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## NATO FROM A FUTURE PERSPECTIVE

*When the Warsaw Pact ceased to exist, many analysts predicted the disappearance of the North Atlantic Pact. A logical question was posed: what is the purpose of this military Alliance if it does not have any real adversary, or a potential enemy? Who is it against? The doubts were reinforced after the dissolution of the Soviet Union when only one super power remained in the world, the United States of America. This military Alliance, however, survived and is, despite everything, the most powerful and important military Alliance in the world today.*

**Keywords:** NATO, security, collective defence, unilateral intervention, permanent neutrality, democracy

### I

1. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO, or OTAN in French – *L'Organisation du Traité de l'Atlantique du Nord*) is a regional security organization established after signing of the North Atlantic Treaty in Washington on 4 April 1949.<sup>1</sup> The initial Members were Belgium, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Canada, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the United States of America and Great Britain. The organization has 26 Members currently.<sup>2</sup>

The Preamble of the Treaty establishing NATO lays down that the Parties “unite their efforts for collective defence, and for the preservation of peace and security”, and are brought together by common values of “freedom, common heritage and civilization of their peoples, founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law.”<sup>3</sup> The essential article of the Treaty is Article 5, whereby the Parties agree that “an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all”,

<sup>1</sup> The negotiations started on 6 July 1948, and the Treaty entered into force on 24 August 1949, after having been ratified by all Signatory States. The Treaty was signed by the Ministers of External Affairs of the State Parties.

<sup>2</sup> The current NATO Members are: Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States of America (on 19 October 2006).

<sup>3</sup> The North Atlantic Treaty, <http://www.nato.int/docu/basic/txt/treaty.htm>.

and consequently they will undertake collective measures to restore the security in the North Atlantic area.

Although nowhere set forth in the Treaty, the Organization was in fact established because of the growing threat of the conflict with the Soviet Union. NATO's first Secretary General Lord Ismay once declared that the main *raison d'être* of this Organization was "to keep the Americans in Europe to keep the Germans down and the Russians out." The main strategic conflicts occurred because the Germans and the Russians had the same territorial aspirations in Eastern Europe. The Western European states were too weak to control this area, and hence it was essential to retain the American military and political presence in Europe at any cost.<sup>4</sup>

The ideological and practical precursors of the NATO Pact were the Truman Doctrine (economic and military aid to the countries that were endangered by Communism, but aspired to Western democratic values), the Marshall Plan (economic aid to European Allies) and the so-called containment strategy (the American threat of the use of force to deter Communism and military aid to endangered countries).<sup>5</sup>

2. NATO's supreme organ is the *NATO Council*, on which all Member States are represented. There are also many civilian and military committees in charge of security aspects.

The dissolution of the adversary Warsaw Treaty did not result in NATO's dissolution. NATO was subject to some organizational adaptations in response to newly arisen circumstances. For instance, in 1991 the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) was established and brought together all NATO Members and former Warsaw Treaty Members (including all Soviet Successor States). It was foreseen as a consultative forum for political and security issues.

In 1994 the Partnership for Peace Programme was established within the framework of the NACC. The Partnership builds on the momentum of cooperation between the NACC Members and the remaining Members of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). The Partnership for Peace addresses practical issues of military cooperation. Each Partner State makes a number of commitments: to preserve democratic societies and maintain the principles of international law, to fulfil obligations under the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in good faith, and to respect existing borders.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Vlatko Cvrtila, *Hrvatska i NATO*, Centar za politološka istraživanja, Zagreb, p. 17.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, pp.19-23.

<sup>6</sup> Vladimir Đ. Degan, *Međunarodno pravo*, Second revised edition, Pravni fakultet Sveučilišta u Rijeci, Rijeka, 2006, p. 476.

3. From the Alliance established to protect Europe from a Soviet tank invasion NATO has transformed into “an expeditionary Alliance ready to be deployed outside of Europe in the defence of freedom.”<sup>7</sup> For that purpose, NATO has been strengthening its cooperation with the countries in the Pacific region as well. NATO also has a humanitarian role, it renders humanitarian relief services following natural disasters, prepares defence against “Internet terrorism”, and aspires to become a decision making forum that would address many world security issues (and also become an analytical instrument of socio-economic conditions these security issues have been generated by).

With respect to new Member States, the most intriguing question is the question of the accession costs. Debates regarding new Member States have predominantly been concerned with money. The authorities have been avoiding such discussions owing to difficulties associated with cost calculations.

NATO’s survival under altered circumstances, without any Eastern threat that resulted in its establishment and persistence before the dissolution of the Warsaw Treaty, **can be justified** by the following reasons, for instance:

- The NATO Member States mutually cooperate and do not enter into conflicts;
- NATO assumed responsibility for the European security at large and assisted countries in transition to adapt their systems to new demands;
- The Member States share common values: human rights, individual liberty and peace;
- NATO is also a political organization;
- NATO safeguards the European and the world economic system, stabilizes hostile areas and promotes democratic order;
- NATO is a link between the USA and Europe;
- NATO is a guarantor of democracy and welfare state in Europe; Western European countries have not needed to allocate substantial defence expenditures;
- NATO has promoted democratization in countries in transition;
- NATO is responsible for stabilization in the Balkans;
- Main decisions are brought by agreement of all Members; the NATO accession does not imply the loss of sovereignty;
- The model of civilian and military relationships is promoted to decrease potential militarization of society.
- The NATO accession is only allowed to countries with high level of respect for human rights and individual liberty;

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<sup>7</sup> From the speech of American President Bush at the Summit Meeting of Heads of State and Government in Riga.

- The contemporary fight against terrorism will lead to success only through common activities and organized action;
- Upon their NATO accession smaller countries substantially increase their national security.

Some of the current reasons against NATO are the following:

- The global security cannot be achieved by weapons; NATO is a Cold War remnant without any *raison d'être* after the dissolution of the Warsaw Treaty;
- The events of September 11, 2001 proved NATO's complete powerlessness against contemporary threats; contemporary terrorism cannot be conquered by a large military Alliance;
- Big countries have a crucial impact on the important decision making process in NATO;
- NATO was established to safeguard capitalism, not democracy;
- NATO came into being to defend capitalism, not democracy; three non-democratic countries, Greece, Turkey and Portugal, joined NATO promptly after its establishment;
- NATO responds in accordance with strategic interests, and not because of human rights violations or genocide;
- NATO does not have any capacities for peace-keeping operations;
- NATO did not have sole responsibility for the termination of military operations in the territory of the Former Yugoslavia; its response was belated; it contributed to the fact that the war criminals were left unpunished;
- The USA is a dominant NATO Member; the USA diminish the international impact of Partner States;
- NATO tolerates human rights violations to Member States;
- The biggest military and industrial complex stands behind NATO;
- NATO is a non-democratic institution;
- The majority of European countries in transition are not in any military danger, which renders their NATO accession pointless;
- NATO's actions are not authorized by the UN Security Council.<sup>8</sup>

## II

From the end of the Second World War to the present day the world security systems have undergone drastic changes, new systems (*unilateral interventions*) have been established and the obsolete or inefficient systems (bipolarism, i.e. military blocks) have disappeared.

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<sup>8</sup> These arguments dominate public discussions in the countries that joined NATO in 2004. Cvrtić, *o.c.* pp. 124-130.

In its essence, the UN collective security (*Chapter VII of the UN Charter*), which smaller nations particularly believed in, has remained an empty word. Despite a restructured international community (*the establishment of new states*) and democratization of international relations, the permanent Security Council Members still hold the key to the world Organization's collective measures. This universal system has been replaced by unilateral security systems in the modern international community. In the USA these systems are referred to as preventive actions or preventive wars like e.g. the American intervention in Iraq, and in China, they are referred to as an "active defence", like a former war between China and Northern Vietnam.

The bipolar or block security systems, having rested on the balance of military power between the two strong blocks for half a century, dissolved at the beginning of the 1990s. Hence there is only one military Alliance that dominates the world's political and military scene today. It is historically the strongest Alliance, the North Atlantic Pact, together with its related humanitarian military actions and interventions to deter international terrorism.

Since "permanent neutrality", as one of the concepts of unilateral security, has been completely modified in the practice of Switzerland and Austria (*they joined the UN and assumed the obligation to participate in the UN military measures against any aggressor; while the fundamental obligation laid down in permanent neutrality is not to enter into any military alliance*), and the "World Government" and "the World United States" have only remained political projects, it seems important to consider future developments of the Atlantic Pact, particularly because the Croatian accession to this alliance is one of the strategic goals of the Croatian foreign policy.

When the Warsaw Pact ceased to exist, many analysts predicted the disappearance of the North Atlantic Pact. A logical question was posed: what is the purpose of this military Alliance if it does not have any real adversary, or a potential enemy? Who is it against? The doubts were reinforced after the dissolution of the Soviet Union when only one super power remained in the world, the United States of America. This military Alliance, however, survived and is, despite everything, the most powerful and important military Alliance in the world today.

From its establishment to the present day many important changes have occurred within the Alliance. The classical functions of defence alliances, first of all a joint response of the Member States only if any one of them has suffered a military attack, were abandoned during the military campaign in Serbia, i.e. the then Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia. The alliance disregarded its restrictions and undertook a military intervention in a country that had not attacked any of the NATO Members and despite a lack of a call for the intervention of the legitimate government of that country. The intervention was justified by larger, predominantly humanitarian goals and an intention to pacify the South European, the Balkan region, where the wars in the 1990s and internal armed and political

conflicts, which loomed and broke out during the 1980s (*in Kosovo*), threatened international peace and security.

The subsequent actions undertaken by NATO, especially the intervention in Afghanistan, indicate that this organization's potential interventions may well, first of all, spread into the areas of Asia and Middle East. It seems that in these regions, especially in Western Asia, NATO is assuming, and has partially assumed, the role of a planetary or more precisely an "Asian policeman".

It is evident, therefore, that the defence military Alliance is no longer only activated by the classical motives of the aggression and the aggressor. For the time being, severe human rights violations and international terrorism are also on the list, which may well be enlarged in the near future.

Since presently NATO does not encroach upon the Latin American continent, or the broader African territory, the analysts study the type and extent of the American impact on the focus and activities of this military Organization. The study started after the last military intervention in Iraq, wherein NATO, as an Organization, had not participated.

Old disputes and disagreements in NATO are commonly known, especially in the line of French and American relations (*even during De Gaulle*). After Germany and France became closer (*Schreder, before Merkel-Chirac*) at the end of the last century, these rifts inside the organization (especially in the commanding field, decision making process and coordination of political assessments) will now become increasingly larger, although they will not impair the basic cohesion – terminologically speaking – "of the Western world", i.e. the European and the North American (*USA, Canada*) countries. To illustrate doubts and disagreements inside NATO we will just mention different opinions regarding the situation in Iran and Syria, and also in North Korea, held for instance by the United States of America and France.

However, the Alliance remains permanently strong when the potential super powers in the world, Russia and China, are concerned. Spreading of NATO in Europe clearly indicates its intention to get closer to Russia. Flirting with the Ukraine and Georgia, and also the recent NATO summit meeting in Riga (*Latvia, 28-29 September 2006*) in the former Soviet territory, are reflections of the NATO's long-term strategy.

Similarly, American efforts to establish closer ties between NATO and Japan, Korea and Australia (wherein Bush Senior is especially engaged), "Asian democracies", as referred to by the Americans, are an expression of a long-term strategy to establish a zone of Alliance along the Chinese borders.

In the near future another interesting supplementary function of the Atlantic Pact is to be expected. This function is, besides its military, its, so to speak, economic function, or military and economic function. In the near future the Alliance will undertake, using its naval forces, to safeguard transportation in vital marine routes, especially from potential attacks of different terrorist groups.

Finally, besides its military goal, the political goal of the Alliance has been increasingly emphasized recently – spreading of democracy. Although the experience has shown that the export of democracy into countries against their wish regularly resulted in new complicated conflicts, after the recent meeting in Riga, NATO's Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Schaeffer communicated the following to furious Russia: "Who can have something against democracy knocking at their doorstep?"<sup>9</sup> Moscow understood this statement as an empty phrase. Despite all slogans about democracy, NATO remains, and will remain in the near future, first and foremost a strong military Organization; naturally, primarily for the achievement of political goals. Many were taken by surprise when it had been decided in Riga to admit Serbia to the Partnership for Peace without any requirements, regardless of the insufficient Serbian cooperation with the Hague Tribunal, which NATO and the European Union have been recently insisting upon.

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The forecasts about the dissolution of NATO after the dissolution of the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact did not come true. The monopoly of the military power, i.e. the absolute military supremacy also provides other forms of (political, economic) supremacy over all potential adversaries. Therefore, for the time being the maintenance costs of such an expensive Organization prove to be worthwhile. Besides, the developed countries still fear a loss of global security.

Since there is an enormous disproportion between the NATO military force and the individual force of any other non-NATO country, it is better to speak about NATO as a guarantor of the establishment of globalism, which necessarily requires the world market economy, i.e. democratic societies. However, if NATO adversary countries were called adversaries of globalism, then the adversaries of democracy would become, in the opinion of many, fighters for justice.

*(Translated by Hrvoja Heffer)*

### *Sažetak*

#### **Budućnost NATO-a**

Sjevernoatlantski savez (NATO) je regionalna sigurnosna organizacija nastala 1949., u doba rastuće opasnosti od sukoba demokratskih zemalja zapadnoga svijeta sa Sovjetskim Savezom. Vrijeme hladnoga rata, pa i Sovjetskoga Saveza,

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<sup>9</sup> He advocated effective forces for high intensity combating tasks, and post-conflict reconstruction work. He encouraged the current membership aspirants, Albania, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Croatia to continue the efforts to qualify for membership. See <http://www.nato.int/docu/review/2006/issue4/english/art1.html>.

je prošlost, tako da je danas upitna temeljna svrha opstanka NATO-a., kao izrazito vojne alijanse.

Uz sve parole o demokraciji, NATO ostaje, i tako će se razvijati u skoroj budućnosti, prije svega kao snažna vojna organizacija. Naravno, prije svega radi ostvarivanja političkih ciljeva.

Poznato je da su u NATO-u odavna postojali prijepori i nesuglasice, posebice na crti francusko – američkih odnosa (*još za francuskoga predsjednika De Gaullea*). Nakon snažnog njemačko - francuskog zbližavanja (*za vrijeme Schredera*) krajem prošloga stoljeća, te pukotine unutar organizacije (osobito u području vojnoga zapovijedanja, načina donošenja odluka i usuglašavanja političkih ocjena) bivat će sve veće, premda neće narušiti osnovnu koheziju – upotrijebit ćemo termin – «zapadnoga svijeta», tj. europskih i sjeveroameričkih (*SAD, Kanade*) država. Za ilustraciju dvojbi i razmimoilaženja u NATO-u autor je naveo različito gledanje na prilike u Iranu i Siriji, pa i u Sjevernoj Koreji, primjerice u Sjedinjenim Američkim Državama s jedne strane, u Njemačkoj i Francuskoj s druge.

Međutim, čvrstina saveza ostaje stalna kada su u pitanju potencijalne super sile u svijetu, Rusija i Kina. Širenje NATO-a u Europi jasno kazuje da se želi zaokružiti Rusiju. Američko koketiranje s Ukrajinom i Gruzijom, pa i nedavni sastanak NATO-a u Rigi (*Letoniji, 28.-29. studenoga 2006.*), u području koje je nekada bilo u sastavu Sovjetskog Saveza, odraz su dugoročne strategije NATO-a.

Jednako tako, nastojanja Sjedinjenih Američkih Država da NATO čvršće povežu s Japanom, Korejom i Australijom (*osobito je angažiran stariji Bush*), «azijskim demokracijama», kako te države nazivaju Amerikanci, izraz su dugoročne strategije stvaranja savezničkog pojasa uz granice Kine.

Zemlje istoga civilizacijskoga kruga, zemlje demokracije, traže odgovor na nove izazove sigurnosti, a sustav koji jamči sigurnost, ostao je NATO (otkako je nastao oružanih sukoba između članica nije bilo, uspkos svađama, primjerice grčko – turskim oko morskih granica u Egeju). NATO se transformirao, u izmijenjenim uvjetima je prošao kroz organizacijsku prilagodbu, ali se također transformirala i prijetnja. Novi, strašni neprijatelj je ovaj put nevidljiv, razasut i raspršen geografski i organizacijski – posebice organizirani međunarodni terorizam – pa je specifična, a i upitna mogućnost golemoga (i skupoga) vojnog sustava da se učinkovito nosi s njime.

Autor na kraju kazuje da u skoroj budućnosti valja očekivati još jednu zanimljivu dopunu funkcija Atlantskog saveza. To je, uz vojnu, njegova „gospodarska funkcija“ (možda je bolje upotrijebiti naziv vojno-gospodarska funkcija). Savez će u skoroj budućnosti preuzeti, svojim pomorskim snagama, osiguranje prijevoza vitalnim morskim rutama, posebice od mogućih napadaja raznih terorističkih skupina.

**Ključne riječi:** NATO, sigurnost, kolektivna obrana, jednostrane intervencije, trajna neutralnost, demokracija