

NATO's June 2025 Summit in The Hague

Updated July 3, 2025

Heads of state and government from the 32 members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) met in The Hague, the Netherlands, on [June 24-25, 2025](#). NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte [portrayed](#) the main summit outcome—a commitment to substantially increase allied defense spending—as laying the foundation for a “stronger, fairer and more lethal Alliance.” The White House [credited](#) President Donald Trump with securing a “monumental victory for the United States and its allies” by “brokering an historic deal to dramatically increase defense contributions.”

The Hague Summit was the first NATO summit since President Trump took office in January 2025. Allied leaders, some of whom [had questioned](#) how U.S. policy toward the alliance might evolve under the Trump Administration, looked to President Trump’s participation in the summit as an important barometer of U.S. policy toward NATO. In The Hague, the U.S. President [expressed continued U.S. support](#) for the alliance while underscoring the “need for other NATO members to take up the burden of the defense of Europe.”

Congress was instrumental in creating NATO in 1949—including through Senate ratification of NATO’s founding [North Atlantic Treaty](#)—and has played a role in shaping U.S. policy toward the alliance ever since. NATO-related issues of ongoing interest to Members of Congress could include allied defense spending, the future of U.S. and NATO force posture in Europe, NATO relations with Ukraine, and NATO’s policies toward Russia and the People’s Republic of China (PRC).

New Defense Spending Commitment

Russia’s 2022 full-scale invasion of Ukraine added urgency to longer-standing NATO efforts to increase allies’ defense spending and investment. Prior to The Hague Summit, Secretary General Rutte called for a “[quantum leap](#)” in NATO’s defense capabilities in response to the security threat posed by Russia, which he maintains could be ready to use military force against NATO in five years, and the PRC’s military modernization, among potential threats.

In The Hague, the allies adopted a new defense investment plan under which they [agreed](#) to “invest 5% of GDP [i.e., gross domestic product] annually on core defence requirements as well as defence- and security-related spending by 2035.” The 5% commitment is to encompass [3.5% of GDP on “core defence requirements”](#) and [1.5% of GDP on defense-related expenditures](#), including building relevant infrastructure and defense industrial capacity. Allies agreed that contributions to Ukraine’s defense, including its defense industry, would count toward the 5% goal. Allied defense investments are to

Congressional Research Service

<https://crsreports.congress.gov>

IN12566

conform with new NATO “capability targets,” including a [fivefold increase in air defense capabilities](#), among other enhancements.

In 2014, the allies adopted the so-called Wales [Defense Investment Pledge](#), under which they committed to “[aim to move towards](#)” defense spending of at least 2% of GDP by 2024. NATO estimates that [23 allies](#) met the 2% of GDP benchmark in 2024, compared with 3 in 2014. In The Hague, Secretary General Rutte [said](#) he expects all allies to meet the 2% target in 2025.

U.S. Policy and Considerations for Congress

The Trump Administration portrayed The Hague Summit as a milestone in its efforts to secure additional defense spending from European allies and Canada. U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio has described the Administration’s focus on defense spending as aimed at strengthening the alliance, [stating](#) that the Administration wants “NATO to be stronger. We want NATO to be more viable. And the only way NATO can get stronger and more viable is if our partners ... have more capability. ... [President Trump is] not against NATO. He is against a NATO that does not have the capability that it needs to fulfil the obligations that [the North Atlantic Treaty] imposes upon each and every member-state.”

As Congress conducts oversight of Administration policy toward NATO, a number of related issues could be of continued interest, including the following:

- **Allied Defense Spending.** Throughout NATO’s history, [Congress has urged](#) European allies and Canada to increase defense spending. Members of Congress, including those who [welcomed the new spending commitments](#) adopted in The Hague, may wish to monitor progress in reaching the spending goals, including by reviewing annual spending plans called for in [The Hague Summit Declaration](#).
- **The Future of U.S. and NATO Force Posture in Europe.** Over the past decade, NATO has [reoriented its collective defense posture](#) in Europe to respond to the threat from Russia. Questions remain about whether NATO’s current force posture would be adequate to deter or defend against a possible Russian military attack and the U.S. role in such a response.
- **Russia’s War Against Ukraine.** Since 2022, NATO has sought to institutionalize long-term allied [support for Ukraine](#) and [pledged to advance](#) Ukraine’s prospects for NATO membership. Allied and congressional views on both issues could factor into congressional consideration of potential longer-term support for Ukraine.
- **People’s Republic of China.** As Congress pursues policy responses related to strategic competition with and security threats from the PRC, Members may seek to engage with NATO and its member states on NATO strategy toward the PRC and the Indo-Pacific region. The security ramifications of PRC investments in Europe could be one particular concern.

More broadly, Members of Congress could consider a range of questions related to U.S. leadership of the alliance, including with respect to future U.S. commitments to NATO and European security, allied perceptions of U.S. leadership of NATO, and the costs and benefits of U.S. membership in NATO.

During and after the first Trump Administration, both chambers of Congress passed legislation expressing support for NATO; some Members [portrayed](#) such measures as responses to President Trump’s criticisms of the alliance. [Section 1250A](#) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2024 ([P.L. 118-31](#)), for example, states that “The President shall not suspend, terminate, denounce, or withdraw the United States from [NATO] ... except by and with the advice and consent of the Senate” and prohibits the use of government funds for such purposes. At the same time, some [Members](#) have questioned the value

of the United States' [historically robust role in European security](#) matters and [have credited](#) President Trump's approach to NATO with securing defense spending increases across the alliance.

Author Information

Paul Belkin
Analyst in European Affairs

Disclaimer

This document was prepared by the Congressional Research Service (CRS). CRS serves as nonpartisan shared staff to congressional committees and Members of Congress. It operates solely at the behest of and under the direction of Congress. Information in a CRS Report should not be relied upon for purposes other than public understanding of information that has been provided by CRS to Members of Congress in connection with CRS's institutional role. CRS Reports, as a work of the United States Government, are not subject to copyright protection in the United States. Any CRS Report may be reproduced and distributed in its entirety without permission from CRS. However, as a CRS Report may include copyrighted images or material from a third party, you may need to obtain the permission of the copyright holder if you wish to copy or otherwise use copyrighted material.