

## **Committee: North Atlantic Treaty Organization**



NATO Symbol (10)

**Topic:** NATO's Strategy in Response to Soviet Control of Energy Routes in Central Asia (1985 –1989): Energy Security, Sanctions, and Collective Defense.

### **Chair**

**Secretary General:** María Fernanda Molina Polo del Valle

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## Welcome letter

Dear Delegates,

It is with great joy and pleasure that we extend a very warm welcome to you all to the 14th edition of the Humboldt-MUN 2026, on behalf of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). With this event, we hope that you enjoy the opportunity to debate and learn how to be even more involved in meaningful discussions on present global issues.

As your chair, we are committed to creating a safe environment for everyone involved, where you as delegates can foster debates and collaborate with others. Even though this committee is historical and you will be spending three days debating about a series of events that occurred between 1985 and 1989, we believe that the skills you will need to do so, such as articulating and defending your positions and building consensus with the other delegations, will help you in your journey as future leaders, diplomats and human beings who will undoubtedly shape tomorrow's world as a better and more just one for everyone. With this in mind, we would like to remind you that we expect you to step into your roles as delegates and approach these proceedings with an open mind, empathy, and most important of all, willingness to collaborate with others, no matter how different their position to your own may be.

Furthermore, the chair and everyone else involved in Humboldt-MUN 2026 are here to support you in anything you may need. Do not hesitate to contact us if you have any doubts regarding your position papers or generally about the model, we are here for you. We have no doubts that this experience will be a success thanks to your dedication and collaboration. We hope that it will inspire you to continue on a path of hard work, empathy and commitment. Never forget the power that your voice holds.

We look forward to three days of productive debate. We kindly remind you to always align with the established protocol and rules of procedure of Humboldt-MUN 2026 and NATO.

Sincerely,

Maria Fernanda Molina Polo del Valle, NATO Secretary General;

Paola Vargas Medina, NATO Moderator;

Samanta Sofia Arreola Arrevillaga, NATO Intelligence Officer.

# **Delegations**

## **Members**

1. President of the United States of America, Ronald Reagan
2. Prime Minister of the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland, Margaret Thatcher
3. Kingdom of Spain, Felipe González
4. Kingdom of Norway, Gro Harlem Brundtland
5. Kingdom of the Netherlands, Ruud Lubbers
6. Italian Republic, Bettino Craxi
7. French Republic, François Mitterrand
8. Dominion of Canada, Brian Mulroney
9. Kingdom of Belgium, Wilfried Martens
10. Federal Republic of Germany, Helmut Kohl

## **Observers**

1. Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Sultan Ali Keshtmand
2. Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (URSS), Mijaíl Gorbachov
3. Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq

## **Extras**

1. Democratic People's Republic of North Korea (observer), Kim Il-sung
2. German Democratic Republic (observer), Richard von Weizsäcker
3. Commonwealth of Australia (observer), Robert James Lee Hawke
4. People's Republic of China (observer), Li Xiannian

# NATO Background info

## About the committee

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is an intergovernmental military and political alliance created on April 4, 1949 in Washington, D.C. Its founding was a defense response to the advance of the USSR in the European continent. Twelve countries — Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the United Kingdom, and the United States — signed the North Atlantic Treaty, pledging to safeguard one another's freedom and security through collective defense and cooperation. The emergence of NATO marks the official beginning of the Cold War, as the world was essentially divided into two blocs: communism and capitalism. In the year 1985, a total of 16 states are members of this committee: the founding 12, Greece, Turkey, West Germany and Spain.

NATO was established with three central purposes:

- Deterring Soviet expansionism and protecting Western Europe from external aggression.
- Preventing the resurgence of nationalist militarism in Europe by embedding a strong North American presence with the support of the United States.
- Encouraging political integration and fostering unity among democratic states. (1)

The alliance's cornerstone is Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty, which declares that an armed attack against one member shall be considered an attack against all. This principle of collective defense has defined NATO's credibility and cohesion throughout its history. (2)

## Faculties of the committee (1985)

As of 1985, NATO's faculties are shaped by the Cold War context and its founding treaty. The alliance acts through both political consultation and military cooperation, with all decisions made by consensus among its 16 member states. Its main faculties include:

- Collective Defense (Article 5): The cornerstone of NATO — an attack on one member is considered an attack on all.
- Deterrence and Military Readiness: Coordinating strategies, deployments, and nuclear posture to deter Soviet aggression.

- Political Consultation: Providing a forum for allies to discuss security concerns and coordinate diplomatic responses.
- Crisis Management (Cold War context): Preparing collective responses to crises, including economic measures or military readiness, while avoiding direct escalation.
- Alliance Cohesion: Ensuring unity among diverse members, balancing U.S. calls for firmness with European preferences for dialogue (3)

# **Topic: NATO's Strategy in Response to Soviet Control of Energy Routes in Central Asia (1985 –1989): Energy Security, Sanctions, and Collective Defense**

## **Background information on the topic**

In order to understand the topic fully, it is necessary to know about the following points that illustrate the development of the Cold War focusing on the consumption of energy sources such as natural gas and oil originating from regions in Central Asia and East Europe.

### **Historical Context:**

#### **The Cold War: The “Iron Curtain” of Energy**

After World War II, former allies Soviet Union and the United States of America began a decades-long international geopolitical rivalry. Even though this conflict was characterized by a contrast of ideologies (communism against capitalism), the focus here lies on the economic and strategic competition. (4)

During World War II, the Soviet energy system was primarily based on coal. Later on, as a response to Moscow's wartime energy crisis, in 1944, pipelines started to be built to link Moscow to a gas field near Saratov. After seeing the success of those pipelines and finishing driving out all Nazi forces from Ukraine and Poland, the Oil Commissariat proceeded to build gas pipelines that supplied the city of Kiev with natural gas from the gas fields in Galicia. (5)



Major Russian gas pipelines to Europe (11)

All of this with the single goal of becoming the world's largest producer and exporter of natural gas. This goal even gave birth to the so-called Central Asia Hub, a region made up of countries such as Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, that focuses on the access to the Caspian Sea. Whilst the term “Iron Curtain” generally refers to the physical and ideological barrier

between the East and the West, the Energy Curtain refers to the literal infrastructure, in this case the steel pipes, that crossed that said barrier. The conflict because of this curtain arose when the US started suspecting that the Soviet Union was using the gas pipelines to blackmail Europe, especially after they started supplying NATO members such as Italy and France with natural gas. (6)

## The Soviet-Afghan War

In December 1979, the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan by sending thousands of troops into the country. Immediately afterwards, the Soviet Union assumed complete military and political control of the capital, Kabul, hoping to make Afghanistan an example of the Brezhnev Doctrine, which stated that once a country became socialist it would never be allowed to return to capitalism by Moscow.

It is believed that one of the main reasons for invading Afghanistan was to support the weakening People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), a political party founded in 1965 based upon Marxist ideology and allegiance to Moscow, which was losing its control because of radical reforms spreading.

Another reason for the invasion of Afghanistan was the concern for an alliance between Afghanistan and the United States of America, as Afghanistan bordered Soviet territory.

As a result of the occupation, the then President of the United States James Earl "Jimmy" Carter announced his own doctrine, by which he vowed to protect Middle Eastern oil supplies from Soviet aggression. (7)



Map of the Soviet invasion (12)

## **Situation as of 1985**

On March 11, 1985, Gorbachev became president.(8) By this time, Afghanistan had already been at war with the USSR for about six years. By January of that year, Soviet-Afghan forces launched an offensive in the provinces of Konarha, Nangarhar, and Paktia in the east and in Nimruz and Herat in western Afghanistan with the aim of cutting off the guerrillas' supply routes. Two months later, the United Nations issued a report on human rights violations in Afghanistan, accusing the Soviet Union of attacking civilians, destroying food supplies, and ignoring the Geneva Convention. The report also stated that the government was holding around 50,000 people as political hostages, but it was dismissed as fabricating information.

By May 1985, alliances had formed among different groups. One of these alliances was made up of one of the seven largest resistance groups in Peshawar; this happened after pressure from the Pakistanis, guerrilla commanders, and others. Another alliance with political and military aims was formed by resistance groups with a similar ethnolinguistic orientation. In mid-August, an anti-guerrilla onslaught led by the Soviet-Afghan forces command was launched in eastern Afghanistan, but it was unsuccessful. An offensive attack that same month was described as one of the largest attacks since the Soviet intervention in 1979. This offensive attack brought the war closer to the border with Pakistan, which greatly concerned the Pakistanis. (9)

# How can you prepare for the debate?

## Guiding questions

1. Historically, what relation has your country had with the USSR's natural gas trade?
2. What sanctions would your country propose in view of the USSR's control over the energy routes in Central Asia?
3. How willing is your country to commit troops, technology or funding to collective NATO initiatives?
4. How is your country affected by Soviet control of energy routes?
5. What are your proposals to ensure energy security for all members of this committee?
6. What access does your country have to energy sources other than those controlled by the USSR?

## Tips

- Always keep in mind that this is an historical committee, so any information regarding years following 1985 are not admissible in your position paper, for as was previously explained, that will be the starting point of the debate.
- It is important that you do not mention the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War in your position papers and during the debate.
- You should include in your position papers which allies you have in this committee and keep them in mind for the debate.
- Do not forget about the differences between a member of the committee and an observer and make sure that you know which one you are representing.
- Remember that, as you will be representing your country's Chief of State, you may express yourself in the first person and use direct contact during the debate, always keeping in mind the rules of respect of the committee and maintaining a diplomatic posture.
- Consider that what you bring to the debate and write in your position paper must align with the position of the person you are representing, not your own opinion.
- Make sure that you know as much as possible about your country's political, economical and social situation to ensure an accurate participation that aligns with the faculties of your country

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