

STUDY GUIDE

NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL

AUTHORS: VIOLET FROST
VINCENT RASTETTER



UNIVERSITY OF LJUBLJANA
Faculty of Law



MUNLawS 2026

NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL

Study Guide

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EDITORS: ŽIVA SRŠE, ŽIVA ROZINA

From the Secretary General...

Dear Delegates,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to this year's MUNLawS!

After ten months of planning, organising, and probably overthinking every possible detail, the day has finally come! We have put a lot of ourselves into making this conference happen, and we hope that you will enjoy it as much as we have enjoyed creating it.

Having been part of the MUN community for a few years now, organising a conference of your own is definitely a different experience, one filled with equal parts excitement, stress, and the occasional crisis. A big thank you goes to my team, Živa Srše, Živa Rozina, Vito Vidmar, and Maks Novak, for everything they have done along the way. I truly could not have asked for a better team!

*As a law student with a particular interest in human rights, I find myself increasingly concerned by the ongoing conflicts and divisions across different regions of the world. This is one of the reasons why, this year, we have chosen **Strengthening Regional Cooperation** as our overall theme.*

While that might sound like a very diplomatic way of saying “let's get along”, there is much more to it. In a world that often seems too divided, cooperation can sometimes feel difficult but that is exactly why it matters. And what better place to promote cooperation among young people than an MUN, where people from different countries and backgrounds come together, ready to listen to one another and, sometimes, even let go of their own ideas for the sake of finding common ground?

Throughout this conference, I encourage you to challenge one another, question your own assumptions, and defend your positions but most importantly, remember to listen to one another. The goal is not to be the loudest person in the room, but rather to see what we can achieve when all those voices are heard.

And of course, do not forget to have fun. At the end of the day, we are not real diplomats (yet)!

I hope you have an unforgettable few days filled with great debates, questionable amounts of caffeine, and, hopefully, many new friendships.

See you in the committee!

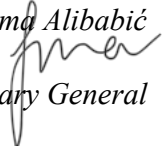
Irina Alibabić

Secretary General



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INTRODUCTION TO THE COMMITTEE

Chairs' Welcome

Distinguished Ambassadors,

Welcome to the North Atlantic Council (NAC) at the 2026 conference of MUNLawS. We are thrilled to host you as your Chairs and wish you luck in your preparations. You will find that reading the study guide is essential to not only individual—but collective—success. All delegates are expected to acknowledge and understand the content within this guide. Curtailing this preparation will be evident in your performance and will hinder our ability to provide strong feedback. It is our goal to push you to be better debaters, thinkers, and diplomats—help us do so.

Our names are Vincent Rastetter and Violet Frost, and we have chaired together before for the advanced UN Security Council (UNSC) committee at the 2026 Sorbonne International MUN (SIMUN) in Paris, France. (You could say we are getting the dream team back together.) We are both interested in **NATO—Ukraine interoperability** and the growing question of **NATO's role in the Indo-Pacific**; these interests inspired our topics for this committee.

Violet is a mymun scholarship delegate and has competed and chaired in the U.S., Europe, and southeast Asian circuits. In 2024, Violet served as Secretary General for UNCMUNC XV, the largest southern American conference. This past year, Violet interned as a political advisor in the Office of International Affairs at NATO Allied Command Transformation (ACT). She is currently finishing her dual Bachelors in Pre-Medicine and Defence.

Vincent has been active in MUN for eight years, having served as an Under Secretary General and eventually Secretary General for Paris International MUN (PIMUN) in 2024. In 2025, Vincent presided over the organising society for PIMUN and engaged as a Board Member of the French United Nations Society (AFNU). He is currently finishing his Masters in Contemporary History of International relations at the University Panthéon-Sorbonne.



Both of us are excited to meet and get to know you as our delegates.

All the Best,

V & V



About the North Atlantic Council

Vocabulary of key terms

TERM / ABBREVIATION	DEFINITION
ACO	Allied Command Operations (ACO) is NATO's strategic command responsible for planning and conducting all alliance military operations and missions. ¹
ACT	Allied Command Transformation (ACT) is NATO's strategic command responsible for transforming alliance military capabilities, doctrine, training, and technology to prepare for future security challenges. ²
Brave1	Is Ukraine's centralized defence innovation platform that accelerates military technology development while ensuring compatibility with NATO standards and serving as a bridge for NATO-Ukraine cooperation in defence innovation. ³
Chokepoint	A narrow and strategically significant maritime passage that connects larger bodies of water and serves as a route for global trade and vessel movement. ⁴
Command	Another name for a military base or group of individuals responsible for specific areas of decision-making within the Alliance. ⁵
C-UAS	Counter Unmanned Aerial Systems are technological solutions to detecting, identifying, tracking, and eliminating unauthorized or hostile drones. Technologies include special radar, lasers, or infrared cameras to target drones of the opposition. ⁶

¹ North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "Allied Command Operations (ACO)," n.d.

² Allied Command Transformation, "The Command," n.d.

³ Ministry of Digital Transformation of Ukraine, "Brave1," n.d.

⁴ Global Guardian, "Global Chokepoints," n.d.

⁵ Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Command," 2026.

⁶ Maris-Tech Ltd., "CUAS (Counter Unmanned Aerial Systems): A Complete Guide for Defence & HLS Teams," 2025.



DPRC	The Deputies Permanent Representatives Committee (DPRC) provides political oversight on international security developments, HR policy, and committee reform, and it reports directly to the North Atlantic Council. The DPRC supports consensus-building by resolving disputes unresolved at lower levels than the NAC. ⁷
Hybrid Warfare versus Hybrid Threats	Hybrid warfare is the integrated use of military and nonmilitary tools in ambiguous “grey zone” conditions to achieve strategic objectives without truly triggering full-scale conventional war. Hybrid threats are coordinated overt and covert military and nonmilitary actions by state or nonstate actors meant to undermine NATO and its political stability. Hybrid threats refer to the activities or tactics themselves, while hybrid warfare refers to the broader campaign that integrates those activities. ⁸
JATEC	Is a joint centre between NATO and Ukraine in Bydgoszcz, Poland, and it is focused on training, education, and applying lessons-learned from the Russo-Ukraine War to improve interoperability between Ukrainian and NATO systems and defence capabilities. ⁹
MARCOM	Allied Maritime Command (MARCOM) is NATO’s central maritime command responsible for directing and coordinating Alliance naval operations to ensure maritime security and deterrence across NATO areas of responsibility. ¹⁰ Recently, the United States assumed the main Command position (head role) of MARCOM, switching places with the United Kingdom, who gave up leadership of MARCOM to instead lead Joint Force Command Norfolk in the U.S.
NSC	NATO Shipping Centre (NSC) is a maritime coordination to support safety and security of maritime global supply chains through shared

⁷ North Atlantic Treaty Organization, “Deputies Committee,” 2022.

⁸ North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Hybrid Threats and Hybrid Warfare Reference Curriculum, 2024.

⁹ NATO Allied Command Transformation, “Joint Analysis, Training and Education Centre (JATEC),” n.d.

¹⁰ Allied Maritime Command, “About MARCOM,” 2026.

	information with commercial vessels and authorities during times of crisis or disruption. ¹¹
Nuclear Planning Group (NPG)	NATO's senior consultative body on nuclear matters, responsible for reviewing and shaping Alliance nuclear policy and related issues such as arms control and nuclear proliferation. ¹² France currently does not participate in the NPG.
Parliamentary Assembly (NATO PA)	Is an independent transatlantic forum of parliamentarians from NATO member states that promotes dialogue and parliamentary oversight while serving as a link between the Alliance and the citizens of member nations through their elected representatives; the PA connects 281 parliamentarians from the Member States. ¹³
PERM REP	The ambassador who serves as the 'permanent representative' from a Member State to the North Atlantic Council. ¹⁴
SHAPE	Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) is NATO's primary military headquarters, hosting ACO, and is located in Mons, Belgium. ¹⁵
Interoperability	The ability of Allied forces to operate together through compatible doctrine, communications, training, procedures, and equipment for joint military operations. ¹⁶

North Atlantic Treaty Organization and its history

After World War II, Europe was devastated: about 36.5 million people had died, including 19 million civilians, and many faced homelessness, rationing, refugee camps, and poverty. At the same time, Soviet-backed communism threatened democratic governments. In 1948, communists seized power in Czechoslovakia, and the Soviet Union blockaded West Berlin

¹¹ NATO Shipping Centre, "NATO Shipping Centre," 2026.

¹² North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "Nuclear Planning Group (NPG)," n.d.

¹³ NATO Parliamentary Assembly, "NATO PA Explained," n.d.

¹⁴ North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "Member Country Representatives," 2026.

¹⁵ Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE), "SHAPE," n.d.

¹⁶ North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "Interoperability: Connecting Forces," 2023.

to tighten control over Germany. However, the U.S. abandoned its policy of isolationism and decided to help stabilize and aid Europe through the Marshall Plan. Yet, European countries still needed security and military cooperation before lasting recovery would be possible.¹⁷

Western European states convened and created the Western Union in 1948, but soon debates led to the realization that a transatlantic security forum—with the United States included—would be the only way to deter Soviet expansion, support European political integration, and prohibit the revival of nationalist militarism in Europe.¹⁸

The **North Atlantic Treaty** was signed in 1949 with **12 founding members**. However, NATO lacked a unified military structure. When the USSR tested an atomic bomb in 1949 and the Korean War began in 1950, fears about communism spiked. In response, NATO established a command system, including the **Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE)** near Paris, led by U.S. General Dwight D. Eisenhower as the first Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR). NATO also appointed Lord Ismay of the United Kingdom as its first Secretary General.¹⁹

With economic aid and NATO's security protection, Western Europe gradually regained political stability and experienced strong economic growth. New members joined the ranks—including Greece, Western Germany, and Türkiye. Infuriated by NATO expansion, the **USSR retaliated by creating the Warsaw Pact**. It was then one retaliation after another—because NATO then adopted the **strategy of “Massive Retaliation,”** which stated that any Soviet attack would be met with a nuclear response. The goal was to deter conflict by making even a small attack risk escalating into full-scale nuclear war.²⁰

However, a glass house can only last so long, and tensions pushed NATO to adopt **“Flexible Response.”** This allowed for limited military responses and encouraged dialogue with the Soviet bloc; Cold War tensions reduced and stability improved. After the USSR fell, the Allies

¹⁷ Jennifer Popowycz, “The Last Million,” 2022.

¹⁸ North Atlantic Treaty Organization, “A Short History of NATO,” n.d.

¹⁹ U.S. Department of State, “North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), 1949,” n.d.

²⁰ North Atlantic Treaty Organization, “A Short History of NATO,” n.d.

even created the **Partnership for Peace program**, or PfP, in 1994. The Partnership for Peace allowed non-NATO countries (or “Partners”) to share information with NATO Allies and to modernise their militaries in line with democratic standards. The Russian Federation established relations with NATO through the **North Atlantic Cooperation Council** and joined the PfP program. Later, in 1997, Russia and NATO signed the **NATO–Russia Founding Act**, creating the **Permanent Joint Council for cooperation between the two former adversaries**. However, after Russia’s involvement in 2008 in Georgia and in 2014 in Ukraine, relations deteriorated. Between NATO’s expansion into the North, the rise of China in the global arena as an opposition ally, and Russia’s growing frustrations in the Alliance’s eastern flank—relations only continue to worsen.²¹

North Atlantic Council

Membership of the North Atlantic Council and the role of PERM REPs

While NATO has military and defence connotations, it is not a military in itself; rather, it is a collection of militaries from 32 nations working together for joint operations as part of a political–military alliance. The North Atlantic Council (NAC) is responsible for the **key decision-making of the Alliance and determining its political direction**. The NAC is composed of Permanent Representatives (PERM REPs), which are the top diplomats from each Member State *[in the NATO context, States may be referred to as either Member States, the Nations, or the Allies]* who reside at Brussels headquarters.²² Occasionally, the NAC convenes between Heads of State and Government, instead of permanent representatives. Each PERM REP is supported by a delegation of political and military advisors and diplomats who represent their respective country on subordinate committees. PERM REPs also have a Deputy Permanent Representative (DPR) who may aid them in their responsibilities and meet within their respective council, the DPRC.²³

These delegations—including the PERM REP—share loyalties to both the overall Alliance mission and to their own respective countries. Permanent Representatives

²¹ Walter S. Poole, “Adapting to Flexible Response, 1960–1968,” 2013.

²² North Atlantic Treaty Organization, “Member Country Representatives,” n.d.

²³ North Atlantic Treaty Organization, “North Atlantic Council (NAC),” n.d.

must thus work to both advocate for and pursue their country's interests while advancing the collective whole. Permanent Representatives meet on a regular basis (mostly weekly), which helps contribute to their deep understanding of their shared agendas in advance of complex decision-making and consultations.²⁴

A state does not join the NAC as a separate process to joining the Alliance – once a state has become a member of NATO, they are automatically expected to send a PERM REP to represent their interests in Brussels. NAC membership is crucial for individual national interests, as the NAC is as old as the Alliance itself and is the only institutional body that may create subsidiary committees.²⁵

Scope of the North Atlantic Council

We have previously stated the history of the NAC and its ability to frame the institutional structure. However, we have yet to discuss the actual scope of the NAC's power and acknowledge its limitations. Let's do so now.

Firstly, the NAC has broad political authority over the Member States through **powers derived from the North Atlantic Treaty's articles**, ranging from:

- collective defence,
- crisis management (military and personnel deployments, deterrence, force postures),
- strategic direction and partnerships,
- consultation amongst Member States,
- authorization of all NATO operations.

Many of these are further explained in the following section on the Treaty articles. However, it is important to acknowledge that the NAC is limited by the need for consensus, a lack of supranational enforcement, dependence on national militaries and voluntary participation, and the need to respect national sovereignty. **Essentially, the NAC can decide what NATO does and the direction in which it is moving, but the Council cannot compel Member States to actually do anything.**²⁶

²⁴ North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "National Delegations to NATO," n.d.

²⁵ Volle, "How Does a Country Become a Member of NATO?," n.d.

²⁶ Sawyer, "NATO's Article 5 Explained," 2026.

North Atlantic Treaty

The North Atlantic Treaty consists of 14 Articles by which the Member States abide.²⁷

Importantly, delegates must acknowledge the relationship of powers between NATO and the United Nations. **Article I** of the Treaty specifically addresses the Charter of the United Nations Organization, such that the Alliance promises to uphold peace, security, and justice above all else. Moreover, the Alliance agreed to settle disputes peacefully and avoid using force in ways that violate international law. **Article VII** further affirms that the actions of NATO must not override the authority of the United Nations Security Council.

Articles II and III encourage economic, defence, and democratic cooperation amongst Member States, all the while inviting nations to build and maintain their own capabilities.²⁸

Article IV allows nations to consult—if any member feels its security is threatened, Allies will consult together.²⁹

Article V is perhaps the most famous of them all—an attack on one is an attack on all. Allies will assist one another, even with force. The only time Article V has been invoked was following the tragedy of 9/11. **Article VI** defines geographical scope of Article V.³⁰

Article VIII prohibits nations from entering international agreements that would be inconsistent with their NATO obligations.³¹

Article IX established the North Atlantic Council and allows for the creation of other structures.³²

Article X invites enlargement, so long as new members are able to uphold NATO obligations.³³

²⁷ North Atlantic Treaty Organization, “The North Atlantic Treaty,” 1949.

²⁸ Kačič, “Commentary on Articles 2 and 3 of the Washington Treaty,” 2019.

²⁹ North Atlantic Treaty Organization, “The Consultation Process and Article 4,” n.d.

³⁰ Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe, “Invoking Article 5,” n.d.

³¹ Hompoth, “North Atlantic Treaty,” 2022.

³² Muñoz Mosquera, “The North Atlantic Treaty: Article 9 and NATO’s Institutionalization,” 2019.

³³ North Atlantic Treaty Organization, “Enlargement and Article 10,” n.d.

Articles XI, XII, and XIII explain processes for ratification, amendment and review, and withdrawal from the Treaty.³⁴

Lastly, **Article XIV** specifies the official languages of the Alliance to be both French and English, and recognizes the U.S. as the treaty depositary.³⁵

Decision-making processes in the Alliance

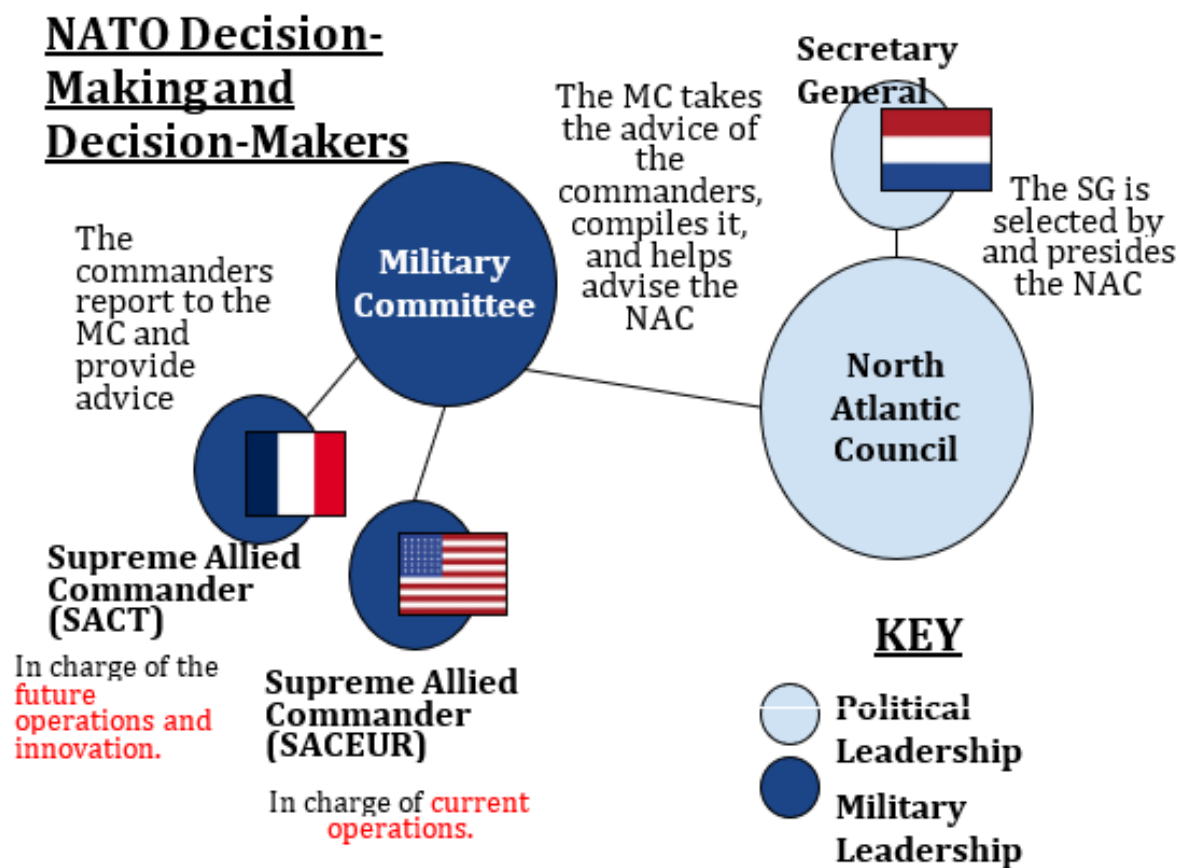


Figure 1: NATO decision-making and decision-makers³⁶

NOTE FROM THE CHAIRS: Delegates must be aware of the nuances of NATO decision-making because its diplomatic and political processes are unique compared to other international bodies, such as the European Union and United Nations. In the case of NATO, much of its decision-making processes are intertwined with military considerations—thus

³⁴ Lillian Goldman Law Library, “North Atlantic Treaty,” The Avalon Project, art. 10. n.d.

³⁵ National Archives, “North Atlantic Treaty,” n.d.

³⁶ Figure created by the authors of the study guide.

meaning that the decisionmakers themselves may be either civilian or an officer in uniform. **Delegates are expected to learn the key players – from both the political and military spheres within NATO – in order to best understand how the Alliance pursues shared strategic interests.**³⁷

Since the creation of the Alliance, **consensus** remains the **sole mechanism by which key political and military decisions are made**—all the way from the NAC to the smaller, more intimate subordinate committees and structures of NATO.³⁸ However, this does not mean that everyone must cast votes of approval—rather, **consensus decision-making means there are no votes cast at all.** When weighing options for a decision, the NAC will consult and discuss until an outcome that is acceptable to all is reached. Because the Member States are already quite familiar with each other’s interests, any consultation that seems glaringly futile will be over quickly, as nations ‘agree to disagree’.³⁹

Leading the consultation process is the **Secretary General (SG)**. The Alliance is staffed by a combination of military personnel (referred to as international military staff or IMS) and international civilians (referred to as international staff or IS); the SG is the top international civilian. Not only are they in charge of the decision-making process and protecting consensus, the SG is also responsible for overseeing decision implementation and following up on operational outcomes. To facilitate this decision to implementation pipeline, the SG engages regularly with Heads of State and Government and Foreign and Defence Ministers, all the while traveling to member nations for bilateral meetings and hosting senior national officials when they visit Brussels headquarters. The SG is head of the NATO Headquarters in Brussels, Belgium. While the SG does not ‘chair’ the NAC in a commanding sense, the SG does preside over NAC meetings.⁴⁰

The Secretary General leads the Alliance with assistance from **two strategic commanders**, known as the Supreme Allied Commanders. Recall that the SG is the top international

³⁷ “NATO Policy and Decision-Making Explained,” Diplomacy and Law. n.d.

³⁸ North Atlantic Treaty Organization, NATO Handbook, 2006.

³⁹ North Atlantic Treaty Organization, “Consensus Decision-Making at NATO,” n.d.

⁴⁰ North Atlantic Treaty Organization, “NATO Secretary General,” n.d.

civilian. In this case, the two commanders are persons in military uniform. The **Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR)** is an American military officer in charge of **Allied Command Operations (ACO)**. SACEUR is dual-hatted, meaning they have two roles—not only are they the top American commander within NATO staff, they are also the top American military leader in all of Europe. ACO is located at the **NATO Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE)** base in Mons, Belgium.⁴¹ SHAPE is the command center for all military operations.⁴² SHAPE is the headquarters and staff that supports ACO by providing the physical command center and personnel where NATO operations are directed and coordinated.⁴³

The second commander is the **Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (SACT)** and is a French military officer in charge of **Allied Command Transformation (ACT)** in the United States.⁴⁴ While SACEUR manages ongoing operations, SACT is responsible for transforming and adapting the Alliance to best combat adversaries, which includes training all personnel and assisting in NATO's acquisitions processes. SACT must work with industry and nations to experiment with and integrate new technologies (including artificial intelligence) into their weapons and communications systems. Importantly, SACT helps maintain the Alliance's relationship with Ukraine and its military leaders, as Ukraine looks to be part of NATO's future in European security.⁴⁵

Both strategic commanders report to the **Military Committee (MC)**. The MC is the oldest body after the NAC, and it serves as the primary source of **military advice to the Council and the Nuclear Planning Group (NPG)**. The MC oversees the translation of political decision and guidance into military direction, and it recommends measures considered necessary for the defence of the NATO area. The MC must also be consulted on the implementation of military operations in any NATO decisions.⁴⁶

⁴¹ North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR)," n.d.

⁴² Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe, "SHAPE," n.d.

⁴³ VetFriends, "HQ Co NATO SHAPE COM Z," n.d.

⁴⁴ North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (SACT)," n.d.

⁴⁵ NATO Allied Command Transformation, "AI Supporting Ukraine," n.d.

⁴⁶ North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "About the Military Committee (MC)," n.d.

ESSENTIAL: For the purposes of our committee, while you – as delegates – will act as the Ambassadors representing each of your countries at the NAC, the Chairs will each take on an individual political or military role to best aid your efforts in creating a resounding communiqué. Delegates should consider how the NAC will interact with the Secretary General, the Military Committee, and the Supreme Commanders, as needed in their consultations.

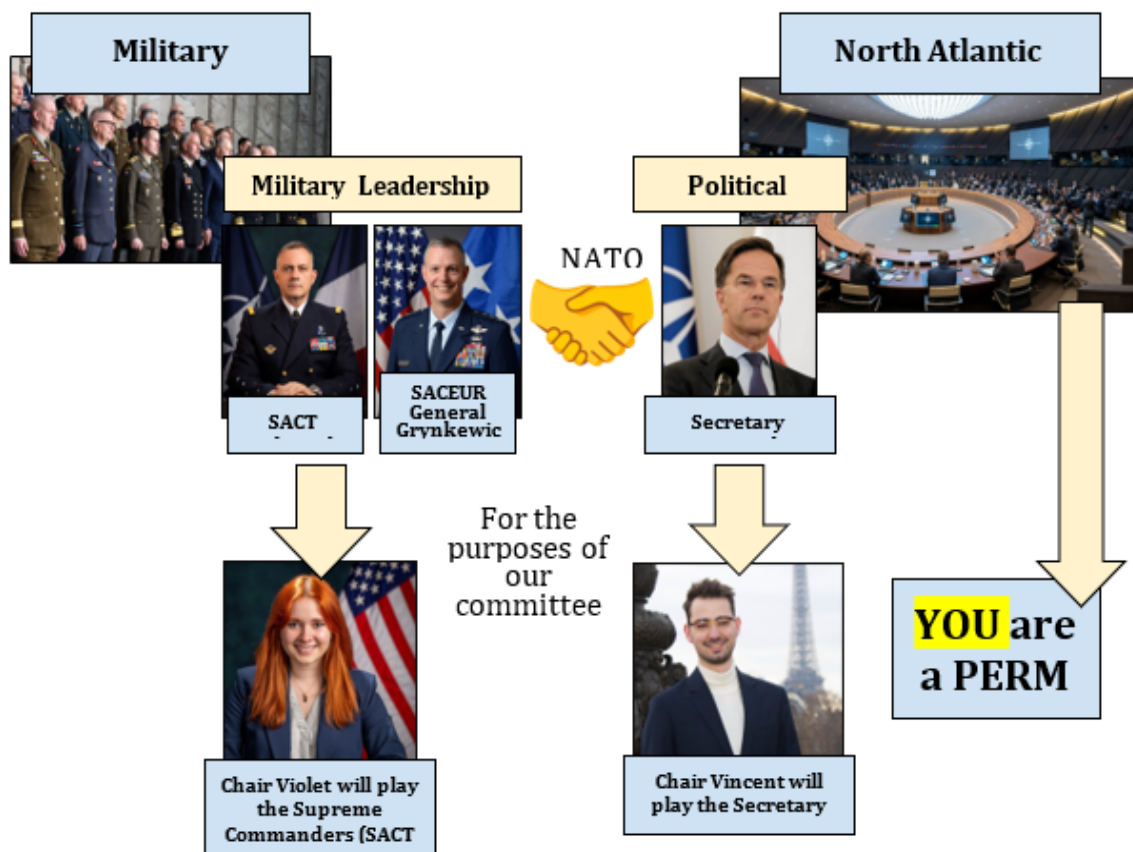


Figure 2: Structure of the NAC committee at MUNLawS 2026⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Figure created by the authors of the study guide.

Topic A:

NATO–UKRAINE INTEROPERABILITY



Figure 3: Flags of Ukraine and NATO⁴⁸

TOPIC DESCRIPTION: Effective use of support that is provided by NATO Allies to Ukraine depends on interoperability between Ukrainian and NATO systems. Delegates will discuss ways to improve interoperability through standardisation, training and technological integration.

⁴⁸ Photograph: North Atlantic Treaty Organization, “NATO’s Support for Ukraine,” n.d.

Introduction

The Model United Nations circuits have regurgitated the topic of ending the war in Ukraine on many fronts—whether creating a ceasefire through a UNSC committee, addressing humanitarian concerns amidst war-torn refugee camps in a UNHCR committee, or condemning the actions of the Russian Federation through the public statements of a multitude of diplomatic bodies.⁴⁹

However, progress can no longer be ignored. Ukraine holds steadfast. Kyiv has become so adept in its warfighting strategy that it vowed to slaughter 50,000 enemy soldiers on Ukrainian soil every month.⁵⁰ Allies, too, continue to strengthen the effort. The European Union committed €90 billion to Kyiv, including €60 billion earmarked directly for defense and ammunition procurement.⁵¹ Even the United States—long criticized by allies for wavering public support—has authorized \$400 million in assistance, expanded arms sales and intelligence sharing, and renewed initiatives to return abducted Ukrainian children through the 2026 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). Although the Trump administration has broadly scaled back direct support to Ukraine, the bill marks a significant step in the opposite direction.⁵²

At the same time, the Kremlin's position appears increasingly fragile beneath the surface. Even within Russia's elite circles, the war is no longer spoken of as a collective endeavor, but rather as Putin's personal project. Officials and business leaders who once referred to the conflict with the language of "we" and "ours" now describe it as "his" war. While this may be a subtle shift, it is an unmistakable reflection of growing disillusionment with the war.⁵³ The costs of the war have become impossible to conceal: inflation, mounting taxes, infrastructure decay, censorship, and the largest redistribution of private assets since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Putin has lost the ability to exclaim a compelling vision of the

⁴⁹ Schwartz, "In Model UN, Students Study Russia's Invasion of Ukraine," 2022.

⁵⁰ CNN, "Ukraine Strategy Aims to Kill 50,000 Russian Soldiers," 2026.

⁵¹ "EU Formally Approves Ukraine Loan and 20th Sanctions Package Against Russia," 2026.

⁵² Klain, "What's in the New US Defense Bill for Ukraine?," 2025.

⁵³ "Vladimir Putin Is Losing His Grip on Russia," *The Economist*, 2026.

future, and—in seeking to preserve his system through war—Putin may instead have accelerated its internal exhaustion.⁵⁴

Innovation may be the key to Kyiv’s success – as new technology continues to shape Ukraine’s battlefield capabilities. Combined with Western aid and investment, Ukraine’s domestic defense industry is thriving.⁵⁵ NATO launched UNITE – Brave Programme, which promises up to \$1 Million USD to any innovative company from an allied nation looking to match with a Ukrainian counterpart and integrate similar systems.⁵⁶ On the battlefield, drones and robots have given Kyiv a significant advantage. Ukraine is accelerating its defense innovation—and it’s paying off in real time.

FOCUS OF THE TOPIC: Through this topic, delegates will look to enhance collaboration with Ukrainian forces on the eastern flank and use lessons-learned from Ukrainian experiences to better NATO’s own posture and means of deterrence. Delegates will consider how to improve interoperability between allies and Ukraine, as to best integrate shared systems of intelligence-sharing, communications, weapons and equipment, and personnel training. By aligning its systems and operations with Ukraine, NATO can heed off an adversary—the Russian Federation—with best readiness and preparedness.

Defence innovation in Ukraine and NATO–Ukraine cooperation

Ukraine’s drone innovations

Ukraine is shaping modern warfare through drones and robots on the battlefield.⁵⁷ The New York Times Magazine shared “in the past year, drone warfare in Ukraine has undergone a chilling transformation. Most drones require a human pilot. But some new Ukrainian drones, once locked on a target, can use A.I. to chase and strike it — with no further human

⁵⁴ Fortune, “Russian Regime Economy, Putin’s Future, Inflation, Ukraine War, and Oligarch Asset Seizures,” 2026.

⁵⁵ Fortune, “Russia’s Economic Despair Is Starting to Hurt Vladimir Putin’s Approval Ratings,” 2026.

⁵⁶ North Atlantic Treaty Organization, “NATO and Ukraine Announce New Joint Initiative to Accelerate Defence Innovation,” 2025.

⁵⁷ “Ukraine’s Drone Innovations Reshape Modern Warfare,” 2025.

involvement.”⁵⁸ Moreover, Ukrainian blood no longer needs to be spilled on frontlines to see tangible results. Now, the adversarial forces can be eliminated at the touch of a button.



Figure 4: Drone warfare in Ukraine⁵⁹

Ukraine has transformed drone warfare by rapidly combining cheap commercial technology (as seen in the figure above, with the ammunition taped to the drone), artificial intelligence, and innovation under pressure. Ukrainian engineers, soldiers, and even defense startup firms developed semiautonomous drones capable of navigation without GPS—these drones are resistant to jamming and can recognize targets and further conduct terminal attacks upon said target independently after human approval. Ukrainians use lessons directly learned from their battlefield experiences, to then adapt and re-imagine new solutions, which thus creates a constant feedback loop for greater and greater innovation. Essentially, the Ukrainians have transformed the frontlines into a live laboratory where coders, venture capitalists, military units, and even Western tech figures collaborate and experiment to make increasingly sophisticated drone swarms with AI-guided strike systems and kill-chains.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ “Ukraine, AI Drones, and the War With Russia,” 2025.

⁵⁹ Photograph: MARCO CORDONE/SOPA IMAGES/SIPA USA VIA AP IMAGES. Retrieved from Metcalfe, “Meet the radio-obsessed civilian shaping Ukraine’s drone defense,” 2024.

⁶⁰ CBS News, “Ukraine Drone Innovation Helps Level Battlefield in War with Russia,” 2026.

Other technologies and the future of warfare

Beyond drones, Ukraine has become a model for a new type of digitally integrated warfare that is centered on AI and low-cost innovation.⁶¹ Ukrainian engineers have emphasised cheap, scalable technology over expensive traditional weapons. Ukrainian systems—like their Delta command platform—connect drones, sensors, and artillery into a single real-time network, allowing these elements to almost ‘talk’ to each other and communicate the whereabouts of targets. **These systems are faster and more sophisticated than those of many Western militaries.** Major global defense and technology firms, including Palantir Tech and various European partners, have partnered with Ukraine to study and adopt these systems.⁶²

NOTE FROM THE CHAIRS: Delegates should not mistake Ukraine for as ‘less advanced’ than their own national militaries and defense systems – rather, delegates should recognise there is an opportunity here to work with Ukraine to adopt their innovations into their own systems. At a time where European security is an increasingly significant topic, this opportunity proves crucial.

Big tech companies have played a key role in strengthening Ukraine’s wartime technological transformation, turning the state into what many officials nickname a global “AI War Lab”.⁶³ While we have already mentioned Palantir’s interests in Ukraine, we have yet to name-drop Microsoft, Google, Amazon, SpaceX (*through Starlink*), and Clearview AI—all of which who have supplied Ukraine with cloud computing, cybersecurity protection services, satellite access, AI-powered battlefield analytics, and even facial recognition systems for both military and civilian use.⁶⁴ All the while, major global investors and firms—like Eric Schmidt and Quantum Systems—have heavily invested in Ukrainian startups. Ukrainian officials have recognized how valuable these partnerships are in supporting their war efforts and continue to **‘market’ Ukraine as a real-world testing ground for next-generation defense systems.** Ukraine has blurred the line between classic Silicon Valley

⁶¹ Reuters, “Ukraine’s Defence Tech Revolution Has U.S., Europeans Envious,” 2026.

⁶² Snider, “They Aren’t in Uniform, but These US Companies Are Fighting for Ukraine,” 2026.

⁶³ Bergengruen, “How Tech Giants Turned Ukraine Into an AI War Lab,” 2024.

⁶⁴ “Ukraine’s Unstoppable Tech Force: Billion-Dollar Industry Defies War, Powers Global Innovation,” 2025.

innovation and traditional warfighting. The Ukraine–market foreshadows the future of modern warfare.⁶⁵

Ukraine’s BRAVE1 team

The Ukrainian government increasingly backs Brave1, a coordination platform that connects military units, startups, engineers, investors, and all the key players we previously mentioned in order to develop and deploy new technologies to fight the Russians.⁶⁶ Brave1 is a team that centralizes this defense innovation ecosystem Ukraine has cultivated, and it works alongside the Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Digital Transformation, and Palantir to achieve results. Recently, Brave1 launched the ‘**Brave1 Dataroom**’, a secure AI training environment made to help Ukrainian companies create autonomous military systems capable of detecting and intercepting enemy drones.⁶⁷

			
Ууіу 8 UKRAINE 19 200 грн	А1-СМ Фурія БпАК Ціну уточнюйте	PD-2 БпАК Ціну уточнюйте	MINI SHARK БпАК Ціну уточнюйте
			ДЕТАЛЬНІШЕ 
Лелека-100М2 БпЛА	PD-2 з вертикальним зльот...	Buntar-3 БпАК	SHRIKE 10CV

Figure 5: Ukraine’s Brave1 launches world’s first online combat marketplace⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Ukraine Business News, “Former Google CEO Eric Schmidt Invests in Kyiv Real Estate and Ukrainian Drone Makers,” 2026

⁶⁶ Brave1, “Brave1,” n.d.

⁶⁷ Ministry of Digital Transformation of Ukraine, “Brave1,” n.d.

⁶⁸ Photograph: market.brave1.gov.ua. Retrieved from Drone Magazine, “Why Individual Companies Should Invest in Intelligence Rather Than Painting on the Walls,” 2026.

The team operates a kind of “**Brave1 Market**”, similar to that of Amazon or even eBay for the military, where frontline Ukrainian troops can directly order drones, electronic systems, and other tech using a battlefield points system tied to verified combat performance. Delegates, forget about using shopping points or credit to order your groceries – now you will look at how you can assist Brave1 through their own point system.⁶⁹

Beyond just supporting Ukraine’s frontline needs, **Brave1 has helped align over 3,500 Ukrainian defense developments with NATO standards, leading to greater interoperability between systems.** Brave1 also enhances collaboration with Western defense industries and has helped position Ukraine as a global leader in defense technology innovation. **All hungry eyes are on Ukraine, watching what they will invent next.**⁷⁰

UNITE – Brave NATO program

Competition drives innovation and highlights the top talent of the marketplace. Ukraine’s growing partnership with NATO reached a new milestone in 2025 with the launch of “UNITE – Brave NATO,” the first joint NATO–Ukraine innovation program focused on **scaling battlefield-tested defense technologies that meet NATO interoperability standards.** This initiative is coordinated between Ukraine’s Brave1 team and NATO’s Communications and Information Agency (NCIA), and it funds collaborative projects between Ukrainian and NATO companies working on next-generation warfare technologies. More simply put, both parties give the same amount of funding (matching each other’s contributions), and these grants are expected to reach up to €50 Million.⁷¹

For example, a defense company from a NATO country – let’s say, Lockheed Martin from the United States – can apply and compete for this program and show their current projects. The UNITE – Brave programme then accepts the application and will ‘match’ them with a Ukrainian company working on similar projects. The two companies are then given a grant from the programme so that they can work together to enhance their innovations for Ukraine’s wartime needs.

⁶⁹ “Brave1 Market – Ukraine’s New Online Marketplace for Drones, Kit & Equipment,” 2025.

⁷⁰ “NATO and Ukraine Announce New Joint Initiative to Accelerate Defence Innovation,” 2026.

⁷¹ “NATO and Ukraine Announce New Joint Initiative to Accelerate Defence Innovation,” 2026.



Figure 6: UNITE-Brave NATO program⁷²

The UNITE – Brave programme shows how Ukraine’s battlefield innovations are no longer viewed solely as wartime necessities, but as models for the future of Euro–Atlantic defense architecture. While Ukraine, indeed, needs financial and military assistance from its allies within NATO, it now has something incredibly valuable to offer—lessons learned and innovation directly from the battlefield. Ukraine knows exactly how NATO’s adversary, Russia, fights and how to pinpoint their vulnerabilities. By learning from Ukraine, NATO does not need to greatly fear overestimating or underestimating the Kremlin’s military prowess; rather, the Ukrainians can teach NATO exactly what they need to do to strengthen their posture in their eastern flank.⁷³

NOTE FROM THE CHAIRS: Delegates should consider how NATO should approach its relationship with Ukraine from a transactional perspective:

- What can NATO gain from Ukraine given its experiences fighting our adversary?
- How can the NAC build upon NATO’s relationship with Ukraine and the Brave1 team to strengthen alliance eastern posture?
- Can innovation be the key to winning the Russo–Ukraine war?

⁷² Photograph: Ministry of Defence of Ukraine, “Ukraine and NATO launch UNITE — BRAVE NATO: first competition for joint defense solutions begins,” 2026.

⁷³ Kirichenko, “Only Ukraine Can Teach NATO How to Combat Putin’s Growing Drone Fleet,” 2025.

Interoperability and NATO's Allied Command Transformation

Defining interoperability

As Ukraine moves forward with its defense innovations, its systems, equipment, and technologies continuously change and adapt. While Ukraine has its own internal processes to ensure all elements work together on the battlefield, Ukraine must also look towards aligning them to be compatible with NATO counterparts. Moreover, Ukraine may want to consider using communications systems that could easily integrate and work alongside Allied communications systems—this logic applies to all aspects of defense and security resources. The state of enhanced compatibility—or improving compatibility between such systems—is known as **interoperability**. If Country A and Country B's systems are interoperable, it means that they can essentially combine these systems to be used simultaneously and together for joint efforts.⁷⁴

ESSENTIAL: NATO defines interoperability as the ability of the Member States to coherently and effectively act together to achieve shared strategic objectives through shared procedures, infrastructure, bases, and communication platforms.⁷⁵

Simply put, interoperability – for NATO's purposes – is a fancy term for teamwork and the tools needed to have the most fluid, effective dynamic possible. **Interoperability does not require identical military equipment**; rather, it depends on systems being able to interact, connect, communicate, and exchange data and services through common facilities and standards.

NATO pushes members to support **interoperability across four dimensions**, as listed below:

- **TECHNICAL** (hardware, equipment, armaments, systems),
- **PROCEDURAL** (doctrines, procedures, standards),
- **HUMAN** (terminology, training), and
- **INFORMATION** (information-sharing, intelligence).⁷⁶

⁷⁴ "Adapting Under Fire: Ukraine's Race to Reinvent Modern Defense," 2026.

⁷⁵ "Interoperability: Connecting Forces," n.d.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

However, achieving true interoperability takes much coordination and communication—two difficult tasks considering the slow nature of bureaucracy. It does not help that true interoperability can never be achieved, as innovation and adaptation leads to constantly changing technologies, and thus there exists a cycle where Allies must strengthen interoperability and re-align systems repetitively. Yet, this cycle is a positive thing—by consistently bettering interoperable solutions, NATO simultaneously betters its strategic advantages and global posture. Achieving interoperable solutions relies on mechanisms such as standardization, training, exercises, lessons learned, demonstrations, tests, and trials, while cooperation with the defense and security industry and the use of open standards further strengthen interoperability as a force multiplier and a means of streamlining national efforts. Moreover, while considering interoperability, **delegates must balance both collective, mission-driven NATO interests and those of their own state.**⁷⁷

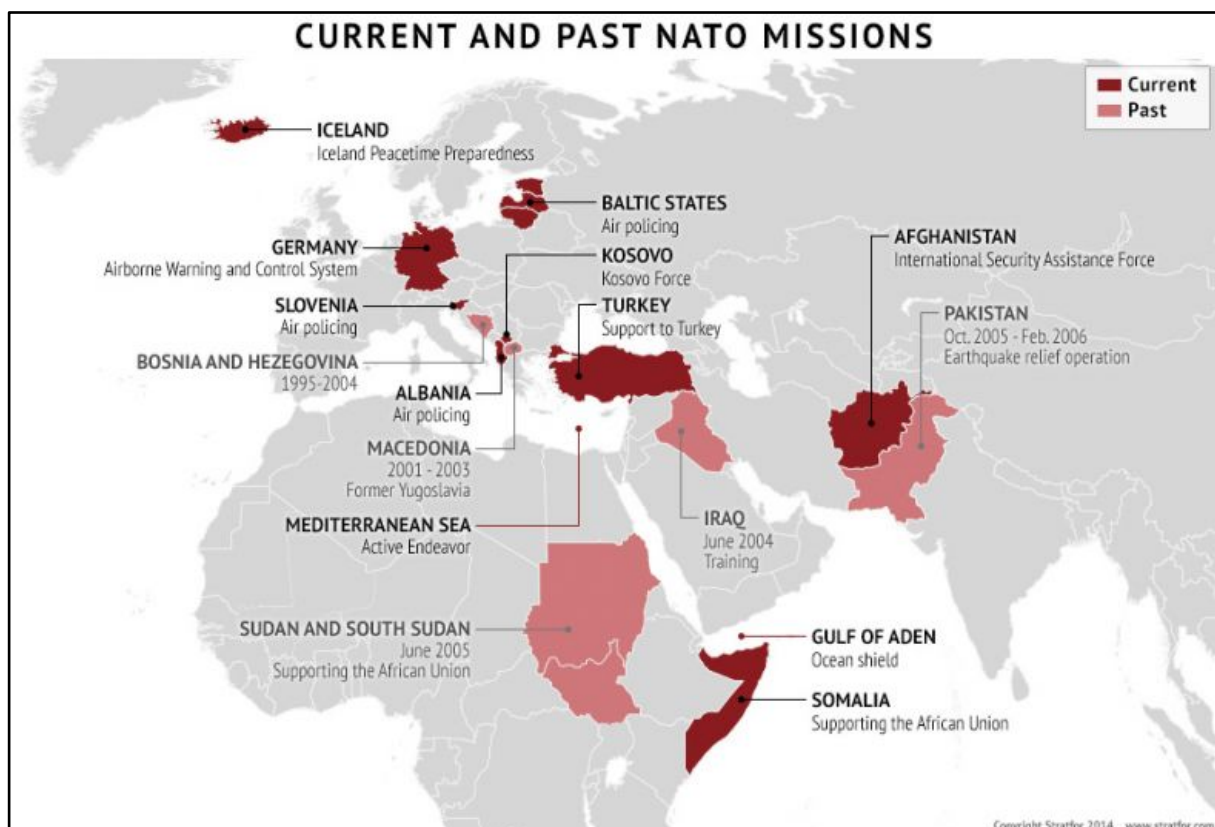


Figure 7: Historical NATO joint missions and operations (2014 data)⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Binnendijk and Braw, "For NATO, True Interoperability Is No Longer Optional," 2017.

⁷⁸ Photograph: Stratfor. Retrieved from GeoAwesome, "Top 14 maps and charts that explain NATO," 2017.

NATO militaries have long developed a high level of interoperability through decades of joint planning, training for their personnel, and exercises. The **scope and limits of the Alliance's interoperability have been historically tested in joint missions** – such as those in Kosovo, Libya, the Balkans, Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere. Through each mission – regardless of the state of operational success – NATO has been able to take away key lessons on how to even further advance field compatibility between Member States. Additionally, NATO has introduced programs such as the **Connected Forces Initiative (CFI)** to ensure that Allies maintain interoperable forces capable of operating together and with partners in any environment.⁷⁹

However, now **two challenges have emerged:**

1. To best weaken NATO's main threat, the Russian Federation, and help secure the future of European security, NATO must now include Ukraine in its interoperability planning;
2. **Interoperability is no longer a technical means alone.**⁸⁰

While we have reviewed the basis of Ukraine–NATO interoperability and later discuss justifications for such, now we will explain challenge #2.

While interoperability largely is a technical state or process, it **increasingly has a political aspect as well**. Moreover, the relationships between Member States and their respective leaders and representatives may affect their interoperability. Simply put, if Country A and Country B cannot get along or work respectively within the North Atlantic Council, how can they expect their joint missions and activities to work well? Technical relationships between countries have political foundations—and this may impact overall mission success. **The reason is simple: trust.**⁸¹

If world leaders actively demonstrate distrust between each other, the media is likely to call them out on it, which then fuels mutual feelings of distrust amongst their national

⁷⁹ Deni et al., “Measuring Interoperability Within NATO,” 2025.

⁸⁰ Fauroux, “NATO Rethinks Its Strategic Plan to Tackle the Russian Threat,” 2026.

⁸¹ Paananen, “Interoperability: An Intertwined Phenomenon,” 2026.

constituents, and leads to tension between two or more countries that can then be seen on the battlefield.⁸²

If NATO is to succeed in deterring its adversaries and protecting the principles of democracy, it must learn how to ignite and maintain mutual trust amongst its Member States. Moreover, interoperability no longer demands just procedural and technical compatibility—it demands trust, mutual respect, and empathy as well. **Interoperability requires basic human decency.**⁸³



Figure 8: World leaders at a reception at Buckingham Palace ahead of 2019 NATO summit, accused by the media of making fun of President Trump⁸⁴

NATO's Allied Command Transformation

The group within NATO responsible for the transformation of the Alliance—including enhancing interoperability – is the **NATO Allied Command Transformation (ACT)**. As we discussed earlier, ACT is one of NATO's two Strategic Commands, cultivating warfare development and innovation. ACT promotes interoperability among NATO member states and partner nations by creating joint standards and procedures so everyone can work together and essentially understand what each other is doing.⁸⁵

⁸² Vasist, Chatterjee, and Krishnan, "The Polarizing Impact of Political Disinformation and Hate Speech," 2023.

⁸³ "Interoperability: The Human and Digital Foundation of NATO Military Power," n.d.

⁸⁴ Photograph: Yui Mok/Pool via REUTERS. Retrieved from Reuters, "Inside the NATO summit," 2019.

⁸⁵ William & Mary, "NATO Allied Command Transformation (ACT)," n.d.

ACT works to modernize NATO's capabilities by developing military concepts and analyzing lessons-learned from conflicts, all the while encouraging innovation across the Alliance. It also leads major portions of NATO's Defence Planning Process and assists national governments in coordinating capability development and procurement of systems that can work together.⁸⁶

ACT is also important because it connects NATO with a broad network of expertise from governments, academia, industry, and military institutions. The command oversees training centres, Centres of Excellence, and research initiatives that contribute to NATO's innovation and modernization efforts. ACT studies emerging threats such as cyber warfare, artificial intelligence, hybrid warfare, and the militarization of space, and develops strategies to help NATO respond effectively.⁸⁷

ACT is composed of three major subordinate entities: the **Joint Warfare Centre (JWC)** in Stavanger, the **Joint Force Training Centre (JFTC)** in Bydgoszcz, and the **Joint Analysis & Lessons Learned Centre (JALLC)** in Monsanto. The JWC focuses on operational-level training to improve readiness, particularly for the NATO Response Force, while the JFTC specializes in tactical-level training for Allied and partner forces. Meanwhile, the JALLC analyzes lessons learned from military exercises and experimentation in order to continuously improve NATO. ACT also has representation in Washington, D.C., to maintain dialogue with the U.S. government.⁸⁸

As well, ACT is in charge of the **NATO Centres of Excellence (COEs)**, which are specialized institutions meant to support the Alliance's transformation (which includes capability development and interoperability). Each centre also provides NATO unique expertise on certain areas, and they work to train and educate military and civilian personnel. Each centre is formally approved by the NAC.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ NATO Allied Command Transformation, "Innovation," n.d.

⁸⁷ NATO Allied Command Transformation, "Centres of Excellence," n.d.

⁸⁸ NATO Joint Analysis and Lessons Learned Centre, "Allied Command Transformation (ACT)," n.d.

⁸⁹ NATO Allied Command Transformation, "Centres of Excellence," n.d.

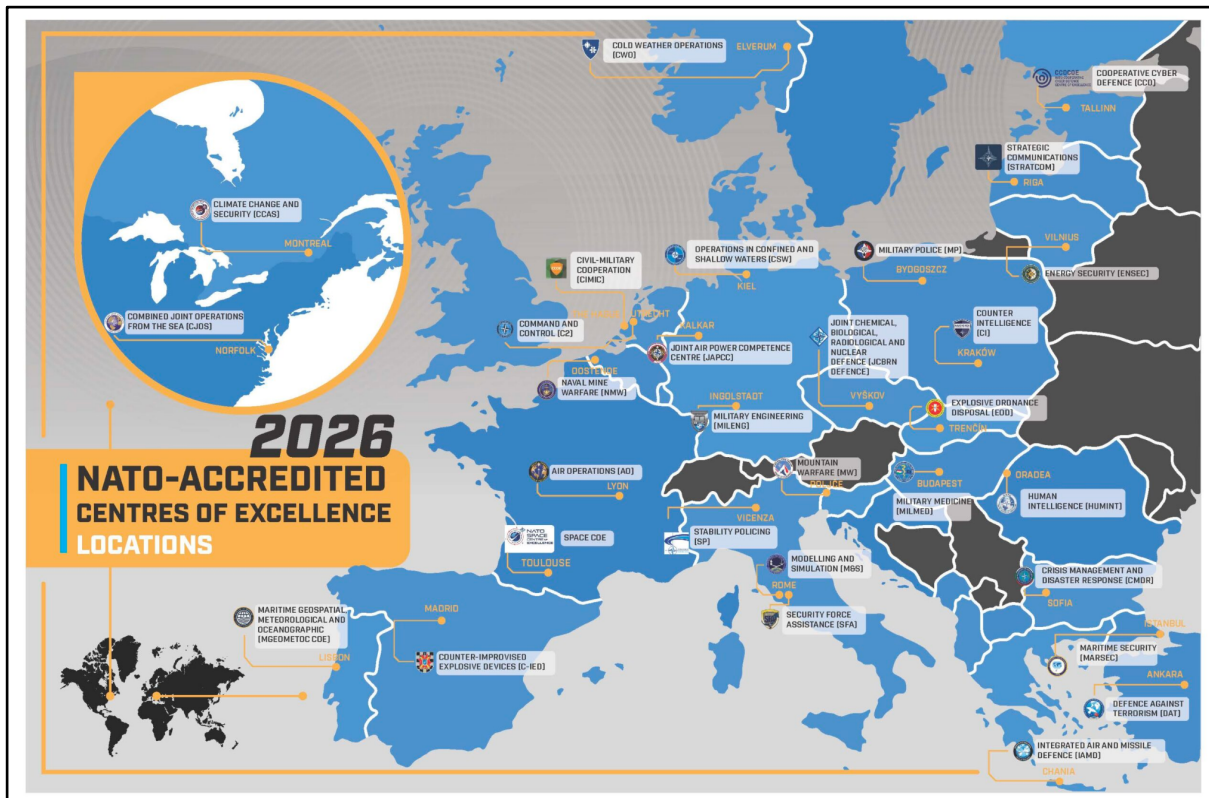


Figure 9: NATO accredited centers of excellence locations⁹⁰

The war in Ukraine: current developments and Ukraine's strategic outlook

Ukraine's goals for a modernized and digitized military

Ukraine's modernization goals are centered around ideas for a military that is digitally integrated and compatible with Western systems, moving away from slow Soviet-style command structures. The Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) argues that Ukraine is moving toward "one of the most advanced defense governance models of the digital age." Ukraine's digital platforms such as **Army+** and **DOT-Chain Defence** aim to **connect frontline units directly with manufacturers and procurement agencies**; this would enable faster iteration of weapons systems and more responsive logistics. The UKR Ministry of Defence views digitization not simply as administrative reform, but as a "core warfighting capability" necessary for sustaining high-intensity warfare against Russia.⁹¹

⁹⁰ Photograph: NATO Allied Command Transformation, "Centres of Excellence," n.d.

⁹¹ Bondar, "How and Why Ukraine's Military Is Going Digital," 2025.

Ukraine is also attempting to modernize its military by **reforming personnel management and making military service more sustainable** after years of attritional warfare. In November 2025, Kyiv announced plans to introduce fixed-term military contracts ranging from one to five years; this essentially replaced the open-ended service system that had increasingly discouraged enlistment. Then-Defense Minister Denys Shmyhal explained that the reform restored “fairness and predictability” for soldiers and their families, while also improving recruitment through higher pay, signing bonuses, expanded social benefits, and temporary exemptions from future mobilization for those who complete longer contracts.⁹²

Ukraine recognized that long-term military effectiveness depends on rebuilding morale and retaining experienced personnel. Ukraine must create a more professional and resilient force structure capable of sustaining prolonged conflict with Russia.⁹³

Territorial gains and Ukrainian advantages

In Spring 2026, for the first time in years, Ukraine claimed that Kyiv had liberated more territory in February than it had lost to Russian occupation. These gains are mostly due to Ukrainian counterattacks along the southern front, particularly near the border of Zaporizhzhia and Dnipropetrovsk oblasts, where Russian advances during late 2025 had exploited weaker Ukrainian defensive formations. Ukraine then deployed elite Assault Forces and Air Assault brigades, including the 95th Air Assault Brigade, to stabilize the line and reduce the expanding “gray zone” between opposing forces. Ukraine said that these operations also disrupted Russia’s planned spring offensive and temporarily shifted momentum on parts of the battlefield.⁹⁴

The territorial gains, however, were of a more limited operational objective than a traditional large-scale counteroffensive. Ukrainian commanders emphasized that the goal was not to achieve a major breakthrough or recapture vast swaths of land, but rather to push Russian assault groups away from vulnerable positions and create greater defensive

⁹² Méheut, “Its Forces Worn Down, Ukraine Moves to Revamp Military Service,” 2025.

⁹³ Kevliuk, Favorska, and Zagorodnyuk, “Rethinking Ukraine’s Manpower Challenge,” 2026.

⁹⁴ Farrell, “Battlefield Analysis: What Ukraine’s Recent Front-Line Gains Really Mean,” 2026.

stability ahead of the spring fighting season. The operations focused on clearing Russian infiltrations. This allowed Ukraine to strengthen defensive posture in strategically important areas of the southern front. The frontlines remain fluid and very fragmented.⁹⁵

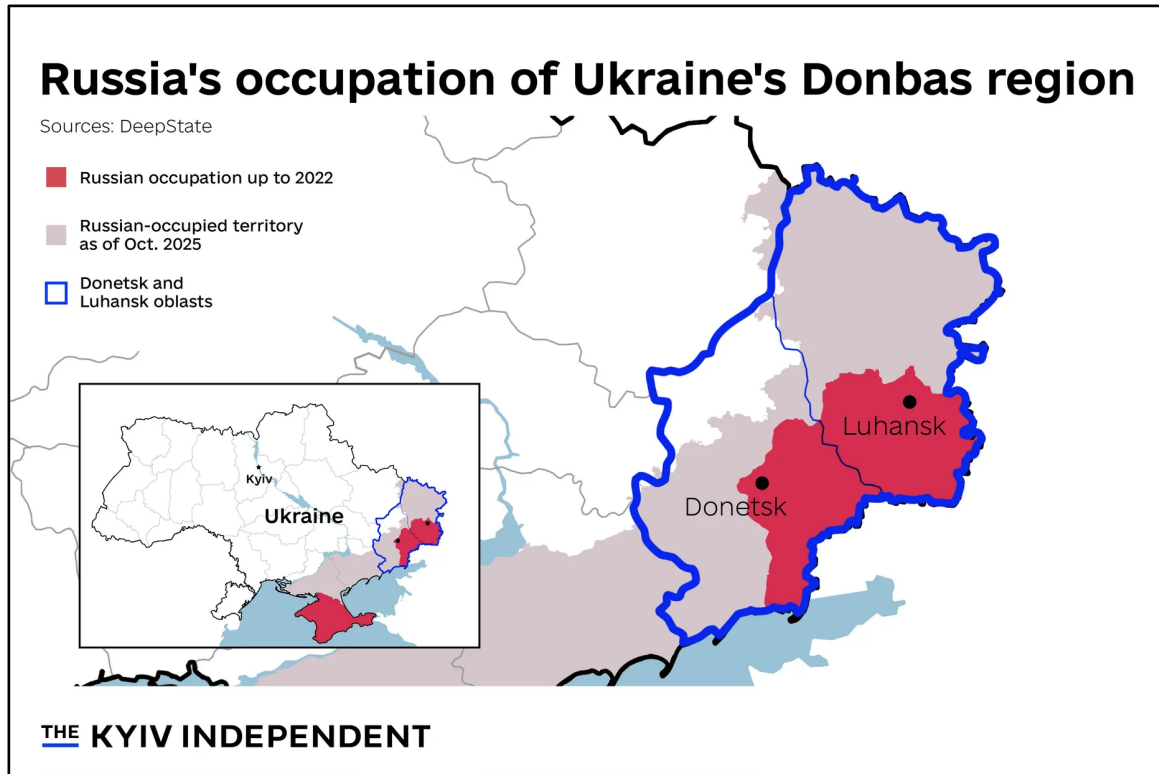


Figure 10: Ukraine's Donbas region, spring 2025⁹⁶

Much of the war's fighting happens in loosely controlled "gray zones," which thus makes precise territorial measurements difficult and politically contested. Moreover, it is hard to truly determine whether Ukraine or Russia is largely 'winning' swaths of contested land. Still, Ukraine's operations in February and March played an important role by restoring stability to vulnerable sectors of the front and slowing Russian momentum in southern Ukraine, particularly in Zaporizhzhia Oblast, where further Russian advances could threaten the city of Zaporizhzhia itself and alter the war's broader trajectory.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ "Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, September 15, 2026," 2026.

⁹⁶ Photograph: Nizar al-Rifai/The Kyiv Independent. Retrieved from The Kyiv Independent, "Where is Ukraine's Donbas? 6 things to know about the region Russia wants to take," 2025.

⁹⁷ Wilkenfeld and Murauskaite, *Escalation Management in the Gray Zone*, 2021.

NATO's support for Ukraine

Why should NATO help Ukraine?

For NATO, **Ukraine's experience offers a model for how allied militaries may need to modernize for future conflict.** Ukraine's military command system combines centralized oversight with decentralized innovation; this allows frontline soldiers to influence procurement and weapons development directly through digital feedback loops. Further, this approach improves interoperability and creates a scalable innovation ecosystem that NATO members could adopt themselves to strengthen alliance readiness. Like we discussed earlier, there is much NATO Member States can learn from Ukraine while building their defense doctrines for the future. Ukraine is not only defending itself from Russia, but it is also serving as a live case study for NATO militaries preparing for emerging high-tech warfare.⁹⁸

As well, Ukraine is largely already set up to be interoperable with Allied systems. Ukraine's use of secure procurement platforms validated against international cybersecurity standards, including the U.S. NIST Risk Management Framework, aligns its defense infrastructure more closely with NATO-compatible digital standards and practices.⁹⁹

What NATO currently does to assist Ukraine

NATO'S TOOLBOX	TOOL TO HELP UKRAINE
Personnel training & support	• Train Ukrainian forces (NSATU) • JATEC • Military advising & planning
Marketplaces & financial support	• Comprehensive Assistance Package (CAP) • Allowing Ukraine into the EU defense marketplace (<i>to an extent</i>) • Purchasing drone and counter drone technologies

⁹⁸ Klement, "Why NATO Should Ask Ukraine for Help," 2026.

⁹⁹ "Ukraine-NATO: Defence Interoperability," 2022.

	from the Ukrainian defense markets to support domestic production
Munitions & weapons	• Advising Ukraine on systems and weapons protocols as to be interoperable with NATO counterparts • Providing Ukraine licences to procure, maintain, and produce certain American missiles
The global stage	• Political backing for Ukraine through various international forums, such as the UN • Including Ukrainian representation in the NATO Ankara Summit and the Munich Security Conference
Partnerships	• Sharing intelligence with Ukrainian military and political leaders • Including Ukraine in joint exercises on the eastern flank
NATO representation	• NATO Liaison Office in Kyiv • Senior NATO Representative to Ukraine • NATO Parliamentary Assembly

NATO continues to play a key role in supporting Ukraine in the war against Russia. Since 2022, Allies have supplied billions of euros worth of equipment, aid, and support to Ukraine's national defense industries. NATO specifically states that it supports Ukraine's "fundamental right to self-defence" in protecting its sovereignty and territory.¹⁰⁰

An important NATO-Ukraine initiative is the **NATO Security Assistance and Training for Ukraine (NSATU)**, which coordinates the delivery of weapons and other military equipment and the training of UKR troops to use said materials. Member States have provided the UKR with tanks, air defense systems, artillery, and even fighter jets to help

¹⁰⁰ "NATO's Support for Ukraine," n.d.

Ukraine get a leg-up on the battlefield. Regarding necessary battlefield equipment, NATO has also established the **Prioritised Ukraine Requirements List (PURL) initiative**, which helps the Allies fund and deliver any crucial military equipment to the frontlines. All of these efforts by NATO aim to ensure Ukraine can defend itself while still negotiating from a position of strengths.¹⁰¹

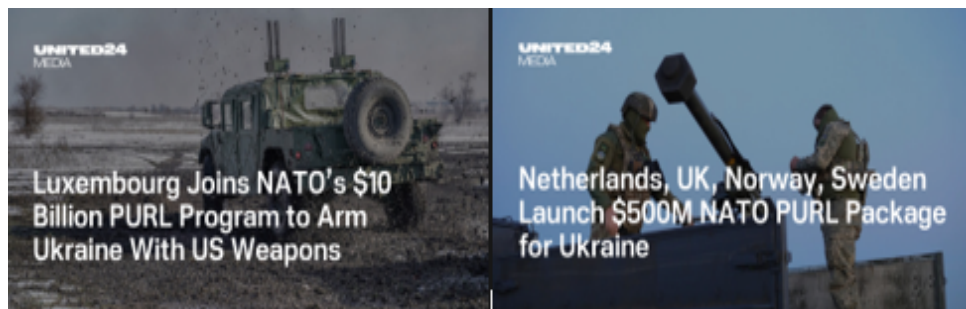


Figure 11: Allies support Ukraine via PURL¹⁰²

In addition to military aid, NATO supports Ukraine through **CAP – the Comprehensive Assistance Program** – which provides ‘non-lethal’ assistance. This includes medical supplies, fuel, body armour, and comms equipment. NATO has also committed to helping Ukraine move away from the old Soviet-style military systems and towards NATO standards—thus improving interoperability.¹⁰³

To foster dialogue between NATO and Ukraine, both parties partake in the **NATO-Ukraine Council (NUC)**, where leaders from both meet as equals to discuss security issues and cooperation. In this setting, Ukraine has also expressed interest in future NATO membership. As well, NATO has representation in Kyiv to maintain closer ties and directly help with coordination for practical support.¹⁰⁴

In February 2025, NATO opened the **NATO-Ukraine Joint Analysis, Training, and Education Centre (JATEC)** to strengthen cooperation between the two parties by transforming Ukraine’s battlefield experience into practical lessons for the Alliance. JATEC resides in Bydgoszcz, Poland.¹⁰⁵ JATEC is the first civil-military organization jointly

¹⁰¹ Krasnoshtan, “Strategic Shift in NATO’s Support for Ukraine,” 2026.

¹⁰² Photograph retrieved from United24 Media website.

¹⁰³ “Comprehensive Assistance Package (CAP) for Ukraine,” n.d.

¹⁰⁴ “NATO-Ukraine Council,” n.d.

¹⁰⁵ “From Frontline Reality to Alliance Readiness: JATEC’s Ukrainian Perspective,” 2026.

operated by NATO and a partner nation. While the primary purpose is served towards lessons-learned, the centre also supports Ukraine's defence sector while increasing interoperability between Ukrainian and Allied forces.¹⁰⁶ Thus far during the war, Ukraine has successfully integrated military equipment from multiple Allied countries under combat conditions, which further proves interoperability is not simply a peacetime concept but an operational necessity.

One of JATEC's most important purposes is accelerating NATO's ability to adapt to modern warfare. Modern conflict evolves at an extremely rapid pace and thus requires adaptation cycles measured in months (or even weeks) rather than years. Therefore, fast adaptation is crucial. Through the inclusion of Ukrainian experts with direct frontline experience, JATEC helps NATO better understand the realities of multi-domain warfare. The centre therefore acts as a bridge between battlefield reality and NATO strategy planning.¹⁰⁷

We have already discussed how Ukrainian leaders advertise Ukraine as a real-world testing ground for defence solutions. JATEC also creates that environment, allowing for controlled experiments of various innovations. In this way, JATEC serves both Ukraine in its war efforts and aids NATO in its future transformation.

Points a communiqué should address

At MUNLawS 2026, the NAC committee will aim to adopt by consensus a **communiqué**. Throughout this study guide, we have mentioned various aspects of this topic that delegates should consider. Each of these suggestions are bolded, and delegates are recommended to fully read through the text. Additional considerations for the debating and negotiation of the NAC statement are listed here:

- How can the NAC steer NATO towards greater interoperability amongst its Member States and partner nations—particularly Ukraine—while supporting political trust and unity among Allies?

¹⁰⁶ "NATO Opens Joint Analysis, Training and Education Centre (JATEC) in Bydgoszcz, Poland," 2025.

¹⁰⁷ "From Frontline Reality to Alliance Readiness," 2026.

- How can NATO integrate Ukraine's battlefield innovations, including drones, AI, and digital warfare systems?
 - How can NATO improve joint training and coordination with Ukrainian forces?
- What role should programs like JATEC, ACT, Brave1, and UNITE-Brave NATO play in strengthening cooperation?
- How can NATO standardize procedures and technologies while respecting national interests of Member States?
 - How can Allied defense industries cooperate with Ukrainian companies to accelerate innovation and production?
- What funding mechanisms should support long-term NATO-Ukraine cooperation?

Additional preparation materials

VIDEO RESOURCES:

- **NATO Allied Command Transformation (ACT):**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mFybHQhHeho>.
- **NATO SHAPE and ACO:**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7NBRMEPIyhk>.
- **How NATO Learns from Ukraine – NATO Innovation and JATEC:**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TkB2pX8eBEM>.
- **The Efficiency and Sophistication of Ukrainian Drone Warfare:**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kFSR6OuWVQ4>.

NECESSARY READING:

- **Joint Interagency Task Force 401 Counter-drone Handbook;**
U.S. Department of War: <https://www.war.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/4538032/joint-interagency-task-force-401-publishes-counter-drone-handbook/>.
- **“How Ukraine’s Drone Innovation Reversed Russia’s Momentum”,**
Council on Foreign Relations: <https://www.cfr.org/articles/how-ukraines-drone-innovation-reversed-russias-momentum>.
- **“What is Interoperability – And Why it Matters to NATO”,**
The Defence News: <https://thedefencenews.com/what-is-interoperability-and-why-it-matters-to-nato/>.

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10. Defence Industry Europe. "NATO Opens Joint Analysis, Training and Education Centre (JATEC) in Bydgoszcz, Poland." February 18, 2025. <https://defence-industry.eu/nato-opens-joint-analysis-training-and-education-centre-jatec-in-bydgoszcz-poland/>.
11. Deni, John R., Matthew R. MacLeod, Sarah E. Stewart, Katherine M. Banko, and Adrian Jones. "Measuring Interoperability Within NATO: Adapted Off-the-Shelf or Bespoke Solution?" *Parameters* 55, no. 1 (Spring 2025): 53–71. <https://doi.org/10.55540/0031-1723.3331>.

12. DroneXL. "Ukraine's Drone Innovations Reshape Modern Warfare." May 20, 2025. <https://dronexl.co/2025/05/20/ukraine-drone-innovations-reshape-modern-warfare>.
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Topic B:

NATO'S SECURITY INTERESTS IN THE INDO-PACIFIC: THE MALACCA STRAIT



Figure 12: The Malacca strait¹⁰⁸

TOPIC DESCRIPTION: The Strait of Malacca is a key global trade route and one of the world's most important maritime chokepoints.¹⁰⁹ Delegates will consider NATO's role in ensuring maritime security in a region shaped by shifting relations with major powers.

¹⁰⁸ Photograph: Jaffna Monitor, "The Strait of Malacca: The First Trade War That Shaped Asia," n.d.

¹⁰⁹ "Strait of Malacca and Singapore Shipping Lane," 2026.

Introduction

As already stated, the **North Atlantic Treaty Organization** aligns itself with the United Nations Organization. As per **Article I** of the North Atlantic Treaty of 1949: *“The Parties undertake, as set forth in the Charter of the United Nations, to settle any international dispute in which they may be involved by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security and justice are not endangered, and to refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force in any manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations.”* The **preamble** of the Treaty states clearly: *“The Parties to this Treaty reaffirm their faith in the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and their desire to live in peace with all peoples and all governments. [...]”*.

NATO has established clear links between its mandate, principles, and actions on one hand, and international law on the other hand. The example most appropriate and recent for this topic stems from the **Alliance Maritime Strategy** published in October of 2025. Its **Article 19** states: *“Partnerships offer valuable opportunities to develop regional security, contribute to strategic stability and uphold the rules based international order. Alliance maritime power plays an important role in NATO’s policy of outreach through partnerships, dialogue, and cooperation, such as with maritime industry and the international shipping community through the NATO Shipping Centre. Overall, this approach contributes to the common goals of preventing conflict, building interoperable partner capacity, ensuring the freedom of the seas, upholding international law and promoting Alliance values.”*¹¹⁰

This aligns with **NATO’s 2022 Strategic Concept**, the **preamble** of which ends as follows: *“Our vision is clear: we want to live in a world where sovereignty, territorial integrity, human rights and international law are respected and where each country can choose its own path, free from aggression, coercion or subversion. We work with all who share these goals. We stand together, as Allies, to defend our freedom and contribute to a more peaceful world.”* On this note, the 2022 Strategic Concept also refers to the maritime domain in **Article 23**: *“Maritime security is key to our peace and prosperity. We will strengthen our posture and situational*

¹¹⁰ Jalan, “NATO’s Legal Framework in the Context of International Law,” 2024.

awareness to deter and defend against all threats in the maritime domain, uphold freedom of navigation, secure maritime trade routes and protect our main lines of communications.”

When describing the Strategic environment, **points 13 and 14** of this same 2022 Strategic Concept states: *“13. The People’s Republic of China’s (PRC) stated ambitions and coercive policies challenge our interests, security and values. The PRC employs a broad range of political, economic and military tools to increase its global footprint and project power, while remaining opaque about its strategy, intentions and military build-up. The PRC’s malicious hybrid and cyber operations and its confrontational rhetoric and disinformation target Allies and harm Alliance security. The PRC seeks to control key technological and industrial sectors, critical infrastructure, and strategic materials and supply chains. It uses its economic leverage to create strategic dependencies and enhance its influence. It strives to **subvert the rules-based international order**, including in the space, cyber and **maritime** domains. The deepening strategic partnership between the People’s Republic of China and the Russian Federation and their mutually reinforcing attempts to undercut the rules-based international order run counter to our values and interests. . . 14. We remain open to constructive engagement with the PRC, including to build reciprocal transparency, with a view to safeguarding the Alliance’s security interests. We will work together responsibly, as Allies, to address the systemic challenges posed by the PRC to Euro-Atlantic security and ensure NATO’s enduring ability to guarantee the defence and security of Allies. We will boost our shared awareness, enhance our resilience and preparedness, and protect against the PRC’s coercive tactics and efforts to divide the Alliance. We will stand up for our shared values and the rules-based international order, including freedom of navigation.”*¹¹¹

PRELIMINARY REMARK FROM THE CHAIRS: In this context, the expression “Indo-Pacific” refers to a geographic perception which sees the Indian Ocean and the Asia-Pacific as forming a super-region. This perception dates back to the 1970s. Any other interpretation would not be in line with NATO’s perception of the region, and would not be approved for discussion at the North Atlantic Council.

¹¹¹ Alberque, “The New NATO Strategic Concept and the End of Arms Control,” 2022.

International law of the sea

To better understand the impact of international law on this topic, a succinct introduction to international law of the sea is appropriate. The main guiding document is the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.¹¹²

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea

Signed in December 1982 in Montego Bay in Jamaica and in effect since November 1994, the **United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)** is the main international treaty regulating maritime activities. Today, it has 172 state parties¹¹³, including some non-state entities, such as the European Union. UNCLOS is subdivided into 17 parts. Given that **Part XI** treats technology transfer, further elaborates on resources extraction in the international seabed, and establishes the International Seabed Authority, its impact on this Topic can be ignored.

Maritime zones

NOTE FROM THE CHAIRS: A major component of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea is its subdivision of maritime zones, and the definition of rights and responsibilities attached to each one. For this topic of the study guide, a few key concepts are particularly important. Bear in mind that these are legal concepts and that explanations provided in this section of the study guide represent significant simplifications of them.

The **high seas** begin 200 nautical miles (1 nm = 1,852 km; 200 nm = 370,4 km) from the coast, and are shared between all States. These waters do not give sovereign rights to any State. States enjoy equal rights in these waters.¹¹⁴

The **exclusive economic zone (EEZ)** designates an area from 12 nautical miles (22,22 km) out from the coast up to the high seas. As its denomination might imply, it gives economic

¹¹² United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, 1994.

¹¹³ Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, art. 2(1)(g), 1969.

¹¹⁴ National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, "Maritime Zones and Boundaries," n.d.

rights to the coastal State. Even though this zone is seen as being owned by its coastal State, other States still have certain rights that they enjoy.¹¹⁵

Territorial waters are the area between the coast and the exclusive economic zone. For all purposes, they can be seen as a direct continuation of the sovereign territory of the coastal State, whose domestic legal regime applies.¹¹⁶

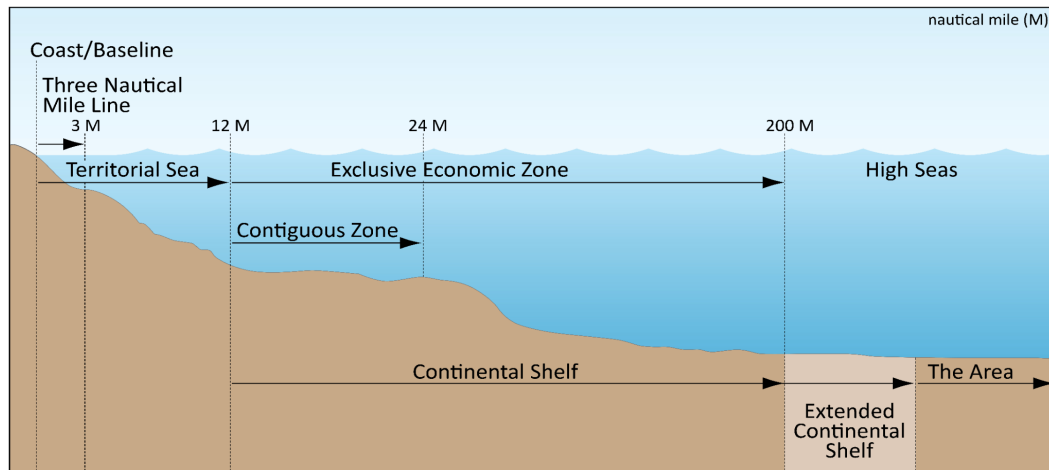


Figure 13: Maritime zones¹¹⁷

Freedom of navigation

In various forms, this concept dates back to classical times and designates the freedom to use the high seas for voyages. The UNCLOS codifies this concept further and attributes this freedom to the high seas. A general case is laid out in **Article 87 (Freedom of the high seas)**: “The high seas are open to all States, whether coastal or land-locked. Freedom of the high seas is exercised under the conditions laid down by this Convention and by other rules of international law. It comprises, *inter alia*, both for coastal and land-locked States:

- (a) **freedom of navigation;**
- (b) freedom of overflight;
- (c) freedom to lay submarine cables and pipelines, subject to Part VI;
- (d) freedom to construct artificial islands and other installations permitted under international law, subject to Part VI; [...]

¹¹⁵ Encyclopaedia Britannica, “Exclusive Economic Zone,” 2026.

¹¹⁶ Encyclopaedia Britannica, “Territorial Waters,” n.d.

¹¹⁷ Photograph: U.S Department of State, “Maritime Zones,” 2023.

This freedom allows States to generally navigate at their leisure. This means that, if no other ships are present, ships may decelerate, accelerate, and change trajectory at their discretion.¹¹⁸

Straits

Certain waters present specific geographic and hydrological features that may restrict passage or, instead, favour it. A strait is a natural waterway connecting two basins, seas, or any other type of navigable water. They are frequently part of the territorial waters of one or more coastal States. Admittedly, they are both a natural occurrence as well as an area used for manmade usage like transit, and thus difficult to define properly. **Straits are not defined in the UNCLOS.**¹¹⁹

While freedom of navigation applies to the high seas, the UNCLOS does establish a **specific regime for the passage of international straits**. More specifically, the UNCLOS does define certain rights, freedoms, and responsibilities for coastal and other States in Part III of the document, titled “straits used for international navigation”. **Article 38 (Right of transit passage)** states:

*“1. In straits referred to in article 37, all ships and aircraft enjoy the **right of transit passage**, which shall not be impeded; except that, if the strait is formed by an island of a State bordering the strait and its mainland, transit passage shall not apply if there exists seaward of the island a route through the high seas or through an exclusive economic zone of similar convenience with respect to navigational and hydrographical characteristics.*

*2. Transit passage means the exercise in accordance with this Part of the freedom of navigation and overflight **solely for the purpose of continuous and expeditious transit** of the strait between one part of the high seas or an exclusive economic zone and another part of the high seas or an exclusive economic zone. However, the requirement of continuous and expeditious transit does not preclude passage through the strait for the purpose of entering, leaving or returning from a State bordering the strait, subject to the conditions of entry to that State. [...]”.*

¹¹⁸ Woods, “The Origins and Principles of Freedom of the Seas,” 2024.

¹¹⁹ National Geographic Society, “Strait,” n. d.

The concept of the right to transit passage, can be understood as the right to use a strait with the intent of either crossing it, or entering it to access a coastal State. The second paragraph adds that the use of a strait has to be “continuous and expeditious”, meaning that ships are not free to navigate within the strait at their free will. It would not be possible for non-coastal States to station ships within a strait at their own discretion.¹²⁰

The Malacca Strait

The geographical definition of the Malacca Strait

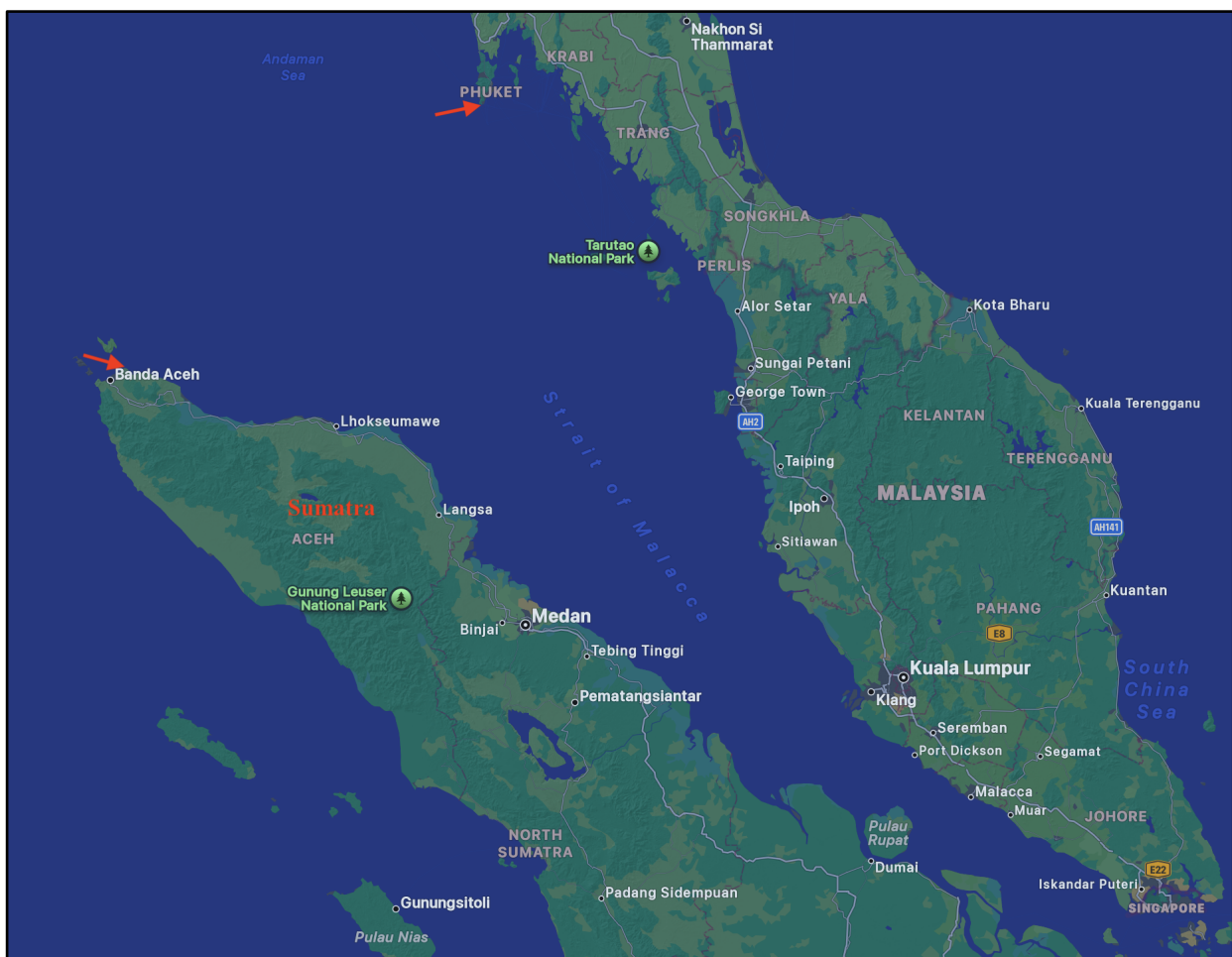


Figure 14: The Malacca strait¹²¹

The Malacca strait is the waterway connecting the Indian ocean in the North-West (specifically the Andaman Sea) to the strait of Singapore and the South China Sea in the

¹²⁰ *The Legal Regime of Straits: Contemporary Challenges and Solutions*, 2014.

¹²¹ Figure created by the authors of the study guide (original source: Apple Maps).

South-East. The International Hydrographic Organization defined the border between the Indian Ocean and the Strait of Malacca as the line connecting the Northern most point of the island of Sumatra (Indonesia) and the Southern most point of the island of Phuket (Thailand). From there, the Malacca strait ends near Singapore in the South-east.¹²²

NOTE FROM THE CHAIRS: Provided above is the minimal definition of the Malacca strait for this topic. Delegates may choose to include the Singapore strait at their discretion. The artistically stimulating map below indicates both of these points for your reference.

In 1998, Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore established a common, mandatory **ship reporting system in the Strait of Singapore and parts of the Malacca strait** in order to ensure safe navigation for all ships. This system divides parts of the Malacca strait into different reporting zones of administrative nature. Below is an illustration of these subdivisions by the Marine Electronic Highway, the organization behind the system.¹²³

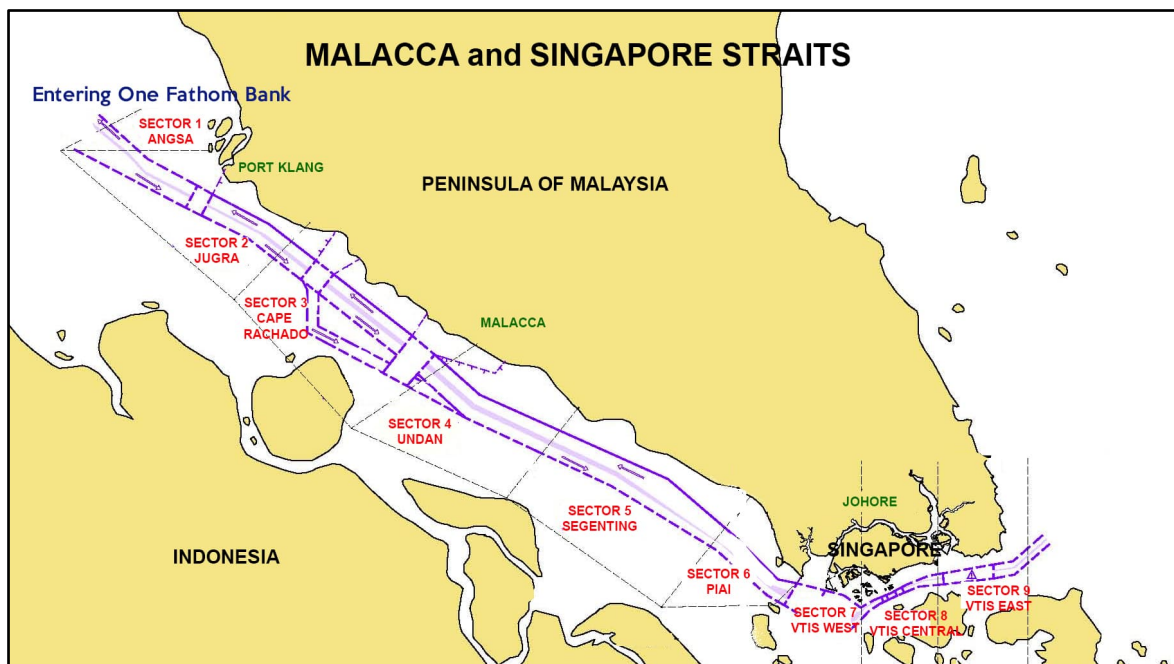


Figure 15: Malacca and Singapore strait¹²⁴

As the organization indicates on their website, this system benefits from a partnership with the Republic of Korea, the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO), the International

¹²² *Limits of Oceans and Seas*, 1953.

¹²³ Caminos and Cogliati-Bantz, "Transit Passage Defined," 206–24, 2014

¹²⁴ Photograph: Marine Electronic Highway, "Safe passage the straits of Malacca and Singapore," n.d.

Association of Independent Tanker Owners (INTERTANKO), and the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS). Project financing is also provided by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and the Republic of Korea.

NOTE FROM THE CHAIRS: Sectors 1 to 6 are part of the Malacca strait, while sectors 7 to 9 constitute the Singapore Strait. Delegates may notice that **sectors 1 to 6 do not represent the entirety of the Malacca strait**. These sectors represent parts of the Malacca strait with the narrowest passage and the most traffic, and may or may not help delegates by presenting predefined, geographic subdivision. Delegates may of course choose to ignore this, or propose different subdivisions if any at all.¹²⁵

The importance of the Malacca Strait

The Malacca Strait is the main entry point into the South China Sea from the Indian Ocean. Its importance is both commercial, and strategic. As a briefer on the subject, it may be useful to **distinguish the direction of transit via the Strait from West to East, East to West, and then bidirectional**.¹²⁶

West to East

For Western observers, the main element that comes to mind when discussing the Malacca Strait is the transit of hydrocarbons from the Middle East (in the West) towards mainland China (in the East) via the Malacca Strait. The expression “Malacca Dilemma” used by then Chinese president Hu Jintao in 2003 comes to mind. Indeed, the bulk of Chinese hydrocarbon imports originate in the Middle East and enter the South China Sea via the Malacca Strait, making it the second most vital waterway for hydrocarbons in terms of volume in the world, behind only the obscure Strait of Hormuz.¹²⁷ As it stands, about 35% of all the ships passing through the Malacca Strait are carrying various hydrocarbons.¹²⁸

¹²⁵ Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore, “Operational Areas,” n.d.

¹²⁶ Encyclopaedia Britannica, “Strait of Malacca,” 2026.

¹²⁷ Paweł Paszak, *The Malacca Strait, the South China Sea and the Sino-American Competition in the Indo-Pacific*, 2021.

¹²⁸ Marine Electronic Highway, “Ships Passing Through,” 2022.

In 2023, net imports of crude oil accounted for 73,9% of China's crude oil consumption,¹²⁹ representing about 43% of all crude oil imports to the region. In terms of energy mix, oil and oil products represent 18,3%, natural gas about 8%. Nevertheless, coal products and derivatives still constitute about 60% of China's energy mix, while renewables now represent about 25%. China is currently on course to limit coal, as well as hydrocarbons, in its energy mix in favour of renewables. While that process is most definitely not over yet, the trajectory is clear.

In the broader region, NATO maintains major active partnerships with India, Australia, the Republic of Korea, and Japan, the former which rely on the Malacca Strait for their hydrocarbon imports. In 2023, both Japan and the Republic of Korea individually imported about a fifth of the crude oil that China imported the same year. 98,6% of the crude oil the Republic of Korea consumed in 2023 is imported,¹³⁰ oil products and derivatives represent about 36,6% of its energy mix, while natural gas makes up 19,7%, and coal 22,3%. Japan is in a similar situation, importing almost all of its crude oil. Oil products represent 36,5% of its energy mix, natural gas 20,9%, and coal 26,1%.¹³¹

Both Japan and the Republic of Korea have the majority of their energy mix dependent on hydrocarbons, while barely producing any. For NATO to remain credible towards its partners, the North Atlantic Council must factor their energy situation into their appreciation of the Malacca Strait.

East to West

The Malacca strait of course also allows for the passage of ships from the East to the West. About 58% of the more than 80 000 ships passing annually through the Malacca Strait are carrying bulk, container, or other commodities. From these 58%, a majority passes from East to West.¹³²

¹²⁹ International Energy Agency, "China: Oil," n.d.

¹³⁰ International Energy Agency, "Korea: Oil," n. d.

¹³¹ International Energy Agency, "Japan: Oil," n. d.

¹³² "Ships Passing Through," 2022.

A variety of products from all over South East Asia pass through the Malacca Strait to the Middle East, Europe, and the east coast of the Americas. From electronics, medicine & medical equipment, chips, industrial products, chemicals, foodstuffs, to cars, clothes, and luxury items, to merchant and warships, South East Asian countries export via the Malacca Strait. China alone ships about 60% of its exports through the Strait.¹³³

In close proximity to the Malacca Strait, three major container ports exist, at Singapore (East of the Strait), Port Klang (Malaysia, West of the Strait), and Tanjung Pelepas (Malaysia, West of the Strait just West of Singapore). While Singapore is the second busiest port behind the port of Shanghai, both Malaysian ports regularly rank in the top 15 container ports worldwide and act as feeder to the region. All in all, 40% of global trade passes through the Malacca Strait.¹³⁴

Bidirectional

For the North Atlantic Council, it might be relevant to consider that Singapore is a key node for subsea cable networks in Southeast Asia, and linking it to its West via the Malacca Strait.¹³⁵ As such, the Strait is also a key route for the global information flow.

The Malacca Strait also allows for the cooperation of the United States Navy's Fifth and Seventh Fleet between themselves and with bilateral US partners in the San Francisco System, NATO members, and NATO partners.

The Fifth Fleet is stationed in Bahrain and is responsible for the Middle East, mainly from the Suez canal to the Indian ocean and including the Persian Gulf, while the Seventh Fleet, the largest forward-deployed fleet, is stationed in Japan and responsible for the Indian ocean and the Western Pacific. It is through the Strait of Malacca that these fleets would intend to coordinate. The **San Francisco System** is a set of bilateral military treaties the United States negotiated with Southeast Asian countries in the 1950s and largely remains in place. This System stems from treaties signed after the Second World War between the

¹³³ "The Strait of Malacca: Asia's Trade Superhighway," 2026.

¹³⁴ Boston Consulting Group, "These Four Chokepoints Are Threatening Global Trade," 2024.

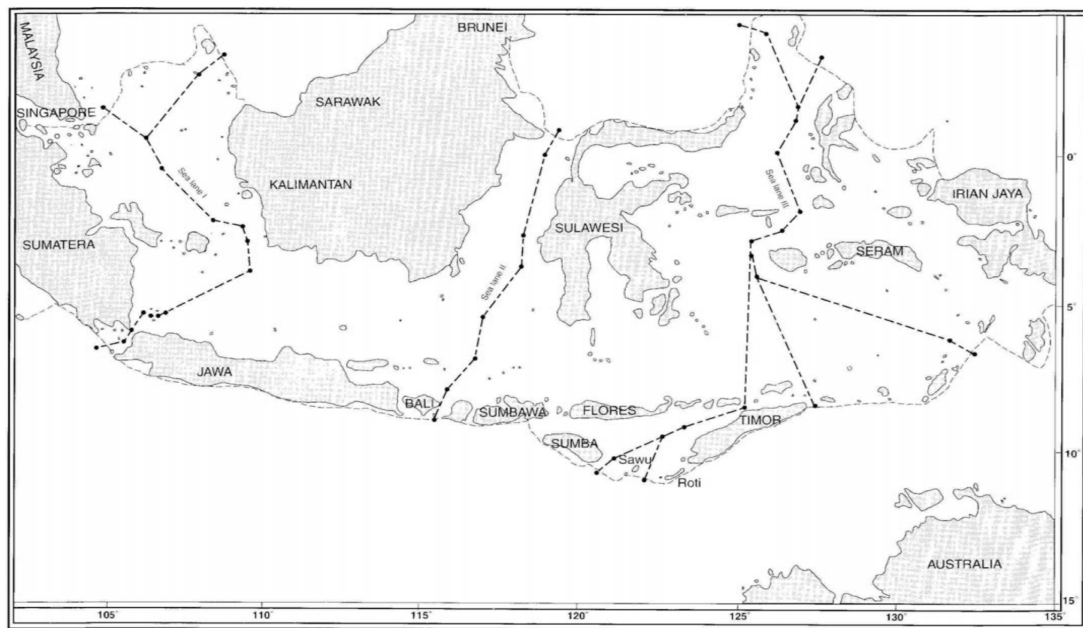
¹³⁵ "The Strategic Future of Subsea Cables: Singapore Case Study," 2025.

United States and former adversaries in Asia, and facilitated the independence of Japan in 1951.¹³⁶

NATO's partnerships in the region tend to grow out of these bilateral relations. Representatives may refer to **Japan**, the **Republic of Korea**, **Australia** and **New Zealand** as **the Indo-Pacific Four (IP4)**, as they now entertain active NATO partnerships¹³⁷. Along with the already mentioned Japan, Republic of Korea, Australia and New Zealand, Taiwan, the Philippines and Thailand are considered to be part of the San Francisco system,¹³⁸ as they all entertained bilateral treaties with the United States and developed security relationships with the latter.

Possible alternatives to the Malacca Strait

To the south of the Malacca Strait, lies the Indonesian Archipelago. In 2002, the Indonesian government formalized **three Indonesian Archipelagic Sea Lanes**.



INDONESIAN ARCHIPELAGIC SEA LANES I, II AND III

Figure 16: Indonesian archipelagic sea lanes I, II and III¹³⁹

¹³⁶ Dower, "The San Francisco System," 2014.

¹³⁷ North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "Relations with Partners in the Indo-Pacific Region," n.d.

¹³⁸ Congressional Research Service, "RL32593," 2015.

¹³⁹ Photograph: Resolution MSC.72(69) at p. 9. Retrieved from Cay, "Archipelagic sea lanes passage and maritime security in archipelagic Southeast Asia," (2010).

From West to East, they are known as ALKI I, ALKI II, and ALKI III, or simply as Sea lane I through III. **Sea lane I** passes the **Sunda Strait**, the waterway bordering the islands of Sumatra and Jawa. It is the closest one to the Malacca Strait and allows relatively quick access to Singapore. **Sea lane II** uses the **Lombok Strait**, passing in between the islands of Bali and Lombok. Sea lane II allows direct access to the South China sea. Moreover, Sea lane II is deep enough to allow submarines to pass easily. It may not surprise delegates that a number of unmanned underwater vehicles have been discovered and eliminated by the Indonesian Navy in Sea lane II. **Sea lane III** is less direct than the other corridors, but allows for Australian vessels to join the South China sea efficiently.

NOTE FROM THE CHAIRS: All three of these may be conceived as alternatives, even though they do constitute longer transits, and the infrastructure along the way is not developed to the same extent. Delegates representing States that wield submarines may find it useful to look up their States capabilities and reflect on how they would interact with these corridors.

Considerations for the North Atlantic Council

NATO's 360-degree approach

NATO's 360-degree approach defines NATO's threat outlook as being all-domain and, perhaps more importantly for this topic, from all geographical directions possible. Sometimes it is referred to as "360-degree defense strategy".¹⁴⁰

For this committee, delegates may consider this approach as allowing the NAC to proceed with a debate on the topic at hand. It forms the backbone of NATO activity in cases where NATO does not execute a UN mandated mission, and does not act to concrete threats to Euro-Atlantic security. Delegates might have noticed the concept being used by NATO officials to describe, for instance, NATO's position towards the Strait of Hormuz.¹⁴¹

¹⁴⁰ Lindley-French, "London 2019: NATO's 360-Degree Dilemma," 2019.

¹⁴¹ Anadolu Agency, "NATO Deploying 360-Degree Defense Strategy," 2026.

The crux of the topic for NATO

As Delegates might assess, this topic is a systematic one and on the frontier of what NATO can and does address.

The North Atlantic Council, which the Delegates are partaking in, is considering the political and normative impacts that NATO action to secure the Malacca Strait might have. For the intends and purposes of this committee, the North Atlantic Council would be able to decide unanimously how its member states might adjust their national foreign policy, but also whether NATO should develop contingency plans related to the Malacca Strait, and to give *instructions* to the Allied Maritime Command (to which the NATO Shipping Centre is associated), as well as any other element of NATO.¹⁴²

Points a communiqué should address

- Why, when, and how specifically would NATO intervene? How would such an intervention be within NATO's mandate and congruent with the North Atlantic Treaty, and the defensive nature of NATO?
- What does it mean to secure the Strait of Malacca?
- How can the Malacca strait be temporarily opened for passage while limiting tensions with regional and/or world powers? What are regional partners that NATO might cooperate with?
- What can NATO as an organization do to ensure the Malacca strait remains open? Do parts of the internal structure of NATO have to change?
- What alternatives to the Malacca strait would be feasible? What should NATO's position be towards them?

¹⁴² Please note that this does not say "orders".

Additional preparation materials

VIDEO RESOURCES:

- **To freshen up your NATO history**, here is a short publication by Dr Heather Cox Richardson: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZbEe7ZJFDOW>.
- **For the political context**, Delegates might consider this video, which includes an initial address by the then Deputy Secretary general of NATO (9:22–13:45): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qrll010ks6Q>.
- **To learn more about the IP4 and their relationship with NATO**, this video might be helpful : https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H1_457RnGoU.

NECESSARY READING:

- Delegates should take some time to familiarize themselves with the **NAC structure and the various Committees reporting to it**: <https://www.nato.int/en/about-us/organization/nato-structure/committees>.
- **For some more historic background**, delegates could read: John Hemmings, “The evolution of the U.S Alliance system in the Indo-Pacific since the Cold war’s end”, chapter 9 in “Hindsight, Insight, Foresight: Thinking about Security in the Indo-Pacific.”, Alexander L. Vuving (Ed.), 2020, Daniel K. Inouye Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies. Available at: <https://dkiapcss.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/09-Hemmings-25thA.pdf>.
- Delegates are expected to have read the **2022 Strategic Concept**: <https://www.nato.int/content/dam/nato/webready/documents/publications-and-reports/strategic-concepts/2022/290622-strategic-concept.pdf>.

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