

Abstract

This diploma thesis deals with the development of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) emphasizing the Alliance's capability to adequately adapt to the ever-changing security environment. Using the historical turning points and the experiences gained during the various activities the dissertation's focus is on the future of NATO.

The first part of the thesis consists of an overview of the four main stages of the NATO development. The first phase (1949-1990) is the Cold War period, when the member states' emphasis was to build a strong collective defense but at the same time they established liberal democratic system and accepted common values. The new countries have adopted these domestic governance standards and institutions proving the effective assertion of the liberal institutionalism doctrine. The second stage (1990-2001) was represented by emerging new security challenges and the Alliance reacted to this by adapting the crisis management policy and launched out of area operations. This new period could be characterized the best by the metaphor of the former CIA director, James Woolsey, who in 1993 stated in front of the Congress: "We have slain a large dragon, but we live now in a jungle filled with a bewildering variety of poisonous snakes. And in many ways, the dragon was easier to keep track of" (Jehl). The third stage (2001-2014) started with the 9/11 terrorist attack and ended with the Russian aggression against Ukraine. Due to the new experiences the NATO continued its active engagement in out of area operations, but the need for a strengthened collective defense policy appeared, accompanied by a cooperative security approach. The fourth stage started in 2014 and is up until present day. The most important findings of this period are the reemerging conventional threat represented by mainly China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea. At the same time this period is also characterized by non-conventional (irregular) challenges like international (Islam-based) terrorism, cyber-attacks, and hybrid type of interferences by state and non-state actors. The irregular (mass) migration also belongs to this group of new challenges. Though this part of the thesis is mostly descriptive, the content is examined with analytical approach. Through the liberal institutionalism theory resilience, each stage is analyzed, and the main factors that affect the investigated research question are identified. The results are then reflected upon in the next part of the thesis which deals with the current state of the organization and the actual tasks the Alliance accomplish.

The main part is trying to foresee the core issues of the next NATO Summit in July 2021. The importance of this meeting is well represented by the intensive and comprehensive preparation work aiming to pave the road to the next Strategic Concept of the Alliance. Since 2010 the NATO did not elaborate similar vision-filled document and the actual preparation work is targeting to reach consensus among member states about the future of NATO. There will probably be serious debates within the Alliance because member states have different views on issues like China, Russia, or the United States' role. As latter the cohesion of the Alliance was damaged by unilateral USA actions which shown the sign of embracing the liberal internationalism doctrine (attacking sovereign states in order to pursue liberal objectives) instead of following the principals of the liberal institutionalism. The former American president, Donald Trump's NATO policy also caused grievances within the Alliance. The NATO Summit in July 2021 based upon the NATO 2030 document and extensive consultations with member states will probably address the most important differences and the Alliance will accept and approve the basic principles on the NATO's future.