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News: NATO winds up its largest air exercise in Europe

Air Defender 23

- Air Defender 23 manoeuvres brought together some 250 military aircraft from 25 NATO and partner nations like Japan and Sweden.
- Up to 10,000 service members participated in the drills intended to boost interoperability and preparedness to protect against drones and cruise missiles in the case of an attack within NATO territory.

North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)

- North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) is an intergovernmental military alliance between 31 North American and European Countries.
- Most recently, Finland became its 31st member in April 2023.
- Joining the original signatories were Greece and Turkey (1952), West Germany (1955, from 1990 as Germany), Spain (1982), the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland (1999), Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia,

and Slovenia (2004), Albania and Croatia (2009), Montenegro (2017), and North Macedonia (2020).

- NATO is established by **Washington Treaty that was signed in 4th April 1949**.
- Its original members were **Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the United Kingdom, and the United States**.
- NATO constitutes a **system of collective defence** whereby its independent member states agree to mutual defence in response to an attack by an external party.
- Being a member of NATO will give the nations a security guarantee under the alliance's **"Article 5" on collective defence**. The article **essentially guarantees a military response and protection by NATO countries if any member of the organisation comes under attack**.
- Headquarters of NATO is located in **Brussels, Belgium**. Mons in Belgium is the headquarters of NATO Allied Command Operations.
- There are two **official languages of NATO, English and French**.
- Recently US Senate passed the National Defense Authorisation Act that brings India at par with NATO allies for increasing defence cooperation.
- Major non-NATO allies of US are Afghanistan, Argentina, Australia, Bahrain, Brazil, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Japan, Korea, Kuwait, Morocco, New Zealand,

Pakistan, Philippines, Thailand and Tunisia. NATO is committed to the peaceful resolution of disputes.

- If **diplomatic efforts fail, it has the military power to undertake crisis-management operations.** These are carried out under the collective defence clause of NATO's founding treaty – Article 5 of the Washington Treaty or under a United Nations mandate, alone or in cooperation with other countries and international organisations.
- A NATO-led mission, called **Resolute Support, was launched in 2015 to provide further training, advice and assistance for the Afghan security forces and institutions.**