

# The International European Model United Nations 2018



*North Atlantic Council*

Topic A: North Korea



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## **Letter from the Chair**

Distinguished delegate,

Please find in front of you the background paper for the European International Model United Nations North Atlantic Council of 2018.

We, the chairs of the North Atlantic Council, would like to urge you to read this paper as a means to gain useful background information on the conference and its topic. The role of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation is today more relevant than ever. Its member states have, in varying degrees, experienced decades of unprecedented peace. Today, this status quo is challenged by a diversity of challenges, ranging from the tangible to the intangible.

In an ever-globalizing world, regional partners have become of paramount importance to the execution of NATO's tasks. Only through cooperation can NATO work to combat piracy, manage conflict areas and to denuclearize the world. The topics chosen for this conference revolve around the conflict in Afghanistan and the nuclear arms development by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Both issues pose imminent risks to member states, in terms of terrorism, unwanted influence and a 'rogue state' possessing nuclear weapons.

Addressing these issues collectively allows us to seek possible solutions and remedies to these conflicts. This means that it is crucial that member states work together, share resources and cooperate with allies in the region. Only then can we hope to resolve these obstacles.

We look forward to meeting all of you and we hope for an engaging and challenging discussion on the proposed topics.

Yours sincerely,

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## **Introduction**

After a great number of highly controversial nuclear tests and despite the prevention efforts of the international community, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) has become a full-fledged nuclear power. For many other countries, with the notable exceptions of Iran, Israel and Pakistan, the development of a nuclear programme has not been considered an international threat, although it was often frowned upon. However, the nuclear power of North Korea is seen as one of the most salient issues to international security, due in large part to the unpredictable nature of its government and their poor human rights record.

This background paper gives an overview of the North Korean issue, the path it took to develop nuclear weapons and the responses of other actors and states in the region. Moreover, the role that the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has played in trying to prevent the development of a DPRK nuclear programme is explicated, as well as NATO's current efforts to tackle the perceived threat to international security. The paper draws from peer-reviewed academic works, including volumes and articles. The questions a resolution must answer (QARMAs) can be found at the end of the paper.

## **Overview of the Korean issue**

Since the Korean War of 1950-1953, the Korean peninsula has been divided into an affluent, capitalist south and an underdeveloped, communist north. Although both countries remained on par economically and military for most of the 1960s and 70s, the developmental gap between both countries now is astonishingly large. To illustrate, the North Korean total GDP in 2015 stood at roughly 16.3 bln USD, whereas that of South Korea comes in at 1.4 trn USD (UN, 2015)<sup>1</sup>. It should come as no surprise that a very large part of the DPRK population lives in extreme poverty, lacking basic necessities such as food, medicine, access to drinkable water and warm clothing.

In 1953, the DPRK and the USA signed the Armistice Agreement, agreeing to end the armed hostilities between both countries and to divide the peninsula into a northern and southern part.

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<sup>1</sup> "National Accounts," United Nations Statistics Division, accessed 14 November 2017, <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/snaama/resQuery.asp>.

Notably, the Republic of Korea did not sign this agreement, thus meaning that both countries are officially still at war.

The Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) is the official name of the two-mile strip of land dividing North and South Korea roughly along the 38th parallel. This area has been the border between the two countries since the Armistice Agreement. As animosity between both governments waxed and waned over the years, so did the number of conflicts along the border. In the years following the war, conflict between the North and the South has been limited to skirmishes along the border and other small-scale conflicts.<sup>2</sup> These include the capturing of the USS Pueblo in 1968, the axe murder incident in 1976 and the shelling of South Korean islands near the coast.

In January 1968, North Korea captured an American intelligence-gathering vessel and its crew, the USS Pueblo. It entered the North Korean marine area and was subsequently captured by North Korean ships. Finally, in December, the US signed an agreement confessing to espionage, after which the crew was released.<sup>3</sup> The most notable border conflict is known as the axe murder incident of 1976. US and ROK soldiers entered the UN side of the DMZ to trim an old tree which obstructed their view. North Korean soldiers axed two American officers and wounded several others in response and diplomatic tension rose to hitherto unseen heights, until Kim Il-sung expressed his regrets.<sup>4</sup> These are a view early examples of border conflicts, which are the most visible clashes between north and south after the war.

After the election of President Kim Dae Jung in 1998, the South Korean government followed a reconciliatory approach named the “Sunshine Policy”. It aimed to improve relations and to open up dialogue between North and South through generous donations of agricultural products and economic assistance.<sup>5</sup> Eventually, this policy resulted in the historical visit of President Kim to Chairman Kim Jong Il in Pyongyang, North Korea. His successor Roh Moo-hyun continued the policy, even after allegations surfaced concerning North Korea’s development of nuclear weapons

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<sup>2</sup> Carla P. Freeman, *China and North Korea Strategic and Policy Perspectives from a Changing China* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 137.

<sup>3</sup> Andrew Glass, “North Korea released crew of USS Pueblo, Dec. 23, 1968,” *Politico*, December 23, 2017, <https://www.politico.com/story/2017/12/23/this-day-in-politics-dec-23-1968-303253>.

<sup>4</sup> Bong Lee, *The Unfinished War: Korea* (Baltimore: Algora Publishing, 2003), 270.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 267.

in 2003.<sup>6</sup> However, the relations between the two sides of the peninsula greatly soured after continued nuclear tests in the North and the election of the more conservative President Lee Myung-bak. He declared the policy void in 2010.<sup>7</sup>

In recent years, the relations have only deteriorated more, especially since North Korea has continuously developed their nuclear capabilities up unto the point where they were able to hit South Korea and Japan with massive force. According to United States intelligence, the DPRK is expected to succeed in developing a nuclear missile that could reach Los Angeles as soon as late 2018 or early 2019.<sup>8</sup>

### **Nuclear Arms Development in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea**

In the 1950s, when the Cold War was in full swing, the DPRK government received Soviet Union scientists and engineers who trained North Koreans to start a nuclear program. It has long been North Korea's conception that the only way to guarantee the survival of their state in the face of American power was by means of developing nuclear weapons and corresponding missile capabilities.<sup>9</sup> With Soviet Union aid, a nuclear reactor in Yongbyon was constructed and first became critical in 1986.<sup>10</sup> In 1990s, United States concerns over the activities of North Korea grew continuously, as inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) were hindered more and more in their activities.

Adding fuel to the flames, North Korea threatened to withdraw from the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1993, which it had ratified in 1985.<sup>11</sup> The objective of this treaty is to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and nuclear arms development.<sup>12</sup> After a huge international backlash and intense diplomatic negotiation by the United States and former President Carter, the Clinton

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<sup>6</sup> "North Korea withdraws from nuclear treaty," *The Guardian*, January 10, 2013, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2003/jan/10/northkorea1>.

<sup>7</sup> Nagesh Narayana, *IB Times*, November 19, 2010, <http://www.ibtimes.com/south-korea-dumps-sunshine-policy-north-opts-go-solo-247812>.

<sup>8</sup> Edward Carr, "The end of ambiguity," *The Economist: The World in ...*, November 1, 2017.

<sup>9</sup> Gordon Corera, *Shopping for Bombs: Nuclear Proliferation, Global Insecurity, and the Rise and Fall of the A.Q. Khan Network* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 91.

<sup>10</sup> "Becoming critical" here refers to the ability to generate a critical mass, which is a prerequisite for a nuclear reaction.

<sup>11</sup> Seth Mydans, "North Korea Assailed for Withdrawing From Arms Treaty," January 10, 2003, <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/01/10/international/north-korea-assailed-for-withdrawing-from-arms-treaty.html>.

<sup>12</sup> "Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons," United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, accessed November 29, 2017, <https://www.un.org/disarmament/wmd/nuclear/npt/>.

administration signed the Agreed Framework with North Korea the year after. This agreement stated that North Korea would dismantle its nuclear efforts and, in return, the United States would build two light water nuclear reactors in North Korea, to be used for the generation of atomic energy. However, a few weeks after the signing, US Congress control switched from Democrats to Republicans, who shorted funding of the United States' commitments.<sup>13</sup>

Increasingly infuriated by the continuous delays, the DPRK threatened to resume its nuclear weapons development in 1998.<sup>14</sup> After the rocky implementation of the Agreed Framework, the infamous 'axis of evil' speech by US President George Bush in 2002 was the final straw for the North Koreans.<sup>15</sup> On October 4 of that year, the US Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and Pacific affairs James Kelly visited Pyongyang to meet with Kang Sok-ju, North Korea's first deputy minister of foreign affairs. During this visit, the latter gave a prolonged statement which ended with the confirmation that North Korea will continue with its nuclear programme as a deterrent against the US threat.<sup>16</sup>

This statement meant the full collapse of the Agreed Framework and subsequently, the resumption of nuclear development by North Korea in 2003. After the death of Kim Jong-II and the succession by his son, Kim Jong-Un, the country started missile tests in the open air, even going so far as to show them on state television in November 2017.<sup>17</sup> The international community had tried to halt the nuclear arms development, primarily through imposing sanctions on the regime and the country, making the DPRK one of the most heavily sanctioned countries in the world.

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<sup>13</sup> United Nations General Accounting Office, *Nuclear Nonproliferation Heavy Fuel Oil Delivered to North Korea Under the Agreed Framework*, New York: United Nations, 1999, <https://www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/library/report/gao/rc00020t.pdf#page=5>.

<sup>14</sup> "Foreign Ministry spokesman calls for international justice, impartiality," *KCNA* (archived), accessed January 21, 2018, <https://web.archive.org/web/20120401221837/http://www.kcna.co.jp/item/1998/9803/news03/06.htm>.

<sup>15</sup> In this speech, Bush stated that preemptive strikes against included countries could be taken if necessary.

<sup>16</sup> Yoichi, Funabashi, *A Chronicle of the Second Korean Nuclear Crisis* (Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2008), 94.

<sup>17</sup> nknewsorg, "KCTV footage - North Korea announces first test of Hwasong-15 ICBM," uploaded November 2017, YouTube video, 4:18. Accessed January 18, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rBqEGu60PLw>.

## Regional actors and their responses

Regardless of the heavy sanctions imposed, North Korea managed to pursue its nuclear weapons development, even going so far as to state that their missiles could reach US mainland.<sup>18</sup> It should be noted that that statement is highly questioned by North Korea watchers and missiles experts alike.<sup>19</sup> Nonetheless, for the countries surrounding the DPRK like Japan and South Korea, the North poses a real and imminent threat.

Eyes often turn to China for dealing with the North Korean crisis. Communist China has since long had an alliance with the DPRK and has supplied the impoverished country and its starving population with food and oil supplies.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, ethnic Chinese living in North Korea (*hwagyo*), who have freer travel options than North Koreans do, often serve as smugglers and black market traders.<sup>21</sup> The volume of that trade is large enough for Chinese firms to produce products especially for the North Korean market, like televisions that run on extremely low power.<sup>22</sup> According to some, the volume of aid and trade gives China a unique leverage vis-à-vis North Korea and an ability to influence domestic policies inside the hermit kingdom.

However, this Chinese aid to Pyongyang is not of a merely altruistic nature. From a Chinese strategic perspective, instability within the bordering nation of North Korea invariably has consequences. These include refugee problems, possible civil war, rogue nuclear material and many more should the Kim regime collapse. This could explain why China put in great effort to secure a smooth transition of power after the death of Kim Jong-il.<sup>23</sup> However, Beijing-Pyongyang relations have severely strained after the repeated nuclear tests by North Korea, as evidenced by China's warning comment that it would not intervene if the DPRK was attacked by the USA should

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<sup>18</sup> Justin McCurry and Julian Borger, "North Korea missile launch: regime says new rocket can hit anywhere in US," November 29, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/nov/28/north-korea-has-fired-ballistic-missile-say-reports-in-south-korea>.

<sup>19</sup> Ryan Browne and Nicole Gaouette, "Mattis says North Korea isn't capable of striking the US," *CNN*, December 17, 2017, <http://edition.cnn.com/2017/12/15/politics/mattis-north-korea-icbm/index.html>.

<sup>20</sup> Lyman R. Rechter, *North Korean Foreign Relations in the Post-Cold War World*, (Nova Science Publishers, Inc., 2009), 97. ProQuest Ebook Central, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/rug/detail.action?docID=3020311>.

<sup>21</sup> Daniel Tudor and James Pearson, *North Korea Confidential Private Markets, Fashion Trends, Prison Camps, Dissenters and Defectors* (Tokyo: Tuttle Publishing, 2015), 32.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

<sup>23</sup> Carla P. Freeman, *China and North Korea Strategic and Policy Perspectives from a Changing China*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 32.

it strike first.<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, China has approved Security Council resolutions sanctioning the regime for its nuclear arms development, something it was reluctant to do in the past.<sup>25</sup>

Aside from China, North Korea also shares a border with Russia in the northeast. Russia thus faces similar threats from regime collapse as China, which is arguably why it has played a double role towards Pyongyang. While supporting the UN sanctions, it does not stop remittances from tens of thousands of North Koreans working in labour camps and it supplies the country with oil product exports.<sup>26</sup> Especially the labour camps which dot Siberia provide the DPRK with a valuable revenue of foreign currency.<sup>27</sup>

Japan is NATO's oldest partner across the globe and has concluded a Individual Partnership and Cooperation Programme (IPCP) with the alliance.<sup>28</sup> Undoubtedly, the threat from North Korea is highly tangible for the Japanese, due to the island's proximity to the peninsula. With missiles flying close to Japan, the Tokyo is gearing up for any possibility in regard to North Korea.<sup>29</sup> NATO, according to Japanese commentators, can have a normative influence on Japan in the sense that the alliance emphasises norms in international defence such as freedom and the rule of law and that the partnership can work as a form of deterrent.<sup>30</sup>

NATO and South Korea are working towards such an IPCP, a commitment that has been reiterated in 2017 when the NATO Secretary General visited Seoul.<sup>31</sup> South Korea is a contributor to the Afghanistan mission, which is for them an opportunity to enhance the effectiveness of the ROK's peacekeeping missions. For South Korea, a partnership with NATO could off-balance their heavy

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<sup>24</sup> Simon Denyer and Amanda Erickson, "Beijing warns Pyongyang: You're on your own if you go after the United States," *Washington Post*, August 11, 2017, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/china-warns-north-korea-youre-on-your-own-if-you-go-after-the-us/2017/08/11/a01a4396-7e68-11e7-9026-4a0a64977c92\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.62a384a7ef8f](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/china-warns-north-korea-youre-on-your-own-if-you-go-after-the-us/2017/08/11/a01a4396-7e68-11e7-9026-4a0a64977c92_story.html?utm_term=.62a384a7ef8f).

<sup>25</sup> Julian Borger, "North Korea sanctions: UN security council unanimously agrees new measures," *The Guardian*, September 11, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/sep/12/north-korea-sanctions-un-security-council-unanimously-agrees-new-measures>.

<sup>26</sup> Andrew Osborn, "Russia throws North Korea lifeline to stymie regime change," *Reuters*, October 4, 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-northkorea-missiles-russia-analysis/russia-throws-north-korea-lifeline-to-stymie-regime-change-idUSKBN1C91X2>.

<sup>27</sup> Andrew Higgins, "North Koreans in Russia Work 'Basically in the Situation of Slaves'", *New York Times*, July 11, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/11/world/europe/north-korea-russia-migrants.html>.

<sup>28</sup> Narratives

<sup>29</sup> Euan McKirdy and Junko Ogura, "PM Abe says nuclear North Korea greatest threat to Japan since WWII," *CNN*, January 4, 2018, <https://edition.cnn.com/2018/01/04/asia/abe-north-korea-comments/index.html>.

<sup>30</sup> Narratives

<sup>31</sup> "Relations with the Republic of Korea," North Atlantic Treaty Organization, accessed January 31, 2018, [https://www.nato.int/cps/su/natohq/topics\\_50098.htm?selectedLocale=en](https://www.nato.int/cps/su/natohq/topics_50098.htm?selectedLocale=en).



reliance on the US military, which has often lead to difficulties in their relations with, for example, China.

For the countries surrounding North Korea, dealing with the regime is invariably tricky and unpredictable. Even a global powerhouse and an ally like China has not been able to halt the development of nuclear arms by the DPRK, which shows how Pyongyang has stayed its course even in great adversity. The Kim dynasty has now reigned over the state for more than sixty years and although the collapse of the DPRK has been predicted at many stages, its control over the country has remained unyieldingly firm.

### **NATO and North Korea**

On several occasions, both the North Atlantic Council (NAC) and the Secretary General of the NATO have expressed their condemnation of the nuclear missile development by the DPRK.<sup>32</sup> Out of all NATO member states, the one most involved is the United States. Since the Korean War they have been looked towards as a defender, peace-broker and an influence-peddler. Nonetheless, a nuclear conflict could have severe ramifications for NATO member states that are less directly involved.

According to NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, countries in Europe are already within North Korea's range.<sup>33</sup> The NAC has concerned itself with the issue before, but no active, collective action has been taken. In the 2016 Warsaw Summit Declaration, besides condemning nuclear proliferation, the Heads of State and Government stated:

“We are deeply concerned about the persistent provocative behavior by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), and we strongly condemn the DPRK's nuclear test of 6 January 2016, the 7 February 2016 launch using ballistic missile technologies, and multiple tests of ballistic missiles since then. We urge rigorous implementation of UNSCR 2270 and other relevant Security

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<sup>32</sup> “Statement by the North Atlantic Council on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK),” North Atlantic Treaty Organization, accessed January 22, 2018, [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news\\_146641.htm?selectedLocale=en](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_146641.htm?selectedLocale=en); “Statement by the NATO Secretary General on the launch of a ballistic missile by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK),” North Atlantic Treaty Organization, accessed January 22, 2018, [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news\\_149266.htm?selectedLocale=en](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_149266.htm?selectedLocale=en).

<sup>33</sup> “Europe already within N. Korean missile range, NATO members in danger’ - Stoltenberg,” *RT*, October 30, 2017, <https://www.rt.com/news/408168-europe-nato-pyongyang-missile-danger/>.

Council resolutions. We call on Pyongyang to immediately cease and abandon all its existing nuclear and ballistic missile activities in a complete, verifiable, and irreversible manner and re-engage in international talks.”<sup>34</sup>

With increasing nuclear capabilities comes an increasing threat. The alliance will have to ask itself what it can do to combat this and in which way regional actors and allies can aid this goal.

## Current developments

July 4, 2017	First flight test of a North Korean ICBM, the Hwasong-14. <sup>35</sup>
August 5, 2017	The UNSC unanimously passes Resolution 2371, imposing additional sanctions on North Korea. <sup>36</sup>
August 7, 2017	Second test of the Hwasong-14. DPRK leader Kim Jong Un says that the entire US mainland is within range. <sup>37</sup>
August 8, 2017	US President Donald Trump says that the United States will respond with ‘fire and fury like the world has never seen’ if it escalates the nuclear threat. <sup>38</sup>
August 9, 2017	In retaliation to the ‘fire and fury’ remark, North Korea shares that it has drawn up plans to fire four intermediate range missiles into the waters near Guam. <sup>39</sup>
August 29, 2017	Pyongyang fired an intermediate range missile that flew over Japan. <sup>40</sup>
September 19, 2017	Donald Trump addresses the United Nations and talks about the escalating tensions with North Korea. In his speech, he referred to Kim Jong Un as ‘Rocket Man’.

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<sup>34</sup> “Warsaw Summit Communiqué,” North Atlantic Treaty Organization, accessed January 23, [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official\\_texts\\_133169.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_133169.htm).

<sup>35</sup> “A Look at This Year’s North Korean Nuclear and Missile Tests,” *TIME*, November 29, 2017, <http://time.com/5040375/north-korea-nuclear-missile-tests-2017/>.

<sup>36</sup> United Nations Security Council Resolutions (website), *United Nations*, <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/2371>.

<sup>37</sup> “A Look at This Year’s North Korean Nuclear and Missile Tests,” *TIME*, November 29, 2017, <http://time.com/5040375/north-korea-nuclear-missile-tests-2017/>.

<sup>38</sup> Emily Shugerman, “Trump says North Korea will be met with ‘fire and fury like that world has never seen’ if it escalates nuclear threat,” *Independent*, August 8, 2017, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/donald-trump-north-korea-fire-and-fury-like-the-world-has-never-seen-nuclear-threat-a7883386.html>.

<sup>39</sup> Sang-Hun Choe, “North Korea Says It Might Fire Missiles Into Waters Near Guam,” *The New York Times*, August 9, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/09/world/asia/north-korea-missiles-guam.html>.

<sup>40</sup> “A Look at This Year’s North Korean Nuclear and Missile Tests,” *TIME*, November 29, 2017, <http://time.com/5040375/north-korea-nuclear-missile-tests-2017/>.

- February 9, 2018 Athletes from North and South Korea march under one flag during the opening ceremony of the PyeongChang Winter Olympics.
- March 9, 2018 Donald Trump announces that he has agreed to meeting Kim Jong Un.<sup>41</sup>

## QARMAs

1. What are the NAC's options in dealing with a nuclear North Korea?
2. How should NATO member states act to prevent further development of nuclear weapons in North Korea?
3. What is NATO's role in providing stability in the South East Asian region?
4. What is the position of the NATO vis-à-vis Russia and China on this issue?
5. How can NATO cooperate with regional allies on the North Korean crisis?

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<sup>41</sup> Jeremy Diamond and Euan McKirdy, “Trump accepts offer to meet Kim Jong Un,” *CNN politics*, March 9, 2018, <https://edition.cnn.com/2018/03/08/politics/donald-trump-kim-jong-un/index.html>.

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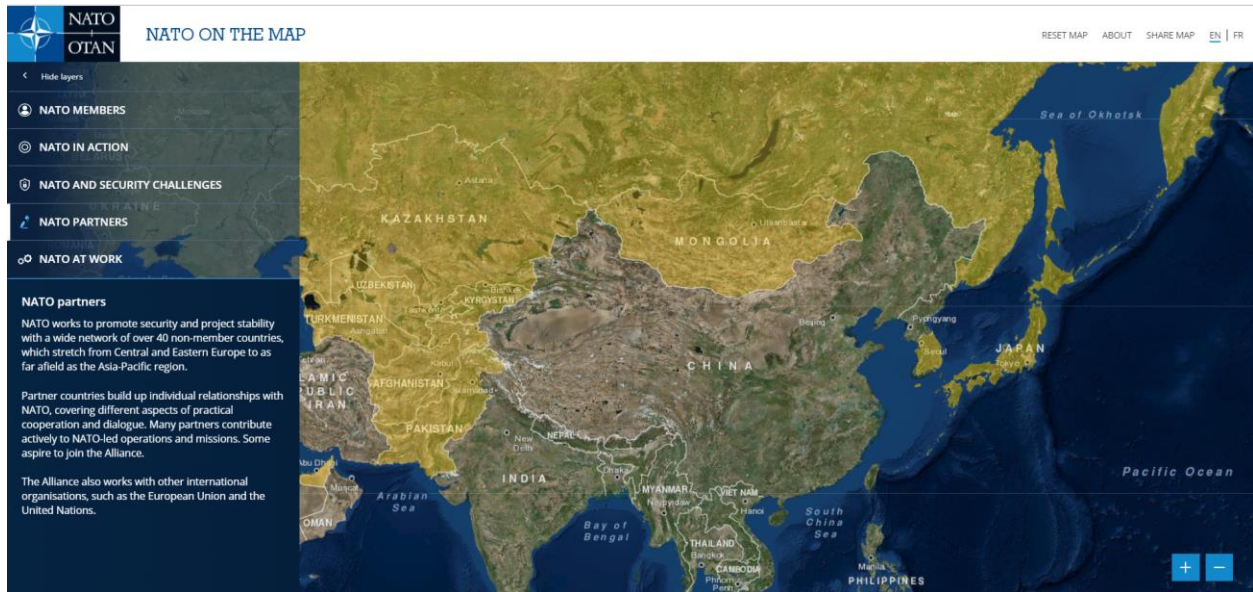
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## Annex I: NATO partners in the region



Source: <http://nato.int>.