

The Transatlantic Relations and NATO: A Comparison between Bush and Obama Administration and its Impact on Iran

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Abstract

This article examines the security relations between Europe and the USA in the framework of NATO and during the Bush and Obama administrations. The author tried to show that the security relations between Europe and America started from the time of absolute dependence of Europe on Washington and, later on with the development of the European Union and also NATO, this dependence has gradually turned into mutual strategic cooperation. On the other hand, Europe attempts to form a defensive and security structure independently of the United States and mainly in the framework of NATO, which has led to an improvement in the defense treaties between the Eastern European countries. It seems that Europe seeks to play an equally important role to the USA and is using NATO as a powerful tool for this purpose. In fact, by developing its relations with NATO, the EU is trying to show the capabilities of Europe in crisis management and to make itself independent of the USA. However, America's attitude towards NATO across the Atlantic is sometimes different, and conservative and democrat governments in America prefer either a mutual coalition or an American initiative.

Keywords: European Union (EU), United States of America (USA), NATO, security relations, strategic cooperation.

Received: 2021-05-22

Review: 2021-07-30

Accepted: 2021-08-23

Iranian Review of Foreign Affairs, Vol. 12, No. 1, Winter- Spring 2021, pp. 105-126

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Introduction

After the Cold War, America continued its policies by entering and interfering in Europe's affairs. Apart from the impact of strengthening NATO and the continued US presence in Europe, the mutual interests of Western Europe and the United States were also defined in terms of strengthening NATO. On this basis, a decision was made to strengthen NATO as the cornerstone of the cooperation between the transatlantic countries and to develop it with the purpose of protecting the national independence, stable life and freedom of the Eastern Europe democracies and with the aim of creating the New Peace Structure in Europe. With regard to the extension of NATO towards the east, it should be noted that it was Germany which proposed this idea for the first time in 1993 to promote and ensure stability in its eastern borders. The elite of the American ministry of foreign affairs not only supported this, but also claimed that the attempt to extend NATO towards the east can help to build stability in the Central and Eastern Europe countries and ensure NATO's survival and consequently, America's presence in Europe.

All these issues were raised when later on the EU decided to extend itself. Therefore, the extension of the EU could be a powerful tool for the expansion of NATO. From this perspective, America's foreign policies after September 11th were the same policies followed in the 1990s. Nevertheless, the neo-conservatives' and democrats' approach was different in the framework of NATO and each has taken different measures with regard to cooperation between the two sides of the Atlantic. Both the historical events on 11th of September and the Arabian Spring

were really effective in this process. NATO, Europe and America became united in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars but when the main motivation for these wars were no longer there, many countries left the coalition leaving America to grapple with many problems. America had a different approach to the Libyan people's movement and did not want to be directly involved in bombing Libya. America's approach to the happenings and developments in Egypt were paradoxical while it has not been willing to have military intervention in Syria in reaction to the events in this country. Is there a difference between neo-conservatives' and democrats' ideology or is it the new global conditions that calls for different measures by America and Bush and Obama administrations are influential in this process? The present study is an attempt to find an appropriate response to the existing questions in this regard.

Theoretical Framework

Neo-realism can be used as a theoretical framework to analyze the foreign policy of the United States and European countries in relation to NATO. Neo-realism has the power to explain the motives, goals, decision-making process and foreign policy behaviors of the two Atlantic countries. However, it should be noted that this theory, like other existing theories, does not have sufficient capability to analyze all aspects and totality of NATO members' foreign policy. (Dehghani Firoozabadi, 2012: 32) The various dimensions of the model and decision-making process, national interests and goals, security, resources and determinants and foreign policy behavior of the two Atlantic countries can be explained in a new framework of realism.

The US hegemon seeks to maintain and increase its security by establishing and increasing its influence over other countries, including NATO European countries because American security is not just about maximizing control over its national resource and power; In addition, it is provided and strengthened by influencing how other countries use their power. This strategy is directly pursued and implemented by creating asymmetric interdependence

through bilateral relations or indirectly within the framework of regional and international organizations and institutions such as NATO. The United States seeks to play a major or at least influential role in these organizations. Under these circumstances, some European countries, especially Germany and France, naturally show relative resistance and protests against the hegemonic desires of the United States.

I- North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NATO, the acronym for North Atlantic Treaty Organization, was formed after the Second World War and as a reaction to the threat posed by the Soviet Union with the purpose of ensuring the security of the member countries particularly the Western Europe countries. Following the Second World War and by 1991, in the Yalta conference in February of 1945 after the Roosevelt, Stalin and Churchill negotiations, the map of Europe was redrawn and with the formation of a bipolar system and with the world being divided between two superpowers (i.e., Soviet Union and America), countries had to become attracted to one of the two power poles as the last resort. As Europe is described during and after war it, “first it was diminished, then divided and finally armed to the teeth” (Sarraf Yazdi, 1381: 100).

When European countries were exposed to threats from the Soviet Union and Moscow gained access to nuclear weapons and hydrogenic bombs, formation of the Warsaw Pact, and production of ballistic missiles and Cuba’s missile crisis between 1949 and 1962, which were all indicative of the existence of a dangerous enemy, Europeans felt obliged to pay attention to NATO more than before. First, Europeans tried to ensure their security. Five countries including England, France, Belgium, Netherlands and Luxembourg signed the Brussels Defense Treaty in March of 1948. Following Soviet Union’s interference in Eastern Europe and with Europe being exposed to the penetrating communism, the need for America’s presence was felt to establish security in Europe in the framework of a defense treaty.

There were negotiations between America, Canada and the five countries involved in the Brussels Treaty in Washington on sixth of July in 1948 for signing the North Atlantic Treaty and finally with Italy, Denmark, Norway, Iceland and Portugal joining, it was signed. As it has been suggested so far, before 1991, the motivation behind this treaty was to create a security belt around western democracies and to lay siege on the communism superpower and its moons, which later on gathered up in the framework of the Warsaw Pact. What is not clear now is the philosophy behind the existence of NATO after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

According to the NATO statute, which is consistent with article 51 of the United Nations Charter and aimed to establish collective security, encounter invasion and preserve international peace, the main concern of the treaty was to defend the member countries and establish regional security. In line with this purpose, with the lobbying of the United States, Greece and Turkey in 1952 and West Germany in 1955 also joined NATO. In this way, they opened the path to arming the disarmed Germany and prevented the formation of exclusively national forces in Germany. Then Spain in 1982 and Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland in 1999 entered into the Treaty. As the last stage of the development of NATO, Bulgaria, Stoyan, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Albania, Croatia and Montenegro joined the Treaty. (Aminian, 2005: 15)

II- US-Europe Relations

European countries and America developed extensive economic relations and interdependence in the years following the Cold War. Based on the statistics, in 2000 America had 22% of the trades in the European Union and European Union accounted for 19% of the trades in America. Furthermore, America represented 77% of the direct foreign investments made in Europe and two-third of the foreign investment in America was owned by the Europeans. This level of relations is of high priority and very high compared to the other countries and regions. For instance, Europeans' annual investment

only in Texas is more than the total of Japanese investment in 50 states in America and America's investment in Europe is equal to all the investments in the world (Baldwin, 2003; 30).

The existing connections in the economic arena are, on the one hand, indicative and a manifestation of common interests and political and security connections between these two areas and, on the other, promoted this relationship. Despite this relationship, there were still many conflicts between America and its European allies especially France. Although in one case even these conflicts led France to get out of the military structure of NATO, due to the existing threat of the powerful Soviet Union, they were overshadowed by the perception of the existing threat and was not reflected in the relationship between these two regions.

By the end of the 1990s, with the philosophy of the existence of NATO being questioned, the conflicts between Europe and America became more obvious. By the end of the twentieth century, the conflicts within the Europe continent and extraterritorial missions for NATO opened a new horizon for NATO. Confronting the new crises and also crisis management and missions in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo were considered as a new test for NATO.

In the post-Cold-War period, European countries limited themselves to the issues within their continent and did not play an active role in the issues related to international security. Economic problems in these countries also led to a large reduction in their military budget and investments in defense research. The sharp decline in the military budgets and, consequently, a decrease in their throughput in European countries along with the increase in military budget and focus on military technology and capabilities in America widened the gap between America and Europe in this respect. This huge gap was manifested in the 78-day operation of NATO against Yugoslavia in the Kosovo issue in 1999. In this operation, which was carried out by NATO, about 90 percent of the equipments used by the fighters of the United States were exactly-guided and 100 percent of the traffic and the ability to constrain Yugoslavia's abilities, 90

percent of air-to-ground surveillance and 80 percent of the fueling missions of the air tankers were carried out by the United States of America (Lansford and Tashev, 2005: 292).

Before the events of September 11th, America attempted to justify its interfering policies in the world affairs referring to them as humanitarian interference and the promotion of human rights, but due to conflicting views and interests, Europeans took different measures and followed different and independent policies and Russia sought strategic cooperation with China in order to strike a balance of power against America and Shanghai group was formed in line with this purpose (Sussex, 2003: 39). NATO was also influenced by these conflicts to a certain extent. Although three countries of Poland, Hungary and Czech Republic had joined NATO in 1999, even the development of convergence between these three countries had created a growing dissatisfaction within NATO and it was gradually turning into a useless and conflicting organization.

The events of September 11th, which were a unique operation and a new method of modern war, had unique effects in the international relations and fundamentally changed the structure of international system and nature and form of relations, threats, unions and even the concepts. This event had also an influence on the form of relations and interactions between the great world powers.

It can be stated that the September 11th events had a considerable extensive impact upon all the important dimensions of international relations. Under the influence of these effects, transatlantic relations after September 11th can be examined and evaluated in the framework of three different time periods. These periods include:

The Golden Time of Receiving Support from America: Posing a common, dangerous and new enemy and introducing unifying and justifying concepts such as the seriousness of the danger of terrorism and “fighting terrorism” put the great powers of the world in the same front and some countries recognized the need to join this front in cooperation with the great powers to ensure

that their interests are satisfied. America also attempted to introduce numerous advantages to the countries for joining this front. Strategic considerations also led some of the powers to join this new union. For instance, Pakistan for proving its dependence on Washington, India and moderate Arabic countries due to the danger and threats they felt existed for their internal security and finally China and Russia for gaining legal justification for the suppression of internal opposition quickly joined this union (Cohen-Tanugi, 2003: 54).

Immediately after the September 11th, NATO resorted to article five of its statute for the first time in its history in support of America; this very important article allows and justifies using military forces of the member countries when one of the members is under attack. On 8th of October in the same year, North Atlantic Council agreed to take eight military measures in support of America and in the fight against terrorism. These measures included increasing informational cooperation, helping the allies and other countries which are likely to be under terrorist attacks, ensuring security for American bases, providing the facilities and equipment needed for fighting terrorism, supporting and facilitating the anti-terrorism flight operations, providing access to all the ports and air space of the member countries for America and the allies in the fight against terrorism and using the sea forces in the eastern Mediterranean for supporting the operations against terrorism (Lansford and Tashev, 2005: 288). In line with this, Ivax planes of the member countries were dismissed to provide support for America's Airspace.

Before September 11th, the legal and security cooperation between America and its European allies was quite limited. The September 11th events changed the environment in which transatlantic security cooperation was formed. This change in the security and operational relations were manifested in three areas:

- Police and legal cooperation: exchange of information, arrestments,
- Agreement to target the financial network of the terrorists

and blocking financial accounts,

- Commitment to promote security for air lines.

Therefore, the mutual Atlantic relations approached the highest level of friendship and union. The first head of state to go to Washington after the September 11th attacks and announce all-out support for America was Jacques Chirac, the president of France. During this period, this country, which up to that time had raised the flag of disagreement with America, had a close cooperation with Americans in informational, security, marine, juridical and police operations. *Le Monde's* headline to the British on 13th of September was symbolic: "We are All Americans". In this way, Europeans were the first and the most committed to offer assistance to Americans to fulfill their responsibility in NATO.

It was due to this alignment and the basic role of NATO in this connection that Armitage, America's Deputy Secretary of Defense at the time praised these countries' participation in the fight against terrorism in his journey to Hungary and Romania in March of 2002 and said "September 11th tested the effectiveness of NATO and the countries requesting for membership (Shearman, 2004).

During this period, NATO witnessed a turning point that not only tested and evolved the role and the special duty of NATO but also determined its future and established its role as the main and the most basic structure that put America and Europe together in the strategic policies and security issues (Lansford and Tashev, 2005: 29). NATO attempted to take the pivotal and fundamental role in the war against terrorism in Prague and Istanbul Leadership Summit in 2002 and 2004.

The Period of Returning to Coordination and Cooperation: NATO's quick and successful reaction after September 11th confirmed its efficiency and the fundamental reason or motivation for the existence of NATO. The unilateral approach taken by America during the Iraq war again endangered the transatlantic relations and led the relations between the allies to crisis.

Following this crisis, by moderating their behavior, which had endangered the union, the two sides of the Atlantic tried to act

united against the new and growing threats particularly in the Islamic world and what they called the development of terrorism and weapons of mass destruction. This issue had a deep reflection within NATO and almost all the concepts and doctrines of NATO were reviewed in light of the threats of terrorism. The most important new document of NATO in this regard is NATO's Military Concept for Defence Against Terrorism, which was approved in 2002 in Prague Leadership Summit.

America and Europe tried to reduce and resolve the tensions in the framework of basic identity commonalities and based on an emphasis on the fact that, as a consequence of globalization, these two areas have become increasingly interdependent. Both sides understood the mutual need for cooperation and moved towards releasing the tensions. In the official document of its national security strategy in 2006, emphasizing this point America stated: we should make the best of the lack of basic conflicts between the great powers. The new era requires new approaches. America realized that it needs Europe for political and military reasons (Binnendijk, 2004: 74). Americans further stated that in the fight against terrorism they need the informational, legal and police organizations in Europe and the higher historic familiarity of Europe with Islam has great benefits for Washington. For historical reasons, geographic location, cultural variety and its diplomatic position and experience, Europe can be the intermediary between Washington and the global community particularly the Islamic world (Cohen-Tanugi, 2003: 55).

As suggested by Rumsfeld, the American Minister of Defense, NATO Response Force was ready to carry out any operations across the globe based on the decision made in the Leadership Summit in Prague. For the first time in October 2005 and in the case of the earthquake in Pakistan, this force sent about 1000 troops with medical and machinery equipment, helicopters and about 11 C130 planes to help the Pakistani government. In addition, interference in Afghanistan (Zorlu, 2004: 35-39) in the framework of the development of the missions of International Security Assistance

Force (ISAF) and in Iraq in the framework of training the security forces were all indicative of the strengthening and increased interference of NATO in international affairs. In this way, NATO not only turned from a defense force into a security force but also got involved in operations with the purpose of nation-building and social engineering.

Without a doubt, one of the most important reasons in the new era, which makes the two sides pursue similar policies is the new concept of security in the international arena. Today, particularly after the September 11th, global security threats have changed so drastically that the old approaches and instruments are no longer effective for sloughing them off. Untraditional threats and the threats posed by social and religious evolutions and not by governments' decisions have led strategists and security decision makers to realize that traditional instruments such as creating balance, deterrence and even confrontation are no longer effective. Besides, there was an issue raised for the western countries: the purposes and capabilities of non-state enemies are not known and this, as a consequence, has led to uncertainty in their security policies. Such feelings of threat and danger put western countries in a united front. The close cooperation of the allies on the two sides of the Atlantic during the second period of Bush's presidency (in 2004) is indicative of the importance the two sides placed on the new security issues. Furthermore, both sides have been forced to reconsider their practices and policies. America, which is still suffering from a painful experience in Iraq and the problems of unilateral action, has now realized that hardware and military superiority cannot in itself help to solve its problems in Iraq.

The issue of dealing with the nuclear power of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the initial coordination between Europe and America in this issue can be also analyzed and examined in the same framework. On the one hand, Europe needs America's support for countering the new threats and in the challenges facing it in the Islamic world and the danger of weapons of mass destruction. On the other hand, America also did not want to have

the unpleasant experience of unilateral action in Iraq and deprivation from international support and the support of its allies in Europe and consequent isolation again. These two issues drove them towards taking similar decisions and approaches.

III- A Comparative Analysis of US-Europe Relations During Bush and Obama Administrations

NATO created a union and an invaluable cooperation and partnership between Europe and America. Even When deGaulle withdrew France from NATO Military Command, they still remained a member though unofficially. Beyond the United Nations framework, NATO gave the ordinary people in America and Europe the possibility to know each other and know that their fate is interrelated and intertwined. After the Second World War, both sides learned this invaluable lesson very well. After the end of the Cold War, a major part of the common goal of America and Europe was not achieved. After 1991, for some time the two sides acted as if NATO could continue its job even when there was no enemy to fight against. But when there was no longer an enemy, a gap appeared in NATO.

Europeans did not entirely trust America during the presidency of Bush. They all knew that neo-conservatives' violent view of the world issues and the reaction of the American citizens and the world nations led the democrats to win the elections and Obama could show off his new political approach. Obama had a different view of the issues in Europe and the world and made new suggestions and took new measures with regard to the security issues in NATO. A comparative analysis of the topic seems to be important and useful if we want to have a clear perception of what may happen in the future.

This common threat and new security considerations have caused Europe-Atlantic community to focus strategically on the East and the great Middle East. (Asmus and Jackson, 2005: 47) By extending towards the East and covering a major part of the eastern Europe, NATO presented a new meaning for the concept of the

West and with the introduction of the Islamic world as a threat by NATO, Russia no longer considered the development of this organization a threat. In the new security environment, the West is no longer limited to Western Europe or America and includes eastern Europe and, to some extent, Russia as well. Even the issue of Israel's membership in NATO should be also analyzed and examined in this broad framework.

Such evolutions and similar stances disproved the interpretation of well-known analysts such as Charles Krauthammer and Charles Kupchan, who used such terms of the death of NATO or Atlantic divorce, or the interpretation made by Robert Kagan that America is Martian and European come from Venus, indicating that the two sides are not able to understand one another (Gordon, 76).

Pentagon's strategists announced a change of security doctrine in America in the last months of Obama's first period of presidency. This change was specifically announced by Leon Paneta, the former Minister of Defense in the controversial conference in Singapore. Paneta stated that in America's new approach, the focus of America's military presence will be the Asia-Pacific Ocean area. This meant a decrease in the long and wide presence of America in Europe. Paneta, in fact, reemphasized the announced change in the new American military strategy.

In January 2012, Barrack Obama, the American president, referred to the new military strategy of this country as Defense Strategic Review. This strategy is, to a large extent, focused on wider military presence in Asia-Pacific Ocean and the Middle East. In this strategy, the issue of reducing American forces in Europe has been also pointed out, which is mainly the result of the large decrease in America's military budget. As from the American strategists' point of view, now the major threats are in the Asia-Pacific Ocean area, Pentagon will be naturally more focused on this area.

IV- The Difference between Obama and Bush Administrations

A comparison between the American presidents from all perspectives can be revealing of the differences and similarities. Undoubtedly, Obama and Bush are two presidents with two different approaches although both have a similar role in terms of responsibility and the wills of the American administration system. The difference between Bush and Obama is not limited to their color, race, family, profession and their party preferences. Probably the most important difference between them is their attitude towards government and its role and functions in managing the American society's issues and affairs. How can we analyze and examine the different views of Obama and Bush about government? Where do the differences lie?

Political Thought: The first difference between Obama and Bush is in their view of the concept and nature of state and government in their political thought and philosophy. Bush can be known by what is considered as Reagan Revolution. In other words, Ronald Reagan, the American president from 1980 to 1988, believed that the share of government in economy should be minimized. According to him, a good government is a small government that prepares the workspace for the development of the private section by reducing the rules and regulations. Although, according to Katwala (2008), the head of Fabian Forum, Reagan enlarged the government by increasing the military budget in the defense section of the government, he tried to leave the private section free by removing and reducing the rules.

At the same time, the measures he took with Margaret Thatcher, Britain's right-wing Prime Minister, created an orientation in the West called Thatcher Revolution, Reagan Revolution and Reaganomics upon which George Bush based the evolution of economic thought. Political-economic philosophy of Reagan's followers is in contrast with the statement made by Obama that he will try to fight against what he called "structured greed". This statement indicates that by developing and setting

rules and regulations and interference the government will not let the private section do whatever it wants. The current financial crisis is rooted in Reagan's attitude towards the relationship between economy and the government.

Internal Economic Wheather: This thought and attitude reveals the second most important difference between Obama and Bush, i.e., 'focus on internal affairs of America'. It means that Obama puts the priority on social, hygienic and economic issues and has, accordingly, selected well-known figures to take the positions related to these issues in the government. For instance, senator Thomas Daschle was selected for the Department of Health and Human Services. This concern is indicative of the different understandings and views of Obama and Bush about the role of government.

Bush was mainly focused on foreign security issues and domestic policies were not among his political priorities. The economic status quo in America made attention to domestic policies a requirement for Obama. In his economic movement, Obama sought to keep the three million jobs that were going to be lost the next year. American people also favored a focus on economy and a reform of the health insurance system and energy policies, based on the surveys conducted by Washington and the ABC. Majority American people are optimistic about the measures Obama has taken in this regard.

Internal Political Affairs: The third difference between Obama and Bush in the area of internal affairs, is in Obama's non-partisan orientation, his attempt to use all the forces and involving all the actors in the political arena of America in contrast with Bush's monopolistic attitude. There is an important evidence for this difference; how he prepared his victory speech on 4th of November, 2008. He is one of the few American and even world politicians who writes his own speech and makes the framework of his speech exactly clear to his assistants. When his victory speech was prepared, he ordered his assistants to give more weight to its non-partisan content. In his speech, he also referred to Abraham

Lincoln, who had a historical role in creating unity between different groups and sectors in America.

Obama and Bush are different in their perception of the nature and function of government in the domestic policies arena. What makes this difference prominent is the deep impact of domestic policies followed by all the main political actors particularly America on the foreign and international policies. America's domestic policy is itself an international issue and there are numerous differences in this regard.

Global Affairs: There is also a difference between Obama and Bush in global affairs. Relations with Israel, how to treat Iran, cooperation with Europe in the framework of NATO, economic crisis in Europe and the position of international law and international organizations are the areas in which the two presidents differ from each other both in word and practice. Bush always threatened Iran by bombing, but the phone conversation between Obama and Rouhani was described as a historical step in political and international assemblies.

With regard to the cooperation between America and NATO, Obama took the cooperation with Europe seriously in his first period of presidency and tried to fill the gap between European and American elite. However, concerning NATO's military interference in the Middle East, he avoided the literature and decision logic of neo-conservatives. For example, during the Libyan people's movement, NATO played no role in the frontline and even in the Syria crisis, it looked for considerations not to have military interference in this country. Military coup de tat in Egypt was also considered by America with great caution.

Security Cooperation: A comparative analysis of the Obama and Bush eras in terms of security cooperation on two sides of the Atlantic is also indicative of clear differences. America's dream did not come true in Bush's time and both the American society and the European nations have an inclination towards reforming the forms of cooperation.

America's military strategy has been always formed under

regional and international conditions and internal requirements. It was in this framework that the new American strategy was introduced by Obama in 2009. But, in practice, the government of this country abandoned this strategy due to increased threats and disagreement among its executors. In this year, Obama ordered a 30-thousand-increase in the number of troops in Afghanistan, but at that time also the decision-making structure and Obama's security team made paradoxical decisions and no clear consensus existed in practice, which led to making changes in the security team and finally introduction of new conditions for the withdrawal of American forces.

Finally, although such an environment will strategically stabilize the American government in controlling the regional crises, it will pose problems for it in preparing the ground for regional stability due to the selection of a new security model.

V- NATO-Iran Bilateral Perspective

Bilateral relations of the Atlantic within the framework of NATO outside the main geography of the treaty's activities have raised concerns among some countries, such as Iran. The North Atlantic Organization, a largely political organization left since the Cold War, has continued to consider itself a global power because of its leader's contribution, i.e the USA's, to the international system. NATO, which includes U.S.-led Arab states, is trying to maintain a physical presence in different parts of the world. Meanwhile, the Middle East and Iran are among the regions where this presence is palpable and has special sensitivities. In other words, considering NATO's plans to develop to the East and approach the geographical environment around Iran and its link with U.S. military programs to intervene in the Geopolitical Region of the Middle East, NATO poses a serious threat to Iran. (Divsalar, 2015: 49)

It is an undeniable fact that Iran's neighbourhood with NATO through Turkey, which lasted half a century and provided the ground for Iran's link with the organization under the Cento Treaty, has now entered a new phase, and NATO's presence in Afghanistan

and Iraq, as well as in Central Asian countries, has made its regional and international policies of particular importance in Iran's defense decision-making to enjoy.

On the other hand, due to Iran's approach to the West, especially the United States, it has been recognized as a threat actor and has found an important place in NATO's security approach. The Islamic Republic of Iran has an important place in NATO's security approach because it opposes major powers and lacks compliance with their policies. Through the support of NATO members, the United States is trying to make the Islamic Republic of Iran's nuclear activities look threatening. NATO's concerns about Iran's expansion of influence in the Arab sphere, e.g. in Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, Yemen and Palestine, have led to the adoption of policies, including NATO's expansion toward Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the Caucasus, and close security, intelligence and economic cooperation with Arab countries on the Persian Gulf.

NATO's expansion into the East, while having negative impacts on Iran's relations with the European Union, puts more western pressure on Iran, headed by the United States. NATO is trying to reduce Iran's role and influence in the region with the aim of strategically controlling Iran through energy and transportation routes and controlling ethnic, political and ideological movements (Mirfakhraee and Khodaei, 2020: 93).

One of the U.S. actions against Iran has been the deployment of military bases around Iran, which have been conducted both on their own and within the framework of NATO expansion. It can be seen that in the northern countries of Iran, within the framework of NATO's expansion to the east, in the west of Iran with Turkey's presence in NATO and the attack on Iraq, in the east of Iran by attacking Afghanistan and in the south of Iran, cooperation with the Gulf cooperation countries has been able to create a potential military threat against the Islamic Republic, in which NATO plays a key role (Soheili Najafabadi et al., 2020: 189). Given the current situation, two major approaches can also be imagined by Iran towards NATO, ignoring NATO and its presence in the country's

neighbourhood, or even at a higher stage, NATO hostility; the other, paying attention to the reality to better secure the national interest. That is, seeing the reality, but not surrendering purely to them, nor blindly confronting them. The second approach further reflects the relationship between Iran and NATO should be based on regional realities (Divsalar, 2015: 64).

Now could be the time when NATO has openly, definitively and inclusively called on Regional Cooperation, especially in Afghanistan's security. Convergence of interests can lead to strategic cooperation between the two. This factor will itself pave the way for the formation of common identities and the construction of new common interests, which are the main foundations of reconciliation programs in Afghanistan and other geography. (Tishehyar, 2012: 18) Although the views of Iran's political and military elites on NATO's goals and practices are very diverse, the treaty's member states should not forget Iran's deterrent power and regional role. In particular, under the post-Biden situation, Iran tends to attract European NATO actors to a sensible and fair solution when it comes to lifting sanctions on Iran and reviving the JCPOA. However, dialogue is better than confrontation.

Conclusion

In this article, the goals and functions of NATO and also American's and Europeans' policies with regard to security cooperation in the framework of NATO were examined. The importance of national interests of a country does not change with the change of political leaders of that country. But the ideological view or the cultural roots and the values cherished by the parties like democrats and republicans in America or the fundamentalists or reformists in Iran require the use of different techniques, strategies and tools for advancing those interests. However, the mentioned differences sometimes lead to great effects and results.

In America, despite the fact that the exchange of power between the Hawks and Pigeons has not led to absolute solutions

for the domestic or foreign issues of the American society or other nations, the public opinion within America and the world has been also effective in directing and determining the political and social conditions. Therefore, the mass population normally welcome the politicians who create new hopes with the claims of creating change, although after a while these hopes are also weakened in this attritional political fight and are replaced with new hopes and promises and the “Brain Circulation” continues. The elite and the investors in Europe and America did not trust Bush and his performance very much. Budget and financial deficits, his sense of adventure abroad, his security measures, etc. had undermined the authority of America during Bush administration. During his administration, Obama made an attempt to rebuild and reestablish this trust both inside his country and between Europe and America. However, there was a conflict between majority of the Europeans during the last century.

In summary, it can be concluded that the goal of the United States is to ensure stable security in Europe as its backyard and the conflicts between Europe and America are not often fundamental and are not about creation of a hegemony but about interests and the position of Europe in America’s foreign policy and the fact that Europe does not like to be ignored in the future world order. There was a growing uncertainty and concern in Europe about this issue that Washington is not willing involve its old allies, which have now become its staunch allies, in important international decisions as it used to and has gradually downplayed their importance and role. This indicates that the EU tries to increase its bargaining power against America to claim and get its share in the future order of the international system. Although this attempt by the EU to gain this position has appeared in the form of resistance against the influence and dominance of America, it puts an end to decades of compliance with this country.

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