

ADRIATIC CHARTER, INTEGRATION IN NATO *AN ILLUSION OR REALITY*

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ABSTRACT

Today the events has begun to change the focus from the conflicts of East-West since the period of the Cold War on the challenges and new opportunities of the 21st century, challenges and opportunities that are too large, linked to the Mediterranean and more broader than the Middle East. Some of these challenges include violent extremism, terrorism, proliferation of nuclear weapons and missiles, failed states, cyber-attack, and lack of security for energy resources. But the opportunities on the other hand are numerous: opportunities for partnerships, other forms of engagement, working opportunities with people in these regions to help them in their effort to look for the same goods from a more global place: stability, self-determination, rule of law and prosperity.

Keywords: Relations, Strategy, Regions, Partnership, Security, Peace, Negotiation, Stabilization.

NATO and Europe

Europe now is more unified and more free thanks to NATO but there are still unfinished perspective due to Cold War in the past which NATO has the responsibility and the history itself. We have some examples.

- a) NATO's relations with Russia through the NATO-Russia Council have not fulfilled its promises. At the same time, Russia is threatening to suspend its participation in CFE (Conventional Armed Forces), the arms control treaty that is Europe's security helmet.
- b) The old Russian mentality as far as the former Warsaw Treaty allies still remain one of the main obstacles to the advancement of missile defense.
- c) The issue of how to deal with former Soviet Union countries, such as Georgia, which is trying to integrate into Western security and other structures, is still unresolved.

On the other hand, NATO is active in establishing relations in the Mediterranean, the Middle East and beyond. In other words, NATO continues to look to the future, such as:

1. Since 1994, the development of the NATO dialogue with the Mediterranean (Med-D), specifically with Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Morocco, and Mauritania has been established. In 2004, at the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI) added relations with Kuwait, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, and Qatar. In 2006, the NATO Cooperation and Training Initiative (NTCI) extend partnership and educational opportunities simultaneously with the Med-D and ICI countries.
2. In a more general plan, NATO has expanded its relations and interaction with non-European countries such as Australia, Japan, and South Korea, countries that have contributed one way or another to the ISAF mission in Afghanistan.

NATO has succeeded in these efforts, first and foremost because it has been able to adapt to a new, changing security environment, first of all in Europe, but increasingly outside. In military terms, this meant that NATO was transformed from a traditional defense force aimed at halting massive attacks from the East, to a more flexible force, destined to withstand asymmetric threats such as non-proliferation weapons and terrorism. Throughout this change, one thing has not changed: NATO's readiness to keep in touch with friends and former enemies, with potential partners and potential allies. The Partnership for Peace was an important mechanism for the preparation of the former Warsaw Treaty countries for the final NATO membership.

NATO created the NATO-Russia Council (NRC) in order to better engage Russia on issues of common concern and to establish a successful NATO-Russia relationship in coping with European security issues.

NATO and Balkan Countries

The Evaluation of NATO after a Cold War has been influenced very much from the events happened in Balkan. After every NATO meeting, the Alliance has expanded their commitments and their strategic interests.

The Balkans remains a very disturbing region for the Organization. But the NATO perspective itself is not so positive. Now that peace has been secured broadly, the question remains. What does the Alliance need to do to win over the "minds and hearts" of people in the region, and most importantly, what should happen to strengthen stability in the area?

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NATO pledged its support for the Euro - Atlantic aspiration of Western Balkan countries and has been a major agent of change in the region with its peace making operation.

As of 2018, NATO officially recognizes two Balkan aspiring members: Bosnia and Macedonia, NATO expansion in Balkan states, presents a potential security flashpoint.

Since the end of formal hostilities in the Balkans in 1999, the United States and its allies have succeeded in dramatically expanding NATO's presence in the region, admitting in quick succession the former Yugoslav republics of Slovenia and Croatia, while entering into negotiations with Bosnia and Macedonia.

Foreign Ministers from across the Western Balkans say that improving ties with Europe and United States it's critical for stabilization of South-eastern European region because some experts describe the Balkan as venerable to anti-Western foreign influences, aiming to Russian Federation.

In a conference in Washington about US strategy in the region, the officials told VOA that membership in EU and NATO is crucial and it sustained security and democratic rule in Europe.

"What we need is to strengthen democracies governed by the rule of law," said Macedonian Foreign Minister Nikola Dimitrov, "Our region is surrounded by NATO member states and EU member states. It's about consolidating Europe; it's about ensuring that — as the migrant crisis showed — this region is an integral part of the system of democracies on our continent. It is true we have increased tensions in the region as a consequence of renewed hostilities between the West and Russian Federation," he added. "But it's not about liking or disliking Russia — and I don't think this should be an either-or choice — it's about the voices of our citizens, who would like to see Macedonia as part of the alliance. This is our destiny. This is our journey."

Montenegro, the smallest Balkan country, began EU accession talks in 2012 and became the 29th member of NATO at a ceremony at the State Department in June, despite fierce objections from Russia.

Adriatic Chart Countries

Albania, Croatia and Macedonia as so called Western Balkan Countries as members of Partnership for Peace (PfP) and Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) decided to follow the same successful path as the former Baltic countries formed a group called "Vilnius Group" which were sent the invitation to seven out of ten aspiring countries. The creation of A-3 group is part of the vision to integrate the entire region into NATO

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alliance. NATO and the US as strategic partners and other NATO countries, offered support to promote this new form of cooperation among countries. On 2 May 2003 in Tirana the Adriatic Charter was signed by Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Albania, Macedonia, Croatia, and the USA.

The cooperation among the three countries aspiring to join NATO, along with the USA as part of A-3 Charter, had only one objective: Admission of the aspiring countries in NATO. The cooperation within A-3 Charter would promote and strengthen, first of all, the regional cooperation and security, but also increase interoperability and adaptation of standards through joint exercises and cooperative activities of respective units.

'The Adriatic Charter' and membership into NATO required not only the stimulation of reforms started by the Armed Forces of the three respective countries, but also democratic reforms, respect of human rights, minorities, engagement in the fight against terrorism, inter-border traffic, weapons of mass destruction, etc. We should point out that the Charter did not impose particular obligations on the three countries, but only general obligations, valid for all NATO member countries. Besides this as it was stressed in the summarizing introduction to the Chart, the progress of the three countries would be assessed based on their individual achievements.

In order to strengthen the cooperation among A-3 countries and the USA, under the supervision of high adequate levels (Ministers/Deputy Ministers of Foreign Affairs) was set up a partnership commission. The commission met twice a year or more often, according needs, in one of the cities of the Charter's signing countries, with the main aim of considering the completion of activities and planning future ones.

In order to effectively implement the obligations deriving from 'The Adriatic Charter', it was agreed that the direction of the joint initiative should be realized by a six - month rotational system. The cooperation among aspiring countries was carried out at various levels and areas within A-3. Numerous were the institutions involved in this process, such as: The Presidents of the States, Ministers of Defense, Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Chiefs of Staff, Command, Directorates, etc. Apart from state institutions, many non-profit organizations were involved in this process to ensure public support for integration of the region into the Euro-Atlantic Alliance. The most significant result of this initiative, since its creation, was undoubtedly the membership of Croatia and Albania into NATO, in April 2009, after the invitation received at the Bucharest Summit in 2008.

Challenges in the Future

When NATO's founding members signed the North Atlantic Treaty on April 4, 1949, they declared themselves "resolved to unite their efforts for collective defence and for the preservation of peace and security." The greatest threat to these objectives was a military attack by a hostile power—a prospect that led to the treaty's most famous provision, Article V, which states, "The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all." Trust – which has been the key for the success, was not very easy. The Program for Peace Partnership used different methods for successful reforms and to build trust among the region and NATO.

Today, more than sixty years later, the threats facing the alliance's members have changed considerably. An attack in North America or Europe by the regular army of an outside state is highly unlikely. Instead, the alliance must confront an array of more diffuse challenges, ranging from terrorism and nuclear proliferation to piracy, cyber-attacks, and the disruption of energy supplies.

NATO has been a cornerstone of security in Europe—and of U.S. foreign policy—for six decades. But its ability to continue playing such a central role is unclear. The Future of NATO takes a sober look at what the alliance and its members must do to maintain NATO's relevance in the face of today's strategic environment. The result is an important work that combines useful analysis and practical recommendations for policymakers on both sides of the Atlantic.

Conclusion

Seen from the perspective, NATO has its planes for Europe and Balkan, and we can conclude that NATO is dedicated to be successful in these region that in the past produced only conflicts. Whatever the Adriatic Charter's illusion could be, where Albania, Macedonia and Croatia are part of NATO, the wonderful results during NATO's history give us a reality for joining these countries in the North Atlantic Alliance in the Bucharest Summit. Today is the bilateral problem with Macedonia and neighboring country Greece, but first the ambitious, realistic and successful activities of NATO mentioned above, we can say that such reality after The Bucharest Summit will be on the way. So NATO will have 1 new member. Greece's put a veto in NATO for Macedonia's accession to its constitutional name in the summit, but solution is on the way, as Macedonia's NATO membership is more important for regional stability in the Balkans than postponing the problem for too long. Even Greece itself is aware that postponing Macedonia entrance in NATO will not be able to withstand stability but only will have an uncertain, insecure and unstable Balkan.