



NATO:

Consultations on Russian incursions
into NATO airspace after Poland &
Estonia trigger Article 4



I. Committee Background

The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation is one of the world's major international institutions. It is a political and military alliance that brings together 32 member countries from Europe and North America that meet to cooperate in the field of security and defence. NATO is committed to protecting its members through political and military means. It also encourages consultation and cooperation with non-NATO countries in a wide range of security-related areas such as defence reform and peacekeeping.

NATO contributes to preventing conflicts within and beyond the frontiers of its member countries with peaceful resolution. If diplomatic efforts fail, it has the military capacity needed to undertake crisis management and peacekeeping operations alone or in cooperation with other countries and international organisations.

NATO also has a 3rd dimension that exists to cope with disasters and promote cooperation in the field of science and the environment.

Each member country has a permanent delegation at NATO's political headquarters in Brussels, Belgium. It is headed by an ambassador, who represents their government in the Alliance's consultation and decision-making process.

The North Atlantic Council is the most important political decision-making body within the Organization. It meets at different levels and is chaired by the Secretary General of NATO, who helps members reach agreement on key issues.

All decisions within each of NATO's committees are reached by consensus. A 'NATO decision' is therefore the expression of the collective will of all member countries.



II. Introduction to the Topic

NATO's Article 4

Article 4 allows any member state to call for consultations with fellow members whenever its territorial integrity, political independence, or security is threatened. This allows delegations the ability to bring urgent issues to the attention of the North Atlantic Council, NATO's main political decision-making body, and can lead to joint decisions or actions, though it does not automatically trigger a military response like Article 5.

Russian Estonia Airspace Violation

NATO intercepted three Russian MiG-31 fighter jets that violated Estonia's airspace in what Estonia called an "unprecedentedly brazen" incident. The country's foreign ministry said the jets entered Estonian airspace over the Gulf of Finland without permission and remained there for a total of 12 minutes. Estonia's military said the jets had their transponders switched off and did not have flight plans, potentially endangering other aircraft.

According to Estonia, the Russian pilots acknowledged but disregarded communication from two Italian pilots in F-35 fighter jets, which had taken off from NATO's Baltic Air Policing Mission in Ämari Air Base in Estonia, before ultimately being escorted into international skies by the F-35 pilots. Russia has denied the violation of Estonia's airspace, claiming that its jets were flying over international waters en route from an air base in northwest Russia to Kaliningrad, situated on the Baltic Sea between NATO countries Lithuania and Poland.

Estonia invoked Article 4 of the North Atlantic Treaty, which initiates consultations among members. The article permits NATO member countries to bring any matter of concern, especially in relation to their security, to the attention of the North Atlantic Council for discussion. This can potentially lead to some form of joint decision or action by NATO, although it does not mandate any response. Article 4 has only been invoked eight other times since NATO's creation, including after the incursion of Russian drones into Polish airspace earlier this month.

In its 20 September letter to the Council, Estonia said that Russia had violated its airspace four times this year, but that the incursion on 19 September marked "a dangerous escalation", with the fighters entering 10 km into Estonian airspace and coming within minutes of Tallinn, the country's capital.

Russian Poland Airspace Violation

On 9 September 2025, around 19 - 23 drones entered Poland's airspace launched from Russia. This incursion prompted a Quick Reaction Alert, prompting the Polish Air Force and other NATO militaries to scramble their aircraft. Up to four drones were confirmed to have been shot down,

primarily by the Dutch Air Force. Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk described the drones as posing a direct threat. The Polish government invoked Article 4 of the NATO treaty. Polish Deputy Prime Minister Radosław Sikorski stated, “We are facing an unprecedented attack not only on Polish territory but also on NATO and the EU.”

Intelligence officials have been unable to determine whether the incursion was accidental or an intentional effort by Russia to probe Western air defences and gauge NATO’s response. Officials cautioned that either way, the episode still represents a worrying signal that the Kremlin’s willingness to pique NATO, at the risk of escalating the conflict, has grown.

Poland shot down the drones with backing from NATO allies, including Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands. There were no reports of casualties in Poland in connection with the incident. Poland invoked Article 4 of the North Atlantic Treaty, which allows NATO member countries to bring their security concerns to the attention of the North Atlantic Council for discussion. The invocation of the Article can potentially lead to some form of joint decision or action by NATO, although it does not mandate any response.

After a 10 September meeting of the North Atlantic Council, NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte said that a “full assessment of the incident is ongoing”, while arguing that the development was “not an isolated incident”. Since the start of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in 2022, NATO members Croatia, Poland, and Romania, as well as non-allied country Moldova, have reported numerous airspace violations by Russia. However, the recent incident in Poland was unusual in its scale and represented the first time that NATO is known to have fired shots since the outbreak of the Russia-Ukraine war.



III. Accountability

Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) Spokesperson Maria Zakharova claimed that European countries are accusing Russia of launching the drones without presenting compelling evidence and that Poland's refusal to consult with Russian officials demonstrates that the broader West is uninterested in understanding the incident. Russian officials have consistently rejected responsibility for the drone incursion and criticized European efforts to defend against Russian aggression

How can de-escalation occur without inciting war? And how should the international committee respond?

Should force be used or mere communication? Is deterrence enough or is it NATO's responsibility to control conflict? Are all member states involved?

How can cyber warfare and hybrid threats from Russia be addressed in NATO's defence strategy?

NATO Allies face threats and challenges from both state and non-state actors who use hybrid activities to target political institutions, influence public opinion and undermine the security of NATO citizens. Hybrid methods of warfare – such as propaganda, deception, sabotage and other non-military tactics – have long been used to destabilise adversaries. What is new about attacks seen in recent years is their speed, scale and intensity, facilitated by rapid technological change and global interconnectivity. NATO has a strategy for its role in countering hybrid warfare and stands ready to defend the Alliance and all Allies against any threat, whether conventional or hybrid.

Are these Russian incursions under NATO's Article 5?

Article 5 provides that if a NATO Ally is the victim of an armed attack, each and every other member of the Alliance will consider this act of violence as an armed attack against all members and will take the actions it deems necessary to assist the Ally attacked.

Humanitarian and economic consequences

Invasions cause severe humanitarian crises caused mass displacement, injury and destruction of economy. How can Russia be prevented from invading other countries and how can NATO avoid such devastating consequences.

IV. Countries List

1. Kingdom of Belgium
2. Republic of Bulgaria
3. Canada
4. Republic of Croatia
5. Czech Republic
6. Denmark
7. Republic of Estonia
8. Republic of Finland
9. French Republic
10. Federal Republic of Germany
11. Hellenic Republic (Greece)
12. Hungary
13. Iceland
14. Italian Republic
15. Republic of Latvia
16. Republic of Lithuania
17. Netherlands
18. Kingdom of Norway
19. Republic of Poland
20. Romania
21. Kingdom of Spain
22. Kingdom of Sweden
23. Republic of Türkiye
24. United Kingdom of Great Britain & Northern Ireland
25. United States of America

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