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Veröffentlichungsversion / Published Version
Zeitschriftenartikel / journal article

Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:
Gürses, E. (2023). NATO: From Control of the Western Territorial Line to Control of the Wider International Territory. *BRIQ Belt & Road Initiative Quarterly*, *4*(3), 38-60. https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-89251-5

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NATO: From Control of the Western Territorial Line to Control of the Wider International Territory

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Recieved: 10.04.2023
Accepted: 06.05.2023

How to cite: Gürses, E. (2023). NATO: from control of the Western territorial line to control of the wider international territory. *BRIQ Belt & Road Initiative Quarterly,* 4(3), 38-60.

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ABSTRACT

The US initially organized NATO, a regional military alliance, as the security pillar of the international system. It planned to regulate the power-security (economic, political, and military) problem in Western Europe and the Mediterranean according to its interests. The containment policy was a strategy pursued by the US against the Soviet Union between 1947 and 1991. The admission of Türkiye and Greece to NATO in 1952 was a continuation of the containment policy against the Soviet Union. The disintegration of the Soviet Union with the end of the Cold War also paved the way for the US to add new countries to NATO in the 1990s and 2000s. The enlargement of NATO and the policy of containment against the Soviet Union were carried out in line with the interests of the US. Especially in the 1980s, steps were taken to open and develop these markets by imposing appropriate rules. The US aimed to maintain its effectiveness in the wide European geography together with the countries it included in NATO. To meet the increasing needs of the existing market, efforts were made to open new areas in Western Europe, where NATO was established. However, a full consensus on security on the Euro-Atlantic line could not be reached. The process of assigning NATO a task to protect new areas of interest, namely all areas in which the US and some of its allies operate or want to operate, has been started following changing imperial demands. How this process develops will be determined by the attitudes of social, regional, and international actors.

Keywords: Containment, hegemony, NATO, territorial control, Cold War

Introduction

ALTHOUGH IT IS OFTEN CLAIMED THAT alliances are formed for defensive purposes, it is also noted that formation processes are structured against certain threat perceptions, including economic, political and ideological purposes. (Russett, 1971, s.262-89; Trauschweizer, 2016, s. 166-94; Fang & Johnson & Leeds, 2014, 775-809; Synder, 1999, 102-119; Synder, 1997; Osgood, 1968).

When countries enter into alliances, they calculate that their interests will be protected among the efforts for a common purpose. It can be said that countries that think they have enough power to realize their own goals may act and enter into an alliance to reduce the cost, shorten the time, or justify the country's action through the alliance. The United States of America (US) reorganized NATO, a regional military alliance at the beginning, to organize the power-security (economic, political, and military) problem in Western Europe and the Mediterranean in a way that suited its interests after World War II.

The Problem of Line Security in the Cold War

The Cold War process began when the NATO Treaty was signed in April 1949. It was clear that in this process, NATO would be controlled by the most powerful military force, the United States. Contrary to the Monroe tradition, the US, which started to become a party to the military-political-economic relations of Europe in every field with the World Wars and especially the Cold War, aimed to protect its interests first.[1] The admission of Türkiye and Greece to NATO in 1952 was a continuation of the policy of containment of the Soviet Union. Nine days after West Germany (German Federal Republic) was admitted to NATO, the Soviet bloc countries gathered in Warsaw on May 11–14, 1955, and the Warsaw Pact was signed on May 14 (Nogee & Donaldson, 1988, 110). The effort to expand NATO's sphere of influence was followed by the inclusion of Spain as the 16th member of NATO in 1982.[2] The disintegration of the Soviet Union with the end of the Cold War also paved the way for the US to add new countries to NATO in the 1990s and 2000s.

While the US was attempting to rebuild the capitalism of Western Europe, which had come to a standstill with World War II, it started to interfere directly in the internal relations of Europe by creating military-political-economic cooperation. The Marshall Plan was brought to the agenda in 1947 to keep Europe economically within the interests of the US. This plan aimed to revive the European economies under the hegemony of the US[3] and thus prevent possible radicalization that may occur in these areas and a shift towards the Soviet bloc (Harman, 1999, 544).

The US emphasis on economic relations with Europe also showed that the US economy could not be isolated from the international capitalist economy, which is the reason for its existence, and that it had to be involved in the markets of developed countries. Although it was stated that the emergence of Washington and Moscow, which were in cooperation during and after the war period as representatives of two different political-economic structures, constituted the main basis of the tension in the new process, as it was understood over time, the primary cause of the tension was economic. For this purpose, in the new international system that the US wanted to build post-World War II, NATO was structured as a security organization, the UN as a political organization, and the World Bank and IMF as economic organizations.

Washington gave weight to military structuring in Europe, believing that the spread of Socialist/Communist ideology would endanger the US market in Western Europe. The deployment of US troops to Europe was intended to intervene as a player. The necessary conditions for this were created by the Cold War. Through NATO, Washington aimed to control the Western European line, where the United States had vital interests.

It was stated that NATO emerged as a result of the beginning of the Cold War, and the embargo imposed on Berlin by the Soviet Union in 1948–1949 played an important role in this. It is also stated that the United Nations reached an agreement on November 13, 1948, which was accepted by Moscow but rejected by the West. The US used helping the people who were starving due to the blockade in

Berlin for propaganda purposes and thus had the opportunity to blame Moscow. (Thomas, 1969; Rawnsley, 1999, 31).

Decision-makers in Washington expressed that NATO being against the Soviet Union was vital to US interests in Western Europe.

In the report titled "Assessment of the Current Process in US Foreign Policy," dated February 24, 1948, prepared by George Kennan, the Political Planning Director of the US Department of State at the time, to present to the Secretary of State, George Marshall, it was reminded that the US held 50% of the world's wealth and constituted 6.5% of the world's population. Kennan continued, stating that the duty of those who govern the US is to establish the type of relationship necessary to maintain this inequality in a way that will not harm national security in the future, and "all our attention should be directed primarily to our national goals everywhere. We should not deceive ourselves that we have the luxury of thinking of others and of helping the world" (Report by the Policy Planning Staff, 1948).[4]

In this report, which mentions three long-term possibilities for Western and Eastern Europe, Kennan mentions the possibility that Germany or Russia may control this geography, as well as a federal European structure, and states that it is necessary to choose a European federation that includes Western and Eastern Europe. This political tradition was brought to the fore on different occasions by decision-makers in US foreign policy during the Cold War period. Suggesting a realistic foreign policy for the US in this period, Prof. Morgenthau also stated that, as an unrivaled superior power in the Western hemisphere, the US always strived to maintain a privileged position (Morgenthau, 1952).

Washington believed that the Soviet Union was threatening the Western European market. Decision-makers in Washington expressed that NATO being against the Soviet Union was vital to US interests in Western Europe. While Washington acknowledged that Europe's role and responsibility would increase in the new security arrangement, he continued to emphasize that NATO would play a leading role, at least in the medium term, due to its existing organization.

In the speech of the then US Secretary of State (1989–1992), James Baker, at the West Berlin Press Club in 1989, it was stated that it was important to end the division in Europe and to maintain the relationship between the US and Europe in terms of politics, military, and economy (United States Information Service, 1989). In the same speech, Baker stated that NATO was essential for maintaining the link between North America and Europe while also suggesting that NATO was a flexible organization and could adapt to rapidly changing situations.

At NATO's London Summit on July 5–6, 1990, the leaders of NATO countries agreed on the restructuring of the alliance (The Independent, 1990). When French President Mitterand's idea of a European Confederation brought forward the claim that NATO could be excluded from Europe, the NATO secretary general opposed this, thinking it would pave the way for European instability.

Margaret Thatcher with other summit leaders at the 1990 NATO London Summit.
(Akiyama, 1990)

The British foreign minister of the time, D. Hurd, emphasized that NATO was important for European security, indicating that London was of a similar opinion to Washington on the future role of NATO in Europe (NATO Review, 1990). For Washington, Britain was one of the most important guarantees of European-North American unity in Europe. Former US foreign minister H. Kissinger stated that the US should play a supportive role in the new European security system and emphasized that NATO should keep up with new developments but maintain its presence there due to possible conflicts that may arise in the European geography (Newsweek, 1989).

In the statement published in the meeting held in Brussels on January 10–11, 1994, the leaders of the North Atlantic countries stated that they gathered for the renewal of the alliance in light of the historical change affecting the European continent and that efforts would be made to develop the European Security and Defense Identity by using NATO's facilities and capabilities (Hill & Smith, 2000, 217). The Declaration of Euro-Atlantic Cooperation was published at the Madrid meeting of the North Atlantic Council on July 8, 1997. At the meeting where the decision to invite the Czech Republic, Poland, and Hungary to NATO membership talks, it was stated that the member states of the North Atlantic Council gathered in Madrid to shape the new NATO as it entered the 21st Century (Hill & Smith, 2000:237).

In February 2001, US President Bush (2001–2009) and British Prime Minister Blair (1997–2007) supported Bush's European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) efforts to improve defense capability (in which NATO did not intervene).

Europe's efforts towards a security structure that could exclude NATO created constant discomfort in Washington.

The joint statement stated that the ESDP would be supported to the extent that it strengthens NATO's capabilities (Terriff, Weber, Croft, & Howorth, 2001). Here, it is seen that London and Washington are not parties to a structure independent of NATO. In his speech at the European Security Policy Conference in Munich on February 3, 2001, D. Rumsfeld, the then US Secretary of Defense (2001–2006), emphasized that attempts to reduce NATO's effectiveness would be a confusing repetition or upset the transatlantic link (Hill & Smith, 2000, 233-34).[5] Former US Secretary of State (1993–1997) Warren Christopher and former Secretary of Defense (1994–1997) William Perry also suggested restructuring NATO and making it a force that could intervene in situations where the common West's interests might be harmed (Christopher & Perry, 1997).

The Prague Summit on November 21–22, 2002, was an important turning point for NATO. At the summit, it was emphasized that NATO must prepare its forces to take action when necessary, and it was decided that effective military power is essential to maintaining security in the Euro-Atlantic region. Therefore a NATO Response Force should be established to send to the required regions. The European intervention force, which was stated to be 60 thousand people, would use NATO infrastructure, but when Greece rejected Türkiye's request to participate in the decision-making process of this force, Türkiye opposed the use of NATO's facilities by the European intervention force. On the other hand, a NATO intervention force consisting of 21 thousand people was brought to the table by the US. This development is important regarding the US's efforts to keep NATO in the EU's geography.

After the Cuban Missile Crisis in October 1962, the President of France (1959–1969), Charles de Gaulle, expressed doubts about relations with Washington. In his letter to the then US President Lyndon Johnson, dated March 7, 1966, France's decision was expressed as "to ensure our full sovereignty in our geography", "to end participation in the combined command", "to remove the troops from NATO's control" and "to change the form of our alliance without changing its essence" (Permanent Representation of France to NATO, 2017). Charles de Gaulle brought the French naval forces out of NATO's control. It also gave notice to NATO to remove its headquarters from France. It withdrew its troops from NATO on June 21, 1966.

Closing ceremony of NATO's Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) facility at Rocquencourt, near Paris, on March 30, 1967. (NATO, n.d.)

This development complicated Gaulle's relations with the Washington administration. In a letter dated March 22, 1966, written in response by US President Johnson, there was a clear sense of astonishment. In his letter, Johnson wrote that it is difficult to believe in this attitude of France, which "makes a special contribution to the security and development of the West", and that "France, an old friend and ally, will be put on hold whenever France wants to assume its leading role again" (Western European Union Assembly General Affairs Committee, 1967). Eventually, France returned to NATO's military wing in 2009.

Europe's efforts towards a security structure that could exclude NATO created constant discomfort in Washington. Against this development, which may have led to the exclusion of American forces from Europe in the medium and long term, Washington aimed to maintain its effectiveness in the wide European geography together with the countries it included in NATO in the post-Cold War period. It was seen that, in response to the efforts of France and Germany for a European-centered security structure, the UK made efforts to organize the European defense system in a way that would be integrated with NATO and that a full consensus on security could not be reached in the Euro-Atlantic line in the 1990s.[6]

The Effort to Extend the Line of Control through NATO

Jaap de Hoop Scheffer from the Netherlands, elected the new NATO secretary general in

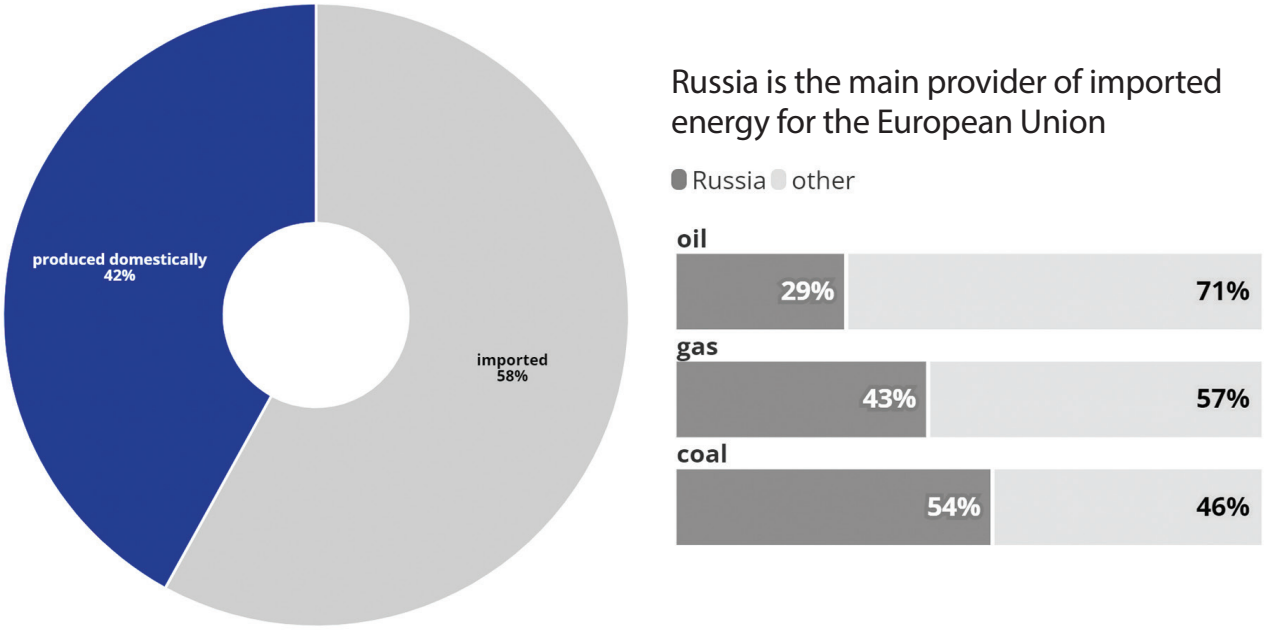
January 2004, stated at a press conference with US President George W. Bush that NATO could not remain neutral to the events in Afghanistan (June 29, 2004). In the statement published at the meeting attended by the leaders of the North Atlantic Council member states, it was decided to deploy the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan, and it was emphasized that contributing to peace and stability in Afghanistan was NATO's main priority (NATO Press Release, 2004). These statements showed that NATO's fields of activity were being expanded.

Today, many developed European countries must meet their energy needs from other areas.

In Western Europe, where NATO was deployed, efforts were made to open up new areas for the increasing market needs of the international capitalist economy, whose existing market was led by the US. It was brought to the agenda primarily due to its proximity to Eastern Europe's geography, which the Soviet Union controlled. Especially in the 1980s, steps were taken to open and develop these markets by imposing appropriate rules. For this reason, the idea that democracy can only happen with a free market was propagated, and attempts were made to prove it true.[7]

It was clear that the free market understanding would privilege imperial centers with a comparative advantage.[8] The geography of the Greater Middle East, which can also be called the Islamic geography, was also highlighted because it contains energy resources, which are the most suitable product in terms of providing the material resources necessary to maintain hegemony in the new system and therefore continue to play a vital role in the hegemony race today. It is clear that the areas where energy resources are located would play an important role in reorganizing the share taken from the system in the restructuring process that took place in the transitional periods. The sharing problem in this process led to an increase in uncertainty.

Today, many developed European countries must meet their energy needs from other areas. In the 1990s, following the end of the Cold War, Japan-centered East Asia and Germany-centered Western Europe came to the fore as centers that could be an alternative economic power to the United States. However, over time, it became clear that the dependence of these centers on foreign energy was an important problem. It was known that these power centers were shown as a risk in the 1992 Pentagon report (Tyler, 1992).[9] In the report, the efforts of the countries that could be an economic alternative to the US in the areas where energy resources are concentrated would have reduced their energy dependence. It was emphasized that this situation would pave the way for alternative power centers such as Germany, France, and Japan to stand on their own and act independently in world politics.



Energy production and import rates of the European Union. (Eurostat, 2020)

If Europe met its energy needs primarily from the Russian Federation, the Middle East, or North Africa and established its own army outside the control of the US, it could disrupt the international order that the US established after World War II. In 1947, the expectation of the Washington administration to be able to adequately benefit from the European market, which depended to a significant extent on the prosperity of the US and the economic standing of Europe, could have been in vain. A Europe in which Eastern Europe was controlled by Germany and North Africa was controlled by France could exclude the United States from the region or narrow its economic sphere of activity. As Dr. H. Kissinger pointed out, it could risk turning the US into an island on the edge of Eurasia (Newsweek, 1989). The effort of the United States to control the North African and Middle Eastern markets and resources, along with the Western European and Eastern European markets, was deemed essential for the project to be successful and for the hegemony to be sustained.

America's post-Cold War regional and international activities were based on this account. NATO's turn towards Eastern Europe was related to the effort to control wider Europe. A new line of control was created towards Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Romania, and Bulgaria (The New American, 2003). With the inclusion of these countries in NATO, the effort to secure this line continued. For the US, it was important to prevent Germany's efforts to control these markets and its rapprochement with Russia

by expanding its sphere of influence eastward. Dr. Kissinger expressed his uneasiness that Germany could claim a leading role in Europe and that a rapprochement with the Russian Federation might arise (Kissinger, 2001).

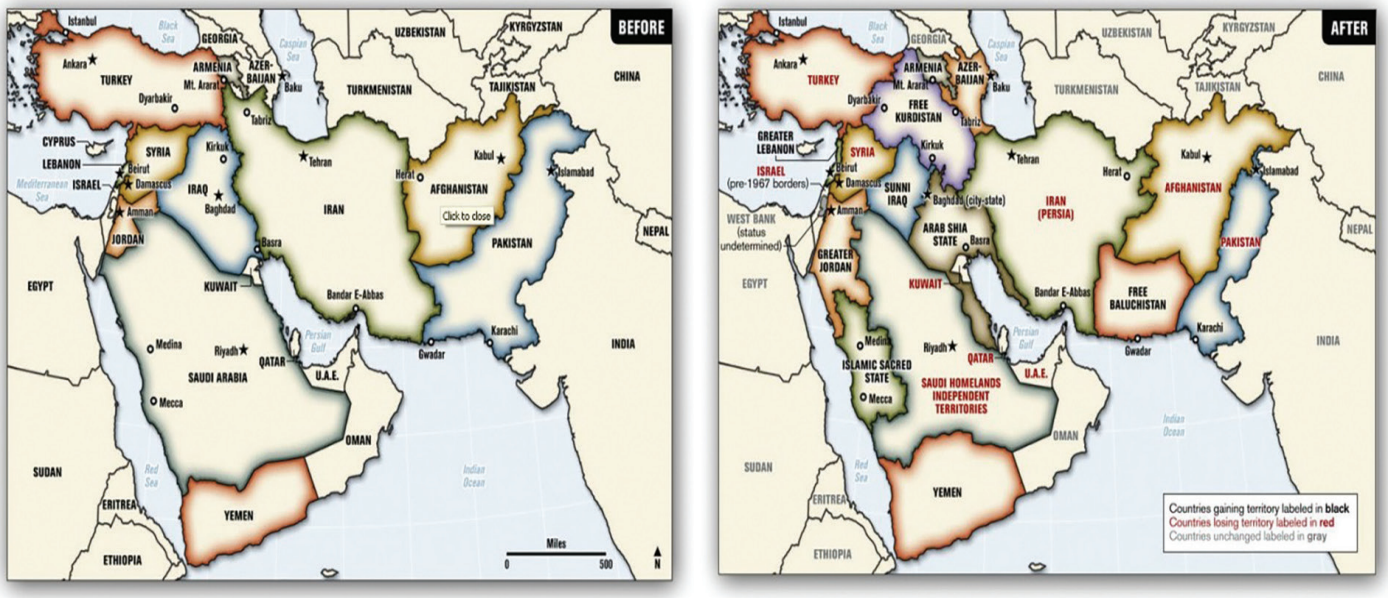
From Geopolitical Alliance to Economic Competition

The containment policy implemented by the US against the Soviet Union during the Cold War began to be implemented against the liberal capitalist countries, which were former allies and new rivals, in the post-Cold War period, although not as harshly. In the new process, the old allies disagreed over sharing the market (O'Loughlin, 1996, 133).[10] The struggle was about whether the market could be controlled, and as was seen in the case of the People's Republic of China, they did not have a problem with communism as long as they kept the market open. Many who defined the Soviet Union as the devil's empire in the 1980s because it closed the market continued to have close relations with communist China.

In the strategy put forward by then-US President George W. Bush (2001–2009), the 'Greater Middle East Project' was put forward to create more freedom for the Middle East. It was envisaged that the West would support some West Asian and Arab countries, especially those with energy resources, to strive for democracy, market reforms, and human rights (A Forward Strategy for NATO, 2004). "We fight for democracy because the larger the pool of democracy, the greater our security and well-being," said Anthony Lake, director of the US National Security Council, in 1995 (Ikenberry, 2004). On the other hand, Brzezinski said that if the democratization of the Middle East was not rushed and there was an election, bin Laden would win in Saudi Arabia (Brezinski, 2004).

The convergence of the EU with central and eastern European countries by expanding its borders to the east occurred at the same time as the USA expanded its influence with NATO in this region. This indicated a regional rivalry in the wider European region.

In the 1990s, the US started discussing the Greater Middle East issue. In 1995, they established a division at Rand Corporation called the Greater Middle East. While defining this, they started from Afghanistan and drew a line that included the east of the Caspian, the Caucasus, the geography of western Asia, and North Africa. Defining the area of vital US interests as a region starting from western India and extending to the Mediterranean Sea, it was proposed to give NATO a role that includes India (Kemp & Saunders, 2003; Lewis, 1995; Lesser & Nardulli & Arghavan, 1998; Kissinger, 1994). This geography is mostly Islamic, where energy resources are concentrated. Some included the Balkans in this area. In the 1990s, they discussed the events in the Balkans and the lack of timely intervention in the conflicts as a part of Washington's effectiveness in Europe.



US Colonel Ralph Peters, in his article *"Blood Borders: How a Better Middle East Would Look Like"*, laid out the objectives of the Greater Middle East Project as shown on this map. (Armed Forces Journal, 2006)

The European countries, which needed the help of NATO and, therefore, the US, by failing to stop the civil war, facilitated the work of those in Washington trying to get involved in the region. According to Zbigniew Brzezinski, the national security adviser of the Carter era (1977–1981), the failure of NATO here would weaken both NATO and America's global leadership (Federici & Cafentzis, 2000, 35). With this intervention, the US could show that there was still a European power there.

The convergence of the European Union (EU) with central and eastern European countries by expanding its borders to the east occurred at the same time as the US expanded its influence with NATO in this region. This indicated a regional rivalry in the wider European region (Hardy, 1995). According to Carpenter, if the Bush administration could not prevent the growing divergence in interests and policy approaches between Europe and the US, it would have difficulty maintaining the new mission it wanted to impose on NATO (Carpenter, 2003, 511).

It started in Afghanistan after 9/11 (2001). Afghanistan is an important route for transporting Kazakh-Turkmen energy resources to the Indian Ocean. After Afghanistan, Iraq was seen as an important area of operation in the westward expansion of the Greater Middle East project. With the invasion of Iraq, Russian and French companies, which had acquired significant energy investment rights there, were excluded from the region. It was also noteworthy

that Syria and Iran aimed to prevent the connections there, and these countries were intimidated into adopting a condescending attitude towards the US (Taheri, 2003).

Finland's membership was made in accordance with the policy of containment of the Russian Federation.

Türkiye's refusal to accept this role also impacted the idea of northern Iraq as a regional operation center. Northern Iraq's Mediterranean connection was sought. Their intense interest in Cyprus can also be considered in connection with this. A line needs to be established from the northwest of Iran to connect northern Iraq to the Caspian. Then needs to be a revolt against the Azeris or the Kurds in northwest Iran. It is known that the uprising and the repressive practices that followed have been used as justifications for humanitarian intervention. As emphasized in the Carter Doctrine, it was stated that the main purpose was to ensure US-centered control of the energy resources in the region (Carter Doctrine, 2005).[11] It is known that they have not been successful in these attempts, but control efforts with different methods continue.

In the article titled "The Greater Middle East Initiative," published in the March 29, 2004, Policy Brief magazine of the US-based think tank the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (founded in 1910), the G-8 was to be held in June 2004 under the name of the Bush administration's "Broader Middle East Initiative." It was stated that he would announce a project at the summit. The "Greater Middle East" geography included the Arab world, Afghanistan, Iran, Israel, Pakistan, and Türkiye. It was aimed at democratizing the region and transforming it economically and politically. In fact, it was clear that they were aiming for forms of government suitable for them. The form of government in Saudi Arabia was not mentioned (Ottaway, M., & Carothers, T., 2004).

US Republican Senator Chuck Hagel, at the security seminar titled "US, NATO, and the Greater Middle East" held in Brussels on January 23, 2004, stated that the threats to NATO come not from the big powers but from the small ones, and NATO needed to be more involved to bring stability to the Greater Middle East. Türkiye was trying to be convinced to play an important role in the Greater Middle East Project and was said to have the potential to influence this geography, as stated by Chase, Hill, and Kennedy (1996, 47).

In March 1999, Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary were admitted to NATO. On March 29, 2004, NATO admitted seven new countries (Bulgaria, Romania, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, and Slovenia). This brought the number of NATO members to 26. The number of members increased to 30, with Albania and Croatia (2009), Karabakh (2017), and North Macedonia (2020).

Meeting of Finnish President Sauli Niinisto and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in March 2023. (Presidential Press Office, 2023)

The efforts to ensure the eastward expansion of NATO planned by the Washington administration, together with some of its allies, were blocked by Türkiye's veto. With the abolition of the veto, the way for Finland's membership was cleared. It was accepted for membership on April 4, 2023. Ankara vetoed Sweden's membership application on the grounds that it protected terrorist organizations in its country. Finland's membership was made in accordance with the policy of containment of the Russian Federation. As before, Moscow stated that this development threatens the security of Russia (The Guardian, 2022; Jakarta Post, 2023).

At the Istanbul Summit, the role that NATO could play in the enlarged Middle East with the new definition was discussed. In his speech at Galatasaray University, NATO Secretary General Scheffer stated that NATO is "no longer a passive organization for deterrence but an alliance on the move."13 In his statement before the Istanbul Summit, Scheffer stated that the summit could create an opportunity for NATO to create a framework for the area stretching from the Mediterranean to the wider Middle East (Scheffer, 2004, 6).

Dick Cheney, the US Vice President from 2001–2009, also gave clues about the project in his speech at the World Economic Forum held in Switzerland on January 24, 2004. It was expressed that it was in everyone's interest to promote freedom and democracy in the Greater Middle East.

While the United States had conflicts with its former allies in its effort to secure the market and keep it out of the control of competitors, it also continued its activities against potential alternative powers such as the Russian Federation. Russia faced a containment policy around itself, and the US tried to cut its connection with Iran in the Caucasus by controlling Georgia (NATO, 2006). Georgia's efforts to be included in NATO were made to move the US control of NATO over a wider area. However, the effort of the US and some of its allies to extend NATO to the Caucasus to both expand the area of control and narrow the sphere of influence of the Russian Federation faced the reaction of Moscow (Reuters, 2008). After Russia intervened in Georgia in August 2008, the US took a step back.

Dr. Kissinger mentioned before the end of the Cold War: "…if you fail to prevent the alliance of Germany and France, and they do ally with Russia, it will be a great disaster," in his article in Newsweek in December 1989.

Iran saw cooperation with Russia as a counterweight to the United States. On the other hand, France continued its stance in favor of Washington to maintain its traditional influence in African geography.

Some state that the Greater Middle East Project was a positive effort to emphasize the dissemination of democracy in the region. H. Kissinger, a former US Secretary of State, said, "The best and indeed the most sensible choice is to adapt American-style economic and political priorities for the entire world" (Kissinger, 2001, 252). This statement can be seen as an expression of an effort to seek legitimacy to justify their imposition.

After the Cold War, tensions increased as the international system was not settled. After the post-Cold War system could not be established for more than 30 years, the different powers Washington and the allies wanted to control began acting differently. On this subject, Dr. Henry Kissinger mentioned before the end of the Cold War: "…if you fail to prevent the alliance of Germany and France, and they do ally with Russia, it will be a great disaster," in an article in Newsweek in December 1989 (Kissinger, 1989). Those who thought that they would not have difficulty controlling this system calculated that the Soviet Union could not resist the US policies and that the Russian Federation and others, which took its place, could be brought to heel in the same way. However, as the new power centers increasingly put forward their demands, the Washington administration began to find it difficult to oppose them. 9/11 was thought of as an opportunity to control the new system, but this development, in which allegations were made that it occurred because precautions were not taken, did not work even though it allowed the US to intervene as far as Afghanistan through NATO (Vidal, 2002).

Due to the high costs, direct conflicts between the major countries were avoided. The power race continued to seize hegemony in the system booty through other local or regional actors.

Syrian and Russian soldiers stand guard at a military position in the recaptured neighborhood in the Eastern Ghouta countryside of Damascus, Syria, on April 1, 2018. (Xinhua/Safarjalani, 2018)

While the efforts to establish new alliances in the Eurasian geography continue, Washington, which has to intervene in everything in the unipolar system, has difficulty meeting this cost. As the reactions and resistance increased in different countries against the efforts to impose on others, the Washington administration became more aggressive in its policy of intimidation. These aggressive policies will put the United States and its affiliates in a difficult position in their international economic activities, where they gain the most. Since these developments will reflect negatively on the welfare of the country's people, they can potentially increase social opposition in their society and among their close allies.

The Impasse of Imperialist Policies

In the first half of the 20th century, centrally developed countries were at each other's throats to get a bigger share of the world economy. Due to the high cost of these experiences, the major countries started to develop new methods in the sharing wars. Especially after World War II, ethnic and religious movements were used in the surrounding countries that were to be subjugated. In this way, the demands to be imposed on the surrounding countries were brought to the agenda when the governments in these countries had difficulties, especially in the face of the demands of ethnic and religious groups.

There was a constant change in the appearance of imperialism in the last quarter of the 19th century, and there were differences in its methods.

During the 20th century, although some centrally developed countries sometimes disagreed about maintaining international influence, the imperialist structure of the international system did not fundamentally change. The change is observed in the approaches and methods used. It aims to direct the opposition to the existing system to other areas. The cost of maintaining activity in the environment using an ethnic-religious card, one of the most important methods left its mark on the last quarter of the 20th century, was also high for neighboring countries such as Türkiye, which was the target of imperial impositions. It is known that the Washington administration resorts to controlled instability, using it to remove obstacles to its effort to maintain its hegemony, and uses instability and provocations when military actions are necessary for this purpose (Escobar, 2002).[12]

Maintaining hegemony has a cost. For this reason, central countries have entered a race over the control of energy resources. The issue of northern Iraq can be understood within this framework. Washington wants to establish new structures to help the US control the energy resources in the Gulf and the Caspian basin and establish states it can keep under its control. Efforts to create a troubled region that will have to follow policies at odds with its neighbors and, therefore, dependent on the US are being carried out in Iraq and the northeast of Syria. The existence of 261 billion barrels (estimated) of oil reserves in Saudi Arabia, 96 in Kuwait, 112 in Iraq, 93 in Iran, and 160–200 billion barrels (estimated) in the Caspian basin (also approximately trillions of cubic meters of natural gas) shows the reason for the competition of central countries in this region (Oil & Gas Journal, 2003). Developed countries, which use the resources they transfer from the surrounding countries to satisfy some of the demands of their societies, continued to preach that the people of the developing countries can get rid of the negative conditions they are in with liberal globalization, while Kissinger expressed that globalization is another name for American hegemony (Kissinger, 1999, 7).

The Field of Geopolitical Competition Expands

The geography of the Greater Middle East, stretching from Afghanistan to Morocco, as well as Eurasia, extending from Hungary to China, being part of the geopolitical rivalry, shows the relationship between geography and politics and is expressed in the political, economic, and military efforts for the control of the geographical areas where the strategic resources are located in the world. Therefore, the region has been at the center of discussions (Abu-Lughod, 1989, 343-5; Gills & Frank, 1996, 86).

In the first half of the 20th century, Germany and Britain's efforts to influence Europe were replaced by the competition between the US and the Soviet bloc in the second half of the century, as the US came to the fore as the strongest military-industrial power. In the 1990s, the strength race gained a new dimension, but it has not been completed yet. In this process, the states that want to reach their specific goals in the strength race in the international system have made an intense effort to determine which methods should be used in this race and their priorities. The world is witnessing new geopolitical competition in the first quarter of the 21st century.

Former US National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski delivered a speech at the 50th Munich Security Conference. (Kleinschmidt, 2014)

Brzezinski, the national security adviser of former US president Jimmy Carter (1977–1981), emphasized the importance of Eurasia and stated that 60 percent of the world's national income and three-quarters of the known energy resources were located in this geography (Brezinski, 1997, 31). Brzezinski stated that as much as the US needed the whole world's market and resources, Eurasia needed American dominance for stability and emphasized that there is an inevitable process of interdependence (Brezinski, 1997, 36).

In today's world, where competition is about the seizure of resources, it is seen that the control of energy resources is one of the basic conditions for ensuring international effectiveness, and it is seen that research that tries to explain geopolitical competition without reference to resources is highlighted. Samuel Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations" is an example (Huntington, 2003, 22-49).[13] He argues that hegemony can be sustained through imperial solidarity. He also states that healthy cooperation with Europe will support America's superpower position (Huntington, 1999, 48). Charles A. Kupchan from the US Council on Foreign Relations draws attention to the fact that the future clash of civilizations may not be between the US and the rest of the world but between developed Europe (Kupchan, 2002, 42-44).

The control of resources has political, military, and economic dimensions. While the effectiveness of the US at a certain regional level brings along its privilege in energy, possible rival powers such as Germany, France, and Japan have chosen to stay close to the US due to their lack of energy resources in their geographies and their lack of structures to control the regions where the resources are located.

The Russian Federation, on the other hand, continues to be an important power center with its self-sufficient resources. The Russian geostrategist Alexander Dugin published his book Fundamentals of Geopolitics the same year Brzezinski published his book The Great Chessboard. In this work, he explored the ways of a new structuring in Eurasia and thus estimated how to block US activity in this geography. He discussed an axis that included Russia, Germany, Iran, and Japan at the base of this bloc. This project highlighted Moscow's demand for a multipolar world order against the unipolar system the US had attempted to build (Dunlop, 2004, 41-57; Shlapentokh, 2001, 29-37).

For the USA to maintain its hegemony in the international system, it is necessary to control the system's military, political, and economic pillars as they were after World War II and allocate the necessary resources for this.

The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), where a significant portion of the world's oil reserves are located, continues to be active in the world energy market as an organization dominated by Islamic countries. Developed industrial countries that are highly dependent on foreign energy (natural gas, oil, etc.) act in cooperation with the US to meet their needs. It is also noteworthy that the countries that produce the most oil in the world, such as Saudi Arabia, where Washington's effectiveness is high, sometimes try to follow an alternative foreign policy and turn to alternative markets in the new Eurasia for oil production. However, they need US-centered solidarity in security matters.

The priorities of the US and some of its allies in international investments through international oil companies, and thus the income they provide, significantly contribute to the economic gains essential for international hegemony. For the US to maintain its hegemony in the international system, it is necessary to control the system's military, political, and economic pillars as they were after World War II and allocate the necessary resources for this.

NATO Expansion by Creating Crisis: The Russia-Ukraine War

The beginning of the conflict between Ukraine and Russia has created new opportunities for the US to increase the effectiveness of NATO again. In 2019, French President Macron's statement that NATO was brain dead caused discomfort in centers such as Washington (The Economist, 2019; The Guardian, 2019). However, starting in 2014, Moscow's decision to annex Crimea with a referendum and the attempt to protect the Russian population in the Donbas region started a new security debate in European geography, and in some of its reports in recent years, Washington's security strategies towards the Russian Federation were also mentioned. In the same report, it was stated that the military assistance and consultancy of the US in the Ukraine-Russia conflict could provide significant advantages in terms of increasing the expenses of Russia without causing a provocation that could lead to the spread of the conflict (RAND Corporation, 2019, 4).

The Ukraine war allowed the Washington administration to restructure NATO's effectiveness as a control mechanism in the wide European geography while putting a barrier in front of the discussions and attempts to exclude NATO from Europe (Chatham House, 2023). The US and some of its allies, who want to control the line, will want to extend their control to an area level, that is, to some parts of Eurasia and Africa, if they are successful in these efforts. In the Caucasus, when the Russian Federation blocked the control mechanism they wanted to establish through Georgia, they had to step back. It is seen that they have difficulties in Ukraine, which they have chosen as their new control area. Following Dr. Kissinger's warnings, they took an important step in blocking the rapprochement of their European allies, especially Germany, with Moscow, but as Kissinger stated, they faced new problems. Some allies, such as Washington and London, who have difficulties taking a step back, think that Russia's victory in the war would be an important step back for the United States after all NATO's efforts, as NATO Secretary General Stoltenberg stated as the reason for this difficulty (Stoltenberg, 2023).

While Prof. John J. Mearsheimer also stated that the US and its European allies played a provocative role in the Ukraine issue (Mearsheimer, 2014), Kissinger, who saw the cost of the war and its risk of spreading, suggested to Zelenski and his allies to adopt a compromising stance in order to end the war (Carbonaro, 2002; Bella, 2022; Kissinger, 2014).

While the problems in relations between the US and the UK and some of their Western allies in Europe were increasing, the Chinese President Xi visited Moscow, and during his meeting with the President of the Russian Federation, Putin stated that their countries play a driving force in the geopolitical change in the world (Lemaître & Ruisseau, 2023; Ellyatt, 2023; Aljazeera, 2023). Considering that China is shown as a target after Russia in the Western press and some Western leaders' statements and that the US, UK, and Australia have established a joint military pact in the region, he sees that these developments are linked to Russia's resistance.

The US-British alliance is disturbed by the fact that India meets its energy needs, especially from Russia (Chang, 2023; Sen, 2022; Naqvi, 2023). It is because the energy cooperation between India and Russia prevents the success of the embargo against Russia. In addition to the rising social reactions in European geography, the inability to control China and Indian Prime Minister Mondi's refusal to accept the termination of energy cooperation with Russia made it difficult for Washington and London to build a new international system under their control, relying on a military structure like NATO.

Conclusion

In addition to powers such as the Russian Federation, it was pointed out that NATO could face a long-term competition problem with China and the US (The National Security Strategy of the United

States of America, 2002, 26-7; Brezinski, 1997; Kissinger, 1994, 826). The high rate of development in China increases its energy needs. It was stated that China would want more say in the geopolitical competition over oil production centers, increasing its problems with the US, which does not want partners with alternative power and resources (Segal, 1998; Ricks, 2000). The embargo imposed by the US due to its problems with Iran was evaluated as an opportunity by the Chinese administration. While China had the opportunity to sign an energy agreement with Iran, which had difficulties in the market due to the US embargo, this situation also allowed Iran to breathe economically (Fassihi & Myers, 2021).

The attitude of the Washington administration, which tries to threaten the countries of the Gulf region through Iran, has been seen as an opportunity for China. The Chinese administration used the economic relationship it established with Tehran to relieve the tension between Saudi Arabia and Iran and succeeded in bringing the two countries together. The meeting between Iran and Saudi Arabia clearly disturbed the Washington administration.

It is stated that Washington has difficulties in its efforts to control the international system. Charles A. Kupchan, who served as a member of the Clinton administration's national security council and worked at Georgetown University, stated that with the emergence of centers such as a united Europe, it would be difficult for the US unipolar system to last even ten more years (Kupchan, 2002, 62; Baun, 2004, p. 27-38). On the other hand, it is also recommended that governments follow an increasingly intrusive policy to maintain control. Robert Kagan from the Carnegie Foundation suggested that American hegemony be preserved, and intervention should be considered before crises occur. He also stated that this is necessary to be a global superpower (Kagan, 2001).

While Washington recommends action wherever NATO interests are threatened (The National Security Strategy of the US, 2002), it was emphasized that the US always had the right to use military force in any country in the world when there was a threat to its interests (Shuia, 2004: 34). Having added Europe after World War II to the American continent, which the Monroe Doctrine essentially defined as the sphere of interest by emphasizing that Washington would act to protect US interests wherever they existed, the Washington administration redefined this sphere with the new realities that emerged after the Cold War.

The process of giving NATO a task to protect new areas of interest, namely all areas in which the US and some of its allies operate or want to operate, has been started following changing imperial demands. The US and its close allies aim to shift NATO's control areas from the western territorial line to the wider international territorial area faces great difficulties. How this process will develop will be determined by the attitudes of social, regional, and international actors.

Notes

[1] In his speech at Harvard University on June 5, 1947, US Secretary of State George Marshall warned that America's prosperity was due to Europe's recovery. See (LaFeber, 1989, 456)

[2] In 1999, the Czech Republic, Poland, and Hungary joined, and in March 2004, Bulgaria, Romania, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Slovenia, and Slovakia became members.

[3] Hegemony: A situation in which a state or a class controls its sphere of activity and other states or classes are forced to submit to the demands of the hegemonic power or class. While states are called hegemons at the world system level, classes are called hegemons within the state.

[4] The US Department of State Policy Planning Staff was created on May 7, 1947. Its purpose was to develop long-term policies.

[5] US President Bush stated they would keep US military power at a level other countries could not reach. (CNN International, 2002, December 2).

[6] G. Robertson, the NATO secretary general at the time, accused France, Germany and Belgium by saying that they were aiming to destroy NATO. (Buhl, 2003)

[7] Marc Grossman, Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs at the US Department of State. In his speech, "American Foreign Policy in the Twentieth Century," he said, "There is no democracy without a free market". In the same speech, Grossman stated, "The United States has never been more integrated with the global system in its history, and American power is the main key to diplomatic success." (Grossman, 2022)

[8] According to the charity Oxfam, developing countries face the barrier of tariffs when exporting to rich developed country markets. This is four times higher than that of rich countries. These barriers cost developing countries $100 billion. This figure is twice the amount of aid that developing countries receive. See (Vass, 2002, 937). The debt interest paid by the economies of the developing countries is higher than the profits of the multinational companies from their international investments. See (The Guardian, 1998). According to Dicken, MNCs significantly impact integrating local economies with the global economy. This negatively affects developing countries because of the sudden changes in the world economy. See (Dicken, 1998, 276).

[9] When the Pentagon's 1992 Draft Defense Planning Manual was leaked to the press, it sparked considerable controversy. Paul Wolfowitz, who was the undersecretary of the defense ministry at the time, played an important role in this draft, where the main purpose was to prevent the emergence of a rival country in the former Soviet geography or anywhere, and that the geography where there are sufficient resources to contribute to the transformation of an alternative power center into a global power is a hostile power. It is emphasized that it should be prevented from passing into control. It is stated that the US strategy should focus on preventing the emergence of potential global competitors in the future (New York Times, 1992).

[10] According to Richard J. Barnet, the most important problem faced by the US is economic, and the source of the problem is not the Communist world but the capitalist countries (Barnet, 1990, 72).

[11] On September 24, 2002, US Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz said about the Iraq intervention: "Iraq is floating on a sea of oil." If Iraq is to be invaded, it will be because of oil, not because of terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, or Saddam Hussein. (Wright, The Guardian, 2003, June 4).

[12] 9/11 can also be seen as the beginning of such a legitimacy process, says Vidal. See. (Vidal, The Observer, 2002)

[13] G. O. Tuathai says the purpose of Huntington's thesis is to turn global politics into a clash of civilizations. See. (Tuathai, 1998, 170-76).

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