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CARLETON MODEL
NATO

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NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL
BACKGROUND GUIDE

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- NATO Relations and Allies
 - Hearts and Minds: Ensuring NATO's Relevance and Challenging Misinformation
 - Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear Threats

Introduction to the North Atlantic Council

The North Atlantic Council (NAC) is the political decision-making body of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The NAC is comprised of Permanent Representatives from all NATO member states. It is established under Article 9 of the North Atlantic Treaty (NATO's founding document) and it is currently the only NATO committee that explicitly draws its authority from the Treaty. The North Atlantic Treaty gives the NAC the power to set up subsidiary bodies for various policy functions, including the other committees present at this conference. Any policy, decision, or action that NATO undertakes is discussed and approved by the NAC on a unanimous basis. The meetings of the NAC are chaired by the Secretary General of NATO. Each Member State represented at the NAC or on any of its subordinate committees retains complete sovereignty and responsibility for its own decisions.

At Carleton Model NATO, the NAC retains the role as the principal decision-making body of the Alliance. Any communiques passed by the other committees during the weekend will be reviewed by the NAC during the final plenary session of the conference, and either approved unanimously and rejected. During this session, delegates from other committees will be present at the NAC and will have the opportunity to consult with and advise their NAC delegates. This provides a great deal of emphasis on achieving consensus in the subordinate committees, even though it is not explicitly required, as a delegate who is opposed can simply request that their NAC colleague vote down the communique when it is reviewed in plenary.

Topic A: NATO Relations and Allies

Democracy among NATO members

NATO is not a typical alliance. From its inception in 1949, NATO has not only deterred and defended against external threats, but it has also more recently highlighted the importance of liberal democratic governance. Although the cohesion of NATO member states initially rested on the common threat of the Soviet Union, NATO was more unified than most multilateral organizations due to the common character of Alliance members. Nearly all were democratically elected governments that were accountable to their citizens, bound by the rule of law, and dedicated to upholding political and civil rights. Even Article 2 of the Washington Treaty commits members to “strengthening their free institutions,” while the 2016 Warsaw Communiqué saw members agree that NATO’s mission is to “ensure that the Alliance remains an unparalleled community of freedom, peace, security, and shared values, including individual liberty, human rights, democracy, and the rule of law.”¹

While many alliances fail to last once the common threat is eliminated, NATO continues to exist despite the dissolution of the Soviet Union. One possible reason is the internal cohesion created by the Alliance’s democratic values. Instead of disintegration, NATO has adapted to new challenges in the post-Cold War era. Preserving and upholding these liberal, democratic values is significant to the success of NATO in the future.

Beginning in the 1990s, NATO has encouraged political reforms by requiring aspiring members to meet its standards for good governance. Fulfilling these requirements was often politically contentious and aspiring members did not always succeed. Montenegro set out with the goal of achieving membership in 2007 but had to wait more than ten years to earn admission. Bosnia has yet to fulfill the criteria the Alliance set in 2010 for the country to be granted the Membership Action Plan, a procedural precursor to joining.²

The credibility of NATO’s admission criteria may be undermined by new members ‘backsliding’ after joining the Alliance. While NATO’s shared commitment to liberal democracy allows it to have similar interests and priorities, this is only true if new members maintain those values after accession. Some member states have actively weakened institutional checks on government power, threatened the principle of freedom of speech, and promoted intolerant nationalism, risking a rapid slide into more authoritarian forms of government. Allowing members to backslide may harm NATO’s credibility, detract from its ability to cultivate liberal values, and hinder consensus-building.

With Russia mounting a renewed threat in Europe, liberal democracy is integral to transatlantic security as illiberal and nondemocratic countries are more vulnerable to subversion.

¹ NATO, 2016, “Warsaw Summit Communiqué,” https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_133169.htm.

² NATO, 2012, “Membership Action Plan (MAP),” https://www.nato.int/cps/ie/natohq/official_texts_27444.htm?selectedLocale=en.

Authoritarianism enables corruption, and in Europe, corruption can enable Russian access and influence as noted in Ukraine.³

Ensuring NATO Member States uphold the fundamental values of the Alliance is not without challenges. One option for dealing with backsliding states is to consider adopting a form of the European Union (EU)'s "qualified majority" rule for internal governance. Instead of requiring consensus, NATO could make it possible for a defined supermajority of members to suspend the voting or decision rights of backsliding states. Another option would be to make a senior official responsible for monitoring and reporting on the liberal democratic credentials of not only new or aspiring members, but also of allies.

NATO External Relations

As a military alliance of like-minded states, NATO's primary mission has not prevented it from forming relationships and partnerships with other international organizations and bodies, such as the United Nations, the EU, and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). In 2017, NATO formally opened its Strategic Direction South Hub, with the purpose of coordinating work and relationships with countries and international organizations to NATO's south, specifically the Middle East and Africa.⁴ This hub emerged from the 2016 Warsaw Summit and the framework NATO developed to better understand challenges, threats, and opportunities in these regions. The hope is that the Hub will provide a more nuanced understanding and to inform NATO programming and operations.

In addition, NATO has long-running regional dialogues in the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI), founded in 2004, and the Mediterranean Dialogue, which launched in 1994.⁵ These initiatives are to provide a forum for discussion and understanding between NATO and its neighbours, preventing misunderstandings, and encouraging strong communication and relationships. NATO also has less formal "Partners Across the Globe", which is a catch-all term for countries NATO works with that do not fall into another category. In 2006, NATO also formalized the first Individual Cooperation Programme with Israel, where Israel, a non-NATO member, actively participated in a NATO operation (Active Endeavor).⁶ Since then, similar agreements have been concluded with Egypt and Jordan.

The combination of all of these initiatives and relationships demonstrate that NATO is no longer the defensive North Atlantic military alliance that it once was; it sees itself as an organization with global interests and a role to play in issues around the world and is willing to work with various external partners to achieve its objectives. This is the direction the Alliance has chosen to go, but it is one fraught with complexities and challenges unlike what NATO has faced in the past. When seeking partnerships and collaborative work, how should NATO balance the usefulness of relationships with the need to ensure that partners share the liberal values and

³ NATO, 2018, "Relations with Ukraine," https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_37750.htm.

⁴ NATO Strategic Direction South, 2018, "NATO Strategic Direction South," <https://www.thesouthernhub.org/default.aspx>.

⁵ NATO, 2015, "Partners," <https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/51288.htm>.

⁶ NATO, 2006, "NATO/Israel Cooperation in the framework of the Mediterranean Dialogue," <https://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2006/p06-123e.htm>.

ideals that define the Alliance? Should potentially beneficial activities be declined because the collaborator isn't a democratic, liberal state, or should NATO focus on the practicality and benefit of the work above all else? The direction the Alliance chooses to go could end up defining its future and viability in the 21st century.

Guiding Questions:

- In the absence of a shared Soviet threat, to what extent is the binding force of liberal democratic values and institutions essential for the Alliance's effectiveness?
- Should NATO implement mechanisms for putting members who 'backslide' on liberal democratic values on notice?
- What should be NATO's criteria for engagement with partners external to the Alliance, and how broad should this engagement be?

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Topic B: Hearts and Minds: Ensuring NATO's Relevance and Challenging Misinformation

With the Cold War and the threat of widespread communism over, NATO must ensure it remains relevant and responsive to the current security climate to ensure its survival. The Alliance has faced criticism both internally and externally regarding its ability to adapt and its necessity in a post-Cold War world. NATO is facing a perception problem where disinformation and the use of propaganda undermines the credibility of the Alliance. The Alliance has initiated a communication experiment in Operation Trident Juncture and a new communication campaign, #weareNATO to combat disinformation and ensure NATO remains relevant in responding to international security threats. Ensuring that the relevancy and necessity of NATO is effectively communicated is essential to the survival of the Alliance.

The Importance of Public Opinion

The founding members of NATO understood the importance of informing public opinion.⁷ As early as August 1950, a modest NATO Information Service was set up and developed. Over the years it has evolved into the Committee on Public Diplomacy, which advises the NAC on communication, media, and public engagement issues. It makes recommendations on how to encourage the public understanding and support for NATO's aims.⁸ Maintaining support for NATO among citizens of all 29 Member States is no easy feat. Public opinion polls indicate that while the majority of citizens in NATO states approve of the Alliance, there are notable exceptions in states such as Spain, Greece, and Turkey.⁹ These polls also highlight criticism that NATO does too little to solve global problems and is seen as unresponsive to current international security problems, including cyber warfare and the refugee crises. Public support for NATO is integral to its survival. Emphasizing the importance and relevance of NATO and effectively relaying that to populations is necessary for the Alliance's continuance.

Ensuring the relevance of the Alliance requires adapting to changing international security threats. With new technologies such as Artificial Intelligence and quantum computing entering the defence field, the Alliance must undergo radical changes if collective defence is to remain credible. While NATO has adapted since 2014 by rebuilding deterrence threats from the East, increasing its engagement with the Middle East, and forging a closer partnership with the EU, it may be falling behind the pace of political change and technological developments that could alter the character of warfare and the role of the Alliance itself.¹⁰

⁷ NATO, 2014, "Committee on Public Diplomacy (CPD)," https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_69272.htm.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Fagan, M., 9 July 2018, "NATO is seen favorably in many member countries, but almost half of Americans say it does too little," *Pew Research Center*, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/07/09/nato-is-seen-favorably-in-many-member-countries-but-almost-half-of-americans-say-it-does-too-little/>.

¹⁰ Lindley-French, J., 19 February 2018, "Adapting NATO to an Unpredictable and Fast-changing World," *NATO Review Magazine*, <https://www.nato.int/docu/review/2018/Also-in-2018/adapting-nato-to-an-unpredictable-and-fast-changing-world-defence-alliance-security/EN/index.htm>.

Combating Misinformation: Communication Campaigns

A major challenge NATO faces in asserting its continued relevance and efficacy is battling disinformation campaigns undermining the Alliance's credibility. Strategic communications planning is an essential part of any military deployment. NATO's communications have been challenged by sophisticated disinformation operations and propaganda, particularly by Russia in response to NATO's operations in Eastern Europe.

NATO defence planners and decision makers may have to prepare for 'fake news' stories and deceptive reports by Russian sources. These sources have adopted several provocation campaigns such as alleged attempts to pay local youths to riot in Sweden, and heavily targeting the Baltics as "plotting an attack on Russia."¹¹

Countering Russian disinformation campaigns requires rapid investigation of the information and its sources, establishing the facts, and ensuring those facts reach the same audiences that were targeted with the disinformation. NATO will also need to be proactive and shape the information agenda. Soldiers and commanders may require education on the nuances of preparing for and reacting to information warfare. Allied states may benefit from Lithuania's 'information influence identification and analysis ecosystem' project that monitors and analyzes physical and information environments.¹² Consultation with the NATO STRATCOM Centre of Excellence could also be beneficial. A high level of preparation is crucial in tackling a sophisticated Russian disinformation campaign aimed at disrupting support for NATO.

#weareNATO

In July of 2017, NATO's Public Diplomatic Division launched their #weareNATO campaign, a crucial pillar in NATO efforts to communicate its relevancy. This marks the first major NATO-wide branded communications campaign in over a decade. The campaign is meant to improve the global understanding of the organization's purpose, develop core solidarity between NATO allies, and illustrate the unity of the organization through a collaborative portfolio of communications, including digital and multimedia content, print, and broadcast. Above all, the campaign's primary goal is to showcase the organization's efforts in promoting social and diplomatic cohesion, military cooperation and control, as well as responses to international crises.¹³

#weareNATO attempts to improve the level of knowledge of NATO issues and gain support for them among the public, specifically that of youth. NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg notes the organization cannot take the support for NATO as a given for new

¹¹ Gramer, R., 7 March 2017, "Russian TV Crew Tries to Bribe Swedish Youngsters to Riot on Camera," *Foreign Policy*, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2017/03/07/russian-tv-crew-tries-to-bribe-swedish-youngsters-to-riot-on-camera-stockholm-rinkeby-russia-disinformation-media-immigration-migration-sweden/>; EU East StratCom Task Force, 2 March 2017, "Disinformation Review: Trends," <https://us11.campaign-archive.com/?u=cd23226ada1699a77000eb60b&id=9393398338>.

¹² Keep, M., 7 June 2017, "NATO: Prepared for Countering Disinformation Operations in the Baltic States?," *RAND*, <https://www.rand.org/blog/2017/06/nato-prepared-for-countering-disinformation-operations.html>.

¹³ NATO, 2017, "We Are NATO," <https://www.nato.int/weare nato/>.

generations who were born after the Cold War and have little memory of its original purpose.¹⁴ The campaign notes that for many individuals it is no longer obvious why NATO exists, especially in states that lack a large NATO presence.

Operation Trident Juncture and the Information Environment Assessment Capability

Operation Trident Juncture, an exercise in Norway, the North Atlantic, and the Baltic Sea involves all 29 allies and is NATO's largest post-Cold War exercise.¹⁵ The operation was aimed at demonstrating the collective capabilities of the Alliance in a high-visibility exercise, built around an Article 5 scenario. The exercise, culminating in November of 2018, worked to assure the world that NATO is operationally prepared by experimenting on testing future capabilities. These include new land command and control systems, intelligence sharing, and developing the 'information environment assessment' (IEA) capability.

The IEA capability is a recent example of NATO evaluating perceptions of world events to better communicate them. The IEA capability aims to boost NATO's ability to analyze information environments and provide senior political and military leaders with analysis and recommendations on how NATO communications are received by a diverse range of audiences. Noting that hostile communications by states can shape perceptions and rapidly disseminate misinformation that polarizes opinions, NATO must compete effectively within the information environment.¹⁶ Analysts monitored communications during the exercise to gain insights about reactions to what NATO was saying, what any adversary may have been saying, and how the public reacted to both.

Shifts within the information environment continue to make an impact on people's perceptions of world events. The IEA experiment during Operation Trident Juncture highlights the Alliance's commitment to analyze information on a continual basis and establish narratives to promote NATO's communications objectives. Strategic communication planning is part of any military deployment and ensuring the dissemination of the right message is crucial to the support of NATO operations.

Next Steps

The North Atlantic Council must address NATO's relevancy and perception problems as the issue is inextricably tied to the future of the Alliance itself. Creating a strategy to combat misinformation, reengage the disenfranchised, and promote NATO's ability to provide defence and security in an ever-changing environment is essential to the Alliance's success. Further, ensuring NATO's actions are effectively communicated to allies and partner states alike is crucial to its survival. NATO's value is in its unity and solidarity in protecting the peace and security of

¹⁴ NATO, 14 September 2018, "Remarks by NATO Secretary General at the Heritage Foundation in Washington, DC," https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_158078.htm.

¹⁵ Paxton, J., 16 November 2018, "Trident Juncture and the Information Environment," *NATO Review Magazine*, <https://www.nato.int/docu/review/2018/also-in-2018/trident-juncture-and-the-information-environment/EN/index.htm>.

¹⁶ Ibid.

citizens. This value must be relayed effectively, particularly to younger generations, to ensure NATO remains a harbinger of peace and security for years to come.

Guiding Questions:

- Is promoting the continued relevancy and necessity of NATO to populations necessary to secure its future, and if so, how should the Alliance go about this?
- How can NATO ensure it remains credible and responsive to a constantly changing international security environment?
- Is NATO's current strategic communications planning effective in informing the public about NATO Operations, exercises, and ability to respond to current threats? If not, how can it be improved?
- With the relevance and value of NATO being questioned by groups within and outside NATO states, what role, if any, should NATO as an organization play in combating false information about the Alliance?

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Topic C: Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear Threats

Introduction

According to the G7 Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons of Mass Destruction, the concept of “CBRN” refers to weaponized or non-weaponized chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear materials that can cause significant harm. In April 2004, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) unanimously adopted Resolution 1540 (2004) under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, which affirms that the proliferation of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons and their means of delivery, constitutes a threat to international peace and security. UNSC Resolution 1540 obliges states, inter alia, to adopt legislation to prevent the proliferation of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons and their means of delivery, and establish appropriate domestic controls over related materials to prevent illicit trafficking.¹⁷ This Resolution was passed unanimously by the UNSC, which at the time included NATO Member States Germany, Romania, and Spain, as well as the permanent members France, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

In addition to the resulting 1540 Committee that is charged with encouraging the implementation of the resolution, there are many other international mechanisms that encourage CBRN control, including the Biological Weapons and Toxins Convention (BTWC), the Proliferation Security Initiative, and the Global Health Security Agenda (GHS), among others.¹⁸

Despite these initiatives and the best intentions of the players involved, there have been repeated instances of CBRN proliferation and use in the past few decades, most recently in the ongoing Syrian conflict, as well as the chemical attacks in the United Kingdom in Spring/Summer 2018. Other well-known CBRN incidents include the anthrax letters in the United States in 2001 and ongoing poisoning attacks in Iraq. With rapidly evolving technology and norms against the use of these weapons weakening with every incident, this problem is likely to get worse before it gets better, without concentrated and sustained intervention.

NATO's Role

NATO occupies a very different geopolitical position and role than the organizations named above, which can be both a strength and a weakness. As a security-oriented organization of like-minded partner countries, NATO is able to move faster and act more decisively than broader and more deliberative international bodies. However, the flip side of this coin is that NATO lacks the multilateral legitimacy that these organizations possess, especially when acting outside the borders of its Member States. NATO formally recognized the threats posed by CBRN in 2003, when it set up the NATO Combined Joint CBRN Defence Task Force. This Task Force consists of the CBRN Joint Assessment Team (JAT) and the CBRN Defence Battalion and is specifically trained and equipped to deal with CBRN events and/or attacks against NATO

¹⁷ Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction, 2017, “CBRN Security, <https://www.gpwmmd.com/cbrnwg>.

¹⁸ UN, “1540 Committee,” <https://www.un.org/en/sc/1540/>.

populations, territory, or forces.¹⁹ The Battalion and the JAT are a multinational and multifunctional team that can deploy quickly to participate in the full spectrum of NATO operations. The Battalion trains for armed conflicts, as well as for deployment in crisis situations, such as natural disasters or industrial accidents, particularly those involving hazardous material. To maintain the Task Force's specialised skills, NATO's Defence Against Terrorism Programme of Work (DAT POW) supports training exercises.

The Task Force supported civilian planning during the 2004 Summer Olympics in Greece, and supported CBRN-related contingency operations at the 2004 Istanbul Summit.²⁰ It also conducts regular training with NATO partners under the auspices of the NATO Science for Peace and Security (SPS) Programme, such as in Kuwait in December 2017, with more such events planned in the future, as this field of security becomes increasingly relevant all over the world.²¹ This force is NATO's main answer to CBRN threats, and beyond it, the Alliance has limited involvement in this field, especially in the areas of international policy and programming, despite the obvious security implications.

Next Steps

In the previous two sections, we've seen what NATO has historically engaged in and seen as its role in CBRN – training, preparedness, and response, as it acknowledged most recently in the 2018 Brussels Summit Declaration.²² Much has changed since this mandate was determined in the early 2000s, however, and it is well past time to re-explore these issues and decide if there are more or different things NATO should be doing to combat these threats. Counter-proliferation and control of dangerous or dual-use substances and technologies is a field that is ripe for more driven involvement. Many NATO members are already involved in this area of international policy through other organizations and may or may not feel that NATO has a greater role to play.

Another potential area for engagement is in medical countermeasures (MCM). Countries maintain stockpiles of antidotes, vaccines, iodine, and other MCM for use following emergencies. However, the quality and quantities of these stockpiles vary wildly, even among NATO Member States. There is currently no formal mechanism by which NATO members can share, distribute, or organize these stockpiles, as the topic has never been seen as an issue relevant to NATO. However, given the increasing prevalence of CBRN incidents, NATO may wish to either coordinate access to these stockpiles, or potentially even develop a NATO-owned reserve. Delegates will have to determine how the doctrine of collective defense applies to these incidents. If there is a role for NATO, is it in response to intentional attacks only, and if so, how will the alliance deal with situations in which it is unclear whether an incident is intentionally caused or natural. There is a risk of a slippery slope or mandate creep on these issues, and delegates will have to be

¹⁹ NATO, 2015, "Combined Joint Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear Defence Task Force," https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_49156.htm.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ NATO, 2017, "NATO trains Kuwaiti experts in dealing with CBRN incidents," https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_49156.htm.

²² NATO, 2018, "Brussels Summit Declaration," https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_156624.htm.

conscious of how NATO should involve itself in the control of these weapons and materials going forward.

Guiding Questions:

- Are NATO's current efforts regarding CBRNs accomplishing the Alliance's goals? Is there a better way to tackle this issue?
- How does NATO balance coordinating prevention and response efforts to CBRN incidents with respect for national sovereignty and the individual priorities of Member States?
- Are there non-NATO bodies that the Alliance can leverage and partner with to facilitate achieving shared objectives? What would the nature of these partnerships be?
- How should NATO prioritize biological, chemical, radiological, and nuclear threats?

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