

Trading in the 21st century

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NATO in the 21st century.

NATO's focus needs to be directed to economic nation building with shared responsibilities among its partners. Smart defense strategy empowered with the world's financial institutions will lead to a more efficient, sustainable and integrated world.

The ending of the Cold War brought about several positive changes to the global community. The disintegration of the USSR resulted in the establishment of the international institutions. Many saw the beginning of US hegemony as a consequence of diminished and weakened NATO. In the 21st century when the political awakening has enhanced nationalism, hence to some extend fostered radical terrorism, consequently what role does NATO play in order to retain the balance of power, stabilize the security dilemma and tame the fear factor?

The world is divided, albeit growth of globalization and interconnectedness. The "Rest" sees NATO as the de facto apparatus for Western imperialism with its interests based on economic and military realism, rather than advocating common consensus. This however is not the case. NATO enforces its member states and partners to work towards the securitization of human rights and the protection of vital resources for maximizing world order. NATO cooperation's are examples of shared responsibilities and integration among its partners through diversification of responsibilities. This resulted in the construction an atmosphere of consensus with stakeholders ensuring the success of preemptive action.

Wars and conflicts shouldn't be the curtain calls for NATO. The raison d'etre of NATO has changed. It is important to remind ourselves that NATO is the most successful alliance in history. The masses should recognize that NATO is not a military institution, which demands and/or supplies conflicts to justify its existence. The global economic

failures have given NATO a new challenge to solve and have an input with a more efficient and common strategy. A stronger alliance with the economic actors would increase the role for NATO as the guardian of security and economic growth. Surely such roles have been reserved to the IMF, World Bank and ECB, but NATO could provide another dimension to this trilateral apparatus. New military/economic joint decisions should be the new framework for the NATO as nations are forced to cut back on military spending in order to prevent fiscal collapses.

This is where IMF, WTO and World Bank can become the insurances for NATO and vice versa. Any violation of trade laws, increased aggression or interest to interfere with domestic politics should lead to severe sanctions from these three institutions and NATO as the enforcer of regulations. NATO could provide incentives based on shared information and technologies, which could decrease military expenditures. Economic incentives/sanctions can significantly reduce the buildup of the fear factor

NATO peacekeeping has been a successful

stabilizer in many conflict zones. Conflict areas have difficulties reaching the NATO "spirit", since military presence by itself does not ensure the wellbeing of the people. Such dilemma can be solved by taking steps to become more of an institution with aspirations to secure peace and rebuild nations. NATO could direct its resources to improve the societies of former conflict zones by sponsoring infrastructure development, improving the access to education and fight against preventable diseases. Yes, there are existing institutions for these problems, but NATO could lead the integration of these institutions and secure the access to areas where help is needed. The key here is to promote the benefits rather than the liabilities.

When the US deploys more military resources to the Pacific, NATO has the opportunity to "seize the moment" and become the dominant peace keeper in Europe. Such strategic decision would support the new Smart Defense tactic with more efficient use of resources and cooperation with regional actors. A more peaceful nation building strategy with efforts to empower the people with opportunities of a better life should be on the NATO's agenda. The unilateral military influence exhibited by the USA has integrated the "rest" since it is easier to group against one identifiable enemy.

A response for such diversified enmity has taken a toll on the USA. Hence, I believe that NATO with its culture of shared responsibilities can bring about stability in conflict zones. Firstly, the diversification of risk diminishes effective retaliation from the other side due to lack of resources. Terrorist groups have lost its momentum, but smaller groups of resistance create expensive issues for the major military forces. NATO can provide its resources as a common strategy and bring neutral stance to solving conflicts.

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