

## A History of NATO

# Major Events and Inflection Points

1949

The signing of the North Atlantic Treaty in Washington D.C., bringing together Canada and 11 other countries as founding members of NATO, with the purpose to deter Soviet expansionism, forbid the rise of nationalist militarism, and encourage European political integration.

1949 AND 1950

The Soviet Union's detonation of an atomic bomb and the outbreak of the Korean War, respectively. The North Atlantic Treaty had created allies, but in response to these two events, NATO created a consolidated command structure and the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe.

1955

The Warsaw Pact – a collective defence treaty between Eastern Bloc socialist states – is signed in reaction to West Germany joining the alliance. The establishment of the Warsaw Pact presents a unified challenge and counterbalance to the West.

1961 AND 1962

The Berlin Wall is built and the Cuban Missile Crisis occurs, escalating tensions between NATO and the Soviet Union. NATO adopts the doctrine of "Massive Retaliation" where any attack by the Soviet Union, however small, would be met with a nuclear response. This strategy bolsters the allies' political and economic cooperation, particularly in the Space Race.

1989 AND 1991

Revolutions spread across Central and Eastern Europe culminating in the Soviet Union dissolving and the Warsaw Pact disbanding. NATO's *de facto* adversary is no more, signifying the strength and perseverance of NATO's mandate, and the importance of the North Atlantic Treaty.

1995 AND 1998

NATO supports the UN-mandated, multinational force in the former Yugoslavia by deploying 60,000 troops to help implement the Dayton Peace Agreement. NATO conducts a 78-day air campaign to cease ethnic cleansing and support a multinational peacekeeping force in Kosovo – leading to the creation of the NATO-led Kosovo Force to maintain a safe and secure environment.

2001

In the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Centre and Pentagon, Article 5, which states that an attack against one NATO member shall be considered an attack against all, was invoked for the first time in history. NATO's military intervention in Afghanistan increases interoperability and solidifies the organization as one that can operate outside the traditional North Atlantic sphere.

2014

Russia illegally annexes Crimea, marking the first time since 1945 a great power has changed Europe's borders by force. NATO condemns the act stating that it is a breach of international law and continues to be a steadfast supporter of Ukraine – a member of the Partnership for Peace programme. This event escalates tensions between Russia and the West.

2021 AND BEYOND

NATO Leaders endorse the NATO 2030 agenda at the 2021 Brussels Summit. The agenda marks a pivotal moment towards adapting to an evolving security climate that includes climate change and constant challenges to the rules-based international order. The leaders pledge to deepen political and defence coordination to uphold the rules-based international order and meet these emerging threats.

