

# **KU Leuven Model United Nations 2019**

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*A WORLD WITHOUT FRONTIERS: SOLUTIONS BEYOND BORDERS  
FOR REGIONAL PROBLEMS GOING GLOBAL*

**NATO**

**Study Guide**

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## Words of Welcome

Dear delegates,

Welcome to KULMUN 2019 and, more specifically, welcome to the NATO Committee. In this study guide you will find a committee overview that will provide you with a short introduction to the history of NATO. Furthermore, the two topics will be introduced providing a basic overview of what will be discussed during the committee work. This guide will also provide you with a list of readings that could help you gain a deeper understanding of the topics. Lastly, an explanation will be given on how an outcome document of the committee should look like.

Due to the ever-changing international environment, conflicts in the 21<sup>st</sup> century have been defined by the increasing presence of non-state actors. When NATO was founded in 1949, however, the main actors in conflicts were states. NATO was created with the idea of protecting its members during such interstate conflicts. Nowadays, however, it seems that the organisation's decision-making mechanisms are increasingly ill-equipped to tackle the challenges of modern conflict. It will be up to you to discuss how this system could be adapted or if it should be adapted at all.

Even though this century has witnessed a growing involvement of non-state actors in conflicts typically dominated by states, states have not given up on military conflict as a political tool. The militarization of the Arctic stands as a stark reminder of that. This is a conflict with the potential to shift power balances between multiple countries and therefore NATO cannot neglect this issue and a solution must be found.

These two issues are both problems which could spill across borders and lead to global instability if solutions are not found. Therefore, we strongly encourage you to prepare yourselves for both topics well as they are of major concern to NATO today.

We look forward to meeting and working with you during KULMUN 2019. Good luck with your preparation!

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## Committee Overview

### The History of NATO

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was founded in 1949, in the aftermath of World War II and the onset of the Cold War. The Alliance was created to serve three distinct purposes: deterring the expansion of the Soviets in Europe, preventing the revival of nationalist militarism in Europe and supporting European political integration.<sup>1</sup> The most important article of the



**Figure 1: Signature of the Washington Treaty 1949, source: <https://www.bostonglobe.com/opinion/2016/07/04/nato-necessary/DwE0YzPb8qr70oIT9NVyAK/story.html>**

Washington Treaty (NATO's founding document) is the renowned Article 5: *"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..."*<sup>2</sup>. The need for this organisation became very clear after the USSR sponsored a coup in Czechoslovakia and organised the blockade of West Berlin in 1948.

NATO was soon met with its first challenges and only a few months after the foundation of the organisation, its members engaged in the first of multiple proxy wars against the USSR in Korea.<sup>3</sup> Throughout the Cold War, NATO would continue to be defined by its rivalry with the USSR. To strengthen its position in Europe, the Alliance extended its membership. Turkey joined in 1952, while West Germany was admitted in 1955.

<sup>1</sup> A short history of NATO, last accessed on 12/12/2018, [https://www.nato.int/cps/ie/natohq/declassified\\_139339.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/ie/natohq/declassified_139339.htm)

<sup>2</sup> NATO, The North Atlantic Treaty, *NATO*, 1949, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Lafeber, W. NATO and the Korean War: A Context, *Diplomatic History*, p. 464.

To counterbalance the power of NATO, the USSR founded the Warsaw Pact in 1955. Until the end of the Cold War, NATO and the Warsaw Pact remained sworn enemies who fought multiple proxy wars even if they never engaged in a direct conflict against each other.

The end of the Cold War meant that NATO had to re-invent itself, as up until that moment the Alliance's main goal had been protecting Europe from Soviet invasion. Once the USSR ceased to exist and left behind a number of deeply troubled newly independent states, it appeared that NATO itself had become obsolete. A new *raison d'être* had to be found. The collapse of the USSR, however, resulted in significant destabilisation of Eastern Europe and the outbreak of a number of regional conflicts. During the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1995, NATO worked alongside the United Nations (UN). A large-scale aerial campaign was launched against the Bosnian Serb military. At the end of the 1990s, another conflict erupted in Kosovo and NATO started an aerial campaign and sent in a multinational peacekeeping force. The commitment NATO showed in both these wars proved that the organisation remained relevant even after the collapse of the Soviet Union. It also showed that NATO was both capable and willing to defend Europe and its values from actors with different ideas.<sup>4</sup>

Nonetheless, the reality of conflicts was changing. While for the best part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century conventional conflicts were the main focus of NATO, the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century proved that a strategic review of the organisation was necessary. This period was characterised by ethnic conflicts, irregular warfare, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and economic instability of great magnitude. Thus, NATO needed to adapt to be capable of dealing with these issues as well.

The attacks of 9/11 brought the world's attention to the rising threat of terrorism globally as well as to its potential for damage of great proportions. The attack on the World Trade Center buildings led to the first ever enactment of Article 5 of the Washington Treaty. As a consequence of this terrorist attack executed by Al-Qaeda, the US and its allies invaded Afghanistan in 2001 in order to prevent the terrorist group from coordinating its activities from the country. As a result of the military intervention, the Taliban regime was overthrown. The military actions of the United States of America, Canada, Australia, Germany and the United Kingdom attracted the attention of the United Nations and led to the adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR)

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<sup>4</sup> Michel, L., NATO Decisionmaking: How the Consensus Rule Works, *Croatian International Relations Review*, 2006, p. 9.

S/RES/1386 (2001), which authorized the creation of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). The goal of ISAF was aiding in the stabilization of Afghanistan.<sup>5</sup>

Another important aspect in the transformation of NATO is the entry of multiple new members into the Alliance since the end of the 1990s. In 1999 the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland were admitted to NATO. The biggest round of enlargement was in 2004 when 7 new members from Central and Eastern Europe joined the Alliance. Albania and Croatia became members in 2009, followed most recently by Montenegro in 2017. Currently, NATO has 29 members.<sup>6</sup> The expansion of the organisation has naturally brought new issues to the forefront. As NATO follows the principle of unanimous decision making, it has become more difficult to find consensus amongst the new members, notably slowing the decision-making process. This issue remains unresolved.

While NATO has been transforming, the rest of the world continued to evolve as well. Following the turbulent event of the Arab Spring, NATO launched a military campaign to protect civilians in Libya from their increasingly violent government. To launch this campaign, NATO used UNSCR S/RES/1973 (2011), which focused around the principle of Responsibility to Protect (R2P). Not all members of NATO supported this military campaign. Germany was amongst its biggest critics.<sup>7</sup> Deadlock was avoided only because Berlin chose not to oppose a military campaign by the Alliance's other members.

The Libyan conflict was also a powerful reminder that there were many different forms of war next to conventional wars. Just as in Afghanistan, NATO intervened in what before the intervention was an intrastate conflict. In 2014, as a consequence of Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea, the world's attention turned to yet another new type of confrontation, namely what we have come to know as *hybrid warfare*.<sup>8</sup> At the same time, the conflict between Russia and Ukraine was also a reminder that conflicts between states are still possible. Around the same time, NATO would find itself at de facto war with Da'esh (also known as Islamic State or ISIS). All of these new challenges demonstrated a pressing need for the development of new and more appropriate tools and tactics.

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<sup>5</sup> ISAF's mission in Afghanistan (2001-2014), last accessed on 16/12/2018, [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_69366.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_69366.htm)

<sup>6</sup> Enlargement, last accessed on 16/12/2018, [https://www.nato.int/cps/ie/natohq/topics\\_49212.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/ie/natohq/topics_49212.htm)

<sup>7</sup> Germany steps away from European Unity, last accessed on 16/12/2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/24/world/europe/24germany.html>

<sup>8</sup> Annexation and Hybrid Warfare in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine, last accessed on 16/12/2018, <https://www.e-ir.info/2018/06/25/annexation-and-hybrid-warfare-in-crimea-and-eastern-ukraine/>

It is clear that in recent history, differing opinions have often divided members of the Alliance. At the same time, the battle against terrorism and Da'esh has also given the Alliance a common enemy and made its member states aware of how much they need each other. With the wide variety of issues which still have to be solved by NATO, many different futures are possible. But one thing is for sure, NATO has come a long way and has already faced big threats. And it will do its best to do so in the future as well.

### Decision making in the Alliance

Consensus is the fundamental principle that has been accepted as the sole basis for decision-making within NATO since the foundation of the Alliance. This principle is applied at every committee level. This means that all decisions in NATO are collective decisions made by its member states.<sup>9</sup>

The Alliance mainly focusses on military and political topics, including on issues linked to the freedom and security of its member states. On the political level, NATO promotes democratic values and enables its members to cooperate and consult each other on topics of defence and security, making conflict resolution and conflict prevention much easier. On the military level, NATO strives to resolve its conflicts peacefully. However, when diplomatic efforts do not succeed, the Alliance has the military capabilities to intervene directly. All military operations of NATO are conducted in accordance with Article 5 of the Washington Treaty or under the mandate of the United Nations. Operations conducted by NATO can also be executed in cooperation with non-member state countries and other international organisations.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Consensus decision-making at NATO, last accessed on 17/12/2016, [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics\\_49178.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_49178.htm)

<sup>10</sup> What is NATO?, last accessed on 17/12/2016, <https://www.nato.int/nato-welcome/index.html>

## Topic I

### Improving the speed of decision making in times of crisis

#### Introduction

NATO is known for its reliance on consensus decision-making. Recently, however, experts and sometimes even member states have started to question the rigidity of this system of decision-making, stating that it is too inflexible and too slow to address a crisis with the flexibility and agility it needs.

Overall, most NATO members are reluctant to change the consensus principle as they fear to lose sovereignty over their own militaries. This does not mean that there is no political will for addressing this issue. Meanwhile, the organisation's new Strategic Concept was introduced in 2010.<sup>11</sup> It lays down the Alliance's strategic objectives for the 2010-2020 period and it aims to inform the decisions and policies of member states. However, it does little to speed up decision-making in times of unexpected crisis. In fact, it only states that there should be a "process of continual reform, to streamline structures, improve working methods and maximise efficiency".<sup>12</sup>

In short, although member states realise that NATO needs a more streamlined decision-making process, real progress has been minimal.<sup>13</sup>

#### Background

Since the foundation of NATO, consensus has been at the core of the decision-making process. However, the Washington Treaty does not specify how collective decisions are to be made. The only specification found in the Treaty is in Article 10, which states that unanimous agreement is needed to invite a non-member state to join the Alliance.<sup>14</sup> Nonetheless, consensus is not only required for the decisions made in the North Atlantic Council (NAC), it is also needed in every

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<sup>11</sup> Strategic Concept 2010, accessed on 17/12/2018,  
[https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_82705.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_82705.htm)

<sup>12</sup> Strategic Concept 2010, accessed on 17/12/2018,  
[https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_82705.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_82705.htm)

<sup>13</sup> Why NATO needs a streamlined Decisionmaking process, last accessed on 18/12/2012,  
<https://nationalinterest.org/feature/why-nato-needs-streamlined-decisionmaking-process-25649>

<sup>14</sup> Michel, L., NATO Decisionmaking: How the Consensus Rule Works, *Croatian International Relations Review*, 2006, p. 7.



other working group and committee within NATO. This way member countries preserve their national sovereignty in the area of Defence and Security.<sup>15</sup>

The application of the consensus rule brings some advantages. One of the biggest among those is the added credibility of decisions made unanimously. At the same time, many critics believe that the consensus-based approach is outdated and adjustments must be made in order to make the Alliance more flexible so that it can respond faster to unexpected crises.<sup>16</sup>

Because the Washington Treaty does not elaborate on how exactly decisions have to be made, NATO has developed a set of customary practices. A large share of the decisions is based on draft proposals, which are sent by the Secretary General (SG) to the members of the North Atlantic Council (NAC), or by any chairperson to the members of their relevant committee. Every draft must be supported unanimously by the committee before it can move ahead.<sup>17</sup>

Draft proposals can be prepared by the International Staff (IS), by the SG and by individual member states. Often a lengthy process of consultations precedes the preparation of the draft.<sup>18</sup> The reason for this is that drafting bodies seek to create a document that comes as close as possible to the position of the members of the committee for chances of reaching a consensus to be higher. The consultation process allows for the identification of the key objectives and positions of members states at an early stage.<sup>19</sup>

Another commonly used procedure is the “silence procedure”. According to this procedure, the chair of the relevant committee drafts a concept proposal, which he or she believes to reflect the interests and opinions of all members of the committee. The draft is then sent to all national delegations in the committee with a deadline for response. If none of the national delegations “breaks the silence” (opposes the proposal) before the deadline, the chair automatically assumes that all members have given consent to the proposal. The draft is then finalised and moved forward.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> NATO Encyclopedia 2017, accessed on 02/02/2019, [https://www.nato.int/nato-static\\_files/2014/assets/pdf/pdf\\_publications/20180201\\_2017-nato-encyclopedia-eng.pdf](https://www.nato.int/nato-static_files/2014/assets/pdf/pdf_publications/20180201_2017-nato-encyclopedia-eng.pdf).

<sup>16</sup> Traugutt, L., Is Consensus Still Necessary Within NATO, *Research Division NATO Defense College*, 2016, p. 1.

<sup>17</sup> Collins, B., NATO: A guide to the Issues, *Praeger*, 2011, p. 30-31.

<sup>18</sup> Michel, L., NATO Decisionmaking: How the Consensus Rule Works, *Croatian International Relations Review*, 2006, p. 8.

<sup>19</sup> Collins, B., NATO: A guide to the Issues, *Praeger*, 2011, p. 31-32.

<sup>20</sup> Michel, L., NATO Decisionmaking: How the Consensus Rule Works, *Croatian International Relations Review*, 2006, p. 8.



Figure 2: The structure of NATO, source: <https://www.nato.int/nato-welcome/index.html>

The process, however, becomes considerably more complex if one or more of the national delegations voice reservations. In these cases, they are required to elaborate on their position. The chair can then use that feedback to try and revise the draft in order to find a suitable solution. If the chair struggles to find a solution, he or she can call for a meeting and discuss the issue further. If this fails, the issue is forwarded to the higher level of deliberation for consideration.<sup>21</sup> There is, however, a general preference for resolving such disputes at the lower administrative levels and relatively few (but highly controversial) issues end up in the NAC, where they can be discussed by the highest ranking member state officials.<sup>22</sup>

The reason why the consensus rule was introduced as a common practice in NATO initially is rather logical. Since the Alliance deals with issues of central importance to all member states, none of them would have agreed to limit their own decision-making power. This was equally true for large and small countries alike. Smaller countries did not have to fear that big countries like the US will have disproportionate power as they had the right to veto any decision. At the same time, large countries as the US do not have to fear that a coalition of small countries can force their hand.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Gallis, P. NATO's Decision-Making Procedure, *Congressional Research Service*, 2003, p.1.

<sup>22</sup> Traugott, L., Is Consensus Still Necessary Within NATO, *Research Division NATO Defense College*, 2016, p. 5.

<sup>23</sup> Benecke, U., Reconsidering NATO's Decision Making Process, *USAWC Strategy Research Project*, 2007, p. 4.

Throughout the existence of NATO in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, there was overall no significant discontent with the consensus principle. This, however, started to change at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. More specifically, in 2002 key members of the American Congress started questioning the suitability and practicality of the system. There were two main reasons for that. First of all, it became clear that soon the Alliance will significantly expand its membership to include a number of Central and Eastern European countries. Congress feared that with so many new members, reaching consensus would become almost impossible.<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, the Americans were well aware that they were by far the biggest contributor to NATO. They feared that the new members would be mainly “consumers” of the Alliance without providing any significant additional resources for the benefit of the organisation. In other words, Washington felt that the new members would not participate fairly in the burden-sharing.

In 2003, the US Senate also started to call for a change in the consensus-based principle. This was in the aftermath of the unsuccessful vote on a UNSC Resolution in which the USA demanded the use of force against Iraq. However, not all NATO allies supported Washington’s resolution in the UN. As a consequence, the American Senate tried to push its idea forward. They asked the President to place two issues on the agenda of the NAC in 2004. The first issue was discussing the consensus rule. The second issue was the Senate’s proposal for a new rule allowing for membership to be suspended when it no longer complies with NATO’s principles of democracy, individual liberty, and the rule of law.<sup>25</sup> This way, if a member state decided to veto a draft, the other member states could decide to suspend that member, if it is believed that the veto goes against the basic principles of the organisation.

George W. Bush, however, never put these matters on the agenda of the NAC. It was the then Secretary of State Colin Powell who explained why:

We believe that the current decision-making procedures work well and serve United States interests [...] NATO is an alliance, and no NATO member, including the United States would agree to allow Alliance Decisions to be made on defence commitments without its agreement.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Michel, L., NATO Decisionmaking: How the Consensus Rule Works, *Croatian International Relations Review*, 2006, p. 10-11.

<sup>25</sup> Wade, B., Senate approves NATO expansion for seven new members, *Arms Control Association*, 2003, p. 34.

<sup>26</sup> Michel, L., NATO Decisionmaking: How the Consensus Rule Works, *Croatian International Relations Review*, 2006, p. 12.

The fact that the USA did not in the end put these issues on the agenda does not mean that the discussions in the American Senate did not have an impact. In fact, it is from this moment on that concerns associated with the lack of flexibility of the current system became more prominent in public discussions.

### Recent Developments

At this moment in time, the consensus rule is still applied in all committees of NATO. And it would also be very hard to do. Any change in this fundamental principle would be difficult as it would require the unanimous support of all members.

With the increasingly volatile international situation in recent years, which has seen the growing assertiveness of multiple actors, however, the issue has acquired a new degree of urgency. In the course of the last decade alone, NATO has seen a significant expansion of its activities having been involved in 5 military operations in 4 different countries.<sup>27</sup> These are a lot of operations in many theatres in comparison with most of NATO's history.

If we look at the diagram below, we also see a notable growth in the share of internationalised intrastate conflicts (black colour). This diagram shows that countries have started to influence conflicts in other nations more and more, and that is why NATO should be flexible enough to make fast decisions. Individual countries (and potential NATO opponents) like Saudi-Arabia, Iran or Russia are not burdened by the need to reach consensus multilaterally before they can act. If NATO is to be able to present itself as a viable military actor, it needs to significantly improve its decision-making speed and efficiency.

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<sup>27</sup> Operations and missions: past and present, last accessed on 17/12/2018, [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_52060.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_52060.htm)

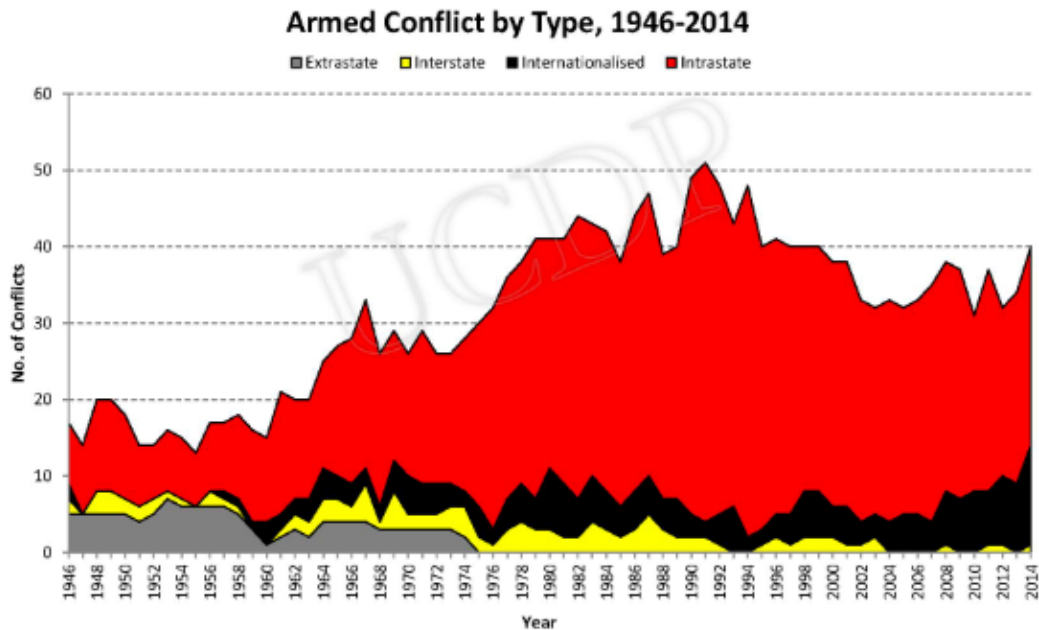


Figure 3: Armed conflict by type 1946-2014, source: <https://dissidentvoice.org/2015/12/the-second-cold-war/>

Multiple experts have come up with possibilities to address the issue. Instead of eliminating the consensus rule, they have tried to come up with solutions to reduce the time that is needed to come to a consensus. One of the possibilities to find consensus more easily is to use the silence procedure more often as well as to use footnotes during permanent sessions of the NAC as a means to express a nation's reservations.

Another option that has been proposed is to give more power to coalitions within NATO. In this case it would be the NAC that could authorize a NATO operation by consensus, but with that decision it would create a Committee of Contributors (NCC), chaired by the SG.<sup>28</sup> This committee would be responsible for carrying out the operation on behalf of NATO. This NCC would be comprised only of the member states that are prepared to contribute to the operation. The NCC would coordinate in the daily management of the operation, so that members that are not part of the committee would not be part of the process. The operation could then be returned on the NAC's agenda only in case a minimum amount of members request this.<sup>29</sup> Thus, by creating the

<sup>28</sup> Michel, L., NATO Decisionmaking: How the Consensus Rule Works, *Croatian International Relations Review*, 2006, p. 13.

<sup>29</sup> Benecke, U., Reconsidering NATO's Decision Making Process, *USAWC Strategy Research Project*, 2007, p. 12.

NCC, the consensus rule can be preserved within NATO as a whole, but at the same time, where the daily management of operations is concerned, decision-making would be accelerated.<sup>30</sup>

None of these previous possibilities, however, has been applied yet. This does not mean that there have been no efforts to increase the speed of NATO's response in case of crises. First of all, NATO member states have come up with the Strategic Concept of 2010. This gives an indication about the Alliance's strategic objectives for 2010-2020, providing members states with a basic guidance on the viability of certain actions. The document also provides a wider explanation on collective defence, crisis management and cooperative security, which are all essential core tasks of the Alliance. Some critics, however, argue that this strategic concept is already outdated considering the major security developments which have happened since its creation (e.g. the annexation of Crimea, the rise of Da'esh, the Arab Spring, etc.). Therefore, they argue a new concept needs to be developed if it is to serve as an adequate guidance for NATO actions.

Secondly, in 2002, NATO created its NATO Response Force (NRF), which is a highly prepared and technologically advanced force comprising all military components (land, air, maritime and Special Operations Forces (SOF)). The purpose of the NRF is to develop NATO's capacity for a quick response to emerging crises. The NRF operates on a rotational system according to which allies commit troops for a period of 12 months.<sup>31</sup> In 2014, the decision was made to enhance the NRF with an additional capacity called the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF). This task force is supposed to be the spear head of the NRF and is able to deploy faster than the rest of the NRF further shortening the reaction time in case of crisis.<sup>32</sup>

This NRF is, however, not the solution to all of NATO's problems. Experts argue that NATO should invest more in the NRF if it is to really rely on it as a quick-response unit. One of the reasons for this is that the troop count of this force is believed to be far too low.<sup>33</sup> Furthermore, even if the NRF is capable of deploying quickly, its deployment is only possible when all 29 allies come to a consensual political decision to use it. Reaching such a decision in reality often takes a long time, meaning that the quick deployment capacity of the response force becomes irrelevant.

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<sup>30</sup> Mayer, S. NATO's Post-Cold War Politics: The changing provision for Security, *Palgrave Macmillan*, 2014, p. 122.

<sup>31</sup> NATO Response Force, accessed on 17/12/2018, [https://www.nato.int/cps/ie/natohq/topics\\_49755.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/ie/natohq/topics_49755.htm)

<sup>32</sup> NATO Response Force / Very High Readiness Joint Task Force, <https://shape.nato.int/nato-response-force-very-high-readiness-joint-task-force>

<sup>33</sup> Ringsmose, J. & Rynning, S., The NATO Response Force: A qualified failure no more?, *contemporary security policy*, p. 453.

Lastly, NATO has been trying to work closer together with other organisations, most notably the European Union (EU). As many of their member states are part of both entities, it is easy to foster a closer relationship between the two bodies. A big step forward in this cooperation was made with the Berlin Plus arrangement according to which NATO and EU agreed to exchange classified information, which allowed the EU to use NATO planning capabilities and other military assets.<sup>34</sup>

Clearly, this decision to work closer together does not improve the speed of decision making in NATO, but it does provide the EU with the tools to conduct operations instead of NATO so that decisions are made. This is possible in some cases as often the goals of NATO and EU in crises are aligned.

Overall, it is clear that NATO has tried to improve the speed of decision-making in the last decade. However, it is also clear that no big changes have been implemented and that the current process remains too rigid to be adequate for addressing emerging crises effectively.

#### Questions an Outcome Document Should Answer

- 1) Should NATO stick to the consensus-based principle? If so, how can the speed of decision-making nonetheless be improved?
- 2) Should NATO consider updating its Strategic Concept to one which is more tailored to the current political reality? If so, what should be changed, removed or added?
- 3) Does the NRF have the capacity to address all possible crises? If not, how can it be improved?
- 4) Should there be room for a Coalition of the Willing within NATO, if NATO cannot come to a consensus concerning a military crisis?
- 5) Should NATO work closer together with other international organisations that can address a crisis when NATO is not capable of doing so?

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<sup>34</sup> Berlin Plus Agreement, accessed on 17/12/2018, [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2004\\_2009/documents/dv/berlinplus\\_/berlinplus\\_en.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2004_2009/documents/dv/berlinplus_/berlinplus_en.pdf).

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NATO Decisionmaking: How the Consensus Rule Works: <https://hrcak.srce.hr/file/18524>

New Research Division Publication – Is Consensus Still Necessary Within NATO?: <http://www.ndc.nato.int/news/news.php?icode=958>

## Topic II

### The militarization of the Arctic

#### Introduction

As global warming is becoming one of the most salient issues of modern reality, even national foreign policies have to shift because of it. One of the regions most affected by global warming is the Arctic, where the ice cap is melting very fast. The changes in the Earth's surface shed a new light upon the old disputes in the region, as the old regimes for governing the Northern Arctic Circle will soon be obsolete and not suitable for regulating the relations between the countries, sovereign territories and national waters. The countries of the Arctic region – Canada, United States of America (USA), Russian Federation and the Scandinavian countries – have been adapting to the situation very differently. While the debate whether global warming and climate change are in fact real phenomena is still in its full swing in the USA, Russia is taking active steps to push its territory further into the Arctic, securing its position and claim on the natural reserves and the trading routes.

The extensive militarization in the Arctic Region conducted by the Russian Federation is most concerning, not only to the neighbouring countries but also to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). What is the role of NATO in this context, what could and what should NATO do to resolve the conflict peacefully and protect the interests of its member states?

#### Background

During the Cold War, the Arctic presented one of the most important areas of tension and militarization because of the short distance between the Western and Eastern bloc and because of the absence of large amounts of population. Both NATO and the Soviet Union have built many military bases there, especially because of its strategic location between the two poles.<sup>35</sup> In recent years, Russia has started to rebuild and renew the old existing Soviet military facilities. Furthermore, it also started to build some new ones, modern and equipped, which could house a large number of troops. Russia is also planning to bolster its nuclear forces in the Arctic region.<sup>36</sup> Military drills and exercises in the arctic region are becoming more and more common. Since 2010, when the largest Russian military exercise in recent time, called 'the Vostok-2010', was conducted, the extensive training of Russian soldiers and testing of new equipment has become

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<sup>35</sup> Lee 2017

<sup>36</sup> Xie 2015

very frequent. In the Vostok exercise, there were 150,000 military personnel present as well as a large number of jets, tanks and vessels. The Russian Federation doesn't deny its military activities in the region – quite the contrary; recently a virtual tour of the new Russian military base called 'The Arctic Trefoil' has been issued, while press releases with footage and photo material are very common.

Privy to the military exercise Vostok were also Russian naval fleets, harboured at the former Soviet naval bases that are being used again. Russian naval patrols have been established, which guard Russian territorial waters. The Northern fleet is currently stationed at Kola Peninsula and Novaya Zemlya, but the melting of the ice will allow the fleet to expand. The space between Norwegian territorial waters and the ice cap used to be very tight and inconvenient for the passage of Soviet troops in the Cold War era but will expand because of global warming. Another reason why ice caps are no longer a big obstacle for Russian ships is a significant number of Russian ice breakers. The Russian Federation currently possesses more than 40 icebreakers and has several under construction.<sup>37</sup> By comparison, the USA has less than 10, and the difference will be very hard to overcome, as these vessels are very expensive and take a lot of time to construct, especially the more powerful ones – the nuclear-powered icebreakers. The increase of the numbers of the Russian military vessels stationed in the Arctic region is therefore concerning.<sup>38</sup>

One of the major motives for the increased Russian presence in the region are the extensive reserves of natural resources.

The US Geological Survey estimates that the Arctic holds twenty-two percent of the world's undiscovered energy resources, thirteen percent of the world's undiscovered oil, thirty percent of the world's undiscovered gas, with eighty-four percent of those resources expected to exist under the Arctic Ocean.<sup>39</sup>

While the rights of exploitation of these reserves are currently governed by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), the countries have the right to exclusive economic zone stretching as far as 370km from its sovereign territory.<sup>40</sup> This zone can be extended if the country is able to prove that its continental shelf stretches out under the sea. In this case, the

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<sup>37</sup> Flot 2017

<sup>38</sup> Neftchi 2016

<sup>39</sup> Korger 2017: 735

<sup>40</sup> Korger 2017

country has to subject its sovereign naval territory to UN international experts, which measure the continental shelf and determine whose sovereign territory the area belongs to.

These re-assessments of the sovereign naval territories re-opened the unresolved questions of territorial disputes in the Arctic region. Because the claims of the countries for their exclusive economic zones often overlap, new tensions are rising. The dispute over the Lomonosov, Mendeleev and Alpha ridges between Russia and Norway has been long-lasting, but in 2014, Russia reiterated its claims that these ridges are in fact connected to its continental shelf and thus a part of its territory. In the area of the ridges the natural resource deposits are numerous, which is why Russia is ever so eager to claim them as its own. The claim over these territories also expresses Russia's claim over the majority of the North Pole, which is deemed unacceptable from an American perspective. The other dispute remains the Svalbar Islands; otherwise economically uninteresting but important for the territorial claim. The number of inhabitants in the Svalbar Islands with Russian citizenship is growing fast, which provides a legitimate reason for Russia to intervene in the area if need be<sup>41</sup>, under the pretence of protecting its own citizens. The militarization of the region as well as the growing number of Russian military vessels further reiterate Russian claims and determination to obtain the disputed areas as its own sovereign territory.

With all the publicity around Russian military developments, video materials released, statements given etc., Russian action could be understood as a way of showing off its power. It is almost impossible for NATO countries to catch up with the Russian Federation in terms of the development of vessels and bases in the region, therefore the image of the Arctic superpower that Russia is trying to create can go unchallenged. In recent times, the other Arctic countries have also begun to conduct their military exercises, as they feel threatened by the growing number of Russian troops in the region.

So far, NATO has not been actively addressing the issue of the Arctic due to the discourse around it being mainly focused on territorial disputes, the resolution of which is not within the scope of NATO. However, due to the environmental changes the Arctic question has evolved into a question of international peace and security, where NATO is one of the key international actors. To the disadvantage of NATO Member States, the Russian Federation has recognised the strategic importance of the area much earlier than the Alliance and is now reaping the fruit of its early

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<sup>41</sup> Neftchi 2016

engagement. Catching up with the military power of Russia is one of the greatest challenges for NATO nowadays.

### Recent developments

The NATO alliance has formed a very vocal response to the Russian militarization – a joined military exercise called Trident Juncture 18 that took place in Norway in October and November 2018. Around 50,000 troops from 31 countries – NATO's 29 member states plus Sweden and Finland – took part in the manoeuvres organised in central Norway for the land exercises, in the North Atlantic and the Baltic Sea for the maritime operations, and in Norwegian, Swedish and Finnish airspace. That is about 10,000 more soldiers than in the Strong Resolve exercises in Poland in 2002, which brought together Alliance members with 11 partner states. No fewer than 10,000 vehicles took part in the manoeuvres. Lined up end-to-end, the queue would measure 92 kilometres (57 miles), according to the Norwegian army. Some 250 aircrafts and 60 ships were involved as well, including the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier USS Harry S. Truman. More than 20,000 land forces participated, as well as 24,000 navy personnel including US Marines, 3,500 air force personnel, around 1,000 logistics specialists and 1,300 personnel from a range of NATO Commands. The top five contributing nations were the United States, Germany, Norway, Britain and Sweden, in that order.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> The Local, 2018

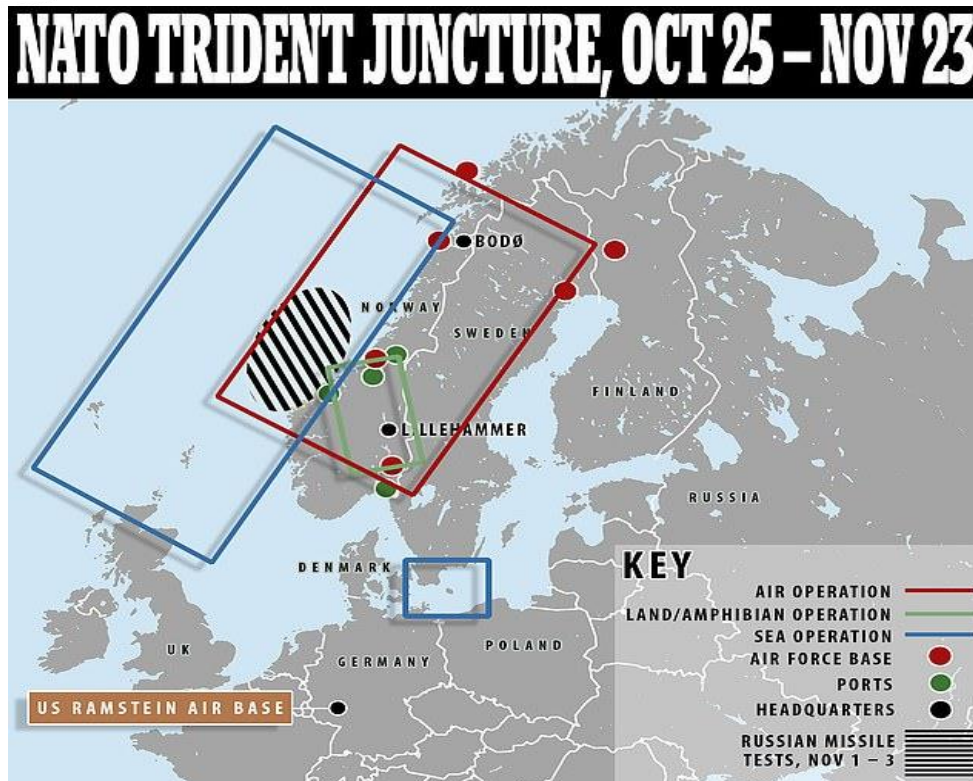


Figure 4: Trident Juncture exercise: <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6333097/Putin-orders-missile-tests-NATO-training-area-huge-war-games.html>

While the military exercise was taking place, the Russian Federation notified the Alliance of its own military tests in the area – Russia held missile tests from ships off the Western coast of Norway. Moscow has called the NATO exercise “anti-Russian” and disputed that they are in fact defensive in nature. The Russian Federation held missile tests in international waters, in the same region where troops from the USS Iwo Jima practiced landing via hovercraft.

We will conduct our exercise as planned, and I don't expect that that will cause any serious problems, but as I said we will follow the movement of the Russian maritime capabilities closely, and they are informed about our exercise, so we do whatever we can to avoid any dangerous situation,

was the official comment by the Secretary General of NATO, Jens Stoltenberg.<sup>43</sup>

Trident Juncture was officially meant to prepare for a potential conflict with Russia and show that NATO will keep up with Moscow's growing military activities in the Arctic. Mr Stoltenberg said NATO was “not mirroring plane by plane, or submarine by submarine or ship by ship; exactly what Russia is doing,” but has begun increasing its presence in the far north. The United Kingdom,

<sup>43</sup> The Telegraph, 2018

United States, Canada, Denmark and Norway are investing in new planes and ships to patrol for Russian submarines and defend shipping lanes, he added. It is important to note as well that the representatives of the Russian authorities met with NATO officials during the exercises, which was the first official contact since the war in Ukraine broke off in 2014. According to reports, they discussed the exercises as well as the US withdrawal from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces treaty.<sup>44</sup>

At the same time, the Collective Security Treaty Organization CSTO (a security organization of post-soviet countries) was holding its final stage of the joined military exercises on the training ground of the Sverdlovsk training centre of the Central Military District of Russia. The main goal of the exercise was to strengthen mutual understanding between the peacekeeping contingents of the CSTO member states, to increase the practical skills of commanders and staffs of all levels in the preparation of peacekeeping operations, and the management of units and subunits in carrying out peacekeeping tasks. About 1,300 servicemen of the CSTO member countries - Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan took part in joint manoeuvres. The so-called "Indestructible Brotherhood-2018" exercise was the final event of the post-conflict settlement stage conducted as part of the operational-strategic exercise "Combat Brotherhood-2018".<sup>45</sup>

As both NATO and the Russian Federation continue to show off their military capabilities, the issue of the rising tensions is still far from resolved. How will the situation develop? How should NATO conduct its operations in order to preserve peace and security as well as the interests of its member states?

### Questions an Outcome Document Should Answer

- 1) How can NATO prevent a possible escalation of hostilities in the current tense situation?
- 2) How can it overcome the issue of shortcomings of the military troops and present itself as an equal party towards the Russian Federation?
- 3) What can NATO do to decrease the tensions and ensure the safety of its Member States?
- 4) What is the role of the national interests of the Member States concerning territorial disputes and natural resources when forming a solution for the issue?

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<sup>44</sup> The Telegraph, 2018

<sup>45</sup> Kabar, 2018

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### Further reading

We encourage you to study the national foreign policies of the country you are representing closely, check the military capabilities and if possible, obtain numerical data of their participation in the joined exercises. Study their national interests as well, in order for you to better understand the direction in which NATO should conduct its actions, concerning this particular issue. Consult the web pages of the countries' Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the best data.

Some links for your consideration:

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NATO's Arctic dilemma: Two visions of the Arctic collide as NATO and Russia flex muscles. Available at: <http://www.rcinet.ca/eye-on-the-arctic-special-reports/norway-nato-trident-juncture-exercise-arctic-kirkenes-russia-military-defence-tensions/>

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## Sample Outcome Document

Under the links below, you can find the official format of a Summit Communiqué. The Communiqué itself is different from the United Nations document – it does not include perambulatory clauses, only operative ones, which are more descriptive than the ones of UN Resolutions. The clauses have to be coherent, not drafted in bullet points unless listing specific things under a certain clause. Sub-clauses are unusual for a NATO Communiqué.

Brussels Summit Declaration. Issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Brussels 11-12 July 2018:  
[https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official\\_texts\\_156624.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_156624.htm)

Warsaw Summit Communiqué. Issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Warsaw 8-9 July 2016:  
[https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official\\_texts\\_133169.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_133169.htm)