

NATO's Security Policy: The case of Syria

Rita Marques Ferreira

Abstract: This paper intends to analyze NATO's security policy, based on the case of the Syrian conflict, started in 2011. Through an historical and critical approach, we will try to understand the Washington Treaty Organization intervention in this specific war, considering the purposes of its creation, back in 1949, the development of its foundational goals in an attempt to adapt to the change of world dynamics and the development of the Syrian conflict from a civil war into a proxy war. We will also try to comprehend if there is a legitimacy or legality in NATO's action or inaction in the much complex Syrian crisis, considering previous missions of the transatlantic organization, namely its involvement in Kosovo and Libya.

Keywords: NATO, Syria's civil war, Islamic State, legitimacy, legality

Author: Rita Ferreira, Master in Journalism, Escola Superior de Comunicação Social, Lisbon.
Contact: ritamferreira19@gmail.com

NATO: A brief introduction

In September 1945¹, the II World War (1939–1945) came to an end, leaving behind a Europe economically and military devastated. Considered the bloodiest conflict in the history of mankind (Royde-Smith, n.d.), the war ended with the death of almost 50 million people, of which 39 million in Europe, followed by the rising of refugees camps, infant mortality, orphans, homeless and the rationing of basic commodities (nato.int, n.d.). On the other hand, towards the multidimensional crisis, new communist parties began to gain more supporters in

¹ The official end of the II World War (1939–1945) was established with the surrender of Japan, in August 1945 and the signed of Japanese Instrument of Surrender in September of the same year.

France and Italy, at the same time that Soviet Union, taking advantage of the power vacuum in central and east Europe, started to dominate military these states, expanding its communist influence throughout the orient (Haglund, n.d.). The Old Continent was soon ideologically fragmented. In the words of Winston Churchill,

“From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain [had] descended across the continent.”

Churchill speech on 5 March 1946²

Two years after the end of the war, Eastern Europe was consumed by the communist influence. In 1947, Greece was one of the few exceptions, thanks to the military and economic help provided by the United Kingdom to the Greek Government in its fight against the communism in the country (BBC Bitesize, n.d.). However, when the British Government announced that it would stop supporting the Greek Government, United States decided to reorient its foreign policy. In an historic speech, on 12 March 1947, President Harry S. Truman asked the American Congress to finance the Greek Government, replacing the gap left by the British (US Department of State, n.d.). This speech has been seen as the milestone of the American foreign policy after the II World War and as the inauguration of the policy of containment that would later led to the foundation of NATO (De Long and Eichengreen, 1991). In that speech, Truman assumed the responsibility of the United States to prevent the expansion of the soviet influence, justifying his claim based on two arguments: first, if the communism won in Greece, the political stability in Turkey would be in danger and, hence, the political stability of the Middle East, a strategic region on the United States national security, would also be vulnerable. Second, the expansion of authoritarian regimes would put in jeopardy the basis of international peace and, consequentially, the security of the United States (US Department of State, n.d.).

“At the present moment in world history nearly every nation must choose between alternative ways of life. The choice is too often not a free one. One way of life is based upon the will of the majority, and is distinguished by free institutions, representative government, free elections, guaranties of individual liberty, freedom of speech and religion, and freedom from political oppression. The second way of life is based upon the will of a minority forcibly imposed upon the majority. It relies upon terror and oppression, a controlled press and radio, fixed elections, and the suppression of personal freedoms. I believe that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures.”

Truman’s speech, 12 March 1947³

² Speech available at: <http://www.winstonchurchill.org/resources/speeches/1946-1963-elder-statesman/the-sinews-of-peace>

³ Speech available <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/coldwar/G3/cs3/cwar.pdf>

Under the Doctrine Truman, name given to the new American security policy, based on the containment of the soviet imperialism, the United States launched a program of economic aid, called European Recovery Program. Also known as the Marshall Plan (1948-1951), the program costed to the American Government 13 billion dollars, given to the European in the form of primary goods (food, feed, fertilizers, industrial materials, semi-finished products), machinery and vehicles, fuel, among other commodities (De Long and Eichengreen, 1991). The original idea was to cover almost all European countries, however, the denial by the Soviet Union was soon followed by the withdrawal of the central and eastern countries under the influence of Stalin government (Encyclopaedia Britannica, n.d.). Therefore the aid was distributed between seventeen western and southern European nations⁴, under the condition the helped countries would cooperate between them for a mutual recovery (Haglund, n.d.).

Meanwhile, the United Kingdom, France, Brussels, Netherlands and Luxemburg started to negotiate an agreement for collective defence, with the main goal of Europe's military recovery (Haglund, n.d.). On March 1948, these five nations signed the Treaty of Economic, Social and Cultural Collaboration and Collective Self-Defence, with duration of 50 years. With this, the Brussel Treaty Organization was formed, based on military cooperation in case of a new threat by Germany.

In the summer of the same year, the Soviet Union blocked the access of the Ally troops to Berlin overland, in order to pressure them to withdraw from Western Germany⁵. As response, the Western Allies created an airlift to distribute supplies to the people in West Berlin. This episode, historically called as the Berlin blockade, has been seen as the boost to the United States plans for the development of a common security policy in Europe. In October 1948, the Brussel Treaty Organization, Canada and United States reached an agreement for a defence pact between the North Atlantic countries. In December of the same year, the negotiations for a collective defence started. In the beginning of the following year, Denmark, Iceland, Italy, Norway and Portugal joined the conversations and on 4 April 1949, the twelve countries signed the North Atlantic Treaty, also known as the Washington Treaty, giving birth to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization – NATO (Reinalda, 2009).

⁴ Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and Western Germany.

⁵ After the II World War and the defeat of Nazi Germany, the country was divided between the Allies and the Soviet Union, as well as the capital Berlin, localized in the Eastern side, under the soviet influence.

NATO's security policy

“The Parties to this Treaty reaffirm their faith in the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and their desire to live with peace with all peoples and governments. They are determined to safeguard the freedom, common heritage and civilization of their peoples, founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law. They seek to promote stability and well-being in the North Atlantic area. They are resolved to unite their efforts for collective defence and for the preservation of peace and security.”

The North Atlantic Treaty, 4 April 1949⁶

When NATO was founded, its main purpose was directly related to the political situation in the second half of the 20th century: the expansion of Soviet Union influence. In this way, the goal of its creation, as established on the Washington Treaty, was to ensure the freedom and security of its members, through political and military means against the communist threat. All the states members would protect each other through mutual cooperation, in case of military aggression against any of the members. Hence, an attack against one or more members, would be consider an attack against the entire alliance (Ganem et al, 2011).

The Treaty was composed by fourteen articles that contained the main dispositions of the Organization. Noteworthy, Articles number 4, 5 and 6. Article number 4 proclaims that if a party considers that its territorial integrity, political independence or security is being threatened, any party has the right to request for a consultation meeting with the rest of the parties. As for Article 5, this is considered the core of the North Atlantic Alliance (Haglund, n.d.), stating that

“The parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them on Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all and consequentially they agree that, if such an armed attack occurs, each of them [...] will assist the Party or Parties.”

Article 5, NATO

This article assumes the collective defence principle of the organization. Article 6 concludes the 5, delimiting the geographical sphere of NATO, in Europe and North America. The rest of the articles are related to NATO's mission and principles, such as strengthening the democratic institutions, being open for new members in Europe, any party cannot engage in an international commitment that compromises the organization and its relation and respect towards United Nations Chart.

However, after 1985, the political and economic reforms imposed by the soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev⁷, that conducted to the fall of the Soviet Union and, therefore, the

⁶ Treaty available on http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_17120.htm

communist threat, called into question the maintenance of NATO's existence (Haglund, n.d.). That is why, in 1991, after a meeting with Heads of States and the Governments of the members of the alliance, it was published The New Strategic Concept, defining the goals of NATO for the end of the century.

Considering the political and economic situation at the time, NATO's new main purposes would be to assist the German's reunification, to reintegrate Germany in the international organizations, to develop the relations with the countries once members of the now disintegrated Warsaw Pact⁸ and the new countries that raised with the fall of Soviet Union and, finally, to guarantee the European security, especially with the climbing of regional conflicts in Eastern Europe. In this sense, its new tasks would involve crisis management operations, maintenance and preservation of peace, fighting terrorism and the proliferation of mass destruction arms and accession to new members (Ganem, et al, 2011).

This would be achieved through political and military means. Regarding the political dimension, we are talking about the promotion of democratic values and the encouragement to consultation and cooperation in matters of defence and security, in order to build trust among its members and to prevent conflicts. As for the military dimension, NATO believes in the pacific solution for conflicts. However, if the diplomatic efforts seem to fail, and only in that case, the alliance is prepared for military actions. Its military means also involve crisis-management operations under Article 5 of the Washington Treaty or under United Nations' request (nato.int, n.d.).

In November 2010, after a summit in Lisbon with the Head Chiefs and Governments of the alliance, it was published a new Strategic Concept, defining NATO's new guidelines for the next ten years.

“NATO is an unparalleled community of freedom, peace, security and shared values. But the world is changing. We face new threats and new challenges. And this Strategic Concept will ensure that NATO remains as effective as ever in defending our peace, our security and our prosperity.”

Anders Fogh Rasmussen, NATO's Secretary General 2009-2014 (nato.int, n.d.)

⁷ In the 1980's Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev imposed several political and economic reforms, with the goal of opening the Soviet Union. These reforms become known as “perestroika”, literally meaning “restructuring”, and are seen by many authors as one of the responsible for the fall of Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War.

⁸ The Warsaw Pact was a collective defense organization created in 1955, gathering the communist states of Central and Eastern Europe. It was founded as a response of the integration of Western Germany into NATO.

Considering the new threats of the 21st century, NATO is committed to develop new capacities, such as defence against ballistic missile attacks and cyber-attacks. Simultaneously, it is NATO's mission to develop new partnerships, especially with Russia, in matters of common interest, to stay open to new members from European democracies, and to strengthen old partnerships. NATO should also assume an active role in crisis management operations, based in the principle of cooperative security and in a comprehensive approach, relating military power with diplomacy and post-conflict stabilization (nato.int, n.d.).

NATO and Syria's civil war

Syria's civil war started in 2011, when democratic protests, influence by the political context of the Arab Spring⁹, were violently censored by the government. Using open-fire against the protesters, with "license to kill", the response of President Bashar Al-Assad was followed by national protests in favour of his resignation. Consequently, the protests rose, as well as the violence towards the demonstrators by the security forces. Soon the conflict ceased to be a mere struggle for power and started to include aspect of religious and sectarian nature, with the Sunni majority opposing to president's Shia Alawite sect. At the same time, taking advantage of the political and social instability in the country, the Islamic State, an extremist jihadist group, started to claim territories in the north and eastern Syria, with the goal of building a totalitarian Islamic caliphate (BBC, 2015).

According to the United Nations investigation, all parties in the conflict have committed war crimes, including murder, torture and rapes, as well as the three fronts have been accused by the international community to impose civil suffer as a method of war, through blocking the access to food, water and health services.

The war escalated with the involvement of external actors, transforming the national conflict into a proxy war. Iran, the Lebanese Hezbollah and the Iraqi government have been showing their support to the regime with military advisers, financial transfers and energy supply. In the same way, Russia and China support Assad regime. On the other hand, the Sunni politicians in Lebanon, tribes and jihadist groups in Iraqi, as well as the Western powers, such as France,

⁹ The Arab Spring was a revolutionary wave that started in 2010 in Tunisia and spread throughout the countries of the Arab League and surroundings. It consisted in several protests, demonstrations, riots and civil war in name of democratic values.

United States and Turkey have been supporting the rebels with logistics and political aid (Asseburg and Wimmen, 2012).

In four years of conflict the results have been dramatic: more than 230 thousand people have been killed and around four million have fled from the country. Turkey is their main destiny, having received 1.8 million refugees, followed by Lebanon (1.2 million) and Jordan (629 thousand). In recent months, Europe has also been facing a refugee crisis, leading António Guterres, the head of the United Nations' refugee agency, to call it the "worst humanitarian crisis of our generation" (BBC, 2015).

Considering the violence of the conflict, and in the light of the Responsibility to Protect Doctrine (R2P), proposed in 2001 by the then United Nations' Secretary General Kofi Annan, an international intervention is urgent (Knapp, n.d.).

The R2P Doctrine, born with the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty report, states that the Human Rights can surpass the sovereignty of a state under certain conditions. This thesis imposes a certain responsibility to the ruler. In this way, sovereignty isn't absolute, but contingent, it changes the emphasis from the outsiders' rights to the victim's rights and justifies an United Nations' intervention in humanitarian matters, when facing an "international default setting" (Knapp, n.d.).

However, as affirmed by the United Nations' Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon in September 2015, the world organization hasn't been able to respond to the humanitarian crisis that Syria is facing, mainly due to the divergences between the members of the Security Council.

"We need some solidarity unity of purpose, particularly among the permanent members of the security council. When they are divided, it is extremely difficult for the United Nations to deliver. That's why I've been urging the members of the Security Council to look beyond national interest. We have to look for the global interest."

Ban Ki-Moon in an interview for the Guardian [7 September 2015]

Russia and China, supporters of Assad's regime, have vetoed in many occasions the resolutions towards the Syrian government, including an initiative to send peacekeeping forces to the field (Kaim, 2012) and an investigation of the Syrian conflict by the international criminal court, proposal backed by the other 13 permanent and non-permanent members of the Security Council (McGreal, 2015). As result, United Nations' credibility is being put into stack.

Towards the United Nations inefficacy to control the humanitarian crisis in Syria, many academics have been debating the perks and disadvantages of a NATO's military intervention, like it happened in Kosovo in 1999 or, more recently, in Libya in 2011 (Knapp, n.d.; Oh, 2012; Kaim, 2012; Asseburg and Wimmen, 2012; Garau, 2013).

For a NATO's military intervention is needed the consensus of the 28 members of the alliance and such mission must be built upon political and moral patterns. The Washington Treaty does not refer any criteria to justify an intervention by the Allies. However, there are some criteria that the officials of the Western Alliance have been using to justify their actions.

After the violence of the much criticized Iraqi War, the United Kingdom presented three conditions that had to be met in order to take NATO to intervene in a humanitarian crisis. The first criterion was demonstrable need, this is, there must be a clear need for intervention, for instance, in case of a serious violation of the Human Rights, under the R2P Doctrine. The second criterion is regional support. This is related to the multilateral approach to a crisis management, when several democracies achieve consensus and get together against the other, under the argument of just cause or legitimacy to use military force and to wage war. Last but not least, there must be a clear legal basis to intervene, this is, the support of the United Nations (Garau, 2013). The "Leslie Criteria", as they were called, were used to justify NATO's presence in Libya 2011.

One can say that, in Syria's case, the first two criteria are met. The rise of the casualties and refugees, as well as the accusations about war crimes from all the parties of the conflict shows that a humanitarian intervention is urgent. On the other hand, the principle of regional support is justify by the threat faced by the borderer countries, such as Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey, a NATO member – we will get to this point later. Only the third criterion, related to the legality of the intervention is not achieved, once again thanks to the power conflicts within the Security Council. According to Commander Pedro Perez-Seoane Garau (2013), Spanish Minister of Defence, the weight of the Security Council is relative. His main arguments are related to the democratic deficit, the cases of paralysis and its incapacity to control its own mandates. The non-support by the Security Council, due to its own internal conflicts, may lead to a humanitarian disaster. One must then ask, what weight more: legitimacy or legality. The author also exposes the possibilities to surpass the Security Council incapacity. One of the means is to promote the authority of the General Assembly, using the procedure of

Uniting for Peace, which allows the General Assembly to use force and recommend a collective action, as it happened with the Suez crisis, in 1956¹⁰.

In fact, NATO's intervention in Kosovo, in 1999, was guided without the support of the United Nations and considered illegal by the international community. However, it has been seen as a legitimate intervention and a positive step towards the R2P doctrine, considering the violation of Human rights that even today haunted Eastern Europe. On the other hand, the intervention in Libya, in 2011, that led to the deposition and assassination of the dictator Kaddafi, though it had the support of the Security Council, was much criticized by the international community, because once NATO obtained the Resolution 1973, or, let's call it, the green light, the mission was executed ignoring the spirit and atmosphere with which the Security Council promoted the mission (Garau, 2013).

Considering the similarities between Libya and Syria, NATO's intervention in the first could be seen as a precedent for the alliance's intervention in the second (Oh, 2012). Plus, the Turkish involvement in the conflict could reinforce NATO's position towards the Syrian conflict.

Turkey's involvement and the Article 5

Turkey has been involved in the conflict almost since the beginning: its territory is the host of the opposition Syrian National Council¹¹ and the main basis of the operations of the Free Syrian Army¹². Besides, due to Turkey's proximity to Syria, the country is directly affected by the fights in the other side of the border. Moreover, the presence of Sunni refugees in the border has been causing social problems with the local Arab Alawit population and with the Kurd situation not resolved, the country fears the lightening up of the separatists tendencies. Turkish participation in the conflict rose in October 2012, when the parliament authorized military operations, including the possibility to enter in Syrian territory. (Asseburg and Wimmen, 2012).

¹⁰ In 1956, Israel invaded Egypt, with the support of Britain and France, in order to restore the control of the Suez Canal to the West and to unseat Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser. This was known as the Suez crisis.

¹¹ Syrian National Council (SNC) is a Syrian opposition coalition, formed in 2011, during the rising of the civil war. The organism opposes to Bashar al-Assad's government and has its base in Istanbul.

¹² Free Syrian Army is an organization founded in 2011, by defected Syrian officers and soldiers, with the goal of bringing down the regime.

As a member of NATO, and regarding to the Syrian conflict, Turkey has not yet invoked the Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, boosting the Allies intervention in the field. However, since the beginning of the civil war, Ankara has requested the Article 4,

“The Parties will consult together whenever, in the opinion of any of them, the territorial integrity, political independence or security of any of the Parties is threatened”

for three times.

The first two invocations happened in 2012, after the Syrian forces shot down a Turkish jet and a Syrian shelling killed five Turkish civilians, in June and October of that year respectively (nato.int, n.d.). As result of the meeting, in December 2012, NATO approved Turkey’s request to implement anti-missiles systems in the border (Asseburg and Wimmen, 2012). Plus, Germany, Netherlands and United States agreed to provide two Patriot missiles batteries each to support Ankara’s air defences (nato.int, n.d.).

In July 2015, following several attacks at the Turkish-Syrian border by the Islamic State¹³, Turkish government request another meeting with its NATO partners. Subsequently, NATO agreed with the Turkish proposal to create a secure area in Syrian territory to accommodate civilians fleeing the war. Such project would have the support of the United States, with the goal of avoiding the civilians keep running to Turkish territory – we remind that Turkey is the main escape for the Syrian refugees. In any moment of the meetings, Ankara has requested military help under the Article 5 of the Washington Treaty. In this sense, a military intervention by NATO does not seem a possibility, at least in the near future¹⁴ (Emmott and Tattersall, 2015).

“In the meeting there was full agreement on the statement. All allies expressed their strong support for Turkey. We stand all together, united, in solidarity with Turkey. All allies also condemned terrorism in all its forms. Turkey did not ask for any additional military NATO presence in Turkey. What we all know is that Turkey is a staunch ally, Turkey has a very capable armed forces, the second largest army within the alliance.”

Jens Stoltenberg speech in the news conference after the meeting on 28 July 2015

¹³ A car bomb that killed security officers and wounded four other people; shoots from the border by ISIS militants against Turkish soldiers, killing one and wounded two more; and a suicide bomber, identified as a Syrian Kurd associated with ISIS that killed more than thirty people (Whitman, 2015).

¹⁴ One can argue that Turkey’s refuse to invoke the fifth article is related to its attempt to avoid diving more deeply in the conflict. In fact, Turkey has been keeping a “neutral” position regarding an active fight against the Islamic State. That may be justify by the fact that Kurdish militia has been the most effective fighting the Islamic State, but the relations between the Kurdish minority and Turkey have not been peaceful. According to Whitman (2015), “Turkey fears that a stronger Kurdish movement would pose a threat to its own stability” (Whitman, 2015).

Legitimacy or Legality for a NATO's intervention

The paralysis of the Security Council due to Russia and China's veto in the Syrian case, has made difficult to achieve a mandate by the United Nations for military intervention. However, like stated in this paper, an international intervention without the permission of the United Nations would not be a first time: we remember Kosovo 1999. In this case, there were several allegations about human rights violations committed by Yugoslavia. Also in this scenario, Russia opposed to the Security Council proposal for a military intervention. As result, NATO decided to launch an air attack without the United Nations' permission. According to Andreas Bock, a political scientist specialized in peace research at the University of Augsburg, though illegal, NATO's intervention followed a moral duty to act.

“There were clear human rights violations in Kosovo that justified an intervention.”
Deutsche Welle, on 28 August 2013

Before Kosovo, NATO also intervened without a United Nations mandate in Liberian civil war, in 1990, following the future criterion of “demonstrable need”. Of course not all interventions without a mandate were justified and internationally applauded. The most demonstrable case was the Iraqi invasion by United States, in 2003, based in the argument without concrete proofs that the Middle East country possessed weapons of mass destruction.

So, the question is: should NATO intervene without a United Nations mandate? The R2P Doctrine, proposed by the Canadian government, was design to enable a potential intervention without being limit by the veto of one of the five permanent members of the Security Council (Lütticke, 2013). Without United Nations permission or the invocation of Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, R2P can be used as the “legal” basis of the intervention.

Many authors have been debating about the best kind of intervention for NATO. According to Knapp (2012), a military intervention would be a mistake, basing his thesis in five arguments. First, a military attack by NATO would lead to the deepening of the conflict, spreading the war through the Middle East, through Turkey, Iran, Jordan and Iraq. Second, the number of casualties would increase, not only in Syria, but also by NATO. Third, it would only lead to a long war, without any actual winner. Fourth, an attack by the Occident would worsen the relation between the West and Muslim countries, especially in Iranian and Iraqi regions, and could be seen as a third war between United States and Muslim by the international community. Fifth and finally, it would increase the violence by terrorist groups against the

United States, making difficult for the American embassies to proceed with the Washington's policy to control and contain groups like Al Qaeda.

The solution shared by authors like Knapp (n.d.), Oh (2012) and Asseburg and Wimmen (2012) would be for NATO to embrace its role in democracy building and peacekeeping. Their suggestion is to install peacekeeping units on Syria, creating safe zones in the north, east and south of Syria. In this way, it would be possible to build stability in the Syrian border with Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey and to protect the refugees. A second step would be to create demilitarized zones between Free Syrian Army and the Syrian government security forces between Aleppo and Damascus. Many are the cases of success of such kind of operations: Suez in 1956, Cyprus in 1964 and Lebanon in 2009 (Knapp, n.d.).

The decision taken in NATO Council, in July 2015, seems to go in accordance with this ideology. In late August 2015, Turkey had already begun training a police force to be deployed to a buffer zone in Syrian territory, in order to keep Islamic State fighters away from the border. Ankara has called for volunteers to join the Turkmen fighters that have enrolled the United States-led Train and Equip program with the purpose of building a police force to patrol the buffer zone. However, Turkey is being accused of using the buffer zone as an excuse to fight against the Kurdish militias with the aspiration of creating a Kurdish majority area in Syria (Bulos and Loveluck, 2015). In fact, after the bomb attack that victimized 32 people, in Suruç, in last July, the Turkish government considered the Islamic State a top threat to national security, alongside the PKK, considering both terrorists. In this way, the dismissal of President Assad has been put in second plan (BBC, 2015; Euronews, 2015). As stated by Ahmet Mahli, Head of the Gaziantep branch of the Syrian Turkmen Nationalist movement to the Telegraph,

“The main aim of this buffer zone is to go against the project of Syrian Kurdistan”.
The Telegraph, on 25 August 2015

Conclusion

In conclusion, NATO has not yet intervened directly in the Syrian conflict. However, recent developments have led to murmur among the international media, about a possible change of the transatlantic position. On 13 November 2015, a series of coordinated terrorists' attacks occurred in Paris, including mass shootings, suicide bombings and hostage-taking. Around 130 people were killed and many others were severely wounded. The Islamic State soon assumed the responsibility for the attacks.

France has not yet invoke any NATO's summit, but the gravity of the attacks legitimize Paris to invoke the Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, as stated by former head of NATO Anders Fogh Rasmussen, who stressed the resemblances of this situation with the terrorist attacks in 2001, in United States.

“Formally, I do believe that the attacks on Paris qualify for an invocation of Article 5. It was an attack on an ally and we know who the attacker is. This is very similar to the situation after 9/11. At the time there was even more doubt about who the attacker was. Nevertheless NATO decided unanimously to invoke Article 5. I have no doubt that the basis is there if France requests it. The formal conditions are there.”

Newsweek, on 17 November 2015

In spite of resembling the 9/11 attacks, Rasmussen does not consider France will request the Article 5. Nonetheless, others personalities have a different vision. It is the case of Omar Lamrani, a military analyst for Stratfor, a global intelligence company, who believes the frequent use of the word “war” by the French President François Hollande, when referring to the Islamic State may be an indicative that France may call for NATO.

“After 9/11 there is a precedent for this. [But] it is not clear if France will do that yet as the French are still discussing among themselves how to respond.”

Newsweek, on 17 November 2015

In the same way, Admiral James Stavridis, former NATO-allied supreme commander, also emphasizing the similarities of Paris attacks with 9/11, argues that NATO may respond in four or five ways:

“It would start with an enhanced level of intelligence-sharing and special operations from NATO nations going in and supporting the current campaign. Secondly NATO, would take over the bombing campaign. This would bring many more assets – aircraft ordinance, the airborne early warning aircraft – into the fight. Thirdly, I think NATO should take on the training mission, both for the Kurds in the north and the Iraqi security forces in the south. [T]his way the United States doesn't have to pull the entire load. We need the alliance to step up and be there with us. And by the way, this ought to be not just NATO. There are many Arab states – and indeed Russia at least has articulated a desire to conduct operations as part of this – so I see this as NATO as the core of, effectively, a global response against the Islamic State.”

The Atlantic, on 15 November 2015

Simultaneously, United Nations have approved a resolution allowing the countries to take “all necessary measures” in the fight against the Islamic State, gathering the consensus of the 193 member states. The resolution presented by France, though, does not give a legal basis for a military action, nor invokes Chapter VII of the Chart authorizing the use of force (Morais,

2015). However, Paris and Moscow have already claimed that a military action is justifiable, due to right of countries to self-defence (BBC, 2015).

Though maintaining a non-offensive position so far, the evolution of the Syrian conflict, from a civil war inspired by democratic values to a proxy war, now also involving Europe, a NATO intervention seems to be closer than has ever been.

*

References

- Asseburg, M. and Wimmen, H., 2012. Civil War in Syria – External actors and interests as drivers of conflict. *SWP Comments*. [pdf] Available at: <http://www.swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/comments/2012C43_ass_wmm.pdf> [Accessed on 20 September 2015]
- Atlantic Community, 2013. NATO spokesperson Oana Lungescu responds to member questions. *Atlantic Community*. [online] Available at <<http://www.atlantic-community.org/-/nato-spokesperson-oana-lungescu-responds-to-member-questions>> [Accessed on 05 September 2015]
- BBC Bitesize., (n.d.) The Truman Doctrine and Marshall Plan, *BBC Bitesize*. [online] Available at: <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/history/mwh/ir2/trumandocctrineandmarshallplanrev1.shtml>> [Accessed on 11 September 2015]
- BBC News, 2015a. Syria conflict: Number of refugees passes four million. *BBC News*, 9 July 2015. [online] Available at: <<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-33457886>> [Accessed on 22 September 2015]
- BBC News, 2015b. IS conflict: NATO discusses Turkey-Syria border crisis. *BBC News*, 28 July 2015. Available at <<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-33682972>> [Accessed on 1 October 2015]
- BBC News, 2015c. Syria: The story of the conflict. *BBC News*, 9 October 2015. [online] Available at: <<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-26116868>> [Accessed on 20 October 2015]
- BBC News, 2015d. Paris attacks: UN's backs 'all necessary measures' against IS. *BBC News*, 21 November 2015. [online] Available at: <<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-34886971>> [Accessed on 22 November 2015]
- Bulos, N. and Loveluck, L., 2015. Turkmen militia enlisted to patrol Syria anti-Isil buffer zone. *The Telegraph*, 25 August 2015. [online] Available at <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/syria/11824264/Turkmen-militia-enlisted-to-patrol-Syria-anti-Isil-buffer-zone.html>> [Accessed on 1 October 2015]
- Calamur, K., 2015. Will NATO respond to the attacks on Paris? *The Atlantic*, 15 November 2015. Available at: <<http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/11/nato-paris-attack-article-5/416097>> [Accessed on 22 November 2015]

- Churchill, W., 1946. The Sinews of Peace. Available at <<http://www.winstonchurchill.org/resources/speeches/1946-1963-elder-statesman/120-the-sinews-of-peace>> [Accessed on 11 September 2015]
- De Long, J. B. and Eichengreen, B., 1991. The Marshall Plan: History's Most Successful Adjustment Program. *NBER Working Papers Series*. [pdf] Available at <<http://www.nber.org/papers/w3899.pdf>> [Accessed on 11 September 2015]
- Encyclopaedia Britannica (n.d.), "Marshall Plan", *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Available at: <<http://www.britannica.com/event/Marshall-Plan>> [Accessed on 12 September 2015]
- Emmot, R. and Tattersall, N., 2015. NATO backs Turkey on Islamic State, some urge peace with Kurds. *Reuters*, 28 July 2015. [online] Available at: <<http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/07/28/us-mideast-crisis-turkey-nato-idUSKCN0Q20RQ20150728>> [Accessed on 29 September 2015]
- EuroNews, 2015. Syria and Turkey – a history of a complex relationship. *Euronews*, 28 July 2015. [online] Available at: <<http://www.euronews.com/2015/07/28/syria-and-turkey---a-history-of-the-relationship>> [Accessed on 1 October 2015]
- Ganem, A. M. et al., 2011. *Simulação de Organizações Internacionais – Guia de estudos – Organização do Tratado do Atlântico Norte 2011*. [pdf] Available at: <<http://www.soi.org.br/upload/ce0a99844f67d385dfd8a2bd22ad515ad59ae7d05d7b28f983189d4378bd4408.pdf>> [Accessed on 13 September 2015]
- Garau, P. P., 2013. *NATO's criteria for intervention in crisis response operations: legitimacy and legality*. Royal Danish Defense College. [pdf] Available at: <<http://forsvaret.dk/FAK/eng/publications/Documents/NATO%20crisis%20intervention%20paper.pdf>> [Accessed on 21 September 2015]
- Haglund, D. G., (n.d.) North Atlantic Treaty Organization: NATO, *Enciclopedia Britannica*. [online] Available at: <<http://www.britannica.com/topic/North-Atlantic-Treaty-Organization>> [Accessed on 09 September 2015]
- Kaim, M., 2012. Crisis in Syria: Possibilities and Limits of Military intervention, *SWP Comments*. [pdf] Available at: <http://www.swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/comments/2012C11_kim.pdf> [Accessed on 28 September 2015]
- Knapp, K., (n.d.) *The Crisis in Syria: The case for UN Peacekeepers*. Washington University. [pdf] Available at: <https://pages.wustl.edu/files/pages/imce/knapp/the_case_for_un_peacekeepers_in_syria.pdf> [Accessed on 30 September 2015]
- Lütticke, M., 2015. UN mandates and military intervention, *Deutsche Welle*, 28 August 2013. [online] Available at: <<http://www.dw.com/en/un-mandates-and-military-intervention/a-17051993>> [Accessed on 28 August 2015]
- McGreal, C., 2015. UN Security Council is failing Syria, Ban Ki-moon admits. *The Guardian*, 7 September 2015. [online] Available at: <<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/sep/07/un-security-council-is-failing-syria-ban-ki-moon>> [Accessed on 23 September 2015]
- Nato.int, (n.d.) North Atlantic Treaty Organisation website [online] Available at: <<http://www.nato.int/nato-welcome/index.html>> [Accessed on 05 September 2015]
- Oh, G. (n.d.) With NATO inaction speaks louder. EUISS. [pdf] Available at: <http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/NATO_on_Syria_-_Oh.pdf> [Accessed on 23 September 2015]
- Reinalda, B., 2009. *Routledge History of International Organizations – From 1815 to the Present Day*, London and New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.
- Royde-Smith, J. G. (n.d) World War II", *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Available at: <<http://www.britannica.com/event/World-War-II>> [Accessed on 5 September 2015]
- Sharkov, D., 2015. Ex-NATO chief says Paris attacks qualify for global response, should France request it. *Newsweek*, 17 November 2015. [online] Available at: <<http://europe>>

- newsweek.com/ex-nato-chief-says-paris-attacks-qualify-global-response-should-france-request-395410?rm=eu> [Accessed on 22 November 2015]
- Truman, H. S., 1947. Truman's Speech of March 12th 1947. [pdf] Available at: <<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/coldwar/G3/cs3/cwar.pdf>> [Accessed on 11 September 2015]
- US Department of State (n.d.) Milestones: 1945-1952, The Truman Doctrine, 1947. *US Department of State Office of the Historian*. [online] Available at <<https://history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/truman-doctrine>> [Accessed on 11 September 2015]
- Whitman, E., 2015. What is NATO's article 4? Why Turkey called for consultations under rarely used provision? *International Business Times*, 27 July 2015. [online] Available at: <<http://www.ibtimes.com/what-natos-article-4-why-turkey-called-consultations-under-rarely-used-provision-2026060>> [Accessed on 28 September 2015]

* * *

© ICRP 2015
<http://culturalrelations.org>
institute@culturalrelations.org

Ferreira, R. M., 2015. NATO's Security Policy: The case of Syria. *Cultural Relations Quarterly Review*, Vol. 2. Issue 4. (Autumn 2015) pp.1–16.

For more information concerning the article and citation please contact us via email at institute@culturalrelations.org