



By: The Editorial Board

Why is NATO using the World Expo in Japan as a diplomatic stage?



At Expo 2025 in Osaka this **week**, the most unusual part of the programme is **taking** place: the "NATO Day" in the Nordic Pavilion, a two-day event as part of the theme week "Peace, Human Security and Dignity" (1-12 August).

In contrast to traditional security forums, security is presented publicly here, in a space where countries, universities, industry and visitors from all over the world meet.

Cyber defence, artificial intelligence and the resilience of infrastructures will be discussed in front of a civilian audience — topics that normally remain behind closed doors.

NATO's participation is not a symbolic "booth visit" but a programmed event with a clear schedule, announced through official Expo and NATO channels.

Why is this important? Firstly, because Expo 2025 is **designed** as a multi-month platform with "theme weeks" where security is linked to human dignity, inclusion and rights — not just military doctrine.

Secondly, because the "NATO Days" are part of a programme that has precise dates and times set out in the official schedule: Thursday 7 August, 10:00-18:30, and Friday 8 August, 10:00-20:00, at the Nordic Circle Pavilion **site** on Yumeshima Island.

This removes any dilemma: the event is formal, open and bears the organiser's stamp.

Crossing the boundary between security and society

NATO **announced** its framework before the start of the week: The alliance will take part in the Expo "from 2 to 12 August", according to the organiser's programme, with a special focus on cooperation with Japan, cyber security and artificial intelligence.

The aim is not to recruit partners but to present standards, processes and models of cooperation that can be transferred to civilian

sectors and practices of partner countries outside the membership.

The announcement underscores the goal of transparently communicating security as a public good.

The Nordic pavilion was not chosen by chance. Following the accession of Finland and Sweden to NATO, this is the first joint conference appearance of all five Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden) with NATO on a civilian, global stage.

NATO discussions will not only be measured by political rhetoric but also by the expectation of industry and academia to see applicable standards and practices

The Nordic framework traditionally combines technological sophistication and strong institutions with a culture of openness.

In Osaka, this model will be translated into a public discussion about digital resilience, rules for AI, and the integration of security into everyday life — from hospitals and energy grids to universities and city services.

The official programme of the Nordic Pavilion, **entitled** "NATO Day," openly invites the diplomatic community, international organisations, professors, scientists, and young people, confirming yet again that it is not a closed format.

The theme week, "Peace, human security, and human dignity," **offers** a broader framework. The programme includes topics that cross the boundary between "security" and "society": migration, human trafficking, the protection of vulnerable groups, gender equality, and inclusion.

The programme also includes sessions on cyber security and artificial intelligence, as well as roundtable discussions with stakeholders in business and academia.

This means that NATO discussions will not only be measured by political rhetoric but also by the expectation of industry and academia to see applicable standards and practices (e.g., what a joint response to a cyber incident looks like with the sharing of indicators of compromise between the state and the private sector).

The usual Expo discipline

The main innovation is the format. Traditional security forums (Munich, Shangri-La...) mainly bring together states and military experts.

The Expo, on the other hand, brings countries together with companies, start-ups, cities and philanthropy. Where there used to be talk of "modern threats", the focus is now on standards that will be incorporated into contracts, software and staff training in hospitals, banks and utility companies.

When NATO talks about AI at the Expo, it is talking to those who use the technology in network monitoring, logistics and crisis management. When it talks about resilience, it has both equipment manufacturers and academic labs developing anomaly detection tools in front of it. This is an attempt to "translate" security from the language of strategy into the language of protocols and interoperable processes.

"NATO Day" - a discussion in the pavilion and a technical note that changes are possible

The calendar and logistics also confirm the seriousness of the approach. On the official Expo programme list, "NATO Day" is listed for 8 August from 10:00 to 20:00, with a note that it is a discussion in the pavilion and a technical note that changes are possible and will be announced in due course via the reservation system.

This is the usual Expo discipline: everything on the calendar must have a moderator, content,

time and location and be visible to visitors.

In practice, this means that the Alliance is judged by the same standards as the United Nations, national delegations, or corporate programmes in Osaka — publicly, according to schedule, and taking responsibility for content.

A fusion of security and the concept of "public good"

The political message is twofold. First, NATO is not coming to Asia to "extend the mandate" but to establish standards and channels for cooperation with democratic partners, particularly Japan. The Expo is an ideal venue because it brings together all the actors who will apply these standards.

Secondly, the selection of this theme week signals a fusion of security and the concept of "public good".

This removes the barrier between "security policy" and "social policy": critical infrastructure protection, digital privacy, data management and AI ethics are not separate but parts of the same story about a functioning, sustainable and legitimate public policy.

What can realistically be expected from Osaka? Not a "doctrine", but rather a minimum set of practical points.

The first is a common language for the exchange of technical data in the event of incidents (format, deadlines, responsibility).

The second point is a framework designed for testing AI tools in decision-making environments that involve safety-related aspects, ensuring clear responsibilities and checks.

The Osaka Expo is a political instrument of soft power that builds a network of trust and standards

The third is training and exercise protocols that bring together public and private actors so that information and resources flow into the same operational stream in the event of an attack.

It is important to understand Japan's specificity as a host. In recent years, Japan has rapidly increased its defence investments, deepened technological agreements with its European partners, and expanded cooperation in the field of civil protection.

The Osaka Expo is a political instrument of soft power that builds a network of trust and standards through culture, innovation, and public programmes.

NATO's presence in this framework does not change the rules of membership, but it does change the way of cooperating—with a focus on the interoperability of civil-military responses, cyber defence, and standards for AI.

This naturally aligns with Japan's priorities in protecting infrastructure, public services and technology supply chains.

Public security policy and not a show of force

It should also be said what is not the goal in Osaka. It is not to "militarise" the Expo, nor is it a "marketing campaign" for the defence industry.

That would suppress the very essence of the theme week, which demands that security be explained and justified in terms of human dignity and the public interest.



In Osaka, NATO has tested something it has long lacked — a public language of security that is understood and accepted by non-military actors

If NATO panels continue to focus on standards, procedures and demonstrable benefits for civil society (faster recovery of hospitals and city networks after cyberattacks, clear accountability in the use of AI tools, and customised exercises with local services), it becomes clear that it is about "public security policy" and not a show of force.

The thematic framework of the week clearly demonstrates this emphasis by simultaneously mentioning human security, migration, equality, and inclusion.

In geopolitical terms, the Osaka format is an opportunity to convey the Western community's foreign policy message without escalating the tone.

At a time of heightened global tensions, the message of standards, interoperability and openness is more useful than the message of "blocs".

Japan is a natural partner for such a message, as are the Nordic countries that have helped shape these standards for decades.

If at least some initiatives that connect labs, cities and industry with security services are run through Expo — for example, joint test sites for AI security or hubs for sharing cyber indicators — then a new direction of cooperation will be achieved that does not depend on changing the Alliance's mandate but on the quality and sustainability of its practices in the civil space.

The conclusion is clear: in Osaka, NATO has tested something it has long lacked — a public language of security that is understood and accepted by non-military actors.

If measurable results (standard protocols, pilot projects, and data-sharing networks) emerge from "NATO Days," Expo 2025 will become a reference for how security is put into practice from documents in front of an audience that demands accountability and results.