

NATO Chronicle:



Twelve nations signed the North Atlantic Treaty in Washington on April 4, 1949.

NATO

The Cold War Years

By RICHARD L. KUGLER

Can the Atlantic Alliance handle the items on the agenda of the Washington Summit? Can it enlarge as well as adopt a new Strategic Concept and a long-term defense reform plan for a new era? Can it forge sensible policies for threats that arise outside its borders? Can it pursue both an eastern and a southern strategy? Can it preserve the transatlantic

bond even as Europeans pursue their own identity? Can it act wisely not only at the summit but afterwards to implement new policies?

While critics may doubt the ability of NATO to master such a new and demanding agenda, events over the four decades of the Cold War offer reassurance. The Alliance faced challenges and met them, however imperfectly. Its wise actions and strength in times of turmoil are a key reason the West won the Cold War. If the past is prologue, it can rise to the occasion again.

Richard L. Kugler is a distinguished research professor in the Institute for National Strategic Studies at the National Defense University and author of *Commitment to Purpose: How Alliance Partnership Won the Cold War*.

The Alliance has the resources to succeed. It possesses not only great wealth and military strength but political assets. Its prospects are enhanced by U.S. leadership, European cooperation, and its own institutions. Its continued success lies in harnessing these assets to forge policies that achieve security while maintaining cohesion. History demonstrates that this can be done through coalition planning and by keeping one eye on policy and the other on consensus.

Troubled Origins

Because NATO stands as the greatest peacetime alliance in history, its troubled origins are easily forgotten. It began as a hollow shell and became a great defense alliance through hard work, patience, and change on the part of its members. The Washington Treaty that created it was not signed until 1949, two years after the Cold War erupted. Because initially there was no consensus for a truly military pact, the organization was formed as a political alliance although its mission was protection against the Soviet military threat.

The idea behind the Alliance was sound: to commit the United States to European security while joining the nations of Western Europe together under American leadership. The Washington Treaty called on NATO to function as a true collective defense alliance rather than a loose security pact like the failed League of Nations. Its members committed to each other's security. If one was attacked, the others were to come to its defense.

Despite brave words the Alliance had only political organs for high-level consultation at the outset. It lacked an integrated military command and a coherent strategy. Its force posture, which included nine divisions and 450 combat aircraft, could not protect the borders of central Europe. NATO forces were not equipped or deployed to operate together. West Germany—the focal point of growing confrontation with the Soviets—stood outside the Alliance and could not defend itself. The northern and southern flanks were vulnerable to direct invasion and political encroachment.

The American presence was paltry: one division and a few aircraft in Europe while the Army had been demobilized in the United States. President Truman intended to further disarm, and Western Europe, still devastated in the wake of the war, had no plans for a military buildup. Deterrence rested entirely on the U.S. nuclear monopoly, but that force was small and unprepared. Had the Soviets attacked, their sizable forces could have swept to victory, conquering Europe before the United States could mobilize.

were adopted to defend the region and to dispatch U.S. reinforcements in emergencies.

With prodding from Washington Western European nations agreed to build up their forces. The Lisbon Accord of 1952 laid plans for 54 divisions to defend central Europe and another 42 to protect the northern and southern flanks. The plan was slated to take a decade, but by 1953 NATO posture had doubled and the all-important military infrastructure was taking shape.



Germany taking its seat at the council table as a member of NATO in 1955.

NATO

Crisis finally brought NATO to life, a recurring pattern in later years. The Korean War and explosion of a Soviet atomic bomb moved the Alliance to remedy its weakness. After increasing defense spending, Truman sent large forces to Europe, expanding Army strength from one to five divisions—350,000 men. An integrated NATO command was formed with General Eisenhower as supreme commander and Field Marshall Montgomery as deputy. Coordinated plans

After lengthy debate Germany was admitted in 1955. Bonn promised to build a large army and air force that would be put under NATO command. Although the notion of a unified European army was rejected, there was agreement on using national forces for integrated defense. The Paris Accord committed the United States, Britain, and France to station assets in Germany as Belgium, the Netherlands, Denmark, and Canada added forces to defend central Europe.

By the mid-1950s NATO had passed through childhood into adolescence. It was not only a political organization but a real military alliance.



America's commitment to Europe was no longer in doubt. Germany had emerged as both a democracy and an ally. Britain, France, and Germany overcame their differences and were working together. Greece and Turkey had joined the Alliance. Western Europe was recovering its economic strength. By creating a Coal and Steel Community and then signing the Treaty of Rome, Europeans established a Common Market, following a path of economic integration.

The Cold War continued unabated. Diplomatic efforts to achieve a political settlement with Moscow failed. Eastern Europe fell further under communist control. Berlin remained exposed to Soviet pressure. Creation of the Warsaw Pact and the invasion of Hungary exacerbated East-West tensions. But Western Europe was now less vulnerable to Soviet threats.

The end of the Korean War and changing military technology, however, led to new defense priorities. President Eisenhower decided to buy deterrence on the cheap by anchoring doctrine to nuclear weapons. This strategy permitted less defense spending and smaller conventional forces. The Europeans were initially hesitant but came to support Eisenhower's rationale because it offered security and savings.

In 1957 the Alliance adopted a strategy of massive retaliation. It threatened a nuclear blow to the Soviet Union for almost any transgression. Both Britain and France began nuclearizing, and non-nuclear Germany found comfort under the growing NATO nuclear umbrella.

By the late 1950s the United States and its allies had a gleaming posture of several hundred long-range bombers with intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) being developed. There were plans to deploy thousands of tactical nuclear weapons to Europe as well. As the decade ended, nuclear deterrence was intact but the conventional buildup had badly slackened. Only 24 divisions and 2,400 combat aircraft—largely configured for a nuclear rather than a conventional war—were available to defend central Europe, a mere

tripwire in confronting the Warsaw Pact. The Alliance was left dependent on U.S. nuclear weapons and rapid escalation against a major attack.

The Great Strategy Debate

The danger facing NATO was apparent as the 1960s dawned. Although its missile buildup was some years away, the Soviet Union was already acquiring ICBMs and could thereby expect to deter a U.S. nuclear retaliation for a conventional invasion of Western Europe. With deterrence in decline, the Cold War heated up and worry spread across the West.

Moscow began to brandish nuclear weapons and put pressure on Berlin. Western Europe was once more vulnerable to political blackmail and invasion. While the United States

the Kennedy administration proposed that nuclear strategy be broadened by upgrading conventional defenses

faced down the Soviets in the 1962 Cuban missile crisis, the Berlin crisis exposed a lack of military options in central Europe. This gap weakened NATO diplomacy. If a war broke out, the Alliance could face the dismaying choice of either surrendering or triggering a nuclear holocaust. It confronted a grave crisis in its military strategy that went to the heart of its political cohesion and will.

The Atlantic Alliance fell into a paralyzing debate. The Kennedy administration proposed that its nuclear strategy be broadened by upgrading conventional defenses. Secretary of Defense McNamara announced this stance to the defense ministers at Athens in 1962. Washington argued that this step would strengthen deterrence by making conventional aggression less attractive while lessening an unhealthy dependence on nuclear escalation.

An alarmed Germany viewed the matter differently. Bonn valued the nuclear strategy and feared that Washington would weaken deterrence, not enhance it. Chancellor Adenauer fretted that America was backing away from the defense of Western Europe and instead would expose the continent to a

destructive conventional war to prevent a nuclear attack on its own territory. He also feared a U.S. sell-out of Berlin or other steps to accommodate Moscow at Europe's expense.

Britain and other allies were caught between two nations. Not wanting to weaken nuclear deterrence or undertake a conventional buildup, most sided with Germany. The debate might have been less volatile had it focused solely on military strategy, but deeper political controversies arose. The transatlantic relationship was changing because economic recovery made Europe less reliant on Washington. The Europeans were now more willing to assert their identities.

President de Gaulle entered the fray to attack U.S. strategy and political motives, alleging that Washington was trying to keep Western Europe subordinate. He did not advocate dismantling the Alliance, but he pulled out of the military command structure and expelled NATO headquarters

from France. He proposed a Franco-German axis to lead Europe and invited other nations to join. Although none did, with the French veto of Britain's admission to the Common Market because of its fealty to the United States NATO seemed to be coming apart at the seams.

Recognizing the danger to the transatlantic bond, leaders resolved to fashion a new strategy that met the core concerns of all parties. This process took five painful years. It involved intensive study of the military situation and heated debate over options. Support for a strong nuclear posture remained unabated. But most member nations became persuaded that a better conventional posture was feasible, affordable, and desirable.

Consensus emerged in 1967. The new strategy was flexible response. Critics complained that it was a compromise that did not resolve all strategic dilemmas. Yet it helped heal the political breach between Washington and European capitals. It also reduced



President Kennedy
visiting the NATO
council, 1961.

NATO

the contradictions of massive retaliation in ways that produced a strategy more aligned with the shifting demands of the day.

Flexible response did not abandon nuclear deterrence or the option to escalate. Although NATO rejected the multilateral nuclear force, it created the Nuclear Planning Group to ensure that U.S. and British forces would fully meet nuclear requirements. Yet flexible response also called for an initial and affordable conventional defense strong enough to fight hard in the early stages and make aggression problematic. It made clear that the defense would be fought on the borders of Germany rather than trading space for

time through retreat. The forward defense line was moved to the inter-German border where it remained throughout the Cold War. While this step reassured Germany that it would be protected, the goal of strengthening conventional forces gave the United States confidence that nuclear escalation would not be premature.

The combination of undiminished nuclear strength and stronger conventional forces which characterized the new strategy promised to enhance deterrence and allow more options. Insistence on affordable defense budgets created incentives to use resources effectively and pursue integrated planning. And above all, flexible response restored political cohesion. America determined that its

interests had been advanced; Germany and other allies felt satisfied. Moreover, flexible response was accompanied by the Harmel doctrine, which called for arms control and diplomatic outreach to the Warsaw Pact. NATO thus equipped itself with a dual-track policy aimed at fostering a sound military strategy and external political dialogue to lessen East-West tensions.

What brought flexible response to life were efforts to build a stronger conventional posture. Germany fielded its long-delayed army. The United States agreed to modernize its forces in Europe and other nations took similar steps. Plans were adopted for better integration through common doctrine and enhanced logistic support.



By the late 1960s NATO was capable of deploying 37 divisions and 2,900 combat aircraft in central Europe after a few weeks of mobilization. This force was smaller than its Warsaw Pact counterpart, but taking into account its superior weapons and the terrain it was within range of an initial forward defense. The building blocks of an improved strategy and force posture were then in place. The Alliance had passed through adolescence and was entering adulthood in reasonably good health.

Cloudy Priorities and Growing Resolve

NATO had growing pains in early adulthood. It also maintained a pattern of internal debate followed by agreement on a stronger defense. In the 1970s the Alliance faced a strategic problem. The Warsaw Pact threat to Europe did not slacken—it increased. But having learned the lesson of brandishing its sword too conspicuously, the Soviet Union called for détente in Europe: not an end to the Cold War but a cooling through negotiations and partial settlements.

Moscow seemed to be intent on consolidating its hold on Eastern Europe while weakening NATO resolve by lulling it to sleep. Yet the West had reasons for dialogue. Germany was

in 1978 the Carter administration persuaded the Alliance to adopt the Long-Term Defense Plan

eager to engage the Soviet Union on Berlin and those issues where accords might lessen tensions. Other European nations agreed, and although Washington was cautious it followed suit. Détente became the name of the game overnight. NATO was left to ensure that détente was not simply atmospheric but would actually enhance the West's security.

The fear that the Alliance would stumble proved wrong. Focusing on the many negotiating forums of détente, NATO adopted a coordinated

diplomatic strategy to handle them. Negotiations would not alter the East-West standoff in central Europe because the Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction (MBFR) talks stalled. But other efforts produced the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT), an antiballistic missile treaty, a Berlin treaty, an agreement on East Germany, and human rights accords in Eastern Europe. This reduced flashpoints but did not end the Cold War.

As the political atmosphere improved member nations again slackened their defense efforts. By contrast, the Warsaw Pact launched a sweeping push to gain offensive supremacy over NATO. The Soviet nuclear buildup accelerated and achieved parity. Modernization bolstered conventional forces to rival NATO which enhanced the capacity of the Warsaw Pact to launch a swift *Blitzkrieg*. Again, NATO military security was eroding in ways that left the Soviet Union better able to assert its strategic agenda in Europe and worldwide. The Cold War entered a dangerous new phase.

The Warsaw Pact buildup initially threw NATO into a crippling debate. Calls mounted for a countervailing response, but the Alliance reacted sluggishly. Divided, its members were reluctant to undercut détente or increase spending. They were also preoccupied with transatlantic economic frictions that diverted attention from defense. In 1970, NATO launched a defense improvement plan called AD-70, but progress was slow.

Europe did little and U.S. modernization was delayed by Vietnam and budget cuts. The military balance in Europe was tilted toward the Warsaw Pact.

Eventually, greater awareness began to take hold. In the mid-1970s, Secretary of Defense Schlesinger called for more spending and stronger NATO forces. The end of the Vietnam conflict allowed American planners to refocus on Europe. In 1978 the Carter administration persuaded the Alliance to adopt the Long-Term Defense Plan (LTDP) to upgrade conventional forces and speed reinforcements to Europe. It sought to enhance interoperability, plug holes in the defense posture, and hasten modernization to match the Warsaw Pact.

The plan pursued not only major programs but practical steps such as collocated airbases, a civilian pipeline, and common ammunition.

Shortly afterward, the Shah of Iran fell and the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan, thereby threatening Western access to Persian Gulf oil. Sensing a crisis, the United States forged plans to defend the region by quickly deploying sizable forces. Aside from Britain and France, European nations did not create similar plans; but they agreed to intensify their military programs. As part of LTDP the allies agreed to place Pershing II and ground-launched cruise missiles on European soil, offsetting the Soviet buildup of SS-20 theater nuclear missiles.

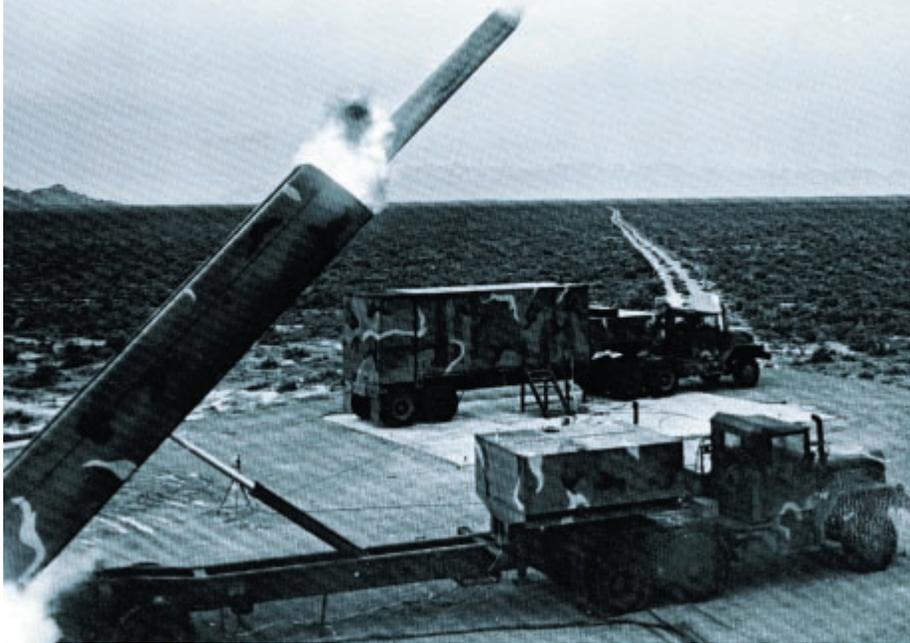
The 1970s thus began with NATO confused about its priorities and unable to act. But the Soviet buildup cleared the air. The United States led but the Europeans agreed. Plans were mostly on paper. Yet the decade ended with NATO pulling back from the brink of military inferiority.

Strategic Resurgence

The Alliance fully matured in the 1980s. It was a decade of strategic resurgence followed by the end of the Cold War. President Reagan mounted a military buildup by increasing defense spending, modernizing strategic forces, and launching the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) for ballistic missile defense. He also pursued 600 ships for the Navy and strengthened U.S. forces in Asia and the Persian Gulf. But it was in Europe that his defense policies, supported by the allies, most directly engaged Soviet power.

A centerpiece of Reagan defense policy was deployment of longer-range intermediate-range nuclear forces (LRINF): 572 Pershing II and cruise missiles. NATO offered to refrain in exchange for an arms control accord on dismantling the large Soviet LRINF threat to Europe. When it was rebuffed, the Alliance deployed the missiles as pledged despite widespread protests across Europe. By the mid-1980s this policy had transformed the European nuclear balance.

Launching cruise missile
in Europe, January 1983.



NATO

The United States and its NATO allies also enhanced conventional defenses. The Reagan administration implemented the decision by President Carter to rapidly reinforce Europe in crises, increasing U.S. presence from 5 divisions and 8 fighter wings to 10 divisions and 20 wings within a few weeks. Europe contributed funding for host nation programs to provide logistic support. The size of NATO forces was further enhanced when Germany transformed reserve brigades into well-armed combat formations. Other allies upgraded readiness and manpower. France also drew closer by making clear that its large army could be available for NATO missions in crises.

Alliance plans were heavily focused on upgrading defenses in northern Germany. While southern Germany was well secured by large U.S. and German forces, flat terrain in the Northern Command was an invitation to invasion, its forward defense line was brittle, and its forces weaker. NATO defense posture was upgraded by committing Americans in III Corps

as reinforcements and the planned use of French reserves. In addition, British and German forces shifted to a maneuver doctrine that increased their flexibility. Meanwhile, NATO also reinforced Norway and Turkey.

Under U.S. leadership, NATO launched the Conventional Defense Initiative, a follow-on to LTDP. It was aided by sweeping modernization, which enhanced weapons quality and restored the armaments edge over the Warsaw Pact. The airborne warning and control system (AWACS) and new aircraft with better avionics and munitions restored air supremacy. Air forces could also contribute more to a land battle by destroying enemy air bases, logistic sites, and armored forces. Better airpower promised to blunt an enemy offensive, thereby taking pressure off ground forces.

Both new tanks and infantry fighting vehicles increased combat power. U.S. weapons led the way, but British and German models were also excellent. They enhanced tactical mobility in ways complementing the firepower from artillery, anti-tank missiles, and large logistic forces. In their wake came a doctrine that blended fire and

maneuver—key to containing enemy breakthrough attacks. As a result, ground forces became more capable of fighting outnumbered and winning.

Modernization of U.S. and allied naval forces restored supremacy at sea. The U.S. carrier force grew in size. It acquired aircraft, cruise missiles, Aegis cruisers, and submarines. European navies also modernized. Thus their naval forces could not only defend the North Atlantic sealanes but destroy enemy forces in northern waters and the Mediterranean Sea. The impact was to blunt the ongoing Soviet effort to build a blue-water navy that could challenge NATO at sea.

By the late 1980s, NATO could deploy 45 divisions and 3,600 combat aircraft in central Europe. Its posture was smaller than the 90 divisions and 4,200 aircraft of the Warsaw Pact. But taking into account its higher quality, the allies could fight a formidable forward defense not only in early days but later. Improving morale plus successful joint and combined operations enhanced confidence. The difference was marked. The trends favored the Alliance, not the Warsaw Pact.

When NATO nuclear and conventional plans went into high gear, Soviet policy underwent a sea change. Premier Gorbachev offered arms control accords that would dismantle the offensive military threat of the Warsaw Pact while leaving Alliance defensive strategy intact. He also called for liberalization in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe which set the stage for the subsequent deluge. The Berlin wall came down and communism faded across Europe, replaced by democracy and market capitalism. Change spread to the Soviet Union when democracy replaced communism in 1991. Indeed, the Soviet Union was supplanted by Russia and 14 newly independent states.

NATO presided over German unification and the Soviet withdrawal from Eastern Europe. The LRINF and Conventional Forces in Europe Treaties reduced lingering fears. Instead of being dismantled, NATO planned to renew itself as a vibrant alliance for the post-Cold War era. When Kuwait was invaded in 1990, U.S. and coalition forces drew on NATO experience to dramatically defeat Iraq. All told, these



Forging the double-track decision, December 1979.

NATO

were remarkable achievements for an organization that began its life militarily and politically weak.

Lessons Learned

NATO was far from a perfect alliance during the Cold War. At times it drifted, behaved indecisively, and made errors. But it never made fatal errors; and it learned from its mistakes. In crisis it rose to the occasion and in normal times continually improved. As a result, Europe became more secure and the West won the Cold War.

Overall, the NATO experience illustrates that democracies can make a success of alliances and coalitions in peacetime. Historians will long debate how the Cold War was won, but it is clear the West could not have waged the conflict, much less triumphed, without the Alliance. NATO gets the lion's share of credit for allowing its European members to recover their internal health and pursue unity. Its defense efforts were strong enough to check attempts by the Warsaw Pact to gain military superiority. The result was to leave the Soviet Union and its allies bankrupt, with no strategic gains to show for their huge investment. In this sense NATO helped provide the

leverage that eventually overthrew communism in Europe.

One canard repeated during the Cold War was that NATO success was driven by the Soviet threat. It implied that once the Alliance did not face an

as NATO gained maturity, it acquired a reputation for effectiveness that transcended the crises of the moment

equivalent threat, it could not mobilize the unity and willpower to act. In truth, the Cold War was not responsible for NATO performance. The West could have responded in many other ways, although none would have been as effective. But it created an alliance at great cost and sacrifice, an unusual response even in a danger-laden era.

NATO was founded partly because the Western democracies had learned the bitter lesson of failing to collaborate prior to World War II. During that conflict, the United States, Britain, and other nations also learned that coalition planning can defeat powerful enemies. But even though that experience

can account for the Alliance, it does not explain its growth and continued success. In the last two decades of the Cold War, Moscow disavowed aggressive intentions and offered warmer relations through diplomacy. No contests

arose like the Cuban missile face-off or Berlin crisis. Instead, the response was silent, gruelling military competition and frustrating negotiations. If NATO had been motivated

only by a threat it would have lost its energy and focus. Something more basic and enduring explains its remarkable staying power.

Sustained performance was driven by widespread recognition that coalition planning served the vital interests of the allies. As NATO gained maturity, it acquired a reputation for effectiveness that transcended the crises of the moment. Coalition planning gave its members an enduring way to combine and magnify their powers. It also enabled them to lower the expense of defending themselves, thereby permitting them to pursue other goals. Such attractions did not evaporate with the Cold War. They remain, helping to account for continuing Alliance success

at a time when big military threats to Western interests have been replaced by other dangers.

In implementing its plans, NATO made effective use of subcoalitions. The Central Region was defended by one, the Northern by another, and the Southern by a third. Thus members were most involved where their incentives were highest. Also important, NATO ensured that authority over the subcoalitions was distributed according to national willingness to accept responsibility and commit resources. Consequently it gained a reputation for even-handed conduct in internal affairs. Nations held command slots because they earned them.

In a greater sense, NATO achieved more equitable burden-sharing than commonly realized. No nation was required to commit more resources than it could realistically afford. The Alliance recognized that defense could not be bought at the expense of damaged economies and societies. The United States, like its allies, influenced policies commensurate with its contribution. Members thus got from NATO what they contributed. Only France chose to leave the integrated command. Other nations occasionally complained, but staying proved more attractive than leaving.

While many members made compromises, overall each one gained. Participation remained a winning proposition not only because the collective good was enhanced in Europe, but because the individual fortunes of the allies were enhanced. NATO policies normally made strategic sense. Rather than reaching weak decisions anchored in logrolling, the Alliance regularly agreed on action that improved security and peace. The combination of democratic processes, respect for national interests, and effective policies was vital to success and staying power.

Without U.S. leadership, manifested by succeeding presidential administrations, NATO could not have gotten off the ground and performed strongly for four decades. This leadership evidenced itself both politically and militarily. American assets provided the critical mass to allow smaller nations to combine to create an effective posture.

Success also owes to key European nations, especially Britain, Germany, and France. Yet all members overcame national predilections. They patiently learned the art of combining power to preserve unity and produce sound policies. Coalition planning was not easy, but it worked.

NATO forces remained national but cooperated in ways not previously achieved in time of peace. They were driven by a coherent division of labor and well-construed roles and missions. U.S. and British forces defended the seas and also provided large ground and air reinforcements for continental defense. Other nations created forces largely to defend their own regions but were attentive elsewhere as well. The effect was manifested in central Europe, where the famous "layer cake" defense was less than ideal but met the demands of a troubled time. Meanwhile, frontier nations such as Norway and Turkey were powerfully defended. This could not have occurred without pursuit of multilateralism or joint and combined operations.

Success was due to the capacity of NATO to promote strategic innovations as the Cold War unfolded. It switched gears to meet new challenges. As threats emerged, it often reacted slowly at first owing to internal debate. But once it reached consensus it acted with resolve. That pattern still holds. The Alliance requires patience but normally rewards sustained commitment.

Finally, success owes to political and military institutions. The NATO story is remarkable not just because a transatlantic alliance was created but because it has worked so well for so long. Many key policy and strategy choices might have been made without an institutional framework. But the Alliance was responsible for implementing them. Its institutions developed the manifold programs and actions that brought the decisions to life. They provided discipline to force planning and diplomacy. They were heavily responsible for the strong forces fielded in response to ever-changing missions. Without them NATO would have been an alliance in name only.

The institutions worked by combining central direction and participation from lower levels. Regular summits and ministerial meetings allowed political leaders to determine strategic directions which were aided by ten-year plans that set key defense and improvement goals. Time and again, the plans elevated the NATO vision from the near to the long haul. This vision, in turn, provided officers and planners the framework to build forces and collaborative relations from the bottom up—the way real military strength is produced.

The bottom line is simple. The Cold War proved that Western democracies can accomplish magnificent goals when they work together. True, the NATO story reflects much political smoke and fury. But out of this discord—a mark of democracy at work—came a series of wise decisions and strong actions. It was the case during the Cold War and has been true in the turbulent 1990s. It is the core reason why NATO, old and experienced but still vibrant, remains capable of handling a demanding strategic agenda. **JFQ**



Secretary Albright with the foreign ministers of the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland on March 12, 1999.

Department of State



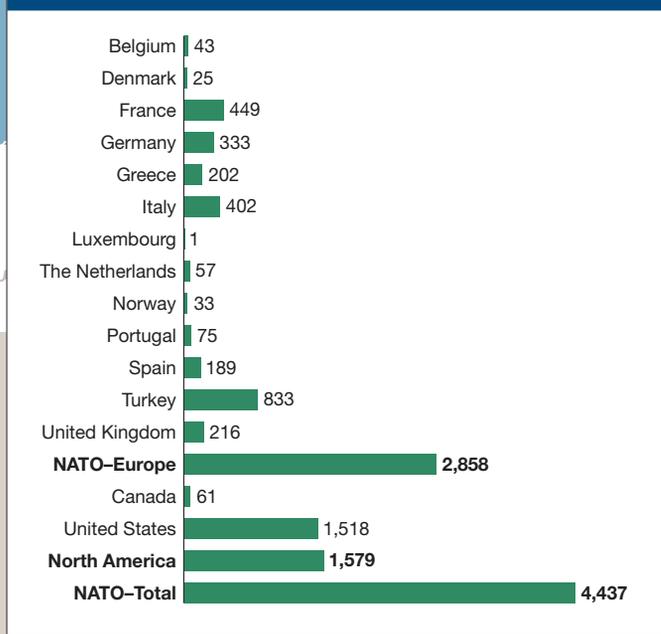
CANADA

UNITED STATES

North Atlantic Ocean

Gulf of Mexico

Estimated Military Strength Levels, 1998 (in thousands)



The Brussels Treaty of March 1948 marked the determination of five West European nations—Belgium, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom—to develop a common defense system and strengthen ties among them in order to resist ideological, political, and military threats to their security interests.

Talks with the United States and Canada then followed on establishing a North Atlantic Alliance based on security guarantees and mutual commitments between Europe and North America. Five additional countries—Denmark, Iceland, Italy, Norway, and Portugal—were invited by the signatories of the Brussels Treaty to participate in the process. These negotiations culminated in the signing of the Treaty of Washington in April 1949, bringing about a common security system of 12 nations.

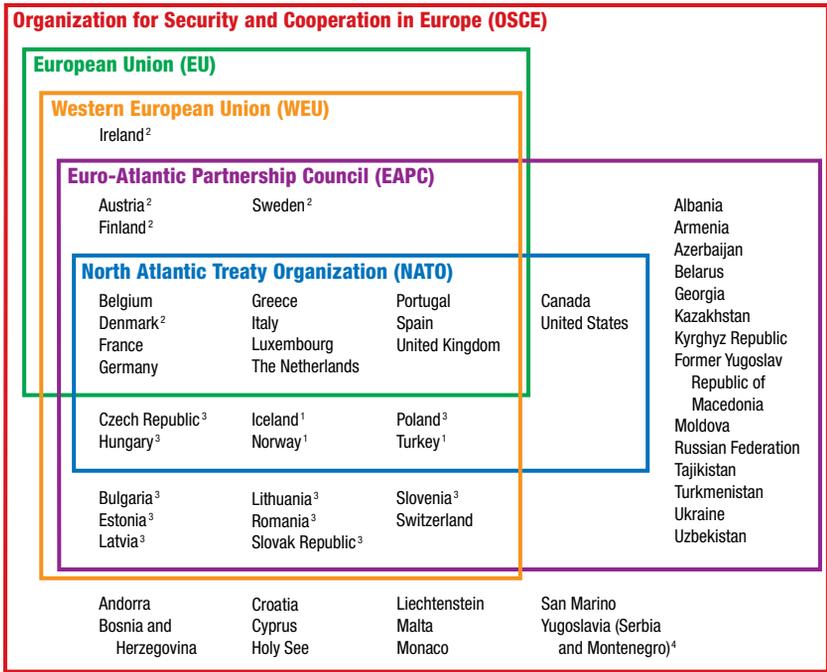
Greece and Turkey acceded to the treaty in 1952. The Federal Republic of Germany joined NATO in 1955 and Spain became a member in 1982. The accession of the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland on March 12, 1999 has brought the number of members in the Alliance to a total of 19.

NATO members and the 25 nations which belong to the Partnership for Peace program comprise the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council.

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Interlocking Euro-Atlantic Organizations



¹ WEU associate member ³ WEU associate partner
² WEU observer ⁴ WEU suspended member

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... for more information, visit the following Web sites:

The Washington Summit
<http://www.nato50.gov>

North Atlantic Treaty Organization
<http://www.nato.int>

Western European Union
<http://www.weu.int>

European Union
<http://www.europa.eu.int>

Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
<http://www.osce>