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*Promoting a more transparent and accountable NATO*



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**Welcome** to NATO Watch's quarterly *Observatory*: the only online publication dedicated entirely to news and independent commentary on NATO policy-making and operational activities. The clips are drawn from a wide range of subscriptions, feeds and alerts covering a substantial part of the major English language newspapers and other periodicals worldwide.

**NATO Watch** conducts independent monitoring and analysis of NATO and aims to increase transparency, stimulate parliamentary engagement and broaden public awareness and participation in a progressive reform agenda within NATO.

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## NATO Watch Essay:

### NATO's Chamber of Secrets and a Cursed Child

When is a summit not a summit? When it is downgraded to a 'Leaders Meeting'. NATO's Leaders Meeting took place on the 4 December 2019 at the Grove Hotel, Hertfordshire—rather appropriately, less than three miles from the Making of Harry Potter Studio Tour. A separate evening reception was held at Buckingham Palace on 3 December, with no formal dinner afterwards. Thus, what was [initially billed as a major summit](#) celebrating NATO's 70th anniversary, was downgraded to a meeting with only one session of the North Atlantic Council (NATO's highest decision-making body). Although this short and sharply focused meeting was designed to highlight existing areas of agreement, it failed to gloss over internal divisions and prevent the meeting from being overwhelmed by theatrics and name calling.

Albus Dumbledore, never proud or vain, could find something to value in anyone, however apparently insignificant or wretched. On the 12 November, NATO's own Dumbledore, Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, accepted the 'Diplomat of the Year' [award](#) from Foreign Policy magazine at a ceremony in Washington, DC. This was undoubtedly a well-earned award for a generally [principled and hard-working politician](#). We all have experience of dealing with difficult and confrontational behaviour either in the workplace or in the wizarding world. But the NATO Secretary General has had to go the extra mile in seeking to build consensus in an alliance of states with increasingly unpredictable and unstable leaders skilled in the dark arts: Recep 'Snape' Erdoğan ("We will open the gates and send 3.6 million refugees your way"); Boris 'Pettigrew' Johnson ("do or die" Brexit); Emmanuel 'Dobby' Macron (NATO is "brain dead");

Victor 'Malfoy' Orbán ("procreation not immigration"); and the original Cursed Child, Donald Trump (who described the alliance as "obsolete" while on the presidential campaign trail, and a serial producer of crazy tweets and narcissistic behaviour since arriving in the White House).

As part of the build-up to the Leaders Meeting, the NATO Secretary General [met](#) the US President and attempted to soothe his ego by thanking him for his strong leadership and commitment to the alliance, and by highlighting rising defence investment (more than [\\$100 billion extra](#) in recent years) across Europe. This, of course, is a President who has displayed exactly the opposite: weak leadership and questionable commitment to the alliance's central norm of collective defence, while simultaneously bullying other member states to increase military spending. (Remember, NATO already collectively accounts for over 50% of [global military spending](#), and instead of Europeans paying more, perhaps Americans should be paying less: closing half of over 800 US military bases in more than 90 countries [would raise](#) about \$90 billion for things like Medicare for Muggles).

When politics gets really debauched—when our leaders, elected or otherwise, forfeit any legitimate claim to power—there used to be a place called satire where you could go to recover. Today, however, if satire is not entirely dead, it is certainly on life support. The final straw to break the satirical camel's back came a day after the Secretary General's visit to the White House. While the former US ambassador to Ukraine, Marie Yovanovitch, was testifying before the impeachment inquiry in Washington about being smeared and ousted, at the same time President Trump was [smearing her again](#) in a tweet. Nicholas Burns, a retired career diplomat and former US ambassador to NATO [called](#) it "reprehensible", while another highly



(left to right)  
Dominic Raab,  
UK Foreign  
Secretary, US  
President  
Trump and the  
NATO Secretary  
General,  
Leaders  
Summit,  
London, 4  
December 2019  
– photo credit:  
NATO

However, the  
Cursed Child  
was not to  
be denied.  
On the 3  
January,  
without  
consulting

regarded foreign service veteran, William Burns, has [compared](#) Trump's treatment of US diplomats to the communist witch hunts of the McCarthy era.

What then was considered in NATO's Chamber of Secrets—where all the discussions took place behind closed doors with no minutes or public record—on the 4 December? The agenda was certainly Voldemort-friendly in a bid to avoid further transatlantic clashes: more on ensuring fairer burden-sharing, maintaining strong defence and deterrence against the Death Eaters (Putin and Xi Jinping), formal acknowledgement of space as a fifth domain of warfare (following up on the 2016 pronouncement of cyber as a warfare domain) and a roadmap for addressing new technologies (the Deathly Hallows) and for maintaining the alliance's technological edge in wands and potions. Instability on NATO's south was also discussed, with the missions in Afghanistan and Iraq reaffirmed (but with no clear sense on how they contribute to ending an 18-year-old insurgency in the former and the mass protests in the latter). Intra-NATO differences towards Iran and Syria were ignored.

the Muggles in the US Congress and in allied capitals, President Trump authorised the assassination of Iran's top military commander Qasem Soleimani. This was in keeping with the US [playbook](#) of borderless assassination using armed drones that has been applied regularly in Iraq, Libya, Pakistan, Somalia and Yemen. Having previously threatened to usher in "[the end](#)" of Iran, the Presidential authorisation to kill Soleimani came as no surprise—but NATO's silence on this matter is astonishing. An immediate impact was the [suspension](#) of the alliance's training mission in Iraq, but with the prospect of much worse to follow.

In 2013, NATO agreed a [Code of Conduct](#) for all NATO staff, whether they be civilian or military, which sets out five core values—integrity, impartiality, loyalty, accountability and professionalism—to guide their personal and professional conduct. Perhaps a copy should have been included in the NATO Leaders welcome pack at the Grove Hotel..... alongside the collected works of JK Rowling.

## News, Commentary and Reports:

### Arctic Security

The Arctic region, or High North, strategically important during the Cold War became less significant after the end of the confrontation between NATO and the Warsaw Pact. However, due to both the warming climate in the Arctic and the re-emergence of geopolitical competition in the region, the Arctic is once again of growing strategic importance. Climate change is reportedly occurring at a faster rate than previously thought, which will have a significant impact on the Arctic and on the security of Arctic littoral states.

Rebecca Pincus, [NATO North? Building a role for NATO in the Arctic](#), War on the Rocks, 6 November 2019

### Arms Control & Disarmament

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg speaking at the Public Diplomacy Arms Control Conference in Brussels on 23 October 2019 acknowledged that “these are tough times for arms control”. He added: “the global arms control regime that has served us so well is eroding”, pointing to Russia’s disregard for its international commitments, and the emergence of new actors and new technologies.

The Secretary General said: “if arms control is to remain effective it needs to adapt. I see four areas where we could act together to reflect these new realities. We need to preserve and implement the Non-Proliferation Treaty. We need to adapt nuclear arms control regimes to new realities. We need to modernise the Vienna Document. And we need to consider how to develop new rules and standards for emerging technologies, including advanced missile

technology”. He concluded: “NATO will and must play its part to ensure arms control remains an effective tool for our collective security – now and in the future”.

Having withdrawn from the ABM Treaty in 2002 and the INF Treaty in August 2019, it has been reported that President Trump is signalling his intent to withdraw the United States from the 1992 Open Skies Treaty, an agreement between Russia and the West to permit reconnaissance flights over each other’s territories to reduce the risk of war.

Dominik Jankowski, [How to save the Open Skies Treaty](#), Carnegie Europe, 9 January 2020

Gustav Gressel, [Open Skies: Trump’s next big blunder?](#) ECFR Commentary, 4 December 2019

[‘Tough Times For Arms Control.’ NATO Chief Says](#), Radio Free Europe/ Radio Liberty, 24 October 2019

[NATO Secretary General addresses arms control conference](#), NATO News Release, 23 October 2019

Lawrence Korb, [The Open Skies Treaty may be the next victim in a spiraling arms control extinction](#), Bulletin of Atomic Scientists, 10 October 2019

Rajan Menon, [Hypersonic Weapons and National \(In\)security: Why Arms Races Never End](#), TomDispatch, 1 October 2019

[NATO Rejects Putin’s Missile Moratorium Offer](#), Moscow Times, 27 September 2019

### Book Reviews

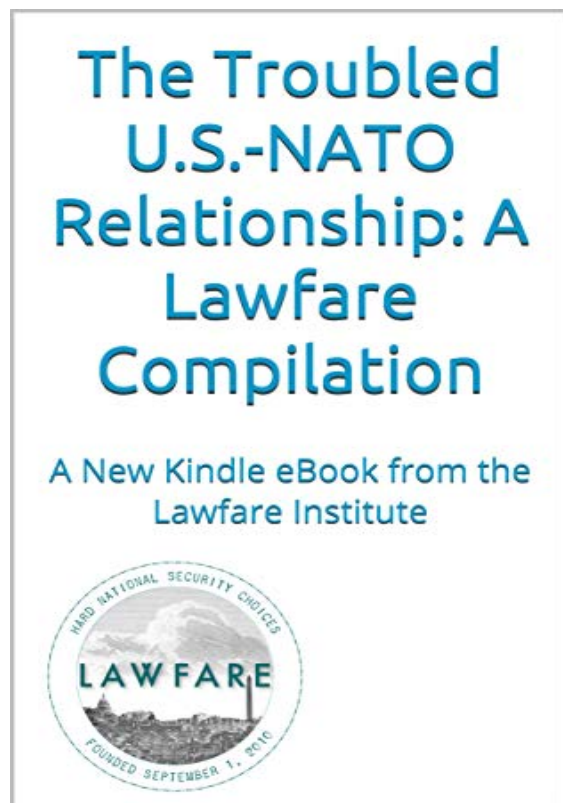
**The Troubled U.S.-NATO Relationship: A Lawfare Compilation:**  
A Kindle ebook from the Lawfare Institute (8 December 2019)

A new Lawfare Institute e-book, [“The Troubled U.S.-NATO Relationship”](#), is now available on Kindle. What underlying tensions within NATO have contributed to recent difficulties in the alliance? How has President Trump’s strikingly different approach than his



predecessors spurred or exacerbated these troubles? And what legal issues come into play as the relationship struggles?

Featuring chapters originally published as articles on Lawfare—a blog dedicated to national security issues, published by the Lawfare Institute in Washington D.C. in cooperation with the Brookings Institution—this e-book pulls together expert analysis on various challenges to the transatlantic partnership.



*Contents:*

Chapter One: NATO and War Powers: Remembering the 'Great Debate' of the 1950s (Matthew Waxman)

Chapter Two: Saving NATO (Scott R. Anderson)

Chapter Three: (Can the Senate Constrain the President on NATO and Russia? (Molly K. McKew)

Chapter Four: Germany's Strategic Repositioning, (Gunther Hellmann)

Chapter Five: Drawing the Line on U.S. Reassurance to Eastern Europe, (Sara Bjerg Moller)

Chapter Six: There Really is an Expert Consensus: Multilateralism Still Matters,

(Eric Parajon, Susan Peterson, Ryan Powers, and Michael J. Tierney)

Chapter Seven: Constitutional Issues Relating to the NATO Support Act, (Curtis Bradley and Jack Goldsmith)

Chapter Eight: What Does North Macedonia's Name Change Have to Do with NATO? (Todd Carney)

Chapter Nine: German Courts Weigh Legal Responsibility for U.S. Drone Strikes, (Emma DiNapoli)

Chapter Ten: Trump, Congress and Presidential Alliance Powers, (Mira Rapp-Hooper and Matthew Waxman)

Chapter Eleven: NATO Allies Need to Come to Terms With Offensive Cyber Operations, (Max Smeets)

Chapter Twelve: What Macron Got Right About NATO, Europe, and the Transatlantic Relationship, (Sara Bjerg Moller)

## Climate Change

Alexander Verbeek, [Planetary Security: the security implications of climate change](#), NATO Review, 10 December 2019

## Collective Defence

In the event of an attack by Russia, the US would have a central role to play in the defence of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, and only the US is capable of ensuring the rapid deployment of forces, cooperation capabilities and readiness issues that as of yet remain unresolved for NATO's European allies, according to a report issued by US think tank The Jamestown Foundation. The report, titled "[How to Defend the Baltic States](#)" examines opportunities for building up sufficient deterrence in the three Baltic countries, and, in the event that this deterrence fails, organizing the necessary military operations to drive the attacker out of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

[NATO Baltic Air Policing mission made record number of flights in 2019](#), ERR News, 17 January 2020

Sergei Boeke, [Creating a secure and functional rear area: NATO's new JSEC Headquarters](#), NATO Review, 13 January 2020

Dmitri Trenin, [European security is becoming Euro-Asian](#), Carnegie Moscow Centre, 18 December 2019

Melanie W. Sisson, [It's time to rethink NATO'S deterrent strategy](#), War on the Rocks, 6 December 2019

Jack Watling, [We Need to Relearn How to do Deterrence](#), RUSI Commentary, 5 December 2019

R.D. Hooker, Jr., [How to defend the Baltic States](#), The Jamestown Foundation, October 2019

## **Cyber Security, Information Warfare & Hybrid Threats**

While NATO does not have its own cyber weapons, the alliance established an operations centre in August 2018 at Mons, Belgium. Several member states have since offered their cyber capabilities. The new NATO cyber operations centre (CYOC) is expected to be fully staffed by 2023 and able to mount its own cyberattacks. In November 2019, the NATO Communications and Information Agency released a Request for Quotation valued at 20 million EUR to upgrade NATO's cybersecurity services.

[NATO Targets Disinformation Efforts](#), NPR, 7 December 2019

[Social Media Platforms Easy To Manipulate, NATO Advisers Find](#), Forbes, 6 December 2019

[NATO-Linked report says Social-Media Platforms failing on Manipulation](#), Radio Free Europe/ Radio Liberty, 6 December 2019

[The 107th NATO Electronic Warfare Advisory Committee \(NEWAC\) convenes in Brussels](#), NATO News Release, 26 November 2019

Mark Pomerleau, [Here are the problems offensive cyber poses for NATO](#), Fifth Domain, 20 November 2019

[NATO to Update Cybersecurity Services and Systems](#), Security Magazine, 5 November 2019

[NATO Allies Need to Come to Terms With Offensive Cyber Operations](#), Lawfare, 14 October 2019

[The Annual Conference for NATO Cyberspace Operations Education and Training convenes in Tallinn](#), The Baltic Times, 2 October 2019

## **Defence Budgets, Procurement and Burden Sharing**

The burden-sharing debate that dominated the 2018 NATO Summit (Observatory No. 48) continued to be a key issue in the run up to the 2019 London Leaders' Meeting.

In a gesture to President Trump, NATO announced in late November that it had agreed to reduce the US contribution to the alliance's relatively small \$2.5 billion a year budget, which covers its headquarters and staff and some small joint military operations. (In contrast, the US military budget is more than \$700 billion). The United States, which currently pays about 22% of the budget will pay less and Germany will pay more: so that both the US and Germany will pay the same, about 16% - effective in 2021. The NATO budget is separate from the 2 per cent of GDP that each NATO member has agreed as their goal for military spending by 2024.

NATO's first two unmanned aircraft arrived at an alliance base in southern Italy in November and December, where reconnaissance missions are expected to begin next year. The first two of five Alliance Ground Surveillance drones arrived at Naval Air Station Sigonella in Sicily after completing 22-hour test flights from Palmdale, California. The RQ-4D aircraft, ordered in 2012, are based on the US Air Force's Global Hawk Block 40 high-altitude and long endurance drone, but modified to NATO specifications. NATO will collectively own and operate the aircraft and will have access to the data and intelligence that is gathered.

NATO and Boeing agreed in late November on a \$1 billion contract to refurbish the alliance's aging fleet of surveillance planes—Airborne Warning and Control planes (AWACS)—ensuring

that they can continue to serve as NATO's eye in the sky until 2035. Purchased in 1977, the 14 Boeing E-3 planes cost almost \$8 billion.

[DOD AI Leader Wants Closer Collaboration With NATO](#), *Air Force Magazine*, 15 January 2020

Margaret E. Kosal, [NATO and emerging technologies](#), European Leadership Network, 13 January 2020

[Arrival of second NATO Global Hawk to be followed by last three in 2020](#), *Defense News*, 30 December 2019

[New NATO surveillance drones bet on Italian safety ruling](#), *Defense News*, 22 December 2019

[Indra to work with Boeing on Nato AWACS aircraft upgrade](#), *Air Force Technology*, 18 December 2019

[After years of delays, NATO receives U.S.-made spy drones](#), *Reuters*, 17 December 2019

[Fortem Technologies Snares NATO Counter-drone Agreement](#), *Drone Life*, 9 December 2019

Lindsay Gorman, [NATO Should Count Spending on Secure 5G Towards Its 2% Goals](#), *Defense One*, 3 December 2019

[NATO moves towards spending goal sought by Trump, Spain lags](#), *Reuters*, 29 November 2019

[Trump administration to cut its financial contribution to NATO](#), *CNN*, 28 November 2019

The world's strongest, nuclear alliance is a castle built on intellectual sinking sand. It's a political, moral, legal and intellectual Titanic.

Jan Oberg, [NATO's 4th crises: The 2 per cent goal as defence illiteracy](#), *The Transnational*, 2 December 2019

[First NATO-owned surveillance drone arrives at Sigonella as alliance looks to Middle East, Africa](#), *Stars and Stripes*, 22 November 2019

[NATO reaches important milestone with Alliance Ground Surveillance system](#), *NATO*

Communications and Information Agency, 22 November 2019

[First NATO AGS remotely piloted aircraft ferries to Main Operating Base in Italy](#), *NATO News Release*, 21 November 2019

Theresa Hitchens, [Multi Domain Drives NATO Industry To Craft New Air Power Interoperability](#), *Breaking Defense*, 15 November 2019

[Secretary General: cooperation with industry is essential for NATO's deterrence and defence](#), *NATO News Release*, 14 November 2019

Malcolm Chalmers, [The 2% Target: Spending Increases and the Russian Threat](#), *RUSI Newsbrief*, November/December 2019, Vol.39, No.10

[NATO demonstrates fusion of active and passive radar detection in military network](#), *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 4 November 2019

Martin Banks, [4 questions with NATO on its unmanned tech test](#), *Defense News*, 28 October 2019

[NATO's RQ-4D Global Hawk Remotely Piloted Aircraft Gets Military Type Certification And Official Callsign "MAGMA"](#), *The Aviationist*, 27 October 2019

[Washington hosts NATO-Industry Forum 2019](#), *NATO News Release*, 16 October 2019

## Enlargement & Partnerships

### *African Union-NATO Relations*

NATO's cooperation with the African Union (AU) focuses on operational, logistical and capacity-building support. NATO has provided air and sealift to AU forces, as well as planning support for the AU peacekeeping mission in Somalia. NATO has also supported the build-up of the African Standby Force through exercises and training. For day-to-day activities, the alliance maintains a liaison office at the AU's headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

On the 4 November 2019, NATO and the AU signed a new cooperation agreement, laying the ground for closer



practical and political cooperation between the two organisations. The latest deal replaces the 2014 NATO-AU cooperation agreement. Neither agreements appear to be publicly available.

The first dialogue on counter-terrorism cooperation between NATO and the AU was held at NATO Headquarters in Brussels on 18 and 19 December 2019. This initiative built on ongoing cooperation through the AU's Centre for the Study and Research of Terrorism and is part of NATO's Action Plan to enhance the alliance's role in the international community's fight against terrorism.

[NATO and African Union exchange views on furthering Counter-Terrorism Cooperation](#), NATO News Release, 19 December 2019

[NATO-African Union plan closer collaboration](#), NATO News Release, 5 November 2019

### **Armenia**

Armenia contributes to NATO-led operations and cooperates with NATO and other partner countries in many other areas.

[NATO Deputy Secretary General meets Defence Minister of Armenia](#), NATO News Release, 31 October 2019

### **Australia**

NATO and Australia are strengthening relations, building on dialogue and cooperation that have been developing since 2005. In a joint political declaration in June 2012, NATO and Australia signalled their commitment to strengthen cooperation, and since February 2013, work is being taken forward through an Individual Partnership and Cooperation Programme. On the 7 August 2019, Australia and NATO [signed](#) a new "enhanced partnership agreement" with a greater focus on the Pacific region.

In November, military personnel from 12 NATO and partner nations tested their Force Protection. Electronic

Counter Measure systems at the Woomera Prohibited Area in South Australia.

[NATO and Australia discuss cyber defence cooperation](#), NATO News Release, 27 November 2019

[Thor's Hammer 2019: NATO partners test IED Counter Measure in Australia](#), Army Recognition, 4 November 2019

### **Azerbaijan**

Azerbaijan contributes to NATO-led operations and cooperates with the allies and other partner countries in many other areas. NATO supports the country's reform efforts.

[NATO Deputy Secretary General meets Defence Minister of Azerbaijan](#), NATO News Release, 31 October 2019

### **Belarus**

Belarusian-NATO relations began in 1992, when the country joined the North Atlantic Cooperation Council, transformed into the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council in 1997. In 1995, Belarus joined NATO's Partnership for Peace (PfP) programme. The first Individual Partnership Programme with Belarus was endorsed by the NATO Council in July 1997. Since then, the number of annual joint activities has increased.

[Russia's close ally Belarus explores working closer with NATO](#), Stars and Stripes, 2 January 2020

### **Bosnia Herzegovina**

Bosnia and Herzegovina has been a member of the NATO Partnership for Peace programme since 2006. The country was invited to join the Membership Action Plan (MAP) in 2010, but it was only in 2018 that NATO Foreign Ministers agreed to accept the submission of Bosnia and Herzegovina's first Annual National Programme (ANP)—a precondition for activation of the MAP. However, disagreements over the submission of the ANP prevented the formation of a

government following the 2018 Bosnian general election. The main Bosniak and Croat parties supported the ANP, but the Bosnian Serbs did not. The country remained in political deadlock until mid-November 2019, when a Serb economist was named as prime minister, after a compromise between its Serb, Croat and Muslim co-presidents.

[Bosnia-Herzegovina's Joint Armed Forces Delegation in Visit to NATO HQ in Brussels](#), Sarajevo Times, 15 January 2020

['Reform Program' Fails to Clarify Bosnia's NATO Ties](#), Balkan Insights, 21 December 2019

[Bosnia names Serb as prime minister after compromise on NATO](#), Reuters, 19 November 2019

### ***China-NATO relations***

NATO has maintained a dialogue with countries that are not part of its partnership frameworks, on an ad-hoc basis, since the 1990s. One such country is China.

At the Leaders' Meeting in December (see below), the [London Declaration](#) recognised China's growing influence and international policies and suggests that these "present both opportunities and challenges that we need to address together as an alliance". The NATO Secretary General said that it was the first time that NATO had addressed the rise of China, [adding](#) "we must find ways to encourage China to participate in arms control arrangements".

For the US President, entangled in a trade war with Beijing, China in the longer term poses a greater strategic threat than Russia. The [2018 US National Defense Strategy](#) cites China as a strategic competitor and the Trump administration has continued to push NATO to address potential threats from China in its day-to-day work in Brussels, as part of a shift in US priorities away from fighting Islamist terrorists and towards a so-called era of great power competition.

Europe seems to be seeking an alternative approach and many European NATO allies already have strong economic ties with Beijing that influence their foreign policy. The conversation at the Leaders' Meeting appeared to be a brief, initial discussion about potential vulnerabilities and challenges in the relationship with China. The focus so far seems to have been on encouraging NATO members to reinforce their networks against actors like Huawei and to engage China where possible. But as China becomes a much more active player in Europe the discussions will continue and deepen.

Subhash Kapila, [North Atlantic Treaty Organization At 70: A Strategic Review - Analysis](#), Eurasia Review, 16 December 2019

Jonathan Holslag, [China, NATO, and the Pitfall of Empty Engagement](#), The Washington Quarterly, Vol. 42 No.3, 2019, pp.137-150

Cary Huang, [Beijing's nightmare is coming true. China is NATO's new communist target](#), South China Morning Post, 15 December 2019

[NATO needs to find its own way free of any manipulation by US](#), South China Morning Post Editorial, 11 December 2019

Frederick Kempe, [Managing China is NATO's biggest challenge yet](#), CNBC, 7 December 2019

Xinhua, [Commentary: Pompeo's China-bashing campaign doomed to founder](#), China Daily, 22 November 2019

[NATO-China Council: Now is the Time - Insights from Ian Brzezinski](#), The Diplomat, 15 October 2019

### ***Colombia***

In May 2018 Colombia became the latest NATO 'partner across the globe'. From 7 to 10 October 2019, a NATO delegation from the NATO International Military Staff went to Colombia for the first time to hold NATO-Colombia Military Staff Talks. NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg welcomed Colombian Foreign Minister Carlos

Holmes Trujillo to NATO headquarters on 28 October 2019 for talks on regional security and strengthening the cooperation between Colombia and the alliance.

[Secretary General welcomes Colombian Foreign Minister to NATO](#), NATO News Release, 28 October 2019

[First NATO-Colombia Military Staff talks in Bogota](#), NATO News Release, 24 October 2019

### ***EU-NATO Relations***

Following the signature of the Joint Declaration on NATO-EU cooperation in Warsaw in July 2016, NATO and the EU have been discussing how to expand their joint work, including by bringing more coherence in their respective defence capability development priorities and output. The European Council Conclusions of June 2018 called for further deepening of NATO-EU cooperation. And in July 2018 a new [Brussels Joint Declaration](#) was signed by the NATO Secretary General, the President of the European Council, and the President of the European Commission. NATO and the EU signed a further agreement on 10 December 2018 to cooperate in promoting good governance in the defence and security sector.

Senior officials from NATO and the EU met at the alliance's headquarters in Brussels on 17 December 2019 for discussions on cyber defence.

[NATO – EU Top Brass Meets, Reviews Joint Cyber Defense Strategies](#), CISO Mag, 19 December 2019

[NATO, European Union experts review cyber defence cooperation](#), NATO News Release, 18 December 2019

David Larter and Sebastian Sprenger, [Despite US complaints, top NATO general says he's working closely with the EU on military projects](#), Defense News, 16 December 2019

[NATO Secretary General holds first meeting with EU High Representative](#), NATO News Release, 9 December 2019

[Remarks](#) by the High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell ahead of his meeting with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, 9 December 2019

[NATO hosts senior military staff talks with EU](#), NATO News Release, 26 November 2019

Luis Simón, [EU-NATO Cooperation in an Era of Great-Power Competition](#), German Marshall Fund, Policy Brief No.28, November 2019

[NATO and EU Military Leadership discuss Gender in Military Operations](#), NATO News Release, 22 October 2019

[NATO Deputy Secretary General and European Commissioner discuss cyber challenges](#), NATO News Release, 11 October 2019

### ***Georgia***

A 2008 Bucharest Summit Declaration promised eventual NATO membership for Georgia—a position reiterated at several NATO summits since, and most recently in July 2018. In October 2019, the North Atlantic Council undertook a two-day visit to Georgia that included a meeting of the NATO-Georgia Commission. Speaking at the beginning of the 3 October gathering, NATO Deputy Secretary-General Rose Gottemoeller [said the visit demonstrated NATO's "ongoing commitment to Georgia"](#). "It is also an occasion to celebrate five years of the Substantial NATO-Georgia package -- the cornerstone of our support for the reform of Georgia's security and defence sectors, and to Georgia's preparations for NATO membership", Gottemoeller added.

Domink Istrate, [NATO's future includes Georgia](#), Emerging Europe, 27 January 2020

[Unprecedented number of NATO-Georgia joint exercises seen in 2019, Georgian PM says](#), Georgian Journal, 30 December 2019

[Georgian Defence Minister, NATO Secretary General meet in Brussels](#), Agenda.ge, 24 October 2019

[Georgia in NATO PA London Resolutions](#), Civil.ge, 15 October 2019

[Rose Gottemoeller on Georgia Keeping Its Eye on the NATO Prize - Interview](#), Georgia Today, 7 October 2019

[NATO Deputy Secretary General in Batumi: Georgia has demonstrated that it is an exporter of security](#), NATO News Release, 4 October 2019

[NATO Deputy Secretary General visits Georgian Coast Guard vessels](#), NATO News Release, 4 October 2019

[NATO Deputy Sec-Gen: Russia doesn't want Georgia in NATO, but we've a different view](#), Agenda, 3 October 2019

[Georgia Hosts NATO's North Atlantic Council In Batumi](#), Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 3 October 2019

[NATO-Georgia Commission meets in the Georgian city of Batumi](#), NATO News Release, 3 October 2019

### ***ICRC-NATO relations***

NATO's relations with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) encompass staff-level engagements and regular exchanges between the NATO Secretary General and the ICRC President. On 9-12 December 2019, a NATO delegation attended the 33rd International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, in an observer capacity. The alliance formally pledged to continue a substantive dialogue with the ICRC to identify areas where training and education provided by NATO on international humanitarian law may be further enhanced.

[NATO renews pledge to strengthen training on International Humanitarian Law](#), NATO News Release, 17 December 2019

### ***Ireland***

Ireland has a longstanding policy of military neutrality, which allows for its armed forces to be used for peacekeeping and crisis management operations where there is a UN mandate, a government decision and parliamentary approval. In 1999, Ireland joined NATO's Partnership for Peace programme and the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council. Ireland cooperates with NATO in a variety of areas,

including peace-support operations. In October 2019, Ireland announced that it would be joining the NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence.

[Ireland joining the NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence](#), CCDCOE New Release, October 2019

### ***Istanbul Cooperation Initiative***

The ambassadors of the North Atlantic Council met with Istanbul Cooperation Initiative partners Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar and the UAE in Kuwait City on 16 December 2019, marking the fifteenth anniversary of the partnership forum. Oman, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf Cooperation Council were also represented at the meeting.

[NATO marks fifteenth anniversary of Istanbul Cooperation Initiative in visit to Kuwait](#), NATO News Release, 17 December 2019

Amanda Webb, [The Istanbul Cooperation Initiative at 15](#), NATO Review, 16 December 2019

[NATO and Kuwait move their long-standing partnership forward](#), NATO News Release, 14 November 2019

### ***Japan***

Japan is the longest-standing of NATO's 'partners across the globe'. Building on initial contacts in the early 1990s, dialogue on common security interests has become more regular and structured. NATO and Japan committed to strengthen cooperation in a joint political declaration in April 2013. NATO and Japan held cyber defence staff talks in October 2019 to assess current cyber threats.

[NATO and Japan intensify dialogue on cyber defence](#), NATO News Release, 9 October 2019

### ***Mediterranean Dialogue***

The Mediterranean Dialogue was initiated in 1994, and currently has seven members: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco and



Tunisia. This framework was set up to develop political dialogue and practical cooperation between the alliance and its partners in the Mediterranean regions. On 25-27 November 2019, the 17th NATO Mediterranean Dialogue Intelligence Experts' Meeting took place in Naples with representatives from the Mediterranean Partners.

[NATO discusses regional security with the King of Jordan](#), NATO News Release, 14 January 2020

[17th NATO Mediterranean Dialogue Intelligence Experts' meeting](#), NATO News Release, 29 November 2019

### **Moldova**

Moldova contributes to the NATO-led operation in Kosovo and cooperates with the alliance and other partner countries in many other areas.

Madalin Necsutu, [Scaremongering behind NATO's Declining Popularity in Moldova](#), Balkan Insight, 2 October 2019

### **Morocco**

In October, a high-level delegation of Moroccan diplomats visited NATO HQ as part of a long-standing cooperation between NATO and Morocco in the field of public diplomacy.

[Moroccan Diplomats visit NATO Headquarters, as NATO-Morocco partnership continues to grow](#), NATO News Release, 17 October 2019

### **North Macedonia**

Macedonia is set to join NATO as the alliance's 30th member after changing its name to the Republic of North Macedonia. Agreement on the name change was reached with Greece in 2018. The name dispute between Skopje and Athens dates back to 1991, when Macedonia peacefully broke away from Yugoslavia, declaring its independence under the name Republic of Macedonia. Greece had objected to the name Macedonia, saying it implied territorial claims on the northern Greek region with the same name.

[NATO and North Macedonia strengthen cooperation through consequence management exercise](#), NATO News Release, 19 December 2019

Robert Moore, [Admitting North Macedonia to NATO brings more risks than benefits to the US](#), The Hill, 31 October 2019

[Jens Stoltenberg welcomes North Macedonia's upcoming NATO accession](#), Parliament Magazine, 28 October 2019

[Đukanović: North Macedonia has secured its place in NATO](#), European Western Balkans, 2 October 2019

### **Pakistan**

In recent years NATO and Pakistan have gradually increased their practical cooperation. Activities include annual military-to-military staff talks and Pakistani military officers' participation in around 50 military training activities with NATO.

[NATO-Pakistan hold ninth military staff talks](#), NATO News Release, 8 November 2019

### **Policy**

Casey Michel, [NATO is expanding, and everyone is curiously silent](#), The New Republic, 16 January 2020

Mark Cancian, [Stop the madness of NATO expansion](#), Breaking Defense, 13 December 2019

James Bindenagel, [Countering disinformation on German reunification and NATO enlargement](#), Europe's World, 9 November 2019

Dylan Meisner, [NATO's membership needs a change](#), Washington Examiner, 4 October 2019

### **Serbia**

Unlike other Western Balkan partners, Serbia does not aspire to join NATO. However, the country is deepening its political dialogue and cooperation with the alliance on issues of common interest, such as defence reforms.

[NATO and Serbia in 2019: Cooperation on the rise](#), European Western Balkans, 30 December 2019

[Political parties in Serbia support cooperation with NATO, but without membership](#), European Western Balkans, 25 December 2019

[Ahead of NATO summit, Serbia buffeted between West and Russia](#), Reuters, 28 November 2019

[Why is the adoption of the new Serbia-NATO IPAP delayed?](#), European Western Balkans, 28 October 2019

[NATO 'Respects' Serbia's Joint Military Drills With Russia](#), Radio Free Europe/ Radio Liberty, 27 October 2019

[NATO co-funded demilitarization facility re-opens in Serbia](#), NATO News Release, 27 September 2019

### ***South Korea***

NATO and South Korea signed a new partnership programme on 21 November 2019 that sets the framework for cooperation and political dialogue. The signature of the Individual Partnership Cooperation Programme follows fourteen years of engagement from a dialogue that was initiated in 2005.

[NATO and the Republic of Korea sign new partnership programme](#), NATO News Release, 21 November 2019

### ***Sweden***

NATO and Sweden actively cooperate in peace and security operations, and the country has been a major contributor to NATO-led operations and missions in the Balkans and Afghanistan. Sweden joined NATO's Partnership for Peace in 1994 and became a member of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council in 1997. Sweden is one of five countries that has enhanced opportunities for dialogue and cooperation with NATO.

[Swedish navy returns to vast underground HQ amid Russia fears](#), The Guardian, 30 September 2019

### ***UN-NATO Relations***

Practical cooperation between NATO and the UN includes operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, cooperation on

tackling terrorist misuse of technology, countering improvised explosive devices, border security, providing assistance to NATO allies in the identification and prosecution of foreign terrorist fighters, and strengthening capabilities to deal with threats posed by terrorist attacks with the use of chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear weapons. On 7 November 2019, the NATO Military Committee hosted the UN Military Adviser, Lieutenant General Carlos Humberto Loitey for a briefing on ongoing activities.

[NATO and United Nations discuss enhancing practical cooperation](#), NATO News Release, 8 November 2019

[NATO and the United Nations take stock of their strong partnership](#), NATO News Release, 5 November 2019

### ***Ukraine***

Ukraine signed a partnership agreement with NATO in 1997 and launched talks on full membership in 2005. But those talks never progressed far, and the situation became even more complicated when Russia invaded Ukrainian territory in 2014, annexing Crimea and launching irregular warfare in other parts of the country. Since 2014, in the wake of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, cooperation has intensified. At the beginning of October 2019, NATO Supreme Allied Commander Gen. Tod Wolters said he backed sending more Javelin tank-killer missiles to Ukraine.

A Council delegation led by the NATO Secretary General visited Ukraine on 30-31 October in a show of support for the nation's sovereignty and the ongoing reform process. Also in October, NATO and Ukraine agreed to launch a new format of cooperation 'One Country - One Plan', which will embrace all previous developments and consolidate them within a single structure of control and coordination. "We relaunch the format of cooperation with NATO, making it much more practical and result-oriented. It is not

only a matter of signing documents but also of implementing NATO standards felt by military personnel in specific prospect,” Ukrainian Defence Minister Andriy Zahorodniuk told journalists following talks with NATO defence ministers in Brussels.

In December, Russian President Vladimir Putin and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky met face-to-face in Paris and agreed to implement a “full and comprehensive” ceasefire by the end of the year in eastern Ukraine. The negotiations were brokered by the leaders of France and Germany, and follow confidence building measures that included a prisoner exchange and the withdrawal of military forces from three key areas on the front line. This process offers an important step in ending the fighting between Ukrainian forces and Russian-backed rebels, which has cost 13,000 lives.

On 12 December, Ukraine signed an updated version of the Ukraine-NATO roadmap on defence and technical cooperation at the 28th meeting of the NATO-Ukraine Joint Working Group on Defence-Technical Cooperation at NATO's HQ in Brussels. The participants reviewed the results of cooperation with NATO in 2019 in the field of arms and reform of the national defence and industrial complex and identified priorities for 2020.

More than 51% of Ukrainians support Ukraine joining NATO, according to a poll by the Gorshenin Institute. Asked, how they would vote if a referendum on joining NATO were held today, 51.2% of respondents said they would support the move, while 30.1% would oppose it.

In January 2020, it was announced that Ukraine plans to send 20 troops to Iraq to support the NATO training mission once it resumes.

[Ukraine joins NATO procurement system](#), Forbes, 27 January 2020

John Herbst, [Think Again](#), Atlantic Council, 16 January 2020

[Ukrainian troops to serve with NATO training mission in Iraq](#), Stars and Stripes, 15 January 2020

[Ukraine, NATO to hold joint exercise in Odesa](#), UNIAN, 15 January 2020

Aaron Mehta, [Ukraine sees two paths for joining NATO. Will either work?](#) Military Times, 12 January 2020

[NATO, Ukraine in 2020 to conduct large-scale joint exercises in response to Russia's actions in Black Sea region](#), UNIAN, 2 January 2020

[NATO outlines key tasks in reforming Ukraine's security, defense sectors in 2020](#), UNIAN, 2 January 2020

[Over half of Ukrainians support joining NATO – poll](#), UNIAN, 19 December 2019

[Ukraine signs updated version of Ukraine-NATO roadmap](#), UNIAN, 12 December 2019

[Ukraine and Russia agree to implement ceasefire](#), BBC News, 10 December 2019

[NATO reviews scientific cooperation with Ukraine](#), NATO News Release, 29 November 2019

Gary Leupp, [Which Is Worse? Trying to Get Ukraine into NATO, or Trying to Use Ukraine to Reelect Trump?](#) Counterpunch, 6 November 2019

[NATO Chief Demands Russia Get Out Of Eastern Ukraine, Stop Supporting Separatists](#), Radio Free Europe/ Radio Liberty, 31 October 2019

[NATO Secretary General addresses Verkhovna Rada](#), NATO News Release, 31 October 2019

[NATO-Ukraine Commission meets in Kyiv, addresses security in eastern Ukraine](#), NATO News Release, 31 October 2019

[Statement of the NATO-Ukraine Commission](#), NATO News Release, 31 October 2019

[Secretary General: NATO is proud to support Ukraine](#), NATO News Release, 30 October 2019

[Stoltenberg on Donbas disengagement: Russia must withdraw all troops, officers](#), UNIAN, 30 October 2019

[North Atlantic Council arrives in Odesa, demonstrating NATO's support for Ukraine](#), NATO News Release, 30 October 2019

[NATO chief lauds Ukraine's pullback of weapons in the east](#), Stars and Stripes, 30 October 2019

[NATO and Ukraine launch new format of cooperation](#), Ukrinform, 26 October 2019

[NATO announces purpose of its leadership's upcoming Ukraine visit](#), UNIAN, 21 October 2019

[NATO representative in Ukraine takes note of confirmation of 'Steinmeier formula' text](#), UNIAN, 8 October 2019

[NATO Commander Backs Sending More Javelins to Ukraine](#), Military.com, 3 October 2019

[NATO, Ukraine wrap up Rapid Trident exercise testing US-backed modernization efforts](#), Stars and Stripes, 26 September 2019

[Hungarian envoy says Budapest does not impede Ukraine's NATO integration](#), UNIAN, 25 September 2019

## History

James Carroll, [What the Dismantling of the Berlin Wall Means 30 Years Later: And the Return of War-as-the-Answer](#), Tom Dispatch, 27 October 2019

## Intelligence

In recent years, NATO has stepped up its efforts in Intelligence by creating an Assistant Secretary General position and a NATO Intelligence Division to better understand the security threats.

Arndt Freytag von Loringhoven, [A new era for NATO intelligence](#), NATO Review, 29 October 2019

[NATO discusses improved cooperation between Intelligence Community and Centres of Excellence](#), NATO News Release, 25 October 2019

## Iran and Syria

### Iran

Tensions between Tehran and Washington have increased since May 2018, when the United States withdrew from the 2015 nuclear deal (between Iran and the P5+1 group of world powers—the US, UK, France, China and

Russia plus Germany—and the EU) and reinstated sanctions with the aim of forcing the country to renegotiate the accord.

In December 2019 and January 2020 these tensions escalated dramatically. In Iraq in late December, Iran-backed militias carried out a rocket attack on a US military base in Iraq, killing a US civilian contractor and wounding several US and Iraqi service members. The US conducted airstrikes in Iraq and Syria in retaliation killing at least 25 militia fighters, and in response Iranian-backed militia groups stormed the US Embassy compound in Baghdad on 31 December 2019.

On 3 January 2020, the US assassinated the Iranian General Qasem Soleimani with an airstrike in Iraq, carried out with an armed drone. The White House argued that the attack was a “decisive defensive action” aimed to deter future Iranian attack plans. In the aftermath, NATO announced a temporary suspension of its anti-IS training mission in Iraq, while Iran retaliated with missile strikes against bases in Iraq housing US and coalition troops, inflicting no casualties which was seen as attempt to prevent further escalation. Shortly after, Iran mistakenly shot down a Ukrainian passenger jet which killed 176 passengers.

Jessica White, [Soleimani's Killing: The Regional Ripple Effects are Yet to Come](#), RUSI Commentary, 20 January 2020

[Trump's NATOME initiative remains a blur](#), The Arab Weekly, 19 January 2020

**Must Read:** [Should NATO stay away from the Middle East?](#), Carnegie Europe, 16 January 2020

Samuel Stolton, [Is NATO about to become 'more involved' in the Middle East?](#) Al Jazeera, 14 January 2020

Matthew Petti, [Trying to Turn NATO Into NATOME: A Trump Administration Adventure](#), National Interest, 13 January 2020



Luke Coffey, [Why NATO won't shift focus to counterterrorism](#), Arab News, 12 January 2020

[Trump Wants to Add Mideast Countries to NATO and Call It NATO-ME](#), Haaretz, 10 January 2020

Matt Snape, [What role can NATO play to ease the Iranian crisis?](#) 9 January 2020

['NATO plus ME': Trump proposes NATO expansion into Middle East](#), Politico, 9 January 2020

[NATO Sec-Gen remarks contradict int'l law: Spox](#), Islamic Republic News Agency, 8 January 2020

[Read-out of phone call between NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg and US President Donald Trump](#), NATO Press Release, 8 January 2020

Justin Ling, [NATO allies should do the unthinkable and listen to Donald Trump](#), National Post, 8 January 2020

[NATO agrees to up contribution in 'fight against international terrorism' after Iran missile attacks](#), The Hill, 8 January 2020

In a remarkably myopic [press briefing](#) after the NATO Ambassadors' meeting, a stoney-faced NATO Secretary General singled out Iran when talking about the need to lower tensions and seemingly parroted what he heard from a US video conference briefing on the regional situation and the merits of US actions. He also refused to condemn or question the assassination of General Soleimani.

NATO Secretary General parrots US concerns over Iran's military programmes and European allies avoid criticising US assassination of Iranian commander, NATO Watch Comment, 8 January 2020

Aaron Mehta and Joe Gould, [Trump wants NATO to be more involved in the Middle East. That may take some convincing](#), Defense News, 7 January 2020

[U.S. briefs NATO over Iran strike, avoids European criticism](#), Reuters, 6 January 2020

[NATO meets over Iran crisis amid 'menacing escalation'](#), Deutsche Welle, 6 January 2020

[NATO addresses Middle East tensions](#), NATO News Release, 6 January 2020

[Nato chief holds back from endorsing US killing of Suleimani](#), The Guardian, 6 January 2020

Paul Pillar, [Would Trump Really Push NATO to Help Confront Iran?](#) National Interest, 1 November 2019

[US to Ask NATO to Pay More to Protect Saudi Arabia from Iran](#), Military.com, 22 October 2019

[Iran Condemns NATO Chief's Accusations](#), Tasnim News Agency, 2 October 2019

### ***Syria-Turkey border conflict***

While the alliance has no mission in Syria, it has been dragged into the debate over what is happening on the ground there. After President Trump abruptly ordered the withdrawal of most US forces from Syria, a Turkish military incursion on 9 October 2019 ([Operation Peace Spring](#)) triggered a new humanitarian catastrophe, with nearly [200,000 civilians](#) fleeing from the Syrian frontier. In the chaos, some Islamic State prisoners [escaped](#)

The goal of the Turkish incursion was to drive the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and its predominantly Kurdish component, the People's Protection Units (YPG), out of the area along the Syria-Turkey border. Ankara considers the YPG to be inextricably linked to the Kurdistan Workers' Party that has waged a decades-long insurgency in Turkey, and often conflates the groups. The YPG, a close ally of the United States, played a key role in the fight against the Islamic State in Syria.

On 22 October, Russia and Turkey [agreed](#) a 10-point plan to create a safe zone in northern Syria, that included an SDF/YPG pullback. A separate [understanding](#) reached between Damascus and the Kurds allows the Syrian Government to deploy its troops in the border area. In the end, the withdrawal of about 1,000 US military personnel turned out to be largely illusory, as an influx of new forces to a different part of Syria left US troop levels [almost unchanged](#).

Germany's Defence Minister triggered a debate within NATO when she [called](#) for

greater German involvement in Syria and for the establishment of an international security zone. However, although the October NATO defence ministers meeting was dominated by the issue, with Turkey largely isolated, there was a lack of interest in taking the proposal forward and by the time of the NATO Leaders' Meeting in London in December 2019 the proposal had largely been overtaken by events.

Turkey's incursion, its accord with Russia and its threat to unleash a wave of Syrian war refugees into Europe if European NATO allies criticised the operation caused dismay in the alliance. While Syria was not part of the official agenda at the Leaders' Meeting, it was clearly the elephant in the room. The Turkish operation in northern Syria and the rapprochement between President Erdogan and President Putin no doubt provided private discussion material for the leaders. It also remains the case that Turkish interests in Syria and in the Middle East more generally, do not coincide with those of European allies. The complexity and fluidity of the situation in Syria suggests that the issue will continue to cause divisions within the alliance.

[Turkey Suggests Invoking NATO Collective Defense Provision in Syrian Conflict](#), National Review, 3 December 2019

[NATO Secretary General participates in meeting of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS](#), NATO News Release, 14 November 2019

Muriel Asseburg and Markus Kaim, [Germany's Syria Debate: Four Key Questions on European Military Action](#), Just Security, 6 November 2019

Asli Aydintaşbaş, [Leverage, for now: Turkey's deal with Russia on northern Syria](#), ECFR Commentary, 30 October 2019

Rene Wildangel, [Clumsy but useful? The German defence minister's initiative for northern Syria](#), ECFR Commentary, 29 October 2019

Jens Stoltenberg: ['Differences' between NATO allies on Syria response](#), Parliament Magazine, 24 October 2019

Paul Pillar, [Pushing NATO Into The Persian Gulf](#), Lobe Log, 24 October 2019

[NATO chief warns 'fight against IS is not over'](#), Deutsche Welle, 23 October 2019

Toni Alaranta, [Turkey's invasion of Syria was predictable](#), FIIA Comment, October 2019

[U.S. welcomes German security plan for Syria, unlikely to take part](#), Reuters, 23 October 2019

[Germany proposes NATO safe zone in N. Syria while Turkey reaches its own deal with Russia](#), New Europe, 23 October 2019

Marwa Wasfy, [Turkey's invasion of Syria a stark warning of how irrelevant NATO could become](#), The Conversation, 22 October 2019

[Germany disregards Turkey's safe zone, plans to propose its own safe zone at NATO meeting](#), Daily Sabah, 22 October 2019

[Germany to pitch international control of Syria-Turkey border zone to NATO allies](#), Defense Post, 21 October 2019

[Trump says he may leave some U.S. forces in Syria to protect oil, but not Kurds](#), NBC News, 21 October 2019

[Pompeo briefs NATO on Turkey cease-fire](#), Politico, 19 October 2019

James Stavridis, [NATO Can Save the Kurds and Make the Turks Happy](#), Bloomberg, 18 October 2019

Daniel Depetris, [NATO ministers need to have difficult conversations to keep everyone honest](#), The Hill, 18 October 2019

"I thought we were in NATO. I thought that the United States and Turkey were in NATO, and then I discovered by tweet that the US had decided to withdraw its troops and pave the way (for Turkey's offensive) in the area. Like everyone else, I realised that another NATO power had decided to attack partners of the coalition fighting Islamic State", President Macron, 18 October 2019

[Macron takes swipe at halting NATO reaction to Turkey's Syria incursion](#), Reuters, 18 October 2019

[Turkey's Syria incursion: Can Ankara force NATO to provide assistance?](#), Euronews, 17 October 2019

Adil Ahmad Haque, [Turkey's \(Latest\) Invasion of Syria: Aggression, Proportionality, and Legal Consequences for NATO and Third-Party States](#), Just Security, 17 October 2019

Alexandra de Hoop Scheffer and Martin Quencez, [Trump's Retreat from Syria Puts the French-U.S. Alliance to the Test](#), GMF Transatlantic Take, 17 October 2019

[As U.S. departs Syria, Kurds join Assad regime to fight a NATO ally](#), PBSO News Hour, 14 October 2019

[Pentagon chief Esper says will press NATO allies to take measures against Turkey](#), Reuters, 14 October 2019

[NATO's Stoltenberg defends stance on Turkey's offensive in Syria](#), Reuters, 14 October 2019

[Turkey's relationship with NATO tested over Syria operation](#), Al Jazeera, 14 October 2019

[NATO expects members to respect international law, Stoltenberg tells Kathimerini](#), Ekathimerini, 13 October 2019

[Trump Orders All U.S. Troops to Leave Northern Syria, Defense Secretary Says](#), TIME, 13 October 2019

[Greece calls for more NATO ships to patrol Aegean Sea following Turkey's Syria offensive](#), Euractiv, 10 October 2019

[Turkey-Syria payback: Norway suspends arms sales to Erdogan regime, exposing cracks in NATO solidarity](#), Fox News, 10 October 2019

[As NATO voices support for Turkey's Syria op, European allies issue reproach](#), Daily Sabah, 9 October 2019

Mikhail Khodarenok, [Paper tiger politics: US Congress hotheads want to kick Turkey out of NATO](#), RT, 9 October 2019

[EU demands Turkey halt Syria operation as NATO chief urges 'restraint'](#), Times of Israel, 9 October 2019

[Turkey's actions in Syria must be measured: NATO chief](#), Reuters, 9 October 2019

Bessma Momami, [Donald Trump abandoned the Kurds. Now, the West needs to finally abandon Trump](#), The Globe and Mail, 7 October 2019

## Maritime Security

NATO's Maritime Strategy, agreed in 2011, sets out a series of activities that includes collective defence, crisis management, cooperative security and maritime security. Eighteen allied nations participated in the NATO Maritime Command's exercise Dynamic Mariner 2019 off the coast of Spain in October 2019. The exercise brought together 32 surface ships, 2 submarines and 18 aircraft, and enabled participants to train together across all maritime warfare areas.

[NATO experts discuss unmanned underwater warfare trends](#), 12 December 2019

Craig Hooper, [Appreciate the peaceful NATO-dominated Mediterranean Sea while you can](#), Forbes, 21 November 2019

[NATO ships test next generation of electronic warfare defences](#), Navy Recognition, 4 November 2019

[NATO Allied Nations Complete Dynamic Mariner 2019](#), DVIDS, 18 October 2019

## Military Exercises

### *Key NATO and allied multilateral exercises Oct-Dec 2019*

**TRIDENT JACKAL 19:** A table-top exercise that trained and supported the certification of the NATO Rapid Deployable Corps Spain as a Joint Task Force HQ to plan and conduct small, non-Article 5 operations against insurgents, mainly on land and cyber domains (23 September – 10 October). Participants: Norway and Spain

**CYBER COALITION:** One of the biggest cyber defence exercises in the world, this exercise trained and tested cyber defenders from across the Alliance (18 – 23 November). Hosted by Estonia.

Luke Coffey, [Major US exercise to highlight importance of deterrence](#), Eurasia Review, 27 January 2020

[NATO ships test next generation of electronic warfare defences](#), NATO News Release, 31 October 2019

[NATO just got together in Portugal to test its drones at sea, underwater, and in the air](#), Business Insider, 30 October 2019

[Fighting the bureaucracy: For NATO, the Defender 2020 exercise in Europe will test interoperability](#), Defense News, 14 October 2019

[Massive NATO Wargame Seeks To Shore Up Fraying Alliance](#), Breaking Defense, 14 October 2019

Matt Field, [NATO's robot navy hints at the future of warfare](#), Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, 27 September 2019

[Nato showcases unmanned maritime mettle](#), Naval Technology, 25 September 2019

## Missile Defence

Major components of NATO missile defence currently include US Navy destroyers fitted with the Aegis missile defence system based in Rota, Spain; and a US-operated land-based system in Romania and Poland known as Aegis Ashore. Other major components include an early warning radar in Turkey. NATO's air command in Ramstein, Germany is the responsible command.

[NATO Shows Off Missile Base In Romania, Calling It 'Purely Defensive'](#), Radio Free Europe/ Radio Liberty, 25 November 2019

## NATO @ 70

The occasion of NATO's 70th birthday was modest: a gathering of foreign ministers in Washington DC in April (see NATO Watch Observatory [No.50](#)), and took place amidst public rifts between the US and several other member states.

Ian Li, [Time to Put the Old Dog Down? Debating the Future of NATO](#), Modern Diplomacy, 14 January 2020

## NATO Defence Ministers Meeting – October 2019

The NATO defence ministers met in Brussels for a two-day meeting to set

the stage for the London Leaders' Meeting in December. It focused largely on the conflict in northeast Syria and the security situation in Afghanistan—but no new commitments were made. Following a discussion on the resilience of alliance telecommunication systems, new security standards were announced for 5G. Plans were also announced to secure priority handling from air traffic controllers within Europe so that NATO forces can respond more rapidly and be better protected.

The Defence Ministers of Croatia, Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia signed a Memorandum of Understanding to establish a Regional Special Operations Component Command. In addition, the Czech Republic joined a multinational effort to acquire and operate new tanker transport aircraft: the Multi Role Tanker Transport Capability.

[NATO's Stoltenberg acknowledges 'different views' on Syria](#), Deutsche Welle, 25 October 2019

[Patriots at Incirlik Base can remain for 6 months more in 2020, Spanish defense minister says](#), Daily Sabah, 25 October 2019

[Despite loveless marriage, NATO to keep Turkey close](#), Reuters, 25 October 2019

[Defence Ministers set the stage for meeting of NATO leaders in London](#), NATO News Release, 25 October 2019

[German defense minister sets out Syria plan to NATO; Turkey, U.S. supportive](#), Reuters, 24 October 2019

[NATO meeting to address Syria, Russia, Afghanistan, Iraq](#), US Defense Department, 24 October 2019

[NATO defense ministers criticize Turkey's northern Syria incursion](#), Defense Post, 24 October 2019

[Pentagon chief to focus on Turkey, Syria at NATO, but short on options](#), Reuters, 24 October 2019

[Amid Syria discord, NATO chief backs continued deployment of allies' air defenses in Turkey](#), Defense News, 24 October 2019



[NATO Defence Ministers discuss security challenges, including situation in northeast Syria](#), NATO News Release, 24 October 2019

[NATO Defence Ministers meet in Brussels](#), NATO News Release, 24 October 2019

[Press Briefing](#) with Kay Bailey Hutchison, US Mission to NATO, 23 October 2019

[5G security, Syria top the agenda at NATO gathering of defense ministers](#), Stars and Stripes, 23 October 2019

[NATO Defence Ministers to address key issues for the Alliance](#), NATO News Release, 23 October 2019

## **NATO Foreign Ministers Meeting – November 2019**

The NATO foreign ministers met in Brussels for a meeting to prepare for the London Leaders' Meeting in December. The foreign ministers discussed three strategic issues: NATO's relations with Russia, arms control and the implications of the rise of China. They also reviewed ongoing efforts to achieve fairer burden sharing within the alliance.

The ministers agreed to recognize space as a new operational domain for NATO, alongside air, land, sea and cyber, and agreed recommendations to consolidate NATO's role in energy security. Finally, the ministers also adopted a policy that sets standards in the prevention and response to sexual exploitation and abuse.

[Foreign Ministers to take decisions on NATO modernization](#), NATO News Release, 20 November 2019

[Foreign Ministers take decisions to adapt NATO, recognize space as an operational domain](#), NATO News Release, 20 November 2019

[Secretary Pompeo's Press Availability at the NATO Foreign Ministerial](#), US embassy, 20 November 2019

[France, Germany offer NATO plans after 'brain death' row](#), France 24, 20 November 2019

[A glance at NATO's aims for December summit, as tensions simmer](#), Stars and Stripes, 20 November 2019

[Germany Pitches Political Fix to Bolster a Floundering NATO](#), Bloomberg, 20 November 2019

[Secretary General welcomes US Secretary of State to NATO](#), NATO News Release, 20 November 2019

[NATO Foreign Ministers to address preparations for London meeting](#), NATO News Release, 19 November 2019

[NATO's alleged 'brain death' is on the agenda as allies prepare for talks](#), Stars and Stripes, 19 November 2019

## **NATO Leaders Summit – London, 3-4 December 2019**

NATO's Leaders' Meeting took place on the 4 December 2019 at the Grove Hotel, Hertfordshire, and a separate evening reception took place at Buckingham Palace on 3 December. Thus, what was [initially billed as a major summit](#) celebrating NATO's 70th anniversary, was downgraded to a meeting with only one session of the North Atlantic Council. In a Trump-friendly agenda designed to hide disunity and avoid the kind of clashes between the US and European allies that marred the 2018 Brussels Summit, the leaders held a strategic discussion on Russia, the future of arms control and the rise of China. They also reviewed the readiness of allied forces, space policy, counter terrorism and ongoing efforts to achieve fairer burden sharing within the alliance (see *NATO Watch Briefing No.70*).

NATO's disunity was reflected in the lack of a summit communique and instead, an anodyne 9-point [London Declaration](#) was agreed. An expert group "reflection process" under the leadership of the NATO Secretary General is to be established to "further strengthen NATO's political dimension".

The leaders discussed NATO's coordinated approach to three strategic

issues—relations with Russia, the rise of China and arms control—without making any new commitments. A fifth consecutive year of growth in military spending across European allies and Canada was announced, including an estimated accumulated increase in spending by 2024 of \$400 billion. It was also announced that NATO's Readiness Initiative has been achieved: 30 battalions, 30 air squadrons, and 30 combat ships are now available to NATO within 30 days.

Space was formally acknowledged as the fifth domain of warfare for the alliance (a decision already taken by NATO defence and foreign ministers), following up on the 2016 pronouncement of cyber as a warfare domain. In addition, a new action plan was agreed to step up NATO's efforts in the fight against terrorism (although no details were released) and new security standards for telecommunications infrastructure, including 5G, were agreed (a decision already taken by NATO defence ministers in October).

Several other measures previously agreed by the defence and foreign ministers were also apparently signed-off, including measures to enhance protection of energy infrastructure, ensure the alliance's technological edge and to step up the response to hybrid threats—although much of the detail on these measures remain outside of the public domain.

There appeared to be no discussion of NATO's new (classified) Military Strategy that was approved by NATO's Chiefs of Defence in May 2019 (see NATO Watch [Observatory No.50](#)). After three consecutive years of summits, the leaders agreed to meet again in 2021.

Rose Gottemoeller, [NATO Is Not Brain Dead](#), Foreign Affairs, 19 December 2019

Michal Baranowski and Julian Lindley-French, [London 2019: NATO's 360-Degree Dilemma](#), GMF Transatlantic Take, 18 December 2019

Tankut Öztaş and Serkan Birgel, [Who is the enemy? Redefining and readapting NATO](#), Daily Sabah, 13 December 2019

Ilan Berman, [The problems plaguing NATO](#), The Hill, 11 December 2019

Ivo Daalder, [NATO at 70: Cracks in alliance are significant](#), Twin Cities Pioneer Press, 9 December 2019

James Jay Carafano, [NATO After London: How Germany and the United States Can Lead the Alliance](#), National Interest, 9 December 2019

[Leaders learn the hard way that Trump will be Trump at NATO meeting](#), CNN, 5 December 2019

[NATO Is Struggling Under Trans-Atlantic Tensions](#), Foreign Policy, 5 December 2019

[Not so nasty: NATO avoids a car crash summit](#), Reuters, 4 December 2019

[Trump drama turns NATO gathering into a diplomatic soap opera](#), CNN, 4 December 2019

Jeremy Cliffe, [Why Nato is still essential for peace](#), New Statesman, 4 December 2019

[NATO leaders downplay divisions threatening military alliance](#), Deutsche Welle, 4 December 2019

Ivan Krastev, [Will Europe ever trust America again?](#) ECFR Commentary, 4 December 2019

[Turkey drops block on defence plan for Baltics - NATO chief](#), Reuters, 4 December 2019

[Footage appears to show world leaders joking about Trump at Nato summit](#), The Guardian, 4 December 2019

[Trump calls Trudeau 'two-faced' after video surfaces of world leaders joking about him](#), Politico, 4 December 2019

[Secretary General: as the world changes, NATO will continue to change](#), NATO News Release, 4 December 2019

[Secretary General: NATO is strong and continues to adapt for the future](#), NATO News Release, 4 December 2019

[Turkey denies blackmailing Nato over Baltics defence plan](#), The Guardian, 3 December 2019

[Alliance divided: Breaking down NATO's factions](#), Politico, 3 December 2019

[Nato summit: Divisions exposed ahead of meeting](#), BBC News, 3 December 2019

[NATO meets as relations with old foe Russia remain frosty](#), CNBC, 3 December 2019

[NATO leaders gather in London to mark the 70th anniversary of the Alliance](#), NATO News Release, 3 December 2019

[NATO Secretary General meets President Trump ahead of Leaders' Meeting](#), NATO News Release, 3 December 2019

[Disruptor in chief Trump bulldozes into NATO gathering](#), Politico, 3 December 2019

[NATO Deputy Secretary General speaks at NATO Engages: Innovating the Alliance](#), NATO News Release, 3 December 2019

[U.S. defense chief calls on Turkey to stop holding up NATO readiness plan](#), Reuters, 2 December 2019

Michael Baranowski, [NATO in 2020: Retirement or Revival?](#) GMF, 2 December 2019

[Defense budgets set to dominate yet another NATO summit](#), Associated Press, 2 December 2019

[NATO is showing its age as the alliance turns 70](#), CNN, 2 December 2019

Joshua Keating, [This NATO Summit, Trump Isn't the Only Leader Getting on Everyone's Nerves](#), Slate, 2 December 2019

Jeremy Shapiro, [A very American crisis: Why Trump is still NATO's biggest problem](#), ECFR Commentary, 2 December 2019

Nick Witney, [Another NATO train wreck? Here's hoping](#), ECFR Commentary, 2 December 2019

[China is 'coming closer' but we don't want a new adversary, NATO chief says](#), CNBC, 2 December 2019

[Russia is not the only pressing issue that NATO has to deal with](#), CNBC, 2 December 2019

[Troubled Nato not in party mood for 70th birthday](#), BBC News, 2 December 2019

[It's No Longer Just Donald Trump Questioning What NATO Does](#), Bloomberg, 1 December 2019

[NATO: READY FOR THE FUTURE](#) Adapting the Alliance (2018-2019), NATO publication, November 2019

Simon Tisdall, [As Nato turns 70, can this feuding global family patch things up?](#) The Guardian, 30 November 2019

[Personal feuding likely to overshadow NATO's 70th birthday bash in London](#), Japan Times, 30 November 2019

[NATO Secretary General announces increased defence spending by Allies](#), NATO News Release, 29 November 2019

[Press conference](#) by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg ahead of the Leaders' Meeting

[Brain-dead at 70? NATO set to ask 'wise persons' for help](#), Reuters, 27 November 2019

**Must Read:** Tomáš Valášek (editor), [New Perspectives on Shared Security: NATO's Next 70 Years](#), Carnegie Europe, 28 November 2019

Paul Mason, [How the left could save Nato](#), New Statesman, 27 November 2019

Mehmet Fatih Ceylan, [Brain dead? No, but NATO needs a new Strategic Concept](#), European Leadership Network, 25 November 2019

**Must Read:** Paul Taylor, [NATO's Next Threat: Its Own Leaders](#), Politico, 25 November 2019

[Trump, NATO Leaders Converge in London: What to Watch](#), German Marshall Fund, 26 November 2019

[Nato to consider expert panel after Macron brain-dead claim](#), The Guardian, 26 November 2019

Henrik Larsen, [NATO at 70: Positioning itself in an illiberal world](#), European Leadership Network, 18 November 2019

['This could get a little ugly.' What to watch for at the NATO leaders summit](#), Defense News, 16 November 2019

David Wemer, [NATO leaders](#) set ambitious agenda for London summit, Atlantic Council, 14 November 2019

Iain King, [NATO is not brain dead yet](#), The Hill, 12 November 2019

Didier Audenaert, [Nasty weather conditions for NATO's 2019 leaders meeting](#), Egmont, 12 November 2019

## **NATO Military Committee and NATO's new Military Strategy**

In May the Chiefs of Defence signed-off on NATO's new Military Strategy, which is not publicly available (see essay in NATO Watch [Observatory No.50](#)).

Air Force Gen. Tod D. Wolters, NATO's supreme allied commander for Europe (SACEUR) and commander of US European Command, told Pentagon reporters in October that the new military strategy allows the US military to have a more productive role within NATO and identifies two basic threats: Russia's status as a near-peer competitor and international terrorism. He also said that it was something that the alliance didn't have for the last 50-plus years. "We did not have a document that the military arm that represents NATO could follow in order to apply a strategy" he said.

On 6 January 2020, the Chairman of the NATO Military Committee, Air Chief Marshal Sir Stuart Peach officially welcomed Vice-Admiral Louise Dedichen as NATO Military Representative for Norway, and as the first woman to serve on the Committee. Appointed in June 2019, Vice-Admiral Dedichen takes over from Vice Admiral Ketil Olsen as the NATO Military Representative for Norway

On 14 and 15 January 2020, the NATO Chiefs of Defence gathered for the 182nd Military Committee in Chiefs of Defence Session, their first meeting of 2020. The two-day discussions focused on NATO's Deterrence and Defence Posture, including the Deterrence and Defence Euro-Atlantic Area Concept, the Enablement of SACEUR's Area of Responsibility as well as NATO's Operations, Missions and Activities. The Chiefs of Defence held a special session with NATO Partner Georgia.

[NATO Chiefs of Defence assess current adaptation and future requirements](#), NATO News Release, 16 January 2020

[NATO Nations Cannot Be Complacent, Milley Says](#), US Department of Defense, 14 January 2020

[Historic moment for the NATO Military Committee](#), NATO News Release, 6 January 2020

[NATO's New Strategy Will Better Protect Europe, Top Commander Says](#), US Defense Department, 4 October 2019

## **NATO Parliamentary Assembly**

The 2019 annual session of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly took place in London from 11-14 October, hosted by the UK Parliament. The committees of the assembly considered several reports. The Committee on the Civil Dimension of Security discussed border security and addressed the refugee crisis. Corruption and the human rights situation in Russia and Ukraine were also discussed.

The Defence and Security Committee dealt with Russia and issues of nuclear deterrence and arms control. Transatlantic defence and security cooperation and the strategy toward Iran were also discussed. The Committee also considered a resolution on supporting allied forces and their international partners' efforts in Afghanistan.

The Economics and Security Committee discussed British trade policy after the UK's withdrawal from the EU, including trade relations with the EU, USA and Canada. The reports of the committee also concern digital markets and cyber security, and the developments in North Macedonia and the country's NATO accession. The efficacy of international sanctions in relation to Russia were also discussed.

The Political Committee focused on the 70 years of the alliance and the state of transatlantic relations. The reports analysed the challenges and opportunities for NATO in ensuring security and stability in Africa, and the regional security dynamics in the Gulf Region.



The Science and Technology Committee considered technology trends and artificial intelligence in security. The main topic of discussion was NATO in today's cyber age, and strengthening of security and defence.

[NATO PA debates situation in northern Syria](#), NATO PA News Release, 14 October 2019

[Secretary General addresses the NATO Parliamentary Assembly in London](#), NATO News Release, 14 October 2019

[NATO PA Estonian delegation attends annual session in London](#), Baltic Times, 13 October 2019

[Instability in the MENA region linked to insecurity on the African continent, NATO parliamentarians heard during a visit to the African Union](#), NATO PA News Release, 1 October 2019

## Nuclear Weapons

NATO's collective defence strategy is based on a mix of nuclear, conventional and missile defence capabilities. The alliance continues to argue that its nuclear arrangements are fully consistent with the 1968 Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), while rejecting the 2017 Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) as being "inconsistent with the alliance's nuclear deterrence policy". Both questionable claims.

[Nuclear weapons and Turkey since 1959](#), Briefing Book, National Security Archive, 30 October 2019

[No longer the obedient NATO ally, Erdogan floats nuclear option](#), CNN, 21 October 2019

[Germany and its NATO allies work out nuclear war scenario](#), 112.international, 19 October 2019

Sébastien Roblin, [Turkey fired on U.S. special forces in Syria. It's absurd that it still has U.S. nukes](#), NBC News, 18 October 2019

John Krzyaniak, [Getting the nukes out of Turkey: A how-to guide](#), Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, 17 October 2019

Hans Binnendijk and David Gompert, [Decisive Response: A New Nuclear Strategy for NATO](#), *Survival*, Vol. 61 No.5, 2019, pp.113-128

...the most pressing concern for the US now is that we have nuclear capabilities at Incirlik that no longer serve the same strategic purpose that they did in the past. Given the growing strain of anti-Americanism in Turkey and Erdogan's willingness to move closer toward Russia, we urgently need to relocate those weapons. Ideally, their new home should be on European soil, with one option being Aviano Air Base in Italy.  
- Chuck Wald, retired 4-star US Air Force general

Tobin Harshaw, [Turkey Is the World's New Nuclear Menace: An interview with General Chuck Wald](#) on NATO's nukes at Incirlik air base and whether the Turks are friends or enemies, Bloomberg, 16 November 2019

## Operations and Missions

### *Afghanistan*

NATO's current main operational effort is the Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan to train, advise and assist the Afghan security forces. NATO ended its combat mission in Afghanistan in 2014, handing security responsibility over to the Afghans, but maintains up to 16,000 troops on the ground as part of the Resolute Support Mission.

Following the collapse of the peace talks in September 2019, the Taliban killed dozens of Afghan civilians in Kabul in suicide attacks and launched offensives on provincial capitals, as well as killing several US soldiers. In turn, Afghan and US forces attacked the Taliban with special forces raids and airstrikes.

According to hundreds of confidential documents obtained by the Washington Post, which have been dubbed the [Afghanistan Papers](#), US officials misled the public about the war in Afghanistan

for years, stating progress was being made when they knew it was not.

Transcripts of interviews, published by the Washington Post after a three-year legal battle, were collected for a Lessons Learned project by the Office of the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR), a federal agency whose main task is eliminating corruption and inefficiency in the US war effort. The 2,000 pages of documents reveal the bleak and unvarnished views of many insiders in a war which has killed about 147,000 people since 2001, including more than 38,000 civilians and more than 2,300 US servicemen and women (with more than 20,000 injured). In financial terms, it has cost about \$1tn (£760bn).

A new study published in January 2020 shows nearly half of all Afghans want US and NATO troops to leave Afghanistan once a peace deal to end the country's 18-year war is signed with the Taliban. The Institute of War and Peace Studies also found that an overwhelming 80% of Afghans surveyed said a political solution was the only way to bring about an end to fighting. The survey found that 46% of Afghans want US and NATO troops out of the country once a deal is struck, while 33% would have them stay.

[Survey: Nearly half of Afghans want US troops out after deal](#), ABC News, 25 January 2020

David Goe, [The Afghanistan Papers and the Perils of Historical Analogy](#), Lawfare, 21 January 2020

**Must Read:** Nick Turse, [Trump Threatens Afghan Armageddon: U.S. "Plans" for the Afghan War Might Prove a Crime Against Humanity](#), TomDispatch, 5 January 2020

Dov Zakheim, [What went wrong in Afghanistan](#), The Hill, 30 December 2019

[Another milestone in enhancing defence education in Afghanistan](#), NATO News Release, 10 December 2019

[Afghanistan papers reveal US public were misled about unwinnable war](#), The Guardian, 9 December 2019

[CIA-backed Afghan units carry out illegal killings, other abuse: group](#), Reuters, 31 October 2019

[Developing Afghan military faculty](#), NATO News Release, 29 October 2019

[NATO Envoy Says Afghans Do Not Want To See A Repeat Of The National Unity Government](#), Radio Free Europe/ Radio Liberty, 29 October 2019

[NATO Renews Partnership with Afghans, Urges Resumption of Talks](#), Tolo News, 26 October 2019

[NATO Defends Commitment to Afghan Mission](#), Military.com, 25 October 2019

Carter Malkasian, [The Logic of Staying in Afghanistan and the Logic of Getting Out](#), Lawfare, 20 October 2019

[NATO Secretary General: We Will Support Resumption of Peace Talks with the Taliban](#), Here and Now, 25 September 2019

## *Iraq*

In January, NATO suspended training of Iraqi forces to ensure the safety of several hundred mission members amid fears for regional stability after a US air strike in Baghdad on 3 January [killed](#) Iranian military commander Qasem Soleimani (see Iran section above). The US military airstrike was ordered by President Donald Trump without consulting the US Congress.

The NATO Mission Iraq (NMI) is made up of several hundred trainers, advisers and support staff from NATO countries as well as partner countries, Australia, Finland and Sweden. Established in Baghdad in October 2018 after three years of war against the Islamic State, NMI is a non-combat 'train-and-advise' mission to help Iraqi security structures and institutions fend off future insurgencies. Its personnel do not deploy alongside Iraqi forces during their operations. NATO's training activities are carried out at the Iraqi military schools in the Baghdad areas, Taji and Besmaya.

The current commander of the NATO mission is Major General Jennie Carignan of Canada. At the end of

November 2019, Denmark offered to take over Canada's leadership of the mission from the end of 2020 until mid-2022.

[NATO chief seeks beefed-up training role in Iraq](#), Military Times, 22 January 2020

[NATO chief says Turkey crucial in fight against ISIL](#), Hurriyet Daily News, 22 January 2020

[If Iraqis order foreign troops out Canada will comply, defence minister says](#), Ottawa Citizen, 17 January 2020

[Foreign troops' future in Iraq uncertain as clashes continue](#), AL-Monitor, 14 January 2020

[NATO and Iraq discuss developments in the Middle East and continued cooperation](#), NATO News Release, 14 January 2020

[Germany, other NATO allies move soldiers out of central Iraq](#), Stars and Stripes, 7 January 2019

[Canadians hunker down as NATO, U.S. offer contradictory messages on Iraq](#), Airdrie Today, 6 January 2020

Stavros Atlamazoglou, [Are US and Allied units in Iraq in danger of insider attacks?](#) SOFREP, 5 January 2020

[NATO suspends Iraq training mission after Soleimani killing](#), Reuters, 4 January 2020

[Canadian military temporarily suspends all Iraq training; troops will focus on their own safety](#), Ottawa Citizen, 4 January 2020

[NATO 'monitoring situation' after Iran General Qassem Soleimani's death](#), Business Standard, 3 January 2020

[Denmark offers to lead NATO training mission in Iraq from 2021](#), Reuters, 26 November 2019

[NATO's training mission in Iraq gaining momentum](#), Jane's Defence Weekly, 11 November 2019

## **Kosovo**

Two decades after the withdrawal of Serbian forces, Kosovo's security is still guaranteed by 4,000 NATO troops, known as KFOR. In December 2018, Kosovo's parliament voted to turn its lightly-armed emergency response

force into a 5,000-strong professional military. Serbia views this decision as a threat to Kosovo's 120,000-strong ethnic-Serb minority. While NATO expressed concerns with this decision, the United States backed the formation of a Kosovan army.

Twenty Years after Kosovo and Allied Force: Controversies, Implications and Legacy, Special Issue, *Comparative Strategy*, Vol. 38 No.5, 2019

Two decades after NATO's Operation Allied Force was successfully concluded in June 1999, to the extent at least of forcing Serbia to give up control of its rebellious Kosovo province, the articles in this special issue, timed to coincide with this anniversary, set out to explore the lasting controversies, implications and legacy of this demonstration of the use of coercive force for declared "humanitarian" purposes.

David Brown and Martin A. Smith, Twenty years after Operation Allied Force, pp.407-408

James Sperling, American leadership of the Atlantic alliance post-Kosovo, pp.409-425

Tracey German, A legacy of conflict: Kosovo, Russia, and the West, pp. 426-438

Sten Rynning, Kosovo traumas: How NATO got out of its depth in crisis management operations, pp.439-453

Aidan Hehir, Kosovo 1999: The false dawn of humanitarian intervention, pp.454-466

David Brown, Kosovo and Libya: Lessons learned for limited humanitarianism?, pp.467-482

Martin A. Smith, Taking stock after twenty years: The mixed legacy of Kosovo, pp.483-496

[Kosovo's Election Winner Signals Tough Stance Toward Serbia](#), Bloomberg, 6 October 2019

## **President Trump and the Transatlantic Bond**

The NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg and many government officials and commentators across the

alliance have articulated the importance of the 'transatlantic bond' and how it has been strengthened in NATO. However, President Trump's nationalistic 'America first' agenda and 'shaking of the NATO tree' suggests that such a bond may only be skin deep and close to breaking point.

A new book written by an anonymous White House insider published in November—*A Warning*, by Anonymous—shed further light on the President's aversion to NATO, alleging Trump claimed the US is "getting raped" by its allies because they are spending far less to be a part of it, and pushed to leave the alliance.

[NATO Secretary General stresses importance of transatlantic bond in Davos](#), NATO News Release, 24 January 2020

[Trump said U.S. is 'getting raped' by NATO, has pushed to exit alliance according to White House insider](#), Newsweek, 22 November 2019

['Unpredictability' Is NATO's Greatest Challenge, Stoltenberg Says](#), VoA, 15 November 2019

## Russia-NATO relations

Relations between Russia and NATO have deteriorated to record post-Cold War lows. Both sides have competing explanations for this. Within the alliance, there remain disagreements about the nature of the Russian threat and how to respond to it.

[Russia invites NATO members to take part in war games](#), Economic Times, 24 January 2020

Mathieu Boulegue, [Military Assets in the Arctic: A Russia-West Correlation of Forces](#), Russia Matters, 22 January 2020

Ben Connable, Stephanie Young, Stephanie Pezard, Andrew Radin, Raphael S. Cohen, Katya Migacheva and James Sladden, [Russia's Hostile Measures: Combating Russian Gray Zone Aggression Against NATO in the Contact, Blunt, and Surge Layers of Competition](#), RAND Corporation, January 2020

Janusz Bugajski, [Subverting NATO from within](#), StopFake, 16 January 2020

Dimitar Bechev, [Russia's strategic interests and tools of influence in the Western Balkans](#), Atlantic Council, 20 December 2019

Robert Beckhusen, [NATO Nightmare: A Russian Invasion of Iceland?](#) National Interest, 15 December 2019

Tom McTague and Yasmeen Serhan, [The Man Who Figured Out Trump](#), The Atlantic, 4 December 2019

Andrew Wood, [Now and then: Navigating the security agenda between Russia and NATO](#), Euro-Atlantic Security Policy Brief, European Leadership Network, November 2019

[Russia warns NATO is 'approaching our borders,' discusses strategy for new decade](#), Newsweek, 22 November 2019

David Axe, [Meet NATO's New Command Whose Job Is to Stop a Russian Attack](#), National Interest, 20 November 2019

Mark Episkopos, [Why Russian Fighter Jets Are Threatening NATO In The Baltics](#), National Interest, 16 November 2019

Shawn Snow, [Russia's ability to hold and capture territory in Europe threatens US and NATO forces](#), Military Times, 7 November 2019

Peter Roberts, [NATO vs Russia at 70](#), RUSI Commentary, 6 November 2019

David Axe, [The Suwalki Gap Is NATO's Achilles' Heel and the Place Where Russia Could Start War](#), Daily Beast, 25 October 2019

[Lavrov sees Norway as possible bridge builder between Russia and NATO](#), Barents Observer, 25 October 2019

[Russian State Media Mocks NATO for 'Catfishing' Troops](#), Polygraph.info, 11 October 2019

David Axe, [The Russian Navy is Building New \(Heavily Armed\) Nuclear-Powered Submarines](#), The National Interest, 8 October 2019

Steve Weintz, [NATO Had a Plan To Kill Russian Submarines with Magnets](#), National Interest, 8 October 2019



## Special Forces

The Defence Ministers of Croatia, Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia signed a Memorandum of Understanding at the NATO Defence Ministers meeting in October to establish a Regional Special Operations Component Command. Under the leadership of Hungary, this multinational command will increase the ability of these four nations to effectively employ their special forces.

Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary and Slovenia jointly opened the Multinational Special Aviation Programme in Croatia in December. The centre is dedicated to training air crews responsible for transporting Special Operations Forces.

[NATO opens Spec Ops aviation school](#), Sofrep, 26 December 2019

[NATO Special Operations Forces](#), Spec Ops Magazine, 23 December 2019

[Special Forces Training Center Opens in Croatia](#), Ainonline, 12 December 2019

[Multinational Special Operations Aviation training centre opens in Croatia](#), NATO News Release, 11 December 2019

[R-SOCC Special Forces Command New NATO Initiative in Balkans – What it Means from a Geopolitical Perspective](#), Communal News, 28 October 2019

[Four NATO Allies establish a regional Special Forces command](#), NATO News Release, 25 October 2019

## Space Policy

At the NATO Defence Ministers meeting in June (see above) a new policy or “a common NATO framework” was agreed to “guide our approach to space”. While the substance of the policy remains secret, the NATO Secretary General argued that it was “not about militarizing space”, but rather NATO playing an important role “as a forum to share information, increase interoperability, and ensure that our missions and operations can call on the support they need”. No further details emerge at the NATO Leaders’ Meeting in London in December, although space

was declared as an operational domain alongside land, air and sea. This allows space to be used for military operations during times of war.

The NATO Military Committee’s meeting in October was also dedicated to space with a briefing by General John Raymond, Commander of the newly re-established US Space Command.

Bradley Bowman and Andrew Gabel, [NATO declares space ‘operational domain,’ but more work remains](#), Defense News, 16 December 2019

Jose Miguel Alonso-Trabanco, [The Dawn of the Age of ‘Astropolitics’?](#) Geopolitical Monitor, 16 December 2019

[Nato leader identifies space as the next ‘operational domain’](#), The Guardian, 20 November 2019

Kyle Mizokami, [NATO Is Preparing for War in Space](#), Popular Mechanics, 30 October 2019

[Space is essential to NATO’s defence and deterrence](#), NATO News Release, 14 October 2019

## Women, Peace and Security

NATO first published an action plan in 2007 to advance the Women, Peace and Security agenda. In July 2018 a new NATO/EAPC Policy and Action Plan was agreed at the NATO Summit, and in September 2018 the [plan](#) was made public. NATO hosted the fourth Annual Meeting of the Civil Society Advisory Panel on Women, Peace and Security in November 2019.

Kathryn Urban, [A Failed Multilateral Consensus on Women, Peace, and Security](#), Charged Affairs, 26 December 2019

[NATO encourages women’s participation in cyber security](#), NATO News Release, 22 November 2019

[NATO hosts the 4th Annual Meeting of the Civil Society Advisory Panel on Women, Peace and Security](#), NATO News Release, 19 November 2019

Teri Schultz, [First female NATO number two hands over post amid Turkey crisis](#), Atlantic Council, 17 October 2019

# Security News from NATO Member States:

## Albania

[Secretary General praises Albania's strong commitment to NATO](#), NATO News Release, 28 October 2019

## Belgium

Andrew Rettman, [State insecurity: Is Belgium fit to protect EU and Nato?](#) EU Observer, 7 October 2019

## Bulgaria

In January 2020, Bulgaria expelled two Russian diplomats for spying. In the same week Bulgarian prosecutors charged three Russians with the attempted murder of an arms trader and two other Bulgarians for a poisoning in Bulgaria that authorities are investigating for ties to the Skripal poisoning in the UK in 2018.

[Bulgaria expels two Russian diplomats for espionage](#), Reuters, 24 January 2020

[Secretary General praises Bulgaria's contributions to Euro-Atlantic security on fifteenth anniversary of NATO membership](#), NATO News Release, 12 December 2019

[The Chairman of NATO Military Committee visits Bulgaria](#), NATO News Release, 26 September 2019

## Canada

[Champagne says Canada committed to its Iraq operations despite Iran's vow to avenge Soleimani killing](#), Globe and Mail, 6 January 2020

[Weaker GDP growth means Canada's defence spending looks better for NATO](#), Globe and Mail, 13 December 2019

[Canada's U.S., NATO allies developing divergent views on weaponizing space](#), National Post, 24 November 2019

[Canada facing renewed pressure from U.S. to meet NATO defence spending benchmark](#), CBC, 24 November 2019

[May calls for NATO review of Turkey amid Syria strike against Kurds](#), The Star, 11 October 2019

## Czech Republic

The Czech Republic became the sixth country to join NATO's multinational tanker fleet following the signature of a memorandum of understanding in Brussels on 24 October 2019.

The Czech Republic currently has 250 soldiers in Afghanistan. The largest component of this force, around 170 service members, is 13 Guard Company, which maintains outer security around the Bagram military base and airfield in the north west of the country, one of the most important military bases in NATO's Resolute Support mission. The guard company's mission is scheduled to end in March 2020 and, according to the Czech Defence Minister, Czech armed forces sent to the country in the future will be focusing on the support and monitoring of Afghan special forces.

[Czech troops wind up Bagram base security mission, will focus on supporting Afghan special forces instead](#), Radio Prague, 25 November 2019

[Czech Republic signs up to NATO tanker effort](#), Flight Global, 28 October 2019

[Czech leader accuses Turkey of war crimes in Syria](#), AFP, 18 October 2019

[Here's our Report from NATO Days 2019 in Ostrava](#), The Aviationist, 25 September 2019

## Denmark

David Axe, [This NATO Member Regrets Buying America's F-35 Stealth Fighter](#), National Interest, 12 January 2020

Soma Biro, [NATO at the age of 70: safeguarding our sovereignty for seven decades](#), CPH Post, 31 December 2019

## Estonia

[Estonia sees life in 'brain-dead' NATO](#), Reuters, 19 November 2019

[Estonian Foreign Minister Makes a Case For NATO](#), USNI, 8 October 2019

## France

In October, France began asking its European partners to send special forces to Mali and other nations in Africa's Sahel region, to shore up local forces who are being increasingly targeted by jihadist groups. The idea is to improve on the basic training for forces which are often outgunned and inexperienced, and free up personnel deployed to France's Operation Barkhane, enabling them to focus on pursuing insurgents and preventing attacks.

In Nov, French President Emmanuel Macron warned in an article in The Economist that European states could no longer rely on the United States to defend NATO and that the alliance was experiencing "brain death" because of a lack of strategic coordination and leadership from the United States. He said the United States under President Trump appeared to be "turning its back on us", notably by pulling troops out of northeastern Syria without notice, and he called on Europeans, as he has often done, to do more in their own defence with the aim of "strategic autonomy."

Axel Hellman and Andreas Persbo, [Insights from Paris: Unpacking Macron's ambitions for European Defence](#), European Leadership Network Commentary, 20 December 2019

Steven Keil, [Trans-Atlantic relations a la Macron could make NATO's brain death a self-fulfilling prophecy](#), Defense News, 17 December 2019

Alexandra de Hoop Scheffer, [For France, NATO was never essential](#), GMF Commentary, 10 December 2019

[Macron defends 'brain-dead Nato' remarks as summit approaches](#), The Guardian, 28 November 2019

Sara Bjerg Moller, [What Macron Got Right About NATO, Europe, and the Transatlantic Relationship](#), Lawfare, 24 November 2019

[Inside Europe: The fallout over Macron's NATO comments](#), Deutsche Welle, 22 November 2019

Patrick Chevallereau, [NATO and the 'Disruptive' French President](#), RUSI Commentary, 18 November 2019

Bill Wirtz, [NATO's Real Enemy: Not Trump But Macron](#), The American Conservative, 18 November 2019

[Paris Peace Forum: Macron attacks 'hypocrisy' over backlash to his NATO criticism](#), Euronews, 12 November 2019

[Why has French President Macron taken the lead in NATO-bashing?](#), Deutsche Welle, 9 November 2019

Martin Quencez, Julie Smith and Ulrich Speck, [What Will Macron's Words Mean for the Transatlantic Alliance?](#) German Marshall Fund, 8 November 2019

Ted Gallen Carpenter, [Macron: NATO is suffering "Brain Death"](#), CATO Institute, 8 November 2019

[French Leader Questions U.S. Commitment to Defend Its Allies](#), NPR, 8 November 2019

Tara Varma, [Rocking the Boat: The Macron method](#), European Council for Foreign Relations, 8 November 2019

Jonathan Eyal, [France and NATO: President Macron Gets Clinical](#), RUSI Commentary, 8 November 2019

Serge Halimi, [How long can NATO go on?](#) Le Monde Diplomatique, 1 November 2019

[France seeks international support for Sahel military coalition](#), The Defense Post, 3 October 2019

Mark Leonard, [Inside Macron's Russia Initiative](#), Project Syndicate, 2 October 2019

Gustav Gressel, Kadri Liik, Jeremy Shapiro and Tara Varma, [Emmanuel Macron's very big idea on Russia](#), ECFR Commentary, 25 September 2019

## Germany

A survey in October 2019 showed that 58% of Germans want Turkey expelled from NATO over the military offensive in Syria. There is even stronger German support for economic sanctions and export bans against the country.

In November, Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg joined German Permanent Representative Ambassador Hans-Dieter Lucas at the Berlin Wall Memorial at NATO HQ for a ceremony commemorating the 30th anniversary of the Fall of the Berlin Wall.

Germany will hit the NATO defence spending targets by 2031, seven years after the goal set by the alliance for members to spend at least 2% of economic output on their militaries, Defence Minister Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer said in November. However, from 2021, Germany will increase its contribution to the NATO common budget to be in line with what the US pays. NATO officials hope the move will diffuse tensions surrounding the 'burden sharing debate' (see Defence Budgets section above).

Rene Wildangel, [A chance for leadership: German foreign policy after the killing of Qassem Soleimani](#), ECFR, 22 January 2020

David Axe, [Is Germany's Military Dying?](#) National Interest, 2 January 2020

[Neo-Nazi scandal hits German elite military unit](#), Deutsche Welle, 1 December 2019

[Germany to match US contribution to NATO budget](#), Deutsche Welle, 28 November 2019

[Germany's Merkel says it's essential to preserve NATO](#), Stars and Stripes, 27 November 2019

[Merkel vows to hit 2% NATO spending target 'by early 2030s'](#), Deutsche Welle, 27 November 2019

[German defense minister hits back at Macron's NATO criticism](#), Politico, 17 November 2019

[Germany warns France against undermining NATO security alliance](#), Reuters, 10 November 2019

[Germany will meet NATO defense spending target by 2031, defense chief says](#), Stars and Stripes, 7 November 2019

[Germany commits to NATO spending goal by 2031 for first time](#), Reuters, 7 November 2019

[NATO commemorates 30th anniversary of the Fall of the Berlin Wall](#), NATO News Release, 6 November 2019

[Secretary General arrives in Germany to prepare NATO leaders' meeting, commemorate fall of Berlin Wall](#), NATO News Release, 6 November 2019

[Majority of Germans want Turkey kicked out of NATO: survey](#), Deutsche Welle, 29 October 2019

[Pressed by Trump over defense, Germany says can pay more for NATO running costs](#), Reuters, 11 October 2019

Jan Techau, [No Trust in Self, No Money for Defense](#), American Interest, 4 October 2019

Marus Kaim, [The Strangely Quiet Visit of Germany's New Defense Minister](#), Defense One, 2 October 2019

Gregor Schöllgen, [NATO and the EU were created in a world that vanished 30 years ago. Clinging to that lost era means denying the facts of the present day](#), The German Times, October 2019

## Greece

The US and Greece have agreed on the text of a new document which will modify the existing bilateral Mutual Defense Cooperation Agreement (MDCA) dating from 1990. Greece is buying three armed drones from the United States and another two from Israel, the country's defence minister Nikos Panagiotopoulos announced in late December. He told the Greek parliament that the drones will be used to defend Greek airspace against potential Turkish incursions.

[Greece To Buy Drones From US, Israel To Defend Against Another NATO Ally](#), Benzinga, 18 December 2019

[Greek PM Requests More NATO Ships for Aegean Migration Patrols](#), Greek Reporter, 11 October 2019

[Secretary General praises Greece's contributions to NATO](#), NATO News Release, 11 October 2019

[Washington and Athens agree on new defence agreement](#), New Europe, 29 September 2019

## Hungary

Hungary blocked a joint declaration by NATO on Ukraine after failing to convince its allies to include a reference to ethnic minorities living there. NATO members rejected “several proposals to include clauses that would force Ukraine to give back rights appropriated from the Hungarian community”, Foreign Minister Peter Szijjarto said in a statement in October 2019. Hungary’s reservations relate to a law passed in April that [expanded the use](#) of the Ukrainian language across state administration and media.

Hungary hopes to reach the NATO defence spending target in 2023, a year ahead of the deadline agreed by allies. The Hungarian Foreign Minister said that Budapest would spend 2% of economic output on its military as a result of buying weaponry and equipment from Turkey, France, Germany and the Czech Republic.

[Hungary aims to reach NATO defense spending goal in 2023](#), Reuters, 20 November 2019

[Hungary's proposals accepted for NATO declaration on Ukraine](#), About Hungary, 4 November 2019

[Ukraine, NATO issue statement on minority rights after Hungary threat](#), Reuters, 31 October 2019

[Hungary Proposals Accepted for NATO Statement on Ukraine ‘after Last Minute’](#), Hungary Today, 31 October 2019

[Hungary vetoes NATO joint statement](#), Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, News Release, 30 October 2019

[Hungary's PM Orban names condition for unblocking NATO's Ukraine Declaration](#), UNIAN, 30 October 2019

[Hungary Vetoes NATO Statement on Ukraine Over Minority Rights](#), Bloomberg, 30 October 2019

## Iceland

Iceland is one of the founding members of NATO, and despite not having a defence budget, contributes to the

alliance in a number of ways. These include maritime and air surveillance from the Keflavik air base and civilian contributions to different NATO missions and operations.

Michael Peck, [Secrets Revealed: America almost stockpiled nuclear weapons in Iceland](#), National Interest, 29 December 2019

[The Chairman of the NATO Military Committee visits Iceland](#), NATO News Release, 12 November 2019

## Italy

In January 2020, NATO received the first two of five Alliance Ground Surveillance (AGS) remotely piloted aircraft at NAS Sigonella, Italy. A collection of 15 NATO allies, including the US, acquired the aircraft. About 600 personnel will fly and maintain them, largely from the main operating base at Sigonella along with small groups of personnel in Belgium and Germany. The NATO Secretary General thanked Italy for hosting the AGS system, and praised the commanders at Sigonella Air Base. “Today, NATO is filling an important intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capability gap,” he said.

[NATO Secretary General visits Alliance Ground Surveillance aircraft in Italy](#), NATO News Release, 17 January 2020

[President Trump calls on Italian President Mattarella to increase NATO contributions](#), UPI.com, 16 October 2019

Ambassador (Ret.) Alexander R. Vershbow and Lauren M. Speranza, [More in the Med: How NATO Can Refocus its Efforts in the South and Italy Can Lead the Charge](#), Atlantic Council, October 2019

[NATO Secretary General highlights Italy's major contributions to Euro-Atlantic security](#), NATO News Release, 11 October 2019

[Italy deploys F-35 on first NATO mission](#), Jane’s Defence Weekly, 26 September 2019

## Latvia

[NATO Secretary General: Latvia is a valued Ally](#), NATO News Release, 3 October 2019



[Fighting 'fake news' online: How NATO soldiers in Latvia got fooled by bots](#), Euractiv, 2 October 2019

[Over 3000 troops begin exercise Silver Arrow in Latvia](#), NATO News Release, 27 September 2019

## Lithuania

In November, around 4,000 troops from 11 NATO nations, including the US, UK and Germany took part in Exercise Iron Wolf in Lithuania.

[NATO drills being held in Lithuania](#), News.am, 4 November 2019

[Army of Lithuania takes delivery of 110 Unimog U5000 light trucks](#), Army Recognition, 29 September 2019

## Montenegro

In October, it was reported that the United States appeared to be finalizing a \$36 million agreement with Montenegro to sell them dozens of brand-new Joint Light Tactical Vehicles.

A new coordination system to handle civil emergencies was successfully tested during an exercise in Montenegro in October. NATO's 'Next Generation Incident Command System' (NICS) provides situational awareness for first responders. It is a web-based command and control software that facilitates collaboration across all levels of preparedness, planning, response, and recovery during natural disasters or other incidents.

In November, it was announced that NATO is deploying a specialized team to Montenegro to try to thwart hybrid attacks by pro-Russian factions against the nation, which holds its first elections since becoming an alliance member next year, officials said. The team being dispatched to Montenegro will be the first to be deployed by the alliance, which established specialized counter hybrid support teams last year to help member nations prepare and defend against multipronged, often covert operations.

[Montenegro among the first NATO allies to receive JLTVs](#), Defence Blog, 21 December 2019

[First NATO counter-hybrid warfare team to deploy to Montenegro](#), Stars and Stripes, 8 November 2019

[Next-Generation Incident Command System tested in Montenegro](#), NATO NewsRelease, 7 October 2019

[A new NATO buyer for JLTV: More buyers on the way?](#) Breaking Defense, 4 October 2019

## Netherlands

[EU needs NATO protection against China and Russia — Dutch PM Rutte](#), Euronews, 4 October 2019

## Norway

Norway will not be part of NATO's joint ballistic missile defence system, the country confirmed as part of its October budget announcement. "As the result of a broad review of political and security factors, the government has decided that Norway will not consider acquiring sensors or defence missiles which can participate in NATO's missile defence system", the budget states. While Norway has been a long-standing supporter of NATO's policy of developing a joint missile defence system, the country opposes merging the system with the wider-ranging US missile defence system. One aspect of that is a reluctance to antagonize Russia, with which Norway shares a border.

[USA in the High North - A Lasting Engagement](#), High North News, 24 January 2020

[Norway against suspending Turkey from NATO](#), Anadolu Agency, 15 October 2019

[Norway decides against participation in Nato missile defence system](#), The Local, 8 October 2019

[Russian Special Forces allegedly spotted in Norway](#), Spec Ops Magazine, 4 October 2019

['Gross Provocation': Russia Dismisses 'Special Forces in Norway' as 'Fake News'](#), Sputnik, 30 September 2019

[Norwegian Media Claim Russian Special Forces Spotted on Spitsbergen Archipelago](#), Sputnik, 30 September 2019

## Poland

The Polish army took over the lead of NATO's Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF) from Germany on 1 January 2020, placing thousands of soldiers on standby and ready to deploy within days. The core of the VJTF in 2020 will be Poland's 21st Podhale Rifles Brigade, supported by units from Poland's 12th Mechanized Division, the 3rd Transport Aviation Wing, Military Police, as well as logistics experts and Counter-Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (C-CBRN) specialists. Around 6,000 soldiers will serve on the Spearhead Force, including around 3,000 from Poland. Units from Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Latvia, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Slovakia, Turkey and the United Kingdom will also serve on the force. The United States stands ready to support the VJTF with airpower and other combat support.

[Poland calls for NATO 'readiness' on Russia](#), EU Observer, 27 January 2020

[Poland takes charge of NATO high readiness force](#), NATO News Release, 30 December 2019

Poland's prime minister brands Macron 'irresponsible' on NATO, Financial Times, 11 November 2019

[Turkey cannot go back on NATO Poland-Baltics plan: Polish official](#), Reuters, 9 December 2019

[Poland's populist Law and Justice party win second term in power](#), The Guardian, 14 October 2019

Fred Lucas, [How a Former Warsaw Pact Nation Became an Example for NATO Allies](#), The Daily Signal, 3 October 2019

## Romania

[NATO Secretary General highlights Romania's contributions to Euro-Atlantic security, stresses importance of peace and stability in the Middle East](#), NATO News Release, 12 January 2020

## Spain

Spain's defence ministry is opening more special forces roles to women as part of international efforts to tackle terrorism and unconventional warfare. Defence Minister Margarita Robles says the UN has called for more women to help resolve conflicts worldwide. Arabic-speaking women are among those sought for UN- or NATO-led missions in conflict areas, such as Iraq or Libya.

[Spain in drive to get women into special forces](#), BBC News, 13 December 2019

## Turkey

In October, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan reportedly told his party members in a meeting weeks ago that he found it unacceptable that Turkey was barred from pursuing a nuclear weapons programme due to obligations under the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty.

Turkey's relations with most European allies are deeply troubled, and relations with the United States have yo-yoed between near collapse and close friendship over a range of issues. In particular, the decisions by the Turkish President to buy a Russian air defence system and to move forces into Syria (see 'Syria-Turkey border conflict' section above), led to open questions about whether Turkey remains a viable NATO ally. Add a separate dispute with the EU over energy exploration in the waters off Cyprus, and Turkey has been the subject of arms embargoes and other sanctions from NATO allies during this period.

In mid-December President Erdogan threatened to close two critical NATO

bases if the US imposed sanctions over Turkey's purchase of a Russian missile system, escalating a long-standing row. The two bases are: an early-warning radar at Kurecik, a critical part of NATO's ballistic-missile defence capabilities; and Incirlik Air Base, close to Syria, which is used by the US to store tactical nuclear weapons and conduct airstrikes against Islamic State.

[Turkey opposed permanent NATO presence in the Black Sea, rebuffed Romanian proposal](#), Nordic Monitor, 16 January 2020

Tatiana Kanunnikova, [Turkey weighs challenges, benefits of NATO membership](#), Asia Times, 13 January 2020

Louis Savola, [NATO and the Turkish Question](#), International Policy Digest, 30 December 2019

[Despite issues, Turkish military bases still key for US](#), Anadolu Agency, 29 December 2019

Iyad Dakka, [Turkey and NATO may be at loggerheads, but they still need each other](#), World Politics Review, 18 December 2019

[Spain extends Patriot deployment since NATO ally's security is crucial: Ambassador](#), Hurriyet Daily News, 16 December 2019

[Erdogan Drags NATO Bases Into Row Over Russian Missile Deal](#), Bloomberg, 16 December 2019

[Turkey Nears Russia Missile-Production Deal After NATO Warnings](#), Bloomberg, 13 December 2019

Semih Idiz, [London summit exposes Turkey's isolation, lack of clout in NATO](#), Al-Monitor, 12 December 2019

Valeria Gianotta, [NATO should remember its raison d'être](#), Daily Sabah, 12 December 2019

[Turkey's military drones: an export product that's disrupting NATO](#), Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, 6 December 2019

[Turkey made no concessions at NATO summit, FM Çavuşoğlu says](#), Daily Sabah, 6 December 2019

Asli Aydıntaşbaş, [Turkey and NATO: Is there life after brain-death?](#) ECFR Commentary, 5 December 2019

Bulent Aliriza, [Erdogan and Trump at the NATO Summit: Another Display of Solidarity](#), CSIS Commentary, 5 December 2019

Rachel Ellehus, [Turkey and NATO: A Relationship Worth Saving](#), CSIS Commentary, 2 December 2019

[Macron is a sponsor of terrorism, says Turkish foreign minister](#), BBC News, 28 November 2019

[NATO must address concerns of all its allies: Turkish FM](#), Hurriyet Daily News, 28 November 2019

[Turkey not backing down in NATO defense plans dispute: source](#), Reuters, 27 November 2019

[Exclusive: Turkey holds up NATO military plans over Syria dispute – sources](#), Reuters, 26 November 2019

[Turkey's Erdogan calls Macron's NATO comments 'unacceptable'](#), France 24, 13 November 2019

Jay Nordlinger, [Turkey, NATO, and a Shifting World](#), National Review, 12 November 2019

Sebastien Roblin, [Turkey Threatens to Buy Russian Su-35 Jets If It Can't Get F-35 Stealth Fighters](#), National Interest, 9 November 2019

Jay Nordlinger, [Turkey, NATO, and a Shifting World](#), National Review, 7 November 2019

[Russia Completes Arms Sale to NATO Member Turkey](#), Caspian News, 4 November 2019

[No NATO country witnessed as many terror attacks as Turkey, Sec. General says](#), Daily Sabah, 3 November 2019

[US secrecy on Baghdadi raid exposes distrust of NATO ally Turkey](#), France 24, 29 October 2019

[NATO-Turkey partnership needs to be strengthened: US defense chief](#), Hurriyet Daily News, 24 October 2019

Peter Pry, [Expelling Turkey from NATO would create a dangerous foe](#), The Hill, 23 October 2019

[US sanctions against Turkey contradict spirit of NATO, Defense Ministry says](#), Daily Sabah, 17 October 2019

[The Reason Why NATO Can't Just Kick Turkey Out](#), CBN News, 16 October 2019

Aurel Sari, [Can Turkey be Expelled from NATO? It's Legally Possible, Whether or Not Politically Prudent](#), Just Security, 15 October 2019

Max Boot, [NATO's Turkey Ties Must Change](#), Council on Foreign Relations, 15 October 2019

Dilara Aslan, [Turkish operation defends NATO, EU borders as well as its own](#), Daily Sabah, 12 October 2019

[Turkey says it expects solidarity from NATO against threats](#), Reuters, 11 October 2019

[Secretary General in Istanbul: Turkey is a great power in this great region and with great power comes great responsibility](#), NATO News Release, 11 October 2019

[Kick Turkey out of NATO? It wouldn't be easy](#), Stars and Stripes, 11 October 2019

[Turkey wants to see clear solidarity in terrorism fight](#), Anadolu Agency, 11 October 2019

Kathy Gilsinan, [Why Is Turkey in NATO Anyway?](#) The Atlantic, 11 October 2019

As NATO has been working on a counter strategy to neutralize the non-conventional cyber threat that originates from Russia, Iran, China and others, NATO member Turkey has secretly been running a project to undermine the alliance structure from within.

The social media and Internet campaigns run by associates of Turkish President Recep Erdoğan harbour anti-NATO and anti-Western sentiments and portray NATO and allies as enemies that are bent on harming Turkey. The most vicious group among various entities that were coordinated by Erdoğan and his office is identified as the Pelican group.

[Turkey undermines NATO cyber-army initiative](#), Nordic Monitor, 26 September 2019

## United Kingdom

The UK Government's [Spending Round](#) announced on 4 September confirmed the significant shift in the financial fortunes of the UK Ministry of Defence (MoD) that has been taking place over the past two years. The additional resources for defence will lead to a real increase in the core MoD budget (excluding operations) of 2.3% for 2020-21, bringing the four-year real-terms increase in core defence spending to some 9.6%, the biggest such increase since the early 1980s. The new increases will allow the UK to continue to meet NATO's 2% target.

It was reported in October, that a new UK-US agreement will create an expedited process to share electronic communications concerning terrorism, computer crimes and child exploitation. It is the first-ever bilateral data access deal of its kind and will compel tech companies to hand over relevant content to police and intelligence agencies in both countries.

Nearly 4,000 troops, 58 aircraft, 16 ships and three submarines from 12 NATO nations as well as Japan and the UAE, participated in the NATO exercise Joint Warrior in Scotland in October.

An investigation by [BBC Panorama](#) and the Sunday Times aired in November accused the UK government and armed forces of covering up the killing of civilians by British troops in Afghanistan and Iraq. The reporters spoke to 11 British detectives who said they found credible evidence of war crimes. The International Criminal Court said it would independently assess the findings.

In an opinion poll, some four fifths of the people polled (79%) still think membership of NATO is important to maintaining UK national interests. Identical portions said the same for the World Trade Organization and being a Permanent Member of the UN Security Council, while 68% said likewise about the G20. For control purposes, the

questionnaire also asked about membership of the General Conference on Weights and Measures, with a notably smaller 42% calling it important.

However, a lot of people polled seemed confused about NATO's fundamental reason to exist. A separate, national sample was shown a list of statements and asked to say which one, if any, best described the core purpose of NATO. Answers included a broadly accurate one of 'to safeguard the security of Western countries', as well as a made-up answer about providing 'the military force of the United Nations'. Less than half (45%) answered 'to safeguard the security of Western countries', while the remaining 55% chose either 'Don't know'/'None of these'(25%), or a different mission statement (30%), including 15% thinking it constitutes the UN's military arm.

In 1995, then defence secretary Malcolm Rifkind, suggested that Russia be allowed to become an "associate member" of NATO, according to confidential Downing Street files released in late December by the UK [National Archives](#). The plan to help dispel Kremlin suspicions of the alliance's eastwards expansion, was later dismissed as "farcical" at a top-level Government meeting.

The cost of maintaining three UK nuclear sites spiralled by £1.35bn because of poor management by the [MoD](#), the National Audit Office found. The auditors also said that work to complete the building and maintenance of the UK's [Trident](#) nuclear weapon system will also be completed more than six years later than planned.

Tom Plant, [Britain's Nuclear Projects: Less Bang and More Whimper](#), RUSI Commentary, 22 January 2020

Nick Witney, [Control issues: The UK's defence procurement woes](#), 14 January 2020

[MoD mistakes led to Trident upkeep costs rising by £1.35bn](#), The Guardian, 10 January 2020

John M. Roberts, [The Soleimani assassination: A view from Britain](#), Atlantic Council, 4 January 2020

[MoD proposed Russian membership of Nato in 1995, files reveal](#), The Guardian, 31 December 2019

[National archives: Officials floated 'farcical' idea of Russia joining Nato](#), BBC News, 31 December 2019

[British PM Hails NATO, Says He Seeks Better Russia Relations](#), Radio Free Europe/ Radio Liberty, 22 December 2019

During the 15 or so years I covered defence for the Guardian, I have calculated that, on the basis of official figures and independent analysis, as much as £280bn was wasted on disastrous equipment decisions

Richard Norton-Taylor, [Dominic Cummings is right - if only about Britain's dysfunctional defence spending](#), The Guardian, 17 December 2019

Malcolm Chalmers, [Clarity on Brexit: The Security Consequences](#), RUSI Commentary, 13 December 2019

**Must Read:** Megan Karlshoej-Pedersen and Liam Walpole, [Time for external oversight of Britain's Special Forces](#), Open Democracy, 5 December 2019

Joel Rogers de Waal, [The British Public Still Believes in NATO - Even if Most Cannot Say What It Does](#), RUSI Commentary, 3 December 2019

Jack Watling, [The Future of Fires: Maximising the UK's Tactical and Operational Firepower](#), RUSI Occasional Papers, 27 November 2019

Sidharth Kaushal and Jack Watling, [Requirements for the UK's Amphibious Forces in the Future Operating Environment](#), RUSI Occasional Papers, 20 November 2019

[UK government and military accused of war crimes cover-up](#), BBC News, 17 November 2019

[British government and army accused of covering up war crimes](#), The Guardian, 17 November 2019

Andrew Curtis, [Planning for the Next Strategic Defence and Security Review - A](#)



[Much-Needed Peg in the Ground](#), RUSI Commentary, 12 November 2019

[NATO Parliamentary Assembly, October 2019: Foreign Secretary's speech](#), UK Government News Release, 12 October 2019

Alice Billon-Galland, [UK defence policy and Brexit: Time to rethink London's European strategy](#), European Leadership Network, European Defence Policy Brief, October 2019

Over the last 20 years, the UK has researched nuclear arms control and disarmament verification in increasing breadth and depth. This activity has become increasingly internationalised and has formed much of the UK's recent disarmament diplomacy. It stems in part from the degree of internal conflict in the UK about its nuclear weapon status, and the perceived need to take the lead in nuclear disarmament matters, set against decreasing room for manoeuvre to make substantive reductions to its declared nuclear arsenal. The degree to which UK verification research is genuinely intended to make a tangible disarmament contribution therefore merits scrutiny. This paper lays out how Finland and other Nordic states could contribute by encouraging the UK to take more meaningful action, inter alia by linking UK verification research and its modernisation programme to potential arms control futures.

Tom Plant, [The disarmament laboratory: Substance and performance in UK nuclear disarmament verification research](#), Finnish Institute of International Affairs, FIIA Working Paper 111, 10 October 2019

[Over 3,000 troops from 14 countries in UK for NATO Exercise](#), UK MoD News Release, 7 October 2019

Malcolm Chalmers, [The End of Defence Austerity? The 2019 Spending Round and the UK Defence Budget](#), RUSI Commentary, 30 September 2019

Liam Walpole, [We Need to Talk About the UK's New Special Operations Concept](#), ORG Comment, 30 September 2019

[Britain is 'at war every day' due to constant cyber attacks, Chief of the Defence Staff says](#), The Telegraph, 29 September 2019

Agne Cepinskyte, [Global Britain's Arctic Security Policy: Going Forward While Looking Back](#), Finnish Institute of International Affairs, FIIA Briefing Paper No.270, September 2019

## United States

It was reported in October 2019, that the US nuclear arsenal quietly underwent modernization updates in June, which included the elimination of reliance on floppy disks. In December, the US Navy awarded the largest-ever shipbuilding contract, over \$22 billion, for nine nuclear-powered submarines. Also in December, the Senate foreign relations committee voted unanimously for a bipartisan bill to stop President Trump from withdrawing the US from NATO. The bill will now be considered within the Senate.

Mandy Smithberger, [Never the Pentagon: How The Military-Industrial Complex Gets Away With Murder in Contract After Contract](#), TomDispatch, 21 January 2020

Karen J. Greenberg and Joshua L. Dratel, [Guantánamo's Indelible Legacy: Or How This Became a Gitmo World](#), TomDispatch, 19 January 2020

Allegra Harpootlian, [How the President Became a Drone Operator: From Obama to Trump, the Escalation of Drone Warfare](#), Tom Dispatch, 12 January 2020

[Would Trump drive NATO exit? Congress works on roadblocks](#), Defense News, 16 December 2019

**Must Read:** William D. Hartung, [The Pentagon Budget Still Rising, 40 Years Later: The Stubborn Persistence of the Military-Industrial State](#), TomDispatch, 15 December 2019

[Senate committee passes bipartisan bill to stop Trump withdrawing from Nato](#), The Guardian, 11 December 2019

**Must Read:** Andrea Mazzarino, [Bearing Witness to the Costs of War: On Being a Military Spouse and Writing About Our Post-9/11 Wars](#), TomDispatch, 24 November 2019

William Hartung, [America's Arms Sales Addiction: The 50-Year History of U.S. Dominance of the Middle Eastern Arms Trade](#), TomDispatch, 17 November 2019

[Trump's Pardons for Servicemen Raise Fears That Laws of War Are History](#), New York Times, 16 November 2019

[Secretary General thanks President Trump for his commitment to NATO](#), NATO News Release, 14 November 2019

[NATO Secretary General begins official visit to the United States](#), NATO News Release, 13 November 2019

Danny Sjrursen, [Watching My Students Turn Into Soldiers of Empire: A New Generation of West Pointers Joins America's Hopeless Wars](#), Tom Dispatch, 7 November 2019

**Must Read:** Nick Turse, [Winter Is Coming: Castle Black, the Syrian Withdrawal, and the Battle of the Bases](#), TomDispatch, 5 November 2019

Andrew Bacevich, [False Security: Donald Trump and the Ten Commandments \(Plus One\) of the National Security State](#), TomDispatch, 31 October 2019

Allegra Harpootlian, [Why I Weep While I Work: Or What It Means to Experience America's Wars From a Computer Screen Away](#), TomDispatch, 29 October 2019

Chris Raggett and Jeremy Shapiro, [The 5 craziest Trump foreign policy ideas \(in the last three months\)](#), ECFR, 28 October 2019

Salvatore Babones, [The United States Has Suppliants, Not Allies](#), National Interest, 26 October 2019

William J. Astore, [Killing Me Softly with Militarism: The Decay of Democracy in America](#), TomDispatch, 24 October 2019

Closing half or more of our foreign bases could actually enhance our national security by defusing unnecessary tensions and discouraging ill-thought-out interventions. And it would raise about \$90 billion for things like Medicare for All. What are we doing with that [base in Aruba](#), anyway?

**Must Read:** Lindsay Koshgarian, [We Don't Need to Raise Taxes to Have 'Medicare for All'](#), New York Times, 17 October 2019

### Estimate of US troops abroad:

Afghanistan	12,000-13,000
Africa	6,000-7,000
Australia	About 2,000
Iraq	About 6,000
Japan & South Korea	About 78,000
NATO nations	More than 35,000
Philippines	About 250
Saudi Arabia & Persian Gulf	45,000-65,000
Syria	About 200
Total:	About 200,000

[Despite Vow to End 'Endless Wars,' Here's Where About 200,000 Troops Remain](#), New York Times, 21 October 2019

Rebecca Gordon, [Extorting Ukraine is Bad Enough: But Trump Has Done Much Worse](#), TomDispatch, 15 October 2019

William Hartung and Mandy Smithberger, [Bestselling Pentagon Fiction: Beware of Defense Secretaries Pledging Reform](#), TomDispatch, 26 September 2019

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