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Dincă, Marian

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## THE PERSPECTIVES OF THE NORTH-ATLANTIC ALLIANCE

LTC.PhD.eng. Marian DINCĂ

\*NATO HUMINT Centre of Excellence, \*\* University of Oradea, Roumania,  
[mariandinca2006@yahoo.com](mailto:mariandinca2006@yahoo.com)

**Abstract:** *Since its appearance in 1949, NATO has gradually transformed from a collective defense organization into a community providing security. NATO has been and will continue to remain a vital security commitment between Europe and the U.S., equally appreciated by both parties. The Alliance's evolutionary perspectives equally interested its members and nonetheless other important players in world geopolitics. Currently, NATO is involved in a wide range of activities designed to promote cooperation with a number of countries outside NATO and pro-actively tackle new security challenges of the XXI century. The most relevant aspect of NATO transformation is focused on promoting enhanced political dialogue, both within the organization and in relation with its partners.*

**Keywords:** NATO, alliance, military, security

In the years that followed the Cold War, NATO has managed to survive and remained a significant security organization, especially due to its involvement in crisis management in Europe. Although this contribution has been critical to improving security and European stability, in terms of strengthening the political cohesion and common identity of the Alliance, it could not replace the existential threat that was formerly posed by the Soviet Union. In turn, the transformation agenda, which was actually the driving force of the Alliance after September 11 and especially after the Prague Summit in 2002, failed to overcome the political division between allies.

In the first decade of XXI century, NATO has evolved significantly from the security alliance created in 1949, to a real advisory board of international security policy. Over more than half century of existence, the Alliance and the international community as a whole have developed in a way that NATO's founders could not have imagined at that time. NATO has also evolved from the institution that defended Western

Europe for four decades during the Cold War and even the institution that oversaw the transition of post-Cold War in the 90s. With the integration of new members, a process of continuous adaptation is inevitable in order to accommodate the interests of a broader alliance, without adversely affecting the Alliance's ability to make decisions in real time. Indeed, as strategic security environment is constantly changing, NATO's evolution rhythm has to keep the pace to be able to address new threats.

Some analysts believe that the current transformation agenda is the highest possible degree of consensus that can be realized in NATO today. As a result, they fear that any currently existing agreement falls apart, perhaps, once the Alliance will have to face decisions regarding the use of force, humanitarian intervention or engagement in regions of collateral strategic importance, thus threatening once again the existence of NATO. The alternative would be that NATO can survive only as a service provider that delivers capabilities for coalition

operations led by the United States or possibly in the future, the European Union. Since the nature of threats that member states face is changing, as well as the fashion NATO tackles with them, the foundations of cooperation within the Alliance remain tied to the principles of the Washington Treaty. NATO ensures the transatlantic political-military framework necessary for security management, by linking the interests of Europe and North America and balancing those of member states.

Continuous transformation of NATO is part of the process meant to consolidate the member states' security and future stability and prosperity of the Euro-Atlantic area as a whole. Since the Prague Summit, Allies intensified their efforts to adapt NATO to today's challenges - defending common values such as respect for democracy and human rights, combating international terrorism and the threat caused by weapons of mass destruction, building security ties with Russia and Ukraine, the development of cooperation with partner countries and when other means have been exhausted, serving as an effective tool for crisis management and conflict resolution in order to halt the spread of the undesirable effects outside the borders or in case they would threaten the stability. This is a global task that depends on member (and partner) states public support; it is mostly unwilling to accept the conflicting policies and is determined to build security on the goodwill and cooperation for the benefit of future generations.

### **1. Global perspective of NATO security**

With the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe, NATO lost his initial scope and position. The end of the Cold War predicted the end of an organization tailored to meet the threats posed by Soviet Union. But a comprehensive reform of the Alliance has focused on emerging objectives and a tailored structure able to fight terrorism, to combat trafficking of weapons of mass destruction, to manage

crises situations, to assist in humanitarian crises, to cooperate with former opponents and impose peace. However, intervention in case of disasters has become a new goal, and the assumed role in conflict prevention is increasingly important.

Thus, NATO has been transformed from a collective defense organization in a community providing security. In spite that some politicians neglect this aspect, we forecast that, in future, this valence must be the one especially strengthened. The Prague Summit in 2002 marked the reformulation of the Alliance way of thinking. Since then, NATO military capabilities have to mutually support the political, civilian and economic instruments of member nations.

Given that under current trends, the role of military force in conflict resolution is minimized, in-depth transformation is required to be continued in the military. In the coming decades, NATO forces have to be able to act jointly, to be rapidly deployable and sustainable in the theaters of operations for long periods of time. In this way, NATO can really demonstrate its overall global relevance. The main element of the transformation of the Alliance is represented by the NATO Response Force (NRF-NATO Response Force concept officially launched on 15.10.2003, which includes making available Alliance military structures, airborne, naval and special forces, well equipped and high tech, flexible, interoperable and sustainable, easily and quickly deployable), which points the expeditionary character of the military organization.

The transatlantic link seems little damaged in the recent years, outlining two camps: U.S. - Britain and France - Germany. The European camp that builds the security and identity of the mainland is diplomatically and energetically pressed by Russian Federation. On the other hand, the U.S., supporting NATO enlargement to the East, builds up the anti-missile shield in Romania and Poland and moves U.S. bases

from the "old" Europe to the "new" Europe, being able to temper the connection of the Russian Federation via German-French channel, by the strength of bilateral negotiations.

The EU is expanding the capabilities of their role in security, the European Centre for Satellite Observations and European Defense Agency (EDA) and looks for a common army. No doubt they can not double NATO capabilities, but must carry on interconnected systems with NATO. This is likely to bring an economic benefit to EU by engagement of large companies such as arms factories in joint projects, with benefits in the civil industry. A competition like the arms race, having as main players U.S., UK, Germany, France, Italy, Spain, will dissipate the political-military effort in recent years. Especially the Russian Federation and China are planning a major vitalization in the arms trade.

In the next 20-30 years, it is necessary to deal with much wisdom Alliance enlargement, both to give way to dialogue with the Russian Federation, and not to weaken NATO by the appearance of difficulties in the transformation process. Also, initiation of steps for establishing a relationship of dialogue with China, similar to NATO's Partnership with Russian Federation would be an important strategic move, given the ambition for global relevance of NATO.

Moreover, the Alliance is natural to assume a more prominent role in the execution of UN missions, as "armed arm". This is a win for the UN and NATO forces to evaluate a solution to strengthen control and recovery capabilities, planning, and information technology. Opening, mainly, to peace support operations, humanitarian and civil emergency area will provide a better perception of its role in the world.

However, the security of NATO members will be affected in future by the migration issue, in all its forms, as labor migration, and illegal migration. Mobility of the workforce is a key feature of globalization,

with particular impact in the economy and illegal migration is closely linked to phenomena such as transnational organized crime, drug trafficking and strategic materials.

Therefore, it is preferable that NATO will pay serious attention to this phenomenon, perhaps as much as to those represented by energy security and critical infrastructure. Then, given that NATO countries constitute a conglomerate, very important for the world economy, including major economic powers, but also with potential candidates to the status of emerging and developed countries, maritime security should be a constant concern of the Alliance. Currently, over 90 percent of world trade is related to seas and oceans, and trade flows are interested in NATO countries.

Alliance works on the principle that security of each member depends on the security of the others. In this context, none of the member countries can afford forgetting one thing: security of each country depends mainly on the NATO ability to anticipate and act proactively.

## **2. Possible scenarios**

Military alliances often use a sufficiently restrained language, sometimes deliberately and sometimes imprecisely conditioned. This is the case for North-Atlantic Council (NAC) statements after their meetings and, to some extent, for final declarations of NATO summits. Unless fundamental issues, communications of the NATO and NATO Member States officials shall assume clear positions, but often leave room for further interpretation depending on audience and future developments. That makes them less predictable, but more stimulating for security experts, somewhere at the border between diplomacy and military. But things change when it comes to NATO priorities, major turning points, imminent crises or those that have passed a critical point that requires a calibrated response of the Alliance.

In summer of 2011, in Brussels, U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates presented, in front of his NATO counterparts, in categorical terms, the growing concerns of a generation for whom the transatlantic relationship is the central pillar, the axis of stability and global security. He spoke as a politician whose final mandate allows or even requires a final role: that of setting the fundamental debate on the future security cooperation between the U.S. and Europe. As his term was a great one, under two administrations, and that brought recognition and respect not only in Washington but also internationally, his words carried weight. As ambiguous they were, as these views have had a significant international impact. According to the high U.S. official and other commentators, the Alliance and particularly European members are likely to pass those red lines that threaten fundamental mandate and mission of NATO. They have evolved since 1949, but not so critically. NATO provides even today the collective defense of North Atlantic and European area. What has fundamentally changed is the context in which they operate. Europe, says Gates, must play a different role from the one played during the Cold War and the U.S. can not continue to provide all unilateral and disproportionate military security contribution within NATO when it comes to actions in theaters of operations.

European military contributions and deficit imbalance in terms of capabilities has been a constant element of NATO political and military developments. Throughout the Cold War military capabilities have shown a certain distribution of roles of the allies. U.S., as a superpower, has been in a globally competition with the USSR.

An international scenario certainly less linear than we knew the world in the twentieth century would be that some areas of the planet will lose their central character, while others will become "the heart of new empires" or will be some empires themselves. What will then be key

areas in the coming decades? Are Russia, Brazil, China, India, ("... geopolitical balance of the XXI century will be decided based on the unit also called crude oil. Good and ancient black gold seems destined to be still true this year's balance of power in the world ..., says Gianluca Ansalone in *New Empires*. Geopolitically map of the XXI century ").

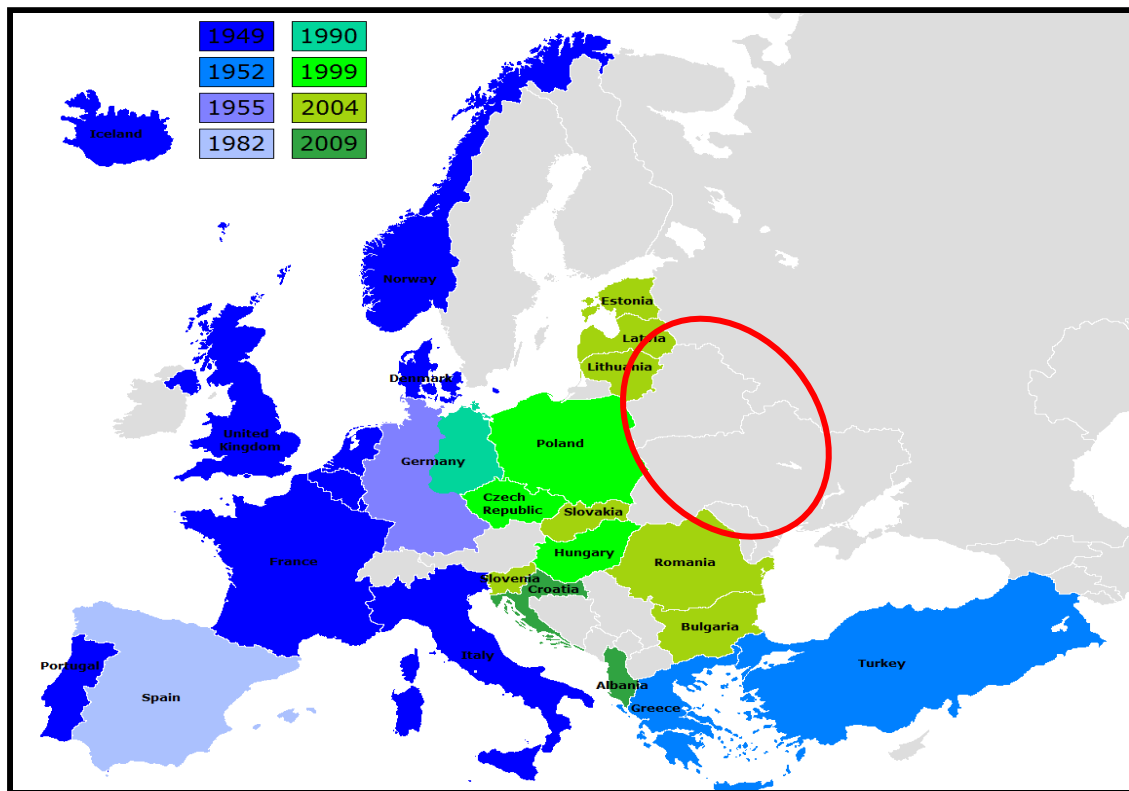
Certainly, the demographic factor will have a decisive influence in the transformation of China and India in two new empires. China is defined as the empire of the hardware, not by accident that country is considered "world factory". India will be a software empire that relies on youth, education, technology, and finally to knowledge. Then it will be Brazil, green-gold empire defined as non-oil, invests in bio-fuels (with the U.S. produces 70% of global ethanol). Also, we must not forget Russia, which will stand as an energy empire.

Becomes extremely important "geopolitical region that stretches from the Caucasus to the borders with China, huge pool with natural energy riches so coveted by many, but also an object of dispute between the great powers". What is at stake is the largely unrecognized 'ability to access vast hydrocarbon region where some countries are rich. Especially Kazakhstan, but also Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. But what will happen to U.S.? Will they remain the power that will have to confront other countries, or a perhaps, in a more realistic view, to assist even possible disputes. In such a geopolitical context, as it emerged from the comparative study presented last year in the framework of the Fifth International Scientific Sessions of the Lucian Blaga University in Sibiu, several scenarios are predictable on the future of NATO, as follows:

- NATO enlargement to the East;
- NATO enlargement to the southern Mediterranean;
- NATO repolarization /regionalization.

**2.1 NATO enlargement to the East** (figure 1), by continuing / initiating partnerships with former Soviet states, like

Georgia and Ukraine, and Moldova. They could start in certain periods of time the pre-accession procedures.

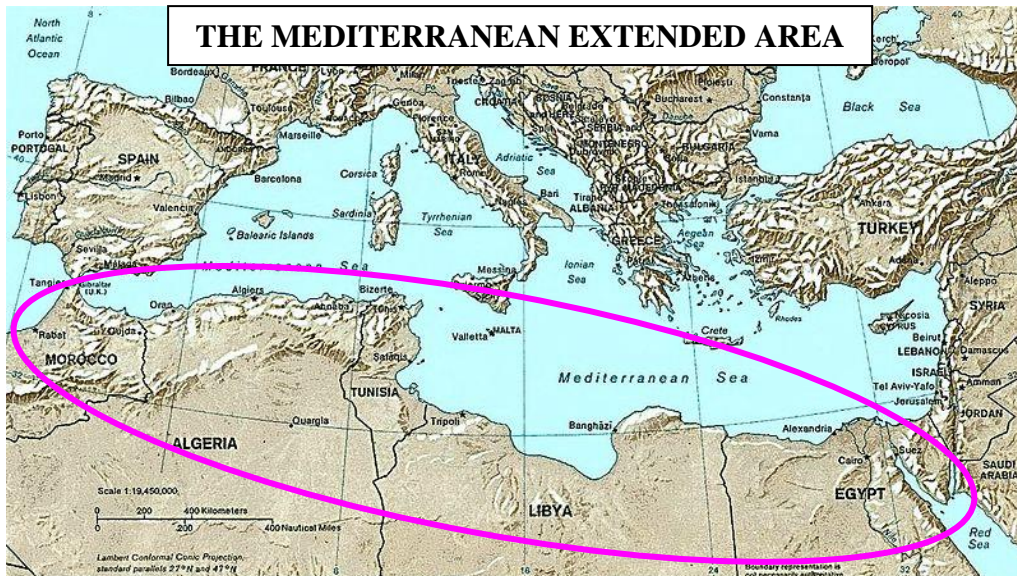


**Figure 1** NATO enlargement to the East (possible accession of the Republic of Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine). (source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Commons:Category:Maps\\_of\\_NATO](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Commons:Category:Maps_of_NATO).)

**2.2 NATO enlargement to the southern Mediterranean** (figure 2), deepening partnerships (Mediterranean Dialogue - Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia, and the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative - Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain and UAE) is funding the efforts to build a partnership with the Mediterranean region and broader Middle East with states in northern Africa, in the first instance, then start accession procedures and their admission to the Alliance. Among these we mention: Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, and Tunisia.

Challenges confronting NATO in the Mediterranean and broader Middle East are very different but no less difficult and

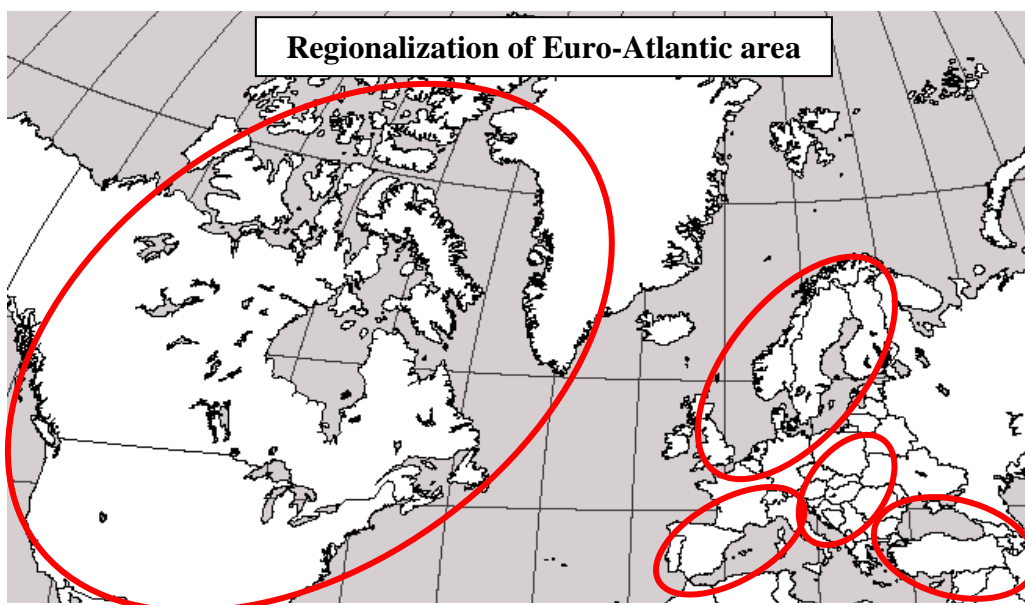
complex than those faced at the beginning of his relationship of cooperation with Central and Eastern Europe. In addition, the evolution of antagonistic relationship that existed during the Cold War, toward long-term integration of the region in Euro-Atlantic structures is remarkable in every respect. From the outset, this objective required a significant effort to overcome prejudices, eliminate misperceptions and building trust and mutual understanding through an orchestrated campaign of public diplomacy, cooperation with government agencies and support for the establishment of NGOs able to take the lead in discussions internally.



**Figure 2** Expanding into North Africa  
 (possible accession of Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, Libya and Egypt).  
 (processing by: <http://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki>).

Nowadays, a similar effort is needed, based on the recognition that building bridges to the Mediterranean and the Middle East deserve the same attention that NATO gave as legacy to overcome the division between East and West at the beginning of the last decade of last century. Significant expansion of public diplomacy efforts of NATO in the region, in concert with our partners, will be the first and one of the most important steps in this regard.

**2.3 NATO repolarization/ regionalization.** Given the possible regionalization of the European powers, it would not be impossible and irrelevant a repolarization of the entire Euro-Atlantic area (Figure 3); the historical and geographical affinities and economic and social features of the most important geopolitical European actors already give us a picture of possible regional security partnership across the Euro-Atlantic area.



**Figure 3** Regionalization of Euro-Atlantic area (possible option).  
 (processing by: <http://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki>).



All these options to extend the Alliance, on medium and long term, are possible but not all equally likely.

The most likely scenario would be to extend NATO eastward, followed by a repolarization potential of the Euro-Atlantic area, and at a quiet distant horizon (taking into account evolutions after the Arab Spring), extending to North Africa, the latter assuming a larger process of conceptual reorientation and reorganization of the doctrinal across the Alliance.

### 3. CONCLUSIONS

NATO has been and will continue to remain a vital security commitment between Europe and the U.S., appreciated equally by both parties, from all points of view (political, military, strategic, and social, economic and even ecological).

The main objective of NATO, established by the Treaty of Washington, is to safeguard the freedom and security of all its members, using political and military means. For this purpose, since its creation in 1949, NATO has provided permanent collective defense of all its members.

Alliance has also acted as the main forum for consultations on global and regional security issues in the interest of its members and as a pillar of peace and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area. Evolutionary analysis of NATO, from the perspective of doctrinal concepts, can actually offer us valuable ideas and

themes, strongly motivated and full of pragmatic significance, on NATO expansion. In this process are already accounted negotiations for Macedonia acceptance and themes like possible accession of Serbia, Georgia and Ukraine.

Also of major importance will be further development of relations between NATO and the Russian Federation, strongly marked by economic and political interests of each allied state and, most likely, strongly shaped by the management of bilateral situation post- Lisbon Summit of 2010, where Russia has participated with the hope of reaching a compromise on missile defense shield.

Currently, NATO is involved in a wide range of activities designed to promote cooperation with a number of countries outside NATO and pro-actively tackle new security challenges specific to XXI century, such as those from international terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

To remain effective in defending and promoting security in a new security changing environment, the Alliance is more than ever, engaged in a transformation process affecting all issues on the agenda and involving new missions, new members, new capabilities, new partnerships and new ways of acting.

Therefore, the most relevant aspect of NATO's transformation is still promoting enhanced political dialogue, both within the Alliance and in relation to its partners.

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