



The United States and NATO, 2011



A woman waves a Libyan flag and flashes a victory sign during a June 2011 demonstration against Muammar Qadhafi in Misrata, Libya. On March 27, NATO took on military operations in Libya under United Nations Security Council Resolution 1973 to protect civilians and civilian-populated areas under threat of attack. *AP Images*

Formed in 1949 during the Cold War with the signing of the Washington Treaty, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is a security alliance of 28 North American and European countries. NATO's purpose is to safeguard signatory countries' freedom and security through political and military cooperation. NATO embodies the common democratic values that bind North America and Europe. Expansion of NATO since the end of the Soviet Union has advanced the goal of a Europe whole, free and at peace.

At the heart of the alliance is a promise of collective defense. Article 5 of the Washington Treaty stipulates that an attack against one ally is an attack against all. Article 4 ensures allies consult on security matters of common interest. NATO's first military operations, in Bosnia and Serbia, occurred after the Soviet Union's 1991 collapse.

NATO's peacekeeping operations have moved beyond Europe. In 2011, NATO is fighting terrorists and insurgents on the ground in

Afghan President Hamid Karzai, left, and NATO Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen sign an agreement. *AP Images*



Afghanistan, enforcing a no-fly zone over Libya and protecting commercial ships from Somali pirates.

NATO in Afghanistan

NATO leads the United Nations–mandated International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan. ISAF aims to prevent Afghanistan from once again becoming a haven for terrorists and to create conditions whereby Afghanistan’s government is able to exercise its authority throughout the country.

To carry out its mission, ISAF conducts counterinsurgency operations in partnership with Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) and provides mentoring, training and operational support to the Afghan National Army and the Afghan National Police. These are ISAF’s priorities in Afghanistan:

- Protect the Afghan people.
- Build the capacity of the Afghan National Security Forces to assume responsibility for security in their own country.
- Counter the insurgency.
- Facilitate stronger Afghan self-governance and development.

As of June 2011, the 48 NATO and non-NATO countries participating in ISAF were contributing more than 132,000 men and women in fighting units and provincial reconstruction teams, including 90,000 from the United States.

NATO Marines find six suspected pirates on a skiff near Somalia. *AP Images*



General David Petraeus, center, former commander of NATO’s International Security Assistance Force, greets Afghan troops. *AP Images*

Libya Operations

In 2011, the Libyan people’s uprising against Muammar Qadhafi led the United Nations to approve a no-fly zone over Libya to protect civilians from attack by forces loyal to Qadhafi. Operating under the U.N. mandate, NATO led an alliance of NATO and non-NATO countries in enforcing the no-fly zone, as well as an arms embargo by sea and air.

NATO foreign ministers agreed to continue these operations until the following conditions were met:

- All attacks and threats of attack against civilians and civilian-populated areas have ended.
- The Qadhafi regime has verifiably withdrawn all military forces, including snipers, mercenaries and other paramilitary forces.
- The Qadhafi regime permits immediate, full, safe and unhindered humanitarian access to all Libyans in need of assistance.

Revitalizing NATO

NATO leaders have taken actions to make the alliance more effective, responsive and capable of addressing 21st-century threats by:



A member of NATO's Provincial Reconstruction Team greets children in Afghanistan. U.S. Air Force/Rylan K. Albright

- Adopting a new strategic concept focusing on emerging threats, such as cyberattacks, terrorism and ballistic missiles.
- Deepening and expanding partnerships, recognizing that NATO can best advance security through rich cooperation with existing and emerging powers, including the European Union, Russia and non-allied partners in Afghanistan.
- Making the command structure, Brussels headquarters and agencies more efficient, flexible and agile.
- Affirming that NATO's door is open to European democracies that meet membership standards.

Today, NATO comprises 28 countries: Albania, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland,

Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States.

NATO Missile Defense

NATO leaders have also agreed to develop a territorial missile defense capability to defend Europe against the growing threat from ballistic missiles from the Middle East. The U.S. contribution to this effort, the European Phased Adaptive Approach (EPAA), aims to deploy missiles on land and at sea to intercept and render harmless incoming ballistic missiles. "To put it simply, our new missile defense architecture in Europe will provide stronger, smarter and swifter defenses of American forces and America's allies," President Obama said.

In March 2011, the United States sent to the Mediterranean the USS Monterey to begin a sustained

deployment there of ships capable of ballistic missile defense. In May 2011, the United States and Romania jointly selected the Deveselu Air Base near Caracal, Romania, to host land-based U.S. SM-3 interceptor missiles starting in 2015. SM-3 interceptors are intended for defensive purposes only and have no offensive capability: They carry no explosive warheads of any type and rely on kinetic energy to collide with and destroy incoming ballistic missiles. The United States plans to fully phase in EPAA through 2020.

NATO and Russia are exploring opportunities for missile defense cooperation. As an initial step, NATO and Russian leaders have agreed on a joint ballistic missile threat assessment.