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STUDY

GUIDE

NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL (NATO)

Written by Jan Marčič Maruško and Elena Kukovica



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NATO – China Relations

Introduction

After the end of the Cold War it seemed that NATO has passed the point where its primary role was defending its members from the threat from the East. The principle of collective defence, enshrined in Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, was not even invoked until the terrorist attacks in the USA on 11 September 2001. The security threats and strategic balances are changing, and the Alliance has to maintain a strong position on the global level, displaying its members' ability to assist each other. Collective defence measures have been taken in some other situations, such as the conflict in Syria and crisis in Ukraine following the Russian annexation of Crimea. Especially the latter has revived the old animosity between NATO's members and its former ideological adversary, Russia. In the meantime, China's almost meteoric rise in all aspects, make it a force to be reckoned with. Chinese economy is the world's second largest, while its military is catching up with the forces of the US and Russia, who are currently sitting in the first and second place, trailed by the Asian superpower.¹ Great economic might enabled China to invest aggressively in the infrastructure of numerous countries, including its critical elements, putting Chinese in a better position to obtain political support in the questions of e.g. Taiwan and Tibet, more recently even regarding Hong Kong, and territorial disputes in the South China Sea and East China Sea. Increased naval power in particular, makes this part of the Pacific Ocean more and more difficult to control for China's potential opponents, US being the primary one. According to several intelligence reports, China is a relevant player in international cyber-espionage campaigns and special services activities in general. Even though the existing Chinese espionage has traditionally been conducted with economic goals in mind, wider

¹ 2019 Military Strength Ranking, Global Firepower, available at: <https://www.globalfirepower.com/countries-listing.asp> (accessed on 15 September 2019).

foreign policy goals can be achieved with some clever adaptations.² European countries are thus placed in a precarious position where maintaining good relations with China can be beneficial from an economic point of view, especially in a short term, but a more far-sighted approach is often missing. This is even truer for the Alliance as a whole. From a historical perspective, rivalry between NATO members and China is vastly different compared to the relations with Soviet Union, because both sides are economically connected, this being true especially for China and the US, but also for e.g. Germany. Vast majority of NATO Member States are at the same time members of the EU and coordinate relations with China on that level. China is also a G20 member, having hosted a summit in Hangzhou in 2016, a second one to be held on the Asian continent³. Seven NATO members (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom and the US) are members of the group and so is the EU. Multilateral platforms to approach China therefore already exist, but NATO's intended role in the Asia-Pacific and the nature of its cooperation with China remain unclear because there is no formal NATO policy on this matter. Regardless of that, NATO's leadership and its individual members are not turning a blind eye to the shifting balance. Most recently, during his visit to Australia and New Zealand in August 2019, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg pointed out that NATO needs to understand the implications of China's rise as Beijing expands its power around the world, including areas that may challenge members of the North Atlantic security body. China is investing heavily in critical infrastructure in Europe, has increased presence in the Arctic and also increased presence in Africa, and in cyberspace. *"This is not about moving NATO into the Pacific, but this is about responding to the fact that China is coming closer to us."*⁴ It was at the 70th anniversary celebration of the Alliance in April 2019 when China's rise was also reportedly discussed by the foreign ministers of NATO Member States for the first time⁵. US Vice-President Mike Pence

² Russia and China through eyes of NATO and EU intelligence agencies, 30 June 2019, p. 18, available at: <https://www.europeanvalues.net/vyzkum/russia-and-china-through-eyes-of-nato-and-eu-intelligence-agencies/> (accessed on 15 September 2019).

³ G20 China, available at <http://www.g20chn.org/English/> (accessed on 15 September 2019).

⁴ NATO needs to address China's rise, says Stoltenberg, John Mair, Colin Packham, Reuters, 7 August 2019, available at: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-australia-nato/nato-needs-to-address-chinas-rise-says-stoltenberg-idUSKCN1UX0YX> (accessed on 15 September 2019).

⁵ Nato's big challenge is not China, but how to keep the Transatlantic Alliance alive, Zhou Bo, South China Morning Post, 18 April 2019, available at: <https://www.scmp.com/comment/insight-opinion/article/3006680/natos-big-challenge-not-china-how-keep-transatlantic> (accessed on 15 September 2019).

emphasized in his speech that *“Perhaps the greatest challenge NATO will face in the coming decades is how we must all adjust to the rise of the People’s Republic of China. And adjust we must. For determining how to meet the challenge of Chinese 5G technology, meet the challenge of the easy money offered by China’s Belt and Road Initiative, is a challenge European allies must contend with every day. Whether we like it or not, the implications of China’s rise will profoundly affect the choices NATO members will face, individually and collectively. China’s expanding influence will necessarily demand more of America’s attention and resources. And as we meet that challenge, our European allies must do more to maintain the strength and deterrence of our transatlantic alliance with their resources.”*⁶

Existing Cooperation with China

During the Cold War, China-NATO ties were limited to diplomatic ties between individual countries. Relations between the US and communist China thawed in early 1971 thanks to so called Ping-Pong diplomacy, when American table tennis team was invited by Chinese authorities to visit mainland China in the time, when Sino-Soviet relations were no longer as friendly, due to a number of border clashes.⁷ People’s Republic of China was then admitted to the United Nations on 25 October 1971, when it assumed the Republic of China (Taiwan) place in the General Assembly and Security Council as well.⁸ In the past three decades, 1999 NATO bombing of Chinese embassy in Belgrade was the lowest point of the relations between the two. US took the brunt of Chinese outrage following the event, which happened due to a targeting error, according to the official NATO explanation.⁹ Afterwards, China had its first meeting with NATO officials in 2002, when Chinese ambassador in Brussels visited NATO Headquarters with then Secretary General Lord Robertson. Director

⁶ Remarks by Vice President Pence at NATO Engages: The Alliance at 70, 3 April 2019, available at: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-vice-president-pence-nato-engages-alliance-70/> (accessed on 15 September 2019).

⁷ How Ping-Pong Diplomacy Thawed the Cold War, Evan Andrews, 8 April 2016, available at: <https://www.history.com/news/ping-pong-diplomacy> (accessed on 15 September 2019).

⁸ Oct. 25, 1971 | People’s Republic of China In, Taiwan Out, at U.N., available at: <https://learning.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/10/25/oct-25-1971-peoples-republic-of-china-in-taiwan-out-at-un/> (accessed on 15 September 2019).

⁹ The night the US bombed a Chinese embassy, Kevin Ponniah & Lazara Marinkovic, 7 May 2019, available at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-48134881> (accessed on 15 September 2019).

General of the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs paid a visit to NATO Headquarters in 2007, starting political dialogue on senior staff level, a NATO official visited China for the first time in 2009, and China appointed a high level representative to NATO in 2012.¹⁰ NATO and China conducted dialogue on the military level in the form of staff talks on almost a yearly basis since 2010. Most recently, both sides discussed the pertinent issues of North Korea the South China Sea, Maritime Security and Counter Piracy, the security perspective on Central Asia - in particular in Afghanistan and Pakistan, the European security landscape, China's defence and military reforms, NATO's partnership policy and possible areas for more practical cooperation between NATO and China. They considered participation in conferences such as the Xingshan Conference in Beijing, participation in courses at NATO Defence College and the NATO School in Oberammergau, NATO participation in courses at China's Defence University, and improved information exchange in relation to respective naval forces. Since 2008, NATO and Chinese naval forces have been conducting anti-piracy operations through the multi-national Shared Awareness and Deconfliction (SHADE) forum for maritime security.

Central Asia, where NATO is still engaged in Afghanistan, and efforts are made to counter the terrorist threat in Pakistan, is an area where NATO's interests are closer to China, both geographically and with shared goals of achieving stability in the wider region. China, bordering Afghanistan and Pakistan, also wishes for more stability to the west of the country, as they deem their own Xingjian region prone to unrest, also fuelled by external factors. China is generally concerned about the security challenges in the region, including the risk of political instability, the challenge posed by terrorist groups, and illicit trafficking of drugs.¹¹

¹⁰ China's relations with U.S. Allies and partners in Europe, Thomas Wright & Thorsten Benner, 5 April 2018, available at: <https://www.brookings.edu/testimonies/chinas-relations-with-u-s-allies-and-partners-in-europe/> (accessed on 15 September 2019).

¹¹The Rise of China and Possible Implications for NATO, General Report, Assen Agov, p. 8, available at: <https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwia7J6CouLkAhXimIsKHVarBi0QFjAAegQIARAC&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.ft.dk%2Fsamling%2F201111%2Falmdel%2FNPA%2Fbilag%2F7%2F1042259.pdf&usg=AOvVaw1z1JlXtL9XSici6eWtNjvj>

NATO's Presence in the Asia-Pacific Region

NATO is actively cooperating with other countries in the Asia-Pacific region, where Australia, Japan, Mongolia, New Zealand and Republic of Korea are all one of NATO's Global Partners. These countries have already supported NATO's operations and missions in the past, most recently in Afghanistan.¹² From the historical perspective, with the exception of Mongolia, the aforementioned countries clashed with China during the Korean War, when their respective troops acted as part of the US-led United Nations intervention in defence of the Republic of Korea.

NATO has been trying to track how the Alliance is perceived in the region through various kinds of research projects, one of them focusing on media images and elite perceptions of NATO among this five Global Partners. NATO's role as global actor was still appreciated, but the latter was more prominent during the Cold War, which does not come as a surprise. In the Republic of Korea, the process of stabilizing “Eurasia” and Europe is still seen as NATO's important achievement and Japan underscored the sharing of democratic values and natural bond with the organization. When it comes to the perception of security threats it was obvious that the closer a country was to China, more important was the aspect of managing relations with it. Particularly in Australia, relations in the triangle with the US and China are deemed vital, as their strategic and economic interests are intertwined. In Japan, maritime security and island disputes were addressed on a daily basis, with the latter being tightly connected to the China's activities in the region, where Chinese forces are exercising increased naval presence. It is generally accepted that Republic of Korea and Japan both share a common fear of the nuclear proliferation on the Korean peninsula, where China has already proven to be an important factor in balancing the precarious situation regarding the North Korean nuclear programme. NATO is still perceived as a valuable partner, but for example in the case of Australia, NATO and its Global Partnership were considered to be somewhat underutilised asset in areas of non-traditional security cooperation. Some

¹² Stressing the importance of NATO's cooperation with the Asia-Pacific region based on academic research, 8 March 2016, available at https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_130030.htm (accessed on 15 September 2019).

confusion was present among the countries regarding the cooperation with individual Member States and the Alliance itself, as most often, the US is the key partner regarding the pertinent security questions in the region. Accordingly, the US should adopt an even more pro-active role in developing increased cooperation between Member States and countries in the region.¹³

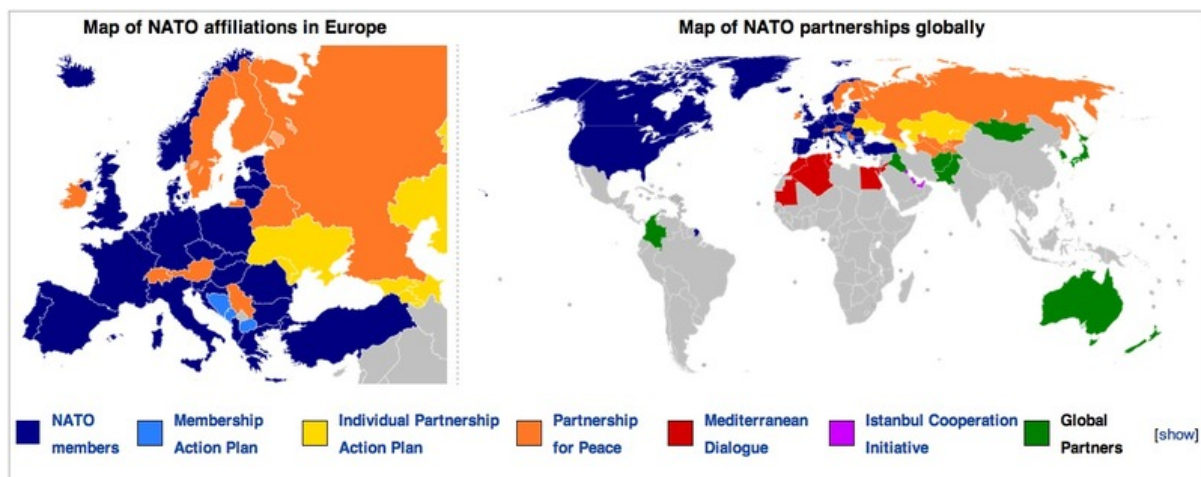


Figure 1: NATO's Global Presence

Australia has long been an important NATO partner, presenting one of the largest non-NATO troop contributors to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan, until 2014 and continued expressing its support during the Resolute Support.¹⁴ Japan has also been a generous contributor to NATO's efforts in Afghanistan and is participating in the Partnership Interoperability Initiative since 2014. Since its naval forces have trained with NATO's maritime assets already and Japan has a liaison officer to NATO's Maritime Command, interoperability of respective forces in case of a potential dispute in the Pacific with China, could prove to be invaluable.¹⁵ Nevertheless, military cooperation with Japan is limited thanks to its pacifistic constitution, most notably its Article 9. This article stipulates that *“Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the*

¹³ The Science for Peace and Security Programme Project: NATO Global Perceptions – Views from Asia-Pacific Region, available at: https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2016_04/20160418_160418-canberra-conference-summary.pdf (accessed on 15 September 2019).

¹⁴ Relations with Australia, NATO, 20 August 2019, available at https://www.nato.int/cps/en/SID-4E37114D-E9973C8C/natolive/topics_48899.htm?selectedLocale=en (accessed on 15 September 2019).

¹⁵ Relations with Japan, NATO, 12 September 2018, available at https://www.nato.int/cps/en/SID-4E37114D-E9973C8C/natolive/topics_50336.htm?selectedLocale=en (accessed on 15 September 2019).



Figure 2: Chinese Claims in the Pacific

*threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes. In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized”.*¹⁶

Reinterpretations of this article have been on the table on several occasions and Japanese military forces, although officially called Self-Defence Force, are still one of the world’s strongest.

Japanese government controversially changed the official posture in 2014, when its Prime Minister circumvented the constitutional amendment process and, through a controversial cabinet decision, issued a “reinterpretation” of Article 9 that allowed Japan for the first time to engage in collective self-defence and thus come to the aid of an ally under attack. China did not welcome such interpretation, because there is an ongoing dispute between the countries centred on a chain of uninhabited islands in the East China Sea known as the Senkaku Islands (Diaoyu Islands in Chinese).¹⁷ Japan's increased willingness to confront China can be a double-edged sword for the Alliance and the US, Japan's vital partner in the field of defence, should prevent the island nation from dragging them into an open conflict with their mainland neighbour. Friendly dialogue of NATO with China, without condemning Japanese historical revisionism could be a difficult task. And at the same time, when regional unity against potential Chinese threats is required, such Japanese attitude could alienate countries such as Republic of Korea and the Philippines.

¹⁶ The Constitution of Japan, promulgated on November 3, 1946, came into effect on May 3, 1947, available at https://japan.kantei.go.jp/constitution_and_government_of_japan/constitution_e.html (accessed on 15 September 2019).

¹⁷ Japan’s “Reinterpretation” of Article 9: A Pyrrhic Victory for American Foreign Policy? Jeffrey P. Richter, Iowa L. Review, 1223 (2016), available at: <https://ilr.law.uiowa.edu/print/volume-101-issue-3/japans-reinterpretation-of-article-9-a-pyrrhic-victory-for-american-foreign-policy/> (accessed on 15 September 2019).

Delegates should therefore examine options how to emphasize the role of the Alliance both on bilateral and multilateral level when engaging with countries in the Asia-Pacific, by no means limiting themselves just to the Global Partners. While the general opinion of NATO might not always be positive, an individual Member State can overcome that and push forward the common agenda. Counter piracy is such a topic, and the same goes for countering narcotics in Afghanistan, but the NATO's activities in the country, with the planned withdrawal of the remaining forces, are destined to be of much smaller extent in the future. However, consultations on these topics were held even with China, together with India, Singapore, Indonesia and Malaysia¹⁸, confirming that common ground for dialogue and mutual benefits is present.

Question of the Arctic

The State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China published a white paper titled "China's Arctic Policy" in January 2018, stating that China has long been involved in Arctic affairs. In 1925, it joined the Spitsbergen Treaty and started to participate in addressing the Arctic affairs and continued to do so. China is now an accredited observer to the Arctic Council and claims that it highly values the Council's positive role in Arctic affairs and recognizes it as the main inter-governmental forum on issues regarding the environment and sustainable development of the Arctic. China also supports international cooperation through such platforms as the Arctic Science Ministerial Meeting and has conducted bilateral dialogues on the law of the sea and polar issues with the United Kingdom and France. In 2016, China, Japan and the Republic of Korea launched high-level trilateral dialogues on Arctic issues to promote exchanges on policies, practices, and experience regarding Arctic international cooperation, scientific research, and commercial cooperation. The Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st-century Maritime Silk Road (Belt and Road Initiative), will bring opportunities for parties concerned to jointly build a "Polar Silk Road", and facilitate connectivity and sustainable economic and social development

¹⁸ Relations with partners across the globe, NATO, 19 May 2017, available at https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_49188.htm (accessed on 15 September 2019).

of the Arctic.¹⁹ It identifies itself as a “Near-Arctic State” and is strengthening ties with Russia, by signing an agreement in April 2019 to create a Russian-Chinese Arctic research centre, which will serve as the basis for the joint research conducted by both countries in the Arctic.²⁰ It is however encouraging that Chinese officials have called for the Arctic to be treated as global commons and have advocated for unhindered passage of maritime traffic, contrary to prevalent Russian views. But on the other hand, Chinese territorial claims in South China Sea and accompanying stance regarding questions connected to the international law of the seas, are in stark contrast with their Arctic policy.²¹ Arctic, thanks to its natural resources soon to be more easily reachable due to the fast melting ice, will be an area where global powers will try to assert dominance. Chinese wishes to include future Arctic shipping routes to their Belt and Road Initiative are also clearly in the bigger picture.²²

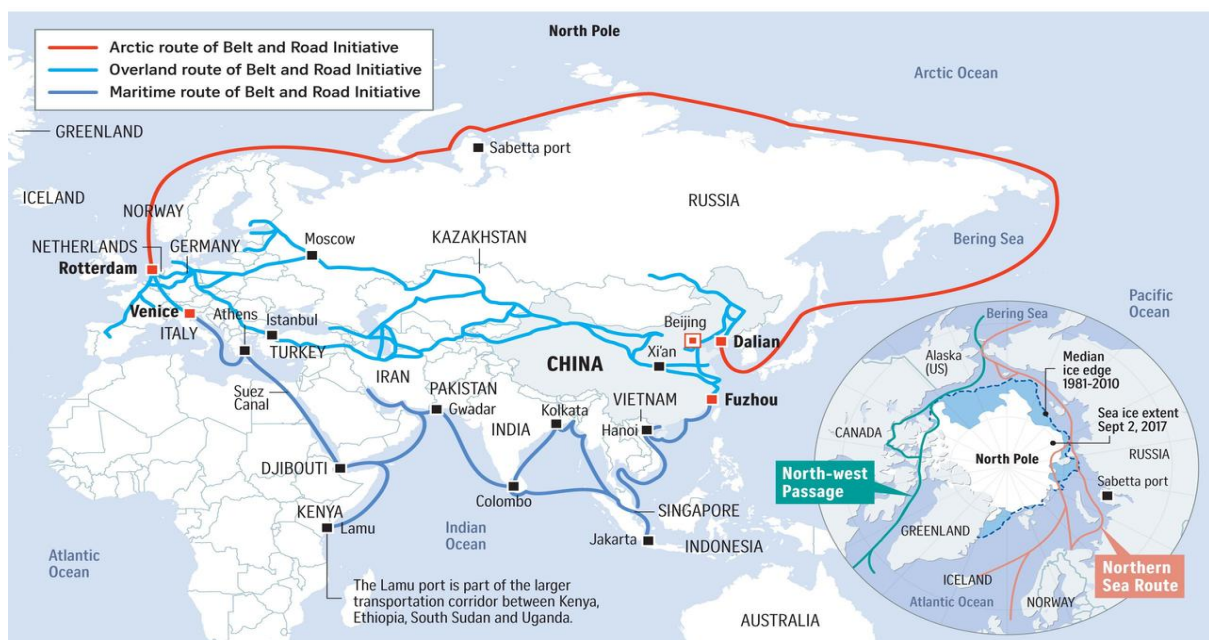


Figure 3: Chinese Arctic Plan and Belt and Road Initiative

¹⁹ China's Arctic Policy, Xinhua, 26 January 2018, available at <https://www.chinadailyasia.com/articles/188/159/234/1516941033919.html> (accessed on 15 September 2019).

²⁰ Russian Academy of Sciences, Chinese scientists to create Arctic research center, Tass, 10 April 2019, available at: <https://tass.com/science/1053084> (accessed on 15 September 2019).

²¹ Russia, China Offer Challenges in the Arctic, adm. James Foggo III, Defense One, 10 July 2019, available at: <https://www.defenseone.com/ideas/2019/07/russia-china-offer-challenges-arctic/158303/?oref=d1-related-article> (accessed on 15 September).

²² Militaries Know That The Arctic Is Melting — Here's How They're Taking Advantage, Jeremy Bender and Michael B. Kelley, 3 June 2014, available at: <https://www.businessinsider.com/the-competition-for-arctic-resources-2014-6> (accessed on 15 September).

Nuclear Non-Proliferation

China is a nuclear weapon state. It tested its first atomic bomb in 1964 and is estimated to possess roughly 290 nuclear warheads, with capability to deliver them either by land based or submarine launched ballistic missiles or by using several nuclear capable airplanes. China is a member of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and it acceded to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in 1992.²³ According to the Chinese Ministry of National Defense: *"China has always pursued the policy of no first use of nuclear weapons and adhered to a self-defensive nuclear strategy that is defensive in nature. China will unconditionally not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon states or in nuclear-weapon-free zones and will never enter into a nuclear arms race with any other country. China has always kept its nuclear capabilities at the minimum level required for maintaining its national security."*²⁴ In June 2018, in a testimony before the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Terrorism, Non-proliferation, and Trade an expert Patricia Kim suggested policy recommendations for the US, where the country should engage in bilateral confidence building and avoid spurring an action-reaction dynamic, strengthen alliances and the credibility of the United States' security commitments, leverage China's desire for stability and its growing international profile and interests to encourage its active participation in non-proliferation effort and set a leading tone on arms control.²⁵ However on 2 August 2019 US officially withdrew from the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty with Russia, claiming that Russia violated it. The latter suggested already in 2004 and 2005 that it might leave the treaty because China, North Korea, India, Pakistan and Iran all possessed medium- and intermediate-range missiles but did not do so. NATO supported US withdrawal decision and stated that "Russia bears sole responsibility for the demise of the Treaty" and vowed to respond "in a measured and responsible way".²⁶ He added that NATO

²³ Nuclear Threat Initiative, China, available at: <https://www.nti.org/learn/countries/china/> (accessed on 15 September 2019).

²⁴ Chinese nuclear forces, 2019, Hans M. Kristensen & Matt Korda, available at: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00963402.2019.1628511> (accessed on 15 September 2019).

²⁵ Chinese Perceptions on Nuclear Weapons, Arms Control, and Non-proliferation, Testimony by Patricia M. Kim, 21 June 2018, available at: <https://www.cfr.org/report/chinese-perceptions-nuclear-weapons-arms-control-and-nonproliferation> (accessed on 15 September 2019).

²⁶ INF treaty: US withdraws from arms control agreement with Russia, Martin de Bourmont, 2 August 2019, available at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/08/inf-treaty-withdraws-arms-control-agreement-russia-190801200731655.html> (accessed on 15 September 2019).

does not want a new arms race and confirmed there were no plans for the Alliance to deploy land-based nuclear missiles of its own in Europe.²⁷ Following this events American President commented that he would be interested in a new treaty, with Russia and China as parties to it.²⁸ Even though the original treaty banned weapons with ranges of 500-5.500 km, meaning that not all European NATO Member States could be targeted by such Chinese weapons, such a move would bring three world's strongest nuclear powers on the common path to avoid additional proliferation of nuclear weapons. At the same time Alliance has to be aware of the fact that the same second-thoughts that Russia had in mid 2000s because of other nuclear states in the wider region, China would probably be even more reluctant, as it neighbours all of them (with the exception of Iran, which currently does not even possess nuclear weapons). China remains North Korea's most important trade partner and ideological supporter. It is nevertheless displeased with North Korea's nuclear capabilities and would prefer a denuclearized Korean peninsula, but is at the same time still more afraid of the collapse of the North Korean regime, with the potential refugee crisis and power vacuum.²⁹ Any NATO's joint efforts in nuclear non-proliferation in Asia should therefore take into account complicated power-balance in the region. Statements, such as the one made by American defence secretary, Mark T. Esper in August 2019, saying that he was in favour of deploying ground-based missiles to Asia following the withdrawal from the INF treaty, certainly raise attention and in case of actually deploying such weapons in vicinity of China and North Korea, regional tensions would increase immensely.³⁰ Fielding additional weapons is by no means an easy task and enough time is available to weigh up all options and discuss them with other NATO Member States and partners in the region.

²⁷ INF nuclear treaty: NATO 'to avoid arms race' after US-Russia pact ends, 2 August 2019, available at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-49207281> (accessed on 15 September 2019).

²⁸ INF nuclear treaty: Trump says new pact should include China, 3 August 2019, available at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-49213892> (accessed on 15 September 2019).

²⁹ The China-North Korea Relationship, Eleanor Albert, CFR, 25 June 2019, available at: <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/china-north-korea-relationship> (accessed on 15 September 2019).

³⁰ Pentagon Chief in Favor of Deploying U.S. Missiles to Asia, Thomas Gibbons-Neff, New York Times, 3 August 2019, available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/03/world/asia/us-missiles-asia-esper.html> (accessed on 15 September 2019).

2019 ESTIMATED GLOBAL NUCLEAR WARHEAD INVENTORIES

The world's nuclear-armed states possess a combined total of nearly 14,000 nuclear warheads; more than 90% belong to Russia and the United States. Approximately 9,500 warheads are in military service, with the rest awaiting dismantlement.

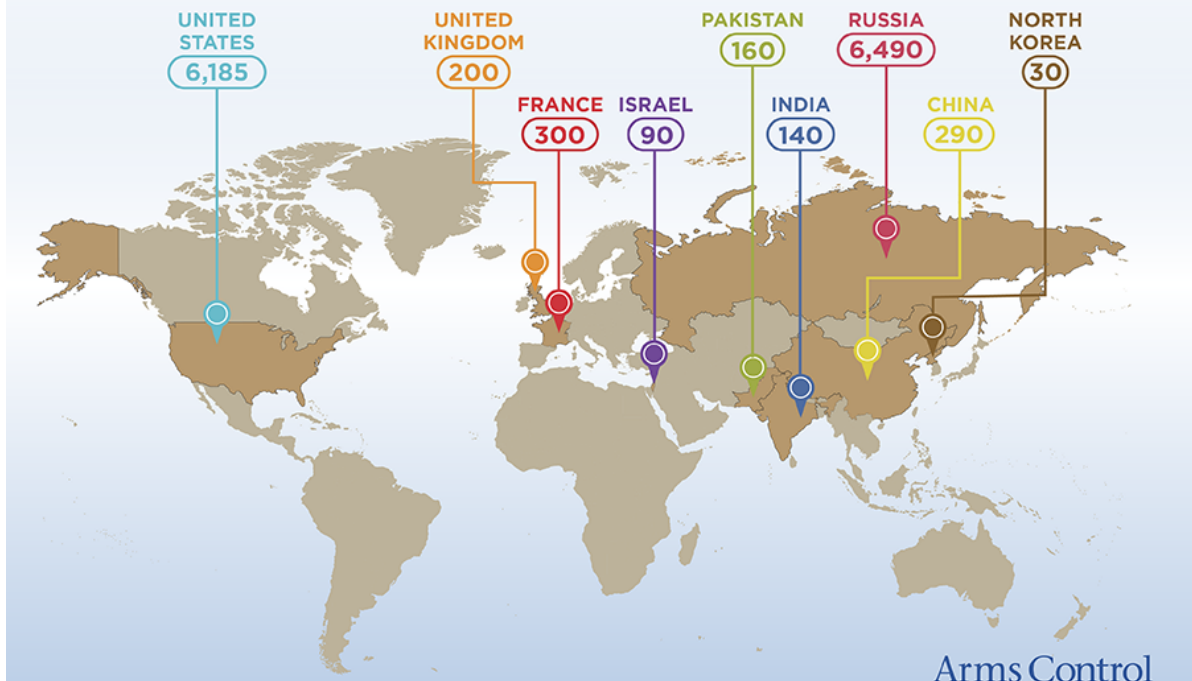


Figure 4: 2019 Estimated Global Nuclear Warhead Inventories

Chinese Influence on NATO Member States

Some experts argue that unlike Russia, China is interested in a stable, but pliant and fragmented EU, with the large and integrated European single market. This way, it is easier for Chinese companies to enter the market but also exert influence at the same time. China is creating ties with political and economic elites, media, civil society & academia. Even though strengthening of democratic institutions, freedom of the press and the rule of law can slow down Chinese attempts of undermining liberal orientation of the Alliance members, it is more and more difficult to do so, once e.g. critical infrastructure is under Chinese control. By yielding more power on a global scale, Chinese leadership ensures stability at home, while it has an opportunity to push forward their idea of political and economic governance. Current American President's comments on the future of the NATO and America's role in it, together with the uncertainty accompanying Brexit, make Europe an ideal target for Chinese power-game at this point. Regardless of the historical ties

between the UK and the US, predicted economic changes following the British farewell to the EU, make UK even more prone to search for new economic opportunities, China surely being a tempting choice. Additional support from some Central, Eastern and Southern European countries inside the EU, where Chinese investments were most substantial, makes it more and more likely for China to receive less coordinated response deemed harmful to their interests. Active support of think-tanks, universities, businesses and prominent politicians is valuable for Chinese leadership and it is consequently crucial to uphold liberal values and promote democratic governance constantly in order to prevent unwanted practices from taking hold in European democracies.

Turkey, as the sole NATO Member State on the Asian continent, is of a tremendous value for the Alliance and it would be unwise to lose mutual trust. Recent tensions over Turkey's purchase of Russian made S-400 air defence system cumulated in American decision to cut Turkey off from the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter program, out of fears that stealth fighter technology would be transferred to Moscow.³¹ Turkey's apparent shift towards Russia is problematic on its own, but additional Turkish military ties with China would be even more so. Chinese president Xi Jinping made a statement at the fifth summit meeting of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA) in June 2019 and called on all CICA members to uphold "the vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative and sustainable security, and explore a regional security structure with Asian features to realise collective security for Asia. In Turkish media, this word were interpreted as a proposal for a structure similar to NATO, even though there is no concrete evidence of Chinese intentions to actually pursue such path. Nevertheless, any debates going in this direction put the Alliance under severe stress regarding the question of Turkey's role in NATO and in addition to a potentially divided Europe, when it comes to China (and Russia) related questions, an unreliable partner in the form of Turkey, would cut into the

³¹ Turkey After The F-35: Choice for Alternative Fighter Will Help Shape Country's Future, Richard Aboulafia, Forbes, 21 July 2019, available at: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/richardaboulafia/2019/07/21/turkey-after-the-f-35-choice-for-alternative-fighter-will-help-shape-countrys-future/#1f3457b4326a> (accessed on 15 September 2019).

transatlantic ties even more. Sufficient willingness to prevent alienating NATO Member States should therefore be exhibited in the future, no matter the temporary disputes.³²

NATO Member States will also have to reach an agreement on how to deal with the Chinese technology firms. U.S. European Command chief Gen. Curtis Scaparrotti had warned that NATO forces would stop communicating with German counterparts, if Germany selects Huawei as a supplier for its 5G telecom infrastructure.³³ US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo also threatened that European countries might suffer from reduced US intelligence and information sharing in general, if they continue to use Chinese built networks and Chinese made devices for information sharing. In his speech he confirmed, that *“We have done our risk analysis, we have now shared that with our NATO partners, with countries all around the world. We've made clear that if the risk exceeds the threshold for the United States, we simply won't be able to share that information any longer”*. These concerns were recently primarily focused on the companies such as Huawei and ZTE, more precisely their high-speed 5G network for mobile devices. NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg responded to this by suggesting more consultations and a more tempered approach given the fact that Huawei is one of the rare providers of such technology.³⁴ It is clear that the US is promoting a stricter response to potential risks and Alliance members will have to find a proper balance since the risk of making American intelligence less accessible, would be a serious blow to the already loosened transatlantic ties. On the other hand, blanket ban on Chinese technology would seriously hamper attempts of building mutually beneficial relations with China and slow down technological development in Europe.

Italy and China signed the Memorandum of Understanding on Belt and Road cooperation in March 2019, Italy being the first large industrial economy to join the Initiative in spite of

³² An Asian NATO and Turkey's position in the equation, Yasar Yakis, Ahval, 21 June 2019, available at: <https://ahvalnews.com/nato-turkey/asian-nato-and-turkeys-position-equation> (accessed on 15 September 2019).

³³ NATO weighing Huawei spying risks to member countries, available at: <https://www.defensenews.com/global/europe/2019/03/15/nato-weighing-huawei-spying-risks-to-member-countries/> (accessed on 15 September 2019).

³⁴ NATO Members Risk Losing US Intel Over China Tech, Jeff Seldin, 4 April 2019, available at: <https://www.voanews.com/europe/nato-members-risk-losing-us-intel-over-china-tech> (accessed on 15 September 2019).

transatlantic pressure and opposition from some EU countries. When it comes to transparency and openness, Italian President stayed limited to mere lip service, but confirmed that Italy is committed to safeguarding peace and rules-based multilateralism, and is pleased to see the two sides have consensus on that.³⁵ Even though this Memorandum is not legally binding, the future will show how much effect it will have on Italy's stance on questions related to China, both in the EU and in NATO.

China is also coming close to Europe by conducting joint exercises with the Russian Navy in the Mediterranean and the Baltic seas, while at the same time People's Liberation Army conducted a medical training exercise with the German military. Opening a new military base in Djibouti and actively participating in the UN Peacekeeping Operations are all signs of Chinese army's intent to strengthen its global presence.³⁶

Some analysts claim that Europe will probably never share the United States' hard power perspective on Asia-Pacific. The American rebalancing to Asia-Pacific was spurred by strategic military consideration and is seen in an economic view only secondarily. For the Europeans, and particularly Germany, the Asia-Pacific region and the relationship with China is shaped by the "tyranny of distance," with Russia in between consuming most of the strategic thinking and resources that Germany and Europe entertain eastward. Additionally, Europe and China are geopolitically more proximate than ever before. Consequentially, some European NATO Member States will remain passive, or even neutral in the case of Chinese-American confrontation or crisis.³⁷ EU and its member states do not have any direct hard security interests in the Asia-Pacific region, but are focused on security threats from the Middle East, Northern Africa (wider Mediterranean region), and partially Russia. Since EU-China relations have mostly been dominated by the economic interests of individual states, both in trade and in investments, other aspects have not been sufficiently

³⁵ Italy and China Sign Groundbreaking MOU on Belt and Road Initiative, The International Schiller Institute, available at: <https://schillerinstitute.com/blog/2019/03/24/italian-president-mattarella-speaks-with-chinas-media-on-china-italy-partnership/> (accessed on 15 September 2019).

³⁶ NATO Needs a China Policy, Helena Legarda and Meia Nouwens, 18 July 2019, available at: <https://thediplomat.com/2019/07/nato-needs-a-china-policy/> (accessed on 15 September 2019).

³⁷ NATO's New Role: The Alliance's Response to a Rising China, Zinaida Bechná, and Bradley A Thayer, "Naval War College, Review: Vol. 69: No. 3, Article 6., 2016, pp. 4-5, available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol69/iss3/6> (accessed on 15 September 2019).

taken into account.³⁸ This is beginning to change, as the European Commission reviewed EU-China relations and the related opportunities and challenges in early 2019. In a Joint Communication of the EC and the High Representative, China is now recognized simultaneously as a cooperation partner with whom the EU has closely aligned objectives, a negotiating partner, with whom the EU needs to find a balance of interests, an economic competitor in pursuit of technological leadership, and a systemic rival promoting alternative models of governance. Among the specifically emphasized actions, a common EU approach to the security of 5G networks in order to safeguard against potential serious security implications for critical digital infrastructure, was recognized as needed and in order to detect and raise awareness of security risks posed by foreign investment in critical assets, technologies and infrastructure, Member States should ensure the swift, full and effective implementation of the Regulation on screening of foreign direct investment.³⁹ China on the other side, desires to acquire more Western technology and expertise to advance their own innovation, and Europe is an ideal ground to achieve this goal. Unlike in the EU, where the attitude towards China is still multifaceted, US identified China as a strategic competitor in its last National Security Strategy and considers it a pacing threat. European countries also see China as a potential partner in non-traditional security areas, such as climate change, where the US withdrawal from the Paris Agreement already cut into transatlantic bond, and also as an ally in the process of keeping the Iran Nuclear Deal alive.⁴⁰

Future Cooperation with China

NATO has to find ways to efficiently develop common policies regarding China, taking into account different priorities of individual Member States. Cooperation with Russia was for example done with the help of the Permanent Joint Council (PJC), a forum for consultation and cooperation created by the 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Act. In 2002 it was replaced by the creation of NATO Russia Council, established by the Declaration on “NATO-Russia

³⁸ NATO's New Role: The Alliance's Response to a Rising China, Zinaida Bechná, and Bradley A Thayer, "Naval War College, Review: Vol. 69: No. 3, Article 6., 2016, p. 11, available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol69/iss3/6> (accessed on 15 September 2019).

³⁹ Commission reviews relations with China, proposes 10 actions, 12 March 2019, available at: https://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-19-1605_en.htm (accessed on 15 September 2019).

⁴⁰ NATO Needs a China Policy, Helena Legarda and Meia Nouwens, 18 July 2019, available at: <https://thediplomat.com/2019/07/nato-needs-a-china-policy/> (accessed on 15 September 2019).

Relations: A New Quality. Following the crisis in Ukraine, the practical cooperation was suspended, but the mechanism, designed for consultation, consensus-building, cooperation, joint decision and joint action⁴¹, could prove to be at least a basis for similar engagement with China. Some experts propose a NATO-China Council that would help shape a more cooperative and constructive relationship between China and the West. Already in 2010, former NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen expressed a desire for the establishment of a NATO-China Council and stated why NATO should engage China: *China is an emerging power, with a growing economy and increasing global responsibility for security. As such, he would like to see regular political consultations with China; China is UNSC member. NATO operates from UN mandates, so it is important to engage China; China shares NATO interests in Afghanistan, especially in terrorism and drug trafficking.*⁴² It would make it easier to respond to increased Chinese influence in Europe and beyond, whenever Euro-Atlantic security interests would be considered to be at risk. Asia-Pacific being one of those areas without a doubt and to a certain extent also Arctic, where tensions with Russia are already high. Given these current disputes a prospect of cornering both China and Russia, with the risk of creating a strong Sino-Russian alliance, should be avoided at all costs. Recognizing Chinese role at the world stage and actively approaching them, could help marginalize Russian influence, discouraging them from future actions similar to their involvement in the Ukraine. Even though it is hard to believe that NATO-China Council could ever result in a relationship similar to the one fostered by NATO-Ukraine and NATO-Georgia Commissions, any attempts would be most welcome. Delegates need to be aware that China prefers dealing with individual countries for a reason, because it is easier to wield power on bilateral terms. By shifting at least part of these talks and responses to an organization, which yields a strong military arsenal in addition to the economic strength of its Member States, bound by common values,

⁴¹ NATO-Russia Council, 9 July 2019, available at: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_50091.htm (accessed on 15 September 2019).

⁴² SPSW Strategy Series: Focus on Defense and International Security NATO-China Cooperation: Opportunities and Challenges, Dr. Christina Lin, p. 3, Issue No. 189, April 2012, available at: https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/141148/189_Lin.pdf#xd_co_f=MDRlZDQyNWYtMTA4OS00YzE0LThjYTQtZDY3MTRhZGI0YmY0 (accessed on 15 September 2019).

interests and history, NATO could get a much desired edge.⁴³ Most importantly, it would prevent an even greater divide among the Alliance members by jointly accepting that China is a global superpower that cannot be ignored.

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⁴³It's Time for a NATO-China Council, Barry Pavel, Ian Brzezinski, 21 August 2019, available at: <https://www.defenseone.com/ideas/2019/08/its-time-nato-china-council/159326/> (accessed on 15 September 2019).

TOPIC TWO

NATO's Presence in the Mediterranean

Introduction

In 1998, F. Stephen Larrabee et al⁴⁴ foresaw the now current events from 2010s onwards. In a research prepared for the Italian Ministry of Defence they wrote:

“Since 1989, NATO has focused primarily on Eastern Europe, giving the Mediterranean only limited and sporadic attention. However, in the coming decades, the Mediterranean region is likely to become more important. If NATO and European Union enlargement succeed, East Central Europe will become increasingly stable and integrated into Euro-Atlantic political, economic, and security organizations, decreasing the need for security in Eastern Europe. Security problems will shift to the Alliance’s Southern periphery—the Balkans, the Mediterranean, and the Caucasus. Therefore, pressure to address these security problems will likely increase, especially from those members in NATO’s Southern Region.”

Today, the situation in Europe, around the Mediterranean, and not least within the Alliance itself, is completely changed, just as predicted.

The Beginning of Extensive Cooperation: The Mediterranean Dialogue (MD)

Since the 1990s were marked as years of progress in the Middle East peace process and great activism in Mediterranean initiatives, with Cold War antagonisms being left behind and upcoming talks about EU enlargement, it was natural to consider further and new ways of cooperation between the transatlantic security and its south.⁴⁵ And so, the

⁴⁴ NATO's Mediterranean initiative: policy issues and dilemmas / F. Stephen Larrabee ... [et al.]. Prepared for the Italian Ministry of Defence by RAND's National Security Research Division,” available at: https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monograph_reports/1998/MR957.pdf (accessed on 15 September 2019).

⁴⁵ Basagni, L., Brandsma, C., Lesser, I., & L  t  , B. (June 2018). The Future of NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue: Perspectives on Security, Strategy and Partnership. The German Marshall Fund of the United States: Strengthening Transatlantic Cooperation.

Mediterranean Dialogue (MD) was established in 1994 with the purpose of increasing north-south cooperation.⁴⁶

MD reflects the Alliance's view that security in Europe is closely linked to security and stability in the Mediterranean.⁴⁷ As expressed in the 2016 Warsaw Summit communiqué, the Alliance has agreed on “projecting stability” on the southern flank. As previously mentioned, this strategy was based on the assessment that NATO members can be secure only if their neighbourhoods are stable - a finding that the Alliance learned the hard way through the post-Arab Spring developments.⁴⁸



Figure 5: The Mediterranean Region

The MD was based and still operates upon two pillars - political dialogue and practical cooperation. Significantly, it was based not only on NATO's own but also on the following principles, which shape the work and conduct of NATO's dialogue with MD Members: non-discrimination, self-differentiation, inclusiveness, two-way engagement, non-imposition,

⁴⁶ Basagni, L., Brandsma, C., Lesser, I., & L  t  , B. (June 2018). The Future of NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue: Perspectives on Security, Strategy and Partnership. The German Marshall Fund of the United States: Strengthening Transatlantic Cooperation.

⁴⁷ NATO Mediterranean Dialogue, available at: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_60021.htm? (accessed on 15 September 2019).

⁴⁸ C. Kasapoglu, “Why and How NATO Should Adapt to a New Mediterranean Security Environment”, SWP Comment, No. March 2019, German Institute of International and Security Affairs.

complementarity and mutual reinforcement and diversity.⁴⁹ As evident, there is a lot of emphasis on allowing a tailored approach to the specific needs of each of MD partner countries - an objective which has been reiterated by MD partner countries on many occasions.

One of possibilities which allows for a more tailored approach is the primary bilateral structure of conduct - NATO+1. However, despite its predominantly bilateral character, the Dialogue nevertheless allows for multilateral meetings on a regular basis (NATO+7). Political consultations in the format of NATO+1 are held on a regular basis both at Ambassadorial and working level. These discussions provide an opportunity for sharing views on a range of issues relevant to the security situation in the Mediterranean, as well as on the further development of the political and practical cooperation dimensions of the Dialogue. Meetings in the NATO+7 format are also held on a regular basis, in particular following the NATO summits and Ministerial meetings and other major NATO events. These meetings represent an opportunity for two-way political consultations between NATO and MD partners. The Political and Partnerships Committee, the body which superseded the former Mediterranean Cooperation Group in July 1997, responsible for all partnerships, meets at the level of Political Counsellors on a regular basis to discuss all matters related to the Dialogue including its further development.⁵⁰

Currently, the Mediterranean Dialogue involves seven non-NATO countries of the Mediterranean region: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia

Current Mediterranean Challenge

The idea behind NATO's engagement with its Mediterranean partners - the notion that Mediterranean and transatlantic security are closely connected - is more obvious today than at any point in the history of the Alliance. Terrorism, migration, and human security are driving policy debates, alongside additional concerns over regional (state) stability.

⁴⁹ NATO Mediterranean Dialogue, available at: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_60021.htm? (accessed on 15 September 2019).

⁵⁰ NATO Mediterranean Dialogue –available at: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_60021.htm (accessed on 15 September 2019).

However, many basic ideas that were the pillars for the establishment of NATO's Mediterranean partnership remain current today.⁵¹

MD in 1990s	MD in 2017
Optimism in Middle East Peace Process	Impasse in Middle East Peace Process
Launch of multiple European neighborhood initiatives	European neighborhood policies in crisis
Limited threats to NATO	Multiple threats to NATO
Focus on political dimension	Focus on practical cooperation
Internal security and WMD core concerns	Counterterrorism and border security core concerns

Figure 6: A Changing Partnership Environment

Although RAND's Arroyo Centre's conduct of war simulation in 2014 and 2015 left the eastern flank scared about its future, key NATO metropolises in the south have not been left untouched: the migration crisis has hit the Euro-Mediterranean area, Turkey has been hit three times in the last

four years by missiles launched from Syria (as underlined by the 2018 Brussels Summit Declaration), the region witnessed the most dangerous chemical weapons use of the 21st century, which triggered US-led punitive strikes against the Syrian Baath regime.⁵²

Under conditions as such, the need to adopt and adhere to a shared security community in political and practical terms is more obvious than even before. Counterterrorism and human security are at the top of agendas in both the north and the south. Similarly, border control, maritime, and cybersecurity are shaping policies around the region, and need to be addressed as prime focus of the dialogue.⁵³

Another point worth mentioning is the finding that nowadays the influences on Mediterranean security have become more diverse and global. As observed by Basagni et al. in the research "The Future of NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue": *"The Mediterranean is not a self-contained space in security terms. To a far greater extent than was envisioned in earlier years of Mediterranean Dialogue (MD), security in the region is being shaped by developments further held, from the Black Sea and the Horn of Africa, to the Sahel, Sub-*

⁵¹ Basagni, L., Brandsma, C., Lesser, I., & L  t  , B., June 2018, The Future of NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue: Perspectives on Security, Strategy and Partnership. The German Marshall Fund of the United States: Strengthening Transatlantic Cooperation.

⁵² C. Kasapoglu, "Why and How NATO Should Adapt to a New Mediterranean Security Environment", SWP Comment, No., March 2019, German Institute of International and Security Affairs.

⁵³ Ibid.

Saharan Africa, and the wider Atlantic. The strategic environment in the Mediterranean continues to expand in terms of geography and players.”⁵⁴

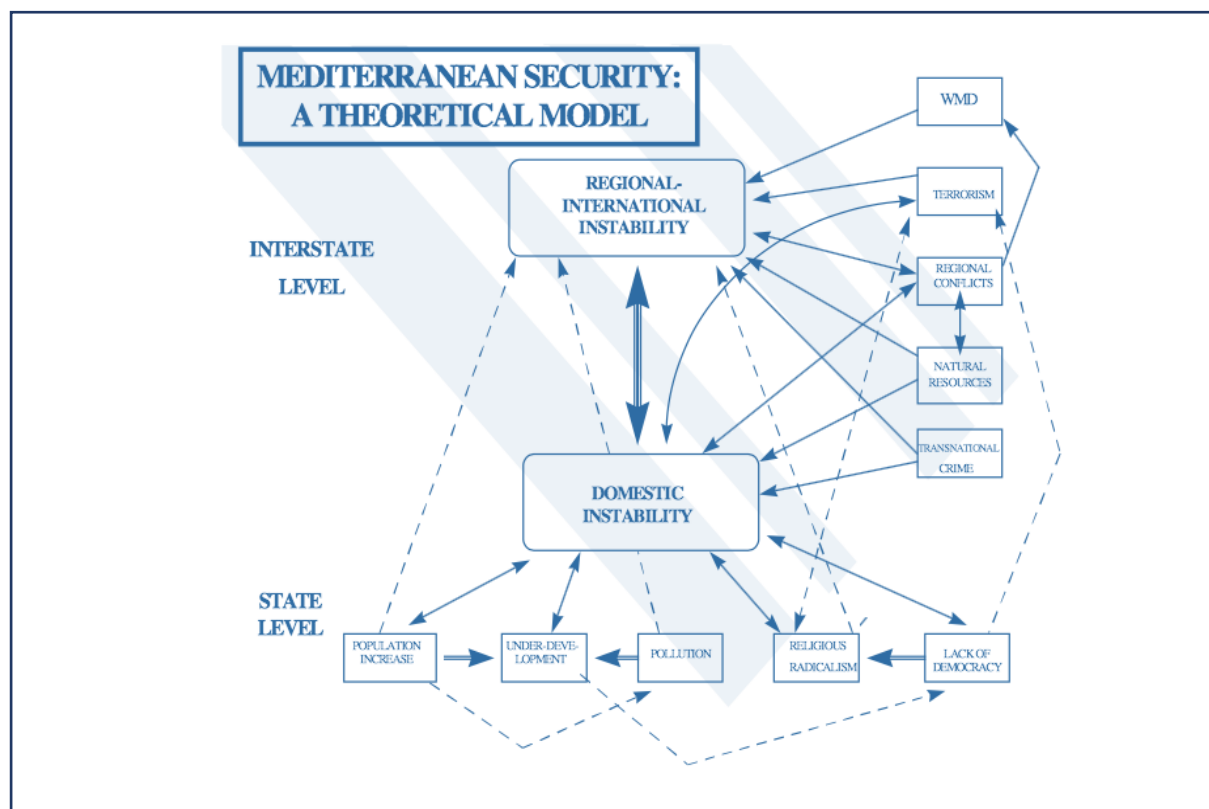


Figure 7: Mediterranean Security: A Theoretical Model

Erosion of Previously Stable States and Warlordism

The strategic environment across the southern Mediterranean is nowadays seemingly shifting to and fro sovereignty and disorder. The erosion of many previously strong states across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA region) raises the possibility of instability of a much longer duration, beyond the capacity of simple crisis management.

Iraq, Syria, and Libya may never return to their pre-crisis conditions, and a further breaking of states is a very real and frightening possibility, which could lead to “institutionalised warlordism”. The fragmentation in Libya and moves toward Kurdish autonomy may point the way toward a new norm, and one that will be difficult to reconcile with the interests of the remaining stable states in MENA region. Adding to that, Egypt and the North African

⁵⁴ Thanos P. Dokos, NATO’S MEDITERRANEAN DIALOGUE: PROSPECTS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS, “Mediterranean Security: A theoretical model”, available at: <https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/26524/PP03.03.pdf> (accessed on 15 September 2019).

states with difficult to monitor large spaces bordering the Sahel, may simply lose complete control over parts of their territory. At best, governments may find themselves in a never ending, running battle with insurgents bent on maintaining a base for terrorist and anti-regime operations and groups.⁵⁵

During an international workshop organised by the *Regional Program Political Dialogue South Mediterranean of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung* in February 2019, a group of leading experts from the US, Europe and the MENA region discussed Middle Eastern controversies and fallacies in previous transatlantic relations and identified the key areas of diversion and agreement within the transatlantic alliance:⁵⁶

- Trump's reversal of the Obama legacy by withdrawing from the Joint and Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the so-called Iran deal, cutting of almost all aid to the Palestinians, disengagement from the MENA region and Jared Kushner's plan to 'solve' the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in regards to US Middle East Policy as both directly and indirectly affecting the Mediterranean region, as well as driving a wedge between the transatlantic partners.
-
- Identifying how the developments known as the 'European migration crisis' triggered a substantial shift in the perception of the MENA region by European electorates and political leaders alike: "...*security and stability in the Mediterranean has developed into a decisive electoral factor in Europe, arguably causing the greatest solidarity crisis within the Union and directly impacting European cohesion through growing anti-immigrant and Eurosceptic sentiments...*" Adding to that is the uncertainty of Brexit for European Foreign policy and defence capacities, which together create fertile ground for detrimental re-nationalization across EU States.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ C. Atilgan et S. Engelkes, "Drifting Apart? Transatlantic Relations in the Middle East", med dialogue series | no. 18, Regional Program Political Dialogue South Mediterranean, available at: <https://www.kas.de/documents/282499/282548/MDS+18+Transatlantic+Relations+in+the+Middle+East.pdf/913f38ce-70f4-24a6-ba7b-2e97cd75bc27?version=1.0&t=1550828373139>

Porous Borders and Migration

Beyond the threat to borders and states, Mediterranean will also be deeply affected by continual insecurity. Worsening of sectarian divides, the internal (and international) displacement of populations, migration pressures from the south — and the south of south — and porous borders.⁵⁷

The criminality accompanying state insecurity, and the phenomenon of political violence that has been on the rise ever since, present an ever so fast decline in personal security. This is especially evident in Mediterranean cities, where steady urbanization has produced its own social and political strains, and where extremist movements have found fertile ground.⁵⁸

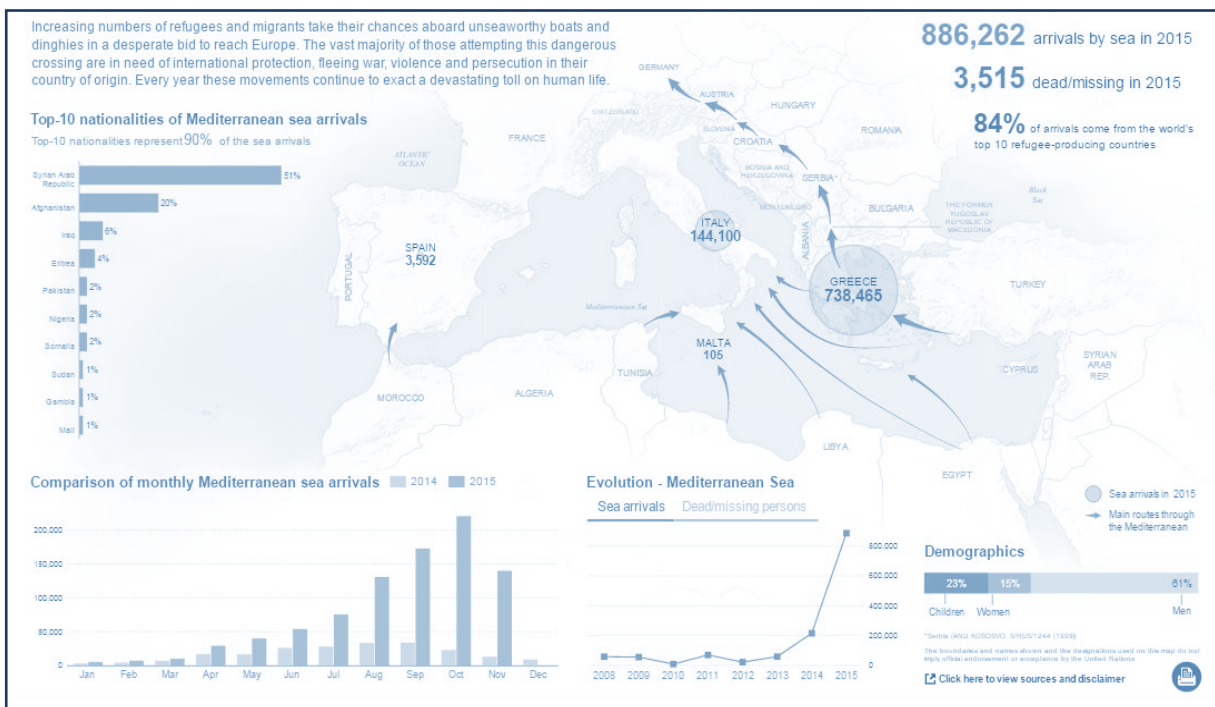


Figure 8: Flow of Migrants Coming from Middle East Via North Africa

One of the shifting interests of the MD that is a direct effect of the violent conflicts in the region, specifically in Syria, is the **migration crisis**. Even though a steady flow of both migrants and refugees has been noticed from the Middle Eastern countries - via North Africa - into Europe since 2013, southern Mediterranean countries (Lebanon, Libya, Jordan,

⁵⁷ Ibid.

58 Ibid.

Tunisia and Turkey) still host a large majority of such displaced persons.⁵⁹ Due to this, many of the Mediterranean countries are forced to set up camps for these people, which they might not have the economic capability to do so.

Contrary to popular belief, many migrants headed to Europe are drawn from places far beyond the southern Mediterranean and Middle East - Nigeria and Bangladesh for example are among the leading contributors to this flow. As pointed out by a research by Basagni et al: *“Ongoing conflicts and multiple potential flashpoints suggest that crisis-driven migration will remain a key element in the regional equation. Perhaps more significant is the accumulation of structural pressures for migration from south to north. Conflict and environmental degradation are further drivers of migration.”*

Hand in hand with the migration crisis goes the **maritime security of the Mediterranean area**, which directly affects the security of Europe and southern Mediterranean. Since the (current) beginning of big migration flows, surveillance and control of the maritime space, especially the Aegean Sea as well as central Mediterranean, have become central issues for southern Europe. (Mostly) EU countries' political reaction suggests that maritime security, and maritime cooperation, will be a top priority in (multi)national policy for the near future. Another bastion and focal point for cooperation between EU and NATO is the Operation Sea Guardian (OSG). All regional states with the resources to do so will look to strengthen their ability to see what is happening in the maritime space, since the Alliance has identified its (maritime security) direct importance to today's economy (approx. 65% of Western Europe's oil and gas consumption passes through the Mediterranean). The OSG also supports the European Union's Operation Sophia to tackle the migrant crisis and human trafficking.

⁵⁹ Basagni, L., Brandsma, C., Lesser, I., & Lété, B., June 2018. The Future of NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue: Perspectives on Security, Strategy and Partnership. The German Marshall Fund of the United States: Strengthening Transatlantic Cooperation.

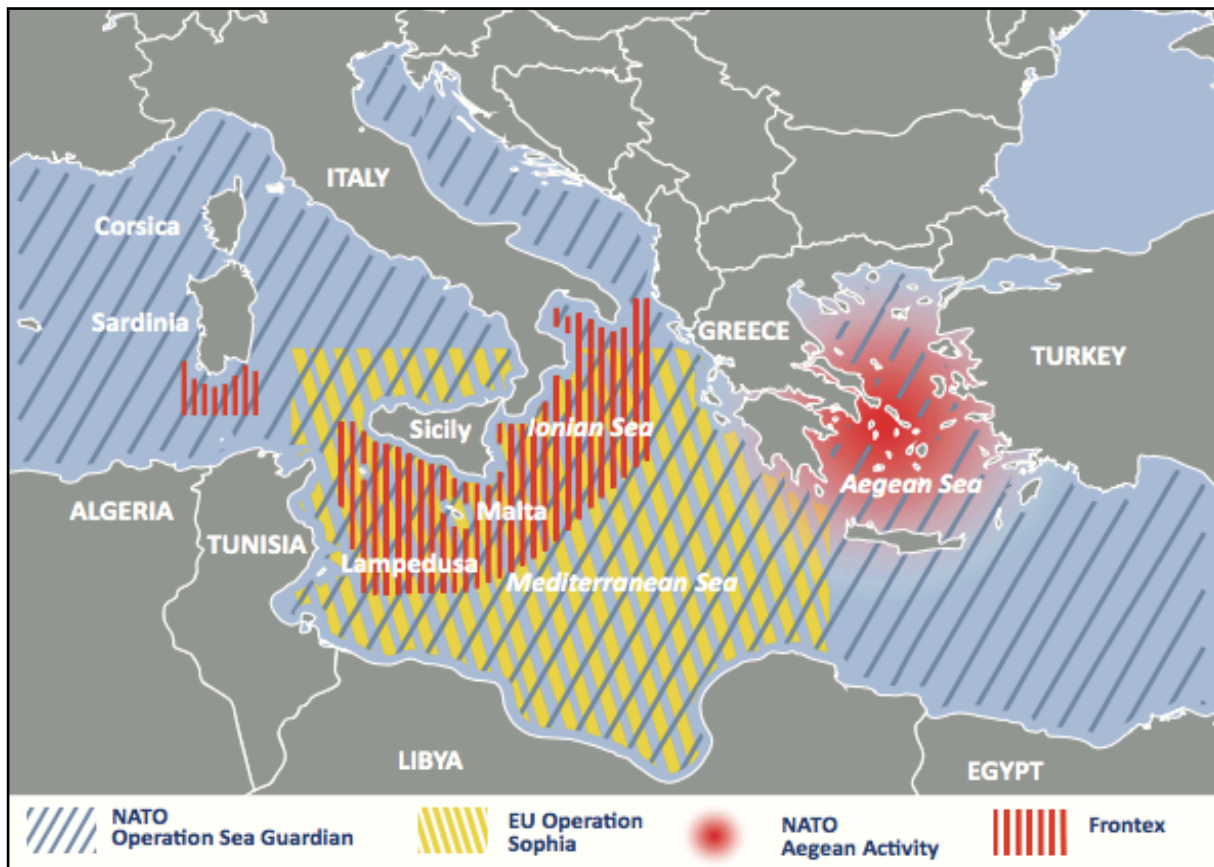


Figure 9: Operational Activities in the Mediterranean

Furthermore, some have expressed their worries about the risk of maritime terrorism and even piracy in the Mediterranean. Until today there have been some attempted and actual attacks of this kind, however none had a serious impact on security or commerce. However, the risk remains - terrorists may attempt to deploy from the sea to attack targets ashore, ports, or even offshore energy facilities. Other risks are associated with port security, and the challenge of maritime crime and piracy linked to chaotic conditions in (but not limited to) Libya. The prominence of tourism in many Mediterranean economies makes the security of coasts and coastal waters a natural concern.⁶⁰

Another problem in connection to the terrorist threat stemming from MENA region and the connected migration flow, is the **rising nationalism and pressures to re-nationalize defence policy**. Politicians are using the current crisis to fuel populist and xenophobic

⁶⁰ Basagni, L., Brandsma, C., Lesser, I., & L  t  , B., June 2018, The Future of NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue: Perspectives on Security, Strategy and Partnership. The German Marshall Fund of the United States: Strengthening Transatlantic Cooperation.

movements, which may influence the evolving NATO debate, affect the readiness of the MENA partners to talk and all in all complicate efforts to promote a unity of commitment looking south. Polls have shown that this kind of a political climate can lead to more apathetic public interest and disinclination to take on security tasks where stakes are more distant or indirect. Under such conditions, the southern most areas of Europe (Balkans) and Southern Mediterranean may be left to European management in security terms and will be expected to handle most of the burden. These pressures could also influence the balance between bilateral and multilateral approaches to security cooperation with southern Mediterranean partners.

The Foreign Fighter Phenomenon

The foreign fighter phenomenon is another part of the overall Mediterranean problem. Thousands of recruits from North Africa and the Middle East, Russia, and Europe, have travelled to Iraq, Syria, and Libya, or have taken up arms with jihadist groups at the Horn of Africa or in the Sahel.

Comparing the Al-Qaeda and Syrian terrorist groups already gives frightening results: Al-Qaeda was mostly the product of the Afghan jihad in the 1980s, which attracted 5,000 to 20,000 foreign fighters, whilst the Syrian jihad mobilised up to 40,000 foreign fighters, with some 7,000 of those being from NATO countries. The results point to the fact that the real threat of the Syrian jihad remains to be felt in the next years.⁶¹ Therefore even though ISIS strongholds in Syria and Iraq are progressively reduced, many of the surviving fighters will make their way home or travel to new battlegrounds elsewhere. This process is likely to produce a substantial mutation in the nature and effectiveness of terrorist, insurgent, and criminal networks.

However, Syria and Iraq are not the sole battlegrounds - Tunisia has a problematic home-grown militancy issue, and this jihadist potential has found a safe haven in Libya amidst the

⁶¹ C. Kasapoglu, "Why and How NATO Should Adapt to a New Mediterranean Security Environment", SWP Comment, No., March 2019, German Institute of International and Security Affairs.

collapse of state. Different sources of intelligence suggest that training camps established in Libya were used to deploy Tunisian foreign fighters to Syria. The militancy issue in Libya also threatens Egypt's Western Desert area and overstretches Egyptian security forces between Sinai and the Libyan border.

Another extremely important fact is that the terrorism and state instability in the MENA region haven't proved to be dangerous only in regard to non-state actors but have shown to point out another actor taking part in the matter: Russia. Moscow's military gains in the Syrian expedition affect the overall NATO-Russia balance, and help foster the Russian military's combat readiness. According to Russian Ministry of Defence, over 63,000 military personnel served in Syria, Russia has tested more than 200 weapon systems through its campaign.⁶²

Connected to this issue is the **digital dimension** - spread of the knowledge of the digital and technology has been readily used by terrorist groups and other criminal networks for different tasks: recruitment, planning, and strategic communications. The growth in the prominence of cybersecurity and protection of critical infrastructure has become a source of growing demand for cooperation in the MD ever since the ability of external actors to shape political outcomes and public attitudes via social media has been identified.

Illicit Arms Trafficking

The mixture of various criminal networks, terrorist groups, weak control over borders in some parts of the MENA region and parts of Balkans pose as a good catalyst for illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. International reports have pointed out that not only regional factors, for example the proliferation of weapons from Libya's extensive arsenal, but external factors as well, e.g. the 2017 discovery of a shipment of light weapons from North Korea to Egypt, play a crucial role. However, in most cases, separating terrorism, smuggling and extremism is almost impossible.

⁶² Ibid.

For the Future: Chartering New Steps

Traditionally, the Alliance had one core task set at a time (collective defence, crisis management etc.), but now it is bombarded with numerous palpable security threats at once. Not only does this pose a great challenge to the Alliance because of its extent, but due to the speed of the realisation of such threats as well. In this context, the 2014 Ukraine crisis served as a wake-up call - times have changed and so has warfare. It became clear that irregular warfare (such as the one in Afghanistan) is no longer in use, but that a new mix of (un)conventional threats are surfacing. Such novelties however demand new strategies and approaches, which is why at the 2014 Wales Summit, the Alliance started a process of transformation and adaptation to new multi-tasking broader-spectrum tasks.

The current debate is centred on the issue of balancing the eastern problem of defence against Russia versus the southern problem. Contrary to the Eastern problem, NATO already has considerable infrastructure in the South (around the Mediterranean). Lacking is the overall strategy and a set of concepts of how to deal with the multifaceted challenges in the south, which is also further complicated by the mix of external and domestic security risks in the region. The Alliance has been aware of the above identified problems and has until now done a lot, namely to point out the adoption of the Framework for the South at the 2016 Warsaw Summit (data collected from this platform can also contribute to making the wider Mediterranean security environment more transparent for defence decision-makers), creation of a new Strategic Direction South Hub in 2017 (if given the capacity, NSD-S can serve as a centre for liaison with Mediterranean Dialogue partners and others) and deepening the NATO-EU cooperation with the Joint Declaration of July 2016 (strengthen their operational cooperation, including on maritime security and on migration, through increased sharing of information and closer coordination of their activities in the Mediterranean).

However, more is still to be done. Some bigger issues for the Alliance to deal with in the future are namely:

- The consideration of the Alliance' core aims looking south (deterrence and defence against Article V contingencies or defence of common security interest), which might help in consolidating solid support from MD (and other) partners and the overall improvement of the outlook on NATO and its involvement in the region
- NATO's future engagement in environment shaping around the Mediterranean (together with straightening NATO's capacities of warning and intervention to the Mediterranean, to which the response and support of partner countries is crucial)
- Adaptation of the old and now obsolete to new and unconventional defence platforms
- Increase in bilateral cooperation with MD partners (first step being the already achieved signing of Individual Partnership and Cooperation Program agreements with NATO), in both political dialogue (perhaps by alternating the platform and creating a steady schedule for even more MD-tailor made events) and practical activities (re-branding and conducting some national and multinational exercises in the spirit of 'NATO' for MD for closer cooperation and goal sharing). The Strategic Direction South Hub could play a crucial role for engaging MD partners.
- Due to the growing relevance of Africa to the Mediterranean security, the inclusion of e.g. G-5 Sahel, African Union or other regional organisations in MD activities could prove to be quite fruitful.

Further Reading

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Preparing for the Debate

Since NATO's decisions are reached by consensus it is important to keep that in mind throughout the entire work in the committee. Although you can use this fact to your advantage and theoretically prevent any draft communique that you disagree with from being adopted, this is not what a delegate should be relying on. In order to have a productive caucusing stage that will flow in the direction you are interested in, it is crucial to prepare an effective opening speech. Presenting ideas and solutions in a structured way that convinces other delegates makes the future steps much easier. After the opening speeches you will be able to recognize the topics where delegates have common views and adjust your future actions accordingly. In the caucusing stage it will be easier to work with these countries and it is more likely you will get the support in areas where policies are not similar, if you know you have strong allies. Whenever it becomes clear that debate is running in circles or everything has already been discussed and agreed upon, it is smart to propose closure of the debate on that matter. Drafting a document is wise as soon as you feel you will have the support to at least introduce it, and being the first to do so, gives you a significant advantage later on. Always keep in mind that drafts can still be amended and be ready to advocate your clauses or try to improve those that you find unsatisfactory. Failing to contribute to the decision-making process in any significant way and then preventing a draft communique to be adopted due to the lack of consensus is strongly discouraged.

We have envisioned both topics to be debated quite broadly, thus allowing delegates even more creative space to swing the debate into their favour, but at the same time warn the delegates to expect the unexpected and be aware that a crisis can erupt at any time.

We advise the delegates to pick a few sub-topics with regard to both themes and focus their Position Paper mainly on those strong points of their delegations, but still gather some background and overall knowledge on all issues pointed out in this study guide. Certain countries will inevitably have a less clear official stance on the issues encountered throughout the debate, but this should not dissuade delegates from supporting an opinion that would otherwise be in line with their countries' general policy.

General Information

- NATO Homepage: <http://www.nato.int/>
- NATO Thematic Index: <http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/68147.htm>
- NATO Archives: <http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/68238.htm>
- NATO Official Texts: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts.htm
- North Atlantic Treaty:
http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_17120.htm
- NATO Historical Overview: <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/nato>
- UN Main Page: <http://www.un.org/en/index.html>
- Charter of the UN: <http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/>

News sources:

- Al-Jazeera: <http://www.aljazeera.com/>
- BBC: <http://www.bbc.com/>
- CNN: <http://edition.cnn.com/>
- Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung: <http://www.faz.net/>
- Le Monde Diplomatique: <http://www.monde-diplomatique.fr/>,
<http://mondediplo.com/>
- New York Times: <http://www.nytimes.com/>
- The Economist: <http://www.economist.com/>
- Washington Post: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/>

Think tanks and policy groups:

- Aspen Institute: <http://www.aspeninstitute.org/>
- Brookings: <http://www.brookings.edu/>
- Center for Strategic and International Studies: <http://csis.org/>
- Chatham House: <http://www.chathamhouse.org/>
- European Council on Foreign Relations: <http://www.ecfr.eu/>
- International Crisis Group: <http://www.crisisgroup.org/>
- International Institute for Strategic Studies: <https://www.iiss.org/>
- Stockholm International Peace Research Institute: <http://www.sipri.org/>
- United Nations Association of the USA: <http://unausa.org/>

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