BACKGROUND PAPER

NATO
MAINSTREAMING CLIMATE INTO NATO'S CORE TASKS

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1. Welcome Letter

Dear Distinguished Delegates,

It is our utmost honour to invite you to The European International Model United Nations Conference 2022, taking place in a city very close to the heart of the international system; the Hague. In this Council, you will be exploring a committee that has been extremely active during these past months and has seen a renaissance in its purpose, goals, and need for Europe, the Atlantic, and beyond. The North Atlantic Treaty Alliance should, therefore, not be seen as simple military cooperation between its member state but as a political project too, one that has gone beyond the old adage of "keep the Soviet Union out, the Americans in, and the Germans down", as Lord Ismay, the first Secretary-General of NATO, said.

Within this Council and during the conference, you will learn a wide range of different soft skills and expand your knowledge of both NATO as an organisation and the topic of international security in our modern world. We purposefully did not put the Russo-Ukraine War on the agenda this year, both in respect of the difficult situations in which some delegates might find themselves and the sensitivities around the topic but also due to the fact that NATO aims to shape a large range of security threats that face us, with the climate crisis and China's rise to a global hegemon being two major issues that will continue to affect our world well into the future.

Throughout the conference, our chairs will always be available to help the delegates, and you should always feel free to reach out if you need assistance or suggestion on where to start your research and proposals. We cannot do this for you! But, with this guide, we aim to create a starting point for your preparation and begin your adventure that will be TEIMUN 2022 – the NATO Council.

Yours Sincerely,

The TEIMUN 2022 NATO Chairs

2. Introduction to the NATO Council

NATO, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, is a military alliance established on 4 April 1949 by the United States, Canada, and the Allies in Western Europe as a defence association to face the Soviet Union and its supporters during the period known as the Cold War.[1] This alliance is arranged around a core treaty, the Washington Treaty, which, inter alia, stipulates that:

> *The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all […]*

This article (Article 5) is considered the founding principle of the Alliance and acts as the main basis for NATO's collective defence mechanism.

Furthermore, the Washington Treaty also created the North Atlantic Council (NAC), the only formal body of the Alliance, which meets in many different configurations. These include the form of Permanent Representatives, Ministers of Defence, Ministers of Foreign Affairs, and in the present simulation, Heads of States and Governments. Therefore, the NAC is an extremely important body that issues the political guidance for the Alliance. It is aided by a myriad of committees, especially a military and defence committee, and "such subsidiary bodies as may be necessary".

Originally, NATO had 12 members, but this number has grown rapidly since its establishment, with a current total of 30 and the rather likely addition of two more (Sweden and Finland) in the upcoming months! The list of countries and when they joined can be found below:

Albania 2009	**Belgium** 1949	**Bulgaria** 2004	**Canada** 1949	**Croatia** 2009	**Czech Republic** 1999
Denmark 1949	**Estonia** 2004	**France** 1949	**Germany** 1955	**Greece** 1952	**Hungary** 1999
Iceland 1949	**Italy** 1949	**Latvia** 2004	**Lithuania** 2004	**Luxembourg** 1949	**Montenegro** 2017

[1] NATO, 2022, 'What is NATO?' https://www.nato.int/nato-welcome/index.html

Netherlands 1949	**North Macedonia** 2020	**Norway** 1949	**Poland** 1999	**Portugal** 1949	**Romania** 2004
Slovakia 2004	**Slovenia** 2004	**Spain** 1982	**Turkey** 1952	**United Kingdom** 1949	**United States** 1949

source: 'NATO Member Countries' https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/nato_countries.htm

Additionally, the North Atlantic Council, and therefore NATO at every level, takes their decisions by process of consensus after discussion and consultation rather than through a vote. This is central to NATO's functioning, as it allows the Allies to establish collective consent and support for all measures which are taken without such decisions being subject to a veto.[2]

3. Introduction the Topic: Mainstreaming Climate into NATOs Core Tasks

The climate crisis has become a key issue for NATO as it aims to centre itself at the forefront of civilian, military, and political action in order to protect the citizens of the Euro-Atlantic area. In this regard, the organisation must not neglect important considerations related to the climate crisis regarding its impact on security in the North Atlantic area and its obligations to adhere to more stringent and improved guidelines on climate-friendly policies.

For decades NATO has understood the danger that natural disasters worsened by climate change can pose to people's lives. This has only become more important with the current developments concerning climate change and the new technologies related to it. Therefore, NATO has been seeking to address such issues since 1969, when the Committee on the Challenges of Modern Society was established, and which has been continually adapting and responding to new challenges.

When it comes to this topic, NATO must not only address the immediate and surface-level dangers posed by climate change but also critically reflect on its policies. As the largest military alliance in the world, they must develop a forward-looking organisation which integrates and mainstreams climate across its core tasks for collective defence, crisis management and cooperative security.

Therefore, building on the NATO Climate Change and Security Action Plan of June 2021, the

[2] NATO, 2022, 'What is NATO?' https://www.nato.int/nato-welcome/index.html

Allies must go further than they have ever done before and aim to build upon decades of environmental challenges and continue to be proactive in their approach to contemporary issues, wherever they may be.

4. Problem Specification

Climate change is one of our era's most pressing issues. It is a threat multiplier that impacts Allied security in the Euro-Atlantic region and the Alliance's wider neighbourhood.[3]

Climate change makes it more difficult for soldiers to complete their missions. Increased temperature extremes, rising sea levels, rapid changes in precipitation patterns, and an increasing frequency and intensity of extreme weather events put our military installations and critical infrastructure to the test while also impairing our capabilities and potentially making our military operations more difficult.[4]

Furthermore, climate change impacts our geopolitical environment and can influence State behaviour. Permafrost thawing, desertification, and the emergence of new maritime channels are all examples of causes that can negatively impact it.

During a NAC session, the NATO Foreign Ministers supported NATO's Climate Change and Security Agenda on 23-24 March 2021. Taking a comprehensive approach in their dialogue, they took upon to encompass measures aiming to raise the awareness of NATO and its member states of the impact of climate change on security; develop clear adaptation and mitigation measures and increase outreach; maintain a credible deterrence and defence posture; and upholding the priorities of military personnel safety, operational and cost-effectiveness.[5] This strategy builds on existing initiatives, institutions, and procedures, improves on and unifies ongoing activities, and identifies new policies and tools as needed. It will enable NATO to respond to the security implications of climate change while remaining true to its mission and purpose.

NATO will perform an annual Climate Change and Security Impact Assessment in this regard.[6] The impact of climate change on NATO's strategic environment and its assets,

[3] Jens Stoltenberg, 2020, 'NATO must help to curb climate change',
[4] M Brzoska, 2015, 'Climate change and military planning', *International Journal of Climate Change Strategies and Management 7*(2)
[5] NATO , 'NATO Summit Brussels 14 June 2021', (*NATO Climate Change and Security Plan*), https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_185174.htm
[6] Ibid, para 9.1

installations, missions, and operations will be examined in this report. NATO will also incorporate climate change concerns into security risk and resilience assessments, as well as civil advice on the security situation in important alliance regions, to support this work.[7] In addition, as part of NATO's Women, Peace, and Security strategy, NATO will use its scientific and technology programmes and communities to support research on the impact of climate change on security, including gender perspectives.[8]

5. Questions a Resolution Must Answer

5.1. QARMA 1: What Role Does NATO's Climate Plan Play in its Arctic Operations?

While the NATO Climate Plan does not specifically reference the Arctic (which is believed by some to be a missed opportunity),[9] it should still signify a shift in NATO's approach to the rapidly changing Arctic operational environment.[10] Scientists predict that the Arctic is warming 2-3 times faster than the rest of the world as a result of climate change.[11] Due to the vicious feedback melting loop, the rate appears to be speeding up. There is even a chance that by 2035, the Arctic may be ice-free.[12] This huge melt is opening new maritime commerce routes for civilian and military vessels, along the Russian coastline, through the Northwest Passage (which runs through Canada) and the Northern Sea Route. Vessels can increasingly pass through formerly inaccessible rivers, and risk assessments of other historic routes, such as the busy — and frequently closed — Suez Canal, are beginning to be made.[13] Climate change is also reviving the prospect of natural resource extraction on the continental shelf of each Arctic coastal State, as the Arctic seafloor holds an estimated 13% of the world's undiscovered oil and 30% of the world's undiscovered natural gas.[14]

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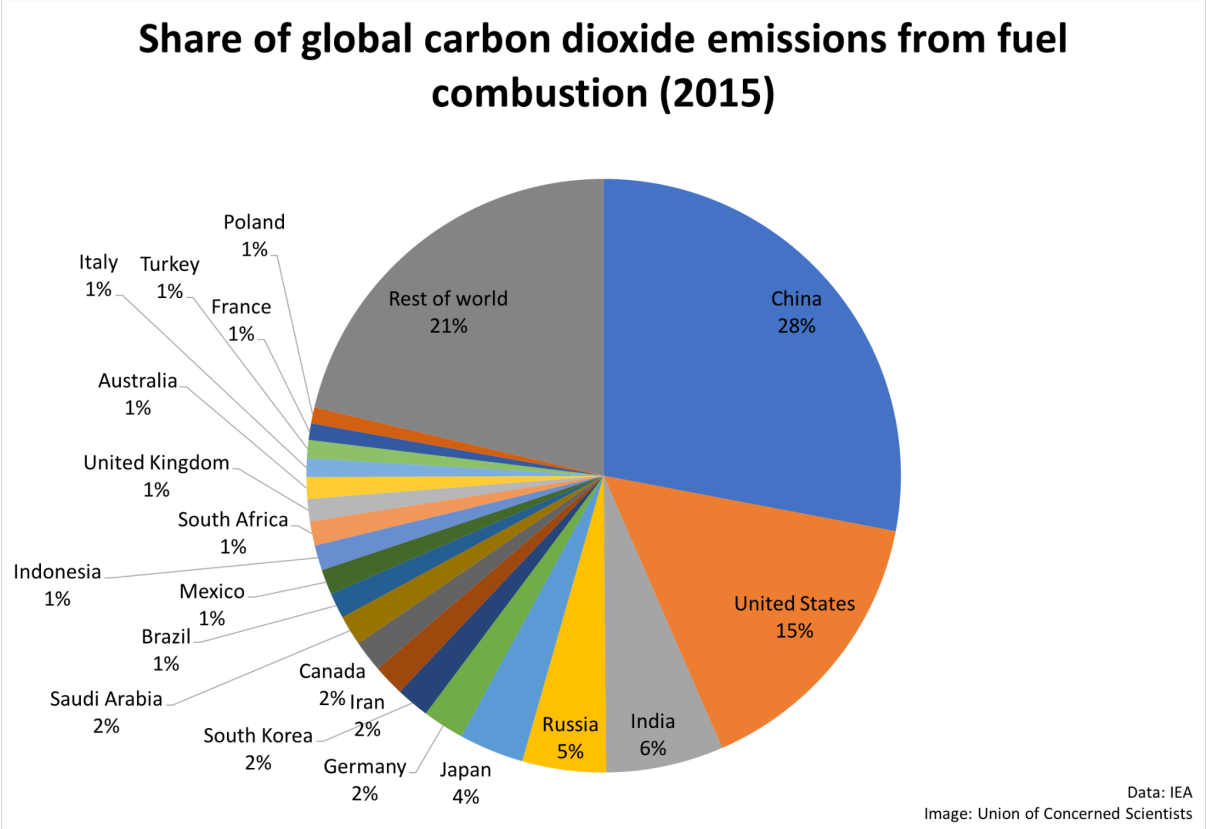
[7] Ibid, para 9.2, 9.4
[8] NATO , 2021, 'NATO releases new Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security' https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_187547.htm
[9] Mark Nevitt, 'NATO's Renewed Focus on Climate Change & Security: What You Need to Know', *Just Security*, https://www.justsecurity.org/77055/natos-renewed-focus-on-climate-change-security-what-you-need-to-know
[10] Ibid
[11] O Hoegh-Guldberg, 2018, 'Impacts of 15ºC Global Warming on Natural and Human Systems', IPCC Special Report 177
[12] A Borunda , 2020, 'Arctic Summer Sea Ice Could Disappear as Early as 2035', *National Geopgraphic*, https://www.nationalgeographic.com/science/article/arctic-summer-sea-ice-could-be-gone-by-2035
[13] Rahel, F. J., 2007, 'Biogeographic barriers, connectivity and homogenization of freshwater faunas: it's a small world after all', *Freshwater biology*, *52*(4)
[14] Michel, J., & Fingas, M. 2016, 'Oil Spills: Causes, consequences, prevention, and countermeasures', *Fossil fuels: current status and future directions*,



Pie chart showing global carbon dioxide emission, which is the main reason for Arctic melting.[15]

As such, the Arctic is becoming increasingly of interest, both physically and militarily. In recent years, Russia has been massively investing in an aggressive militarisation push in this area.[16] Furthermore, Russia also has operational capabilities that far outstrip those of the US and NATO partners. According to one estimate, Russia possesses 50 icebreakers (some of which are nuclear-powered), while the US only has two.[17] Russia has said in recent years that it regards the Northern Sea Route (NSR), which runs parallel to its coastline, as a "historically formed national transit corridor"[18] rather than an open-to-all international waterway.[19]

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[15] Union of concerned Scientist, 2018, https://www.ucsusa.org/sites/default/files/images/2017/11/gw-graphic-pie-chart-co2-emissions-by-country-2015.png

[16] Pascual, C., & Zambetakis, E., 2010, 'The geopolitics of energy', *Energy Security: Economics, Politics, Strategies, and Implications*, 9-35.

[17] Borgerson, S. G. 2008, 'Arctic meltdown-The economic and security implications of global warming', *Foreign Aff.*, *87*, 63.

[18] Ercan Zer, 2020, 'Black Sea Economic Cooperation: A Test Case' https://www.nato.int/docu/colloq/1997/97-2-2.htm

[19] Brendon Cox, Policy exchange, 2020, 'A Climate Security Plan for NATO: Collective Defence for the 21st Century - Policy Exchange'

Due to a lack of a treaty laying down the rules for action in the Arctic, the majority of international Arctic governance work falls to the eight-member Arctic Council, which NATO Allies heavily populate.[20] Nevertheless, according to the 1996 Ottawa Declaration, which established the former organisation, military security considerations remain outside the Arctic Council's specific jurisdiction.[21] Because of a geopolitical twist in the High North,[22] four of the five Arctic coastline governments (the United States, Denmark (through Greenland), Norway, and Canada) are all NATO Charter members and original signatories to the 1951 Washington Treaty. Russia, whose Arctic continental shelf claims extend to the North Pole, has sovereignty over about half of the Arctic Ocean. Natural resource exploitation authority is delegated to NATO member nations.

Interestingly, Russia and China are investing significantly in this new, climate-changed Arctic.[23] Despite being almost 1,800 miles from the Arctic Circle, China officially declared itself a "near-Arctic state". This increases the possibility that Russia may progressively treat the Northern Sea Route as a personal maritime checkpoint and EZ-Pass toll lane, requiring advance notification from foreign ships and charging them a transit fee. This directly violates the law of the sea convention's nautical provisions.[24] Is there a future for NATO-led Arctic Freedom of Operations? While this is improbable at the moment, NATO should avoid giving Russia too much leeway. In addition, NATO's ability to act in the Arctic should be increased. Trident Juncture, a NATO military exercise held in the Arctic for the first time in years, was a positive sign for NATO's capability to operate in the high north.

NATO's Climate Action Plan reaffirms the Alliance's commitment to preparing for the century of climate security. As repeatedly stated, the disruptive effects of climate change will progressively shape the future – a perspective now clearly supported by all 30 NATO members.[25] The NATO Brussels Communiqué and Climate Action Plan are positive, forward-thinking efforts in the fight against climate change. NATO's focus on climate change also aligns perfectly with President Biden's Interim National Security Strategy[26], a major strategic-level national security planning document in which the word "climate" appears 27

[20] Knecht, S., 2017, 'The politics of Arctic international cooperation: Introducing a dataset on stakeholder participation in Arctic Council meetings, 1998–2015'. *Cooperation and Conflict*, *52*(2)
[21] Ibid
[22] Barents observer, 2015, 'NATO: Climate change can have security implications for the Arctic'
[23] Weidacher Hsiung, C. 2016, 'China and Arctic energy: drivers and limitations', *The Polar Journal*, *6*(2)
[24] UN GA, 1994, 'Convention on the Law of the Sea'
[25] Morton, J. F. (2007). The impact of climate change on smallholder and subsistence agriculture. *Proceedings of the national academy of sciences*, *104*(50), 19680-19685.
[26] Interim National Security Strategic Guidance, 2021, The White House, https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/NSC-1v2.pdf

times.

5.2. QARMA 2: Will NATO's New Climate Change and Security Impact Assessment Be More Accurate in Predicting Future Threats from the Outside?

From phasing out fossil fuel subsidies to addressing the rising costs of loss and damage caused by climate change impacts, pressure for more aggressive action to combat global warming on the ground is set to increase in 2022.[27]

The urgency comes as authorities and climate policy researchers warn that the most ambitious Paris Agreement goal of reducing global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 Fahrenheit) is becoming more difficult to achieve, despite stronger political support in 2021.[28]

Last year, the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) in Glasgow demonstrated a rising willingness to act and collaborate.[29] Despite the fact that NATO has no formal participation in the UN climate discussions, the Conference's participants included NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg and other representatives from the defence and security sectors in the discussion.

The good news is that the Alliance will not have to start from the beginning. NATO has been concerned about environmental issues for more than 50 years, mostly through a variety of scientific research projects. NATO has also created six environmental protection standards (STANAGs) that address the sustainability of military camps, waste management, and military training.[30] Moreover, climate change was incorporated into the Strategic Concept in 2010 and was subsequently addressed in summit pronouncements.[31] Additionally, NATO developed a Green Defence Framework in 2014[32], and the modern NATO headquarters, which were completed in 2018, incorporated energy efficiency and other environmental

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[27] Beh Lih Yi, 2022, 'These are the climate change trends to look out for in 2022', *World Economic Forum*, https://www.act.nato.int/application/files/5515/7428/7917/legal_gazette_40.pdf
[28] TU Delft, 2022, 'Immediate acceleration of global climate action needed to realise 1.5°C goal' https://www.tudelft.nl/en/2022/tu-delft/immediate-acceleration-of-global-climate-action-needed-to-realise-15c-goal
[29] H Mountford, 2021, 'Key Outcomes From the UN Climate Talks in Glasgow', *World Resources Institute*, https://www.wri.org/insights/cop26-key-outcomes-un-climate-talks-glasgow
[30] L Weihser, 2019, 'The Emergence of the Right to a Healthy Environment and Resulting Obligations during NATO-led Military Activities', *NATO Legal Gazette* https://www.act.nato.int/application/files/5515/7428/7917/legal_gazette_40.pdf
[31] KK Larsen, 2015, 'The NATO Green Defence Framework' *Centre for Military Studies,* https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/resrep05270.5.pdf
[32] Ibid

considerations into the design.[33] There are currently the foundations in place for a more ambitious and prominent involvement in climate security.

Climate change has now been officially designated as a risk multiplier by NATO, a term originated by Sherri Goodman and now embraced by national security professionals worldwide. This is a significant move, and NATO's annual Climate Security Assessment declaration should guarantee that future climate threats and hotspots are constantly monitored.[34]

The 2019 European heatwave claimed hundreds of lives (amount ranging depending on a source), a tragedy exacerbated by human-caused climate change.[35] Further, climate change is already destabilising some 'climate hotspots' outside of Europe, most notably in the Middle East and the African Sahel. Many of these climate hotspots will emerge outside of NATO's traditional sphere of influence, but they can quickly reach Europe's doorstep. Consider Syria, which had an unprecedented drought in the months leading up to its political turmoil. After crop harvests collapsed due to the drought, which was exacerbated by climate change, 1.5 million Syrians fled to cities in search of work. While climate change cannot be blamed alone for the onset of the Syrian War, it did create the circumstances for instability. The political instability that followed resulted in a large human migration problem on Europe's doorstep.

Outside of Syria, a growing corpus of research and empirical evidence links the effects of climate change to violent conflict. The International Committee of the Red Cross anticipated that 12 of the 20 nations most vulnerable to climate change would be in conflict in 2020.[36] In theory, NATO's new Security Impact Assessment should aid in identifying future climatic hotspots and better preparing NATO to deal with them. This can lead to greater intelligence, resourcing and possibly reduce human suffering if done through early warning detection.

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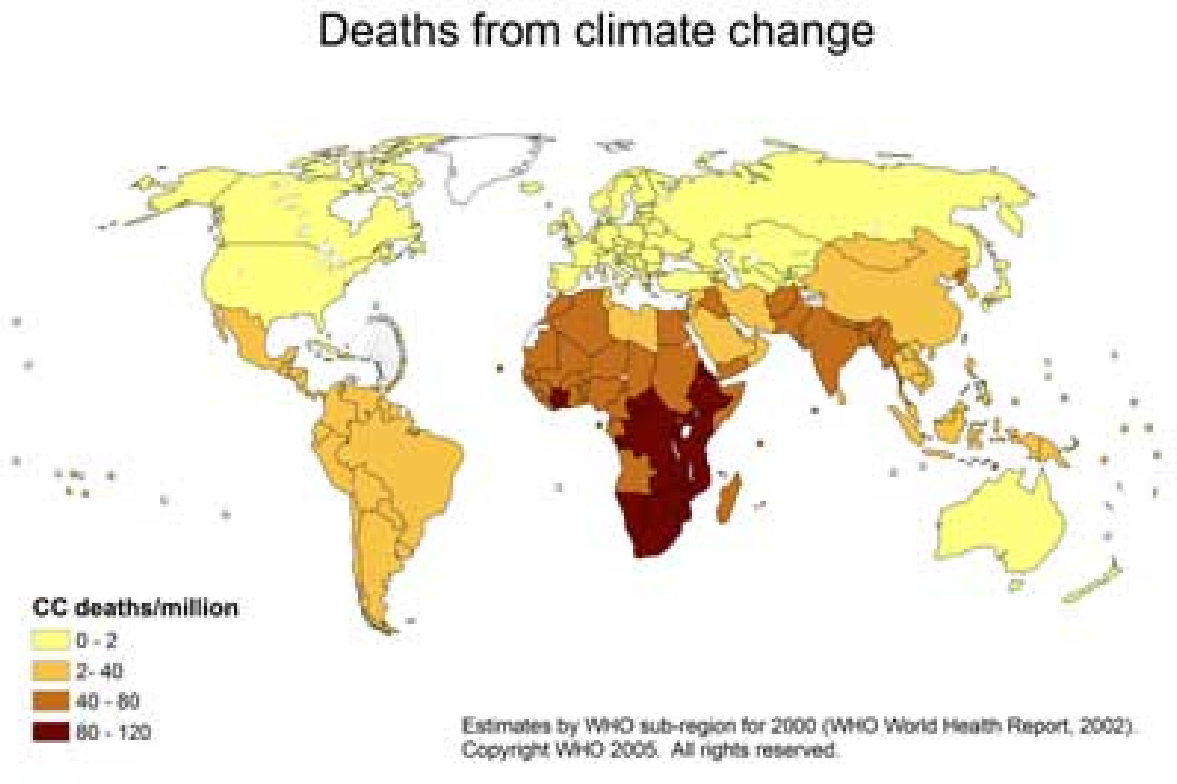
[33] KK Larsen, 2018, 'New NATO Headquarters', *NATO Press Fact Sheets and Backgrounders*, https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2018_05/20180507_1805-factsheet-nnhq-en.pdf.pdf
[34] NATO, 2019, ‘Opinion, Analysis and Debate on Security Issues’,
[35] R Vautard, 2020, 'Human contribution to the record-breaking June and July 2019 heatwaves in Western Europe', *Environmental Research Letters 15*(9)
[36] ICRC, 2020, 'Seven things you need to know about climate change and conflict', *International committee of Red Cross*, https://www.icrc.org/en/document/climate-change-and-conflict



Picture depicting death toll due to climate change.[37]

NATO has numerous key assets (in comparison to other international bodies). It may contribute to international climate initiatives and assist Allies in reducing emissions and adaptation activities. NATO's global network of allies and structured relationships with other regional and international organisations, such as the United Nations (UN), European Union (EU), and Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), are among its most valuable assets (OSCE). This network is critical for increased situational awareness as well as capacity and resilience building.

5.3. QARMA 3: How Will NATO's Climate Efforts Work in Tandem with those of Other International Organisations and Initiatives?

As part of broader climate mitigation initiatives, NATO has committed to using a mapping and analytical methodology to better identify each military's contribution to GHG

[37] World Health Report, 2002, https://www.who.int/heli/risks/climate/en/climmapsmall0906.jpg

emissions.[38] This is a much-needed and welcome commitment, as determining each military's carbon footprint can be tricky. According to a recent assessment by the International Military Council on Climate and Security, the defence sector is the world's single greatest institutional user of hydrocarbons. The United States military, according to the Watson Institute at Brown University, emits more greenhouse gases than several NATO member countries combined.[39]

NATO has also stated that it will be the main international institution on climate-security issues. It intends to convene a high-level climate and security discussion to exchange ideas. [40] Three of NATO's five members (the US, the UK, and France) are members of the UN Security Council's Permanent Five (P5) and have recently expressed an interest in continuing to discuss and debate climate security at the Council. The Council's efforts, such as the Arria Formula discussions and Open Debates, provide another avenue for international cooperation on climate security issues.[41]

The United Nations Security Council has the ability and obligation to act on behalf of all 193 Member States on international peace and security questions, as stipulated in the United Nations Charter.[42] It also has the broad legal authority to back up its claims (if needed). However, the Council, the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, and the EU have to deal with several other international organisations. To this list, NATO is now added as well.

1. NATO has been assisting the African Union with military and logistical support as well as capacity-building since 2005. Various internal as well as independent external evaluations have been created, providing a strategic summary of the Atlantic Alliance's position in Africa, a reminder of the AU-NATO relationship's critical importance for international peace and security. Even though we should not be diving into this topic too excessively, one such has been created by the NATO Defense College and Institute for Security Studies.[43]

2. The NATO Science and Technology Organisation (STO) includes a Collaboration

[38] n5, para 9.3
[39] NC Crawford, 2019, 'Pentagon Fuel Use, Climate Change, and the Costs of War', *Watson Institute of Brown University*, https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/files/cow/imce/papers/Pentagon%20Fuel%20Use%2C%20Climate%20Change%20and%20the%20Costs%20of%20War%20Revised%20November%202019%20Crawford.pdf
[40] n5 Ibid
[41] World Economic Forum, 2021, ‘These 6 trends will impact climate change in 2022, experts say’
[42] H Nasu, 2011, 'The UN Security Council's Responsibility and the Responsibility to Protect’
[43] A Adeniyi, 2013, 'AU-NATO Collaboration: Implications and Prospects', https://www.ndc.nato.int/

Support Office and a Maritime Research and Experimentation Centre. The STO is headed by a Chief Scientist based in Brussels, who serves as a NATO-wide senior scientific advisor, and works closely with different international organisations in the respective field.

With these collaborations and many more, NATO hopes to achieve the climate change goal as mentioned in SG 13, keeping in mind that the security and defence management of its Member States stay in place and have an inevitable improvement in strengthening the same. With NATO's increasing focus on China and Russia (the other two P5 members), it is unclear how NATO will approach the Security Council's climate security work. Russia and China have already obstructed Council climate action, effectively securing NATO's participation in the climate security debate. How will NATO's efforts be coordinated with the recent innovative climate-security work of the United Nations Security Council? What international body is most suited to lead the charge on climate security?[44]

NATO is severely concerned by the increased activity of Russia around the bordering NATO Member States. The main goal remains to safeguard and secure its members from any unfortunate situation in the near future.

[44] NATO, 2020, 'NATO Climate Change and Security Action Plan'.

The NATO Member States bordering Russia and major geopolitical and defence activities.[45]

[45] Understanding war, 2020, www.understandingwar.com

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M Brzoska, 'Climate change and military planning' [2015] 7(2) International Journal of Climate Change Strategies and Management 172-190

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