

NATO BACKGROUND GUIDE

AMSIMUN'26

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Dear Delegates,

As the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) committee chairs, we are happy to have you at the annual AMSIMUN 2026 conference! We are thrilled to see the diplomacy, strategy, and teamwork you will bring to the table, and it is a true honor to lead you through this year's conference. There are still a number of obstacles to preserving world stability, and international security is facing constantly increasing issues. We therefore anticipate your commitment to tackling the current problem and coming to a practical and beneficial conclusion.

The creation of NATO dating back to April 4, 1949, marked an enormous change in global collaboration. Since this alliance was founded on the idea of collective defense, an attack on one member would be seen as an attack on all. In addition to traditional defense, NATO has expanded into crisis management, joint security, and deterrence over the years. As tensions rise, ceasefires fall apart, and new forms of mixed conflict develop, the alliance has to make tough decisions about how much of its strength to use to maintain peace and stability.

We would like to emphasize as your chairs that this background guide is merely a place to start when it comes to your preparation. Your research should go well beyond what is included in the background guide. Understanding your country's relationships, policies, and strategic goals is extremely important to excel in your debate and discussion during committee. Before you begin learning more about the topic, this guide is meant to provide you with background guidance and information.

We can't wait to start this journey with you. Your attendance at this conference is the first step toward an exciting academic journey full of discussion, cooperation, and leadership. In our role as chairs, we will make sure that each delegate gets the chance to make a significant contribution during the committee meetings.

Last but not least, we hope to see you representing NATO with pride in May. Please don't forget to send in your position papers only via Mawakeb Mail, and don't hesitate to contact us with any inquiries.

Your Chairs,
Lucia Kakoun, Leen Sawan & Joury Musharbek

Topic: "Responding to Ceasefire Violations: Where Does NATO's Authority Begin and End?"

In modern conflicts, ceasefire violations offer a serious threat to peace, stability, and civilian safety as agreements that stop combat are broken. A clear example is the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. After the Minsk Agreements were signed to stop the fighting, both sides repeatedly violated the ceasefire through continued shelling and clashes. This ultimately delayed and prevented any lasting peace from happening.

In addition to prolonging violence and undermining negotiations, these breaches also cause uncertainty for governments and international actors working to keep the peace. With the goal of preventing aggression and protecting its member nations, NATO has been a key

player in collective defense and crisis management since its establishment in 1949. During the Cold War, NATO deterred potential aggression from the Soviet Union, helping maintain stability in Europe. More recently, it has taken part in crisis management operations, such as those in Afghanistan, where it led missions to combat terrorism and support security.

Although Article 5 of the Washington Treaty gives NATO the explicit right to defend its members, the organization's ability to respond to ceasefire violations in non-member nations is nevertheless complicated and limited by international law, the UN mission, and sovereignty principles. Despite the fact that NATO has carried out crisis management and peace enforcement missions in areas like Eastern Europe and the Balkans, concerns regarding the boundaries of its power still influence international security strategy. In order to make clear NATO's position, guarantee strategic decision-making, and safeguard the stability of both member and partner states, it is necessary that the urgent topic of responding to ceasefire violations be tackled.

History

NATO's involvement in enforcing compliance with ceasefires began at the conclusion of WWII, when it was established as a deterrent force at the beginning of the Cold War as part

of NATO's mission to deter aggression and establish a collective defense in the Euro-Atlantic area. The North Atlantic Treaty, signed by the founding members in 1949, is based on the principle of collective defense, whereby an attack on one NATO Member State will be considered an attack on all NATO Member States, as mandated by Article 5. However, NATO's mission was now specifically to serve as a regional military deterrent against aggression; therefore, enforcement of ceasefires by NATO has historically been dependent on whether NATO's military force is threatened and whether or not the actions taken are consistent with international law. In the Bosnian War, NATO enforced ceasefires with airstrikes only after the conflict became a serious threat and after having had the approval of The United Nations. This further shows that NATO acts based on threat level and international law.

Although NATO did enforce compliance with ceasefires occasionally during the Cold War, the predominant use of NATO's military forces was for deterrent purposes. Most ceasefires were monitored by the United Nations during this time. Additionally, NATO continued to function in a defensive posture, preventing violations of ceasefire agreements. During the Cold War, NATO kept strong forces in Western Europe to deter the Soviet Union from breaking peace agreements. This helped prevent escalation in tense regions like Germany, where the military buildup acted as a warning against any ceasefire violations. However, NATO did not begin to assume a significant role in enforcing compliance with ceasefires until the 1990s, when NATO was forced to become a major player in enforcing compliance with ceasefires as a result of regional conflicts arising in the Balkans after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. NATO conducted air operations to support the imposition of no-fly zones and, with international approval, eventually deployed peace implementation forces. The events surrounding those missions marked a fundamental evolution: When NATO was authorised and had consent from its members, it was able to enforce compliance. There was an important precedent established in that NATO would engage in interventions for collective defence or under the authorisation of international law, rather than as a unilateral intervention.

In the early part of the 2000s NATO extended its crisis management operations from traditional territorial defence to stabilization operations and training of security forces in combat zones. The primary focus of its operations shifted from punishing ceasefire violations

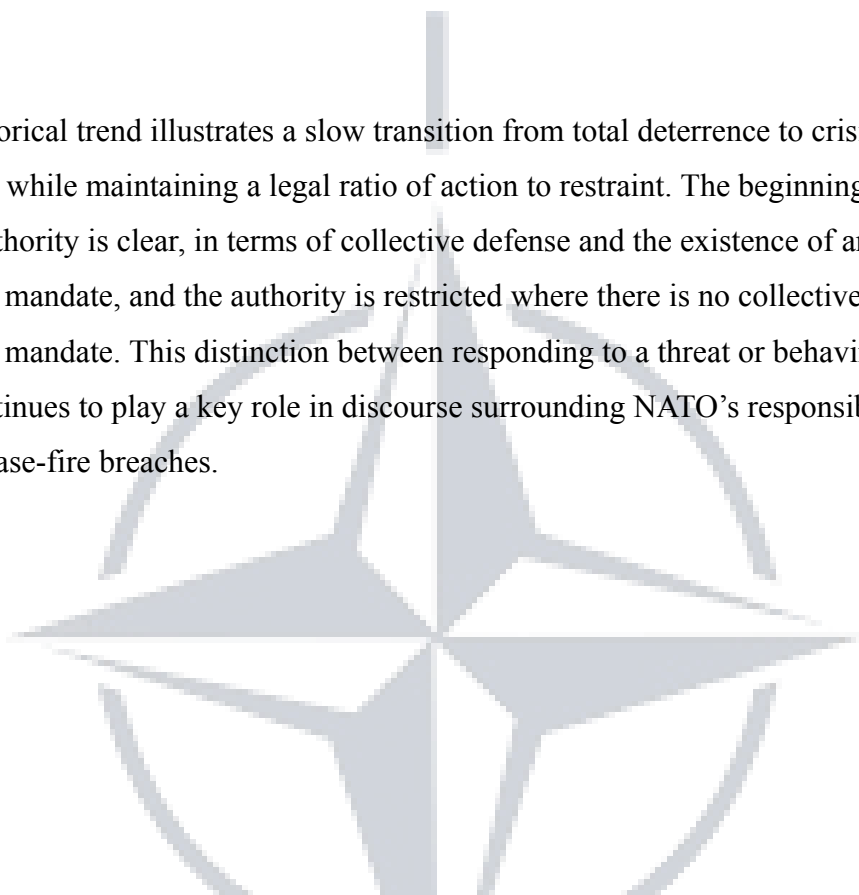
to preventing a ceasefire breakdown. These operations showed that NATO was beginning to rely heavily on deterrent capability, monitoring, technical assistance and developing capacity, rather than on direct enforcement.

One of the new 21st century challenges is hybrid warfare, which has blurred the distinction of what is an “armed attack” through use of cyber warfare. An example of this is Russia against Ukraine. Alongside traditional military force, there were cyberattacks on Ukrainian government systems, the use of proxy forces in eastern Ukraine, and irregular fighting in the Donbas region.

As a result, there is a huge ambiguity rooted in the uncertainty of whether a breach of ceasefire will create an obligation to provide collective defence. NATO has been progressively adapting; enhancing the Cyber Defence cooperation; and participating in intelligence sharing; and developing forward deployed troops – all in an effort to deter escalation when there has not been immediate military action.

Recent conflicts in Eastern Europe have helped to delineate NATO’s boundaries further. While NATO has provided defensive assistance to its partners, as well as training and political support, it has remained out of combat in non-member conflicts in order to avoid increasing the risk of escalating into a larger war. This is an example of the long-standing tradition of NATO acting decisively when a member's security is threatened and using deterrence, diplomacy and partnership when violations are committed outside of the Alliance territory.

NATO’s historical trend illustrates a slow transition from total deterrence to crisis management while maintaining a legal ratio of action to restraint. The beginning of the alliance’s authority is clear, in terms of collective defense and the existence of an international mandate, and the authority is restricted where there is no collective defense or international mandate. This distinction between responding to a threat or behaving with restraint continues to play a key role in discourse surrounding NATO’s responsibility with respect to cease-fire breaches.



Analysis

As an institution, however, NATO was created under strict limitations, with collective defense taking precedence over intervention into global conflicts. Indeed, its very nature made NATO more of a deterrent and protector than an organization whose task would be to enforce peace globally. As such, any action by NATO against ceasefire violations would be predicated upon several factors, such as threats to the security of a member state and conformity with international law and legal procedures.

Throughout the Cold War period, NATO retained the characteristics that made it more of a deterrent than anything else. In particular, NATO did not intervene actively in ceasefire situations and instead concentrated primarily on preventing any kind of massive conflict. Such limitations made NATO less of an intervener in ceasefire violations than other institutions.

The disputes and wars of the 1990s became a turning point in terms of NATO's ability to become an organization engaged actively in the resolution of crisis situations. Previously, it had been considered that NATO could only act as a deterrent to any potential attacks, but at this stage, it started intervening into the situations of ceasefire violations in order to stabilize the situation. However, NATO interventions were always made on condition of the existence of legal grounds for such actions and internal consensus between the parties to the conflict.

As for the early years of the new millennium, NATO showed that it was ready to play an even more proactive role and contribute to the stabilization of the situation. In particular, there was no need anymore to react to ceasefire violation, because the priority was now shifting towards prevention. Stabilization measures and building up of local forces' security capabilities became priorities at this point.

Hybrid warfare in the contemporary period makes the role of NATO even more complicated as the differences between classic attacks and indirect aggression become hard to identify. Such attacks as cyberattacks, proxy wars, or irregular wars leave questions whether it is time to apply the obligations of mutual defense or not. Because of this, NATO finds it harder to act in case of ceasefire breaches and thus prefers prevention over the use of force, collaboration, and the exchange of intelligence information.

Contemporary conflicts in Eastern Europe demonstrate the inability of NATO to take part in some processes that may go out of control because of it. Providing some aid to the countries that undergo a war, such as training, providing defense and security, giving political and financial assistance, but not entering the battlefield, becomes a constant feature of NATO activity.

On the whole, the history of NATO demonstrates how the organization is increasingly moving from being solely a deterrent alliance to taking a multifaceted part in crisis management. In spite of all its changes, the activities of NATO are always restricted by certain legislation and processes of consensus-building among the participating states. The powers of the Alliance are most obvious when defending the member countries or acting on the basis of international resolutions. Otherwise, restraint is observed.

To sum up, NATO is experiencing an increasing number of challenges as both the lack of ceasefire and contemporary wars are pushing the boundaries of its power. Its intervention in conflicts outside its member states has been a controversial issue, although its involvement in the protection of its member states is understandable.

You are the representatives and you need to determine where the power of NATO should start and where it should end. Should it be more aggressive, or deterrent and supportive? Your job is to do so in a middle ground, a realistic solution that would not lead to further escalation but keep it at peace.

Questions to be answered in your resolutions:

1. When does a ceasefire violation legally qualify as an armed attack triggering collective defense?
2. Should NATO require United Nations authorization before intervening in non-member conflicts?
3. What non-military responses should NATO prioritize when violations occur?
4. How should NATO respond to hybrid warfare ceasefire breaches such as cyberattacks and proxy forces?
5. Under what conditions can NATO deploy troops to enforce or monitor ceasefires?
6. How can NATO cooperate with international organizations without becoming a party to the conflict?
7. What measures can deter violations without escalating into wider war?
8. How can NATO protect civilians and humanitarian operations during ceasefire collapse?
9. Where should NATO's legal authority end to avoid violating sovereignty?
10. How can NATO maintain credibility while remaining a defensive alliance?

Starter Resources:

1. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_17120.htm
2. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_110496.htm
3. <https://www.state.gov/the-north-atlantic-treaty-organization-nato/>
4. <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter>
5. <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/history-of-peacekeeping>
6. https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR4381.html

Country Matrix:

Afghanistan - Belgium - Bulgaria - Canada - China - Denmark - Finland - France - Germany
- Greece - Hungary - India - Iran - Italy - Lebanon - North Korea - Norway - Pakistan -
Poland - Portugal - Romania - Russia - Spain - Sweden - Syria - Turkey - United Kingdom -
United States - Venezuela

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