



**ITU
MUN**

NATO

STUDY GUIDE

- Measures to protect nato and its member states from the ongoing conflicts.
- Reassessment of NATO membership action plan.

Ada Yazıcı

President Chair

Ezgi Ceren Kaykan

Deputy Chair

Letter From the Secretary-General

Most esteemed participants of ITUMUN24,

I, as the Secretary General of ITUMUN24, welcome you all to the 7th edition of Istanbul Technical University Model United Nations. It is an honor and a pleasure to be able to present to you what we have been preparing for months and dreaming for years. My team has worked tirelessly to bring the best you have ever seen, starting with our organization to our academics.

Our objective is to facilitate proficient and elevated diplomatic deliberations, fostering valuable and constructive solutions throughout the four-day duration of ITUMUN, enriched by the collective contributions of all participants. As a delegate, your journey begins here, with the study guide prepared by our dedicated members; your most honorable chairboard.

I advise you to read this study guide thoroughly and expand your research on different perspectives; focusing on your allocated country. It is essential to bear in mind that each nation and every perspective holds significance if you are adequately prepared to engage with the agenda at hand.

You have my best wishes for success and enriching discussions during these four days of enjoyment. I eagerly anticipate witnessing the valuable contributions you'll make to our conference.

Best regards,

Zehra Akçay

Secretary General of ITUMUN24



Letter From the Committee Board

Dear delegates of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO),

It is our utmost pleasure to serve as the Committee Board of NATO. We are so proud and excited to welcome you all to our committee.

The world is going to an unknown future surrounded by discrimination and violation. The agenda at hand that is vast and complex and a successful discussion on it would necessitate the mutual participation of all of you. It shall be your choice to decide the direction in which you want to take this committee ahead. We strongly encourage you to go through the study guide that has been prepared for you as a part of the conference in order to get an in-depth understanding of the issue that will be discussed in the committee. However, there is a lot of content available beyond the study guides too. You are expected to research, collate, list down possible points of discussions, questions and plausible responses and be prepared to enjoy the intellectual energy in the group. At the same time it is not only about speaking and presenting, but very importantly it is also about the ability to listen, understand viewpoints and learn from each one's perspectives. This committee is expecting you to come up with sufficient solutions collectively to provide better conditions for all.

Lastly, we would like to thank everyone working behind the scenes for this conference to happen for months with their endless efforts for this conference. Our team is working tirelessly to provide you with an unforgettable MUN experience so we wish you the best. We are excited to host you all at our committee.

With our best wishes,
Azra Ada Yazıcı & Ezgi Ceren Kaykan

Committee Board of NATO



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1.0 Introduction To The Committee North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization, or NATO, is an intergovernmental military alliance that was established in 1949. The primary objective of NATO's establishment was to protect its member countries' freedoms and security by working together and conducting joint defense research. Since its founding, NATO has played a vital part in fostering transatlantic cooperation and has made a substantial contribution to the improvement of security, stability, and peace in the North Atlantic region.



After World War II, Europe was sharply divided, and numerous security concerns required to be addressed. As tensions between the Soviet Union and the Western democracies grew and the Cold War was about to break out, European countries, the US, Canada, and other countries tried to negotiate a collective defense agreement to deter future Soviet attack. NATO was founded on April 4, 1949, when the North Atlantic Treaty was signed in Washington, D.C. Among the first twelve founding members were Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the United Kingdom, and the United States. According to the treaty, an armed attack against one member state would be considered an attack against all members, and collective action would be required to restore and preserve security.

The concept of collective defense is the core of NATO's mission. Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty outlines that, requiring prompt collective action in the event of an armed strike against any member. This pledge has served as a strong deterrence and contributed to maintaining peace in the Euro-Atlantic region for more than 70 years. NATO has changed over time in response to shifting worldwide circumstances and safety concerns. When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, NATO expanded its membership base and reoriented its strategy to confront emerging challenges such as terrorism and regional conflicts. At the moment, NATO has 31 members, with the recent addition of Finland, from North America and Europe.

2.0 Agenda Item A: Measures To Protect NATO and Its Member States From the Ongoing Conflicts

2.1 Introduction to The Agenda Item A: Measures To Protect NATO and Its Member States From the Ongoing Conflicts

From the beginning of history men have been struggling with oppositions regarding many issues; religion, food and land being the most common disagreements. Before people learned how to bargain, which is called policy in the modern world, for their needs they would fight for their claims. The end of the conflicts would be one side killed, the other side claiming what the opposition had. As people learned how to negotiate by respecting each others' rights they established a system called policy. This meant that without fighting they could get what they wanted, but then they realized this started alliances between different parties. When men started creating alliances everything became more complicated than before.

When two parties had disagreements they wanted to create alliances against the opposition side in order to show *tour de force* and intimidate the opposition party. This meant that the conflict was no longer between two parties. The word "alliance" could manifest in different forms such as sending military forces, humanitarian aids or economic support. Since this formation has been formed none of the conflicts could stay isolated. Either involved parties requested support or different parties found the defeat of one of the involved parties in their favor. In fact, NATO was formed with the same idea. After World War II, NATO was formed in response to the security concerns which were posed by the Soviet Union and its aggressive effort to disseminate communism across Europe. These concerns arose from the aftermath of WWII and the western block, particularly the USA, founded the need to form a collective defense strategy against the Soviet Union and its expansionism.

Even though NATO has lost its' primary cause after the fall of Soviet Union, member countries decided to keep their alliances intact and ensure the collective defense of its members against any possible security threats. As predicted it did not take long for countries to get threatened by ongoing conflicts in the world. NATO has been protecting its security and enhancing its strategic management by employing a range of diplomatic, political and military strategies. For instance in 2003, NATO Response Force was formed in order to act as a precursor force before the late deployment of a larger force. It was only used as a peacekeeping force and humanitarian aid intermediary until 2022 when the military NRF forces were deployed on the borders of the Allied members against the threat of Russian invasion in Ukraine. Many conflicts have been occurring all around the world, although some of them have been geologically far away from the member countries they still do threaten the peace and the well-being of the member countries. In this committee we will discuss how NATO can ensure the security of the Allied members and maintain the peace for its allies.

2.2 Key Vocabulary

Conflict: Conflict refers to a disagreement or a struggle between two or more parties who have opposing interests or stances regarding an issue. In this topic the word “conflict” is used as the disagreement between two countries which involves political and military actions.

MAP: MAP stands for Membership Action Plan. The MAP program offers guidance, aid, and hands-on support to nations looking for membership in NATO. This assistance is given in accordance with each nation's unique requirements with respect to political, economic, defense, resource, security, and legal elements. Membership Action Plan (MAP) is the official institutional mechanism used by the alliance to guide selected applicants toward membership.

Oslo Accords: The Oslo Accords, which sought peace within five years, were signed in 1993 by Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat. It was the first time that both parties had acknowledged one another.

IDF: IDF, which stands for Israeli Defense Force, is the military force in charge of defending Israel from all types of threats by land, air, and sea. The Israeli Air Force, Israeli Air Defense Force, Israeli Navy, and Israeli Land Forces make up this group.

KFOR: KFOR stands for Kosovo Force which was established by NATO in 1999 in order to maintain peace in Kosovo during the attack of Serbian forces on Kosovo. KFOR is a force which consists of multiple forces from multiple countries who are NATO members or NATO allies. Even though this force has left its place to Kosova police in time, by 2013 KFOR still has more than 4000 soldiers present.

NRF: NRF stands for NATO Response Force. NRF is a high-readiness force which was formed in 2003 in order to be able to deploy NATO forces in a short notice. This NATO rapid deployment force consists of land, sea, air and special forces units which are trained to provide immediate collective defense of Allied members, help relieve a disaster, aid humanitarian needs, act as an initial force deployment before a larger force unit and act as peacekeepers.

2.3 Focused Overview

2.3.1 Conflict Between Ukraine-Russia

2.3.1.1 Historical Background

Independence of Ukraine

Before the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Ukraine used to be a part of the Soviet Union. Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 Ukraine declared its independence by holding a referendum. 90 percent of the voters endorsed independence and Lenoid Kravchuk was elected as the president while the Communist

Party dissolved. After this dissolution and the establishment of the new government, a separate Ukrainian army force started forming. Although these crucial developments were taking place, Ukraine was still under the pressure of Moscow, trying to convince the countries who were separated from the USSR to reconsider their independence and change their course into a reconstructed Soviet Union. Ukraine endured these oppressive acts and after the referendum of independence the leaders of Russia, Ukraine and Belarus agreed on establishing a new political block called the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). After this establishment the USSR was officially disbanded.

After the declaration of independence, Ukraine started to become powerful enough to catch up with European countries in the aspect of economy and prosperity. Even though Kravchuk started off strong by integrating Ukraine to European standards, at the end of the 20th century the economy of Ukraine had faltered aggressively. The efforts to reach the standards of Europe fell short of expectations with inadequate economy, social and political change. In this time period Ukraine suffered an 8 year recession. Following the big crash in the economy, Ukraine started working on its relations between Europe and neighboring countries. These political efforts resulted in absolute success and Ukraine made crucial steps in the process of democratization. These acts helped Ukraine to establish itself as a strong member of the international community. These rapprochement policies were taken into account by the Russian Government and subsequently Russia developed a political stance against the newly formed Ukrainian government and its political stance.

Holodomor Incident

The conflict between Ukraine and Russia started even before the declaration of independence of Ukraine. In 1928 Stalin endorsed a policy on agriculture called "Policy of Collectivization" which meant that the individual farm owners were being forced to combine their harvests with the collective farms. By all means this meant that all of the farms were now state property. Since farm owners started to lose their profits notwithstanding working more hours, Ukrainian farmers started resisting this policy. This rebellion damaged the faith in unity of the USSR in Ukraine. This national movement intimidated the government in Moscow and Josef Stalin, who was the leader of the Soviet Union, started implying harsh punishment for those who objected to surrender, and by time these punishments were put into effect all across Ukraine.

In the end these punishments manifested as a devastating incident called "The Holodomor". Between 1932-1933 Ukraine lost millions of its people to The Holodomor. The Holodomor is accepted as a man-made famine in Soviet Ukraine made by Stalin. Even though scholars are in consensus about The Holodomor being a man-made genocide, some still do accept that it was an unavoidable consequence of rapid Soviet industrialization and collectivization of agriculture. The emotional effects of the lives that were lost remained alive for hundreds of years in the Ukrainian Nation and this fueled the idea of nationalism and independence.

Different Governments-Different Stances in Ukraine

In 2004 Ukraine experienced a revolution called “Orange Revolution” that included a series of protests and political events following the presidential elections. The elections took place between Viktor Yanukovich, who was more prone to being an ally to the Russian Federation, and Viktor Yushchenko, who pursued a more pro-European integration policy. Initial results showed that Yanukovich was the winner but these results were not accepted by the people, especially the supporters of Yushchenko, due to the allegations of electoral fraud and voter intimidation. In response to these allegations Ukrainians started massive protests in the streets and maintained a continuous presence in Kiev's Independence Square (Maidan Nezalezhnosti) with peaceful intentions and they used the color orange as the symbol of the movement.

These movements gained international attention and various Western countries expressed their concerns over the fairness of the elections. With international support for the revolution, the Supreme Court of Ukraine felt under pressure and decided on declaring the results invalid and the second round of the presidential election was ordered. At the end of the second round Victor Yushchenko was declared president, marking a significant victory for the Orange Revolution. This victory created tension in Moscow since Russia has experienced similar “color revolutions” in the past. The Russian government responded to the Orange Revolution by taking measures to demolish all of the similar intentions that may fire a political upheaval in Russia. President Vladimir Putin ordered tightening the control over political opposition, media and civil society within Russia. The Russian authorities also criticized the Western intervention that influenced the course of the revolution and put pressure on the Supreme Court of Ukraine. Even though Russia maintained the opposition stance against Western countries, the new Ukrainian government pursued a more pro-Western and pro-European integration policy which strained the relations between two parties.

After 5 years of presidential term, Yushchenko lost the next election to his previous opponent, Viktor Yanukovich. With the establishment of a pro-Russian policy of Yanukovich, Ukraine started to strengthen its relations with Russia again with different measures. Yanukovich suspended the signing of an EU association agreement with the European Union in order to strengthen the economic relations with Russia. Following these acts Ukrainian people who support the idea of a pro-Western Ukraine started Euromaidan protests to dissuade the government from a pro-Russian stance. The initial protests started off with peaceful gatherings in Maidan Nezalezhnosti but the police crackdowns and use of force led to escalation of the protests. As a result of the violent clashes from 100 to several hundred protestors were killed under the name of law enforcement.

In February 2014 some members of the party, which is led by Yanukovich, voted for the removal of Yanukovich from the presidency. After his removal his own



party issued a warrant for his arrest. With this warrant Yanukocyyh fled to Russia and an interim government was formed. Seeing the pro-western movements in Ukraine, Russia saw the power vacuum caused by the protests as an opportunity to show power and they responded by annexing Crimea in March 2014. This move was condemned internationally and it led to strained relations with Ukraine. After an early presidential election in May 2014, Petro Poroshenko was elected as the new president and the conflict in eastern Ukraine continued. In September 2014 and February 2015 two agreements were made under the name of ‘Minsk Agreements’. These agreements referred to two separate ceasefire agreements in order to resolve the conflict in Eastern Ukraine. Even though these agreements were intended to provide a framework for a peaceful political resolution, on account of the lack of implementation these agreements failed to reach their intended purposes.

Due to the challenge of the implementation of the Minsk agreements which included withdrawal of the heavy weapons, ceasefire of hostilities and facilitation of a political settlement the situation remained tense. In response to Russia’s aggressive actions in Ukraine, the European Union and the United States imposed sanctions on Russia which fueled the aggression. From the beginning of Euromaidan protests the conflict between Ukraine and Russia has never been solved completely. Although the tension cooled down after the Minsk agreements, upon the order of Putin to station the Russian tanks and military personnel across the Ukrainian frontier in 2021 the tension got heated once again.

2.3.2.2 Current Status

The Russian Attack

Even though Putin declared that there was no intention of striking while the Russian military were stationed across the Ukrainian border, Russia ultimately attacked the country without issuing an official "war declaration." President Putin's declaration of "exceptional military activity" on February 24, 2022, marked the beginning of Russia's invasion on Ukraine. According to Russia, the attack was carried out for the purpose of "protecting the people in the motherland" and "demilitarizing and denazifying Ukraine."

The intrusion included rocket strikes, air strikes, and ground attacks on a few fronts. This was the biggest attack on any European country since World War II. The president of Ukraine ,Volodymyr Zelenskyy, declared martial law in Ukraine and ordered a general mobilization throughout Ukraine immediately after the invasion began. First invasion resulted in tens of thousands of Ukrainian civilian casualties and much more military casualties for both sides. Russian troops occupied around %20 of Ukrainian territory until the end of June 2022. Opposition and counter-offensives by

Ukrainian powers prompted Russian military losses and kept Russia from taking the capitol, Kyiv.



International Responses

Universally, the intrusion was denounced as a conflict of hostility and was condemned deeply. The United Nations General Assembly condemned the intrusion and demanded a full Russian withdrawal and the Council of Europe removed Russia. Sanctions forced on Russia had ramifications for the worldwide economy and the Russian economy but still, the sanctions remained or even increased. The International Court of

Justice requested a stop to military tasks and started investigations on Russia due to possible crimes against humanity, genocide and abduction of children. In March 2023 the court issued a warrant for the arrest of Putin for keeping him responsible for the unlawful deportation of children. Compassionate and military aid was provided to Ukraine by multiple countries all around the world.

Volodymyr Zelenskyy declared on December 1, 2023, that the Ukrainian counteroffensive had failed due to a lack of ground troops and weaponry. Numerous foreign media sources reported in December 2023 that the Ukrainian counteroffensive had fallen short of all of its strategic goals and had not succeeded in regaining any appreciable amount of land. As of August 2023, almost 500,000 Russian and Ukrainian troopers have been killed and in excess of 10,000 civilians have been killed.

The attacks continue still on this day resulting in serious international emergency, numerous casualties and a huge influx of displaced people resulting in a huge refugee crisis. Asserting that peace talks to terminate the Russo-Ukrainian conflict were "not possible at this moment," UN Secretary-General António Guterres stated in May 2023 that both Russia and Ukraine were "completely absorbed in this war" and "convinced that they can win.". Even though some countries such as China have proposed peace plans for both parties, In June 2023, the minister of defense for Ukraine underlined that Beijing's efforts to persuade Russia to hand over its seized lands is a must for Ukraine to accept China as a mediator.

2.3.1.3 Actions Taken by NATO

Especially in the times of Euromaidan protests and Eastern Ukraine conflicts, NATO has been known to aid Ukraine with different actions. NATO has supported



Ukraine with political statements declaring the support for the territorial integrity of Ukraine and independence, aiding with non-lethal supplies such as medical supplies and humanitarian aid, deploying NATO military advisers in Ukraine in order to assist the enhancement of the capabilities of Ukrainian military forces, imposing sanctions on Russia with the goal of prevailing Russia to enter the path of peace. Keeping in mind that NATO is an organization it does not have a direct military role in the conflict but individual member states, especially those who are located in the conflicted region, have taken military and other actions under their own name.

Following Russia's unlawful attempt to seize Ukrainian land in September 2022, Ukraine renewed its application to join NATO. Considering the goal of entering NATO of Ukraine, NATO has been facilitating the way into the organization for Ukraine. Normally members are required to commit to a membership action plan, or MAP, in order to join NATO. In order to facilitate the way, NATO members have agreed on the removal of the Membership Action Plan requirement for the entrance of Ukraine to NATO. After Russia invaded four Ukrainian territories in September, Ukraine officially submitted its application for fast-track NATO membership. The Allies maintained their commitment to Ukraine's NATO membership during the Vilnius Summit in 2023.

2.3.2 Ongoing Conflict Between Israel-Palestine

2.3.2.1 Historical Background

Israel Before 1948

After the Ottoman Empire, which had ruled the mentioned region of the Middle East, was defeated in World War One, Britain took control of the area now known as Palestine. A majority of Arabs and a minority of Jews resided in the region, along with many smaller ethnic groups. The global community entrusted the UK with establishing a "national home" for Jews in Palestine. This was a result of the 1917 Balfour Declaration, which was a promise given to the Jewish people in Britain by then-foreign secretary Arthur Balfour. The proclamation was accepted by the newly established League of Nations, which served as the model for the United Nations, in 1922 and embodied in the British administration over Palestine. Palestine was the ancestral home of the Jews, but the Arab Palestinians also claimed the land and were against the relocation.

Jews began to arrive in greater numbers between the 1920s and the 1940s; many of them were escaping persecution in Europe, particularly the Nazi Holocaust during World War II. There was also a rise in violence against British rule and between Jews and Arabs. The UN agreed in 1947 to divide Palestine into Jewish and Arab states, with Jerusalem becoming a global metropolis. Even though the Jewish officials approved this proposal since the Arab side rejected the idea, it was never carried out.

Conflict in 1948

Jewish leaders declared the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 shortly after Britain withdrew because of its failure to resolve the conflict. It was intended to serve as both an independent homeland and a haven of safety for Jews escaping persecution. Months of fighting had escalated between Arab and Jewish militant groups, and five Arab nations launched an attack on Israel the day it became a state.

Israel managed to occupy most of the region by the time the conflict came to an end in a truce the following year. Egypt occupied Gaza, and Jordan occupied the area now known as the West Bank. Israeli soldiers invaded the West of Jerusalem, while Jordanian forces occupied the East. Israel emerged victorious at the end of the war in 1949. There was a "Catastrophe" known to the Palestinians as Al Nakba, when 750,000 Palestinians were forced to flee their homes and the land was split into three sections: the Gaza Strip, the West Bank (across the Jordan River), and the State of Israel. Whilst the Palestinians claimed East Jerusalem as the capital of an imagined future Palestinian state, Israel continued to occupy the West Bank and claimed the entire city as its capital. The United States was among the few nations that acknowledged the city as the capital of Israel. In the decades that followed, there were further disputes and attacks since there was never a peace treaty.

Gaza Strip

Gaza is a tiny region of land with a short southern borderline with Egypt, but it is surrounded by Israel and the Mediterranean Sea. Slightly less than 41 kilometers in length and 10 km in width, it is home to almost two million people, making it among the world's most densely populated regions. Following the 1948–1949 conflict, Egypt occupied Gaza for 19 years. During the 1967 conflict, which is also known as the six-day war, Israel invaded Gaza and remained there until 2005, during which time it established Jewish settlements. In 2005 Palestinian forces invaded the Gaza Strip. Israel established a temporary embargo on Gaza in 2005, unilaterally removed its armed troops from the region, and dismantled its settlements there. Israel kept control over its shared border, coastline, and airspace even after it removed its settlers and military. The UN Security Council and the UK government, among others, maintain the view that settlements are illegal under international law, but still Israel opposes this statement.

Hamas's Rise to Power

After Hamas overthrew the long-standing dominant party Fatah in the Palestinian Authority's 2006 legislative elections, partisanship among Palestinians erupted. This handed control of the Gaza Strip to Hamas, a political and militant movement influenced by the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood. The election triumph of



Hamas was not recognized by the US and the EU as the group has been viewed as a terrorist organization by western governments since the late 1990s.

Following the ascent to power of the Hamas organization, Israel altered its embargo to a permanent one on Gaza in 2007. Even now, the siege is still ongoing. Additionally, Israel controls East Jerusalem and the West Bank, which the Palestinians hope to be a part of their future state. Following a surprise strike by Hamas within Israel, which took the lives of at least 1,200 people, Israel shut off the Gaza Strip's supply of petroleum, food, water, and power on October 9 and enforced a complete embargo. Israel has been asked to remove the embargo by the UN multiple times. While rights organizations and Palestinians argue that Israel's blockade of the Gaza Strip has exacerbated already dreadful living circumstances, Israel has justified its actions by stating the need to stem the flow of weapons into the region. After the embargo, violence broke out between Hamas and Fatah after Hamas took over. A ceasefire was reached in 2011 after an extended period of failed peace negotiations and violent clashes. In 2014, Fatah and Hamas formed a unity government.

Clashes in the Palestinian territories in the summer of 2014 led to a military confrontation between the Israeli military and Hamas. In response, Hamas fired around 3,000 missiles into Israel, and Israel launched a massive attack in Gaza. Fatah President Mahmoud Abbas declared that the boundaries imposed by the Oslo Accords would no longer bind the Palestinian people. A cease-fire mediated by Egypt brought the skirmish to a conclusion in late August 2014.

Following a court decision in favor of evicting many Palestinian families from houses in East Jerusalem, riots broke out in early May 2021, with Israeli police using force to disperse the protesters. Following many days of unrelenting fighting, hundreds of rockets were fired into Israel territory by Hamas, the terrorist organization that controls Gaza, and other Palestinian militant organizations. In response, Israel launched airstrikes and artillery bombardments that resulted in the deaths of over twenty Palestinians and damaged both military and civilian infrastructure. Eleven days later, both Israel and Hamas claimed victory and reached an agreement to a cease-fire.

The biggest concerns around these times have been these questions: What is the appropriate course of action for Palestinian refugees? Whether Jewish settlements in the West Bank should remain under occupation or be evacuated? Should the two sides coexist in Jerusalem? But the most challenging issue of all is probably whether or not Israel and the Palestinian state ought to be neighbors.

2.3.2.2 Current Status

In September 2023, tensions between Israel and Hamas escalated when Israel discovered explosives concealed in a shipment of jeans and suspended all exports from Gaza. Hamas responded by placing its troops on high alert. Following these incidents, on September 13, five Palestinians were killed at the border of Israel. The

Washington Post claimed that the Palestinians were attempting to set off an explosive device. This incident fueled the ascending tension between two parties.



7 October Attack

On October 7 2023, at around 6:30 a.m Hamas declared that "Operation Al-Aqsa Flood" had begun, claiming to have fired over 5,000 missiles into Israel in less than 20 minutes from the Gaza Strip. Commander Mohammad Deif of Hamas issued a call to arms, urging "Muslims everywhere to launch an attack" and "kill them wherever you may find them".

While conflict broke out between Palestinians and Israel Defense Forces at the Gaza border line, Palestinian terrorists opened fire on Israeli vessels. Later that night, Hamas fired 150 more missiles in the direction of Israel. At the same time, over three thousand Hamas fighters used trucks, motorbikes, speedboats, and paragliders to get into Israel from Gaza. They overran the Kerem Shalom and Erez checkpoints and broke over the border barrier in five additional locations. In the words of Hamas, the assault was a reaction to several factors, including the embargo of the Gaza Strip, the growth of unauthorized Israeli settlements, an increase in settler violence in Israel and recent unrest at Al-Aqsa.

Hamas militants burned down houses, murdered civilians, and abducted hostages. The first day of the attack has been called the worst day in Israel's history and the worst single-day killing of Jews since the Holocaust. According to Hamas, Hamas has indicated this attack in order to force Israel to release Palestinian hostages under coercion. Videos showed that the captives were being taken across the street barefoot. Additionally, during an open-air music event next to Re'im, Hamas slaughtered at least 325 people, wounded a great number, and took at least 37 hostage. According to reports from Israel, there were incidents of rape and sexual abuse against Israeli women in private residences, an Israeli military base, and during the Re'im music festival slaughter. The Palestinian Authority and Hamas denied the massacre, claiming that the large number of casualties was caused by Israeli fighter planes and helicopters.

Initial Israeli Counter-Attack

It took hours for the Israeli military to respond with a counteroffensive after Palestinian militants had first overrun the Gaza Strip. They quickly ran into difficulty identifying which settlements and outposts were under occupation and differentiating between Palestinian militants and the soldiers and civilians who were present in the area. During the first four hours, the helicopter crews attacked about 300 targets at a rapid rate of fire. Journalist Josh Breiner of Haaretz reports that an IDF helicopter that started fire on Hamas terrorists "apparently also hit some festival participants" in the Re'im music festival slaughter, according to a police source cited in the police probe. The Haaretz report was denied by the Israeli police.

At first, the Israeli crews were selecting their targets carefully in order not to harm civilians. Investigations later revealed that Palestinian militants had been told not to run in order to fool the air force into believing they were Israelis. For a while, this strategy worked, but eventually pilots realized what was going on and started to disobey the restrictions. Amidst the commotion and chaos, several helicopters began setting fire without permission. The Security Cabinet of Israel decided to take action overnight in order to ensure the "destruction of the military and governmental capabilities of Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad". The Gaza Strip lost power due to an outage caused by the Israel Electric Corporation, which provides 80% of the region with energy.

Invasion of Gaza Strip

The IDF began a massive ground operation into northern Gaza on October 27. Israel's declaration that its forces remained in Gaza the following day verified the invasion of the Gaza Strip. The al-Quds hospital was the target of Israeli bombardment, which filled several areas of the building with smoke and dust and forced personnel to distribute breathing masks to some patients. It was estimated that 14,000 civilians were taking shelter in or close to the hospital. According to the Associated Press, Israeli airstrikes also damaged the roads that led to the Al-Shifa hospital, making it harder to get there.

The heavily populated Jabalia refugee camp was bombed by the Israeli Defense Forces, according to the Gaza Health Ministry, which is run by Hamas. The bombardment caused 150 wounded and 50 Palestinians dead. Attackers in subterranean tunnels, including a senior Hamas official, were the target, according to Israel. At least 15 people were killed and 60 injured in an Israeli strike on an ambulance convoy outside Al-Shifa Hospital two days later. The Israeli Defense Forces confirmed the strike against a Hamas target but did not offer any supporting evidence. The IDF claimed terrorists utilized civilian infrastructure without giving evidence, in the light of this statement a video showed an Israeli tank firing at a cab flying a white flag, supposedly indicating surrender, which can be seen as a war crime. Concerns over possible war

crimes were stated by the UN Human Rights Office saying there has been "disproportionate attacks that could amount to war crimes" after the Jabalia refugee camp was struck twice in the same day.

A temporary ceasefire deal between Israel and Hamas was agreed upon on November 22. It called for a four-day "pause" to enable the release of the hostages held in Gaza. Additionally, the agreement called for the release of 150 Palestinian women and children who were detained by Israel. Even though the deal was confirmed by the Israeli cabinet, The Israeli Prime Minister's Office declared that Israel intends to carry on with the war. At the end of the four-day pause the attacks on both parties continued. In a December 25 Wall Street Journal interview, Netanyahu stated that Israel aimed to "destroy Hamas, demilitarize Gaza, and deradicalize the whole of Palestinian society."

2.3.2.3 Actions Taken by NATO

Since NATO stands for the maintenance of peace, NATO has not been directly involved in the conflict. NATO thrives for peace and the alliance has stated that diplomatic efforts to achieve a humanitarian cease-fire is backed by NATO. The head of NATO encourages parties in conflict to uphold international law and take precautions to safeguard civilians. NATO members underline that efforts to find a lasting, political, peaceful resolution to the Israel-Palestine problem must never be abandoned by the international community.

Although NATO has not been involved directly, allies showed their support for Israel by stating that Israel has the right for a reasonable defense against these immoral acts of violence. They demanded the utmost security for civilians and the prompt release of all hostages by Hamas. Additionally, allies made it clear that no country or organization should try to exploit or deteriorate the situation. Israel continues to get practical help from a number of NATO Allies as it responds to the ongoing crisis.

Notwithstanding the fact that NATO is an alliance of numerous nations, not all of them have the same views on the issue at hand. Every country approaches the crisis differently, and Türkiye has been taking a slightly opposing position. Türkiye has withdrawn its ambassador from Israel due to the humanitarian crisis that is emerging in Gaza as a result of Israel's continuous strikes against civilians and Israel's rejection of a ceasefire. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan told reporters that Netanyahu was "no longer someone we can talk to" and that he was personally responsible for the passing away of civilians in Gaza.

2.3.3 Ongoing Conflict Between Türkiye-Syria

2.3.3.1 Historical Background

Relations between Syria and Türkiye have been tense ever since both countries emerged as modern states after World War I. The initial point of conflict was a territorial dispute over the present-day Turkish province of Hatay. Hatay was included in the French mandate of Syria until 1938, even though Ankara claimed it under the terms of the Turkish National Pact of 1920. Even so, Syria never approved of the autonomous parliament's 1939 vote to join Türkiye, which strained ties for a lengthy period. Another enduring issue was brought about by the sharing of water. Resentment arose from Türkiye's damming of the Euphrates and Asi rivers, which restricted the flow across the frontier. The relationship between the two parties took a major turn for the worse in the 1980s and 1990s when Hafez, the father of Bashar Assad, gave the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) strongholds and support during their fight against Türkiye. When Türkiye decided to take action against Syria in 1998 to stop supporting the PKK, the situation shifted, and Damascus ended the sanctuary it had provided to PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan under fear of military invasion. To put a stop to hostilities, the two nations signed the Adana Protocol.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, Tehran, Baghdad, and Damascus have long viewed Türkiye's secular democracy, its desire for EU membership and its close relationship with the United States viewed with extreme suspicion. Islamists recognized the establishment of the new secular state that replaced the Islamic caliphate as betrayal. However, with the change in government of Türkiye, the tensions cooled down to a certain extent since the new AKP government embraced the system of a mix of democracy and islamic rules. The relations between two parties remained stable and rather peaceful for years, until the Syrian Civil War broke out.

The Syrian Civil War

Another shift in the two governments' relationship was the outbreak of the Syrian civil war. Türkiye publicly supported the overthrow of Assad and aligned itself with the popular movement after delaying for several months in the hopes of reaching a solution. Türkiye decided on suspending all of the trade relations and agreements between Türkiye and Syria. Rebel organizations were granted access to Turkish bases and borders, and the opposition Syrian National Council was permitted to convene there. As a result of this stance, there was an influx of two million refugees into Türkiye, and there were security issues due to fighters and weapons congregating along the border. Following the granted access to the borders ,as foreseen, Syrian rebels opened fire across the border with Türkiye and Syrian military shot an RF-4E reconnaissance aircraft operated by the Turkish Air Force in 2012, in close range to the Syrian border. This move was allegedly made due to the airspace violations by the plane, according to the Syrian military. As a consequence, Türkiye and the United States started having

high-level meetings over plans to overthrow the Syrian government, which showed the severity of the situation.

The Erdogan administration was forced to reevaluate its strategy as ISIL grew both militarily and geographically, bringing the Kobani conflict closer to Türkiye's borders and even initiating attacks there. Türkiye has long sought to establish an international community-monitored buffer zone and a no-fly zone over Syria. However, all attempts to form an international operation in Syria have been thwarted by Russia and China, and other partners are hesitant to pay for it or jeopardize the lives of their troops.

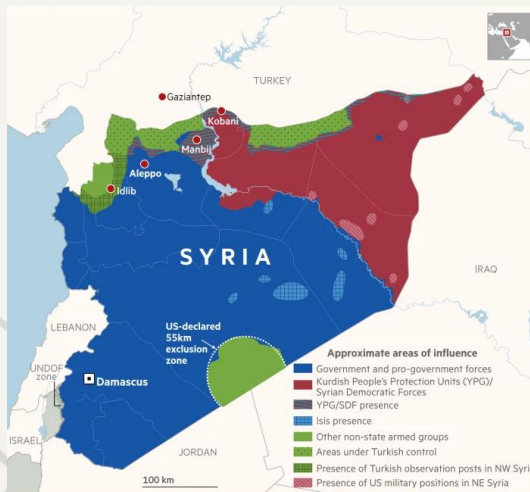
Türkiye has conducted numerous military operations in northern Syria against the Kurdish YPG militia forces since August 2016. Every operation has a distinct purpose and was created to react to situations on the ground that were changing quickly. The main objectives that have shaped Türkiye's Syria policy over time may be determined. Fundamentally, the Turkish government's involvement in Syria has been motivated by internal political issues, aiding in the political survival of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and his Justice and Development Party (AKP). Overall, Ankara's engagement in Syria has not only caused friction or reconciliation with its longstanding allies and neighbors in the area. Additionally, it has given Türkiye new means of pursuing a more assertive and nationalistic foreign policy.

2.3.3.2 Current Status

Since the beginning of the conflict Türkiye has been dealing with suicide bombers and attacks masked with civilian vehicles in highly populated places. Due to the inability to differentiate the attackers from the civilians Türkiye has been trying to pave the way into political peace meetings, return of the millions of refugees and normalization of the strained relations.

When Syrian Foreign Minister Faisal Mekdad and Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu met in October 2021 during the Non-Aligned Movement summit, ties between the two countries' intelligence agencies were once again restored. While the Syrian government listed five requirements for the resumption of diplomatic ties, Ankara simply required from Damascus the complete clearance of the YPG territories, the safe return of refugees, and the conclusion of political and military collaboration between the opposition and the government. There was a recent meeting between the heads of Turkish and Syrian intelligence in Damascus, according to a September 2022 Reuters story. Significant progress was made during the talks, and they additionally paved the way for higher-level meetings.

Syria: spheres of influence
As of Feb 2023



Even though the attacks from both sides still do continue occasionally, the peace talks between Syrian and Turkish officials keep making significant progress too. Türkiye sees the way into a peaceful solution as negotiating with other country officials about the conflict and trying to normalize the ties between two parties by easing the economic sanctions on Syria. The biggest concern of Türkiye abides as North Syria which is controlled by separatists and the security issues on the border. The dispute still remains to be resolved.

2.3.3.3 Actions Taken by NATO

In late 2019, there were signs of disagreement between Türkiye and members of NATO, with NATO feeling "powerless" to restrain Turkish interventions on Syria. Due to Türkiye's strategic placement between Europe and the Middle East, the NATO members were limited to mild criticism. But at the same time NATO was also concerned about Türkiye's increasing sympathies with Russia due to Türkiye's purchase of the Russian S-400 air defense system which led to strained relations between allies ,particularly the United States of America, and Türkiye.

The NATO summit in London shed light on a number of topics related to conflict resolution. Türkiye proposed to create a safe zone which was proposed to be controlled by NATO where Syrian refugees may be transferred. Nevertheless due to the notion that the migrants could only be moved voluntarily, NATO members rejected the proposal. The EU kept arguing about the political, social, humanitarian, and legal essentials of protecting migrants, rather than applying the agreement on a shared refugee and sanctuary policy.

The German chancellor, Angela Merkel, led a campaign to detain refugees and migrants in Türkiye in order to prevent them from traveling through Greece and Bulgaria to enter the allied countries. The EU promised to pay Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan €6 billion for their maintenance in exchange. At least 3 million refugees have maintained residency in Türkiye ever since. This provided Erdoğan with several opportunities to use the refugees as a tool of blackmail, threatening to abandon

the refugee agreement if either the EU didn't defray more or if NATO didn't fulfill its obligations. On February 28, 2020, Erdoğan made a demand that they cooperate.

There are clear ethical criterias for NATO. NATO is designed to be a political and military alliance of democratic nations that share the same set of principles. The organization's reputation has been damaged by Türkiye's disregard for these principles with disrespect as a significant NATO member and potential EU member. Although NATO member states have been restless about the stance of Türkiye, alliance has called on Syria to adhere to international law and has publicly condemned the airstrikes executed by the Assad government, but expressed that Türkiye shouldn't be anticipating the activation of Article 5, which is the collective military response mechanism of NATO.

The allies made the decision to help improve Türkiye's air defense capabilities in order to support Türkiye in protecting its territory. NATO has been helping Türkiye to improve air surveillance and strengthen its naval presence. NATO has also provided Türkiye with funds to enhance its military installations totaling about US\$5 billion (£3.8 billion) in recent years. Despite the struggles, NATO partners remain committed to help the key ally Türkiye in accordance with Article 4, even though the current circumstances cannot lead to Article 5. In reality, Article 4 meetings invoked by Türkiye would make it possible for NATO to assist Türkiye without provoking a collective military response, strengthening the alliance's claim for ongoing conflict's significance.

2.4 Questions To Be Addressed

- Should Ukraine be accepted to NATO? Is there an urgency to accept the application of Ukraine to NATO?
- What can be done by NATO to improve the safeguarding of the allied countries who are border neighbors to Ukraine and Russia considering the conflict between Ukraine and Russia ?
- Which actions can be taken in order to prevent the conflict between Israel and Palestine to become a bigger issue in the Middle East and it's spread to the world?
- Considering the escalated terrorist threats caused by the Israel-Palestine conflict, what can NATO do to safeguard the security within member states?
- What can allies do to reduce the social tension caused by the protests made by the supporters of the conflicted countries throughout the member countries?
- What can NATO do to assure the protection of the troops that are located in the conflicted areas that were deployed for other purposes?
- What can NATO do to ensure Türkiye's border security?
- Should NATO activate Article 5 in order to aid Türkiye for the ongoing conflict on the country's border?

- What actions can NATO take in order to resolve the refugee problem caused by the ongoing conflicts? Should NATO continue with the actions that were taken prior?

2.5 Further Readings

- [Understanding](https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/explainers/understanding-ukraines-euromaidan-protests) the Euromaidan Protests in Ukraine.
<https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/explainers/understanding-ukraines-euromaidan-protests>
- [Detailed Overview](https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/2/9/what-is-the-minsk-agreement-and-why-is-it-relevant-now) of the Minsk Agreements.
<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/2/9/what-is-the-minsk-agreement-and-why-is-it-relevant-now>
- [Explanation](https://history.state.gov/milestones/1993-2000/oslo) of the Oslo Accords Which Was a List of Agreements Between Palestine and Israel.
<https://history.state.gov/milestones/1993-2000/oslo>
- [Detailed Explanation](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_110496.htm) of The Article 5 of NATO alliance.
https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_110496.htm
- [Detailed Explanation](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_49187.htm) of The Article 4 of NATO alliance and Its Consultation Process.
https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_49187.htm

3.0 Agenda Item B: Reassessment of NATO Membership Action Plan

3.1 Introduction to the Agenda Item B

The NATO Membership Action Plan (MAP) serves as a guideline to the countries who are aspiring to join the collective political and military coalition and become a Member State. In order for non-member countries to become officially a member, there are criteria to be met as in the aspects of political, economic and military specifically based on the country's needs. The process involves dialogue between NATO Member States and the possible aspiring members which serves as a mechanism to observe if the aspiring member meets the criterias and adjustments needed for integration into the organization.

Reassessment of this process comes in naturally reflecting the evolving geopolitical landscape, changes in the security environment, and the progress made by the aspiring members. Reassessment of MAP may be based on a single aspiring country or as a whole. As an example, NATO Member States agreed to remove the MAP requirement which would eventually shorten the membership of Ukraine specifically. However, NATO members were

still divided on the decision of whether to let Ukraine become a member in the middle of a war since, at the end of the day, NATO is a military coalition which means an attack or a war of one of its Member States is an action done on all its members collectively. All those decisions must be collective and unanimous which leads NATO to conflict within itself when it comes to distinctions as such.

The general process of a country becoming a member goes as; application, evaluation, consultation, decision-making and finally ratification. Keeping in mind that a collective decision must be reached to let a country become a member, this process is usually not a short one to ratify. Additionally, MAP is not a guideline that is precisely set for every country but the criteria may vary from country to country regarding their individual needs. This is an aspect that is controversial. As in the given example of Ukraine above, under normal conditions, for a country to become a new member of NATO political and military stability is aspired since the country's matters will be the agenda of NATO collectively once they join the alliance. However, the urgency of the membership of Ukraine needed a specific path to membership since one of the core establishment values of NATO was to stand against the aggression of Russia. Considering all these, whether to have a precise and unchangeable MAP is a question in mind. While the MAP provides a clear framework and guidelines for aspiring members, it is not a one-size-fits-all document.

3.2 Key Vocabulary

Membership Action Plan (MAP): Process of a dialogue and cooperation designed to guide possible new member states aspiring to join NATO in their preparations.

Partnership for Peace (PfP): The program was established in 1994 to build trust and transparency through cooperation between individual Member States and non-member partner countries.

Member States: Refers to the countries that are an official part of the political and military coalition with primary focus of collective defense which in this case consists of 31 countries.

Partner Country: In order to strengthen ties with non-member nations and promote cooperation in fields like political discourse, military collaboration, crisis management, and joint security, NATO has created a number of partnership programs

Unanimous Decision-Making: NATO operates on such principles that a decision must be made with the agreement of all Member States before the alliance takes official action regarding its agenda.

3.3 Focused Overview



3.3.1 Relations with Russia

The NATO-Russia relations may get tense as more members join, particularly those neighboring Russia since it views NATO expansion as a security risk and a possible danger to its interests, and has long voiced concerns and objections to it. It has been controversial to expand NATO into Eastern Europe, especially to include nations from the former Warsaw Pact and Soviet sphere of influence. Tension has arisen from NATO's post-Cold War expansion, which Russia views as an alliance extension into its traditional sphere of influence. Russia raised concerns about the NATO workforce stationed close to its borders and their military equipment. There has been controversy over NATO's troop deployment in nations that were formerly allied with or a part of the Soviet Union. NATO stresses that each candidate member makes the independent decision to join the alliance. But since Russia frequently views NATO expansion as a factor behind regional instability, which could result in increased military activity and a more complex security environment, Russia has argued that NATO expansion undermines its security and challenges its interests.

3.3.2 Domestic Opposition

A major and frequently disputed decision of whether or not to join NATO may include factors as political, security, and social. Public opinion can be influenced and a domestic opposition may be formed by historical occurrences and legacies. Public opinions can occasionally be shaped by past conflicts or alliances, which can lead to reluctance against supporting a military partnership that comes from a different historical background. As a result, in international disputes, certain nations have a history of remaining neutral or non-aligned. Some people may object to joining a military alliance like NATO because they believe it to be a break from these customs. Furthermore, if NATO is seen as an aggressive military alliance as opposed to a defensive one, people who are afraid of being involved in alliances or battles that go against their moral principles may oppose. NATO membership may encounter domestic opposition in nations with a history of significant pacifist movements or anti-military sentiment. Resistance may be intensified by fears about rising military budget and participation in foreign crises. Opponents claim that membership in NATO undermines a country's sovereignty. They may worry that the alliance will control or dictate defense and security decisions, reducing the nation's independence in important policy domains. However, it is important for NATO that the public support is given to the aspiring country before their accession into the alliance in order to eliminate any crisis that may occur in the future after the country joins in.

3.3.3 Uncertain Path to Membership

Due to a number of issues that may affect the process, taking the MAP route to NATO membership is frequently referred to as unclear. Although the MAP offers candidate nations a methodical framework for pursuing NATO membership, there are obstacles and uncertainties involved in this process. Aspiring nations might encounter difficulties given their geopolitical

setting, such as ongoing conflicts or tensions with neighboring countries. Aspiring nations must implement extensive political, economic, and military reforms in order to qualify for the MAP. The process of putting these reforms into action can be difficult and time-consuming. Another important consideration is the degree of public support that a candidate nation has for joining NATO. If the public does not support political leaders' pursuit of NATO membership, they may encounter difficulties.

NATO is an alliance made up of many member states with different interests and goals in geopolitics. Decision-making processes may be unclear as a result of differing opinions among member states about the admittance of new members and the relation between the candidate nation with the current members. Since NATO member nations must agree by consensus prior to admitting new members, even a single country's objection can raise questions. Prolonged discussions can result from disagreements or geopolitical factors. There may be difficulties with convincing the national legislatures of all NATO member nations to approve an applicant nation's accession to the alliance. Member state disputes or political shifts could have an impact on this procedure. All put together, NATO does not have certain rules in place for any country to obtain before joining the alliance. The changes in the procedure for any applicant may cause uncertainty amongst aspiring nations.

3.3.4 Security Concerns

Security considerations are a major factor in the decision-making process when a new member of NATO is being considered. NATO is a military organization that prioritizes collective defense, and a number of security considerations are taken into account when evaluating new members. In order to make sure that the prospective member's membership does not worsen already-existing conflicts and is consistent with NATO's commitment to collective defense, the alliance carefully evaluates the potential influence on regional security. The prospective member's military suitability, defense capabilities, and key geopolitical location are all carefully considered in order to assess how well it will complement NATO's broader defensive capabilities. In light of the constantly shifting environment of security threats, preparedness for cybersecurity and the capacity to repel hybrid attacks become ever more crucial factors.

Important considerations in the assessment include the prospective member's dedication to fulfilling Article 5 requirements, intelligence sharing capabilities, cautious handling of nuclear capabilities where appropriate, and adherence to NATO's shared values, which include democracy and human rights. Furthermore, NATO assesses the prospective member's contribution to the organization's overall deterrent capacity as well as the degree of public enthusiasm for NATO membership in that nation. Assuring that the new member preserves NATO's values and commitments while strengthening the organization's cohesiveness, resilience, and collective security is the primary objective.

3.4 Major Parties Involved and Their Views



3.4.1 NATO Member States

NATO member states' opinions toward the Membership Action Plan (MAP) for aspiring nations might differ depending on a number of factors such as national interests, regional security dynamics, and geopolitical concerns. Every NATO member state views the MAP process differently, and the alliance's collective decision-making is governed by the consensus principle, which specifies that all members are required to agree on key issues. The requirement based on Article 5 to make every decision unanimously may lead to conflict within NATO which causes an elongated process for a possible new member into NATO. A proposal or an invitation must be first made by or to a country for membership for the process to begin. Even an invitation for membership does not guarantee a space in the alliance unless the set criteria for the specific country are met and approved by every present Member States. It is important to keep in mind that even though all 31 current Member States are in a political and military coalition, they still have distinct policies and various external relations with non-member countries within their own governmental regulations.

3.4.2 Russian Federation

The first establishment of NATO was to have a collective defense with the first 12 founding members against the Soviet Union back in 1949. After the establishment, NATO kept expanding further for the common purpose, which continued even after the collapse of the Soviet Union followed by the Establishment of the Russian Federation. Therefore, the enlargement of NATO has always been seen as a threat to Russia since the coalition was founded against the nation. Especially after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the post-Soviet states such as Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania joined the coalition as its post-Cold War extension in 2004. Thus, the view of Russia on the NATO expansion and the joining of new states has always been on the negative side. Additionally, this has been generating tension between the Russia-NATO relations since the situation is perceived as a security threat to Russia's strategic interests. Russia also holds that unofficial promises made in the early post-Cold War period are broken by NATO's eastward expansion.

3.4.3 Finland

Finland is the newest and 31st Member State of NATO as of 4 April 2023. Alexander Stubb, the former Prime Minister of Finland, stated that his nation's accession in the alliance was "done deal" as soon as Russian forces invaded Ukraine in the previous year. The battle carried with it an alarming familiarity for many Finns. Finland and Sweden have remained neutral against military acts for many years until now. Even though Finland has joined NATO recently, Sweden is currently not a member in the alliance but an invitee since 5 July 2022. "Sweden is fully ready to join NATO, and Sweden's membership will make NATO stronger," states Jens Stoltenberg at this date. Sweden seems to be following Finland's path into NATO with major support from Finland on the enlargement. However, Türkiye, one of NATO's 31 members, stopped Sweden from joining, claiming that the Nordic nation supports Kurdish

separatists. After the accession of NATO, what has changed is that thanks to NATO's Article 5, which considers an assault on one member state to be an attack on all, the nation will receive security guarantees from nuclear states for the first time. The reason why the path for Finland to join NATO was unusually fast compared to other aspiring members was stated to be that Finland, and Sweden, was one of the closest allies of NATO and that they had military and political relations for a long time coming to the accession of the country. This, however, creates an uncertainty for other aspiring nations about the precision of the MAP.

3.4.4 Ukraine

Ukraine is not a current Member State of NATO. As a partner nation of NATO, Ukraine collaborates closely with the organization but is not protected by the security guarantee outlined in the Alliance's fundamental treaty. At the 2008 Bucharest Summit, NATO Allies decided that Ukraine will join the alliance, with a commitment that the next step would be for it to apply to the MAP. The Allies confirmed during the Vilnius Summit in 2023 that Ukraine will join NATO if and when requirements are fulfilled. They eliminated the need for Ukraine to pursue a MAP, which will result in a one-step membership process instead of a two-step one. NATO's "open door policy" based on Article 10 highlights that any European nation that is able to fulfill the requirements of membership and contribute to the security of the Euro-Atlantic region remains welcome to join NATO. Additionally, the article also states that the North Atlantic Council decides whether to extend an invitation to a nation to join the Alliance based on consensus of all Allies. In these discussions, no third nation may voice any opinions. This means that, even though the Russian Federation shows aggression towards the accession of Ukraine due to security concerns, Russia will not have a say in that decision and therefore shall be reckoned without. Additionally, even though Ukraine is not a Member State but a partner country, NATO still aids and assists Ukraine since the invasion began.

3.4.5 Türkiye

It was anticipated that Finland and Sweden, two Nordic nations, would be quickly approved as members of the defense alliance when they declared their interest in joining NATO. But in order to join NATO, all current members must agree, and Türkiye, one of the organization's most strategically significant and militarily severe members, was not thrilled about this. The complex, sentimental, and deeply embedded in decades of frequently deadly history are the grounds underlying Türkiye's resistance to Sweden and Finland joining NATO. Crisis Group estimates that since 1984, violence between the PKK and the Turkish government has cost the lives of between 30,000 and 40,000 people. Türkiye, the United States, Canada, Australia, and the European Union all list the PKK as a terrorist organization. Türkiye claims that members of the Kurdish Workers' Party, or PKK, have received assistance from Sweden, however, Sweden rejects this. In fact, in 1984, Sweden was among the first nations to declare the group as a terrorist organization. Given that Finland has a far smaller Kurdish minority than Sweden but shares similar foreign policy, Türkiye's resistance to Finland joining NATO seems to be more by association. In response to Ankara's military operations against Kurdish forces

in Syria, Finland, along with Sweden and other EU nations, outlawed the PKK as a terrorist organization. However, in 2019, Finland also stopped selling arms to Türkiye against this military action. At first, Türkiye vetoed the accession of Finland and Sweden into the alliance, however it was lifted later on after many discussions. The agreement stood on the grounds of the promises made by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg that the agreement required Sweden to strengthen their handling of Turkish requests for the extradition of suspected attackers and to alter Swedish and Finnish laws. Additionally, Stoltenberg declared that Finland and Sweden would remove their bans on arms sales to Türkiye as well. Afterwards, Finland joined the alliance. Even though Sweden has not yet, it is expected that the nation will follow the steps of Finland on joining after the closed-door negotiations during the Vilnius Summit.

3.5 Evaluation of Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

3.5.1 Membership Action Plan (MAP)

During the Alliance's Washington Summit in April 1999, the MAP was introduced to assist nations hoping to join NATO with their preparations. The procedure made extensive use of the expertise obtained during the 1999 Alliance post-Cold War enlargement process that saw the admission of Czechia, Hungary, and Poland. The seven countries (Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia) who joined NATO in the second post-Cold War round of enlargement in 2004 as well as Albania and Croatia, which joined in April 2009, were better prepared thanks to their participation in the MAP. After joining the MAP in December 2009, Montenegro joined the Alliance in June 2017. In March 2020, the Republic of North Macedonia, which had been a part of the MAP since 1999, became a member of NATO. Bosnia and Herzegovina was invited to join the MAP in 2010 and is currently a participant. At the time, the foreign ministers of the Allies urged the Bosnian government to find a solution to a significant problem involving the state's registration of transportable defense property. The foreign ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina concluded at their December 2018 meeting that NATO is prepared to adopt the country's first Annual National Programme under the MAP. It is still necessary for defense property to be registered with the state.

It is obvious that MAP varies from country to country depending on their individual requirements decided by NATO. Thus, the process is relatively not a short one for most countries aspiring to be a member. The common criteria can be listed as:

1. It is expected of prospective members to uphold human rights, respect the rule of law, and have strong democratic institutions. Countries must hold peaceful and constructive relations with their neighbors, including the resolution of major or ongoing conflicts.
2. Potential members must be able to manage market forces and rivalry within the parameters of the European Union, as well as have a viable market economy. Economic improvements are urged to be implemented by nations in order to foster greater resilience and stability.

3. The goal of newly admitted nations should be to become cooperative with NATO forces and compliant with NATO military standards. It is expected of those who apply to have defense facilities that are both accountable and efficient and that can support NATO's collective defense.

3.5.2 Partnership for Peace (PfP)

A program of practical intergovernmental relationship building between NATO and various Euro-Atlantic partner nations is called Partnership for Peace (PfP). It enables allies to forge unique bonds with NATO and establish their own areas of mutual interest and collaboration. The PfP was founded in 1994 to give partners the freedom to forge their own path with NATO, determining their own goals for collaboration as well as the rate and scope of advancement. All NATO allies, including those from the Euro-Atlantic region, the Mediterranean Dialogue, the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative, and other international partners, are essentially welcome to participate in PfP programs and exercises as of April 2011.

Although they are separate initiatives within the NATO framework, the Partnership for Peace (PfP) and the Membership Action Plan (MAP) are related phases in the process that aspirant nations go through as they work toward possible NATO membership. For nations that have made it apparent that they would like to join NATO, there is MAP, a more formal and structured program. It acts as a trial period for prospective membership in the future. Whereas, PfP provides a flexible framework for bilateral relations, enabling nations to interact with NATO in accordance with their unique requirements, goals, and interests. Even while PfP is an important milestone toward working with NATO, being a part of the program does not ensure that one would eventually join the alliance. It gives nations an occasion to collaborate with NATO toward advancements. Some nations decide to set up Individual Partnership Action Plans (IPAPs) in order to enhance their engagement with NATO. These two-year plans aim to consolidate all the different channels of cooperation that a partner nation uses to engage with the Alliance, therefore narrowing the scope of actions to more effectively assist the partner nation's internal reform initiatives. Political communication, military-to-military interaction, defense reform, and involvement in NATO exercises are only a few of the many topics covered by PfP.

3.5.3 Bucharest Summit

The Bucharest Summit, which took place in April 2008, was a pivotal moment for NATO's relations with Georgia and Ukraine. Leaders of NATO discussed the matter of the MAP for both nations during the summit. Nevertheless, the outcome did not result in the MAP for Georgia and Ukraine being activated right away. Leaders of NATO did not provide Ukraine and Georgia an instant MAP at the summit. Rather, they stressed that these nations would join NATO; however, they did not provide a timeframe for the MAP's activation. There have been disagreements within NATO, as seen during the Bucharest Summit decision to not activate the MAP for Georgia and Ukraine. At that time, some of the members were reluctant to expand

the MAP due to worries about possible strained relations with Russia. Russia's resistance to Georgia's and Ukraine's desire to join NATO influenced the decision-making process. This summit is an example of many that were held in order to assist new possible members of NATO, however internal and external relations of NATO play an enormous role in the decision-making process as seen in the Bucharest Summit.

3.5.4 Vilnius Summit

A wide range of topics were discussed during the NATO Summit in Vilnius, Lithuania in 2023, including the war in Ukraine and security assurances, Ukraine's NATO membership, defense expenditures, Sweden's quest for membership, and an emphasis on China and the Asia-Pacific area. Four key takeaways from the summit include:

1. A primary topic was the issue of Ukraine's NATO membership and security guarantees. The terms and timing of Ukraine's accession into NATO are still unknown, even though NATO has acknowledged Ukraine's advancements and established a NATO-Ukraine Council.
2. Several partners were encouraged to contribute more to NATO's defense assets. The summit also addressed defense expenditures, emphasizing the urgent need for greater funding above the 2% GDP pledge to meet military commitments and equip NATO forces effectively.
3. The important breakthrough of Türkiye and Hungary supporting Sweden's NATO admission ended the extended constraints. The choice illustrated the difficulties in reaching decisions unanimously within NATO when individual members use their positions to advance their own interests.
4. The meeting demonstrated NATO's increased participation and concentration on the Asia-Pacific area through cooperation agreements and interactions with nations such as Japan.

3.6 Questions to be Addressed

- Is the Membership Action Plan (MAP) currently available and accessible for any nation aspiring to join NATO that maintains the “open door policy” based on Article 10?
- Is the accession process clear enough, if not, how can it get further clarified by NATO in order to provide a smoother and easier approach for both parties?
- According to the Bucharest and Vilnius Summit, what are the next steps to be taken upon the possible joining of Ukraine and Sweden into the alliance provided by the MAP?
- Can the preparation of the MAP get standardized for every aspiring country or should it remain distinct for every country depending on individual needs and requirements decided upon by NATO?

- What are the minimum requirements of joining into the alliance and can or should those be altered collectively?
- How does the unanimous decision making process affect the joining of a new member into the alliance, taking previous and current examples under consideration?

3.7 Further Reading

- [Explanation](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_37356.htm) of the Membership Action Plan (MAP) provided by NATO itself.
https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_37356.htm
- [Process](https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/7/12/how-does-a-country-join-nato-2) of the accession of an aspiring nation into the military alliance and its requirements. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/7/12/how-does-a-country-join-nato-2>
- [Declarations](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_49212.htm) on the “open door policy” of NATO based on Article 10 about the enlargement policy.
https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_49212.htm
- [Detailed overview](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_192648.htm#:~:text=Ukraine%20is%20not%20a%20NATO,in%20the%20Alliance%27s%20founding%20treaty) of NATO’s response to the invasion of Ukraine by Russia.
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