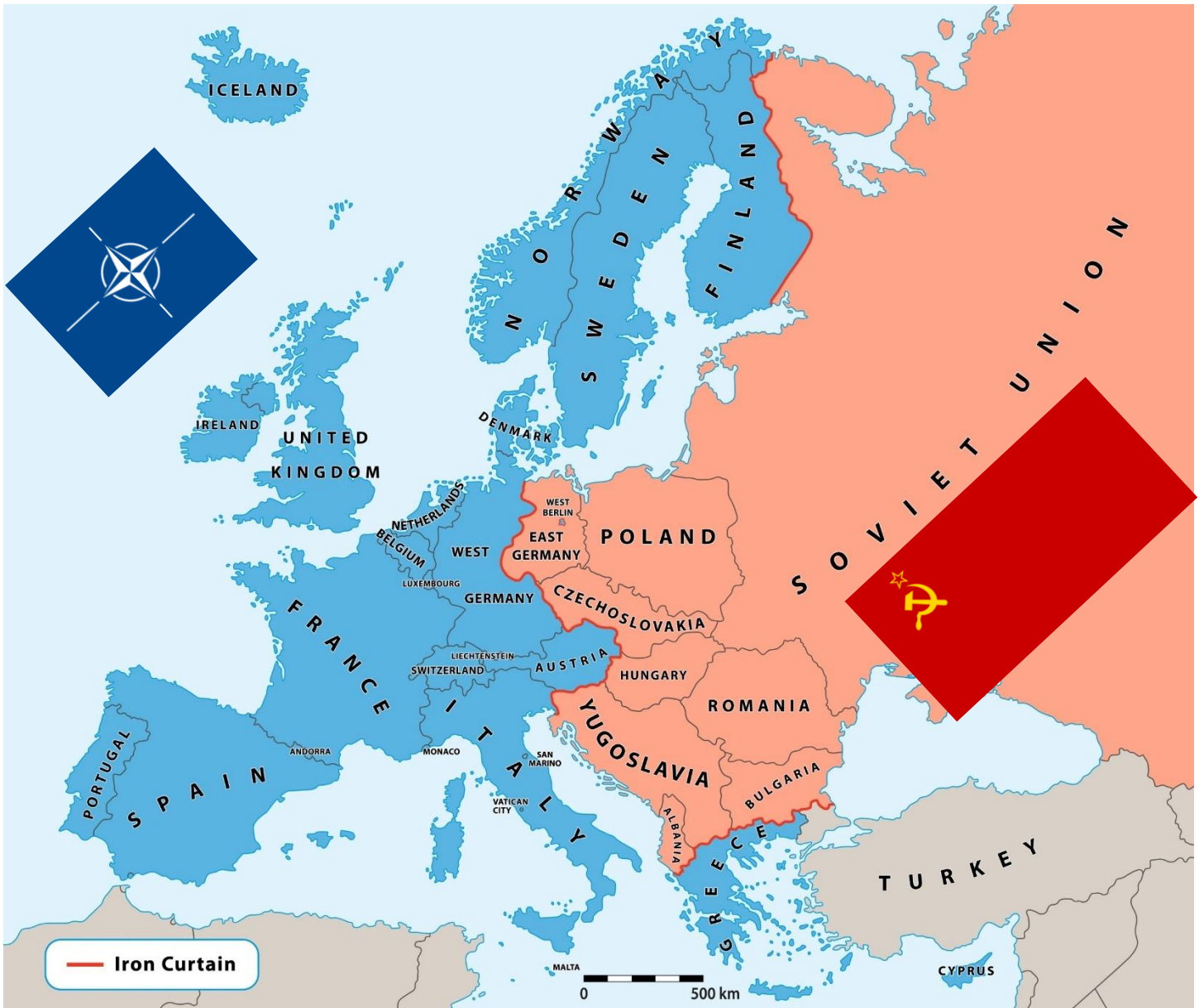


# The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)



Europe following the end of the Second World War. NATO countries are in blue, while the Soviet-aligned states are in orange.

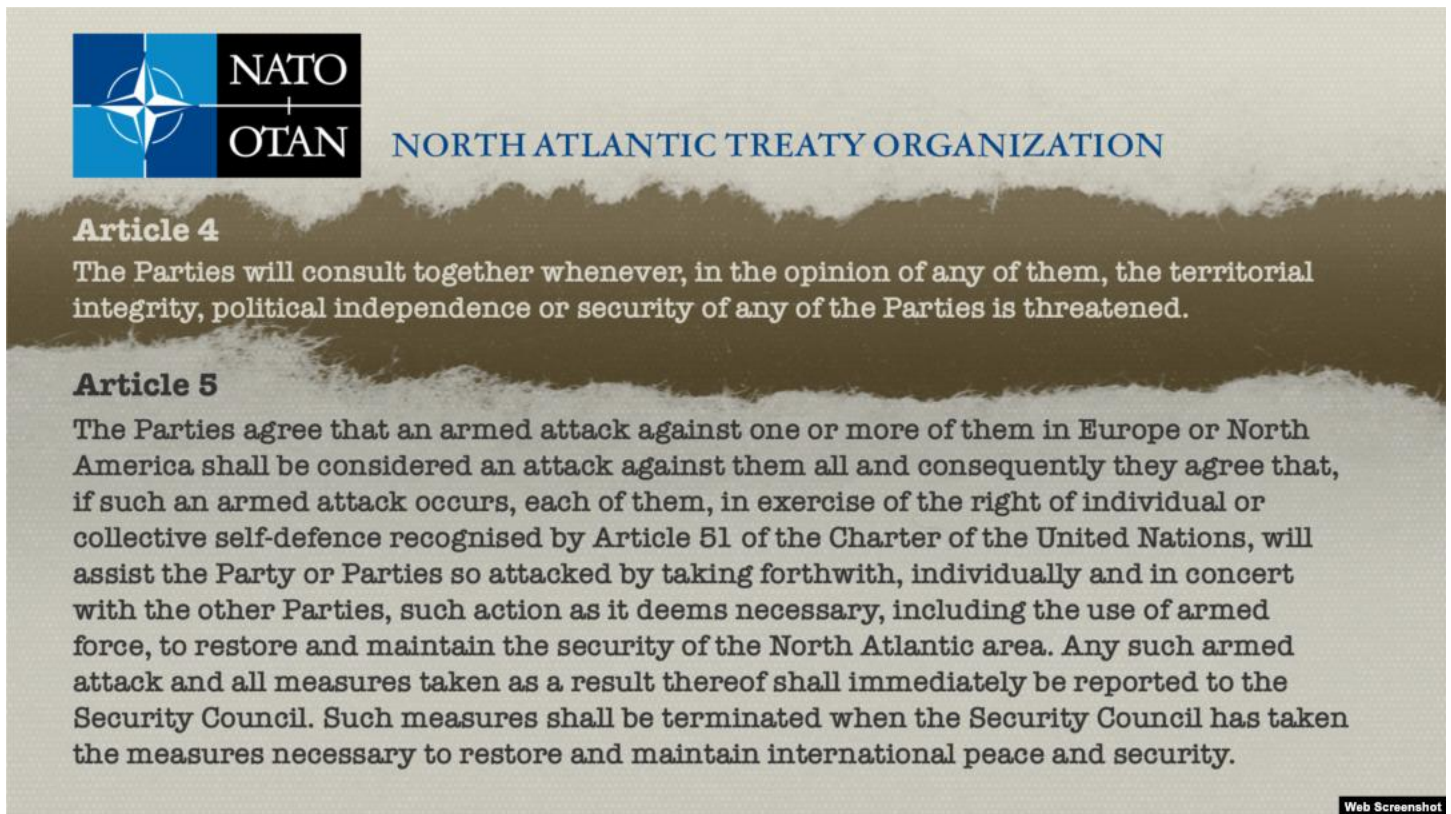
- Following the Second World War, the world was divided between two dominant superpowers: The United States of America and the Soviet Union (whose primary member was Russia). The rest of the world, including European Nations and Canada, aligned themselves with one of these two powers.

United States = Largely Democratic States (with exceptions) with a consumer/capitalist economy.

Soviet Union = Largely Communist States.



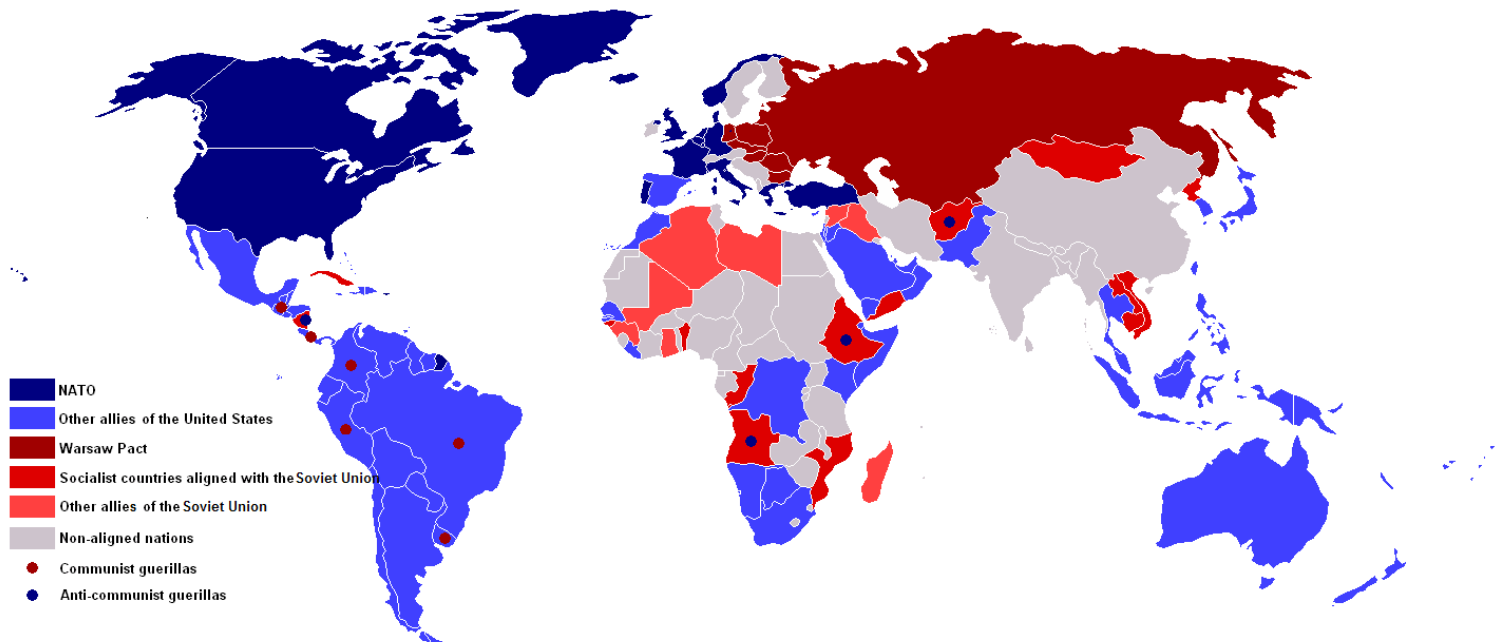
- The United States played the central driving role in the creation of the *North Atlantic Treaty Organization* (NATO) in 1949, as a way to stop Soviet expansion and stabilize postwar Europe.
  - After witnessing the devastation of World War II and the rising tensions of the early Cold War, U.S. leaders concluded that collective security—an attack on one being treated as an attack on all—was essential to prevent future conflict.
  - Working closely with Western European nations, the U.S. shaped NATO’s founding treaty, provided the bulk of its early military strength, and framed the alliance as both a military shield and a political commitment to democratic cooperation. **In many ways, NATO reflected a major shift in U.S. foreign policy: a move away from isolationism toward long-term international leadership.**



- In response to the creation of NATO, the Soviet Union and its allies formed the Warsaw Pact.

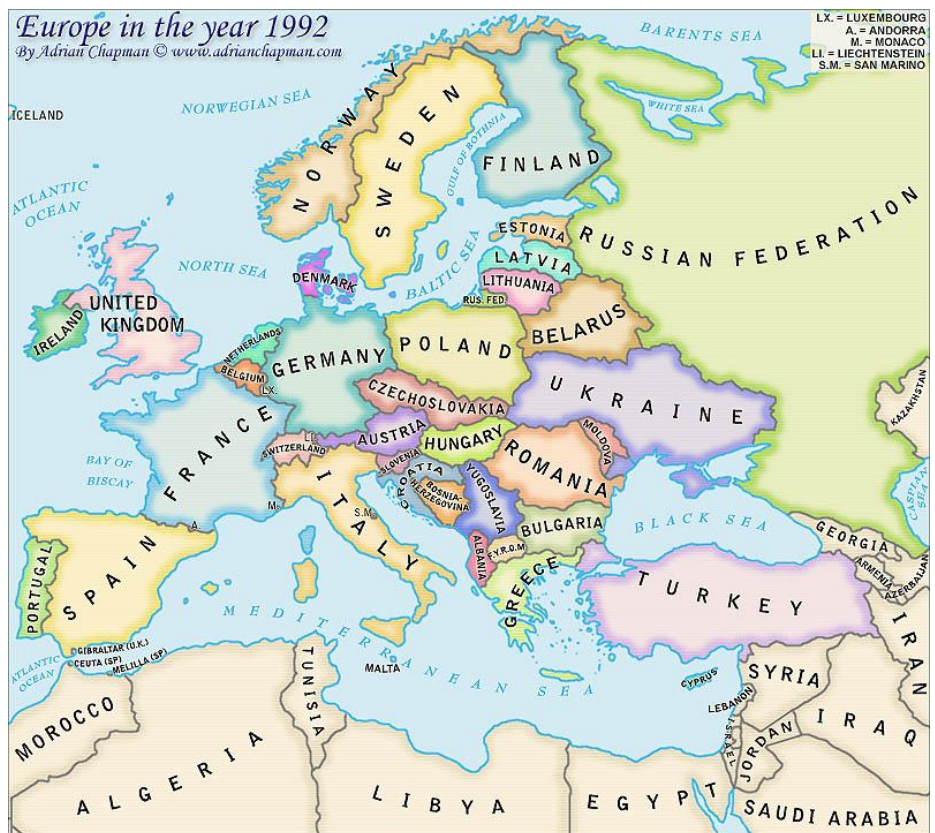


- The world dominated by these two military alliances dominated international relationships from the end of the Second World War until the 1991.



Global alliances during in 1980.

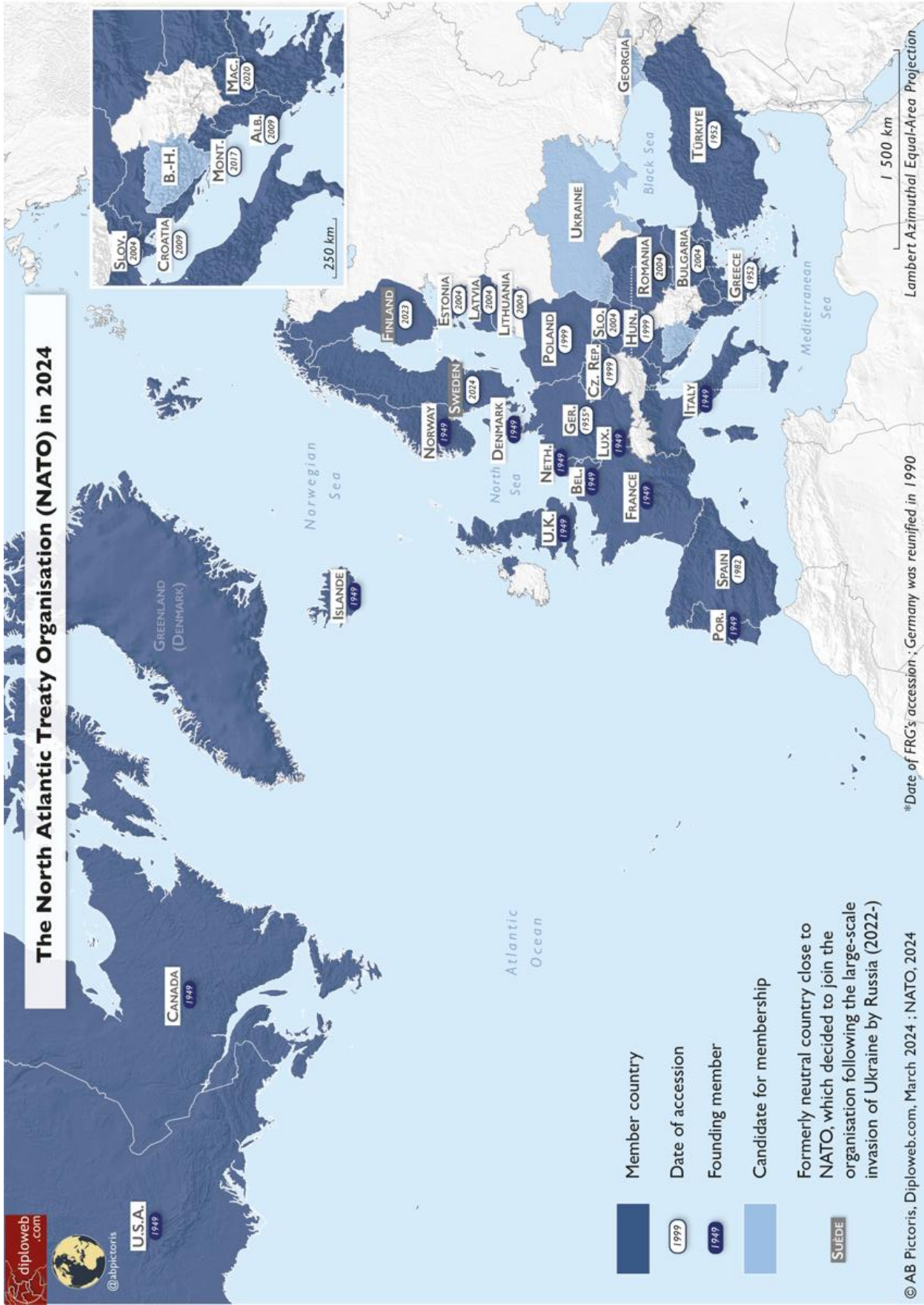
- In 1991 the Soviet Union collapsed into 15 independent states, the largest of which was the Russian Federation. The Warsaw Pact dissolved and many of its members moved to join NATO.
- Since NATO's reason for existence was to stop Soviet (aka Russian) expansion, Russia's leadership has viewed its continued existence (and expansion) as a threat.



Europe following the dissolution of the Soviet Union.



# The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) in 2024



© AB Pictoris, Diploweb.com, March 2024 ; NATO, 2024



- Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022.
  - Ukraine formally applied for NATO membership in September 2022, when the Ukrainian government submitted an accelerated application to join the Alliance.

Why would Russia have a problem with Ukraine joining NATO?

- Following a failed 2019 proposal by the Trump Administration, on January 5th, 2026, Stephen Miller (a senior member of the Second Trump Administration) publicly stated that the U.S. was considering multiple ways, including using the military, to acquire Greenland. This was echoed the following day by White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt who stated:

*"President Trump has made it well known that acquiring Greenland is a national security priority of the United States, and it's vital to deter our adversaries in the Arctic region. The President and his team are discussing a range of options to pursue this important foreign policy goal, and of course, utilizing the U.S. Military is always an option at the Commander in Chief's disposal."<sup>1</sup>*

Why does the US acquiring Greenland using its military a problem for NATO?

---

<sup>1</sup> Khan, M. (2026, January 6). US military is "always an option" for Trump to acquire Greenland, White House official says. ABC News.

