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North Atlantic Treaty Organization

Outline of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is a political and military alliance created in 1949 for the safeguard of the freedom and security of its 28 members from Europe and North America. It provides a unique kind of link between its members for consultation and cooperation in the field of defense and security, and the conduct of multinational crisis-management operations. If diplomatic efforts fail, it has the military capacity needed to undertake crisis-management operations. These are carried out under Article 5 of the Washington North Atlantic Treaty or under a UN mandate.

Topic A

The syrian conflict main role in the lead to a clash between the Russian Federation and NATO as well as the dissension of forces against ISIS and its evolution to a wider armed confrontation

By: Alejandro Ibarra Pérez
Daniela Villarreal Quiroga

Background

The humanitarian crisis in Syria has been an armed conflict fought by more than one country. The foreign intervention of a number of states and international organizations has turned this conflict into an international issue as well. It has gone on so long and is so devastating in its social impact that sight of the military dangers that are now threatening the Middle East can be lost.

NATO has been trying to stop the Syrian crisis to spill over into a wider armed confrontation, but that moment is closer now than it has ever been before. After The Russian Federation accused Turkey of breaching the Syrian ceasefire multiple times, there are fears that the two countries could spark a wider conflict between NATO and Moscow. However, the 28-country alliance is bound by Article 5 of its treaty to collectively defend its members. NATO has every right to advise caution on Turkey as its fellow member.

The Russian military, in favor of the Bashar al-Assad regime, reported nine violations of the ceasefire charging Turkey with sending a small group of fighters to take on Kurdish rebels inside a border town while also providing military support from inside its own territory. It's believed by Russian forces that around one hundred Turkish fighters attacked the Syrian border town of Tal Abyad on February 2016. NATO has urged Russia to end air strikes "on the Syrian opposition and civilians", days after Moscow began raids to support Syria's government.

A statement by NATO's 28 members, that include Turkey, warned of "the extreme danger of such irresponsible behavior" and urged Russia "to cease and desist". NATO has the option of not become embroiled as an alliance in fighting on the ground in Syria. It seems there is a real danger of a military spillover. It may be that nothing can prevent a regional war. It will, however, respond to any attack that threatens the territorial integrity of Turkey.

The Beginning of the Syrian Conflict

The uprisings and popular revolts made during the spreading of the Arab Spring in the Middle East turned Syria's situation into the instability and a particularly violent character. It has since deteriorated into fighting between pro-government forces and various movements of rebel groups leaded by the *Free Syrian Army*, some of which also fight against each other. On March 15 of 2011, the day on which power responded against to protesters in the city of *Dará*, the Syrian government began its confrontation with the rebel opposition groups, whose main objective is to overthrow the regime of the current mandatary of the country, Bashar al-Assad.

It is at this time that Syria was at the center of attention of many States and international actors. Countries such as The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (U.K.), The French Republic and The United States (U.S.) were aware of this conflict and, through the statements of the most important politicians of these states, Bashar al-Assad began to be built as "absolute enemy" to the Western hemisphere.

The violence in Syria has been denoted from the first responses of the regime to peaceful protests which resulted in statistics of victims, displaced persons and refugees reflecting international organizations and the media. According to figures provided by the *Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights* (OHCHR), until June 2011 1,500 fatalities have been registered, which totaled 3,000 in September; in November up to 4,000; in December there were recorded 5,000 and 7,500 in February of 2012.

The Syrian government opted to draw on to their armed forces to carry out operations for "selective cleaning" in certain populations where insurgent movements represented a risk to the regime. Following a pattern of counterinsurgency operations, al-Assad sent armed forces to fence off areas where manifestations occurred in order to isolate participants of any uprising against his government; eliminate the connection to the outside and then send security of military forces to clear the area of activist groups.

The situation that Syria now faces began to get more attention by the international community when the *Islamic State of Iraq and Syria* (ISIS) appeared in the equation. The Syrian Conflict represented a problematic that threatened the security of various states, and mobilizes them to secure their own safety after a series of attacks attributed to ISIS. In their attempts to stop this crisis as well as the increasing expansion of the jihadist ideologies of ISIS, the countries that claim to be victims of this extremist group had took sides on the conflict to end with the problematic by their own means.

The regime supporters and enemies

On first instance, the Russian Federation is a long-term supporter of Bashar al-Assad's government (which has been its only persistent ally in the Middle East for decades) by bringing military assistance and supplying economic help to stop the insurgent movements of the rebel groups against the regime. Even though its stance in the country is only to stop ISIS, and not to neutralize al-Assad enemies, Russia has deployed military equipment and armed forces into

the Syrian territory and also has breached the Syrian ceasefire by attacking many rebel groups and civilian areas under the justification of attacking the Islamic State.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, for its shared ideologies, geographical position and military support has been supporting al-Assad along with The Russian Government. Iran has provided the Syrian government with military equipment, advisers and revolutionary Guards commanders to train and assist its armed forces. Its Lebanese ally and proxy, *Hezbollah*, is actively fighting alongside the regime's forces. Afghanistan and Pakistan. Iran opposes Sunni insurgents, the Islamic State and other Sunni extremists.

The United States of America has an opposition to the regime based on diplomacy and military logistics. It leads a coalition conducting airstrikes in Iraq and Syria against ISIS and other extremist groups. Along with the Pentagon program, the U.S. has provided a small number of moderate rebels and Kurdish people on the North of the country with ammunition and training to fight the Islamic State on the ground, yet this program had to be paused after a series of setbacks. The U.S. continues to head up an international coalition, constituted mainly by NATO member states, which is bombing targets in Syria belonging to ISIS.

The United Kingdom of Great Britain parliament voted on December the second on 2015 to join the U.S.-led coalition in bombing ISIS targets in Syria and Iraq because of the strong opposition in Parliament to military intervention in the confrontation. The U.K. has so far focused only on coalition airstrikes rather than a direct intervention in the Syrian state.

Opposing as well, The French Republic has backed moderate elements among the rebel forces in Syria. France has prioritized an anti-ISIS alliance and has extended airstrikes along with the U.S and the U.K against the Islamic State and increased the intensity of missions in the Syrian country. The French Government directly blames the government of Bashar al-Assad as not being able by itself to stop ISIS, and make it responsible for the extremist attacks in Paris on 2015. France also faces a refugee crisis and thus has ruled out on any ground intervention.

The Republic of Turkey and has begun a campaign of airstrikes and military incursions. Turkey has been charged of nine violations of the Syrian ceasefire by providing military support to take on some Syrian borders. Also, Turkey supports and has allowed the U.S.-led coalition to use Turkish air bases. Turkey backs rebel groups opposed to al-Assad´s regime despite the Russian intervention, and has clashed with Moscow over incursions into Turkish

airspace. The incident prompted Russian sanctions and a declaration by Vladimir Putin, the Russian President that Turkey, a NATO member, was an "accomplice to terrorists".

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabía, in Addition to funding and arming rebels on the ground, began conducting airstrikes with the U.S.-led coalition Against the Islamic State in Syria a year ago. The Saudi government insist that the departure of al-Assad will be a solution to the crisis. Coordinated with other Arab countries such as Qatar and Jordan, Saudi Arabia has backed a number of Syrian rebel groups fighting against Bashar Al-Assad.

Clashing Forces

After several ceasefires had been broken in Syrian territory NATO's Secretary General, Jens Stoltenberg, does not want to left any longer the problematic only between bilateral exchanges of the U.S. and Russia. However, since Russia started airstrikes over Syria on September 30, 2015, the ground situation has dramatically changed and deviated far from stability.

The Russian government claims that it was only responding to a request from the Syrian president to help it keep cleared its territory from armed movements. As seen from Russian viewpoint, responding to this request was legitimate, since Russia has had naval and military bases in Syrian Territory for over 45 years at the invitation of the Syrian government.

The Russians have made clear that their stance in Syria was also to end the advance of ISIS throughout the territory. Nevertheless, it seemed that the intervention was less concerned about the Islamic State by itself and more destined to move the balance of the ongoing civil war in favor of Bashar al-Assad.

NATO has renewed assurances to defend allies in view of the escalation of Russian military activities in Syria. NATO's Secretary General stated that defense ministers opted to increase NATO response against the intervention by deploying 40,000 troops in Syrian Territory rapidly.

NATO has urged Moscow to stop backing Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's regime against it enemies, but, Moscow denies Western accusations that it has mainly targeted al-Assad opponents, insisting its strikes have hit the infrastructure of ISIS and other militant groups affiliated to it. According to the Syrian government, the Russian air strikes had "weakened" ISIS enabling the army to start a "big attack" to retake towns and villages.

Russia's air campaign has also raised fears of accidental contact between Russian warplanes and those of the U.S.-led coalition and NATO's forces which have been targeting ISIS for the past year. Pentagon officials revealed they recently had to carry out at least one "safe separation" maneuver to avoid a U.S. jet coming too close to a Russian aircraft over Syria.

Russia's foreign ministry also said Moscow was willing to establish contact with the Free Syrian Army to discuss fighting ISIS and other terrorist groups, but US Defense Secretary Ash Carter said coalition forces fighting ISIS in Syria would not co-operate with Russia.

"We believe Russia has the wrong strategy and would have consequences for Russia itself, which is rightly fearful of attacks... in coming days, the Russians will begin to suffer from casualties," Mr. Carter warned.

What role is Turkey playing in the crisis?

The Turkish regime has been accused by the Russian and Syrian government repeatedly for a series of circumstances that their decisions have made over the Syrian crisis. Turkey supposedly has been sending troops to fight against Kurdish nationalist people and targeting groups affiliated to them in the northern part of Syria, with the excuse that ISIS had been spotted in those areas.

At the same time Turkey has refused to close the Jarablus corridor which is part of the Turkish-Syrian border, were, according to Russia, weapons and other resources can flow easily for the Islamic State. Also, Turkey has been supporting several "moderate Syrian opposition forces" that fight against al-Assad's regime with help of the *Central Intelligence Agency* (CIA) of the U.S. with military training. Turkey by itself and with the help of the U.S.-led coalition is trying to overthrow the Syrian Arab Republic.

Saudi Arabia has now moved fighter jets to Turkey with the aim of carrying out strikes inside Syria and has agreed to deploy special forces coming into Syria via Turkey. Turkey is making it clearer by the day that it may feel it necessary to move from shelling mainly Kurdish positions inside Syria to moving troops into Syria. Concerns are being raised about Turkey invoking Article 5 of the NATO treaty, if Turkish forces were to be attacked by Russia or Syria.

The recent charges of Russia against Turkey, a fellow NATO member, for breaching its obligations on the Syrian ceasefire have increased the tension between the organization and

the State, since NATO is obliged by its article 5 to see for the welfare of its members and it is feared that the disagreements may spill into a wider armed conflict. However, the Alliance does not seek confrontation and poses no threat to Russia. NATO has every right to advise caution on Turkey, its fellow NATO member. But in these circumstances, following the Russian intervention it is very hard to argue that it is not unreasonable for both Saudi Arabia and Turkey to contemplate such action. NATO will, however, respond to any attack that threatens the territorial integrity of Turkey.

NATO has warned of "the extreme danger of such irresponsible behavior" and urged Russia "to cease and desist". NATO has the option of not become embroiled as an alliance in fighting on the ground in Syria. Nonetheless, a wider armed conflict is inconceivable. NATO has to look out for a solution that does not threats the security of the North Atlantic area before this conflict escalates into a wider armed confrontation that will not result by any means in a viable way for any of the parties.

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B

Bilateral: Relating to two sides

Breaching: A gap in a wall, barrier or defense. Failing to observe a law or agreement.

C

Coalition: An alliance for combined action.

Consultation: Action of formally consulting or discussing something.

Counterinsurgency: Political or military actions taken against revolutionary groups.

D

Denote: Indicate.

Diplomatic: Skill to manage international relations.

Dissension: A disagreement that leads to discord.

E

Embroil: Involve deeply in an argument.

F

Foreign: Coming from the outside, belonging to another area.

O

Opt: Make a choice from a range of possibilities.

P

Proxy: The authority to represent someone else.

U

Uprising: An act of rebellion.

R

Raid: A sudden attack on an enemy.

S

Setbacks: A reversal or check in progress.

Safeguard: A measure to protect someone or something.

T

Threatening: Having a hostile manner.

Topic B

Tension caused by NATO's influence expansion in Eastern Europe created by the accession of formerly ex-soviet and ex-yugoslav states; and NATO's policies of confrontation against Russian interests

By: Alejandro Ibarra Pérez
 Daniela Villarreal Quiroga

Background

Since its creation in 1949, NATO has been trying to expand its influence in the Euro-Atlantic area in order to accomplish its task of liberty, safety and security in all of Europe. By choosing to adopt the standards and principles of NATO, aspirant countries get the promise that their accession will give their democracies the strongest possible anchor; and by taking the compromise to defend NATO, they received the pledge that NATO would protect them as well. This fundamental principle is enshrined in international agreements including the Helsinki Final Act which states that every state has the right "to belong or not to belong to international organizations, to be or not to be a party to bilateral or multilateral treaties including the right to be or not to be a party to treaties of alliance." And by signing the NATO-Russia Founding Act, Russia agreed to respect states' "inherent right to choose the means to ensure their own security."

As NATO's foreign ministers signed to invite Montenegro to become yet another member state, some military experts suggest that the Alliance won't stop until it takes control over all of Europe, while others note that few states are now wishing to contribute to NATO's announced priority of "deterring Russia". A NATO membership would give Montenegro an opportunity to become a regional power. This development could inspire other countries like Macedonia, Bosnia and Georgia to seek NATO membership as well, such developments might lead to further tensions with Russia, which perceives NATO's activities near its borders as a threat to its national security.

NATO hold a summit in Warsaw in July 2016 to discuss Montenegro's accession into the alliance and the security environment in Europe, with the approval of a larger troop presence in Eastern Europe. On the other hand, Russia's Foreign Ministry has warned that the negotiations over Montenegro's NATO membership will harm Eurasian and Atlantic security systems in the long-term and raise the degree of tensions, as well as relations between Russia and NATO itself. Russian Envoy to NATO Alexander Grushko said that NATO has been inviting Eastern European states even though their ideologies do not fall in line with all of the bloc's criteria and their accession to NATO weakens regional security and deepens the dividing lines in Europe. Russia has deployed three military divisions along its western border as the Kremlin and the NATO military and political alliance continue to exchange sharp words ahead of the alliance's major summer summit in Warsaw. Grushko established: "Our interests will be

reliably protected. The deployment of three divisions is only one of the measures that should be considered in this context."

Montenegro´s invitation has been taken as a threat for Russia. NATO has somehow hidden its real interests by using the principle of collective defence to establish military bases and operations in member states territories near the borders of the Russian Federation. Russia claims that NATO is trying to encircle his territory to decrease its influence in the Euro-Atlantic area. The likelihood of normalization of ties between NATO and Russia is bleak, the comments come amid rising tensions between the two parties as the military alliance's expansion right up to Russia's doorsteps has angered the country and puts Europe's situation near a possible conflict.

Enlargement of NATO

Domestic politics in Eastern European countries continued to push for more NATO enlargement, so at the 1999 Washington Summit Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic officially joined the organization, despite of Russia's opposition. It said that Russia's actions in the First *Chechen War* were a motivating factor for these countries and others that had memories of similar soviet offensives to join NATO.

At the 1999 Washington summit, NATO also issued new guidelines for membership with individualized "Membership Action Plans" for Albania, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia. In May 2000, these countries joined with Croatia to form the Vilnius Group in order to cooperate and lobby for common NATO membership, and by the 2002 Prague summit seven were invited for membership, which took place at the 2004 Istanbul summit.

Russia became particularly upset with the addition of the three Baltic states, the first countries that were part of the Soviet Union to join NATO. In the post-Cold War era, NATO saw a 75-percent increase in membership from 16 to 28 members. The 12 new members were all in Eastern Europe, either former Warsaw Pact member states, including three former Soviet republics, or former Yugoslav federal republics.

Croatia also started a Membership Action Plan at the 2002 summit, leading to a national debate on whether a referendum on NATO membership needed to be held there. Albania and Croatia were invited to join NATO at the 2008 Bucharest summit that April, though Slovenia threatened to hold up Croatian membership over their border dispute in the Bay of Piran.

Slovenia did ratify Croatia's accession protocol in February 2009, and Croatia and Albania both officially joined NATO just prior to the 2009 Strasbourg–Kehl summit, with little opposition from Russia.

Montenegro, Macedonia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina are currently the only countries with a Membership Action Plan, and together with Georgia, were named NATO "aspirant countries" at the North Atlantic Council session that took place on December 2011. In 2008, Greece blocked an invitation to its northern neighbor, pending resolution of the Macedonia naming dispute. Macedonia was part of the Vilnius group, and had formed the Adriatic Charter with Croatia and Albania in 2003 to better coordinate NATO accession.

For more than two decades, The NATO has strived to build a stronger partnership with The Russian Federation, creating dialogue and practical cooperation. However, cooperation got suspended in response to Russia's military intervention in Ukraine, which the Allies condemn in the strongest terms. NATO remained concerned by Russia's continued destabilising pattern of military activities and aggression, which went well beyond Ukraine.

At the Wales Summit in September 2014, NATO leaders condemned Russia's military intervention in Ukraine and demanded that Russia comply with international law and its international obligations and responsibilities; end its illegal and illegitimate occupation annexation of Crimea; refrain from aggressive actions against Ukraine; withdraw its troops; halt the flow of weapons, equipment, people and money across the border to the separatists; and stop fomenting tension along and across the Ukrainian border.

Montenegro's accession and Russian negative

The tension with Russia actually started with the Montenegrin invitation to the alliance. Since Montenegro declared its independence from its Union with Serbia on June the 3rd 2006, the new country subsequently joined the NATO's Partnership for Peace programme that Serbia was part of at the Riga Summit in 2006. From that moment on Montenegro has contributed to NATO military missions and signed different agreements with NATO allowing the alliance's troops to move across its territory. NATO let Montenegro apply for the Membership Action Plan with the Support of the Montenegrin Prime Minister, Milo Đukanović, which was granted on 2009. Finally on December the 2nd 2015, NATO formally invited Montenegro to join the alliance being its first expansion to Eastern Europe in 6 years. In February 2016, final accession talks began, and concluded in May, allowing Montenegro to take an "observer" status pending

ratification by the governments of the other members, as well as by Montenegro's own parliament.

After Podgorica, Montenegro's capital, accepted the invitation to the alliance, numerous protests were triggered in the capital with more than 5,000 opponents taking to the streets. The protest first started because NATO bombed the west Balkan state 17 years ago when Montenegro and Serbia were part of Yugoslavia. The Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman, Alexander Grushko, expressed that the Montenegrin decision to become part of NATO's alliance was took by the political elite in the country because is under Western pressure and that this issue should voted on by Montenegrins at a referendum.

For Russia Montenegro's accession to NATO signifies a weakening of regional security and makes even more evident the dividing lines between the two ideological blocs in Europe. Russia's Foreign Ministry has warned that the negotiations over Montenegro's NATO membership will harm Eurasian and Atlantic security systems, as well as relations between Russia and the alliance.

> "This is not the alliance's first expansion, and, of course, not a single round of expansion has improved our relations with the countries that had decided to join NATO. The expansion itself generates a psychology of frontline states, in essence creating new or moving old dividing lines in Europe and contradicts the necessity of creating a new system of collective security of the continent." Grushko stated.

The Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR) threatened in May 2014 that NATO membership would make Montenegro "a legitimate target of Russian missiles", which caused the fear of the spread of an armed conflict, but did not stop NATO's or Montenegro's intentions. In late 2015, anti-government and NATO protests, supported by pro-Serbian parties, had developed in the run up to Montenegro's invitation, which Đukanović has accused Serbia and Russia of supporting.

Future expansion is currently a topic of debate in several countries outside the alliance, and countries like Sweden, Finland and Serbia have open political debate on the topic of membership, while in countries like Ukraine, support and opposition to membership is tied to

ethnic and nationalist ideologies. Overall, the incorporation of countries formerly in the Soviet sphere of influence has been a cause of increased tension between NATO countries and Russia since NATO's firsts quests for enlargement,and will continue to be.

Military exercise in Eastern Europe

The Warsaw Summit stood out NATO's unity and its focus on defense, deterrence, and projecting stability beyond NATO's borders. However, After Russian claims were exposed, NATO and its member countries decided to deploy their forces as a response to concerns about Russiás assertiveness, threatening its vision of a Europe free and at peace. For that reason NATO is now concerned about Russia's increasing military activities along NATO's borders, which continues to make the Euro-Atlantic security environment less stable and predictable.

NATO is planning to have four battalions in Eastern Europe and the Baltic region in order to reassure its members as well as developing an anti ballistic air-defense system. This measure caused an alarm in Russia and generated more tension between the parties. NATO argued that this "missile interceptor shield" is only for defensive purposes and does not represents any threat to Russia, and that its main intention is to prevent any attack from a problematic country. NATO missile defence is intended to defend against potential threats emanating from outside the Euro-Atlantic area. Now the alliance has begun to move defensive weaponry to Rumany, Czech Republic and Poland.

The Warsaw summit resulted in the deployment of four battalions to Poland and the Baltics composed of soldiers from many if not most member states whose size exceeds the bare-minimum definition. The alliance basically attempts to send four battalions to Poland and the Baltics composed of at least 2,000 troops, ideally closer to 4,000. Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States have already agreed to lead three battalions, and Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary have in a separate initiative committed a total of 600 troops to the Baltics. The difficulty of finding another NATO member to head this battalion has generated poor optics both in terms of the alliance's deterrence credibility against Russia.

Meanwhile, Russia continues its military operations inside its territory and in the Middle East, answering to NATO members actions with the continuing of military development and watch of possible threats; but mostly via diplomacy and sharp statements. The Russian President, Vladimir Putin, addressed that for some reason NATO's infrastructure has been expanding and moving closer to the Russian borders, and also on its way to create a

ring around Russia NATO is accepting Montenegro that was a close ally of Russia. Putin also called Washington's unilateral withdrawal from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty an issue:

> "An outside threat, an outside enemy is needed, otherwise why is this organization (NATO) needed?… If we continue following such logic, act to escalate and intensify efforts to scare each other, then one day we may come to a Cold War. We have a completely different logic, it is aimed at cooperation and search for compromise."

Russia supporters, allies, citizens, Pro-Russian and Pro-Serbian communities have a strong feeling against NATO's intentions. Viktor Baranez, the popular columnist, asks why Russia should even consider joint maneuvers after being deceived by the West. NATO, he writes, "has pushed its way right up to our national borders with its guns." and stated that Moscow needs to stop treating NATO as a partner of any kind.

Even though the situation in Europe has turned into a problematic area to the point of entering into a crisis NATO has welcomed its members and allies not to use force and call on Russia to reciprocate. NATO continuously enforces that the Alliance does not seek confrontation and poses no threat to Russia. However NATO cannot and will not compromise on the principles on which the Alliance and security in Europe and North America rest. There are measures that have to be taken in order to maintain international security and the peace between the people.

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A

Accession: The act of coming into the possession of a right, title, office, etc.

Amid: In the middle of; surrounded by; among.

Anti Ballistic Air-Defense System: Military compound capable of destroying ballistic missiles.

Assertiveness: Confidently aggressive or self-assured; positive: aggressive.

B

Battalions: A ground force unit composed of a headquarters and two or more companies or similar units.

Bleak: Without hope or encouragement; depressing; dreary.

Bloc/s: A group of nations that share common interests and usually act in concert in international affairs.

D

Deterring: To discourage or restrain from acting or proceeding.

E

Encircle: To form a circle around; surround; encompass.

H

Halt: To stop; cease moving, operating, etc., either permanently or temporarily.

I

Inherent: Existing in someone or something as a permanent and inseparable element, quality, or attribute.

L

Likelihood: A probability or chance of something.

M

Maneuvers: A planned and regulated movement or evolution of troops, warships,etc.

S

Summit: The highest level of diplomatic or other governmental officials.

V

Vilnius Group: Military Association of the Vilnius region.