

NATO Standing Naval Forces

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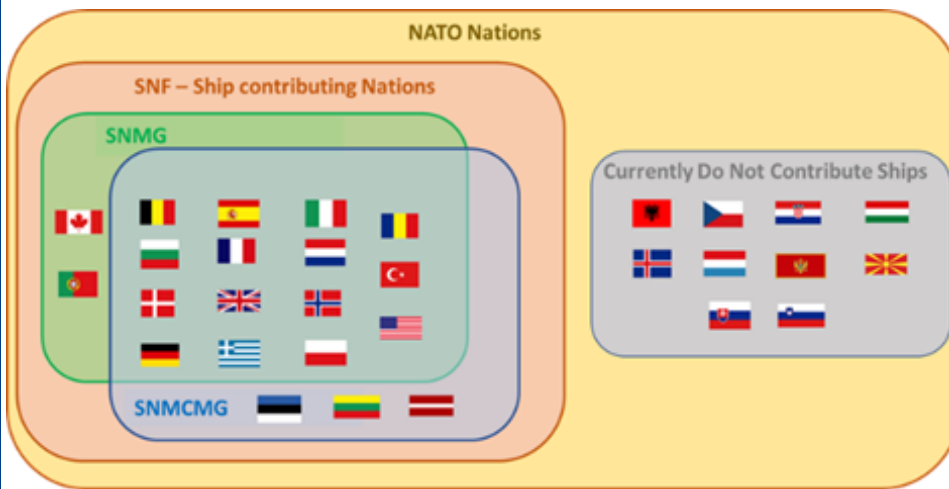
Project Overview

The Standing Naval Forces (SNF) is a core maritime capability of NATO and the centrepiece of its maritime posture, that provides the Alliance with a continuous naval presence. This multinational deterrent force constitutes an essential maritime requirement for the Alliance. The SNF carries out a programme of scheduled exercises, manoeuvres, and port visits, and can be rapidly deployed in times of crisis or tension.

The SNF consists of four groups, the Standing NATO Maritime Groups (SNMG) comprised of SNMG1 and SNMG2, and the Standing NATO Mine Countermeasures Groups (SNMCMG) comprised of SNMCMG1 and SNMCMG2. A fully resourced SNF should be comprised of 26 ships. As of March 2022, 17 NATO Nations contribute ships to the SNMG and 18 NATO Nations contribute to the SNMCMG. However, for a number of years insufficient ships have been provided to the SNF, which has led to an under-resourced capability.



“Benefits that Nations get from contributing ships include: enhanced interoperability between multinational ships, improved defence posture, and a demonstration of Alliance cohesion”



Tasking

Shortfalls in force generation are a longstanding problem for the SNF. This report builds on a previous JALLC study that was conducted in 2015 to determine the reasons for SNF shortfalls. As part of both the 2022 and 2015 reports, the JALLC sent an SNF-centric survey to Nations. The 2015 survey was designed to capture the factors (positive and negative) that affect SNF contributions. By contrast, the survey conducted for this report was designed to understand the extent of the impact that these factors have on SNF contributions and, by analysing the responses, determine the likely root causes. Additionally, the 2022 report asked the Nations to provide insights on how they envision a future SNF.



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Key Takeaways

The key takeaway from the report is that Nations are willing to contribute ships, but are constrained by shrinking navies, aging ships, competing demands on national defence budgets, and naval personnel shortages. The report contains examples of some initiatives that can be undertaken by NATO to reinvigorate the SNF. However, there appears to be no single solution to address the SNF shortfalls and the report concludes that more innovative and alternate solutions may be required.

The report also highlights the benefits that Nations get from contributing ships to the SNF. These benefits include: enhanced interoperability between multi-national ships, improved defence posture, and a demonstration of Alliance cohesion.



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