

Abstract

This Diploma Thesis called “NATO and WMD: Evolution of the threat construction and Alliance’s response” deals with the evolution of understanding of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) within the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). WMD, especially the nuclear ones, have preoccupied NATO since its establishment. However, it was only after the end of the Cold War that NATO started to focus on WMD as a specific overarching category, consisting of chemical, biological and nuclear (since 9/11 also radiological) weapons. Despite the conspicuousness of the concept and increased use of the WMD term, the definition of weapons of mass destruction is not clear-cut. However, the way the actors understand WMD is very important. For this reason, NATO’s official discourse is studied as an indicator of how is WMD understood in the Alliance, which will allow to fulfill objectives of this thesis. First, the work intends to analyze how has the WMD threat been constructed and interpreted within the Alliance since the year 1991 until this day. Secondly, this thesis aims to find out what is NATO’s response to the dangers posed by the identified WMD threats (i.e. proliferation and terrorism) and identify the concrete measures the Allies undertook to tackle the evolving WMD threat. This thesis is based on securitization theory, which views security and threats as socially constructed. Accordingly, the WMD are treated in this thesis not as a fixed concept, but as a relatively flexible, politically conditioned, construction with important implications for international security. Since there is surprisingly little research done on how NATO constructs and interprets the WMD threat, this thesis would like to contribute to the yet under-researched topic of WMD threat construction within this Alliance.