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**NATO'S GLOBAL MISSION IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY\***

Solomon Passy & Lyubomir Ivanov

*Dr. Solomon Passy is Founding President of the Atlantic Club of Bulgaria and Vice-Chairman of the Paris-based Atlantic Treaty Association.*

*Dr. Lyubomir Ivanov is a Founding Member and Member of the Board of the Atlantic Club of Bulgaria, and President of the Manfred Wörner Foundation.*

Dozens of military, political and defence alliances have emerged throughout mankind's history, and especially in the twentieth century. Some of them have operated on a regional scale; others have set themselves strategic objectives and global missions. Undoubtedly, though, the Atlantic Alliance, established exactly half a century ago, has been the most successful, the firmest and the most promising of all these alliances in the history of man. This Alliance has proved to be one of those fortunate human creations which, having stood the tests and trials of time, enjoys recognition and marks its triumph almost daily.

Inspired by NATO's success, experiments to form similar coalitions have continued unabated. Despite the ample experience from which they could learn, practically none of these alliances and coalitions has survived, let alone dominated the security arena.

Now, therefore, 50 years after NATO's establishment, it is only natural to ask why NATO alone of all the others has managed to survive and flourish amidst its numerous analogues in different places and times? Is NATO's success a lucky chance, or was it programmed back at its inception by the wisdom and foresight of its founding fathers?

Furthermore, is NATO's monopoly in the security arena guaranteed? Or is it possible to set up another similar organisation that could successfully compete with NATO? And, ultimately, why has NATO not disbanded itself?

**WHY HAS NATO ALONE SURVIVED AND COME TO DOMINATE THE WORLD SCENE?**

An impartial analysis, free of political casuistry, reveals four simple factors that identify the uniqueness of the Alliance and predetermine its viability and success.

NATO's first principle is its homogeneity. The Alliance is built on the basis of consensus, on its members' common values: democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law. The principle of shared values is decisive, and it supplants the classical principle of commonality of interests that used to motivate almost all other previous alliances. For values last far longer than interests do. On the strategic level, common values presuppose common interests, while common interests do not necessarily stem from common values. The Alliance firmly rests on its resolve to safeguard these values.

The second factor is the universality of NATO's value system. The Atlantic values proved

universally valid, ie. the 'right' values on the scale of socio-political evolution. It is precisely these values that guarantee the survival of the fittest. Other alliances also used to profess values common to their members that, however, were quite wrong from the point of view of world reason. A typical example was the total fiasco of the Warsaw Pact, which is the most indisputable evidence of the futurelessness of the values that motivated it.

This also explains why democracies, which have always been in a minority, have taken the upper hand against communism and dictatorships despite the democracies' numerical inferiority.

The third factor (but no less important than the first two) is the leading role and strong political will of the United States. US leadership is the leaven of this Atlantic dough, turning common principles into common policy. It is precisely American leadership that has managed to unite the policies of 19 countries, ignoring their differences, blunting their contradictions and pooling their efforts for the sake of common values. The US's global role and far-sighted vision set the tone for the conduct of the Alliance, turning it from a regional self-defence alliance into the most powerful machinery and one whose global role has yet to be appreciated.

The US was not just a leader but also a key sponsor of this value system. The Marshall Plan, launched in 1948, offered the most disinterested financial support to all of Europe and emerged as an immediate predecessor of NATO itself.

It is precisely the leading and rallying role of the US that turned NATO into an instrument for the collective defence of its members' common values and common interest. NATO left its members free to develop their economies, their political and legal systems, and financial policies according to their particularities. The freedom that NATO left its members made it flexible and adaptable and allowed it to increase its membership from 12 at its foundation in 1949 to 19 now and to establish a close partnership with some 30 other countries. Thanks to this flexibility, the Alliance will be able to enlarge shortly by yet another dozen members.

Such strong, broad and strategic leadership is just what the European Union is still lacking. It is precisely this lack that largely predetermines its parochial European nature and does not allow it to build a common foreign and hence defence policy. Again, it is this lack that increasingly turns the EU into a tool for the protection of the narrow individual interests of each member. Moreover, the partisan principle on which the EU rests will get it into even deeper trouble, which has been signalled by the recent unprecedented en bloc resignation of the Commission. By the way, the criticism which the Bulgarian Prime Minister, Ivan Kostov, recently levelled at the EU sounds like a pat on the back compared to the EU's predictable hara-kiri.

The fourth fortunate distinguishing feature of the Alliance is that it was luckily instituted by all three Great Powers espousing common values. The merger of three out of the world's five nuclear capabilities proved a strategic move that made the outcome of the Cold War a foregone conclusion. NATO thus emerged as the broadest possible coalition, incorporating all key actors on the European scene capable of playing in one team.

Thus, NATO assumed an essential function that is still underestimated by the general public. NATO eliminated the possibility for the creation of an alternative alliance based on the same values, which could duplicate the Alliance or compete with it in Europe or in the world alike. NATO has thus emerged not only as the most important but also as the only significant forum that has been defusing

tensions between its members. This is why NATO has managed to contain and localise even the most painful conflict within the Alliance, the one between Greece and Turkey, and to prevent a war that at times seemed inescapable.

#### CAN ANY COMPETITION TO NATO APPEAR IN THE NEXT 50 YEARS?

The four fundamental criteria setting NATO's parameters impose on it a monopoly over the maintenance of peace and security for a long time ahead. This function has to be performed not only within the NATO area itself but worldwide too. The amazing advances of technology and information have naturally increased the number of countries that could be a potential threat, shortening the distance between the Alliance and possible aggressors and expanding the geography of this area. In other words, the challenges, which used to be distant, have now come close and are forcing the Alliance periodically to assume new responsibilities for world peace.

There are also a number of financial and technological reasons that will leave NATO without competition in the coming decades. In the first place, the United States is the only power in the world that has the logistical capacity to deploy large numbers of combat troops over a great distance within a short time. This capability is decisive for any alliance with a global mission. In the second place, NATO's communication system is at the pinnacle of modern technology and a very expensive asset. No such system could practically be built by any other large group of states.

In other words, any future reliable systems of collective security and world order will be able to emerge only on the basis of NATO, by way of its enlargement with new countries which prove that they share the common values of the Alliance.

#### THE ALLIANCE'S FURTHER ENLARGEMENTS

Parallel to NATO's further enlargements in Europe, two more strategic centres of Transatlantic co-operation will emerge during the coming decades. One such centre, in South America, will crystallise around Argentina, and the other centre, in Central Asia, will consolidate around Turkey.

Latin America is a region whose integration and common future can hardly be questioned. There is no other large and homogeneous region of countries sharing a common heritage, origins and religion, a common culture and mentality, as well as a common language and a common value system. Moreover, their value system is identical or at least quite compatible with the common Atlantic values. This regional idyll is complemented by the lack of serious international conflicts.

In other words, Latin America has all the prerequisites for a future pioneering role in the process of Atlantic integration and globalisation. An indication of the existing integration processes is the emerging Southern Cone Common Market, MERCOSUR, which, even in embryo, is demonstrating a clear tendency.

The powerful economic and political presence of the United States in the region is, certainly, decisive, and the natural interest of Spain and Portugal will catalyse the integration processes.

Argentina's long-standing aspirations to integration with NATO have already earned it a special ally relationship with the US. In 1997, President Clinton extended to Argentina, a non-NATO ally, status that was then enjoyed by only five other countries: Egypt, Israel, Jordan, South Korea and Japan.

In any case, it is difficult to foresee whether regional integration processes will not outstrip the individual countries' NATO integration. It may well happen that the future Latin American alliance will negotiate as a separate entity with both NATO and the EU.

Turkey's role emerged with the 1991 disintegration of the USSR, which dispersed its constituents to their natural European and Asian orbits. The European ones headed (each at its own speed) for United Europe. For their part, the Asian ones lacked such a centre of attraction to canalise, co-ordinate and harmonise their common development.

The attempts to create the Commonwealth of Independent States were rather convulsions at the inevitable end of the USSR. These attempts, served public expectations, which were the product of the universal stress caused by the almost instantaneous collapse of the bipolar model. Several generations, born and bred in axiomatic bipolarity, experienced an axiological shock from which mankind will recover entirely only after a generation change.

At the same time, the six ex-Soviet Caspian-Asian republics were looking for a new identity: Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kirghizstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, on an aggregate area of 4,081,000 sq. km (a third more than the present EU area) and an aggregate population of 62 million. Each of the six states could apparently start on its own road. However, their similar value system and the lack of a legacy of serious conflicts created a natural environment for common development. The surroundings did not offer any abundance of models. There were two options: Islamic Fundamentalism or Chinese neo-communism. Yet Turkey, which does not even have a common border with them, was naturally motivated and had something better to offer them.

Turkey is the most brilliant and significant example of Islam's compatibility with democracy. Turkey enjoys international recognition as Europe's shield against Islamic fundamentalism, but the Turkish model is all the more remarkable precisely by refuting the theories that democracy has religious correlations. It is precisely for this reason that Turkey, of all countries, will emerge as the most direct supplier of democracy to Central Asia.

Turkish leaders, as almost always in history, had an unerring political instinct and identified Central Asia as their strategic priority. Turkey is thus predestined to become the organiser of regional integration and will fill the post-Soviet vacuum by assuming a role similar to the role that the US plays in respect of Europe. The East created the West, and the West revisited the East through its values.

Intensifying Balkan co-operation, in which Bulgaria, Macedonia and Romania are actively involved, complements Turkey's leadership.

Naturally, the West prefers a Turkish democratic model for the countries of Central Asia, especially against the background of the other bleak prospects that the region holds up. American-European blessing and support will be crucial for development of the process.

The EU's worst strategic error is its treatment of Turkey, whose Association Agreement with the European community dates back to 1963. Since then, however, their relations have been blocked. The EU's isolationist policy towards Turkey is counterproductive: it merely deepens the reasons that have led to the differences between the EU and Turkey. The estrangement of the EU is creating a breeding-ground for Islamic fundamentalism, whose onslaught is, in turn, activating the immune

system of the Republic of Turkey, including its military establishment. The military establishment is thus becoming a key guardian of the democratic institutions that, by presumption, must themselves control the militaries in modern democracies. It is precisely the principles and consequences of this military-democratic model that are the butt of criticism from the EU. In other words, cause and effect get trapped in a vicious circle, and severing this knot is up to the European Union in the first place.

Turkey has successfully offset the stagnation of its relations with the EU by rapid progress in other areas: internal economic development, economic and political expansion in Central Asia, intensified Turkish-American and (now) Turkish-Israeli co-operation.

Turkey will thus be turning, unexpectedly and gradually, into a second leading actor on the Middle East scene. The European Union, with its aspiration to mediate in the Middle East, leans towards excessive diplomacy and gets estranged from Israel, which makes it uninteresting to the Arab countries as well. The resulting effect is to simultaneously distance itself from the target clients of its mediation. Thus, the EU neither manages to capture the political territories vacated by the USSR after 1991 nor to come up with an alternative to the American approach to the region. Turkey, on the contrary, has entered into close co-operation with the US and Israel and has thus materialised an almost mythological political alliance between the three religions. At the same time, it has preserved its traditional positions in the Arab world.

American-Israeli-Turkish military political co-operation will become the most natural channel for transfer of the common Atlantic values to the Middle East. Thus, in the next 10-15 years Turkey will emerge as a powerful regional centre between the Balkans, Central Asia and the Middle East, at the expense of the EU, unless the latter ceased being a slave to its own egocentrism and victim to strategic positions for the sake of fleeting comfort.

#### BALKANS: NATO'S HUMANITARIAN LABORATORY

Many European tragedies in this century have started from the Balkans. They have also remained the last stronghold of communism and dictatorship and the last sore of a local war in now ex-Soviet Europe, having lived up to their deserved notoriety as a troubled region of unreasonable peoples with irreparable relations. The Balkans, true to tradition, have thus posed the greatest challenge to the Atlantic value system at the very end of the outgoing century. All hopes of universality of the common values have been put to the test, risking to be dashed by a handful of tinpot dictators entrenched in the region.

#### Ex - Yugoslavia

All trouble in the region since 1991 has had a single epicentre: Slobodan Milosevic. In eight years, he has waged four wars and has lost them all. The political philosophy he professes could be summed up as, 'Power in exchange for land.' When Milosevic came to power in 1989, Yugoslavia had 256,000 sq. km and a population of 23.5 million, which made it the largest Balkan country after Turkey. After ten years of disastrous Milosevic rule, Yugoslavia shrank to 102,000 sq. km and 10.5 million people, the fifth largest country in the Balkans.

When NATO launched Operation Allied Force in March 1999, rump Yugoslavia had already been in a state of continued and irreversible disintegration. The policy of the West and in particular of the US to keep the unkeepable was merely prolonging the agony of the country and its peoples and

inflicted substantial damage on neighbouring countries. Of course, other behaviour of the West was hard to predict. The vision of a government cannot be many decades ahead compared with the vision of the voters who elected it. And voters are not professional prophets.

Milosevic's ethnic cleansing, which has escalated to a genocide of the Albanian people, has led to a complete and unhealable rift between Belgrade and Pristina. NATO's operation merely revealed to the world the tragic truth about that region. The inevitable prospect of an independent Republic of Kosovo will be the least bad of all bad solutions to this local, specific and tragic problem.

Montenegro's independence may well precede rather than succeed the independence of Kosovo. Podgorica has long been on the receiving end of international blows meant for Belgrade. Staying within the boundaries of Yugoslavia is getting ever more unprofitable and more expensive than seceding from the Federation. The Kosovo crisis is merely precipitating the divorce between the two republics.

After Montenegro and Kosovo, the secession of Vojvodina is also coming on to the agenda. The people of Vojvodina, a sizeable proportion of whom are ethnic Hungarians, have a mentality absolutely incompatible with the nationalist doctrine of the Milosevic regime. Still, the main reasons leading Vojvodina to independence are economic: it is the richest constituent, which generates a far greater proportion of the federal budget than it receives. Its geographical location as gateway to central and Western Europe is another natural factor of the separatist sentiments prevailing in the area.

Thus, after the split-off Kosovo, Montenegro, Vojvodina, and most probably of Sandzak, too, Milosevic will reduce Yugoslavia to Serbia proper, with one-fifth of the territory of Tito's Yugoslavia and one-third of its population. By its blood-stained regime and short-sighted policy, Milosevic will turn his country into a third-rate Balkan state, deprived of much of its historical and natural heritage, landlocked and bordering mostly on its former territories. Certainly, this will cause a sustained national trauma to all peoples in the newly established states and above all to the Serbian people, which will be the largest victim of Europe's last dictator of this century.

The Strategic Centre of the Atlantic Club of Bulgaria described this realistically pessimistic scenario in detail in a series of publications between March and August 1998. Then it seemed absurd to many, but even we did not expect that history would prove it so literally right.

### Bosnia: NATO's Rubicon

History decreed that NATO's road to its future pass through the Balkans, and chance had it that Bosnia be the first and decisive test of the Alliance's will and capability of meeting the new challenges of the post-Cold War era.

Bosnia was NATO's first—and, at that, successful—mission to enforce power peace through power diplomacy. In the past, the Great Powers repeatedly intervened in the Balkans, mostly to impose their settlements, a product of confrontation and balance-of-power considerations between themselves and assigning the least priority on the aspirations and interests of the Balkan peoples themselves. In Bosnia, the international community intervened for the first time to impose not any particular settlement but just a democratic system. A system allowing the Bosnian Muslims, Serbs and Croats to regulate their relations in a civilised way instead of by war, genocide and ethnic cleansing. Incidentally, whether the Bosnians will chose to continue to exist as a single state or, in

the long run, would rather split into a few democratic states is, above all, their own concern and is not an inevitable part of NATO's fundamental strategy. What is important is that the successful, albeit somewhat belated, intervention of NATO guaranteed that any decision they may take in the future would be arrived at in a democratic way. Inevitably, Kosovo proved the second, even more serious test for NATO, as well as the Balkans' decisive step from their divided past towards their common future.

### Rest of the Balkans

Although the world's attention is now focussed mostly on the offshoots of the former Yugoslavia, NATO's Washington Summit clearly outlined not only the new challenges but also the new opportunities for priority and early integration of the Balkans into NATO and the EU.

Above all, it should be borne in mind that the Alliance, through Greece and Turkey, has been a long and stable presence in the region. On the other hand, NATO Partner Countries like Bulgaria, Romania, Macedonia and Albania are contributing substantially to NATO's efforts towards settlement of the Yugoslav conflict and building regional security. These countries have made their choice, different from the choice of rump Yugoslavia. Each one of them has built its democratic political system and has asserted the practice of solving any ethnic problems in compliance with modern European principles and standards, while finding solutions to the problems with neighbouring countries held over from the past.

One example, which would attract little attention elsewhere in Europe but which sounds like an axiological revolution in the Balkans, has been the recent creation of a Multinational Peace Force South-Eastern Europe. This Force, predicted by the Atlantic Club back in 1994, brings together Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, Italy, Macedonia, Romania and Turkey. It sets a remarkable precedent of progress in political morality in the region and demonstrates that the Balkans have the potential of building their relations motivated more by their future than their past.

### WHY WILL NATO TAKE OVER FROM THE UN IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY?

The UN played a strong deterrent role after World War II and managed to conserve the balance of forces until the end of the Cold War. With the end of the Cold War, the role of the UN was substantially reduced. The lack of effective machinery for enforcement of Security Council resolutions has been steadily eroding the UN's authority. Against this background, the iron will and firm hand with which NATO has been upholding democracy has won the respect of the public and motivated the member states. The Alliance has proved that it is precisely the machinery that the UN is lacking.

The UN's next inevitable step will be to devolve to NATO the functions of a world trouble-shooter. This new role for NATO will give a new impetus to the development of the Alliance, additionally deactivating the UN. The general tendency for the coming 15-20 years is for the UN to pass the baton into NATO's hands and to retire from the race.

The Security Council is increasingly turning into an instrument from protection of the individual interests of the permanent members rather than of universally valid values or causes. The most recent example is China's veto of the Blue Helmets in Macedonia. Such tug-of-war behaviour has been plaguing the UN for 50 years now, forcing the World Body to lose more and more ground to the

order introduced by the Western democracies and maintained by NATO.

Yet the playing out of the UN is determined by a far deeper-going process. The purposes for which the UN was established in 1945 have already been largely and durably achieved, and the UN ideals are no longer a sufficient objective motivating world development.

The world's political history in recent centuries falls into three principal eras. The first one, until World War II, was characterised by a conflict of power and a natural social selection. This era culminated in the War, after which mankind realised that it was building up a capability sufficient for its self-destruction.

The second, transitional era, until the fall of the Berlin Wall, was characterised by a balance of power. At the beginning of this era the social immune system gave birth to the UN as a transitory machinery maintaining the precarious post-war balance. The same social immune system also conceived NATO, whose mission was to consolidate and organise the forces of progress and, in the long term, to take over from the UN the management of world affairs during the next era.

The third era, since the fall of the Berlin Wall, is defined by the unity of power, and this is the era of globalisation. During it, the common Atlantic values will unite Europe with the Americas, and subsequently with the rest of the world. NATO will be precisely the backbone and motor force of this new era, as the world's affairs will develop under its aegis during the twenty-first century.

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