

# NATO

## Party Portrait

NATO is a political-military alliance founded in 1949 to ensure the collective defense of its 28 trans-Atlantic member states. Since 9/11, Islamic extremism and threats originating in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) have become one of NATO's and its member states' primary concerns.

### Key Interests

- Stabilize the MENA region in order to eliminate long-standing threat to NATO and its members
- Minimize risk of jihadist terror threats to NATO states

### Sources of Leverage

**Military** - Hard power in the form of military strength, as was seen in its 2011 intervention in Libya

**Soft Power** - Soft power through military exchanges, training missions, collaboration and political support.

## Regional Strategy

Since NATO's intervention in Libya, many key actors have shied away from further pursuing interests in the region, instead preferring a minimal containment strategy. For instance, NATO members' involvement in Syria has been on an individual, ad hoc basis rather than as part of a greater NATO MENA strategy. The bulk of NATO's strategy in the region consists of establishing dialogues with Gulf and Mediterranean states while also pursuing bilateral agreements with individual states throughout region that focus on collaboration, communication, and mutual understanding.

### Powerful Individuals

The United States is the most influential member of NATO. Other key actors include France, Germany, the UK, and Turkey. The NATO Secretary-General is Jens Stoltenberg.

### Potential Negotiation Moves

**Continue Engagement**- Continue to pursue engagement with regional actors on shared security interests

**Broaden Engagement** - Negotiate tailored bilateral deals with key regional actors such as Saudi Arabia and Oman, or by seeking to expand participation in its multilateral forums (Mediterranean Dialogue and Istanbul Cooperation Initiative). In addition, moving forward it may seek to reach out to rivals and build ties with non-partner states.

**Deepen Engagement** - Offer itself as a "soft-security" provider of maritime engagement, training, consultation, WMD monitoring and intelligence expertise to partners in the region.

## Internal Conflicts

There are several internal conflicts affecting NATO policies and strategy in MENA. NATO's southernmost member, Turkey, and other countries affected by the refugee crisis - Greece, Germany, and Italy - have urged NATO to focus on conflict and instability in MENA, while Eastern members have argued for NATO to reinforce its eastern flank against new Russian aggression. More broadly, recently the President of the United States has questioned the value of the alliance, and has sought greater budgetary commitments from other member states.

### Memberships

N/A

### Allies

N/A

### Partners

Mediterranean Dialogue partners: ALGERIA, EGYPT Government, ISRAEL, JORDAN, MOROCCO Government, TUNISIA, MAURITANIA  
Istanbul Cooperative Initiative partners: SAUDI ARABIA, QATAR, KUWAIT, UAE; More limited partnership with SAUDI ARABIA and OMAN

### Rivals

IRAN

### Adversaries

RUSSIA (not in the MENA region, but this adversarial relationship impacts NATO's involvement in the region)

### Active Armed Opponents

N/A

### Proxy

N/A

### External Sponsor

N/A

### Aid Recipient

N/A

### Aid Donor

N/A