LEAPING IN THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM: NATO’S NEW ROLE

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During the Cold War, NATO's purpose was to defend Western interest and values. NATO's mission now is to advance these interests and values and create stability. The political guidance of NATO’s agenda recognizes that instability outside the Euro Atlantic space poses a threat to Alliance members. The security environment continues to change; it is and will be complex and global, and subject to unforeseeable developments.
In Riga meeting, NATO leaders named terrorism and the spread of weapons of mass destruction as the likely principal threats to the alliance over the next 15 years. They also talked about the instability that follows failed or failing states, regional conflicts, the growing availability of conventional weapons and disruption in the flow of resources, especially in the energy sector.
NATO no longer has one perceived threat to its common security, but many different threats. And because these threats, like terrorism, exist on a global scale, NATO has decided to carry out all military tasks, from peacekeeping to full-scale war, and it is preparing itself be able to respond to threats against the West from wherever they may come.
The transformation that NATO leaders laid out at Riga has of course already been going on. For most of its history, NATO never fired a shot. Now NATO is fighting. Considering NATO path since the end of the Cold War: In 1994, NATO was an alliance of 16 states, without partners, having never conducted a military operation, by 2005, NATO had become an alliance of 26, engaged in eight simultaneous operations on four continents with the help of 20 Partners in Eurasia, seven in the Mediterranean, and four in the Persian Gulf. Besides the NATO deployments in Afghanistan and Kosovo, NATO flies air patrols over the Baltic States and Slovenia, carries out anti-terrorist naval patrols in the Mediterranean, runs military headquarters in Bosnia and Macedonia, trains the Iraqi army and gives logistical support to African peacekeepers in Darfur.
NATO’s claimed missions in Afghanistan, in Kosovo, in Iraq, have a common purpose: the promotion of peace and security, the protection of freedom. But they are different kinds of missions in different geographical theaters. They show that there is Western claim for NATO to address different sorts of common threats.
At Riga, NATO leaders highlighted several important steps in NATO transformation.
One: It expanded the strategic dialogue with its allies. It does not make any difference where NATO is deployed, in as much as it meets all of the challenges to Western collective security.
Two: NATO moved to strengthen its relationship with partners and has for more than a decade had good relations in the euro-Atlantic space. Increasingly, today's challenges in the perspective of the West require the latter to work well with nations all around the world, particularly countries who share Western values and are willing to commit to working with the West.
Three: It was reaffirmed NATO's open door policy. At a time when many Europeans are questioning the limits of Europe, the United States, Lithuania, and our NATO allies see the possibility of expansion as essential to NATO's goal to create a Europe whole, free, and at peace. From America's perspective, NATO's role as a mentor and magnet for change and positive democratic reform throughout the transatlantic space has been one of its greatest exports. NATO has expressed its intention to keep the door open, and continue to work with those countries who aspire to meet NATO's performance-based standards for membership.
NATO is becoming something different than the static Cold War organization which the West relied on for so many years. The greatest test of NATO's ability to protect collective security in the 21st century is Afghanistan, where NATO has taken on the lead role. This is not NATO's first military operation. It fought in Kosovo in 1999, but that was primarily an air war. In Afghanistan, NATO is engaged for the first time in active ground combat. NATO’s proclaimed goal is to prevent Afghanistan from reverting to a failed state and terrorist haven. NATO troops are in each sector of the country, including Eastern and Southern Afghanistan.
Today 37 countries are contributing to the NATO mission in Afghanistan. Twenty-six are NATO allies. Eleven are partners from outside NATO, like Australia, South Korea, Japan, and Jordan. Fifteen years ago, who would have thought that all NATO members and partners would have made this state sovereignty penetration to rebuilding a country far from Europe? That countries like Australia, New Zealand, Albania, Croatia, or Macedonia would contribute to this NATO mission? NATO leaders in Riga pointed out the need for partnership and the need for out-of-area operations. In Afghanistan, global partnership is a reality. "Out- of-area" operations are the NATO norm today.
NATO today claims that it is delivering 21st century security and that it is doing it in Afghanistan, doing it in Kosovo, and doing it with training mission in Iraq, and with support for the African Union in Darfur.

Since its founding in 1949 till now, NATO plays a major role in influencing the decisions made by its members and their allies and foes. But the world, nowadays, comprises many and new powerful countries with different and new objectives. Thus, NATO faces new challenges and new obstacles as the world police controlling the world. The question remains is NATO the legitimate organization to face the new challenges? And does NATO have accurate function in making decisions and doing military interferences when necessary to defend and protect their own alliances and their own interests?

Going back to its history, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization is a [military alliance](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Military_alliance) established by the signing of the [North Atlantic Treaty](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_Atlantic_Treaty) on April 4, 1949 and entered into force on August 24, 1949. The NATO headquarters are in [Brussels](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brussels), [Belgium](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Belgium), and the organization was created to establish a military defense against any invasion of Western Europe by the Soviet Union and it constitutes a system of [collective defense](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Collective_defense) whereby its member states agree to mutual defense in response to an attack by any external party. According to article V: “Armed attack against one or more members in Europe or North America shall be considered and attack against all; each member in exercise of the right of individual or collective self defense or collective self defense recognized by Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, will assist the party or parties so attacked by taking forthwith individually and in support with other parties such actions as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force, to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic Area” . 1

NATO is an alliance that consists of 26 independent member countries. Lately, on March 29, 2004 Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia formally became members of NATO; at that moment the seven countries formally became parties to the North Atlantic Treaty and members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. This is the fifth and the largest round of enlargement in NATO’s history. On July 9, 2008 Albania and Croatia sign in the accession protocols hence are bringing NATO to 26 member countries.

Not all NATO members are so enthusiastic to exercise influence to control other countries. As an example: Germany, according to both German and U.S. diplomats, wants to send an accommodating message to Moscow, both by slowing down NATO membership for Georgia and Ukraine and by welcoming a call by President Dmitri Medvedev of Russia for talks on a new "security architecture" for Europe. For now, Germany insists that Georgia and Ukraine go through what is called a Membership Action Plan, or MAP, before NATO enlargement is considered.

For its first few years, NATO was not much more than a political association. However, the [Korean War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Korean_War) galvanized the member states, and an integrated military structure was built up under the direction of two U.S. supreme commanders. The first NATO [Secretary General](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Secretary_General_of_NATO) [Lord Ismay](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lord_Ismay) famously stated the organization's goal which was "to keep the [Russians](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USSR) out, the [Americans](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States) in, and the [Germans](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Germany) down.”2

In 1966, the French President Charles de Gaulle disturbed at American and NATO influences in his country and seeking a more important and independent role for his country, withdraws France from NATO’s military command and requests removal of NATO headquarters form France.

Thus the Alliance moved headquarters to Brussels, Belgium. But France continued a cooperation relation and still holds membership in the North Atlantic Council, composed of ministerial representatives of member states which meet at least twice annually.

Moreover, after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the organization became drawn into the [Balkans](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Balkans) while building better links with former potential enemies to the East, which ended with several former [Warsaw Pact](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Warsaw_Pact) states joining the alliance in 1999 and 2004.And since the [September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/September_11%2C_2001_terrorist_attacks), NATO has attempted to refocus itself to new challenges and has deployed troops to [Afghanistan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afghanistan) and [trainers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NATO_Training_Mission_-_Iraq) to [Iraq](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iraq).

Like any alliance, NATO is ultimately governed by its 26 member states. However, the [North Atlantic Treaty](http://www.nato.int/docu/basictxt/treaty.htm), and other agreements, outlines how decisions are to be made within NATO. Each of the 26 members sends a delegation or mission to NATO’s headquarters in [Brussels](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brussels), [Belgium](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Belgium).

The senior permanent member of each delegation is known as the Permanent Representative and is generally a senior [civil servant](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Civil_servant) or an experienced [ambassador](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ambassador). Together the Permanent Members form the [North Atlantic Council](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_Atlantic_Council), a body which meets together at least once a week and has effective political authority and powers of decision in NATO. From time to time the Council also meets at higher levels involving [Foreign Ministers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Foreign_Minister), [Defense Ministers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Defence_Minister) or Heads of State or Government and it is at these meetings that major decisions regarding NATO’s policies are generally taken.

However, it is worth nothing that the Council has the same authority and powers of decision-making and its decisions have the same status and validity, at whatever level it meets.

[NATO summits](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NATO_summit) also form a further scene for decisions on complex issues, such as enlargement. The meetings of the North Atlantic Council are chaired by the [Secretary General of NATO](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Secretary_General_of_NATO) and, when decisions have to be made; action is agreed upon on the basis of agreement and common treaty. There is no voting or decision by majority. Each nation represented at the Council table or on any of its subordinate committees retains complete sovereignty and responsibility for its own decisions.

The second pivotal member of each country's delegation is the Military Representative, a senior officer from each country's armed forces. Together the Military Representatives form the Military Committee, a body responsible for recommending to NATO’s political authorities those measures considered necessary for the common defense of the NATO area. Its principal role is to provide direction and advice on military policy and strategy. It provides guidance on military matters to the NATO Strategic Commanders, whose representatives attend its meetings, and is responsible for the overall conduct of the military affairs of the Alliance under the authority of the Council.

Like the council, from time to time the Military Committee also meets at a higher level, namely at the level of Chiefs of defense, the most senior military officer in each nation's armed forces. The Defense Planning Committee excludes France, due to that country's 1966 decision to remove itself from NATO's integrated military structure. On a practical level, this means that issues that are acceptable to most NATO members but unacceptable to France may be directed to the Defense Planning Committee for more expedient resolution. Such was the case in the lead up to “[Operation Iraqi Freedom](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Iraqi_Freedom).”

**The current**[**Chairman of the NATO Military Committee**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chairman_of_the_NATO_Military_Committee)**is “**[**Giampaolo Di Paola**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giampaolo_Di_Paola)**” of**[**Italy**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italy)**.**

The [NATO Parliamentary Assembly](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NATO_Parliamentary_Assembly), presided by “[José Lello](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Jos%C3%A9_Lello&action=edit&redlink=1)”, is made up of legislators from the member countries of the North Atlantic Alliance as well as thirteen associate members. It is however officially a different structure from NATO, and has as aim to join together deputies of NATO countries in order to discuss security policies. Subordinate to the political structure are the International Staff and International Military Staff, which administer NATO programs and carry out high-level political, military, and also civil emergency planning.

NATO's military operations are directed by the [Chairman of the NATO Military Committee](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chairman_of_the_Military_Committee), and split into two Strategic Commands both commanded by a senior US officer assisted by a staff drawn from across NATO. The Strategic Commanders are responsible to the [Military Committee](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chairman_of_the_Military_Committee) for the overall direction and conduct of all Alliance military matters within their areas of command.

Many countries try daily to enter the NATO and being blocked by other major powerful countries a new council was created, on May 29, 1997, The Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council which is a multilateral forum created to improve relations between NATO and non-NATO countries in Europe and in Asia. In addition, the collaboration and coordination between “The Partnership for Peace Program” and “The Mediterranean Dialog Countries are in alignment”

 As a result, NATO's expansion policy is seen by Moscow as a continuation of a Cold War attempt to surround and isolate Russia. Furthermore, NATO’s policy is based on nuclear sharing, which is a policy of nuclear deterrence. Thus, countries without nuclear weapons are also involved in delivering weapons for the armed forces. In all cases the United States of America is the first and pioneer in delivering weapons for other countries. In this way, both the “[Non-Aligned Movement](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Non-Aligned_Movement)” and critics inside NATO believe that NATO's nuclear sharing violates Articles I and II of the [Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nuclear_Non-Proliferation_Treaty), which prohibit the transfer and acceptance, respectively, of direct or indirect control over nuclear weapons.

During the Cold War, NATO’s nuclear forces played a central role in the Alliance’s strategy of flexible response. To prevent major war in Europe, nuclear weapons were integrated into the whole of NATO’s force structure, and the Alliance maintained a variety of targeting plans which could be executed at short notice. This role caused high readiness levels and quick-reaction alert postures for significant parts of NATO’s nuclear forces.

In the new security environment, NATO has radically reduced its reliance on nuclear forces. Their role is now more fundamentally political, and they are no longer directed towards a specific threat. NATO has also ended the practice of maintaining standing peacetime nuclear contingency plans and as a result, NATO's nuclear forces no longer target any country. Nowadays, NATO's nuclear forces play an essential role in war prevention.

Some will agree that after the Cold War, the Atlantic Alliance’s military dimension is no longer that important. NATO’s political and diplomatic strengths can guarantee member nation’s security. However it’s known that the unique military capabilities have given the NATO credibility in a disorderly world.

The reinvention of NATO took on two main forms: first to enlarge the Alliance and second to expand the mission. USA administration officials declare that the NATO military mission is no longer just collective defense but it has been expanded to include collective security. As Gordon Adams, a former Clinton budget official, has pointed out, “The enlargement decision does not enlarge an alliance whose core purpose is to defend against the Soviets. Rather it recognizes NATO’s new mission: collective security.” 3

In this way NATO’s membership and mission could expand infinitely. The term collective security is a universal concept and NATO is now committed to guarantee the security and independence of all states. Technology transfer has expanded rapidly in the world. It has been estimated that some 50% of new products and processes will originate outside the primary developer; academic and other research institutions are obvious sources of much of this new technology.

In the NATO Co-operating countries, however, technology transfer is in its infancy; it is crucial for wealth creation and improvement in the quality of life that this mechanism is developed. As previously mentioned the 26 member countries are fully independent, and can freely decide and seek out for technology and military expansion. In this way, a widening technology gap between the United States and other NATO members will challenge the ability of NATO to function as a unified, multinational force.

Over several decades, great disparities in the funding of defense research and technology by NATO members has produced a widening technological gap that threatens to become a divergence, a condition from which the Alliance may not be able to recover. The technology gap, in turn, is creating a capabilities gap that undercuts the operational effectiveness of NATO forces, including the new NATO Response Force. Consequently, the greatest challenge facing NATO is the desire of individual nations to safeguard information and technology from their allies, according to the general manager of the agency tasked with enabling coalition interoperability.

As a result the NATO creates an organization to facilitate and improve their technological works. “The NATO Research and Technology Organization”, founded in 1998, promote and conduct co-operative scientific research and exchange of technical information amongst 26 NATO nations and 38 NATO partners. The “RTO” is the largest collaborative body in the whole world. It includes over 3000 scientists and engineers addressing the complete scope of defense technologies and operational domains.  This effort is supported by an executive agency, the Research and Technology Agency, which facilitates the collaboration by organizing a wide range of studies, workshops, and other forums in which researchers can meet and exchange knowledge.

NATO’s new structural vision must be the continuous and dynamic incorporation of ever-changing politics and ever-changing technologies into political-military operations, doctrine and structure. There must be a visible plan to step up smoothly and rapidly from a new smaller NATO force structure to a twenty first century fighting capability.

Thus the real issue that faces the NATO is how to reconstruct and reorganize the Alliance to address new challenges. Moreover, NATO must redefine its mission to satisfy the world demands and to deal in a better way with all threats confronting its existence and its alliances security and safety. Hence, NATO faces new challenge through its force posture, operational concepts and doctrine.

One of the most serious challenges confronting NATO is whether and how to redefine its mission. NATO’s traditional mission have included prevention from an attack against its members, defense against such an attack should deterrence fail, and reassurance of its members that their security needs are being met. Or the American view of improving the mission of the NATO was declared by secretary of the state Madeleine Albright, who called on the Alliance to become “a force for peace from the Middle East to Central Africa.” 4

In this way, USA also claimed that NATO should become more relevant to America’s current security challenges to have support from the American people. Historically, NATO has depended upon a mix of forces to control its attitudes towards the world. Mainly the European League and U.N are two of the most organizations that exercise influence and power upon its decisions. Consequently, the Russian will not be the only ones with high expectations and the only ones who try to exercise power and influence NATO’s decisions. Upon its creation NATO has promised that the first new members will not be the last, but countries left out of the first round of expansion are beginning to question the sincerity of this commitment. “NATO’s door is open in theory and closed in practice.” 5

In fact, Russia may revert to dictatorship, and it may again pose a threat to Europe in the distance future. But NATO does not need to enlarge to serve as a hedge. Its existence is sufficient for that purpose. NATO needs to enlarge to continue its promise of consolidating democracy and markets in order to promote prosperity and security in a part of Europe often plagued by economic backwardness and military conflicts. In addition, USA can continue to promote consolidation and can reach out to a Russia that wants to reach out to NATO. Only by making a strong case that consolidation strengthens Europe’s security and thus serves USA interests. Therefore, USA supports NATO’s future enlargement to overcome Russia that the former members of its Empire are now independent and sovereign states, and they have the same qualities as “Her” and can contribute in leading Europe to better standards.

Conversely, the theory that NATO expansion would isolate Russia was a sensitive one for the American administration. In an effort to eliminate any such development and reassure Moscow of the defensive nature of NATO expansion, Bill Clinton, the President of the United States, persuade NATO to create the NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council on May, 1997. This council permits Moscow to have a consultative status in NATO, but of course not the opportunity to dilute or block or even vote a NATO decisions. This council reduced and even worked out to cancel decades of hatred and division between Russia and other European countries.

Since the fall of the Berlin Wall, NATO has demonstrated a willingness to adapt to the post-Cold War security environment, conceptually and organizationally. For this, what NATO needs to enter the next decades is an implementation plan to fulfill the obligations of a new strategic environment. Or that plan must link the Alliance’s new strategic concept to the military capabilities and force planning goals that are foundation of the Alliance.

Since the end of the World War II and the crisis of the Cold War, NATO proved its existence and efficiently. Many critics argue that by accomplishing its mission NATO should relax and enjoy its triumph. But NATO has been about more than just collective territorial defense. It has always concerned itself with common values and shared interests. And the treat that was from one side and one aspect become with multiple aspects and sides. This age, “The Age of Terrorism”, is a clear evidence of the necessity of such an organization.

As a matter of fact, the Europeans want to narrow the focus of the Alliance far too regionally, and they hope to obtain capability over the economical issues. The United States is idealistic about the limits of NATO as an instrument of global security and wants to dominate leadership, while criticizing Europeans for their lack of initiative and capability.

For this, the Americans see the Europeans as unwilling to face problems and using their one military force to overcome any danger. In contrast, the Europeans see the Americans as being to harsh and ready in any case to exercise military power without even thinking of consequences and even without taking in consideration other Alliances. The Europeans are quite sure that the Americans get benefit from every thing to insure their stability and economical statues and military power.

At present, NATO is reestablishing its profile through different views and features.     Foremost, NATO is working to give a modern meaning to collective defense, under Article V; for example, by invoking Article V, NATO members have shown their solidarity toward the United States and condemned, in the strongest possible way, the terrorist attacks against the United States on 11 September. Furthermore, the NATO is working to reduce and resolve the tension through a cooperative relationship with Russia and preserving the autonomy of Alliance decision making.

In addition, NATO is working to make a balance between the Alliances especially between Europe and North America. In this way, USA is leading a harmonization and a relationship with the European Union organization. “The United States will not depend on individuals in key position to ensure that ESDP does not split the Alliance. It will want to establish institutions and processes that will lock the European effort into a transatlantic frame-work” (Stanley R. Sloan)6

In addition, France insists on radical reform of the NATO. Unless NATO would become genuinely multilateral in military planning and operations, France does not apparently see the point in joining its military structures though recently the French president indicated a possibility of joining providing some conditions are met. For this, the most important issue that faces the NATO, it’s building a well military, defense and command posture and the right to exercise its power and the ability to react rapidly.

However, the events of September 11 reinforced the weakness of NATO’s internal decision-making and this weakness revealed in the Kosovo crisis. As well, a growing divergence in threat perceptions was also bound to make the Atlantic grow wider. On one side there was Europe, focusing on the social and political causes of terrorism. On the other side there was the US, focusing exclusively on fighting the symptoms of terrorism, while effectively trying to restore the immunity it lost on September 11.

In the new US security strategy Europe was to play only a subordinate role. While the enlargement advocated by the US indicates a continuing role for NATO in expanding a unique European zone of peace, Washington no longer foresees any major military role for the alliance. Thus, the European Union should become stronger militarily in order to pursue its own security interest independently of the United States.

When talking about NATO, we usually concentrate on summit, crises and conflicts. As a result, the daily work and achievements of the Alliance are often overlooked. In fact, small states can find many opportunities for influence that spring from the dynamics of committee work, the forming of alliances within the Alliance, veto power, and active participation in defense planning and operations. Influence cannot be gained without sufficient will to accommodate the needs of others. Efficient decision-making in such a large Alliance entails flexibility from all of the members, and it is vital not to abuse the unanimity rule by incessantly exercising one’s veto. Several panelists agreed that the smaller allies are not, by virtue of their limited capabilities, designated as mere ‘followers’ of the bigger states in the decision-making process. The major powers disagree on many points and this gives the smaller ones opportunities to find different alliances within the Alliance. There seems to be a certain degree of permanence in the coalitions that have formed as a result of larger power disagreements; certain nations tend to agree more often with certain same nations than with others. Two sets of reasons explain why these alliances within the Alliance gain their semi-permanent character. First, strategic interests are often of permanent nature because of geography, demography, national economy, characteristics of armed forces, and other realities. Second, common cultural and historical backgrounds influence the behavior of member states. This semi permanence of alliances increases the influence of the small states within the Alliance.

In addition, as NATO has grown to an organization of 26 members, the use of speaking time has to be economized. It is recommendable to make a statement only when one has something important to say. Some nations have wanted to leave their fingerprint on every initiative. If this is done in matters of minimal importance it can be regarded as a waste of time and as counterproductive to effective decision-making.

As a result, many features show that USA is definitively NATO’s biggest member with regard to defense spending and military power. This gives Americans a special weight, and they use it to dominate the political and strategic levels of the Alliance. However, on tactical and operational levels this does not apply. USA influence was much less than he had presumed before beginning his work in NATO. On political level, UK plays a big role. It has also increased influence on the operational level because of its expertise pertaining to the doctrines and concepts suitable for NATO’s new tasks and missions. Many of them have characteristics that resemble imperial policing missions, in which UK has a long history of experience. France too has strengthened its participation recently. Moreover, many smaller members have shown that they can play bigger roles than their size would lead one to believe.

 Thus, in daily work, NATO is a transatlantic organization in which initiatives come from many different nations, big and small. According to many countries, NATO represents a fearful aspect. A report made by the “CNN” on April 3, 1999, shows that two-thirds of Russian fear NATO attacks. One of the Russian claims that “the attack on Yugoslavia is just a dress rehearsal for NATO”.7

Russia is strongly opposed to any further expansion eastwards of NATO, and is furious that Ukraine and Georgia will be offered membership. US Vice-President Dick Cheney expressed during his visit to Ukraine in September 2008, his support for Ukraine's bid to become a member of NATO.

He states clearly that "Ukrainians have a right to choose whether they wish to join NATO and NATO has a right to invite Ukraine to join the alliance when we believe they are ready and that the time is right.” In fact, NATO remains as a protective supremacy, certainly when it deals with common interests and affairs. Warships were sent to Somalia’s coast to protect it form pirates attack. And these warships have the authority to interfere including military actions to protect ships passing in this dangerous water.

Notwithstanding, NATO presence in Afghanistan is helpful to Afghan to provide them security, stability and paving the way for reconstruction and effective governance. The NATO Secretary General “Jaap de Hoop Scheffer” proclaims,*when they asked him about the NATO existence in Afghanistan, “this is one of the most challenging tasks NATO has ever taken on, but it is a critical contribution to international security.” 8*

*Conversely, NATO are not doing their mission fully, they face daily many problems and lacks, which abuse their effective role. For example, according* to media reports, many civilians were killed in heavy fighting between NATO forces and insurgent forces in Kandahar, Afghanistan. NATO has admitted that many civilians were killed in NATO air and ground operations or during heavy aerial bombardment. Sam Zarifi, Human Rights Watch’s Asia research director said considering this issue: “While NATO forces try to minimize harm to civilians, they obviously are not doing enough.” 9

Finally, NATO is an alliance whose members are all democracies, committed to similar values, in particular the advancement and protection of human rights. However, the Alliance is acting on behalf of the International community and ready to slight the UN and skirt international law in order to enforce its collective judgment. In fact, after all, NATO is an alliance which exercises influence over the world for many decades. And NATO’s members use this alliance for their own countries advantages and benefits. For this, many small and weak countries face daily fear from being attacked or governed by the NATO, and they avoid being under any influence to keep, as they can, their autonomy.  And as Machiavelli wrote in his book, The Prince, “there is nothing more difficult to carry out, nor more doubtful of success, nor more dangerous to handle, than to initiate a new order of things.”10

In conclusion, nothing can be done to prevent NATO expansion to include the whole world. Even most prohibited and exiled countries. The door to NATO should remain open. In his speech at Warsaw University in 2001, the President Bush stated that, "all of Europe's democracies, from the Baltic to the Black Sea all that lie between should have the same chance for security and freedom and the same chance to join the institutions of Europe -- as Europe's old democracies have."11

It seems rather clear that, from the points of view of NATO, of Russia and of the Central and Eastern European countries, also in connection with the question of NATO enlargement and how to defuse the (politically explosive) nuclear component of this issue, so that this development has a positive evolution rather than negative consequences. There might be much to gain from the early establishment of what so called Nuclear Free Zone (NWFZ) in Eastern Europe. Not to mention the obviously positive contribution to European and world security that would ensue *per se* from such a development.

A separate, and also most positive, step would be the decision to complete the withdrawal of American nuclear weapons from Western Europe. This would make a lot of military sense: the small deployments left are a costly and dangerous nuisance. It would also establish the *de facto* norm that nuclear weapons are only based within nuclear-weapon countries. But this question - which would be in the nature of a unilateral American and NATO decision - should not be confused with the creation of a NWFZ in Western Europe, that entails an internationally binding commitment and - desirable as such a development would be - might be hardly feasible, as long as Great Britain and France cling to their nuclear arsenals.

These developments would contribute to de-emphasize the role of nuclear weapons, thereby strengthening the world-wide nuclear-weapon nonproliferation regime that has been reaffirmed recently by the indefinite extension of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT); a regime whose viability depends on the nuclear-weapon countries demonstrating their capability to adjust to the novel world circumstances in which nuclear weapons should only be deemed appealing by desperate terrorist groups (incidentally, this entails a threat against which the availability of nuclear weaponry provides no protection whatsoever; indeed, it only adds to the risk).

All these developments can be interpreted as adding more and more "finite elements" to a step-by-step process whose final goal is to cover the entire globe with NWFZs. The achievement of a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World (NWFW) by such a route is an old idea (the "Swiss cheese" method): it is an approach synergistic to the realization of a NWFW via a universal convention analogous to that Chemical Weapon Convention, which has recently entered into force, opening thereby the way towards the realization of a Chemical-Weapon-Free World. But neither is it too remote: for instance, Brazil has recently tabled at the United Nations General Assembly the proposal to turn the entire Southern Hemisphere into a NWFZ. Indeed, this half of our globe is already almost completely covered by NWFZs which are partly or completely in force.12

**Footnotes**

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**التحول المفاجئ في النظام الدولي: الدور الجديد لحلف شمال الأطلسي**

كان هدف حلف شمال الأطلسي خلال الحرب الباردة الدفاع عن المصالح والقيم الغربية، وتكمن مهمة هذا الحلف حالياً في تحسين هذه المصالح والقيم وخلق الاستقرار. ويقر التوجيه السياسي لأجندة حلف شمال الأطلسي بأن عدم الاستقرار داخل المنطقة الأورو – أطلسية يشكل تهديداً لأعضاء الحلف. في هذا الحين، يواصل المناخ الأمني التغيُّر باستمرار وهو سيكون معقداً وشاملاً وعرضة لتغيرات غير متوقعة. خلال اجتماع مدينة ريغا، اعتبر قادة حلف شمال الأطلسي أن الإرهاب وانتشار أسلحة الدمار الشامل هما التهديدان الأساسيان الذين سيواجههما الحلف خلال السنوات الـ15 القادمة، كما تطرقوا أيضاً إلى مسألة عدم الاستقرار التي تعقب النزاعات الإقليمية و نتيجة للتوفُّر المتزايد للأسلحة التقليدية وانقطاع تدفق الموارد وخاصةً في قطاع الطاقة.

لم يعد يواجه حلف شمال الأطلسي تهديداً واحداً لأمن الدول الأعضاء المشترك بل عدة تهديدات. وبما أن هذه التهديدات، ومن بينها الإرهاب، تشمل العالم بأسره، قرر الحلف تنفيذ مهمات عسكرية متعددة تتراوح ما بين حفظ الأمن والحروب الواسعة النطاق وهو يحضر نفسه للتحرك في وجه تهديدات تتعرض لها البلدان الغربية أياً يكن مصدرها.

وقد كان هذا التحوّل الذي أرساه قادة الحلف في اجتماع ريغا قد سبق الإعداد له في الماضي. ويُذكر هنا أن حلف شمال الأطلسي لم يطلق طلقة واحدة خلال معظم تاريخ إنشائه إلا أننا نجده حالياً في ساحات المعارك.

وتتأمل الكاتبة في هذا المقال في مسيرة الحلف منذ بداية الحرب الباردة معددةً عدة مراحل:

في العام 1994 كان حلف شمال الأطلسي عبارةً عن تحالف يضم 16 دولة، لا شركاء لها، ولم يكن قد نفذ أية عمليات عسكرية. وبحلول العام 2005 أصبح يضم الحلف 26 دولة وشارك في 8 عمليات متزامنة في 4 قارات بمساعدة 20 دولة شريكة أورو - آسيوية و7 دول متوسطية و4 دول من الخليج الفارسي. وإضافة إلى انتشار قوات الحلف في أفغانستان وكوسوفو، يقوم الحلف بمهمات مراقبة عبر دوريات طائرة فوق دول البلطيق وسلوفينيا وينفذ مهام في مجال مكافحة الإرهاب في المتوسط كما يدير مقرات عسكرية في البوسنة ومقدونية ويشرف على تدريب الجيش العراقي ويقدم الدعم اللوجستي لقوات حفظ السلام الإفريقية في دارفور.

وتضطلع مهام الحلف في كل من أفغانستان وكوسوفو والعراق بهدفين مشتركين هما تعزيز الأمن والسلام والدفاع عن الحرية. لكن الحلف يضطلع أيضاً بأنواع مختلفة من المهام وفي مناطق جغرافية مختلفة وتظهر الباحثة في هذا الإطار وجود مطالبات غربية لكي يواجه الحلف الأطلسي أنواعاً مختلفة من التهديدات المشتركة.

وخلال اجتماع ريغا، سلّط قادة الحلف الضوء على عدة خطوات مهمة أدت دوراً مهماً في تحوّل الحلف وهي:

أولاً: قيام الحلف بتوسيع حواره الاستراتيجي مع حلفائه وهنا تجدر الإشارة إلى أن موقع انتشار الحلف ليس مهماً بقدر ما يتوافق هذا الأمر مع كل التحديات التي يواجهها الأمن الغربي الجماعي.

ثانياً: قام الحلف بخطوات لتقوية علاقته مع الشركاء وقد كانت له على مرّ أكثر من عقد علاقات جيدة في المنطقة الأورو – أطلسية. وحالياً، تتطلب التحديات المتزايدة باستمرار من الدول الغربية ضرورة التعاون جيداً مع الدول الأخرى التي تتشارك مع الغرب قيمه والتي تظهر رغبةًً في التعاون معه.

ثالثاً: أعاد الاجتماع التأكيد على سياسة الباب المفتوح المعتمدة من قبل الحلف. وفي حين يرى العديد من الأوروبيين ضرورة اقتصار الدول الأعضاء على دول القارة الأوروبية، ترى كل من الولايات المتحدة وليتوانيا أن إمكانية توسيع الحلف أمر ضروري لتحقيق الأهداف المرجوة ومنها تحول أوروبا إلى قارة موحَّدة حرة تعيش بسلام.

بالنسبة إلى وجهة النظر الأميركية فقد كان الدور الذي أداه الحلف، كمعلّم وناصح ونقطة جذب للتغيير وللإصلاحات الديمقراطية الإيجابية في المنطقة الممتدة عبر الأطلسي، من أهم الأمور التي صدّرها الحلف. عبّر حلف شمال الأطلسي عن نيته بإبقاء الباب مفتوحاً وبمواصلة العمل مع البلدان الراغبة في استيفاء معايير الانضمام إلى الحلف بناءً على تقييم الأداء.

نظراً إلى كل هذه المعطيات، نلاحظ أن الحلف يتحوّل إلى منظمة تختلف عما كانت عليه خلال الحرب الباردة والتي اعتمد عليها الغرب لسنواتٍ طوال ويكمن الامتحان الأكبر لجهة قدرة الحلف على الدفاع عن الأمن الجماعي في القرن الـ21 في أفغانستان حيث اضطلع هذا الحلف بالدور الأساسي. لم يكن اجتياح أفغانستان أول عملية عسكرية يطلقها الحلف إذ سبق وشارك في القتال في كوسوفو في العام 1999 ولكن تلك المعركة كانت معركة جوية بشكل أساسي أي أن الوضع في أفغانستان يختلف بحيث تقوم قوات الحلف بالقتال الفعلي على الأرض.

حالياً تشارك 37 دولة في مهمة حلف شمال الأطلسي في أفغانستان، 26 منها هي دول حليفة للحلف و12 منه شريكة من غير أن تكون لديها عضوية مثل أستراليا وكوريا الجنوبية واليابان والأردن. ويدعي حلف شمال الأطلسي بأنه يوفّر الأمن خلال القرن الـ21 في كل من أفغانستان وكوسوفو كما يؤمّن التدريبات في العراق والدعم للاتحاد الأفريقي في دارفور.

- See more at: https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/leaping-international-system-nato%E2%80%99s-new-role#sthash.B6d3eMx2.dpuf