

What is NATO?

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A Political and Military Alliance

Security in our daily lives is key to our well-being. NATO's purpose is to guarantee the freedom and security of its members through political and military means.

POLITICAL - NATO promotes democratic values and enables members to consult and cooperate on defence and security-related issues to solve problems, build trust and, in the long run, prevent conflict.

MILITARY - NATO is committed to the peaceful resolution of disputes. If diplomatic efforts fail, it has the military power to undertake crisis-management operations. These are carried out under the collective defence clause of NATO's founding treaty - Article 5 of the Washington Treaty or under a United Nations mandate, alone or in cooperation with other countries and international organisations.

Collective Defence

NATO is committed to the principle that an attack against one or several of its members is considered as an attack against all. This is the principle of collective defence, which is enshrined in Article 5 of the Washington Treaty.

So far, Article 5 has been invoked once - in response to the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States in 2001.

The Transatlantic Link

NATO is an alliance of countries from Europe and North America. It provides a unique link between these two continents, enabling them to consult and cooperate in the field of defence and security, and conduct multinational crisis-management operations together.

The 2010 Strategic Concept

Strategic Concepts lay down the Alliance's core tasks and principles, its values, the evolving security environment and the Alliance's strategic objectives for the next decade. The 2010 Strategic Concept defines NATO's core tasks as: collective defence, crisis-management and cooperative security.