Alliances in Action

How NATO responds as regional security needs change

WG.C.4.5 "Explain how international alliance networks respond to changing needs of people, places, and regions."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline a security need in each paragraph, then circle a NATO response to that need in the same paragraph. Use your marks to explain how the alliance has adapted.

One Alliance, Changing Needs

1 On a cold morning in northern Europe, troops from several countries train together. Their exercise is possible because members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, or NATO, promise to defend one another if attacked. NATO formed in 1949, when Western Europe faced fears of Soviet expansion after World War II. The United States and Canada joined European countries so an attack on one would be treated as an attack on all. This shared promise linked security across the Atlantic. Instead of preparing alone, members planned together and stationed forces where they believed an attack was most likely.

2 When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, the risk that shaped NATO's original plans changed. Violence inside southeastern Europe posed a different danger: wars could displace families and unsettle nearby countries. After a peace agreement ended the war in Bosnia in 1995, NATO led a multinational force there to help keep the peace. Members also built partnerships with countries outside the alliance and accepted new members from Central and Eastern Europe. NATO did not abandon collective defense. It added ways to work with neighbors and respond to regional instability, showing that an alliance can change its activities without losing its original purpose.

3 Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022 changed security needs again. Ukraine is not a NATO member, so the alliance's defense promise does not cover it. NATO increased forces in member countries near Russia and Ukraine, while NATO members separately sent military aid to Ukraine. Finland joined NATO in 2023, and Sweden joined in 2024, expanding the network in northern Europe. Those decisions reflect concerns about security close to their borders. NATO also works with partners on cyber defense because attacks on computer systems can disrupt services far from a battlefield. Its network adjusts both where it prepares and whom it works with.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did NATO's original network respond to Western Europe's security needs after World War II?

2. Why did NATO lead a multinational force in Bosnia after 1995, rather than only prepare for an attack on its members?

3. How did NATO's response near Ukraine differ from the military aid sent to Ukraine, and why?

4. How did NATO's network change in northern Europe after the 2022 invasion, and what concern did that change address?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Suppose severe flooding hits a NATO member country and a neighboring country that is a NATO partner, not a member. In four sentences, propose how the alliance could work with both countries, explain why nearby members might help, and describe how this response fits NATO's purpose.

ANSWER KEY

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HIGH SCHOOL · WG.C.4.5

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline a security need in each paragraph, then circle a NATO response to that need in the same paragraph. Use your marks to explain how the alliance has adapted. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did NATO's original network respond to Western Europe's security needs after World War II?	**The United States, Canada, and European countries joined in a shared defense promise, planned together, and stationed forces where they expected an attack.**
2	Why did NATO lead a multinational force in Bosnia after 1995, rather than only prepare for an attack on its members?	**Wars in southeastern Europe could displace families and unsettle nearby countries, so NATO helped keep the peace after the war in Bosnia.**
3	How did NATO's response near Ukraine differ from the military aid sent to Ukraine, and why?	**NATO increased forces in member countries near Russia and Ukraine. NATO members separately sent military aid to Ukraine because Ukraine is not covered by the alliance's defense promise.**
4	How did NATO's network change in northern Europe after the 2022 invasion, and what concern did that change address?	**Finland joined in 2023 and Sweden in 2024, expanding NATO in northern Europe as those countries grew concerned about security near their borders.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

NATO could coordinate emergency supplies from its members for flooded areas in both countries. The partner country could share information about blocked roads and request needed supplies. Nearby members might deliver those supplies faster than distant members. This cooperation would address a regional disaster while NATO kept its commitment to defend its members.

Accept other plausible ways to coordinate disaster assistance. Responses should distinguish a partner from a member and should not claim that the partner is covered by NATO's collective-defense promise.