



NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION

NATO operations and missions

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NATO is an active and leading contributor to peace and security on the international stage. It promotes democratic values and is committed to the peaceful resolution of disputes. However, if diplomatic efforts fail, it has the military capacity needed to undertake crisis-management operations, alone or in cooperation with other countries and international organisations. Through its crisis-management operations, the Alliance demonstrates both its willingness to act as a positive force for change and its capacity to meet the security challenges of the 21st century.



Since its first major peace-support operation in the Balkans in the early 1990s, the tempo and diversity of NATO operations have increased. NATO has been engaged in missions that cover the full spectrum of crisis-management operations – from deterrence and peacekeeping, to training and logistics support, to surveillance and humanitarian relief. Today, approximately 18,000 military personnel are engaged in NATO missions around the world, managing often complex ground, air and naval operations in all types of environment. They are currently operating in Afghanistan, Kosovo, the Mediterranean and off the Horn of Africa. NATO is also assisting the African Union, conducting air policing missions on the request of NATO member countries and supporting Turkey's air defence system with the deployment of Patriot missiles.

Highlights

- NATO is a crisis-management organisation that has the capacity to undertake a wide range of military operations and missions.
- The tempo and diversity of operations and missions in which NATO is involved have increased since the early 1990s.
- Currently, NATO is operating in Afghanistan, Kosovo, the Mediterranean and off the Horn of Africa.
- NATO is also supporting the African Union and conducting air policing missions on the request of its Allies; it also has Patriot missiles deployed in

Turkey.

- NATO carries out disaster-relief operations and missions to protect populations against natural, technological or humanitarian disasters.

^ Current operations and missions

NATO in Afghanistan

NATO is currently leading Resolute Support, a non-combat mission which provides training, advice and assistance to Afghan security forces and institutions. Resolute Support was launched on 1 January 2015. It includes approximately 12,000 personnel from both NATO and partner countries and operates with one hub (in Kabul/Bagram) and four spokes in Mazar-e Sharif (northern Afghanistan), Herat (western Afghanistan), Kandahar (southern Afghanistan) and Laghman (eastern Afghanistan).

Key functions include: supporting planning, programming and budgeting; assuring transparency, accountability and oversight; supporting the adherence to the principles of rule of law and good governance; supporting the establishment and sustainment of processes such as force generation, recruiting, training, managing and development of personnel.

The legal basis of the Resolute Support Mission rests on a formal invitation from the Afghan Government and the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) between NATO and Afghanistan, which governs the presence of our troops. Resolute Support is also supported by the international community at large. This is reflected in the United Nations (UN) Security Council Resolution 2189, unanimously adopted on 12 December 2014. This resolution welcomes the new Resolute Support mission and underscores the importance of continued international support for the stability of Afghanistan.

Resolute Support is a follow-on mission to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). ISAF was under NATO leadership from August 2003 to December 2014. It was established under a request for assistance by the Afghan authorities and by a UN mandate in 2001 to prevent Afghanistan from once again becoming a safe haven for terrorists. In addition, ISAF was tasked to develop new Afghan security

forces and enable Afghan authorities to provide effective security across the country in order to create an environment conducive to the functioning of democratic institutions and the establishment of the rule of law.

The mission in Afghanistan constitutes the Alliance's most significant operational commitment to date. Moreover, beyond Resolute Support and ISAF, Allies and partners countries are committed to the broader international community's support for the long-term financial sustainment of the Afghan security forces. NATO leaders have also reaffirmed their commitment to an enduring partnership between NATO and Afghanistan, by strengthening political consultations and practical cooperation within the framework of the NATO-Afghanistan Enduring Partnership signed in 2010.

NATO in Kosovo

While Afghanistan remains NATO's primary operational theatre, the Alliance has not faltered on its other commitments, particularly in the Balkans. Today, approximately 4,500 Allied troops operate in Kosovo as part of NATO's Kosovo Force (KFOR).

Having first entered Kosovo in June 1999 to end widespread violence and halt the humanitarian disaster, KFOR troops continue to maintain a strong presence throughout the territory, preserving the peace that was imposed by NATO 15 years ago.

Following Kosovo's declaration of independence in February 2008, NATO agreed it would continue to maintain its presence on the basis of UN Security Council Resolution 1244. It has since helped to create a professional and multi-ethnic Kosovo Security Force, which is a lightly armed force responsible for security tasks that are not appropriate for the police. Meanwhile, progress has been achieved in the European Union-sponsored dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina. The normalisation of relations between Serbia and Kosovo is key to solving the political deadlock over northern Kosovo.

Monitoring the Mediterranean Sea

NATO operations are not limited only to zones of conflict. In the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, NATO immediately began to take measures to expand the

options available to counter the threat of international terrorism. In October 2001, it launched the maritime surveillance operation Active Endeavour, focused on detecting and deterring terrorist activity in the Mediterranean.

Since April 2003, NATO has been systematically boarding suspect ships. These boardings take place with the compliance of the ships' masters and flag states and in accordance with international law.

The increased NATO presence in these waters has benefited all shipping travelling through the Straits of Gibraltar by improving perceptions of security. More generally, the operation has proved to be an effective tool both in safeguarding a strategic maritime region and in countering terrorism on and from the high seas. Additionally, the experience and partnerships developed through Operation Active Endeavour have considerably enhanced NATO's capabilities in this increasingly vital aspect of operations.

Counter-piracy off the Horn of Africa

Building on previous counter-piracy missions conducted by NATO (Operation Allied Provider and Operation Allied Protector - see below), Operation Ocean Shield is focusing on at-sea counter-piracy operations off the Horn of Africa. Approved on 17 August 2009 by the North Atlantic Council, this operation is contributing to international efforts to combat piracy in the area. It is also offering, to regional states that request it, assistance in developing their own capacity to combat piracy activities.

Supporting the African Union

Well beyond the Euro-Atlantic region, the Alliance continues to support the African Union (AU) in its peacekeeping missions on the African continent.

Since June 2007, NATO has assisted the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) by providing airlift support for AU peacekeepers. Following renewed AU requests, the North Atlantic Council has agreed to extend its support on several occasions and continues to do so. NATO is also working with the AU in identifying further areas where it could support the African Standby Force.

Air policing missions

Since Russia's illegal military intervention in Ukraine in 2014, NATO has been taking extra reassurance measures for its Allies. Among these is the boosting of NATO's air policing missions.

Air policing missions are collective peacetime missions that enable NATO to detect, track and identify all violations and infringements of its airspace and to take appropriate action. Allied fighter jets patrol the airspace of Allies who do not have fighter jets of their own. NATO has deployed additional aircraft to reinforce missions over Albania and Slovenia, as well as the Baltic region where NATO F-16s have intercepted Russian aircraft repeatedly violating Allied airspace.

This air policing capability is one of three NATO standing forces on active duty that contribute to the Alliance's collective defence efforts on a permanent basis. They also include NATO's standing maritime forces, which are ready to act when called upon, as well as an integrated air defence system to protect against air attacks, which also comprises the Alliance's ballistic missile defence system.

↗ Terminated operations and missions

The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan

Established under the request of the Afghan authorities and a UN mandate in 2001, the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) was led by NATO from August 2003 to December 2014.

Its mission was to develop new Afghan security forces and enable Afghan authorities to provide effective security across the country in order to create an environment conducive to the functioning of democratic institutions and the establishment of the rule of law, with the aim to prevent Afghanistan from once again becoming a safe haven for terrorists.

ISAF also contributed to reconstruction and development in Afghanistan. This was done primarily through multinational Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) - led by individual ISAF countries - securing areas in which reconstruction work could be conducted by national and international actors. PRTs also helped the Afghan authorities progressively strengthen the institutions required to fully establish

good governance and the rule of law, as well as to promote human rights. The principal role of the PRTs in this respect was to build capacity, support the growth of governance structures and promote an environment in which governance can improve.

ISAF was one of the largest international crisis-management operations ever, bringing together contributions from up to 51 different countries. By end 2014, the process of transitioning full security responsibility from ISAF troops to the Afghan army and police forces was completed and the ISAF mission came to a close. On 1 January 2015, a new NATO-led non-combat mission called "Resolute Support" to train, advise and assist the Afghan security forces and institutions was launched.

NATO in Bosnia and Herzegovina

With the break-up of Yugoslavia, violent conflict started in Bosnia and Herzegovina in April 1992. The Alliance responded as early as summer 1992 when it enforced the UN arms embargo on weapons in the Adriatic Sea (in cooperation with the Western European Union from 1993) and enforced a no-fly-zone declared by the UN Security Council. It was during the monitoring of the no-fly-zone that NATO engaged in the first combat operations in its history by shooting down four Bosnian Serb fighter-bombers conducting a bombing mission on 28 February 1994.

In August 1995, to compel an end to Serb-led violence in the country, UN peacekeepers requested NATO airstrikes. Operation Deadeye began on 30 August against Bosnian Serb air forces, but failed to result in Bosnian Serb compliance with the UN's demands to withdraw. This led to Operation Deliberate Force, which targeted Bosnian Serb command and control installations and ammunition facilities. This NATO air campaign was a key factor in bringing the Serbs to the negotiating table and ending the war in Bosnia.

With the signing of the Dayton Peace Accord in December 1995, NATO immediately deployed a UN-mandated Implementation Force (IFOR) comprising some 60,000 troops. This operation (Operation Joint Endeavour) was followed in December 1996 by the deployment of a 32,000-strong Stabilisation Force (SFOR).

In light of the improved security situation, NATO brought its peace-support

operation to a conclusion in December 2004 and the European Union deployed a new force called Operation Althea. The Alliance has maintained a military headquarters in the country to carry out a number of specific tasks related, in particular, to assisting the government in reforming its defence structures.

NATO in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia¹

Responding to a request from the Government in Skopje to help mitigate rising ethnic tension, NATO implemented three successive operations there from August 2001 to March 2003.

First, Operation Essential Harvest disarmed ethnic Albanian groups operating throughout the country.

The follow-on Operation Amber Fox provided protection for international monitors overseeing the implementation of the peace plan.

Finally, Operation Allied Harmony was launched in December 2002 to provide advisory elements to assist the government in ensuring stability throughout the country.

These operations in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia¹ demonstrated the strong inter-institutional cooperation between NATO, the European Union and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. NATO remains committed to helping the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia¹ integrate into Euro-Atlantic structures. To that end, NATO Headquarters Skopje was created in April 2002 to advise on military aspects of security sector reform; it still operates today.

NATO's first counter-terrorism operation

On 4 October 2001, once it had been determined that the 9/11 terrorist attacks in New York and Washington D.C. had come from abroad, NATO agreed on a package of eight measures to support the United States. On the request of the United States, the Alliance launched its first-ever counter-terrorism operation – Operation Eagle Assist - from mid-October 2001 to mid-May 2002.

It consisted of seven NATO AWACS radar aircraft that helped patrol the skies over the United States; in total 830 crew members from 13 NATO countries flew over

360 sorties. This was the first time that NATO military assets were deployed in support of an Article 5 operation.

The second Gulf Conflict

During the second Gulf Conflict, NATO deployed NATO AWACS radar aircraft and air defence batteries to enhance the defence of Turkey. The operation started on 20 February, lasted until 16 April 2003 and was called Operation Display Deterrence. The AWACS aircraft flew 100 missions with a total of 950 flying hours.

Protecting public events

In response to a request by the Greek government, NATO provided assistance to the Olympic and Paralympic Games held in Athens with Operation Distinguished Games on 18 June – 29 September 2004. NATO provided intelligence support, provision of Chemical, Biological Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) defence assets and AWACS radar aircraft. This was the first operation in which non-Article 4 or 5 NATO assistance was provided within the borders of a member country.

In the same vein, NATO responded to a request made by the Latvian government for assistance in assuring the security of the Riga Summit in November 2006. NATO provided technical security, CBRN response capabilities, air and sea policing, improvised explosive device (IED) detections, communications and information systems and medical evacuation support.

NATO and Iraq

NATO conducted a relatively small but important support operation in Iraq from 2004 to 2011 that consisted of training, mentoring and assisting the Iraqi Security Forces. At the Istanbul Summit in June 2004, the Allies rose above their differences and agreed to be part of the international effort to help Iraq establish effective and accountable security forces. The outcome was the creation of the NATO Training Mission in Iraq (NTM-I). The NTM-I delivered its training, advice and mentoring support in a number of different settings. All NATO member countries contributed to the training effort either in or outside of Iraq, through financial contributions or donations of equipment. In parallel and reinforcing this initiative, NATO also worked with the Iraqi government on a structured cooperation framework to develop the Alliance's long-term relationship with Iraq.

Hurricane Katrina

After Hurricane Katrina struck the south of the United States on 29 August 2005, causing many fatalities and widespread damage and flooding, the US government requested food, medical and logistics supplies and assistance in moving these supplies to stricken areas. On 9 September 2005, the North Atlantic Council approved a military plan to assist the United States, which consisted of helping to coordinate the movement of urgently needed material and supporting humanitarian relief operations. During the operation (9 September-2 October), nine member countries provided 189 tons of material to the United States.

Pakistan earthquake relief assistance

Just before the onset of the harsh Himalayan winter, a devastating earthquake hit Pakistan on 8 October 2005, killing an estimated 53,000 people, injuring 75,000 and making at least four million homeless. On 11 October, in response to a request from Pakistan, NATO assisted in the urgent relief effort, airlifting close to 3,500 tons of supplies and deploying engineers, medical units and specialist equipment. This was one of NATO's largest humanitarian relief initiatives, which came to an end on 1 February 2006.

Over time, the Alliance has helped to coordinate assistance to other countries hit by natural disasters, including Turkey, Ukraine and Portugal. It does this through its Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre.

Assisting the African Union in Darfur, Sudan

The African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) aimed to end violence and improve the humanitarian situation in a region that has been suffering from conflict since 2003. From June 2005 to 31 December 2007, NATO provided air transport for some 37,000 AMIS personnel, as well as trained and mentored over 250 AMIS officials. While NATO's support to this mission ended when AMIS was succeeded by the UN-AU Mission in Darfur (UNAMID), the Alliance immediately expressed its readiness to consider any request for support to the new peacekeeping mission.

Counter-piracy in the Gulf of Aden and off the Horn of Africa

From October to December 2008, NATO launched Operation Allied Provider, which involved counter-piracy activities off the coast of Somalia. Responding to a request

from UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, NATO naval forces provided escorts to UN World Food Programme (WFP) vessels transiting through the dangerous waters in the Gulf of Aden, where growing piracy has threatened to undermine international humanitarian efforts in Africa.

Concurrently, in response to an urgent request from the African Union, these same NATO naval forces escorted a vessel chartered by the AU carrying equipment for the Burundi contingent deployed to AMISOM.

From March to August 2009, NATO launched Operation Allied Protector, a counter-piracy operation, to improve the safety of commercial maritime routes and international navigation off the Horn of Africa. The force conducted surveillance tasks and provided protection to deter and suppress piracy and armed robbery, which are threatening sea lines of communication and economic interests.

NATO and Libya

Following the popular uprising against the Qadhafi regime in Benghazi, Libya, in February 2011, the UN Security Council adopted Resolutions 1970 and 1973 in support of the Libyan people, “condemning the gross and systematic violation of human rights”. The resolutions introduced active measures including a no-fly-zone, an arms embargo and the authorisation for member countries, acting as appropriate through regional organisations, to take “all necessary measures” to protect Libyan civilians.

Initially, NATO enforced the no-fly-zone and then, on 31 March, NATO took over sole command and control of all military operations for Libya. The NATO-led “Operation Unified Protector” had three distinct components:

- the enforcement of an arms embargo on the high seas of the Mediterranean to prevent the transfer of arms, related material and mercenaries to Libya;
- the enforcement of a no-fly-zone in order to prevent any aircraft from bombing civilian targets; and
- air and naval strikes against those military forces involved in attacks or threats to attack Libyan civilians and civilian-populated areas.

The UN mandate was carried out to the letter and the operation was terminated

on 31 October 2011 after having fulfilled its objectives.

^ From 1949 to the early 1990s

During the Cold War

When NATO was established in 1949, one of its fundamental roles was to act as a powerful deterrent against military aggression. In this role, NATO's success was reflected in the fact that, throughout the entire period of the Cold War, NATO forces were not involved in a single military engagement. For much of the latter half of the 20th century, NATO remained vigilant and prepared.

After the Cold War

With the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s came great changes to the international security environment. The Alliance witnessed the emergence of new threats and the resurgence of old but familiar ones.

With these changing conditions came new responsibilities. From being an exclusively defensive alliance for nearly half a century, NATO began to assume an increasingly proactive role within the international community. Before engaging in its first major crisis-response operation in the Balkans, NATO conducted several other military operations:

Operation Anchor Guard, 10 August 1990 – 9 March 1991

After Iraqi forces invaded Kuwait on 2 August 1990, NATO Airborne Early Warning aircraft deployed to Konya, Turkey, to monitor the crisis and provide coverage of southeastern Turkey in case of an Iraqi attack during the first Gulf Crisis/War.

Operation Ace Guard, 3 January 1991 – 8 March 1991

In response to a Turkish request for assistance to meet the threat posed by Iraq during the first Gulf Crisis/War, NATO deployed the ACE Mobile Force (Air) and air defence packages to Turkey.

Operation Allied Goodwill I & II, 4-9 February & 27 February – 24 March 1992

Following the break-up of the Soviet Union in December 1991 and the collapse of its centrally-controlled economic system, NATO assisted an international relief

effort by flying teams of humanitarian assistance experts and medical advisors to Russia and other Commonwealth of Independent States nations using AWACS trainer cargo aircraft.

Operation Agile Genie, 1-19 May 1992

During a period of growing Western tension with Libya after the UN Security Council imposed sanctions designed to induce Libya to surrender suspects in the bombing of a Pan Am airliner over the town of Lockerbie in Scotland in 1988, NATO provided increased AWACS coverage of the Central Mediterranean to monitor air approach routes from the North African littoral. NATO AWACS aircraft flew a total of 36 missions with a total of 2,336 flying hours.

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1. Turkey recognises the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name.