

## **The New NATO: Adapting the Alliance to Meet the New Security Challenges**

### **1. The present role of NATO**

North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), established mainly to face the Soviet threat, has served its paramount purpose by overcoming the East -namely communism-. Moreover, the Alliance transformed the interstate relations, eliminated the use of force among the members, successfully dealt with the nuclear threat and avoided nuclear confrontation between the East and the West. Today, however, the missions of NATO have transformed into a new phase, especially in the aftermath of the collapse of iron curtain.

The present role of NATO includes the need for reorganizing Europe, extending the cooperation and democracy particularly in East European countries, and more importantly, facing and adapting the new form of security challenges and threats. As such, the issue of human rights has become a major part of NATO's new role, keeping in mind that human rights have no longer been an internal issue as claimed by many totalitarian regimes in the past, but rather a concern of international community. Undoubtedly, the foremost example is NATO's intervention in Kosovo in 1999. Last but not least, as can be seen in the case of Afghanistan, NATO's mission in this country is vital in maintaining the importance and the role of the Alliance. Afghanistan is the single most significant test for NATO since its foundation and the Alliance has an obligation in building peace. The major difference for this mission, in fact underlying the new role of NATO, is combining military job with the state-building efforts and converging civilian efforts with military responsibilities.

## 2. Suggestions

In describing the new role and strategies of NATO, I would like to list six suggestions. My first suggestion is that in order to handle the increasing and changing security threats, NATO needs to expand its existing capabilities, such as defense against chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons, missile defense and air-to-ground surveillance.

The second one is the inevitable need for support from all members, European states in particular, in handling security concerns since the sustainability of growing asymmetry in power between the United States and Europe is suspicious. Given that one of the founding principles of European Defense and Security Policy (EDSP) is that the European Union would act militarily where NATO as whole is not engaged reminds the necessity of a tight cooperation, yet without unnecessary duplications. In order to realize the increased support from European members, these countries should increase their overall military capabilities so as to deal with the changing form of international terrorism, which has become an asymmetric threat for organized military capabilities. Robertson (2004) describes these capabilities mainly as “rapid response, force projection and protection against weapons of mass destruction” and points out that the Afghanistan case and September 11 both showed that “Europeanization” is not adequate in ensuring the European security.

The third proposition is that, apart from its military capacity, the Alliance needs a stronger, more flexible and less bureaucratic organizational structure in dealing with and handling failed states, terrorism and weapons of mass destruction in a timely way. It should be kept in mind that the

current structure of NATO reflects an organization which was developed more than 50 years ago, for an Alliance of twelve nations.

Fourth, the ways to converge the means and ends for a NATO and ESDP cooperation should be sought. Only when United States and the European Union cooperate, they would be successful in dealing with all of the dimensions of security challenges, such as economical issues, poverty, criminality, democratization and capacity building for failing states.

Fifth, today there is a bigger need more than ever for the continuation of diplomatic efforts, consultation and discussion. It should be asserted that an effective multilateral system and properly functioning international institutions have become indispensable necessities in trying to find common grounds. Hence, Europe should be treated as a partner in shaping the priorities and the United States should reemphasize its support for European integration and enlargement. In dealing with corruption, abuse of power, weak institutions, bad governance and lack of accountability, Europe's historical experiences could be much valuable. Preventing the collapse of state institutions would also serve in impeding organized crime -“cross-border trafficking in drugs, women, illegal migrants, and weapons for the activities of criminal gangs” (European Security Strategy, 2003)- and terrorism or both. The use of assistance programs, European Development Fund, conditionality and trade measures as tools is an added benefit that a European partnership would bring forward.

Lastly, security guarantee clause needs to be highlighted again and non-EU members of the Alliance must not face any discriminatory policies in using the NATO capabilities. Turkey was

disappointed when the calls from the US to include her within the security protection of Article 5 in the Iraqi war were blocked by some European NATO members and when the collective defense commitments were weakened in an attempt to exploit them as a means in trying to strengthen the political arguments. On the other hand, there should not be a discrimination in the decision-making process of military operations and interventions. The dual enlargement of the European Union to 25 countries and NATO to 26 members in 2004 has made 19 states being members of both organizations. Whereas, as Lindley-French points out (in Hamilton, 2004) that “the mission of ESDP is progressively to harmonize the security concepts and cultures of European states”, there is a need for considering the status of non-EU but NATO members and Turkey must not be excluded from the critical decisions since the big picture of ESDP-NATO cooperation demonstrates “how -and whether- Europe and the United States can align the grand experiment of European integration with a strategic shift of the transatlantic partnership to tackle together the challenges posed by the post-Cold War, post-911 world.”

### **3. Conclusion**

The new threats cannot be resolved in a pure militaristic approach; rather, there is a need for a mixture of instruments, such as “intelligence, police, judicial, military and other means.” (European Security Strategy, 2003) Here, the role and importance of Europe emerge. As a supranational organization which has tremendous experience in state building thanks to the negotiation process for candidate countries, European Union can use its nonmilitary capabilities in helping the United States and NATO in order to cope with the changing global threats and terrorism cells jeopardizing international security. The European approach, including the

Turkish view, should include the extension of good governance and human rights to strengthen the international order instead of regime changes.

Today's reality is that a firm and loyal relationship between EU, by taking into account the role of European Defense and Security Policy, and NATO must be continued stronger than ever, particularly in the aftermath of September 11 attacks. While those in Europe who perceive that weakening NATO would serve to strengthen ESDP could only find very few, if any, supporters, those in the United States who feel that a strengthening ESDP is identical with a weakening NATO are also seriously mistaken. As Jean-Yves Haine argues (2004), European autonomy does not mean "emancipation, but improvement of European means of action inside the Alliance", which was the main point of St-Malo initiative of 1998.

European defense cooperation is, by no means, a counterbalance to the United States and NATO, especially in an era when terrorism has turned from a national security issue into an international challenge for peace and security. Moreover, albeit its overwhelming military capabilities, the United States needs Europe in dealing with the complex causes of global terrorism, including but not limited to pressures of modernization, and cultural, social and political conflicts.

Finally, to conclude, the present role of NATO should not include a redesigned global mission for it; the Alliance's sole target should remain to "defend its members against global threats: terrorism, the spread of weapons of mass destruction and failed states", rather than to become a "gendarme du monde" as mentioned by Secretary General De Hoop Scheffer (2006).

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