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Routledge Handbook of NATO

Edited by John Andreas Olsen

'The enduring success and durability of NATO have been due to its capacity to adapt and change to accommodate a world in turmoil. Just as it stood firm in the Cold War, the most successful-ever Alliance of like-thinking, freedom-loving nations stands today as united, necessary and vital as ever. The *Routledge Handbook of NATO* is an authoritative guide on this remarkable transatlantic relationship, highly recommended for diplomats, military officers and university students.'

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NATO Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, 2013–2016

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Emeritus Professor of War Studies, King's College London

'This impressive compendium has gathered the most knowledgeable experts to assess NATO's past and present, and also wrestle with its prospects. There can be no better celebration of the Alliance's 75th anniversary than this volume that offers such valuable perspectives on its future.'

Rose Gottemoeller,
Lecturer, Stanford University, NATO Deputy Secretary General, 2016–2019

'This survey of the history and main themes preoccupying NATO is a very useful introduction for students, journalists, and practitioners alike. The chapters cover technical ground based on NATO and government archives generally accessible only to researchers, but also point to key documents that are online. An essential starting point for any research on NATO.'

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ROUTLEDGE HANDBOOK OF NATO

This handbook provides a comprehensive survey of the development and importance of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), its role in international relations and its influence on history.

The volume examines the Alliance's evolution in breadth, depth and context by analysing and explaining why and how NATO has endured and remained relevant since its creation. To present an inclusive study of the Alliance's activities and milestone events and to offer a glimpse of future challenges, the book's 29 chapters fall into six thematic sections that act as frameworks and allow the exploration of specific topics that pertain to the evolution of NATO:

- Part I: History of NATO, 1949–2024
- Part II: Key Enduring Themes, 1949–2024
- Part III: Military Operations, 1995–2024
- Part IV: National Perspectives, 1949–2024
- Part V: Regional Perspectives, 1949–2024
- Part VI: Future Prospects, 2024–

This handbook will be of much interest to students and researchers of NATO, strategic studies, defence studies and International Relations, as well as for staff and fellows at security- and defence-oriented think tanks and government officials, military personnel and other practitioners in the areas of foreign affairs and defence.

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Written by a team of international scholars and practitioners who have dealt with NATO issues extensively, this book analyses the dynamics and events that have made NATO the most accomplished political-military alliance in modern history. Twenty-nine authors from 13 countries accentuate evolving, contextual, political and operational aspects of the Alliance with an underlying focus on NATO's primary mission of deterrence and defence. The views of the authors and the editor are personal and do not represent NATO or any other organisation or institution.

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FOREWORD

NATO's Enduring Strategy for Success: Unity and Adaptation

NATO is an extraordinary idea, born from the ashes of the Second World War and against the backdrop of violence, destruction and extreme ideologies. In 1949, 12 nations from Europe and North America came together and made a solemn promise to defend one another, preserve peace, and protect our shared fundamental values of democracy, freedom and the rule of law.[1] Seventy-five years later, the world has radically changed and so has the Alliance. However, the idea that led our founders to create NATO has endured. NATO is the most successful Alliance in history, representing half of the world's economic might, and half of the world's military might. The *Routledge Handbook of NATO* sheds light on the Alliance's story, and its ability to navigate a changing security environment and tackle a range of challenges over the decades. It highlights the importance of transatlantic unity in the face of evolving security challenges.

In its early years, NATO's security context was shaped by a single and clearly defined threat. Our sole purpose over four decades was to deter the Soviet Union and prepare to defend Europe if deterrence failed. The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 precipitated the end of the Cold War and marked the start of a new chapter for NATO. To some, NATO had to go 'out-of-area' or it would be 'out-of-business.' However, as my predecessor Manfred Wörner made clear in a speech in 1993, 'we are acting out-of-area and we are very much in business.'[2] Indeed, not only did the Alliance grow in size, when the newly free democracies of Central and Eastern Europe gradually became NATO members,[3] it also shifted its focus to managing conflicts beyond our borders. In the 1990s, NATO helped end two ethnic wars in the Western Balkans – in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Kosovo. After 9/11, when the United States was attacked, NATO launched its biggest ever combat operation to fight terrorism, deploying hundreds of thousands of troops in Afghanistan.

In 2014, the world changed again. Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and the occupation of eastern Ukraine by Russian-controlled insurgents marked a major turning point. For the first time since the Second World War, a European country had seized part of another and tried to change internationally recognised borders by force. That same year, the Islamic State (ISIS/ Daesh) expanded its so-called 'caliphate' in Syria and Iraq, spreading terrorism, death and instability across the Middle East and North Africa. Since then, our world has become more dangerous and more competitive. Other global security challenges have

multiplied, from sophisticated cyber-attacks to disruptive technologies, from the rise of a more assertive China openly challenging our values to the security impacts of the climate crisis. Russia's increasingly aggressive actions culminated in its open, illegal and full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. Faced with this new security reality, NATO continues to adapt.

In the years since 2014, NATO has undergone a profound adaptation to keep our one billion people safe. This was a transformational decade for our Alliance. Four new countries joined the NATO family: Montenegro in 2017, North Macedonia in 2020, Finland and Sweden in 2023 and 2024. Since 2014, we have implemented the largest reinforcement of our collective defence in a generation. We deployed new battlegroups along our eastern flank,[4] invested in high-end capabilities and significantly enhanced the readiness of our military forces so they can act faster, wherever and whenever needed. We agreed new strategies for air power, maritime posture, cyber threats, hybrid threats, as well as for emerging and disruptive technologies, such as artificial intelligence. We modernised NATO's military command structure to reflect the new geography of the Alliance, taking into account new members, greater capabilities and a wider – 360-degree – approach to threats and challenges. We established new military commands to enhance awareness of challenges in cyberspace and outer space, protect the sea lines of communication and facilitate the movement of our forces across our territory.[5] We agreed the most ambitious regional military plans for the defence of Europe since the Cold War, backed by 300,000 troops on high readiness, and major capabilities across all domains.

Over the past decade, NATO also boosted its contribution to the fight against terrorism. It joined the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS in May 2017. Working together in the Global Coalition, we helped liberate Daesh-occupied territory and freed millions of people. We increased our defence capacity building support to partner countries – notably Jordan, Mauritania and Tunisia – and launched a training and capacity-building mission in Iraq in 2018. We deepened and expanded our cooperation with the European Union and like-minded partner countries, notably in the Indo-Pacific region,[6] because our security is not regional, it is global. Working more closely together with our partners around the world is indispensable to preserve peace and protect the rules-based international order against growing pressure from authoritarian regimes in Moscow, Beijing and elsewhere. In addition, learning lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's war against Ukraine, we increased the resilience of our societies and critical infrastructure, and diversified our supply chains. We eliminated our dependency on Russian oil and gas, which made us vulnerable, and heightened our vigilance vis-à-vis China, whose stated ambitions and coercive policies challenge our security, interests and values. Over the years, we made great strides advancing the Women, Peace and Security agenda and integrating a gender perspective in everything NATO does, from defending our nations and deterring our adversaries to managing crises and cooperating with partners.

NATO's adaptation this past decade has gone hand-in-hand with increased defence investments in all Allied countries, because our freedom does not come for free. At the NATO Summit in Wales in 2014, Allies committed to spend up to 2 percent of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on defence. Nine years later, at the Vilnius Summit, they went a step further and made a more ambitious commitment to spend *at least* 2 percent of their GDP on defence. Consequently, over the past decade, defence spending across the Alliance has steadily and significantly increased. More and more nations now reach, or exceed, the 2 percent target.

Although NATO has changed fundamentally in many ways, one thing has always remained the same. Nations across Europe and North America have stood strong together in NATO for 75 years to maintain peace and security. Preserving that unity has not always been easy. NATO is a family of 32 countries from both sides of the Atlantic, with different histories and cultures, and different political parties in government. Just like any family, there are disagreements among its members – as there always have been, from the Suez Crisis in 1956 to the Iraq War in 2003. We should take differences among Allies seriously, but ultimately history shows that Allies have always been able to overcome their disagreements to maintain our shared security. The enduring values and interests that unite us are stronger than anything that may divide us. Not only has our unity prevailed over the decades, it has grown stronger in light of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. President Putin thought he could divide us. He has done the exact opposite. We have strengthened our support for Ukraine and stepped up our defence of each other.

We live in a more complex and contested world. We do not know what the next years and decades will hold, but I know that whatever happens, NATO Allies are stronger and safer together than alone. The extraordinary idea at the core of our Alliance – 'all for one, one for all' – holds as true today as it did in 1949. With this in mind, I am confident NATO will remain an indispensable and irreplaceable anchor of stability and an engine of peace for generations to come. At 75, NATO is stronger and more united than ever.

Jens Stoltenberg, NATO Secretary General

Notes

1 Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the United Kingdom and the United States.
2 Speech by Secretary General of NATO Manfred Wörner at the IISS in Brussels, 10 September 1993.
3 The Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland became NATO members in 1999. Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia in 2004. Albania and Croatia in 2009.
4 Four multinational battlegroups were created in 2017: in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland. In February 2022, Allies agreed to establish four more multinational battlegroups in Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia.
5 At the 2018 Brussels Summit, Allies decided to establish a Cyberspace Operations Centre in Belgium, a Joint Force Command Norfolk headquarters in the United States, and a Joint Support and Enabling Command in Ulm, Germany. In October 2020, Allies agreed to establish a NATO Space Centre in Ramstein, Germany.
6 Australia, Japan, New Zealand and South Korea.

PREFACE

The North Atlantic Council (NAC) is the very symbol of NATO's consultation-oriented and consensus-building diplomacy. Here NATO makes its ultimate decisions and declares its positions. As NATO's most senior decision-making body, it is chaired by the Secretary General, the Alliance's top international civil servant. The NAC usually meets twice a year at the level of ministers of foreign affairs, three times a year at the level of ministers of defence and, most recently, annually at the summit level, with meetings attended by the individual Allies' heads of state and government. The Washington Summit in July 2024 marks the 34th summit in NATO's 75-year history. The outcomes of summits, reflected in declarations and communiqués, constitute key milestones in NATO's evolution, since they formally set out the Allies' collective view of NATO's current challenges and commitments.

Few outside NATO Headquarters in Brussels understand how the NAC functions on a daily basis, as external audiences see only short videos of officials talking to the press at summits and ministerial meetings. The NAC meets at least every week, and often more frequently, at the level of Permanent Representatives – the so-called 'ambassadors' to NATO. The conference room where these NAC meetings take place, located at the centre of NATO Headquarters, features an oval table with a seat for each ambassador. A small nameplate, symbolising that the participants represent their nations, marks the designated seat of each ally. The ambassadors sit around the table in alphabetical order by nationality. Behind the ambassadors are a few reserved places for the national delegations.

The Secretary General opens each NAC meeting with a short statement, outlines the agenda and calls upon the representative of each nation to comment or elaborate on its national views. This gives each representative an opportunity to discuss national policies as well as strategic and operational questions requiring collective decisions. Thus, the Council provides a forum for wide-ranging debate among the Allies on all issues affecting peace and security. The rule at NAC meetings is to limit each intervention to three minutes, with a visible time clock, although at times some Allies inevitably speak for longer. The Secretary General closes a NAC session, which typically lasts two to three hours, with a summary and a plan for the way forward. The Council's secretariat produces notes for the record that capture both consensus and diverging views as well as issues that require further action.

Delegations usually report back separately to their respective capitals on the NAC meeting's content and results to ensure that all stakeholders stay informed.

The items on the NAC agenda – especially ahead of ministerial meetings or summits – are normally accompanied by comprehensive reports and recommendations prepared by various subordinate committees and working groups at the Council's request, or sometimes in the form of introductory briefings by senior NATO civilian and military officials.

The NAC often initially tasks the NATO Military Authorities – the Military Committee (Brussels), the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (Mons) or the Allied Command Transformation (Norfolk) – to provide advice. This military advice is often supplemented with political-military advice provided by civil committees, such as the Defence Policy and Planning Committee, the Deputies Committee, the Operations Policy Committee, the Political Committee or other committees or entities depending on the topic. All member states are represented at all levels of NATO's elaborate committee structure. NATO's International Staff facilitates negotiations and revisions of committee papers until the text is acceptable to all. Approval takes the form of the 'silence procedure;' the distribution of a document or text of a proposed NAC decision and a specified time that can elapse after which silence signifies assent. By the time the discussions reach the NAC, each nation's positions are known and taken into account.

The committee reports and recommendations, and the NAC's eventual decisions, must all receive unanimous support: NAC procedures do not include voting or majority decisions. As a result, policy decisions by the NAC express the collective will of all Allied nations, with each member, large or small, having an equal voice in this process. The Allies place high value on the principle of consensus. The principle is at times controversial, especially when only one member nation disagrees with a decision. The requirement for unanimity doubtless can slow decision-making and subsequent action, and can result in a lower 'level of ambition,' but NATO members recognise that failure to reach consensus means a loss for all. A commitment by all results in a remarkable drive and a sense of unity, since Allies generally refuse to agree to any policy or action that they are not prepared to implement, at least to some degree. While the collective decisions Allies take are not legally binding, they are considered highly binding in a political sense, as they can legitimately be seen as an extension of the purposes set out in the North Atlantic Treaty.

While consultations take many forms, the most formal involves invoking Article 4 of the North Atlantic Treaty, which allows any allied nation to bring any issue of concern, especially related to its national security, to the attention of the other Allies. This can result in a joint decision or action. Since the Alliance's creation in 1949, Article 4 has been invoked seven times: five times by Türkiye and once by Poland, and on 24 February 2022 several members requested that the NAC hold consultations under Article 4 following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

The 'NATO method' of consultation and consensus constitutes the baseline for persistent cooperation and collective action. It depends on a unique and continuous interplay between NATO Headquarters and subordinate military headquarters of the NATO Command Structure and NATO agencies on the one hand, and between the international staff and the national delegations on the other. Although the larger members tend to lead discussions and set the framework for policies, the 'NATO method' enables the smaller Allies to share ownership of, and to influence, the Alliance's decisions, thus turning the concept of an 'Atlantic community' into reality.

PHOTOGRAPHS FROM NATO ARCHIVES

1 Signing of the North Atlantic Treaty, US President Harry S. Truman, Washington DC, 4 April 1949.

2 First Supreme Allied Commander Europe, General Dwight D. Eisenhower. Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (Rocquencourt, France), 1950–1951.

3 First NATO Secretary General, Lord Hastings Ismay. NATO HQ (Palais de Chaillot, Paris), 1952–1957.

4 Signing the Protocol Accession for Germany. NATO HQ (Palais de Chaillot, Paris), 23 October 1954.

5 First NATO Summit, Heads of State and Government. NATO HQ (Palais de Chaillot, Paris), 16 December 1957.

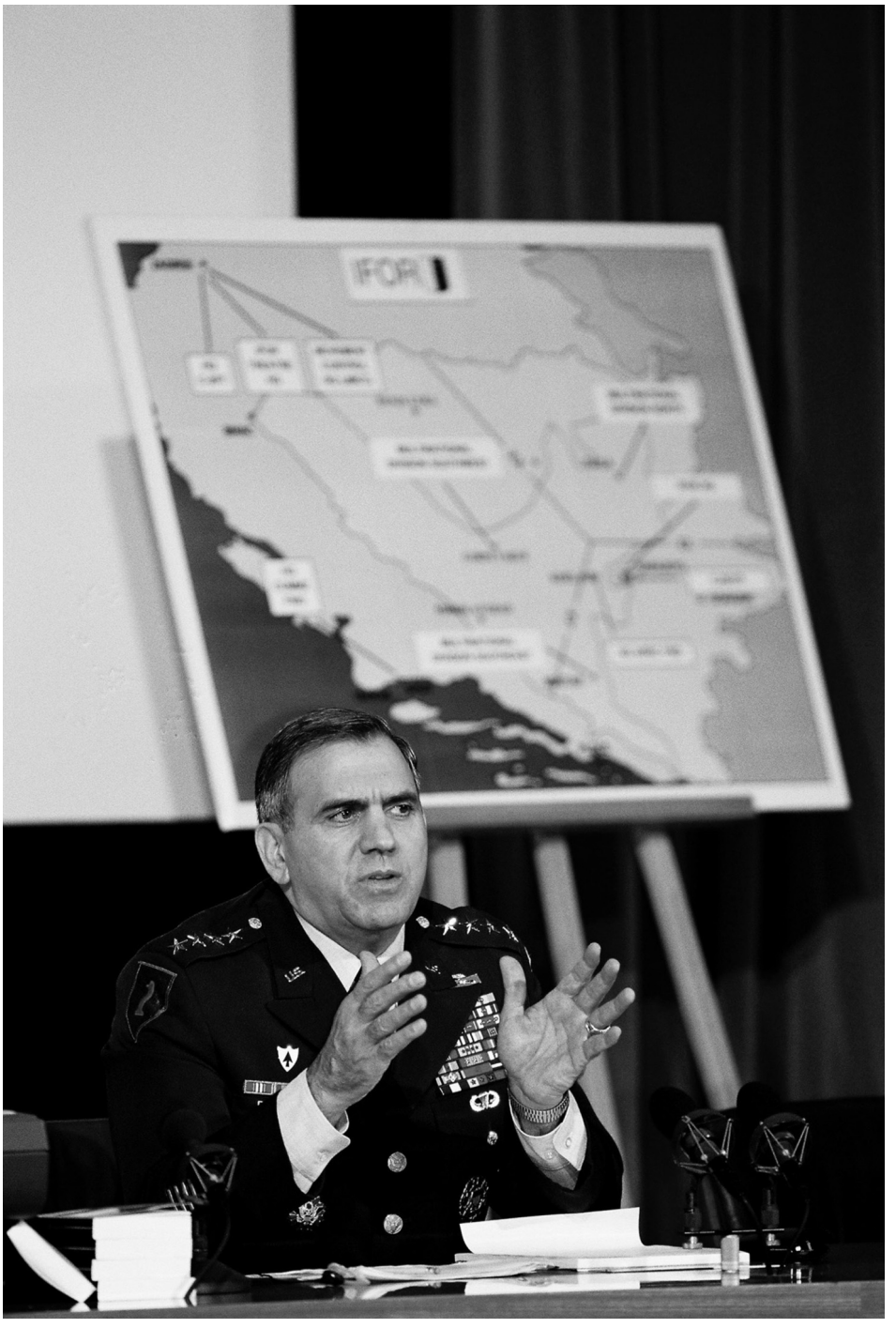
6 US President John F. Kennedy and NATO Secretary General Dirk Stikker. NATO HQ (Porte Dauphine, Paris), 2 June 1961.

7 Joseph Luns, longest serving NATO Secretary General (1971-1983), escorts Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. NATO HQ, Brussels, 25 November 1980.

8 NATO Summit including UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, US President Ronald Reagan, US Secretary of State George Schultz and NATO Secretary General Lord Peter Carrington, NATO HQ (Brussels), 21 November, 1985.

9 First senior Soviet official visiting NATO HQ, Eduard Shevardnadze (Minister of Foreign Affairs) and Secretary General Manfred Wörner, 19 December 1989.

10 First NATO Secretary General to visit Moscow, Manfred Wörner, to meet Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, 14 July 1990.



11 Supreme Allied Commander Europe, General George Joulwan, IFOR brief NATO HQ (Brussels), 19 December 1995.

12 President William Clinton welcomes NATO Heads of State and Government to the 50th anniversary Summit in the Mellon Auditorium where the Treaty was originally signed. Washington DC, 23 April 1999.

13 Supreme Allied Commander Europe, General Wesley K. Clark, Kosovo air campaign brief. NATO HQ (Brussels), 16 September 1999.

14 Article 5 invoked for the first time, NATO Secretary General George Robertson. NATO HQ (Brussels), 2 October 2001.

15 NATO Summit, NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen (right) and NATO Secretary General-designate Jens Stoltenberg (left). Wales (Newport), 5 September 2014.

16 NATO's first female Deputy Secretary General, Rose Gottemoeller. NATO HQ (Brussels), 2016–2019.

17 First NATO Secretary General to address the US Congress, Jens Stoltenberg. Washington DC, 3 April 2019.

18 Flag ceremony to mark Finnish membership. NATO HQ (Brussels), 4 April 2023.

19 NATO Summit, Heads of State and Government. Vilnius, 12 July 2023.

20 NATO Summit, Vilnius, 12 July 2023, First meeting of the NATO-Ukraine Council, President of Türkiye Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak.

INTRODUCTION
The Alliance for Our Times

John Andreas Olsen

On 4 April 2024, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) turned 75. It offers an important opportunity to reflect on the unchanging purpose and extraordinary endurance of the Alliance, as well as on NATO's immediate and longer-term prospects. This anniversary takes place at a time of considerable international turmoil, which underscores the unique roles that NATO plays. While an occasion for celebration, it also prompts us to review the organisation's practice of collective decision-making, cooperation and action through both calm and turbulent times.[1]

This book provides a comprehensive survey of the development and importance of NATO, its role in international relations and its influence on history. It examines NATO's evolution as a political-military alliance in *breadth*, *depth* and *context*, seeking to analyse and explain *why* and *how* the Alliance has endured and remained relevant since its creation. While many institutions and organisations weaken or become irrelevant over time, NATO has not only survived several major crises and prolonged periods of tension, but has also gained strength, expanding from its original 12 members to 32, and extended its roles and missions to include three core tasks: deterrence and defence, crisis management and cooperative security.[2] In the process, the Allies converted the essence of the original North Atlantic Treaty – stronger together – into robust institutional and operational arrangements that would ensure NATO's continuing value and longevity.

Looking Back: NATO at 75

The North Atlantic Treaty, signed on 4 April 1949, represented the recognition by the United States, Canada and ten European countries that only a genuinely transatlantic security agreement could deter Soviet expansionism, prevent the revival of nationalist militarism in Europe through a strong North American presence on the continent and encourage political integration among European states.[3] While the Treaty was originally intended to cover only North America and the European signatories of the Brussels Pact (Belgium, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom),[4] the United States wanted to include Denmark, Iceland, Norway and Portugal given their Atlantic coastlines, and France

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insisted on including Italy. This ensured that the provisions of the Treaty applied to Greenland, the Faeroe Islands, Jan Mayen and Svalbard, as well as the Azores and the Mediterranean Sea. Importantly, control of the North Atlantic Ocean would ensure open sea-lines of communication that would allow safe transport of reinforcements from the United States to Europe if required.

The most sensitive issue during the months leading up to the formal signing of the treaty was not the Alliance's purpose or composition, but the extent to which the United States would honour its 'defence pledge,' embodied in Article 5. The signatories eventually agreed on the wording 'an armed attack against one or more… shall be considered an attack against them all' and that each ally would take 'action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force' in response to such an attack. This pledge of solidarity – 'one for all, all for one' – has since remained the cornerstone of the Alliance. The unique transatlantic compact, in the form of a 14-paragraph treaty, set the stage for a new era in world politics and international relations. It created an unprecedented bond between two continents that would ultimately become far stronger than any of the 12 signatories could have imagined. NATO remains the only framework that routinely and frequently brings Europe and North America together to address the central challenges that affect their shared security.

The evolution of NATO is a story of hard-earned success, because from its inception the Alliance has been beset by internal differences and challenges. This is hardly surprising when sovereign states with different geographic characteristics, history, culture, religion and threat perceptions must agree on matters concerning territorial integrity, nuclear policy and deterrence and defence writ large. While NATO's unmatched longevity partially serves as a counterexample to Lord Palmerston's famous observation – 'in international relations, there are no permanent friends or permanent enemies, only permanent interests' – *Realpolitik* and national politics are always at play in the Alliance, sometimes overtly and at other times in the form of invisible undercurrents.

Yet through 75 years, the Allies have managed to overcome most difficulties through the time-tested 'NATO method' of consultation and consensus.[5] NATO's record shows that individual Allies have always sought to ensure that the overarching interests of a peaceful, prosperous and secure Europe surpassed or at least bypassed national grievances. Even when a country's leaders at times questioned the relevance and effectiveness of NATO, the Allies typically reinforced the importance of cohesion, reminded each other of the principal rationale for creating the Alliance and demonstrated strategic patience. This sense of common purpose and unity derives from the positivist appeal embedded in the words of the North Atlantic Treaty, which emphasise the values of 'democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law' without mentioning a specific threat or enemy.

That commitment drove the Allies' commonality of purpose through the four decades of the Cold War and persisted after the collapse of the Warsaw Pact and the demise of the Soviet Union.[6] Some NATO members sought justification for the Alliance's continuation in the wording of the North Atlantic Treaty. Others believed NATO should support the Euro-Atlantic aspirations of democratic nations in Europe, expand partnerships with non-NATO countries and stand ready to conduct or contribute to 'out-of-area' missions.[7] Yet others continued to view Russia, 'reformed' or not, as a latent threat to democracy and the rules-based international order. Either way, the 16 members at the time of German reunification needed and wanted NATO to remain in existence: whatever the future might hold, every member concluded that there is 'no substitute for NATO' and no alternative to the transatlantic bond it represents.[8]

In explaining *why* and *how* NATO has developed and endured, it is important to acknowledge unifying incidents, as well as the several crises NATO has faced over its long history, and to assess how NATO and individual Allies managed them.[9] This book explains the immense effort involved in keeping NATO united through the 40 years of the Cold War, facing a threatening Soviet Union and confronting many crises, including Suez (1956), Berlin (1961), Cyprus (1964 and 1974), the Vietnam War (mid-1960s to mid-1970s) and the Euromissile controversy (1979–1985).

The most profound internal challenge to NATO unity culminated in 1966, when President Charles de Gaulle withdrew France from NATO's integrated military command structure – a decision not reversed until 2009. De Gaulle expressed a desire for greater military independence, particularly vis-à-vis the United States. This manifested itself in the refusal to integrate France's nuclear deterrent into NATO or accept any form of control over its armed forces, and the removal of all foreign forces from its territory. Still, 'NATO left Paris, but France did not leave NATO.' In 1974, Greece's worsening relations with NATO had similar consequences: a wave of public resentment at NATO's inaction regarding the situation in Cyprus led then-Prime Minister Konstantinos Karamanlis, a great admirer of de Gaulle, to withdraw Greece from NATO's integrated military structure. Greece remained a member of the Alliance but did not contribute staff to military headquarters or have a voice in shaping NATO's military policy until it rejoined the Alliance's command structure in 1980. In both cases, NATO found political and military solutions rather than severing all ties and the national decisions were transitional rather than irreversible.

Examining the post-Cold War period, this book also elaborates on the challenges involved in managing the enlargement from 16 to 32 members, establishing partnerships with some 30 additional countries around the globe, conducting over 50 'out-of-area' operations, and, most recently, providing support to one of the partners in a full-scale war in Europe. While representing national and regional viewpoints in these discussions, Allies always negotiated positions until they reached common ground for moving forward.

Over its 75-year history, flexibility has allowed the Alliance to adapt to changing political and military needs and conditions. In the 1950s, the Alliance focused on building its collective deterrence and defence capabilities nearly from scratch. In the 1960s, NATO also became a political instrument for pursuing confidence building and *détente* with the Soviet Union and, later, for arms-control negotiations. In the 1990s, the Alliance contributed to the post-Soviet stabilisation of Eastern Europe and Central Asia by incorporating new partners and Allies.

When the United States was the object of brutal terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001, NATO invoked Article 5 for the first and only time in its history. Through this action, NATO members showed their solidarity with one of its members and condemned, in the strongest possible way, the terrorist attacks. Consequently, for nearly 20 years, NATO members and partner countries deployed military forces to Afghanistan under a United Nations Security Council mandate. The fight against terrorism caused NATO to launch its first operations outside the Euro-Atlantic area and begin a far-reaching transformation of its capabilities. NATO Allies went into Afghanistan to ensure that the country would not again become a safe haven for international terrorists planning to attack NATO member countries.

While this book seeks to provide a long-term perspective on NATO, its point of departure is inevitably the present. Russia's illegal annexation of the Crimean Peninsula in March 2014 and its subsequent full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 demonstrated, once again, the Kremlin's readiness to resort to military force against a sovereign nation, to inflict

devastating damage on infrastructure and cause major human suffering, and to violate international norms and agreements. Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine poses the gravest threat to Euro-Atlantic security since the end of the Cold War, shattering peace in Europe and reinforcing the need for NATO to ensure that its deterrence and defence baseline remains credible and effective.[10] NATO has strengthened that posture significantly since 2014 and orchestrated the largest real-world deployment of Allied forces and capabilities in its history. Furthermore, as a direct result of Russia's full-scale war on Ukraine, Finland and Sweden applied for membership after generations of non-alignment. All Allied governments, *bar none*, have reassessed their relationship with Moscow.

At the Vilnius Summit in July 2023, Allies further strengthened NATO's deterrence and defence mission by approving new and more robust regional plans to counter the threats posed by both Russia and terrorism. While all NATO members agreed that Russia 'is the most significant and distinct threat to Allies' security and to peace and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area,' they also reaffirmed that terrorism, 'in all its forms and manifestations, presents the most direct asymmetric threat to the security of our citizens and to international peace and prosperity.'[11] At Vilnius, the Allies also addressed the challenge an increasingly ambitious China poses to the rules-based international order and discussed the impact of global trends on Euro-Atlantic security.

In every year since 2014, NATO Allies have increased their collective defence budget in real terms, and at the Summit in Vilnius they renewed their pledge to invest a minimum of 2 per cent of Gross Domestic Product annually on defence. They also endorsed a Defence Production Action Plan to accelerate joint procurement, boost interoperability and generate investment and production capacity. NATO agreed on a multi-year assistance programme for Ukraine, held the inaugural meeting of the NATO-Ukraine Council, and reiterated that Ukraine will become a member of NATO when Allies agree and when conditions for membership are met. Russia's unprovoked attack against Ukraine has stimulated remarkable resolve, cohesion and unity among Allies.

NATO at 75 arguably faces the most complex security environment since the end of the Cold War. In the second quarter of the twenty-first century, the Alliance can expect to address threats and security challenges that range from nuclear and conventional attacks to terrorism, cyber-attacks and the weaponisation of energy and information.

The Book: Structure and Brief Summaries

Although deep concerns surrounding the future direction and outcome of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine dominate NATO's 75th anniversary, this book takes a wider view of the Alliance's journey to explain how far NATO has come politically as well as militarily, the part NATO plays in today's evolving world and its likely roles in the future. While NATO and individual Allies must continuously adapt to new realities, they also play a proactive role by shaping the environment in which they operate.

To present an inclusive study of the Alliance's activities and milestone events and to offer a glimpse of the challenges ahead, the book's 29 chapters fall into six functional categories that act as frameworks and explore specific topics as they pertain to NATO's past, present and future (see Figure 0.1). Taken together, these chapters give the reader a broader and deeper understanding of both individual Allies and NATO as a whole. While the topics covered by some chapters may overlap to some extent, they address them from different perspectives, thus reinforcing rather than repeating each other.

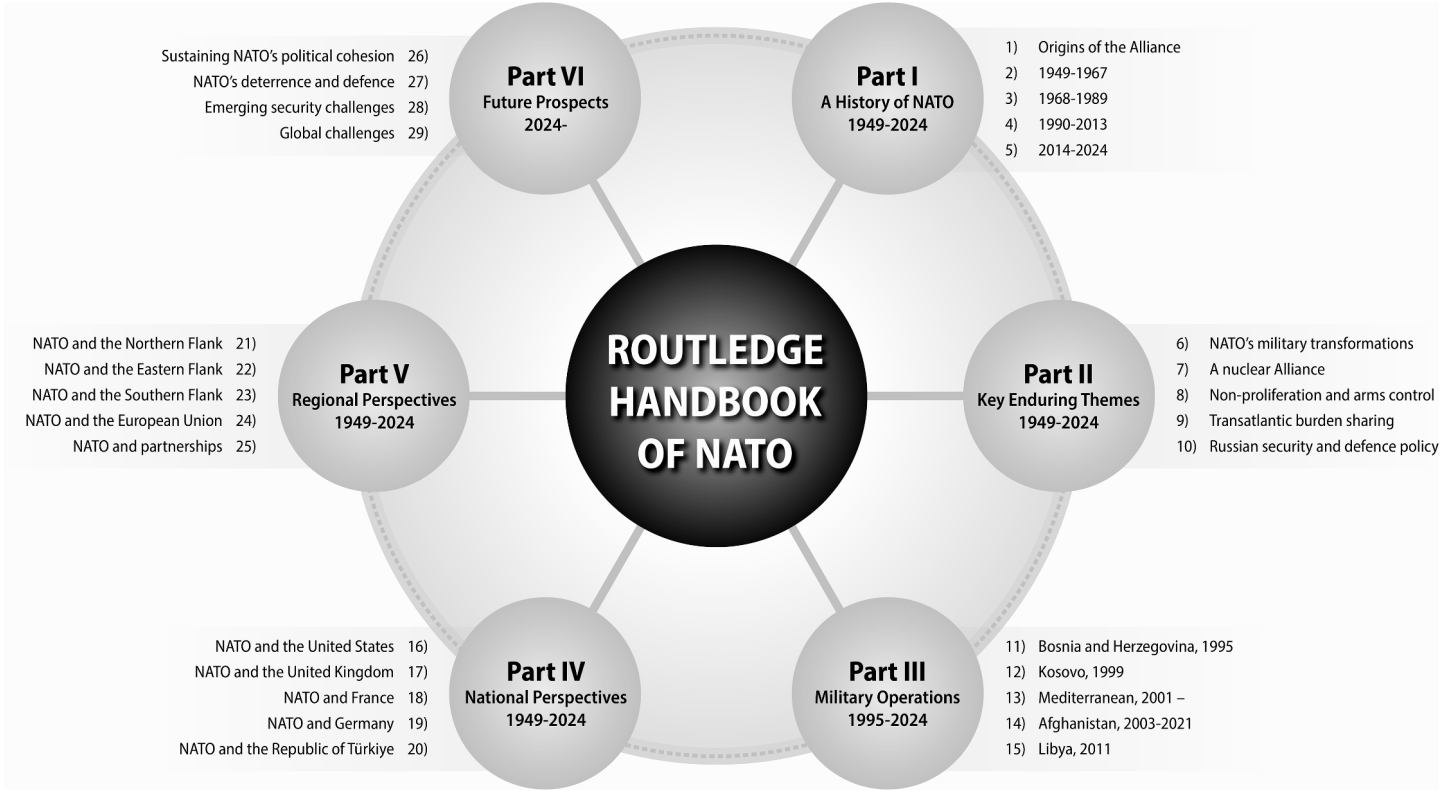

Figure 0.1 The *Routledge Handbook of NATO* structure.
Author's creation.

The book should serve as a major source of reference for students and researchers at universities, as well as staff and fellows at security and defence-oriented think tanks. It should have value for governmental staff leaders, military personnel and other practitioners in the areas of foreign affairs and defence, and, not least, to anyone with an interest in security and defence. The book should be of interest not only to residents of the Euro-Atlantic area who are already familiar with NATO, but to all who want to learn more about NATO's history, values, structures and decision-making processes, especially in today's unstable world

Part I: A History of NATO, 1949–2024

The first part of the book covers the history of NATO from 1949 to 2024, focusing on milestone events, major debates, various internal difficulties and key strategic and operational developments. The five chapters in this section explore the establishment and development of NATO's headquarters and commands; the strategies of massive retaliation and flexible response; the dual policy of deterrence and *détente*; and the changes following the end of the Cold War, including NATO's new roles and missions and expanding memberships and partnerships, as well as NATO's renewed attention to Russia.

- Chapter 1 argues that the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty on 4 April 1949 represented the culmination of complex and at times confrontational diplomacy, reflecting the different perceptions and interests of the states involved about post-war threats and possible security arrangements. In the end a combination of vision, pragmatism and patience resulted in the formation of the most important alliance in modern history.
- Chapter 2 covers the years 1949–1967 and explains how the Korean War led to the creation of a permanent military command structure and established the position of the Secretary General. The strategy of massive retaliation evolved during this period, because NATO recognised the impossibility of building sufficient conventional forces to match those of the Soviet Union and nuclear weapons offered a less expensive way to defend Allied territory.
- Chapter 3 focuses on 1968–1989 and argues that the defeat of Soviet strategy in the Cold War resulted from NATO's continuous political unity sustained by commitment to its policy of *détente* and its strategy of flexible response. The chapter concludes that NATO prevailed despite disagreements over basing nuclear weapons in Europe, arms control, defence expenditures and demands of large anti-nuclear movements.
- Chapter 4 details NATO's development from 1990 to 2013. It contends that NATO continued its core role of deterrence and defence while embarking on internal and external adaptation, expanding the range of military operations and missions at the same time as embracing new partnerships and several rounds of enlargement. It ensured that the end of the Cold War did not cause NATO's demise but consolidated NATO's unique role in Euro-Atlantic security.
- Chapter 5 examines the period from 2014 to 2024, arguing that the cost of the Afghan combat mission, which ended in 2014, was visible in that NATO Allies reacted timidly to Russia's annexation of Crimea the same year. Transatlantic disputes grew during the Trump presidency, but NATO recognised its crisis and launched the 'NATO 2030' campaign of political renewal, which Russia's 2022 full-scale war on Ukraine greatly invigorated, and further strengthened its deterrence and defence posture.

Part II: Key Enduring Themes, 1949–2024

The second section of the book examines important enduring themes and longstanding issues that have persisted throughout NATO's existence, including NATO's military transformations, the nuclear dimension of the Alliance and the continuous debate about NATO's role in promoting non-proliferation and arms control. This section also sheds light on the always-contentious issue of transatlantic burden sharing and offers insights into Soviet and Russian security and defence approaches from Joseph Stalin to Vladimir Putin.

- Chapter 6 addresses five military transformations between 1956 and 2024 that enabled NATO to adapt to the operational requirements associated with the ever-changing security environment and the strategic preferences of individual Allies. In each instance, the incumbent Supreme Allied Commander, Europe or Secretary General brought the necessary mix of vision and skill to make each transformation a source of strength and unity.
- Chapter 7 reviews the origins and evolution of the Alliance's nuclear dimension. It highlights three enduring themes: the primacy of nuclear deterrence in avoiding war, the importance of nuclear weapons in making Allied security indivisible and the interplay between nuclear and conventional components of NATO's overall deterrence. It concludes that threats posed by Russia and China drive NATO's adaptations in its nuclear posture.
- Chapter 8 focuses on how NATO reconciled its nuclear strategy with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks during the Cold War. It also discusses how the Alliance next dealt with the tension between its traditional reliance on nuclear deterrence and the aspirations of some members to reduce NATO's strategic salience and enhance its role in promoting arms control.
- Chapter 9 examines the various dimensions of burden sharing within NATO and the debates surrounding member state's contribution throughout the Alliance's 75-year history. It argues that NATO's continued relevance will depend on European countries' taking ownership of their own defence, both to ensure continental security and to improve transatlantic burden sharing. This will require investment in *cash*, *capabilities* and *contributions*, including enhanced technology sharing.
- Chapter 10 argues that Russia's security and defence policy toward NATO has evolved in response to geopolitical circumstances and military-technical developments. It suggests that Russia's enduring zero-sum security perspective is due to its geographic realities and historical-cultural heritage. It concludes that balancing national and collective interests with shared values to agree on action against Russia's aggression will remain a complex test of Allied cohesion.

Part III: Military Operations, 1995–2024

The third part contains in-depth case studies of NATO's use of military force – some more successful than others. It covers the Alliance's involvement in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1992–1995, the air campaign against the Serb regime in 1999, a series of operations in the Mediterranean after 11 September 2001, the long-lasting operations in Afghanistan from 2003 to 2021 and the intervention in Libya in 2011. Each chapter describes NATO's