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## Discourse on NATO's re-building Afghanistan

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### **Abstract:**

*North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was formed by the United States, Canada and some Western European countries in 1949 as a well-equipped and structured military organization with having the purpose to provide security to its member states from any external threats in general and the Soviet Union and its allies in particular. During the Cold War, signing of Warsaw Pact treaty by the Soviet Union and its allies, and their attempt to achieve parity of power with the Western bloc, propelled NATO to accomplish its objective by deterrence alone. After collapse of the Soviet Union, NATO was expected to end its relevance in the post-Cold War era but, through expanding its role and functions to other areas such as crisis management and peace keeping operations, promoting and strengthening democracy, enlargement of its member states, 'out of area' operations and fight against global challenges etc, it has transformed itself from collective defense to collective security organization. The study addresses on why and how it has involved in 'out of area' operations? To provide empirical input to the study, Afghanistan has taken as a case study. The study further highlights how NATO faced difficulties in civilian resources for this operation and for that reason it seeks cooperation from other International Organizations like EU and UN. It further discusses on various attainments and challenges in reconstructing socio-economic-political and military systems of Afghanistan. It throws light on its impacts over the region and the possibility of conflicts among member states and international organization in future.*

**Keywords:** NATO, Afghanistan, ISAF, EU, Out of Area Operation

### **1. Introduction**

The primary purpose of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)<sup>1</sup> was to address the threats posed by the Soviet Union and its alliance to Western Europe. During the Cold War period NATO remained its deterrence role as the mechanisms to deal with its adversaries as well as operated within limited geographical boundary of its member-states. Therefore, providing security to its member states from the external threat was the main concern in this period. However, after disintegration of the Soviet Union, NATO lost fear of threat from Soviet Union and faced the new circumstances in the world affairs. It was expected that NATO's relevance would come to an end in this changing international affairs in the world. But, adaptation and changes of any international organization is necessary or timely requirement with the changing international order to survive in the world affairs (Haas 1990: 73). During that time NATO decided to expand its role and functions in the post-Cold War era with adapting new tasks such as peace keeping and crisis management operation, and fight against global challenges (such as narcotic drugs, terrorism, cyber-attacks, weapons of mass destruction and piracy operation) to survive and strengthen its relevance in the post-Cold War era. NATO's Conflict Prevention and Management (CPM) and importantly its 'out of area'<sup>2</sup> operations are important issues in the context of post-Cold War security framework as it has been working on various regional and international issues instead to concentrate on a single role which never seen in the Cold War period. In December 1992, for the first time in its history the Alliance is taking part in UN peacekeeping and sanctions

1. North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was formed by the North Atlantic Treaty which signed in Washington D.C in 4<sup>th</sup> April 1949 by the representatives of Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the UK and the US forming the Atlantic alliance. Now it is an alliance of 28 countries from North America and Europe committed to fulfill the goals of the North Atlantic Treaty, and provides a forum in which the US, Canada and European countries can consult together on security issues of common concern and take joint action in addressing them. It regarded as a collective defence organization. For more details, please see: Lindley-French, J. (2007), *The North Atlantic Treaty Organization: The Enduring Alliance*, New York: Routledge

2. 'Out of area' operation refers to a notion of common security interest to propose commitment of NATO forces anywhere outside the territorial boundary or integrity of the member states. For example, the alliance's first major engagement outside of Europe, USA and Canada, was Afghanistan for invasion against Al-Qaeda and the Taliban. For more details, please see: Douglas, A. S. (1991), *Can NATO Transcend Its European Borders: NATO Out-of-Area Disputes*, Carlisle: Strategic Studies Institute. 19-21; Sendmeyer, S.A (2010), NATO Strategy and Out-of-Area Operations, URL: [www.hsdl.org/?view&did=713508](http://www.hsdl.org/?view&did=713508).

enforcement operations in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Schmidt 2001: 59), and gradually it has been involved in 'out of area' operation such as Kosovo, Afghanistan and Darfur.

Afghanistan is the first "out of area" operation beyond Europe for NATO as located in Asian continent. NATO's involvement in Afghanistan is the first operation where its allies invoked Article-V<sup>3</sup> of the North Atlantic Treaty after the terrorist attack on World Trade Center of New York in 11<sup>th</sup> Sept, 2001. This involvement has been legitimized by adoption of resolution 1386 at the United Nations Security Council on 20th December 2001, which launched International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) with a peace enforcement mandate under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. In 2003, UN Security Council authorized NATO to lead ISAF (Sloan 2010: 36). But, in 2003 the UN realized the lack of its military capabilities to carry out Afghanistan operation with its mandated ISAF, at last in the same year the UNSC authorized NATO to lead ISAF and to carry out its peace keeping and crisis management operations in Afghanistan. The ISAF has constituted of "coalition of the willing", supported by NATO and financed by the troops of the contributing nations. Its main purpose is to promote peace and secure environment through which Afghanistan government can rebuild its political-economic and military system in the state (Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan 2001).

### *1.1. Cooperation with Other International Organizations*

The NATO led ISAF's peace building operation in Afghanistan was a symbol of multi-facet task, which needs both military and civilian power. Having military power of NATO was not enough for the Afghanistan operation; it needs economic and political tools which other international organizations can provide such as World Bank (WB), European Union (EU), United Nations (United Nations), World Health Organization (WHO) etc. (Lindley-French 2007: 116). The NATO realized the significance of soft power that any progress in hard power matters is superfluous without addressing soft security issues to re-establish social, political, economic and military systems in Afghanistan. In this operation, NATO couldn't have contributed civilian resources such as economic, social and political tools (Dufoureq and Yost 2006: 39). It is widely accepted that security and development are closely interrelated, and this was the main reason which influenced NATO to seek cooperation from other regional and international organizations as they could fill this gap of civilian resources to successfully carry out Afghanistan peace building operation. In this context, EU and WB were the most significant organizations for NATO to seek cooperation for this civilian resource gap as both the organizations hold strong civilian capabilities with having experiences in socio-political and economic development sectors. Therefore, NATO has had been taking cooperation from the EU, WB, WHO, UN and also various national and international non-governmental organizations and its non-member states (Lindley-French 2007: 116). Therefore, all these other international organizations have been engaged in providing their respective resources for the different sectoral development such as security, economy, politics and controlling opium trade etc. For example, EU and WB are in economic development sector, ISAF, NATO and PRTs are in security sector, and UN and EU are engaged for the electoral process and judicial reforms and controlling opium trade. At the Riga summit of NATO in 2006, it welcomed efforts by donor nations, the EU, UN and other international organizations to increase their support in civilian and military activities. At the same time, it also addressed that its role in the reconstruction of Afghanistan could be no longer without assistance from the EU and UN. Indeed, having only military power of NATO which can consolidate security is not enough for this operation (NATO 2006: 09).

### *1.2. Re-building Afghanistan*

In the different security and developmental sectors NATO led ISAF has been engaged in Afghanistan. In the field of reforming Afghanistan security sector fight against terrorism and providing military training to the Afghanistan National Army (ANA) and providing police training to Afghanistan National Police (ANP) are the most important attempts of ISAF. Fight against terrorism was one among other reasons of NATO's involvement in Afghanistan as its main purpose is to prevent Afghanistan from once again becoming a terrorist state of Taliban group. It means Afghanistan should be free from the Taliban or any other terrorist organizations and becoming a well-established democratic state through which people can realize peace, stability, cooperation, right, liberty and developments. In pursuit of that goal, NATO intends to provide sustained practical support to Afghan security institutions aimed at sustaining and improving their capability to counter threats to the security, stability and integrity of Afghanistan effectively, and contributing to regional security; and doing so with full respect for Afghan sovereignty and leadership, in a manner consistent with and supportive of the Afghan constitution and international law. In concern to provide police training to ANP, ISAF has been taking cooperation from the EU police forces called EUPOL<sup>4</sup>. The ISAF's primary role in Afghanistan is to support the Afghan government to bring peace and security in the state. The ISAF increased in size from approximately 5581 troops in August 2003, 43,000 in February 2008, and 56,000 in February 2009 (NATO report 2009). Securing and expanding positive developments requires the enduring presence of sufficient well trained Afghan security forces. In 2008, ISAF has transformed its responsibility to Afghan

<sup>3</sup>Article-V says that "The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all and consequently they agree that, if such an armed attack occurs, each of them, in exercise of the right of individual or collective self-defense recognized by Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, will assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking forthwith, individually and in concert with the other Parties, such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force, to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area" (North Atlantic Treaty 1949).

<sup>4</sup>In May 2007, the EU accepted a request by NATO to take the lead in training Afghanistan's police. The European police (EUPOL) training mission began in June 2007 with the addition of some 120 EU police trainers who joined the 41 German trainers that remained in the program. Aim of this mission is to provide effective civilian police system with the wider justice system under Afghan ownership (European Union 2009a). For more details, please see: EU Police Mission in Afghanistan, URL: <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/eupol-afghanistan>.

National Security Force (ANSF) for security in the Kabul province to strengthen Afghan government. In 2007, the ANA trust fund was established to cover transportation and installation costs of donations when nations are unable to fill this requirement. The ISAF had provided full support during the establishment of the Afghanistan National Army Air Corps (ANAAC) as an important milestone in increasing the ANA's capability to operate independently which provides trained and ready airmen and soldiers to execute critical tasks in support of the ANA.

Establishing and promoting democracy in Afghanistan through various political means is another attempt of ISAF as democratic governance and the protections of human rights constitute the cornerstone of sustainable political progress in Afghanistan. With the help of NATO led ISAF, Afghan Government has been rapidly trying to recruit competent and credible professionals to public service on the basis of merit; establish a more effective, accountable and transparent administration at all levels of Government; and implement measurable improvements in fighting corruption, upholding justice and the rule of law and promoting respect for the human rights of all Afghans. Successfully conducting presidential elections in 2004 and in 2009 were another important milestone in the development of Afghanistan's constitutional democracy. During that time, voter registration was conducted efficiently and successfully by the Afghanistan authorities with the support of ISAF. There was a list of 4.4 million newly registered voters in the year 2009. The Afghan Government has given priority to the coordinated establishment in each province of functional institutions including civil administration, police, prisons and judiciary. These institutions have appropriate legal frameworks and appointment procedures; trained staff; and adequate remuneration, infrastructure and auditing capacity. The aim was to ensure equal, fair and transparent access to justice for all based upon written codes with fair trials and enforceable verdicts. In this regard, measures have included completing legislative reforms for the public as well as the private sector; building the capacity of judicial institutions and personnel; promoting human rights and legal awareness; and rehabilitating judicial infrastructure. And also the Afghan Government and NATO are committed to their effort to protect and promote of human rights as providing through the Afghan constitution.

Re-building different political institutions is also another important area of focus that enables Afghan Government to stand on its own feet. Some of the initiatives taken as part of re-building process are: Enhancing Legal and Electoral Capacity for Tomorrow (ELECT), Support to the Establishment of the Afghan Legislature (SEAL), Capacity for the Afghan Public Service Programme (CAP), Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan (LOTFA), Afghanistan Sub-National Governance Programme (ASGP) and Access to Justice at the District Level (AJDL) etc. NATO led ISAF supports the National Drug Control Strategy (NDCS), and provides assistance to the Afghan authorities counter narcotics operations through training, intelligence, logistics and in-extremist support, as appropriate.

ISAF also helps the Afghan government to explain its counter narcotics policy to its people through Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs)<sup>5</sup>. According to the UN report more than 93% of the opium in the world was supplied from Afghanistan in 2007 (NATO 2009b). Poppy farmers are heavily concentrated in the south of the country as it is a major earning source in the economic stability of Afghanistan. The drug trade is also a major source of funding for the insurgency as the Taliban draw an estimated 40%, or close to \$100 million, of their funds annually from this industry. With the support of ISAF and other international community, Afghanistan government was established Afghan National Drug Control Strategy in May 2003, to combat the drug trade as opium is not only a criminal problem; it funds the insurgency, drains the legal economy and promotes corruption. It constitutes a significant threat to Afghan governance, stability and regional security. The ISAF provides support to the overall counter-narcotics effort in Afghanistan; most obviously through security. ISAF has become more proactive, conducting joint planning with organizations such as the Afghan National Counter-Narcotics Forces, Poppy Eradication Force and Interagency Operational Coordination Centre to ensure coordinated efforts that optimize the synergy between counter-narcotics and security missions. In this counter narcotic drugs operation, the NATO has been taken assistance from the EU with having strong commitment and cooperation to end the production of the narcotic drugs (heroin and opium) in Afghanistan as following the 'Berlin Plus Agreement'<sup>6</sup> of 2003. With the help of international community NATO has developed the Comprehensive Agriculture and Rural Development (CARD) sector strategy is aimed at poverty reduction through economic regeneration. 440 irrigation canals were built over the last five years. Real GDP growth is expected to exceed 13% in the current fiscal year ending on March 19, 2008. Afghan GDP has doubled since 2003 to amount to USD 10 billion this year (NATO 2009).

The ISAF also has active role in pursuing other developmental activities such as humanitarian relief and reconstruction of economic infrastructures. The ISAF's Post-Operations Humanitarian Relief Fund (POHRF) was established in 2006 to provide quick humanitarian assistance, such as food, water and shelter. The basic principle for this humanitarian assistance is to remain "as civilian as possible, as military as necessary". The Fund consists entirely of voluntary donations. The PRTs of ISAF are playing very significant role in the socio-educational sectors as well as women empowerment. Schools are being rebuilt with the mentoring or assistance of

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5. PRTs consist of teams of civilian and military personnel working together to help extend the authority of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan throughout the country by providing area security and supporting the reconstruction and development activities of Afghan. In addition to providing area security, PRTs also use their diplomatic and economic capabilities to support security sector reform, encourage good governance, and enable reconstruction and development. While the PRTs' civilian components take the lead on the political, economic, humanitarian, and social aspects of the teams' work in support of the Afghan government's national development priorities, military components focus on increasing security and stability in the area and building security sector capacity.

6. The NATO-EU formal joint declaration for strategic partnership in peace keeping and crisis management was finalized on 11 March 2003 which is known as the 'Berlin plus Agreement'. It paved the way to use single military force and allows EU to access NATO's capability, headquarters, structures and mechanism to carry out peace keeping and crisis management operations.

ISAF engineers, allowing children to resume their education in Afghanistan. The NATO Virtual Silk Highway (SILK) project provides Internet access via satellite to the academic communities of the Caucasus and Central Asia. At the local level, ISAF's Provincial Reconstruction Teams support capacity-building activities and programmes by providing mentors and training, and by facilitating effective linkages between the development community and the Afghan authorities. With the help of international community NATO led ISAF have Constructed 1,816 schools commenced in 2007. NATO's public diplomacy division's Science for Peace and Security (SPS) programme is providing Internet connectivity to afghan authorities in developing their educational system. With the help of other international community ISAF has been also engaged in reforming health care sectors and since 2002, 16 million vaccinations against childhood diseases have been administered, contributing to a 26% decline in infant mortality in the last five years. In 2007, there were about 103 hospitals and 878 health centers across Afghanistan. More than 80% of the populations have access to health care, as opposed to 8% under the Taleban rule.

The ISAF has also engaged in providing and establishing women empowerment in throughout the Afghanistan. Due to religious believe in Islam, women are very strict towards wearing 'burkha', not working in the various public and private places and not learning education etc. are the most important obstacles towards the enjoyment of rights, liberty and equality of women specially in Afghanistan. Therefore, with the help of NATO military power EU has been engaged in the various developmental activities of women, like in relation to education of the girl Childs, the increase was even more dramatic: from only a few thousand to 2.7 million in 2011, and in overall its Schools' enrollment went from "approximately 900,000 in 2000 to 6.7 million in 2009. In the other sectors women empowerment is also growing such as working in the Afghanistan National Security Forces and in the politics. As of September 2012, there were 1,455 female members of the ANP; 634 patrolwomen, 599 NCOs, and 222 officers. (Department of Defence, US: 2012: 61). In the political field, women hold 27 percent of the seats in the National Assembly and 25 percent of the seats in the Provincial Councils-seats that are reserved for women by law. Increased participation was met by increased electoral success: there were two female winners in Nimroz Province who won both provincial seats; 69 women filled elected seats, one seat above the reserved number of 68; and 11 women had enough votes to enter the Parliament independent of the reserved seats. Women have also increased their presence and visibility through the National Solidarity Program and constitute 24 percent of participants in the local Community Development Councils. Altogether women make up 19 percent of the GIROA workforce, and the government continues to make progress toward their goal of 30 percent female staff (Department of Defence, US: 2012: 142).

### *1.3. Impacts over the Region*

NATO's Afghanistan peace keeping operation has great impact in the region of Asia. Russia and China are not part of NATO and have suspicious that the west will use the UN and/or NATO as tools to legitimize their own aggression or intervene in the international affairs of sovereign states. Russia is not against of NATO's Afghanistan peace keeping operation because of its anti-terrorism and end production of narcotic drugs mission. Russia is also an important victim of terrorism and narcotic drugs through which thousands of people are dying every year. But china is against of NATO's Afghanistan operation, it argues that NATO should work within its limited European boundary. In September 2009, the Chinese Communist Party's newspaper China Daily, openly called for U.S. and NATO troop withdrawal from Afghanistan as a prerequisite for peace. India has re-established its presence in Afghanistan under the NATO security umbrella. India, with its \$1.2 billion pledged to Afghanistan, is the fifth largest bilateral donor and the most significant donor in the region. Virtually every Islamist militant group operating in and against India (e.g., HUJI, Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), and Harkat-ul-Mujahideen/Harkat-ul-Ansar, among others) trained in Afghanistan with varying connections to the Taliban and by extension Al-Qaeda. All these terrorist groups which trained often in camps co-located with the Taliban and al Qaeda, LeT always maintained its own camps in Kunar in northeast Afghanistan. Thus while LeT has considerably ideological affinity with al Qaeda, the evidence that the two groups are linked is scant. Naturally, India dreads a future Afghanistan that again becomes a terrorist safe-haven for groups targeting India.

## **2. Conclusion**

This is an out of area operation of the NATO and for that some member countries such as Belgium, France and Britain are reluctant to provide sufficient contribution of financial resources and military troops to the Afghanistan peace building operation. As most of the NATO member states have small numbers of military troops and budgets. Only a handful of NATO nations like France, Germany, Britain, Turkey, and Poland have the capacity to field significant numbers of troops. Issues of Atlantic's view (which is advocated by NATO) and Europeanist view (proposed by the West-Europe especially France and Germany) are the emerging obstacles towards NATO's out of area operation and its long term cooperation other international organizations (Reichard 2006: 22; Kamp 2007: 06; Rane 2006: 59). Europeanist view was objected to the presence of US in any form in Europe and Atlantic's view supported US presence as necessary in Europe and opposed to the Europeanist view (Schake 2001: 31). Due to that reason participation and decision making problems have been arising in peacekeeping operations. Member states contradictions on their issues are also ongoing problems in NATO, like Germany says that police as a civilian law and order force whereas US regarded it could play counterinsurgency role (Gross 2009: 28).

It is very difficult for NATO to end terrorist activities in Afghanistan, because in the real field violence and crime are mostly created from the condition of poverty as the poverty rate of Afghanistan is very high or it regarded as a most socio-economic-political and educationally backward state than compare to other countries in the world. So, NATO and other international organizations those are operating in Afghanistan they required to more focus on the economic development sectors. Death of the innocent afghan civilian by the US/NATO strikes are also the most important challenge and in this context, according to the 'Global Research' during the U.S/NATO attack from October to Dec 2001, around 2,256-2,949 civilian were killed. According to the UN report up to 11,864

civilians were killed in Afghanistan from 2007 to the end of 2011 (Herold 2008: 02, Chesser 2012: 03). Another challenge is to end production of narcotic drugs, which is main source of national economy of Afghanistan. Until people of Afghanistan will not get fully alternative agricultural facilities, or any other alternative source of income with proper infrastructures of road, buildings and electricity etc., then it is not possible to stop the production of narcotic drugs.

The UN is a symbol of collective security and its primary responsibility is to maintain international peace and security as not the responsibility of the NATO. Given authorization to the NATO by the UN for out of area operation was very illogical issue. If, UN didn't have sufficient military power during that time it could reform its military structures or it could reform the structures and functions of the Security Council. It means UN had to re-build/reformed its military capability in the transforming way as the supreme political authority in the world. After that it could have operated gradually in Afghanistan in a very effective manner. And If, the UN continues to allow this type of operation to NATO then after some years may be other regional organizations like South Asian Association of Regional cooperation (SAARC), African union (AU), Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and ASEAN etc., will come forward to make their own separate or independent military capabilities, and after they may to operate peace keeping and crisis management operations within regional boundary and out of boundary. And gradually conflicts will be seen in the international affairs. The NATO was made for collective defence organization and it may operate within its geographical boundary not in out of area like in Afghanistan. Due to transferring authority to NATO to led ISAF, it shows failure or inability of the UN to maintain international peace and security. It also addresses that NATO is gradually leaving traditional responsibility and adapting new tasks with the supremacy of the United States in the post-Cold War era. Therefore, instead of giving authorization to NATO, the UN should re-strengthen its military capability through which there will be no chance to transfer this type of operation to the other international organizations. Therefore, the UN or international community may noise their voice against NATO's out of area operation to maintain international peace and security, neither NATO will further operate in other 'out of area' and any non-member state, region or continent may be victimized in future.

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