

**Houston Area  
Model United Nations  
Standard Committee**



**NATO**

**Chair | Hamsini Ajjan  
NATO Expansion into Asia  
Houston Area Model United Nations 48  
February 2-3, 2022**

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# Note to Delegates

## Delegates,

My name is Hamsini Ajjan and I am currently a senior at the University of Texas at Dallas, majoring in healthcare management and minoring in biology, on the pre-med track. I have been with HAMUN ever since my senior year of high school. Phew, it's been a while since I've been with the organization, and have seen it grow from many angles from the delegate, Logistics, and Secretary General position. I'm super excited to be chairing the NATO committee this year. I have previous experience being a director for different committees and really enjoyed writing y'all's background guides!

HAMUN has personally helped me grow and develop into a strong speaker with great research skills. I look forward to seeing each delegate bring a fresh perspective from their country and debate the topics on hand with confidence. Encouraging all delegates to step-out of their comfort zone to propose bold ideas, I am curious to see which delegates will create actionable resolutions and amass cooperative discussion groups. I'm hoping to see everyone have an enjoyable experience and make HAMUN as exciting as always, especially in-person!

### **Hamsini Ajjan**

Chair of NATO

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# North Atlantic Treaty Organization Chair | Hamsini Ajjan Houston Area Model United Nations 48 February 2-3, 2023

## Background Information

The ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine alongside risks from China have prompted global concern amongst countries in an era where issues pertaining to supply chain deficiencies, cyber defense, and nuclear warfare loom imminent. With China's rise and status as a dominant trading partner, global leader in innovative technology, and having the largest global defense budget after the US, many countries are wearily assessing their relationship with China whilst balancing any potential risks they may face.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) comprises an alliance of 28 European countries and 2 North American countries dedicated to security of the North-Atlantic region. With security concerns from China extending into Europe and NATO countries, NATO is attempting to expand and

strengthen their relationships eastward to countries in the Asia-Pacific region. Framed alongside Ukraine's application for NATO membership in September 2022, NATO's continued support for Ukraine's security and defense has placed pressure on their ongoing conflict with Russia.

NATO now looks towards increasing cooperation with partners in the Asia-Pacific, as, for the first time in history, Japan, South Korea, Australia, and New Zealand were formally



invited to attend the Madrid Summit in June 2022. NATO's updated "strategic concept," unanimously adopted to outline the alliance's core tasks and purposes, reflects concerns in the Asia-Pacific region. Alongside identifying Russia as the most imminent threat to NATO security, the new concept highlights North Korea's enduring development of missile systems and tools for nuclear warfare as well as China's expansion of their nuclear arsenal. This concept represents the first explicit reference to China as a strategic challenge, as well as the contention that concerns in the Asia-Pacific region pose security risks for the NATO alliance. With NATO's new identification of concerns from China, the participation of Japan, South Korea, Australia, and New Zealand in the most recent summit reflect the expansion of NATO's security interests into the Asia-Pacific region through strengthening ties with strategic partners.

**History** NATO's extension of membership to other countries began with its founding in 1949, with 12 founding Allied countries, including the US and Canada. The alliance formed after WWII to

establish collective security of the region in response to the dominant threat of Russia and to mitigate Germany's power. NATO's governing body, the North Atlantic Council, oversees the process of accepting new member countries. This multi-step accession process entails consensus among all allied countries, military integration, and commitment to contributing to maintaining security in the European region. NATO's Article 10 of its founding treaty details the process of accession as an "open door policy," where any European countries can express aspirations to join the alliance and invitations are dealt upon unanimous agreement of the allied countries.

NATO's expansion into cooperating with countries in the Asia-Pacific region dates to 2001 after Al-Qaeda attacks on 9/11. Invoking Article 5 in the subsequent UN-led ISAF mission in Afghanistan, Japan, North Korea, Australia, and New Zealand contributed military and logistical support. Additionally, during the anti-piracy mission off the coast of East Africa in 2009, Australia, New Zealand, and Japan contributed ships for the operation. NATO officially met with these four Asia-Pacific partner countries in February 2016. This formal meeting reflected mutual concerns for

stronger relationships between NATO and Asian-Pacific countries, with condemnation of North Korea's expansion of their nuclear and missile arsenal.

Recently, NATO's main concern has been China's dominant global status and implicated risks on Allied and Asian-Pacific countries. After Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022, NATO received expressed aspirations of five countries, including Finland and Sweden, to join NATO. These countries have completed succession talks and signed protocols, so upon ratification by Allied countries, Finland and Sweden will become members of NATO.

NATO's concerns about China's military and nuclear developments, alongside their relationship with Russia, pose security threats for NATO countries in Europe. Additionally, COVID exacerbated concerns regarding the reliance of European countries on China's powerfully controlled supply chain. Indeed, NATO's 2022 Strategic Concept directly addressed China as a strategic threat, with explicit reference to cyber security threats, censorship campaigns, and control of supply chain, economic sectors,

and infrastructure. Additionally, the concept expresses concern about China and Russia's strategic relationship with regard to their heightening military and nuclear capabilities.

Yet, according to Article 10 of the founding treaty, the scope of NATO's role is limited to the North-Atlantic area, so NATO will not commit to defending the Asia-Pacific region or accepting new country members from this area. Regardless, the newfound participation and strengthened partnership of countries in the Asia-Pacific reflects the increasing concern of China, Russia, and North Korea as imminent threats to the safety of NATO countries with global implications. Regardless, NATO officially states that their "ongoing enlargement process poses no threat to any country. It is aimed at promoting stability and cooperation, at building a Europe whole and free, united in peace, democracy and common values."

## Questions

- To what countries should NATO expand to form strategic partnerships in the Asia-Pacific region in the interest of security and defense?

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- How, if at all, does NATO's expansion into Asia implicate heightened security tensions within the Asia-Pacific region and European countries?
- What strategic moves can NATO undertake in order to further their attempts in establishing security?
- How can NATO countries balance their relationship with China in an economic sense whilst maintaining the alliance's security interests?

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