

Preface

This study is an attempt to analyse U.S.-NATO Relations, with particular orientation to the changing U.S. security perceptions since 1949. During the Second World War, the United States and the Soviet Union put aside their differences to face their common enemy – Nazi Germany. Created to response to the failure of the League of Nations, the United Nations was based on the idea that an international body could resolve disputes through discussion and diplomacy to avert or stop wars. The U.S. agreed with the U.N., bearing in mind that isolationism could not protect the country and may actually be dangerous. However, due to the set-up of the General Assembly and the veto power of the five permanent power, the U.N. seemed destined to fail. The U.N. has played a constructive role in the resolution of many disputes. As the U.S. rose to superpower status, so did the Soviet Union, and both countries tried to spread their respective forms of ideology and governance. The Soviet Union drew many Eastern European nations into their influence, especially with the organisation of Warsaw Pact. The U.S. and other Western democracies created the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, pledging to protect democracies beyond those involved in the Warsaw Pact. Nations all over the world attempted to develop their nuclear arms capability in order to improve their status among world powers. Perhaps the most significant casualty over the long term was the world balance of power. Britain, France, Germany and Japan ceased to be great powers in the traditional military sense, leaving only two, the United States and the Soviet Union.

NATO was created through the signing of the Washington Treaty in 1949. The treaty, model of brevity and clarity, paved the way for the Alliance's adaptation to the constantly changing dynamic of international security. It provides built-in flexibility and scope for tackling new problems and applying solutions to them that reflect the changing environment. In Article 9, the drafters provided a flexible organisational structure for the Alliance based on a single, authoritative institutional body in the form of a Council responsible for the implementation of the treaty and for the creation of such subsidiary bodies as might be necessary. This foresight has enabled the Alliance to evolve and adopt itself to new circumstances throughout its history.

The decision of the United States after the Second World War to participate in a regional wartime defensive alliance represented a fundamental change in American foreign policy. The United States recognised that its interests no longer could be confined to the limits of the Western Hemisphere: U.S. security was linked inextricably to the future of West European democracies. Concepts of individual liberty and rule of law, coupled with those of a common heritage and shared values, provided by the foundation for the NATO Alliance. These ideals, as well as the on-going goal of every member country to achieve a just and lasting peaceful order in Europe, continue to link the fate of America to that of its NATO Allies.

NATO underwent a series of reforms and reorganisations during the first forty years (1949-89) of its existence, designed to adapt it to the occasional opportunities that presented themselves to move beyond Cold War constraints in order to place the

security of member countries on a more positive and stable foundation. In a relatively short period of time since the end of the Cold War, the alliance has been in the midst of an identity crisis, and had to undergo a process of much more fundamental transformation, adapting to changes in the security environment of a scope and intensity that few could have foreseen.

It was in the 1990s that NATO first responded to the end of the familiar East-West division and its accompanying ideological, political and military adversarial relationships, and to the disappearance of conventional military threats to security in the Euro-Atlantic Area. The Alliance defined a new strategic concept, embarked on intensive partnerships with other countries, including former adversaries, and embraced new member countries. In addition, and for the first time, NATO undertook peacekeeping tasks in areas of conflict outside the Alliance, opening the way for a lead role in multi-national crisis-management operations and extensive cooperative arrangements with other organisations.

The 11th September 2001 attacks on the United States placed the fight against terrorism at the top of the international agenda, including that of NATO. As a result, the transformation processes that characterised the first ten years (1990-2001) after the end of the Cold War era took on a more coherent dimension and great urgency.

Today, the Alliance's response to the new, post-September security environment is based on a clear set of principles agreed upon by member organisations. The Allies

agree that they must be ready to help to deter, defend, disrupt and protect themselves collectively against terrorist attacks from abroad and this may include taking actions against terrorists and against those who harbour or protect them. They also agree that the Alliance should not be constrained by pre-determined geographical limits: it must have the capabilities, on a case-by-case, to assist with operations conducted by other international organisations or coalitions of countries involving NATO members.

These decisions make wide-reaching demands on the Alliance, not only in terms of acquiring the necessary capabilities, but also in terms of the sustained political will of the member countries to draw the consequences of the policies they have adopted and to provide the means to implement them. The need for reviewing and updating policies and structures will not end with the fulfilment of present commitments. Modernisation and rationalisation will remain factors to contend with on a permanent basis, if only because threats to security and stability themselves are not static.

How the Alliance has met the challenges of the past and how it has set about preparing itself to be able to fulfil equally challenging roles in the future is the subject of this new edition of the NATO thesis. It seeks to provide a comprehensive analysis of the evolution of the Alliance up to 2013.