

## NATO birth and evolution

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Received: 04/07/2021

Accepted: 20/10/2021

Published: 29/10/2021

### **Abstract:**

At the end of the Second World War and in order to secure peace in Europe, the United States, Canada and ten Western European countries signed the North Atlantic Treaty in Washington on April 4, 1949. Over the years, other European countries join the Alliance: like Greece and Turkey in 1952, Spain in 1982, Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic in 1999, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia, which, since 29 March 2004, and with this evolution, Nato has adopt a new mission , the treaty establishes a collective defense alliance and a framework for member countries to consult each other whenever one of them feels that their security is in risk, The study aims to outline the factors and circumstances that led to the creation of NATO, also the most important stages in its development, It also attempts to predict its future in the light of current events and developments, We conclude that NATO's future depends on its success or failure in facing the challenges and issues of the current international scene.

**Keywords:** NATO; Second World War; Cold War; Military Alliance; Nato evolution.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was founded in 1949. For its supporters, the interest of this military alliance lay in the possibility of building a barrier against the aggression of an expanding communist system that threatened to plunge Europe back into a war. The threat of war emanating from Eastern Europe has been widely spread in the media. It referred to the blockade of Berlin, the Korean War, the overthrow of the Hungarian uprising, the Prague Spring, and so on. Historical statements, such as that of Paul-Henri Spaak and his famous "We are afraid" at the Third General Assembly of the United Nations (September 1948)<sup>1</sup>, were intended to emphasize the perception of a real threat. In this context, the creation of NATO and militarization were essential to frighten the enemy and have a military response when needed.

Before the signing of the NATO treaty, many events preceded and contributed to prepare the ground for the establishment of this organization, we will try to focus on the most important stages.

### **The problematic of study**

The main question of our study is the following: What are the most important stages in the emergence and development of NATO and what is its future in the light of current international realities?

To answer the above question, we put forward the following sub-questions:

What are the most important stages and stations contributing to the emergence and development of NATO?

What are the most important issues and future challenges for NATO in the current international situation?

### **The study's assumptions**

A number of factors and circumstances have contributed to the creation and evolution of NATO through different stages and stations.

NATO's future depends on the success or failure of its countries to address the various challenges and issues facing it in the current international context.

### **Study methodology**

The descriptive analytical approach has been applied to the issue under discussion because it corresponds to it and helps to reach its aims by looking at the most important factors and stages through which the process of creating NATO has developed, and then trying to forecast its future.

## **2. The NATO establishment " the most important stages"**

### **2.1 First military alliance**

The United States, which had first resolved to remain neutral, in 1914, went to war, on April 6, 1917<sup>2</sup>, alongside the Entente - France, United Kingdom, Russia - and its allies - Belgium, Serbia, Japan, then Italy, Romania, Portugal, Greece and China. The "underwater warfare" decided by the Germans who torpedoed neutral commercial ships and their intrigues in Mexico precipitated the Americans in the other camp. In spring 1918, the Germans released from the Eastern Front because the Russians withdrew from the fight following the October Revolution (armistice in December 1917 and Treaty of Brest-Litovsk on March 3, 1918) can resume their attacks west<sup>3</sup>.

However, from March 1918 mainly, the United States send to Europe an army, which, at the time of the armistice, will exceed two million men. Without this extra-European intervention decided in 1917, the Entente was outnumbered and financially ruined. In June and July 1918, the second American Division effectively helped to prevent the advance of the Germans to Paris.

### **2.2 Second military alliance**

Historians agree that the year 1942 is the turning point of the war of 1939-1945<sup>4</sup>: from that date, the balance of power is no longer in favor of Germany and its allies. The United States goes to war after the attack of their naval base by Japan in Pearl Harbor. Americans win important victories in the Pacific against the Japanese.

In Europe, the Germans are stuck in Stalingrad and must retreat before the Soviets. The Red Army advances to the west, while the Allies land in Normandy in June 1944. From then on, Germany, exhausted, is taken in pincers by the Allies in the west and by the Soviets at the end of the war in the east.

With more than 50 million deaths, World War II is the deadliest conflict in history. The material destruction is immense: in Poland, Warsaw is destroyed to 70%. Germany has lost 4 million homes. The USSR is also largely affected with 1700 towns and 70 000 damaged villages.<sup>5</sup> The return to peace does not end with the end of the rationing for the European populations. The Allies' discovery of Nazi concentration camps and the Nazis' genocidal will results in considerable psychological shock: the belief in the moral progress of the human race through science and technology is shaken up. From November 1945 to September 1946, 21 high-ranking Nazi dignitaries were tried in Nuremberg for crimes against humanity.

### **2.3 Yalta Conference: February 1945**

Conferences are organized even before the German defeat to prepare the final battles and lay the foundations for post-Hitler Europe. The three "great"

Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin meet in Yalta in February 1945 and envisage partitioning Germany into four Soviet, American, English and French occupation zones. They are also committed to the preparation of future elections and the establishment of a United Nations (UN).

The Second World War upsets the international order. Faced with a ravaged Europe, the USSR and especially the United States appear as giants and enjoy immense prestige.

#### **2.4 March 4, 1947 and the Treaty of Dunkirk**

This treaty, signed on March 4, 1947, gathers Georges Bidault for France (Minister of Foreign Affairs) and Ernest Bevin for the United Kingdom (British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs), signing in Dunkirk a mutual assistance pact - where a British expeditionary force had to re-embark in the face of the German push. This treaty constitutes the first treaty of alliance between the United Kingdom and France.<sup>6</sup> In a way it completes the Entente Cordiale of 1914. This treaty is negotiated in three months during the winter of 1947, and is the culmination of a slow process that began during the Second World War.

The objectives of this treaty reflect at first sight the desire to protect themselves against possible German aggression, particularly because of the fear of German reunification under the auspices of the USSR, and reflect the desire to strengthen economic relations between these countries. In this, the Dunkirk Treaty reactivates the memories of the Entente cordiale franco-Britannique of 1914, since it is primarily to counter the risk of a resurgence of German expansionism.

This treaty is also at the origin of the 1948 Brussels Pact, itself giving birth to the Atlantic Pact of 1949, which creates NATO.<sup>7</sup> The Soviet danger quickly crystallized in this period, and the two countries will be pushed to move towards a wider alliance, under the tutelage of the United States. From its inception, the treaty was therefore rather designed to deal with a Soviet threat - the German threat was initially invoked only to facilitate the adoption of the treaty in France and the United Kingdom, at the time the communist party enjoyed a strong position on the French political scene.

#### **2.5 The Marshall plan: April 1948**

It was during a speech at Harvard University in the United States on June 5, 1947 that General George C. Marshall, Secretary of State for President Harry Truman, offered help to Europeans.<sup>8</sup> It is not yet a plan but an economic aid for the reconstruction of Europe, after the Second World War.

It is the unstable economic and political situation of Europe - dangerous for the American interests -, which is at the origin of this measure. Indeed Marshall's

offer has cyclical origins: the European countries, against a backdrop of economic crisis, are destroyed, in debt, in a situation of scarcity and misery. And as Secretary of State Marshall said in his speech: "The truth is that Europe's needs for the next three or four years in food and other essential products imported from abroad, including America, are much larger than its current payment capacity, that is why it will have to receive very important additional assistance or expose itself to a very serious economic, social and political dislocation",<sup>9</sup> the American financial aid thus appears as the cure. Nevertheless, the fear of the soviets and their grip on the European continent is also one of the motives of the United States proposal.

Noting that the previous aid failed because given individually, Americans condition their financial and economic assistance to a comprehensive plan for European restoration. That is why George C. Marshall insists that "an agreement will have to be made by the countries of Europe on their current needs and what these countries of Europe will do themselves to make all the measures effective, that the US government could take",<sup>10</sup> the idea of a European economic federation, with this closer, enforced European co-operation, is underpinned in the minds of Marshall and his advisers.

\$ 13 billion was allocated<sup>11</sup> - in the form of donations, loans or in-kind - over a four-year period. The plan, which is ending in 1951, is also accompanied by technical assistance (internships in the United States for many European engineers and industrialists). As a first step, financial aid is used to buy food and gas. Then the hardware that rebuilds the productive devices and infrastructure. In the end, Marshall Plan money is used primarily for the purchase of manufactured goods from the United States.<sup>12</sup>

For the establishment of the European recovery program, and especially to oversee the distribution of funds from the Marshall Plan, the Europeans set up a supranational organization on April 16, 1948. It is the European Organization for Economic Cooperation (OEEC) whose headquarters are at the Château de la Muette in Paris. This structure is also intended to promote cooperation between participating countries and national production programs; and to intensify intra-European trade. In 1961 the OEEC is replaced by a world organization: the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD),<sup>13</sup> 17 countries accept the American proposal: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Ireland, France, Great Britain, Greece, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, Norway, Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland and Turkey. The Federal Republic of Germany (FRG).

## **2.6 The "Prague Stroke" (February 1948)**

Between 1945 and 1949, communist parties took power east of the "Iron Curtain" in Europe, in the territories controlled by the Red Army, by eliminating

non-communist competitors following the "salami tactics". In 1948, only Czechoslovakia still appears able to be a democracy outside the control of the USSR.

Indeed, Edward Benes, the pre-war Czechoslovak president, returned from exile to London and found his post in 1945. From 1946, he had to compose a mixed government following the short victory of the Communists in the legislative elections. He appointed Klement Gottwald, head of the Czechoslovak PC, as Prime Minister, before being re-elected President, but following pressure from Stalin, who forced Benes to reject the US Marshall Plan to Europe, the Communists strengthened their position in the government by taking key positions in November 1947 such as (Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of War ...).<sup>14</sup>

In February 1948, the appointment of communist police commissioners by the communist minister of interior led to the resignation of the government's non-communist ministers on 20 February. The next day, demonstrations are organized; on the 24th, a general strike was called by the Communists to pressure Benes to accept the resignations and appoint new Communist ministers.

Facing the threat of a civil war and under pressure from the Red Army and Communists, Benes is forced to yield and accept the formation of a new, almost exclusively Communist government led by Gottwald,<sup>15</sup> where Jan Masary (Minister of Foreign Affairs) is the only non-communist. This "coup de force" is fatal to Czechoslovak democracy and allows Communists to take control of the country.

## **2.7 The blockade of Berlin: June 24, 1948**

It is the Soviets who first enter Berlin, capital of the Third Reich. May 8, 1945 marks the capitulation of the Nazi regime and the end of the Second World War in Europe. If the partition of Germany and Berlin between Allies and Soviets had been decided a few months earlier at the Yalta conference (February 4 to 11, 1945), the Soviets are indeed in a position of superiority in the German capital.

The tensions between these allies of circumstance against the Nazism that are the Westerners and the Soviets are quickly rising, at the end of the war, so that Winston Churchill will speak of a "curtain of iron which fell on the continent", during a speech in 1946, and in 1947, the expression "cold war" will be pronounced for the first time by the American Bernard Baruch.<sup>16</sup>

In Berlin, the situation deteriorates precisely when the Allies announce a monetary reform by creating the Deutsch Mark on June 18, 1948,<sup>17</sup> to revive the economic activity in their zones of occupation. Five days later, the Soviets introduce their own currency and block all access routes to the western sectors of the city. The Americans then set up the famous airlift, which will show the Soviets their desire to keep West Berlin. The face to face will lead to an allied "victory", since in May

1949 the Soviets lift the blockade of the city. The first round of a long series of tensions, which will lead, in 1961, to the construction of the Berlin Wall.<sup>18</sup>

### **3. NATO birth and evolution**

#### **3.1 The Brussels Pact of 1948 and the birth of NATO**

On March 17, 1948, Belgium, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom sign the Brussels Treaty or Treaty on Economic, Social and Cultural Collaboration and Collective Self-Defense, Establishing a Mutual Assistance System automatic in case of armed aggression in Europe. The signatory powers of the Brussels Treaty invite Denmark, Iceland, Italy, Norway and Portugal to participate in this process,<sup>19</sup> shortly after, Canadians, British and Americans begin talks in Washington on a "collective defense for the North Atlantic area" treaty.

The North Atlantic Treaty, which constitutes the Legal foundation and Contractual Agreement of the Atlantic Alliance, was signed on 4 April 1949 in Washington by Belgium, Canada, Denmark, the United States, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, Norway, the Netherlands, Portugal and the United Kingdom.

Among the 14 articles stipulated in the agreement of the organization Article 5, which is, the cornerstone of NATO states that: The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered as an attack against them all and consequently they agree that, if such an armed attack occurs, each of them, in exercise of the right of individual or collective self-defense recognized by Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, will assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking forthwith, individually and in concert with the other Parties, such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force, to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area.

Any such armed attack and all measures taken as a result thereof shall immediately be reported to the Security Council. Such measures shall be terminated when the Security Council has taken the measures necessary to restore and maintain international peace and security.<sup>20</sup>

According to his preamble, NATO is the structure that allows the realization objectives of the Alliance, has been created to promote peaceful and friendly relations throughout the Atlantic north area.<sup>21</sup> It was actually to prevent a war against the USSR on the European Theater and, if necessary, to defend the members of the Alliance against this threat. This mission was fully accomplished because, not only, there was no war but also again, the Soviet Union disappeared without armed conflict.

#### **3.2 NATO evolution and adaptability**

Since its inception, NATO's fundamental and enduring purpose is to safeguard the freedom and security of all its members by political and military

means. The ever-changing security environment increasingly requires us to address threats and challenges using military and non-military instruments in a deliberate, coherent and sustained manner. NATO will take a tailored and structured approach. NATO uses a variety of non-military instruments to support the Alliance's three core tasks. It also serves as a platform for greater coherence in the use of these instruments by Allies, under their authority and control, and alongside other international actors. We will continue to strengthen our efforts to ensure effective, clear and compelling strategic communication as an essential element in support of NATO's three core tasks

The NATO 2030 Agenda sets a higher level of ambition for the Organization. It provides clear guidelines for the Alliance to continue to adapt to meet current, new and future threats and challenges, building on the ongoing political and military adaptation.<sup>22</sup> The implementation of the NATO 2030 Agenda, the fulfilment of the three core tasks and the realization of the next Strategic Concept require adequate resources through national defense spending and common funding. Taking into account the requirements, we decide to increase these resources, including if necessary NATO common funding from 2023 onwards, taking into account sustainability, affordability and accountability. At our meeting in 2022, in parallel with the adoption of the Strategic Concept, we will approve the specific requirements for additional funding up to 2030, as well as the resource implications for NATO's military budget, the NATO Security Investment Program and the civilian budget, and identify possible efficiency measures.<sup>23</sup>

#### **4.The future of NATO in the current situation**

The current international crises have proven the inability of European countries to fill the security vacuum and the inability to build a common security and defence policy without the United States of America, especially in view of the differences between the countries of the continent. On the one hand, there are strong and developed countries like Great Britain, France and Germany, and on the other hand there are countries that are economically and militarily weak. New security threats such as terrorism, illegal immigration and transnational organised crime are too big to be tackled by one country alone

All these and other challenges have made it necessary for the alliance to survive and have underlined the need to develop and expand its missions to meet common challenges, and to stress the leading and pioneering role of the United States of America in addressing issues that threaten the security and interests of the allies.<sup>24</sup>

Although differences and divisions within NATO have existed since its founding, and despite the classification of those interested in security and strategic affairs that the crisis of former US President Donald Trump is the strongest since the founding of the alliance, as the latter attacked European allies because of their



low financial contributions to the alliance and asking them to pay fees for their protection. However, observers of NATO affairs agree that the announcement of the strategic partnership between the US, Britain and Australia in mid-September 2021 is the most dangerous of all previous alliance crises

This crisis is the first of its kind in terms of damage to one of the alliance's active allies, as it led to the cancellation of the agreement to acquire 12 warships for Australia from France, and replaced it with a US nuclear submarine deal. This resulted in a loss to France estimated at nearly 50 million Euros. It provoked strong and violent reactions from France, which considered the deal a betrayal and a stab in the back from America, and called in its ambassadors in Washington, London and Canberra, not to mention cancelling celebrations of the 240th anniversary of a battle in which the French navy took part in the American war of independence in 1781.<sup>25</sup> The European Union countries expressed their displeasure and anger at this event. of the partnership and the lack of consultation with it, and stressed that this issue would prompt them to review their accounts with NATO, as well as their strategic independence.

Out of this, three scenarios can be developed to determine NATO's future in the light of current changes and crises :

**Status quo scenario:** the so-called tidal process remains between its members, sometimes they reconcile and agree on positions and other times they differ and fight according to their interests, and here it is worth noting the British position, which still comes from its protection under the American umbrella despite its European affiliations.

**The scenario of the globalisation of NATO:** Through the formation of a global military force, that includes countries outside America and Europe and the hegemony of the United States of America over it, and this is what many countries reject, like Germany and France.

**The scenario of the disintegration of NATO:** This leads to the withdrawal of the United States of America, and the Europeans are directed to alliances and blocs on the European continent, and the United States of America directed to alliances and blocs on the American continent. The exit of Great Britain from the European Union, and a delay in the European Union countries in aiding Italy and the arrival of Chinese aid in the Corona crisis and the raising of the Chinese flag instead of the flag of the European Commission, as well as the Euro-Russian rapprochement have greatly affected the possibility of the cracking and disintegration of the alliance.

## 5. Results of the study:

The main purpose of the creation of NATO is to establish a collective defence system to deter the expansionist tendency of the former Soviet Union, where any

aggression against one of the alliance countries is seen as an attack on the whole alliance that requires a collective response.

The social and economic problems of European countries after the end of the Second World War had a significant impact on the relaunch of the 1949 Marshall Plan for the reconstruction of Europe, and pushed its members to build an economic policy based on cooperation and economic integration.

The United States of America, together with its European partners, sought to impose a containment policy on the former Soviet Union with a series of alliances and military bases to stop the communist advance into Europe and its neighboring regions.

The shift in NATO's strategic interests from collective defence against a possible Soviet attack to expansion towards building a new framework for Euro-Atlantic security.

This expansion has required the alliance to address many issues and resolve them politically so as not to impede its military strategy, and perhaps the most important of these is to determine the political future of the European continent and to resolve conflicts politically before resorting to the use of force.

The possible breakdown and disintegration of NATO as a result of the current crises and problems between its various members, especially the major powers which are dominated by national interest over collective interest.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

Many factors and elements have participated in the birth of the North Atlantic Alliance, which has developed and expanded over time to adapt to the post-Cold War era and to meet the needs of the new era which was full of new challenges and which led states to form an economic, political and military alliance to ensure their national security. Finally, the future of NATO depends on the success of the member states in facing the current issues and challenges in a world that is experiencing constant crises.

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