



### InsSciDE Work Package 7:

#### Environment: Monitoring as an Arena for Science Diplomacy

<b>Case Study n°7.1</b>	<b>Origins of environmental monitoring in Europe: NATO and the Cold War legacy</b>
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### Abstract

This InsSciDE case study deals with the organization of original research and environmental monitoring activities under the aegis of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. NATO was responsible for sponsoring environmental research and actions through schemes designed by its Science Committee (from 1958) and the Challenges of Modern Society Committee (from 1969). Once implemented these schemes led to important collaborative exercises between NATO countries in terms of both environmental legislation (for instance on dumping, on oil-spills, on the management of poisonous chemicals) and monitoring initiatives on specific issues.

### Introduction

The proposed study seeks to address the following two overlapping questions:

- What impact did NATO's scientific and environmental initiative have in the definition of current environmental monitoring knowledge, processes and systems?
- How did NATO's construction of a space for environmental diplomacy define the landscape of environmental activities in Europe and elsewhere?

The historical reconstruction of NATO's initiatives has two compelling elements which have also contemporary relevance. Firstly, it provides an opportunity to investigate the legacy of current forms of environmental monitoring, some of which were originally pioneered in the context of NATO programs. Secondly, it helps to consider the ancestry of contemporary multinational organizations devoted to global environmental governance since NATO was a key forerunner. In particular, it helps to investigate the origins and development of 'environmental diplomacy', i.e. science diplomacy processes and activities with an environmental focus.

### Actors

Looking at NATO provides a unique opportunity to explore what Crawford, Shinn and Sörlin (1993) have referred to as a *bureaucratic* mode of international scientific collaboration, in which actors do not spontaneously elaborate and/or endorse specific schemes, but instead are appointed by government agencies and foreign office departments to represent a national viewpoint in the multilateral forum. The shaping of science and environmental diplomacy at NATO was responsibility of the members of the two aforementioned committees, that were, in turn, representatives of national delegations with expertise in either scientific or environmental affairs.

Some of these actors underwent distinctive processes of hybridization in the course of their careers by blending their training in one or more scientific disciplines with advisory work in government, and diplomacy



activities on behalf of the foreign office agencies of their country. While most of the subjects involved in this study are scientists (mainly environmental scientists), others actually came from law. For instance, one prominent figure in NATO scientific/environmental affairs is Russell Train who was a lawyer by training.

### **Fields and disciplines, interfaces with technology**

For this study, it is my intention to focus on the application of geophysical methods and techniques to environmental problems. Thus the study encompasses the environmental uses of research in geophysics, oceanography, meteorology and atmospheric science. These fields received sponsorship in NATO's early programs because of their implications for the setting up of NATO's communication and detection networks. However, the background of knowledge put together in defense-oriented research was re-utilized in the configuration of later NATO initiatives in the environmental field.

### **Networks and communication**

NATO science and environmental diplomacy initiatives responded primarily to the deficit of dialogue in NATO's mainstream diplomacy arena. They represented therefore a track II type of diplomacy. Because of that the emphasis in the NATO science/diplomacy nexus was on effective diplomacy rather than effective science. That said, over the years NATO's investment helped to produce the infrastructures that eventually operationalized these activities and set the circumstances for making the environmental issues more relevant than the diplomacy aspects (intended as instrumental use for diplomacy gains).

### **Disciplinary/methodological approach**

The proposed study will be based on a transnational history approach, whose merits are discussed in Turchetti, Boudia and Herran, 2013. There are some previous works (for instance Turchetti, Adamson and Camprubí, 2014 and, more recently, Turchetti, 2018) displaying how this approach is operationalized; namely by comparing and contrasting archival document from different countries in order to understand how national viewpoints blended (or clashed) in the multilateral arena and what opinions prevailed in the definition of specific research initiatives. The chief merit of such a method is that it helps to trace the origins of the decision-making process and also helps to fill gaps in the documentation available in one national repository with what can be found in the others.

The study helps to understand how science diplomacy works in a highly bureaucratized space where decisions on the direction of international collaboration depend on the stance emerging at national level. In turn, it presents an important underlying question about the determinants and motives of science diplomacy whose origin is deeply rooted in national interests and agendas. In terms of policy aspiration the NATO case helps to observe how in the running of specific programs over a number of years, the quest of support to specific initiatives because of a national interest can be superseded by an ambition to address supra-national (or even global) challenges thus empowering those who are directly involved in operationalizing the original schemes.

### **Essential bibliography**

- E. Crawford, T. Shinn and S. Sörlin, "The Nationalization and Denationalization of the Sciences: An Introductory Essay," in E. Crawford, T. Shinn and S. Sörlin (eds.), *Denationalizing Science. The Context of International Scientific Practice* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1993), pp. 1-37.
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- Adamson, Matthew, Camprubí Lino, and Simone Turchetti, "From the Ground Up: Uranium Surveillance and Atomic Energy in Western Europe," in Simone Turchetti and Peder Roberts, *The Surveillance Imperative*, New York: Palgrave, 2014, pp. 23-44.
- Simone Turchetti, *Greening the Alliance: The Diplomacy of NATO's Science and Environmental Initiatives* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2018)