouring countries. Before the bombings, the U.S. was met with strong opposition from Russia and China; a formal vote in the Security Council was not required to predict the use of a veto that would have halted any operations in the region. Immediately, the international community questioned the legitimacy of the bombings. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia described it as an illegal act of aggression against a sovereign country, a clear violation of international law. Russia viewed the intervention as an attack on a historical ally and warned of the U.S.’ lack of regard for the sovereignty of other nations.¹⁵ Not only did the Russian government condemn the bombings, but its citizens also echoed the same sentiments. Public opinion of NATO plummeted among the Russian population, a stark contrast to the hope ignited by cooperation nearly a decade before.¹⁶

The situation in Yugoslavia invited doubt of future actions taken by the NATO. Despite nominal contributions from all countries, most of NATO’s military resources are provided by the United States; NATO depends on the U.S. both for its massive military spending and overseas projection capabilities. This dependency raises questions surrounding U.S. influence over NATO, and how it may be manipulating the organization to advance U.S. foreign policy. The organization must work to ensure uneasy relations between the U.S. and Russia do not exacerbate problems in Europe. When they carry the potential to destabilize the European continent, future expansions must be tempered by global interests.

¹¹ Ralph B. Levering, *The Cold War: A Post-Cold War History*(Chichester, West Sussex, UK: Wiley Blackwell, 2016).

¹² The Associated Press, "Clinton and Yeltsin, and How They Faced "Three Fundamental Challenges,"" *The New York Times*, March 22, 1997, <https://www.nytimes.com/1997/03/22/world/clinton-and-yeltsin-and-how-they-faced-three-fundamental-challenges.html>.

¹³ Kimberly Marten, "Reconsidering NATO Expansion: A Counterfactual Analysis of Russia and the West in the 1990s," Cambridge Core, November 1, 2017, <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/european-journal-of-international-security/article/reconsidering-nato-expansion-a-counterfactual-analysis-of-russia-and-the-west-in-the-1990s/356448EA9D5C63C53BE1EC6B33FE470A/core-reader>.

¹⁴ Elaine Sciolino and Ethan Bronner, "CRISIS IN THE BALKANS: THE ROAD TO WAR -- A Special Report.; How a President, Distracted by Scandal, Entered Balkan War," *The New York Times*, April 18, 1999, <https://www.nytimes.com/1999/04/18/world/crisis-balkans-road-war-special-report-president-distracted-scandal-entered.html>.

¹⁵ William S. Cohen, "Kosovo/Operation Allied Force After-Action Report," *Unclassified Report to Congress*, December 22, 2016, <http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/kosovoaa/kaar02072000.pdf>.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

As a conciliatory measure, Russia and NATO created the NATO-Russia Council (NRC) in 2002, established with the intent to facilitate consultation, consensus, and cooperation. Within the NRC, individual NATO states and Russia have worked as equal partners in the war against terrorism, scientific discovery, and numerous other fields of common interest. Regardless of all differences, Russia's willingness to cooperate through this organ has served as a beacon of hope for global unity.¹⁷

Past Expansion

For the past 30 years, NATO has stated that its door "remains open to any European country in a position to undertake the commitments and obligations of membership, and contribute to security in the Euro-Atlantic area."¹⁸ It also remarks that the enlargement process is "aimed at promoting stability and cooperation, at building a Europe whole and free, united in peace, democracy and common values."¹⁹ In NATO, action must follow consensus: an agreement by every member must precede implementation of any decision made by the Alliance. Despite this, controversial additions from the open-door policy have swayed the balance integral to the organization. After the conclusion of the Cold War, NATO strayed from its founding principles to invite new members, quickly integrating the once-feared Germany. Greece, emerging from civil war, and Turkey, a nation uncomfortably close to the communist fervor of Central Asia and Eastern Europe, were both hastily incorporated. In 1999, U.S. President Bill Clinton led an initiative for the expansion of NATO to include some of the former Soviet allies.²⁰ Despite their strengthening of the collective, each new addition brought with it a new set of controversies.

Case Study: Ukraine

The name "Ukraine" is derived from the Slavic word for "borderland." Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, Ukraine has served as a geopolitical buffer between East and West. Even within the nation itself, there are enclaves of polarized political sentiments that stymie unified governance. Declaring independence in 1917, Ukraine's sovereignty was short-lived, lasting only until its amalgamation into the USSR in 1922. During this process, Ukraine underwent forced "Russification" in southeastern regions; Imperial Russian authorities implemented measures to strengthen Russian national, political, and linguistic influence. Russification included specifically the installation of new language policies, integration of Russian settlements on the Crimean Peninsula, introduction of agricultural policies that resulted in the deaths of 7 million ethnic Ukrainians, and other actions to impose Russian hegemony on Ukraine. These policies laid the foundation for present-day ethnic divisions within the nation.

Aside from a brief period of tumult surrounding Ukrainian elections in 2004, the years leading up to the Crimean crisis were marked by relative stability. The attentions of NATO and Russia were diverted to the ongoing issues in the Middle East, and later the aftermath of the Arab Spring. In 2014, Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich shocked the region by severing ties with the EU and accepting a USD 15-billion bailout from Russia; within three months, economic incentives took Ukraine from collaborating with the EU to coalescing with Russia. In response, Ukrainians took to the streets, protesting their leader's actions in what became known as the Euromaidan. More than 800,000 protesters stormed the streets of Kiev, followed by a series of violent events involving protesters, riot police, and unknown shooters in the capital. Amidst this, Yanukovich reluctantly resigned and a new de

¹⁷ NATO, "About the NATO-Russia Council," November 9, 2012, <https://www.nato.int/nrc-website/en/about/index.html>.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Alison Mitchell, "Clinton Urges NATO Expansion in 1999," *The New York Times*, October 23, 1996, <https://www.nytimes.com/1996/10/23/us/clinton-urges-Nato-expansion-in-1999.html>.

facto government arose. Days after, Russia seized control of Crimea, a semi-autonomous part of Ukraine with deep historical ties to Russia. Russian President Putin stated that the annexation was to prevent NATO from taking control of the region; however, implicit reasons for the move include historical significance and Crimea's strategic naval assets.

Regardless of the reasoning, NATO viewed the annexation as a direct violation of the international legal order affirming the unity and sovereignty of all states. Ukrainian forces voluntarily left the region in a move to de-escalate the hostile situation; with Russian forces controlling the peninsula, Ukraine's population participated in a Russian-sponsored referendum. Despite severe criticisms from NATO, the EU, and other international observers, the overwhelming majority favoured joining Russia. In response to the annexation, the UN General Assembly passed a non-binding resolution, Resolution 68/262 (A/RES/68/262), declaring the Crimean referendum invalid and the incorporation of Crimea into Russia illegal. On April 1, 2014, NATO formally voted to suspend all cooperation with Russia.

The protracted violence spread to the neighbouring Domboss region in the following months. Pro-Russian separatists seized the cities of Luhansk and Donetsk and declared them independent from Ukraine. The Ukrainian army moved to take back control of the region, but Russia covertly backed the separatist rebels. Thousands were killed before both sides agreed on Minsk II, a peace agreement setting conditions for a ceasefire and a security zone, intended to end the violence. Although largely successful in de-escalating the immediate situation, no final accord regarding the status of these contested areas has been agreed.

Past NATO/International Involvement

Time and time again, both sides have extended proverbial olive branches to ameliorate residual tensions from the Cold War. In the decade after the fall of the Soviet Union, Russia joined the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (1991), the Partnership for Peace programme (1994), and created the Russia Founding Act (1997). Constructive and cooperative dialogue peaked in 2002 with the establishment of the NATO-Russia Council (NRC).²¹ The NRC served as a bridging forum for about current security and beyond military concerns. Regardless of political beliefs, several key figures came together; protecting civilians, fighting terrorism, tackling corruption, and more. However, in instances of aggressive military action, the NRC was suspended; during Russia's military action in Georgia in 2008 and the Russia-Ukraine conflict in 2014, formal meetings to facilitate cooperation were cancelled. Despite reopening channels since, major disagreements remain regarding the recognition of Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Crimea as independent states.²²

In the face of advances of Russian and Russian-backed forces in Crimea, the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania united, announcing the formation of a Rapid Reaction Force (RRF) in 2014.²³ This plan envisaged enhancing awareness and intelligence, strategically pre-positioning equipment, intensifying military exercises, and improving the capacity of the NATO Rapid Reaction Force. NATO voted to more-than-double its existing RRF from 13,000 troops to 30,000 troops, and to "create a new quick-reaction force of 5,000 troops to meet simultaneous challenges from Russia and Islamist extremists."²⁴ The majority of monetary backing for this

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ellen Mitchell, "US Calls for Larger Rapid-reaction NATO Force to Counter Russia," TheHill, March 29, 2018, <http://thehill.com/policy/defense/380809-us-calls-for-larger-rapid-reaction-nato-force-to-counter-russia>.

²⁴ Robin Emmott, "U.S. Pushes NATO to Ready More Forces to Deter Russian Threat," Reuters, June 06, 2018, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-nato-russia/u-s-pushes-nato-to-ready-more-forces-to-deter-russian-threat-idUSKCN1J11L4>.

advancement is from contributions by the U.S. By revitalizing the RRF, NATO hopes to not only operate on the front lines but to excel in anticipatory defence.

Current Situation

Georgia

The former Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic was riddled with internal conflict from 1991 to 1993. After Georgia declared independence from the Soviet Union, the Georgian regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia followed suit. In both cases, Georgia was unable to retain control of the territories in the ensuing civil wars, affording de facto independence to each. Today, both South Ossetia and Abkhazia have autonomous governments unaffiliated with that of Georgia, though the self-declared republics remain largely unrecognized internationally.

In the years that followed, both South Ossetia and Abkhazia forged close ties with Russia. However, in 2008, Georgia deployed troops to South Ossetia to retake the region. Despite having little-to-no military power of its own, South Ossetia was backed by Russian forces already well-established in the area. Within five days, the conflict had ceased, leaving instead an atmosphere of tension and uncertainty. From the perspective of the West, Russia had launched a large-scale land, air, and sea invasion of a region of Georgia.²⁵ To South Ossetia and Russia, however, the action was a defensive measure against Georgian aggression. On both sides, there were hundreds of casualties and accusations of the ethnic cleansing of Georgians. Altogether, more than 30,000 citizens were displaced by the conflict.²⁶

In 2011, NATO identified four aspirant members, three of which adopted individualized Membership Action Plans (MAPs): Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Macedonia. Georgia was the fourth nation inaugurated into the Intensified Dialogue program, upgrading accession negotiations. Consequently, Georgia faced immense backlash from Russia, threatening a “terrible conflict” if Georgia’s integration into the alliance progressed.²⁷ The implications of such Russian aggression are substantial. Economic sanctions, social uprisings, and an unresolved territorial conflict are threats affecting Georgia’s admission into NATO. However, with the threats at Georgia’s border, the nation’s government is insistent on reaping the benefits of Article 5: collective defence.²⁸ In December 2016, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg declared that Georgia “has all the practical tools to become a member of the alliance.”²⁹ Be it through non-binding referendums or continued integration, both sides must address the political stalemate between Georgian and Russian interests; protecting without provoking.

²⁵ "Russia Vs. Georgia: The War That Shook The Caucasus," August 06, 2018, <https://www.rferl.org/a/russia-Georgia-2008-war/29415590.html>.

²⁶ John Hudson, "Who Caused the Russian-Georgian War?" *The Atlantic*, October 26, 2013, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2009/10/who-caused-the-russian-georgian-war/347974/>.

²⁷ Tom Embury-Dennis, "Russia Threatens 'horrible' Conflict If Georgia Joins Nato," *The Independent*, August 08, 2018, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-georgia-nato-war-conflict-dmitry-medvedev-south-ossetia-a8481901.html>.

²⁸ Rikard Jozwiak, "Georgia Ready To Commit To Joining NATO, President Says," July 13, 2018, <https://www.rferl.org/a/georgia-ready-to-commit-to-joining-Nato-today-president-says/29359846.html>.

²⁹ "Luke Coffey, "How to Admit Georgia to NATO - Without Triggering a War," *Defense One*, May 30, 2018, <https://www.defenseone.com/ideas/2018/05/how-admit-georgia-nato-without-triggering-war/148563/>.

Ukraine

Public support for Ukrainian NATO membership has risen considerably over the last several years; markedly so since the 2014 Russian incursion into eastern Ukraine. In June 2014, polls indicated that 50% of Ukrainians supported NATO membership; nearly 69% of Ukrainians wanted the country join NATO in 2017, both figures dwarfing the 28% support recorded in 2012.³⁰

On December 23, 2014, Ukraine's parliament voted to repeal Ukraine's so-called "non-aligned status", originally adopted in 2010 under intense Russian pressure, which bars the nation from joining military alliances. The text of the law stated that the non-aligned status had "proved to be ineffective in guaranteeing Ukraine's security and protecting the country from external aggression and pressure" and desired to enhance cooperation with NATO "in order to achieve the criteria which are required for membership in the alliance."³¹ As expected, this move was met with harsh condemnation from Russia. Nevertheless, on December 29 that same year, newly-elected President Petro Poroshenko promised to hold a referendum on NATO membership.

On March 10, 2018, Ukraine was added to the official list of prospective NATO members (alongside Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, and Macedonia). This step was followed by additional parliamentary resolutions affirming Ukraine's commitment to future relations with NATO and Europe. Most recently, on September 20, the legislature approved constitutional amendments recognizing accession to NATO and the EU as a core policy tenet.³²

Finland and Sweden

Despite differing historically, Finland and Sweden share similar national interests. Their historical neutrality during the World Wars and the Cold War, as well as their dual entry into the EU in 1995, give them a commonality to rally under. In January 2014, the governments of both countries agreed to proceed hand-in-hand regarding their future with NATO, forming a transnational "package deal".³³

Not only are Finland, Sweden, and Russia geographically intertwined, they also share a long history of affiliation. Initially, Russia annexed Finland from the Kingdom of Sweden, continuing a long string of historical enmity. For Russia, Finland served as a geographic buffer for invasions. In 1917, Finland secured independence from Russia and became one of few nations able to fend off the Red Army in the years to come. The final military confrontation between the two states ended with Finland ceding 10 percent of its territory to the Soviets in 1941.³⁴ Following this defeat, Finland signed several treaties with the USSR in 1948, including the *Agreement of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance*. The treaties stated that Russia accepted Finland's independence

³⁰ BBC News, "Ukraine votes to drop non-aligned status," December 23, 2014, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-30587924?fbclid=IwAR21ApRmzz9ZKAlTu48ZTJ7gqawI8uDS1G98HxbmRiBQZ9sFwGms62lscM>.

³¹ Interfax, "Presidential bill on integration with EU, NATO directed to Ukrainian Constitutional Court," January 10, 2018, <https://en.interfax.com.ua/news/general/534857.html?fbclid=IwAR0Q48AiAx8dW1RcHDjC2Mh92WiaMe1ekSkABGvCC4univNnGMEacKaSyXQ>.

³² RadioFreeEurope, "Poroshenko Says Russia Has No 'Veto' On Ukraine's EU, NATO Bids," November 23, 2018, <https://www.rferl.org/a/ukraine-poroshenko-russia-/29616266.html?fbclid=IwAR293NNol3edZl2a4VpkfKHOGifGA6ugI0lPUJT3hs4XheDSkYjBDILX5Y8>.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Jason Lemon, "Russian Defense Minister Threatens Response If Sweden and Finland Join NATO," Newsweek, July 24, 2018, <https://www.newsweek.com/g00/russian-defense-minister-threatens-response-if-sweden-finland-join-nato-1040806?i10c.encReferrer=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZ29vZ2xlLmNhLw==&i10c.ua=1&i10c.dv=14>.

on the basis that it abstained from a closer military integration with the West. Despite being a bilateral agreement between two nations, the agreement connoted military non-alignment for all Baltic states.

Since then, both nations have engaged in extensive economic and military cooperation with the West. After the fall of the Soviet Union, both states expressed contentment when their Baltic counterparts gained independence and acceded to NATO. Be it joining the European Union or NATO's PfP program, neither country is truly non-aligned. Both states have already participated in joint military exercises and donated resources to NATO-led missions in the Balkans and Afghanistan, as well as supported NATO-driven scientific research, disaster management, and environmental issues.³⁵ Indeed, Sweden and Finland are regarded as more compatible with NATO than many current member countries.³⁶

In the wake of the Ukrainian crisis, public support for joining NATO in both Finland and Sweden rose by approximately five percent. However, majorities of their populations still oppose the idea, cautious of unnecessarily poking the Russian bear.³⁷ In 2004, Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania joined NATO and faced similar concerns. Russia felt threatened by the placement of NATO military bases near its border, causing it to take retaliatory measures in the Baltic region. The pendulum of escalation has pressured Russia to turn to military manoeuvres, most notably the Zapad exercise in September 2017, allegedly involving "over 100,000 Russian and Belarusian forces with aircraft and helicopters."³⁸ The accession of Finland and Sweden must note the impacts of retaliatory measures in the future; stability is crucial both for the Alliance and for the region.

Possible Solutions and Controversies

Revising the MAP Framework

Joining NATO comes with a lengthy list of prerequisites: countries must lie geographically within Europe, have a democratic government, and be willing to contribute to the Alliance in order to be considered. Any country seeking membership must be voted in by existing members; if there is no consensus, the process can be indefinite. Should a nation pass the voting process, it will receive an individualized Membership Action Plan (MAP) detailing the reforms that must take place before joining the alliance. Each MAP is a uniquely-tailored plan for improvement in the following areas, selected of which are listed.

1. Political and Economic Issues:

- a. To settle their international disputes by peaceful means;
- b. To demonstrate commitment to the rule of law and human rights;
- c. To refrain from the threat or use of force in any manner inconsistent with the purposes of the UN;
- d. To show a commitment to promoting stability and well-being by economic liberty, social justice and environmental responsibility.

2. Defence/Military Issues:

³⁵ Avesta, "New Boots for NATO?" The Economist, June 28, 2007, <https://www.economist.com/europe/2007/06/28/new-boots-for-nato>.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Aleksi Teivainen, "46% of Finns Approve of Close Defence Cooperation with Nato, Finds Poll," HelsinkiTimes, March 6, 2018, <http://www.helsinkitimes.fi/finland/finland-news/domestic/15376-46-of-finns-approve-of-close-defence-co-operation-with-nato-finds-poll.html>.

³⁸ Thomas Nielsen, "Russia Threatens Response If Finland and Sweden Join NATO," The Independent Barents Observer, July 25, 2018, <https://thebarentsobserver.com/en/security/2018/07/russia-threatens-response-if-finland-and-sweden-join-nato>.

- a. To participate, as appropriate, in the military structure;
 - b. To participate, as appropriate, in the Alliance's collective defence planning;
 - c. To participate, as appropriate, in NATO agencies;
 - d. To continue fully to support PfP and the development of cooperative relations with non-NATO Partners.
3. Resource Issues:
- a. To allocate sufficient budget resources for the implementation of Alliance commitments;
 - b. To have the national structures in place to deal with those budget resources;
 - c. To participate in the Alliance's common-funded activities at agreed cost shares;
 - d. To participate in Alliance [representation] structures.
4. Security Issues:
- a. To have in place sufficient safeguards and procedures to ensure the security of the most sensitive information as laid down in NATO security policy.
5. Legal Issues:
- a. To, as much as possible, [have domestic legislation] be compatible with the other arrangements and implementation practices which govern NATO-wide cooperation.

At their times of accession, the aforementioned conditions were not satisfied by countries like Romania and Slovenia. However, NATO helped facilitate the development of democratic institutions and resolution of territorial conflict. Thus, it may prove beneficial to alter these criteria to better reflect the true requirements of the Alliance. As shown, nations not having fully completed their MAPs have nonetheless proven valuable members of NATO. Indeed, analysis of the situations in Romania and Slovenia reveals that NATO may prioritize strategic resources over certain ethics and values. Thus, future revisions of MAP criteria should prioritize sustainable growth in NATO prospects, potentially allowing promising Eastern European nations to join the alliance.

Enforcing Accession Terms

There are also structural flaws with the standards current members are held to, particularly as regards financial and military contributions. The so-called "two-percent rule", setting recommended defence spending at two percent of national GDP, and fundamental disparities in military capabilities and investments expose divergences within the Alliance's association. As a result, valuable allies are spurned, and certain nations disproportionately reap the benefits of NATO membership. In order to address this, the perpetual enforcement of accession terms may be considered. Turkey, for example, now contrasts starkly with NATO's proclaimed ideals despite striving toward them at the time of its accession. Rather, its leadership has highlighted its military prowess to divert attention from human rights violations and deeply-seeded institutional corruption. For current Alliance members, the continuous upholding of accession terms may entail the suspension of nations that grow to contradict the values and terms of NATO.

Reviving the NATO-Russia Council

In the wake of Russia's Ukrainian military intervention in 2014, the NATO-Russia Council was suspended as an act of European solidarity. The message was powerful, but it came at the loss of a critical mechanism for cooperation. Before 2014, Russia and NATO had varying levels of cooperation on counter-narcotics, counter-piracy, counterterrorism, helicopter maintenance in Afghanistan, and even theater missile defence (TMD). Re-

establishing cooperation efforts may not be immediately feasible with current tensions, but NATO countries should advocate for it in the future.

Crucially, reopening discourse may restore the state of affairs that characterized the Cold War *détente* period. Restoring cooperation between East and West would alleviate tensions causing regional conflicts to flare, guaranteeing greater peace and security on both sides. Nevertheless, this approach would mark a divergence in NATO's approach to Russia, abandoning antagonism in favour of constructive engagement. The path to diplomacy may be littered with concessions that neither side wishes to make, but the payoffs of compromise could be most rewarding.

Bloc Positions

NATO tends to comprise countries with similar mindsets, aligning with the consensus-based nature of the alliance. Even in areas of contention, countries are required to negotiate to the point of agreement. However, the issue of enlargement manifests itself differently in specific regions; each having an array of nuances manifesting subtle divisions. The varied histories and foreign policies of NATO nations lend themselves to different solutions; as such, rather than being rigid, the blocs described are relatively amorphous based on the circumstance and topic.

Western European and North American States

Despite advocating for rapid expansion in 2008, France, the United States, and the United Kingdom now oppose the enlargement of NATO. Comprising the military core of the alliance, these states are careful of triggering Russian retaliation. For these nations, the costs of integrating new members far outweigh the benefits they may bring. If new nations are integrated, NATO is more likely to have to spend resources solving territorial conflicts; the contributions of wealthier Western European and North American nations disproportionately fund these endeavours. In recent years, this has prompted anti-NATO rhetoric by the leaders of the most substantial contributors, especially U.S. President Trump. Additionally, these countries are also geographically distant from Eastern Europe and the Baltic states, further isolating them from impertinent regional disputes.

Balkan States

NATO admitted Croatia and Albania after they loosely meet membership requirements in 2008. Although their commitment later served as justification for their membership, the countries did not initially meet NATO standards for admission. Another Balkan state, Romania, also faced a territorial dispute on its Black Sea border at the time of its accession. By joining NATO, it was able to secure stability and grow away from the legacy wrought by the USSR. Croatia, Albania, and Romania are nations that will advocate for the expansion of NATO after experiencing the benefits of the organization firsthand. However, with Croatia and Albania attesting to the flaws in NATO's criteria for accession, corresponding reforms will almost certainly be required.

Baltic States

All NATO nations share a nominal collective goal of improving the Alliance. For Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania, this is accomplished by engaging with post-Soviet states and fostering a united Baltic region. However, being geographically proximal to Russia, they would be the first to face the repercussions of aggression from expansion. When the first Baltic state joined NATO in 2004, Russia pre-emptively took measures to intervene for its protection. Recognizing these challenges and risks, Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania must balance a strong and

united Baltic region with a warm relationship with Russia. Maintaining a more translucent stance, these nations may be hesitantly in favour of expansion, bearing closely in mind the resultant security considerations.

Discussion Questions

1. Should Georgia and Ukraine be considered for future membership within the Alliance, irrespective of threats of further military action from Russia? Does this paradigm extend to countries like Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina?
2. Can Georgia and Ukraine enter NATO without enacting Article 5?
3. What is the future of the Partnership for Peace programme? Will NATO continue to actively seek association with other countries?
4. Can partnerships ever serve as a substitute for full NATO accession?
5. How can the Member Accession Plan framework be revised to better meet the Alliance's future needs?
6. Does the enlargement of NATO contribute to achieving NATO's purpose in the 21st century?
7. Will a militaristic or diplomatic approach yield more success in NATO's relations with Russia?

Additional Resources

NATO Member Countries and their Accession:

https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_52044.htm

Partnership for Peace Programme:

<https://www.sto.nato.int/Pages/partnership-for-peace.aspx>

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Securing the Nordic-Baltic Region

Overview

The Nordic-Baltic region, comprising Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Sweden, has long been a crossroads for travellers, merchants, and politicians alike. During the Cold War, it was a buffer zone for the geopolitical tensions between the Soviet Union and the United States. Progress since the Cold War notwithstanding, strained relations between Russia and NATO reverberate to this day. With this state of affairs only continuing to deteriorate, security is a concern not only for the Nordic-Baltic region, but for the entire alliance.

Since declaring independence from the Soviet Union in 1992, the Baltic nations have cast off the shadow of communist Eastern Europe. In the last few decades, the Nordic-Baltic region has undergone a transformation from a place of economic uncertainty to one of promising potential, backed by Euro-Atlantic nations. However, as Western hegemony reached further into Europe, Baltic relations with neighbouring powers turned sour. NATO was formed to deter Soviet aggression, but now often finds itself in a subdued struggle to limit Russian influence regionally. However, after transgressions including the annexation of Crimea and the poisoning of Russian citizens overseas, tensions have adopted undertones of hostility. Within the past year alone, Russia has violated Norwegian airspace, vocalized threats, and continued to amass military forces along its western border, showcasing the strained nature of current affairs.

In an increasingly globalized world, the problems associated with conflict are never solely military. For Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, the Baltic states, Russia is the primary supplier of energy. People that rely on this energy will have to address the energy insecurity looming over their countries. Insufficient infrastructure directly threatens economic growth and quality of life. There have also been indications of Russian activity of the region's information environment. Information warfare, being far more furtive, is often difficult to detect; analysis by the NATO's Strategic Communication branch alludes to Russia's alleged strategic use of misinformation to undermine the legitimacy of national governments and various institutions, especially during elections.

In recent years, strengthening the military capabilities of the region has been a consistent yet understated effort. Nordic-Baltic countries have formed alliances and spearheaded cooperation efforts to unite their military resources for a common goal. For example, military exercises like the Trident Juncture help prepare troops for specific commands and climatic conditions. However, military preparations can be perceived as hostility, provoking the enemy to ready their forces and heightening tensions further. In these circumstances, negotiations to de-escalate the situation are incredibly necessary; diplomatic discussions have been underway, however, detangling nearly 50 years' worth of tension entails great care and detail. Regardless of culture, ideology, or nationality, all sides ultimately agree that the spectres of the Cold War should remain forever in the past.

Timeline

April 4, 1949 — NATO is formed as Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the United Kingdom, and the United States sign the *North Atlantic Treaty*. Of

its 14 articles, Article 5 is the most widely recognized: “The parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all.”³⁹

March 31, 1945 — The Soviet Union offers to join NATO on the condition that Western nations join the Soviet security agreement, the intent being to establish “indivisible security” throughout the wider European region.⁴⁰ However, strong opposition to the idea is brought forth by the France, the UK, and the U.S.

1971 — The first iteration of the Baltic Operations (BALTOPS) takes place. Since then, 15 European states have conducted annual exercises in radar tracking, interception, mine countermeasures, seamanship, and search and rescue, to prepare for real-world crises.⁴¹

November 9, 1989 — The Berlin Wall falls, symbolizing the collapse of communism throughout Europe. The fall paved the way for the reunification of Germany the following year.

December 10, 1996 — NATO takes formal steps to expand and reassures Russia that it has no plans to move nuclear weapons into the territory of new members. This action momentarily eases tensions until 1999, when Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic join the alliance.

August 30, 2000 — The Nordic Council and the Baltic Assembly amalgamate into the Nordic-Baltic Eight (NB8). Politicians, civil servants, and civil societies later use the platform for networking and cooperation.

March 18, 2014 — Russia annexes Crimea, in part due to the threat of Ukraine breaking its historical ties with Russia to join NATO. NATO foreign ministers agreed to suspend all cooperation with Russia and look to strengthen defences to reduce the unease of Eastern European countries during the worst East-West crisis since the Cold War. During this time, Nordic-Baltic states in geographic proximity are wary of activity near their respective borders.⁴²

April 2014 — Finland and Sweden join the Partnership for Peace Program. Although already having contributed to NATO-led missions, they officially sign away their traditional alignment of neutrality; however, thoughts of joining NATO provoke threats from Moscow.

July 2016 — Totalling nearly 4,000 troops, 4 battalions are approved to move into the Baltic states and eastern Poland, serving on a rotational basis to reassure allies.

January 2017 — The office of the United States Director of National Intelligence (DNI) releases a statement about Russian meddling in the 2016 U.S. election, concluding it was intended to “harm Clinton’s chances” and “undermine public faith in the U.S. democratic process.”⁴³

³⁹ NATO, “The North Atlantic Treaty,” NATO, April 9, 2018, https://www.nato.int/cps/ie/natohq/official_texts_17120.htm.

⁴⁰ Richard Weitz, “The Rise and Fall of Medvedev’s European Security Treaty,” Foreign Policy and Civil Society Program, May 2012, www.gmfus.org/file/2657/download.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Dave Majumdar, “Newly Declassified Documents: Gorbachev Told NATO Would not Move Past East German Border,” The National Interest, December 13, 2017, <https://nationalinterest.org/blog/the-buzz/newly-declassified-documents-gorbachev-told-nato-wouldnt-23629>.

⁴³ Ibid.

March 2018 — Sergei Scribal, a former double agent for MI6, and his daughter Yulia are poisoned using a nerve agent by Russian operatives. Following the incident, NATO expels seven Russian diplomats and rejects credentials of several others. Russia blames the U.S. for NATO's curt response.⁴⁴

July 2018 — Recently-elected U.S. President Donald Trump criticizes Europe's comparatively low levels of military spending and suggests re-evaluating the U.S.' commitment to NATO collective defence. Germany and Belgium follow suit, threatening to rescind agricultural and energy support. Despite this, the U.S. and NATO still support Baltic security financially.

Historical Analysis

Creation of NATO

By the end of the Second World War, the European continent stood unified against the atrocity of fascism. Nation by nation, the Soviet Union absorbed the formerly-fascist states the Nazi regime's collapse left behind in Eastern Europe. Before long, Western Europe and North America were forced to coalesce to protect their common ideologies. In Brussels in 1948, Belgium, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom created an alliance through the signing of the *Treaty of Brussels*. However, more was needed to consolidate regional hegemony over the Soviets. In a meeting in Washington, D.C. in 1949, the group expanded to include Canada, Denmark, Iceland, Italy, Norway, Portugal, and the United States. Thus, NATO was born.

Amidst clouds of political turmoil, the organization shielded countries from external security threats. Lord Hastings Ismay, the first Secretary General, proclaimed the three-pronged approach upon which the alliance was built: to subdue the Germans, to isolate and protect against the Soviet Union, and to incorporate the U.S. into the workings of the "Western world".⁴⁵ By this, all member countries were united: an attack on one was an attack on all.

Cold War Era

The decades following were plagued with tumultuous times. Faced with nuclear proliferation, the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the Space Race, NATO's existence seemed as crucial as ever.⁴⁶ Throughout the Cold War, NATO shifted its primary focus to the looming Soviet threat. The formation of the Warsaw Pact, a military alliance comprising the Soviet Union and its allies designed to counter NATO, cemented the shift in 1955.⁴⁷ Nearly all European countries fell into one of the two alliances, formalizing the decades-old continental division. The conflict that plagued the landscape of Europe manifested itself as a flurry of proxy wars. The first incident that pitted NATO against its communist counterparts was the Korean War in the 1950s.⁴⁸ Divided by the 38th parallel, the USSR supported the North, the U.S. and its allies the South. Time and time again, the ideological blocs competed for influence in the international sphere.

In 1991, Mikhail Gorbachev assumed the leadership of the Soviet Union. New radical policies and fundamental flaws in the regime fractured the former superpower into 15 constituent republics: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus,

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ NATO, "Lord Ismay, 1952 - 1957," NATO, July 2, 2015, https://www.nato.int/cps/us/natohq/declassified_137930.htm.

⁴⁶ NATO, "North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), 1949," Office of the Historian, September 18, 2015, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/nato>.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Patrick Allan, "A Brief History of the Conflict Between North and South Korea," Lifehacker, May 01, 2018, <https://lifehacker.com/a-brief-history-of-the-korean-war-1825653259>.

Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan. Lacking unity and cause, the Warsaw Pact disbanded and the Cold War came to an end.

Post-Cold War Era

Gradually, tensions between East and West dissipated. This period of détente defined co-existence and participation as the path forward. NATO shifted from a defensive security organization to a cooperative one; its reformed mandate contained two main objectives: “to foster dialogue and cooperation with former adversaries in the Warsaw Pact” and “to manage conflicts in areas on the European periphery, such as the Balkans.”⁴⁹ To foster dialogue, NATO established the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) in 1991 and the Partnership for Peace (PfP) in 1994. Soon after, these relations reached a positive and constructive peak; dozens of meetings were held between U.S. President Bill Clinton and Russian President Boris Yeltsin. During their courses, the two parties created a platform for future dialogue, cooperation, and consultation.⁵⁰

For nearly a decade, the Eurasian continent cultivated bilateral agreements, both economic and political. However, in the decades to come, intermittent acts of aggression from both sides would reset progress towards better relations. The 2008 Georgia-Russia War first redirected the eyes of the international community to Eastern Europe; in 2014, Russia annexed Ukraine as the final blow to the precarious balance of regional power. Since then, Russia and China have economically co-escalated tremendously; bilateral trade surpassing USD 100 billion in 2018 alone.⁵¹ NATO leadership has speculated that the sudden quasi-alliance was due to Russia and China’s distaste for Western dominance in international institutions. The conflict now extends far beyond differing political ideologies; regressing over time into rival hegemony grappling for power and influence. However, by understanding the landscape of the conflict, NATO will be better equipped to protect the Nordic-Baltic region from the repercussions of the degrading relations.

Past NATO/International Involvement

Thus far, NATO has been the driving force in the Nordic-Baltic region, revitalizing efficiency and strategy. Fifteen NATO members were involved in recent regional military exercises, showcasing solidarity across the alliance. Since 2014, the bulk of security measures currently in place have been implemented and enforced by NATO. At the 2014 summit in Wales, NATO adopted the Readiness Action Plan (RAP) to improve its rapid-response capabilities and embarked on a series of measures to reassure the Allies. As a part of the RAP, the NATO Response Force was tripled to 40,000 personnel to improve emergency preparedness. In line with pledges from the 2014 Wales summit, NATO members have begun to reverse long-term spending cuts.⁵² The collective NATO membership contributed an additional USD 45 billion annually in 2017.⁵³ As historically, the most significant contribution came from the U.S., accounting for 51 percent of the total budget.

⁴⁹ Ralph B. Levering, *The Cold War: A Post-Cold War History* (Chichester, West Sussex, UK: Wiley Blackwell, 2016).

⁵⁰ The Associated Press, “Clinton and Yeltsin, and How They Faced ‘Three Fundamental Challenges,’” *The New York Times*, March 22, 1997, <https://www.nytimes.com/1997/03/22/world/clinton-and-yeltsin-and-how-they-faced-three-fundamental-challenges.html>.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Rebecca Morin and Bryan Bender, “Russia’s Anxious Northern Neighbors Toughen up,” *POLITICO*, April 09, 2018, <https://www.politico.eu/article/russia-anxious-northern-neighbors-toughen-up-nordic-baltic-military-defense-us-donald-trump-vladimir-putin/>.

⁵³ Ibid.

The overall number of NATO-led exercises rose from around 80 initially planned for 2014 to 246 in 2016. According to the Polish Institute of International Affairs, the most significant exercise on the Eastern Flank was Anakonda 2016, involving 31,000 troops. This operation was notable for being more substantial, diverse, and strategic, with a larger emphasis on non-traditional warfare scenarios such as cyberwarfare.

Current Situation

The Nordic-Baltic region has undergone a remarkable transformation over the last 20 years. Frederick Kempe of the Atlantic Council highlights its shift from “a region of instability in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union to a place of robust stability, deep Euro-Atlantic integration, and economic dynamism.” The transformations span economic, cultural, political, and most notably, military changes, moving to favour pan-European integration.⁵⁴

Since 2014, Russian aggression, demonstrated by annexation of Ukraine, continues to influence Europe's security environment. Russia's European neighbours felt threatened, prompting the Nordic-Baltic states to turn to NATO to improve their defence systems and employ strategies to better address security concerns.⁵⁵ Since then, Russia has also voiced concerns about NATO involvement and the escalation of military activity in Eastern Europe. With NATO's troops inching closer to Russia's borders, President Putin has threatened retaliatory measures.⁵⁶ However, NATO has made it adamantly clear that its involvement is non-negotiable. The continuous conflict between the two hegemon reveals the key necessity when finding a solution: compromise.

The concerns of the Nordic-Baltic countries are not unfounded. Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania are small, flat, and relatively easy to invade. Their advantageous position by the Baltic Sea, the crossroads of the European, Nordic, and Russian markets, has made these lands an attractive place for invaders—explaining centuries of foreign rule and conflict.⁵⁷ The Nordic countries share similar historical scars. Regional powers such as Germany and Sweden have invaded the region in the past, and the Soviets occupied the area after the Second World War.⁵⁸ When listening to government officials, academics, and business leaders from the Nordic-Baltic Council, a common theme emerges: Russia is still widely seen as a threat. However, nations of the Nordic-Baltic region are not necessarily concerned about a physical invasion, but rather other forms of aggression, including cyberattacks, disinformation campaigns, and domestic political subversion that could destabilize the region.⁵⁹

Security Infrastructure

Although NATO's European and American armed personnel are comparable in size, Europe contributes fewer than one-third of the current NATO combat soldiers in Afghanistan. According to Robert Gates, former United

⁵⁴ Živilė Marija Vaicekauskaitė, "Security Strategies in the Nordic Baltic Region: Towards Enhanced Regional Defense Cooperation?" *The Small States and the New Security Environment*, July 26, 2018, http://ams.hi.is/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Policy-Brief_security-strategies-in-the-nordic-baltic-region_-_vaicekauskaite-2.pdf.

⁵⁵ Yaroslav Samolyuk, "Stoltenberg: NATO Not to Be Seeking Russia's Permission for Ukraine's Membership," *Information Agency*, September 26, 2018, <https://www.unian.info/politics/10275273-stoltenberg-nato-not-to-be-seeking-russia-s-permission-for-ukraine-s-membership.html>.

⁵⁶ Andrew Rettman, "Putin Has Lost Ukraine; US Diplomat Says," *EUobserver*, October 11, 2018, <https://euobserver.com/foreign/143094>.

⁵⁷ Kevin A. Chaney, "NATO OR NEUTRALITY?: DECISIONS BY DENMARK, FINLAND, NORWAY, AND SWEDEN," *Dtic*, September 2017, <http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/1046807.pdf>.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ Stratfor, "The Front Line Drawn Across Russia's Backyard," *Stratfor*, August 08, 2017, <https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/front-line-drawn-across-russias-backyard>.

States Secretary of Defence, this reflects a structural disconnect.⁶⁰ Although European defence spending amounts to more than USD 300 billion, their overall expeditionary capabilities remain relatively limited.⁶¹ In times of crisis, lack of cohesion and interoperability wastes resources. This inefficiency was especially true of Nordic countries in the past, when each country specialized in some military component, but were more or less unable to cooperate. Sweden's air force, Finland's artillery, Norway's navy, and Denmark's expeditionary capability were each among the best in Europe.⁶² ⁶³ Although cooperation has improved significantly, this process has not been modernized to reflect the current European security environment.

In 2014, experts from Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Sweden, and the United States met to establish an understanding for Nordic-Baltic defence and security cooperation. This meeting is often cited as the beginning of modern discussions on Nordic-Baltic security. Thus far, the road to securing the Nordic-Baltic region has involved similar brainstorming workshops and military exercises. Armed with the NATO Defence Planning Process (NDPP), the Nordic-Baltic region formed new standards for interoperability and established an integrated military command structure. Various summits and meetings later, the region adopted the Framework Nation concept; larger armies project military force, smaller nations use their more limited resources to fill in gaps.⁶⁴

Since then, threat detection has been improved through better alerting and tracking technologies.⁶⁵ Using the unique military abilities of each country, these states created a common strategy to combat threats from neighbouring countries. Another significant development is the renewed attention to national defence capabilities. Increases in national defence spending were given as a priority in all strategic documents. Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania accounted for the most significant increase in military spending in the region. Military exercises, spanning three weeks at a time, tested the new resources.⁶⁶

Energy Markets

Regardless of how well-integrated the Baltic states are into NATO's military structures and operational patterns, they are still incredibly dependent on the Russian energy supply-systems, carriers, and infrastructure, Lithuania particularly so. Despite efforts to develop independent infrastructure, the three nations attract fewer direct Western investments than other European nations and are often overshadowed by the larger economies surrounding them.⁶⁷ The Baltic energy sector has also generated some influential domestic companies; however, these act predominantly out of short-sighted economic interest and lack the strategic outlook for long-term growth. As stated by Russian defence researchers Tomas Malmlof, "it is not unusual that their affairs overlap or

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Asta Maskaliunaite and Andrew Monaghan, "Future Security Challenges in the Baltic Sea Region," Assets.publishing.service.gov.uk, November 2015, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/494595/20151201-Baltic_sea_regional_security.pdf.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Henrik Ø. Breitenbauch and Kristian Soby Kristensen, "Options for Enhancing Nordic-Baltic Defence and Security Cooperation," Cms.polsci.ku.dk, May 2017, https://cms.polsci.ku.dk/publikationer/options-for-enhancing-nordicbaltic-defence/CMS_Rapport_2017_Options_for_enhancing_Nordic-Baltic_Defence_and_Security_Cooperation.pdf.

⁶⁵ Lucie Béraud-Sudreau and Nick Childs, "The US and Its NATO Allies: Costs and Value," IISS, July 9, 2018, <https://www.iiss.org/blogs/military-balance/2018/07/us-and-nato-allies-costs-and-value>.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ TBT Staff, "Baltic, Nordic Countries to Increase Energy-related Research Cooperation," The Baltic Times, September 29, 2018, https://www.baltictimes.com/baltic_nordic_countries_to_increase_energy-related_research_cooperation/.

entangle Russian business or political interests.”⁶⁸ Under a veil of corruption, the money and politics of local businesses entwine with those larger Russian companies, precluding meaningful advancement.

For the Baltic states, developing infrastructure means dismantling the monopoly of Russian energy companies. However, ironically, developing Baltic energy companies are being lured by cheap investments from Russia. These predatory investments put the region in a dubious cycle of dependence, raising fundamental questions about the security of energy, especially with looming political implications—Russia can leverage Lithuania’s 40-percent energy dependency as an instrument for geopolitical influence.⁶⁹ As the buffer zone between NATO and Russia, when Moscow clears its throat, the Nordic-Baltic region will feel it.

Possible Solutions and Controversies

Increasing Air Policing

After a decade of tweaking policies on interoperability and joint procedures, the next step for the Nordic-Baltic region would be to unify information-sharing systems. Although countries need not fully integrate their intelligence networks, it would be beneficial to develop shared maritime and airspace surveillance tools.⁷⁰ Cooperation can be facilitated by drawing upon available resources on a rotational basis. For example, the air forces of Sweden and the United Kingdom are among the best in the world—those resources can be used by NATO on an alternate basis to fairly allocate the burden of involvement.⁷¹ Nordic-Baltic countries have also agreed to work together to bolster artificial intelligence technology.⁷² In addition to surveillance, having an efficient emergency or rescue system could potentially prevent more instances of the 39 military encounters between Russian and NATO vehicles that occurred in 2017; some of which were labelled “highly disturbing” violations of national airspace.⁷³ The 2006 closure of the U.S. air base at Keflavik, Iceland has also made the region more susceptible to potentially-disruptive aerial incursions, precipitating a need for improved surveillance.⁷⁴

Reducing Energy Dependence

NATO’s strategy has shifted primarily from the protection of territory to the protection of people.⁷⁵ In doing so, the alliance stands not only for military security, but also economic and energy security. The present lack of energy diversification coupled with predatory Russian investment in the Baltic energy sector makes the industry highly vulnerable to catastrophe. This problem is especially prominent in Lithuania after the closure of the Ignalina Nuclear Power Plant. Twenty years on, plans for rebuilding lost facilities still exist only on paper. Within the parameters of NATO, there are three widely-discussed approaches to the problem: sharing intelligence,

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Alina Fedosova, “Baltic Energy Systems: Synchronisation by 2025,” Image, July 30, 2018, <http://www.youris.com/energy/energy-grid/baltic-energy-systems-synchronisation-by-2025.kl>.

⁷⁰ Dmitri Trenin, “Russian Policies toward the Nordic-Baltic Region,” Carnegieendowment.org, September 2011, https://carnegieendowment.org/files/Nordic-Baltic_Security_Trenin.pdf.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Gerard O’Dwyer, “Nordic and the Baltic States Agree on Joint Approach to AI,” ComputerWeekly.com, June 25, 2018, <https://www.computerweekly.com/news/252443627/Nordic-and-Baltic-states-agree-on-joint-approach-to-AI>.

⁷⁴ Damon Wilson and Magnus Nordenman, “The Nordic-Baltic Region as a Global Partner of the United States,” Atlantic Council, September 4, 2013, <http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/publications/articles/the-nordic-baltic-region-as-a-global-partner-of-the-united-states>.

⁷⁵ NATO, “NATO and Energy Security,” NATO Review - NATO and Energy Security, https://www.nato.int/docu/review/2011/climate-action/energy_security/en/index.htm.

projecting stability, and securing infrastructure.⁷⁶ All three prongs of the solution embody one unified notion—that energy security is a complex problem requiring an equally-nuanced solution. Countries should also extend upon NATO’s multilateralism to coordinate in finding new energy trade partners, building infrastructure, and developing new forms of energy. For example, streamlining and protecting transport routes will translate into more reliable facilities and reserves.⁷⁷ Expanded intelligence collaboration will also help secure critical energy infrastructure and transport channels. To this end, NATO may also engage in dialogue with other organizations such as the Energy Charter Conference, the International Energy Agency, and the European Union.

Combating Covert Influence

The public’s widespread understanding of traditional warfare has pushed tactics to become more subversive and strategic. Misinformation campaigns, espionage, and political polarization are novel, highly-targeted methods of undermining Baltic political systems. Regions like the Baltic are more susceptible to these disruptive mechanisms due to the immaturity of its political structures and its geographic proximity to Russia. To address these challenges, the Latvian Ministry of Defence and Education is coordinating efforts to emphasize media literacy and critical thinking.⁷⁸ In the Nordic region, Sweden trained hundreds of election workers to spot and deter foreign influence in the country’s 2018 vote, helping to maintain democracy in elections.⁷⁹

Bloc Positions

NATO was founded on the basis of mutualism, consensus, and agreement. Even in areas of contention, countries are compelled to negotiate to the point of agreement. However, with the diverse array of ideologies, cultures, and interests, there are bound to be blocs formed. Generally, the countries geographically removed from the issue feel less incentive to devote resources to it; even within Nordic-Baltic nations, there are varying degrees of apprehension towards the perceived risk. However, rather than being rigid, the blocs are fairly amorphous based on the circumstance and topic.

Nordic-Baltic States

The Nordic-Baltic nations are typically united in security decisions, and this instance is no exception. As a display of unity, all the Nordic-Baltic nations in NATO took part in the internationally coordinated expulsion of more than 150 Russian diplomats after the Salisbury attack.⁸⁰

Thus far, the region has devoted resources to establishing chains of command and synchronizing military exercises. However, Nordic-Baltic preparations pale in comparison to the magnitude of defence efforts by Russia. Although not all parties are in NATO, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Denmark, Finland, and Sweden have

⁷⁶ Luke Coffey, "Russia's Provocations in the Nordic-Baltic States: The U.S. Needs a Strategy to Support the Region," The Heritage Foundation, December 2, 2014, <https://www.heritage.org/europe/report/russias-provocations-the-nordic-baltic-states-the-us-needs-strategy-support-the>.

⁷⁷ NUPI, "Nordic-Baltic Security in Times of Uncertainty: The Defence-Energy Nexus," NUPI, March 12, 2018, <https://www.nupi.no/en/Publications/CRISTin-Pub/Nordic-Baltic-Security-in-Times-of-Uncertainty-The-Defence-Energy-Nexus>.

⁷⁸ Wojciech Lorenz and Jakub Godzimirski, "Squaring the Circle: Is a Balanced Deterrence and Dialogue Approach toward Russia Workable?" PRISM Policy Paper No. 4 (157): Squaring the Circle: Is a Balanced Deterrence and Dialogue Approach toward Russia Workable? August 31, 2017, <http://www.pism.pl/Publications/PISM-Policy-Paper-no-157#>.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Washington Post, "List of Countries and Others Expelling Russian Diplomats," March 28, 2018, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/list-of-countries-and-others-expelling-russian-diplomats/2018/03/29/7cce692c-334d-11e8-b6bd-0084a1666987_story.html?utm_term=.d36b9daa365a&noredirect=on.

united as the Nordic-Baltic Eight with the common goal of securing the region. Baltic states that want stability to continue, enabling them to maintain their favourable trajectories, and welcome the influence of NATO and regional organizations. To them, the alliances bolster their sovereignty and help deter threats. Although the Nordic countries feel similarly, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and Finland lean towards regional unity with less intervention from NATO. Distrust in external military organizations fuels low public support for NATO, especially in Sweden and Finland; polls have consistently found that less than one-quarter of the Finnish public is in favour of joining NATO.⁸¹

Eastern European States

Since the annexation of Crimea in 2014, the countries of Eastern Europe have become all-too familiar with the precarious balance between security and escalation. Countries like Poland, Slovakia, and Turkey, among others, support a robust military defence against potential threats. For example, a new NATO military base was established in Poland to bolster the security of the Nordic-Baltic region.⁸² However, Russian ethnic enclaves in these countries may not condone NATO intervention, and nations geographically proximal to Russia are typically unwilling to jeopardize vital trade relations. Commonly, countries needing to preserve economic and social ties with Russia will favour approaches based on cooperation; for those more secure in the hegemony of the West, structural defence and military prowess is the method of choice.

Western European States

Western Europe has long been a stronghold of NATO; their general support for a military approach mirrors that of the Nordic-Baltic region. However, geographically-removed nations may lack incentive to tender resources to the cause. Nonetheless, Italy and the United Kingdom, among others, have vocalized their support for military efforts in securing the Nordic-Baltic region.

United States of America

Recent transfers of leadership have drastically altered the United States' foreign policy. Previously a bulwark of support for the NB8; in the status quo, the current president has expressed distaste for current relations with NATO and deepened bilateral ties with Russia. However, the contribution of fighter jets and participation in military exercises show that the U.S. is still committed to Baltic security; albeit not without a shroud of uncertainty. The United States' criticism of Europe's "inadequate" levels of military expenditure has become a source of tension within NATO itself. Most notably, the White House denounced Germany's massive surplus in bilateral trade while accusing Berlin of spending too little on defence. As security analyst Adriano Bosoni postulates, "The war of words puts the Nordic-Baltic states in an awkward situation, since their main military ally, the United States, is sparring with one of their main economic and political partners, Germany."⁸³

Discussion Questions

1. What resources can your country contribute to the interoperability of the Nordic-Baltic region? Is your nation fulfilling current quotas set out by NATO?

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Jamestown Foundation, "Russian and Western Militaries Training to Deploy against Each Other," Russia, West Prepares for Military Actions against Each Other, October 19, 2018, <https://112.international/article/russian-and-western-militaries-training-to-deploy-against-each-other-33343.html>.

⁸³ Ibid.

2. Are current solutions to secure the Nordic-Baltic region acceptable to your country? If not, how can they be improved upon?
3. What issues does your government consider to be of the highest priority when dealing with perceived threats?
4. To what degree of seriousness should NATO hold Russian violations of airspace? What can be done to prevent incursions?
5. How can member countries protect against the subversive bolstering of radical groups in their own countries? How is this applicable to emerging frontiers like cyberspace?
6. What role does energy security play in considering the defence of the Nordic-Baltic region?
7. Should NATO take actions to invite cooperation? Even at the expense of negotiating power?

Additional Resources

Security Strategies in the Nordic-Baltic Region:

http://ams.hi.is/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Policy-Brief_SECURITY-STRATEGIES-IN-THE-NORDIC-BALTIC-REGION-_VAICEKAUSKAITE-2.pdf

Future Security Challenges in the Baltic Sea Region:

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