North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO): Yesterday Objectives, Today Strategies

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Abstract

NATO is an organization that was formed in the aftermath of the Second World War for fulfillment of the North Atlantic Treaty in 1949. In the early years after World War II and in response to Soviet expansionism in Eastern and Central Europe, in March of 1948, five countries of UK, France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg signed the Brussels Treaty and formed the collective defense alliance. This treaty is from the regional treaties that is allowed in the UN Charter and its fifth article warranties that entering the war is not automatic and the US congress can decide whether to enter the war or not in that country. Today, NATO with 28 members with more than a trillion dollars in annual defense of the members, is one of the most important mechanisms of providing security in today's world and is present in every part of the world that there are areas of threat. These have made NATO a global security agency.

Keywords: North Atlantic Treaty Organization, NATO, World War II

Introduction

After that the five countries of Britain, France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg in 1948 signed the Brussels treaty and formed the collective defense in response to the Soviet expansionism in Eastern and Central Europe, they were known as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization "NATO".

NATO stands for "North Atlantic Treaty Organization" which was held on 4 April 1949, and in which the members of the Brussels organization (Belgium, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom), Canada, Denmark, Iceland, Italy, Norway, Portugal and the United States of America participated.

During the years following World War II, America succeeded in expanding the central institutions of its choice within the security and economic structure of the Member States, and institutionalizing its hegemony. The United States needs to be present in various areas and applies its power in order to institutionalize its hegemony so that, managing the system can prevent challengers and control the area tensions, and deal with the obstacles as institutionalized and legal.

Now the question is that what exactly had been the purposes of the creation of NATO? Which countries have the most to gain from emerging NATO? Today, what are the most important achievements and strategies of NATO?

Formation of NATO

The Treaty was signed in Washington on the fourth day of April 1949 with the participation of the twelve States of USA, Canada, England, France, Italy, Belgium, Netherlands, Luxembourg, Denmark, Norway, Iceland and Portugal. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was in fact the completed form of Brussels treaty. Turkey and Greece in 1952 and West Germany in 1956 joined the treaty and with Spain joining the organization in 1982, the number of members rose to sixteen.

This treaty links the two governments of Northern America to the Western European countries; according to the fifth article of the treaty, the members have announced that any attack on
any one of members is considered as an attack on all member states and if each of the countries is subject to armed attack, each of the countries will help that country “by any action deems necessary”

The treaty was basically against the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries and in the other hand, there was the "Warsaw Pact" which is the same as this treaty for the countries of Eastern Europe. This treaty is from the regional treaties which are allowed in the United Nations Charter. According to the article 9 of the North Atlantic Treaty, a centralized structure consisting of military and civil institutions is intended to NATO organization. The North Atlantic Council is at the head of NATO which is composed of ministers from member countries, meeting at least every two years. The council is the highest decision-making power in NATO and its decisions are taken unanimously.

Since the NATO was established for opposing military threats of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact, the organization has a complete system of military command intended for a possible war which consists of the heads of member states general staff, and three headquarters including the European Command, Pacific Command and British Command. NATO Seat was first in France, but after that General de Gaulle in 1966, protesting to the US dominance on this organization and that the High Command of the Armed Forces of this organization was always for one of the senior officers of US, exited from NATO military command, then this Seat was moved to Brussels, the Belgian capital.

The objectives of NATO

NATO for these encroachments and consecutive attacks to various countries has defined certain military policies for itself which uses them to reach certain objectives including execution of limited war, preventive attack, flexible response, the execution of the second attack, rapid rebuff of the attack of the attackers, or restraining their attack and so on. Also, given that the main member states of NATO possess nuclear weapons, this military organization always uses nuclear weapons as an instrument for indoctrinating some kind of real fear of nuclear catastrophes and dreadful propagandas.

In 1956, NATO members, Great Britain and France started a military aggression against Egypt and their purpose was to achieve the country's rich resources. In 1978, military intervention in Zaire was NATO's clear intervention in the black continent’s affairs and NATO headquarters in Europe was the leader of the interventionist actions, and the new doctrine was to expand the area of activities of the North Atlantic Treaty to the Africa.

NATO and the surrounding countries

NATO members with the aim of maximizing their own safety started some innovations. They found that to achieve this goal of the organization, they should develop ties with surrounding countries.

In fact, NATO has two positive effects on America's global position: on the one hand, it prevents from creating of a balancing power against America, and on the other hand, closes America to the hegemonic position. America, in the context of global NATO, marginalizes or isolates its strategic rivals and enemies (such as Russia and China) or puts them in the siege (such as Iran). On this basis, NATO enlargement will play a prominent role in advancing the strategy of stabilizing and depth of the global lead of America, till achieving the hegemony.

The most important areas in this field were central and eastern Europe, North Africa, the Middle East and the Persian Gulf. With the globalization of NATO's area of operations, the need for cooperation with other international forces was emphasized. Thus, the project of "Partnership for Peace", became the framework of cooperation with the countries of central and Eastern Europe and
Eurasian countries. The "Mediterranean dialogues" was designed to improve ties with the countries of North Africa and the Middle East.

**NATO expansion to the East**

The early nineties was a time when NATO was trying to justify its existence. Crises in the Balkans at that time were considered an opportunity for NATO and European members of NATO that were worried about the expansion of Balkans ethnic crises to their countries and also the effects of those conflicts (such as massive immigration from Balkans). Also, there was the likelihood of conflict in the countries of central and Eastern Europe in the shadow of boundary and territorial disputes. NATO members were aware of the new international environment and after the collapse of the Soviet Union and redefining the threats found that to deal with security challenges they need to cooperate with the surrounding countries. In this regard, the project of "Partnership for Peace" came up.

The "Partnership for Peace" design was recommended by America at a meeting of defense ministers in Travemünde of Germany (1993) and was agreed by the leaders at the following year at a meeting in Brussels. All the countries of central and Eastern Europe, and areas of the former Soviet Union signed the plan and except three countries, others adopted it.

Among NATO allies in the Mediterranean area, Israel with its geopolitical position in the center of three continents, has a special position, as far as most of the joint projects of NATO with Middle East and North African countries had been done in order to increase cooperation with Tel Aviv.

**NATO expansion towards North Africa and the Middle East**

Water, has separated Europe continent from the continent of Africa. This natural barrier has become a major contributor to Europeans in order to be away from security damages arising from Northern Africa. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, with the broad interpretation of security that emerged in political literature, the Europe’s security attention to North Africa is increased. Occasions such as the rise of migration, increased activity of criminal groups and jeopardizing of the security of communication lines in the waters of Southern Europe provided grounds for NATO to provide the security for the members, called "Mediterranean Dialogue" to cooperate with North African countries in order to counter these challenges. This initiative was arising from the view that security in Europe is linked to security and stability in the Mediterranean. Southern Europe countries such as France and Italy were more sensitive about Africa and thus the Mediterranean Dialogue initiative was based more on the wishes of Paris and Rome.

**NATO after the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union**

With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Communist bloc and the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact Organization which was created to counter with NATO, and also due to the end of the Cold War, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization also lost its former purpose and nature. In 1991, two “American” and “European” trends of thought about NATO and its role after the Cold War were seriously proposed. The American view was based on maintaining NATO and America's leadership along with slight military and organizational changes. European view was divided to the two moderate and extremist visions that emphasized the strengthening of the status and power of Europe. The moderate view focused on the strengthening of only European arrangements inside the society of North Atlantic. The extremist European view which belonged to France focused on strengthening the twelve European defense powers, so that a European organization in the future replaces NATO.
However, some countries of Eastern Europe and even Russia are also seeking membership in the organization; and in this regard, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland joined NATO in 1999. Also, in the final stage of development of the organization to the East in 2004, joining the countries of Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia caused the number of NATO members are increased to 26 countries.

Among the NATO, major challenges in the new era is that based on the fifth article of the North Atlantic Treaty, NATO is the main guarantor of security in Europe, but in case of formation of European independent force following the joint Union of Europe, NATO's military command structures will gradually abolish, and the US political leadership in Europe that now it possesses through NATO, will be pale.

NATO with the new composition, which did not have any other strategic enemy on its way anymore and had internal philosophical challenges, considered the terroristic attack of September eleven as a turning point in its new approach after the cold war which was based on processional security and defense. This event was the beginning of a new stage in defining NATO's goals and approaches, because it had an enemy far more important than its former enemy, the Soviet Union which although it did not have a known base, it was very dangerous.

**NATO expansion towards the Persian Gulf**

The Persian Gulf is important for NATO for several reasons: Firstly, this area is in the center of the Middle East; secondly, the Persian Gulf is one of the most important sources of Islamic stability in the region; thirdly, it has more than 60% of oil and 40% of natural gas of the world in itself, and fourthly, economic profit of oil attracts the attention of many developed countries and each of them is trying to gain a share of this profit.

The background for NATO's tendency to new geopolitical areas was prepared with the terrorist attacks in New York, London and Madrid. Bush at the time of admission of seven new NATO members in 2004 announced that NATO’s mission goes further than the boundaries of the organization and he added that “NATO members go towards nations in the Middle East to strengthen our ability to fight with terrorism and providing joint security”.

Also, a plan was passed on 29 June 2004 which was called “Istanbul Cooperation Initiative” based on which they agreed on educational cooperation and also cooperation in various fields ranging from dealing with terrorism to budget transparency and decision-making in the defense affairs.

The most prominent agreements in the framework of the Istanbul initiative includes breaking international terrorist groups, fighting against the spread of special weapons of mass destruction, illegal trade of arms, as well as cooperation in the NATO peace operations. Similar to what is recommended to the Mediterranean Dialogue partner countries by NATO, Istanbul initiative also has provided backgrounds for reforms in the areas of budget and defense plans, etc. with the aim of motivating the Persian Gulf states.

In the framework of cooperation between NATO and Persian Gulf Cooperation Council, it was agreed to join the Persian Gulf states (as well as Pakistan, Afghanistan, Jordan and Israel) as an observer in NATO. To monitor the process of transformation in the defense structure of Middle East countries that want to join NATO, at the meetings in Istanbul and Riga (2006) it was appointed that offices called "regional agency office" to be established in these countries.

At September 2007, the reporter of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly in a report entitled “NATO and Persian Gulf security” suggested that an article be added to the Istanbul Peace Initiative, based on which the member countries of this plan like the members of “Partnership for Peace Initiative” can consult with NATO, feeling any kind of security threat. Also in the joint
Bita Khaghani

meeting of NATO and Persian Gulf Cooperation Council that was held in Qatar, there were agreements in the fields of information exchange and military training and counterterrorism operations.

**NATO and international allies**

United State in the years after the Cold War has intervened in many international crises and in this process has benefited from helping of some countries. Joining of new countries to NATO is good for United State because: a) America is the top member in NATO and NATO expansion will mean expansion of America's international power; b) it puts other regional powers in the framework of this organization in America's orbit; c) Since the military instruments of the countries seeking to join, it should be commensurated with the military instruments of NATO members, NATO expansion will provide a market for the sale of American weapons; d) Since these countries support the positions of America more, NATO cooperation with them will add the weight of America against Europe in the organization.

**Theoretical stability and expansion of NATO**

Among the intellectual viewpoints that have done more effort to explain the evolution of NATO after the Cold War, we can mention the following four schools:

Realist theory as the main school of thought in international relations states that countries only seek to protect and increase their own interests and power and under normal conditions do not accept limitations and conditions for their sovereignty and power. Entering the Union will have high costs for the country and will make the interests of the country subaltern to the interests of the group. This in a realistic interpretation is a loss for countries. Thus, countries do not enter the unions except in emergencies and it is in very special occasions that countries rationally choose to cooperate with the union.

The traditional theory of realism was reviewed and amended by scholars such as Kenneth Waltz and Kinderman and new realists (or structural realists) are the product of this amendment. The most important objective expression of realism ideas can be found in the theory of balance of powers in which the formation and continuation of the union is also interpreted in order to create powers. Countries start their unity in order to counter with a superior power and if the logic of the balance of powers requires, the union will disappear.

Realist school of thought argues that America's security interests in the post-Cold War Europe has increased; because as a country finds more relative power, it will have more foreign benefits and commitments, and the conception of the country about the security benefits and requirements of that also increases.

America has always sought to control Europe since 1945 and has worked to prevent from the dominance of a major power in Europe (such as Germany in both World Wars). Aggressive realists argue that hegemony is a great strategy in response to uncertainty of a country about the intentions and capabilities of others at present and future. The hegemony country even for maintaining its security (and territory) which always sees it in danger, is not satisfied with the status quo and is always looking to increase its power over others and the formation of NATO and its continuation is also defined and justified in this context.

**Different views about NATO expansion**

Reviewing different views about NATO expansion provides a framework that various aspects of this unique institution will be analyzed from different aspects. In general, different views about the reason of continuity and expansion of NATO, can be divided in four following categories:

a) Strategic issues

Openly accessible at [http://www.european-science.com](http://www.european-science.com)
This group with an emphasis on the military aspect of this union focuses on geopolitical issues and the confrontation lines and considers NATO as a security institution with strategic missions for the implementation of Article 5 of the Atlantic Treaty and dealing with threats such as classic threats (e.g. Russia), progression of conflicts between smaller powers, civil war, instability in weak and failed states (e.g. East Europe), the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and in recent years, confronting with terrorism.

b) The relationship between the military - civilian

Civilians working to control this primarily military institution has led some observers to think that NATO expansion will result in perversion of the military missions and performing civilian responsibilities.

NATO expansion in this era is a mean to achieve political and economic objectives within each country, the region and in the transnational union. Criteria for membership of new countries also add to the validity of this argument: commitment to democracy, the rule of law, human rights, treatment of minorities, a market economy and the ability to fulfill the obligations, control of the militaries by the civilians.

c) Economic issues

A set of economic factors are also associated with the continuation and expansion of NATO which with detailed reviewing of NATO's evolutions, can be extracted and analyzed. NATO by expanding the concepts of liberalistic economy has created a key role in the development of globalization and practically and deeply has prevented economic conflicts in this sector. Globalization of the economy needs a global strategic program in the field of security and NATO with its performance (e.g. in the case of Kosovo), laying the United Nations away, tried to play such a role.

4) Organizational and institutional issues

NATO due to organizational characteristics, high institutionalization and organization, and institutionalized assets is considered as a unique institution. The complexities of this institution made France, England and other European countries to accept Germany's rearmament and its power. Successful operation of these institutions made the defense and security not to be national in Europe and even conflicts between them (e.g. Turkey and Greece) be inhibited.

Conclusion

What was evaluated above, were the trends and processes in the shadow of which, the geographical scope of the security cooperation of NATO has spread around the world. Such trends had been towards expanding NATO’s operation area that eventually have made it such an international union.

With the Soviet collapse, America as the sole superpower, took a far distance from the other actual and potential competitors and attempted to construct the structure of international system based on its own supremacy and hegemony. America's grand policies in nineties, such as humanitarian intervention and human rights did not provide the support of domestic public opinions. But the issue which is more related to the main focus of this research is the lack of institutionalization of the hegemonic power of America. America should institutionalize its hegemony through presence in various fields and implementing power so that on this basis can manage the system, prevent the emergence of challengers and control regional crises.

After the events of September 11, 2001, America was able to settle the issue of terrorism threat as a concept defining the strategy and foreign behavior and found a legitimate ground for its external behavior, in front of domestic opinions, and mobilize its allies around the threat of terrorism. NATO's role in stabilizing the hegemony of America is more important when we know
that the most important potential competitors of America are located in Europe, and European Union (or countries such as Germany and France) is the second global powers (according to economic power, technological and even military factors).

America pursues several goals from NATO entry to the Middle East which seems that the most notable of them is stabilization of superiority in the region. Although the NATO decision-making structure is based on consensus and therefore every country has the ability to veto decisions, NATO is an elitist organization and the United State has the role of the larger shareholder. Many of the initiatives are presented by Washington and a major part of troops and equipments of the organization are provided by America. United State posing and managing the idea of NATO expansion to the East, in fact is expanding its own amplitude of power and international influence. According to many scholars of international affairs, NATO will have a significant role in stabilization of the superiority of America and establishing its hegemony.

In the current situation also one of the aims of NATO is to fight against Russian influence in the Caucasus and Central Asia. This aim becomes possible through doing exercises with countries defiant with Russia like Georgia, in order to prepare the country for potential war against Russia.

References