

NATO's Third Era?

The Question of a Global NATO

By Neil Bhatiya*

Since the end of the Cold War competition in the early 1990s, there has been much search for a new overall orienting conception in international affairs. Those who prevailed in the Cold War—the United States and its allies in Europe and in East Asia—have struggled to develop a methodology for advancing their security and their political and economic ideals across the globe. Successive NATO summits, including the most recent one held in Romania in April 2008, have made strengthening ties with out-of-area nations a significant aspect of its agenda. How the Atlantic Alliance expands and which nations it includes have been a subject of much debate and several ideas about how to manage the spreading of NATO's influence.

One such idea is a further, global expansion of membership in what has hitherto been primarily a transatlantic alliance. It has come to be studied and discussed by a wide variety of commentators in the last two years. There has been support for the idea from foreign policy experts associated with both parties in America.

In an October 2007 speech to the NATO Supreme Allied Command Transformation Seminar, Republican Presidential Candidate Rudy Giuliani said that the membership of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) should be expanded to include non-European regional powers such as Israel, India, Japan, Australia, and Singapore.¹ In 2008, an election year, other U.S. politicians, such as Senator John McCain, expressed similar views about the future of America's alliances. Common themes include dissatisfaction with the United Nations and the possibility that a Global NATO would provide the United States with a more effective international collective security organization. International press magnate Rupert Murdoch gave voice to the outlook behind this support in a speech to the Atlantic Council of the United States in 2008:

“We need to transform this Alliance [NATO] from a community formed around a map to a community based on common values and a willingness to take joint action in defense of these values. . . . Around the world, there is no shortage of nations who share our values, and are willing to defend them. I am thinking of countries like Australia, which sent troops to Iraq; Israel, which has been fighting Islamic terrorism almost since its founding; and Japan, which generally follows a more ‘Western’ policy than most of Western Europe.”²

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¹ Rudolph Giuliani, “Mayor Giuliani’s Remarks to the NATO Supreme Allied Command Transformation Seminar, Norfolk, VA, 10/11/07,” JoinRudy2008 Homepage, (<http://www.joinrudy2008.com/article/pr/891>), accessed 11 December 2007.

² “Mr. Rupert Murdoch’s Prepared Remarks for the Atlantic Council’s 2008 Annual Awards Dinner,” Atlantic Council Website, (http://acus.org/about-news-Awards_2008MurdochSpeech.asp), accessed 17 June 2008.



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These statements represent a conceptual challenge to the further development of NATO as well as to the continuation of Euro-American integration. Its expected impact on the potential member states bring up several points worth further investigation.

The Three Eras of NATO

NATO is once again faced with a turning point in its history. The first era in NATO's history was the Cold War, when the watchword of the Alliance was military preparedness in the face of Soviet bloc military power. NATO inherited a strong transatlantic bond, forged in the emergency of the Second World War, when military and political cooperation was unprecedented. The context of the Cold War codified the transatlantic connection in a new way. A long term ideological threat necessitated a permanent peacetime security structure. When there were problems within the Alliance, such as Charles De Gaulle's withdrawal of France from the military command in the 1960s, or tensions between member-states Turkey and Greece, the common threat could still focus minds.

The second era in NATO's history was the decade after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Absent a major geopolitical threat, the Alliance for the first time had to redefine itself. During the 1990s, NATO did so by being the vehicle by which the former Warsaw Pact became part of the larger European community. It also intervened in the Balkans—five operations in total from 1993 to 2001—proving that it could keep the peace in Europe. By the turn of the twenty-first century, the Alliance had overseen the transformation of post-World War II Europe from a fractured continent into a united one.

The terrorist attacks of 2001 ushered in the third of NATO's historical eras. In the immediate hours after the attack, NATO's member-states for the first time ever invoked Article 5 of its Treaty, acknowledging that the terror attacks represented an assault not only on the United States but on all of NATO. The Alliance's contribution to the War on Terror became quite tangible in 2003, when it took command of the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan. By extending its operations to places not only "out of area" but out of Europe, NATO took an historic step in its security mission.

It is in analyzing NATO's future that much of the discussion about a Global NATO has arisen. An academic debate about the globalization of NATO was galvanized by the publication in *Foreign Affairs* of an article by Robert Kagan and Ivo Daalder, entitled "Global NATO." It was perhaps the most strident call for NATO to embrace global partners. The authors' vision was bold: "NATO's next move is to open its membership to any democratic state in the world that is willing and able to contribute to the fulfillment of NATO's new responsibilities."³ The article buttressed the arguments made by public officials such as the late Congressman Tom Lantos, or former Spanish Prime Minister José Maria Aznar. They reflected a general trend to expand inter-democracy cooperation, an impulse that has run strongly for the past 60 years.

The Complicating Factors

The idea for a Global NATO, however, is not without controversy. There exists an extensive literature on the pitfalls of extending the Alliance past its current geographic

³ Robert Kagan and Ivo Daalder, "Global NATO," *Foreign Affairs* (September/October 2006), 106.

boundaries. Some, such as Simon Koschut of the German Council on Foreign Relations is wary of the ability of NATO to institutionally adapt to global members, and holds that its priority should be on the relationship between the United States and Europe.⁴ Many policymakers, particularly in Europe, have balked at the idea. French President Nicolas Sarkozy, who has recently expressed his desire for France to return to NATO's military command structure, has stated that one of his conditions is that the Alliance re-focuses on European security issues.⁵

Five nations in particular have been mentioned as potential member states in a Global NATO: Japan, Australia, New Zealand, South Korea, and India. These nations are strong ones with a history of democratic governance and, save India, a close security relationship with the United States. Yet, proponents of a Global NATO should be cautious in considering how each of these nations would fit into an expanded security framework.

Japan

Excitement over Japan's possible role in a Global NATO coincided with its larger profile in international security, including the deployment, even if it proved temporary, of support troops to Afghanistan and Iraq, and, more enduringly, of peacekeepers to the Golan Heights, Cambodia, East Timor, Mozambique, and Zaire. These operations stood in direct contrast to Japanese defense posture during the Cold War and the decade after, when the Japanese constitution proscribed the deployment of troops outside of Japan. When this posture changed, the possibilities for Japan's global role increased.⁶

During its postwar history, Japan has relied on the United States as the guarantor of its international security. At first, this the result of the U.S. occupation, but later continued due to fears of Russian and Chinese Communist expansionism in East Asia. After the Cold War, Japan and the U.S. reaffirmed their relationship in broadened form, through the January 1992 Tokyo Declaration on the U.S.-Japan Global Partnership. The text of the Declaration specifically mentions Japanese cooperation with NATO: "Intensify dialogue among Japan, the U.S., and Europe, including political consultations among the G7 countries and political dialogue between Japan and NATO."⁷

The possibility of joining a multilateral alliance excites many Japanese who see the current bilateral relationship as constrictive. Memories of the Second World War still keep Japan highly controversial among other countries in the region; multilateral integration would rehabilitate it more fully and confer legitimacy on its foreign operations.

⁴ Simon Koschut, "Global NATO or Global Partnerships?" *Kolner Forum fur Internationale Beziehungen und Sicherheitspolitik*, April 2006, (http://www.dgap.org/midcom-serveattachmentguid-4b8518f486af11db8b0e81a58ce940a140a1/KFIBS2006.04_koschut_globalzyxfouronexyznato_analysis_englishzyxfouronexyzedition_final.pdf), 16.

⁵ Honor Mahony, "Sarkozy Sets Conditions for Rejoining NATO Military Command," *EUObserver.com*, 25 September 2007 (<http://euobserver.com/9/24827/?rk=1>).

⁶ Masashi Nishihara, "Can Japan be a Global Partner for NATO?" in Ronald D. Asmus, editor, *NATO and Global Partners: Views from the Outside*, (Riga Papers, 2006), (http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/IMG/pdf/A4_Asmus-Editor_d.pdf), 35-36.

⁷ 1992 U.S.-Japan Global Partnership Agreement, *United States Department of Commerce International Trade Administration Market Access and Compliance Homepage* (<http://www.mac.doc.gov/japan/market-opening/ta920109.htm>), accessed 1 January 2008.





It has done this for Germany in Europe, which, despite a clearer and greater burden of guilt, has arguably developed a more solid international role and a healthier identity since 1949 than Japan. The prestige of becoming a responsible member of a multilateral community is important to continuing to develop an international role for Japan, and will be an essential requirement for domestic support within that nation.

Nevertheless, for many commentators Japan is still constrained by its interpretation of its constitution, which would, in a hypothetical future situation, prevent it from fighting side-by-side with its NATO allies. After all, the central precept of the NATO alliance is the concept of collective self-defense, something which the Japanese believe their constitution, in its current form, prohibits. This prohibition has been crystallized in debate over Japan's anti-terror role in Afghanistan. The Japanese Navy had been refueling U.S. warships in the Persian Gulf which had been supporting U.S. forces in Afghanistan, but in October 2007 support for the refueling operation collapsed in the Diet the Japanese Parliament.⁸ Such opposition helped cause the fall of Fukuda's predecessor, Shinzo Abe. Supporters of Japan's role in a Global NATO need to take into account the ever-present opposition to Japan's military role expanding overseas.

There are also geo-strategic reasons for Japan's caution. It cannot predict how its two largest regional competitors, China and Russia, would react to its explicitly aligning itself with NATO.⁹ Though the high tensions of the Cold War are gone, Northeast Asia still has the potential to be de-stabilizing. Russia has already expressed concern about the march of NATO eastward to its borders; such concern would only be heightened if the alliance was extended to encircle it on its eastern frontiers as well. Japan should be worried against provoking the deepening of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, a group that includes Russia, China, and several former Soviet Republics, and brings in as observers the regional powers Iran, India, and Pakistan. Japan's self-interest gives it significant reasons for a cautious approach.

In the final analysis, whatever role Japan chooses for itself in a global NATO will depend on the domestic political willingness of the Japanese people to align themselves with a multilateral military alliance. Such a shift could flow from the Japanese seeing their bilateral relationship with the United States as no longer sufficient for their security needs, or from their seeing an opportunity for a more dignified role and for deeper reconciliation with some of their neighbors in a multilateral context.

Australia and New Zealand

Australia and New Zealand are the two rare Pacific nations that, like the U.S., have shared roots in British and European history. They have been allied with the United States since the beginning of World War II, and indirectly through Britain for decades longer. The relationship was solidified with the Australia-New Zealand-United States (ANZUS) Treaty in 1951. Since then, relations among the three nations have been a cornerstone of Southeast Asian security. This close relationship is a reason why the proposal for including them in NATO faces relatively little objection in America. It is also, paradoxically, a reason cited for saying the prospects for either of them joining NATO are slim. Both countries feel secure in the current state of their bilateral relations with the United States.

⁸ "Japanese PM rules out reshuffle," *BBC News International Version Website*, 4 January 2008, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/7171002.stm>, accessed 4 January 2008.

⁹ Nishihara, 40.

Both nations possess a foreign policy vision which is significantly more integrated with their regional role in Southeast Asia rather than the global role envisioned by an expanded NATO. The People's Republic of China, specifically, is seen as a tense strategic relationship that needs to be managed on a bilateral basis, rather than through a new multilateral one. Neither Australia nor New Zealand would want such a relationship to be jeopardized by a headstrong rush to join a Global NATO. Rightly or wrongly, their leaders are reticent to see a multilateral alliance as a force-multiplier in conducting their relationship with China. Such a calculus of power might change, however, if it becomes apparent that the political and economic as well as military weight of the West is needed as a visible presence in the Pacific Rim.

In Australia the willingness to join a Global NATO faces domestic constraints that reflect a lack of elite and public enthusiasm. This has been particularly true since John Howard's electoral defeat in elections in November 2007. Howard, seen as too close of an ally to U.S. President George W. Bush, lost to Kevin Rudd, a former diplomat. Australia's participation in Iraq was highly unpopular among Australians. In attempting to move past it, Rudd seems to be attempting to fashion a foreign policy that gives Australians more independence within its relationship with the United States. While proponents of a Global NATO might argue that a multilateral forum could allow Australia to assert itself outside a bilateral relationship with the U.S., one writer on the subject concludes that "a formal alliance of Western nations on a global scale ("global NATO") is an idea whose time is yet to come, a least for Australians."¹⁰

South Korea

Alongside Japan, South Korea has been a keystone of the United States' relationship with East Asia. U.S. troops helped liberate the country from Japanese occupation at the end of the Second World War, giving support to the government of Syngman Rhee. When South Korea was invaded by North Korea, the United States led a United Nations effort to repel it. Since the armistice of 1953, U.S. troops have been continuously stationed along the tense 38th parallel. The United States also became involved in modernizing South Korea, which allowed the nation to become one of Asia's most dynamic economies. The inclusion of South Korea into a Global NATO framework has been buoyed by the recent election of Lee Myung-bak to the Presidency. He is seen as more pro-American than his predecessor. The cornerstone of his foreign policy is the "MB doctrine" which calls for a more solid Korea-U.S. alliance.¹¹

Yet the same questions arise for South Korea as they do for Japan. With so much of Lee's focus on a stronger bilateral relationship between the United States and South Korea, where does a multilateral, NATO-like framework fit? Again, as in the case of Japan, the cloak of legitimacy, which a bilateral relationship with a superpower cannot provide, seems to give credence to the extension of NATO. The South Koreans have always been uneasy with their junior status vis-à-vis the United States in defense and

¹⁰ Jeffrey Gray, "Future Directions for NATO: An Australian Perspective," in Ronald D. Asmus, editor, *NATO and Global Partners: Views from the Outside*, (Riga Papers, 2006), (http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/IMG/pdf/A4_Asmus-Editor_d.pdf), 33.

¹¹ Jin Dae-wong, "Veteran Diplomats, Academics formulate the MB Doctrine," *Korea Herald*, 21 December 2007, (http://www.koreaherald.co.kr/NEWKHSITE/data/html_dir/2007/12/21/200712210050.asp).



foreign policy matters. The question remains whether the important factor of a popular commitment to multilateralism exists in sufficient strength to justify Global NATO membership.

The second part of the “MB doctrine” is a delicate plan of re-engagement with North Korea. South Korea is keen on convincing the North to abandon its nuclear weapons program in exchange for investment into the country. The effort is broadly popular, but many in his own conservative Grand National Party may challenge his efforts if they give away too much to the government of Kim Jong-Il.¹² South Korea must also, like Japan, be wary of the response from Russia and China if it were to expand its commitments to a Global NATO.

India

Both the unique civilizational status of India and the complexities of its geographical and strategic position are limiting factors for its membership in an expanded NATO. If India were to join NATO, it would be the only country to do so which stands not only outside of the European-rooted countries of the West but outside of the sociological space of the OECD or First World, despite its historical colonial ties to Great Britain, as well as its continued political and linguistic connections. This could introduce new difficulties into NATO itself, as well as awkwardness for India.

India's status as a leader in the Non-Aligned Movement during the Cold War speaks to a fiercely independent spirit in foreign policy. India does not wish to identify its foreign policy primarily with the West, which membership in a Global NATO would notionally entail. The Asian OECD members, Japan and South Korea, are more plausible self-identifiers with the West. Since India cannot consider itself Western in this era, it is unlikely to be enthusiastic about the idea of Western leadership in the world, as embodied in NATO.

India also wishes to maintain good relations with Iran, Russia, and the People's Republic of China. India's foreign minister, Pranab Mukherjee, for example, has spoken out against a containment policy towards Iran, stating that “there's enough space to grow together to accommodate each other's legitimate aspirations.”¹³ This diverges from the stated position of both the United States and several states in the European Union, who wish to see stringent action taken against Iran's nuclear program. India, it would seem, does not see the same urgency as the West.

Nor does India share the dissatisfaction of some with the United Nations; indeed, it seeks a seat on the UN Security Council, rather than repudiating that organization as outmoded. This is not to say that the idea for a Global NATO implies a rejection of the United Nations. Rather, it is important to note that India's priorities are for expanding its role in the United Nations. India's focus on economic, as opposed to security, ties, speaks to its desire to be integrated into a global economic, rather than security, framework. Where it has sought an upgrading of military links is bilaterally, with the United States, on condition of de facto acceptance of India's nuclear status.

¹² Lee Byong-chul, “On the Lee Myung-bak Doctrine.” *Ohmynews.com*, 29 August 2007, (http://english.ohmynews.com/articleview/article_view.asp?at_code=430971).

¹³ Pranab Mukherjee, interview by Charlie Rose, 2 October 2007, New York, *Ministry of External Affairs, India Website*, (<http://mea.gov.in/>), accessed 4 December 2007.

India's domestic situation also seems to argue against it joining a bloc dominated by Western nations, especially the United States. The Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M), central among the leftist parties, has derailed ratification of a nuclear deal between India and the United States because it gives the U.S. too much latitude in interpreting when India has overstepped its bounds in developing its nuclear program.¹⁴ This criticism comes despite the fact that the nuclear deal allows India, which is not a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), access to significant nuclear know-how.

As India seeks to be a global player, then, it will want to do it in its own way. It will continue to seek engagement with Western nations, but it will most likely do it in an informal manner, not in a formal military structure such as a Global NATO. India will also continue to seek to engage with nations bilaterally, outside of an overarching multilateral framework.

Conclusion

It would seem, then, from these brief overviews of the immediate obstacles, that "Global NATO" is a non-starter. However, this would underestimate the attraction of a gradual but still targeted move towards multilateralism in Asia. The argument may not be, as it seems at first glance, a question of the ultimate goal, but the path each of these nations take.

Daalder and Kagan argue in a generic way that the problems mentioned are not fatal to a Global NATO, because NATO's core values—democracy and common security—are attractive enough to both entice any of these nations and overcome the concerns of existing member-states. The question remains, however, whether or not the current and potential members of the Alliance feel an overwhelming sense that international security necessitates such an expansion. Most analysts do not believe that this is the case, absent an abrupt turn by China into further militarization and aggression in its foreign policies. This ever-present contingency could provide enough forward momentum for a Global NATO end-goal to become a part of each nation's foreign policy vision.

These points suggest that caution is needed when one discusses a Global NATO. Bilateral relations between the United States and these nations are often complex enough, without injecting into it a debate over an expansive security framework.

An immediate expansion is not the only option for the future. It would be a mistake to fail to continue pushing toward deeper relations among all of these nations. The discussions of a Global NATO represent a positive sign that the underlying desire to bind together nations with common political and social values is strong. While overall strategies may differ, most parties seem to agree on the necessity of better-organized cooperation. Doing so in a systematic but informal way would further reinforce the complex web of bilateral ties that have proliferated in these regions (South and East Asia), while not constricting the independent foreign policies of Japan, Australia, New Zealand, or India. These nations may not become full-fledged members of a Global NATO in the short term, but the United States and Europe have a lot to gain from inducting them into a global framework based on shared values.

¹⁴ See commentary on the website of the Communist Party of India-Marxist (<http://www.cpim.org/>), accessed 10 December 2007.



NATO's statement from in the Bucharest summit in April 2008 embodies this approach: "[W]e reiterate our willingness to further develop existing, and openness to new, individual relationships, subject to the approval of the North Atlantic Council, and at a pace that respects mutual interests in so doing."¹⁵ In spelling out a method to "respect mutual interests" by paying attention to "individual relationships," NATO can bring together its partners, without putting up front the problems raised by full-fledged NATO membership. By proceeding in this way, the United States and the NATO countries can expand their engagements in Asia and the Pacific with nations that it feels it has common political, economic, and social beliefs.

The Pacific basin democracies favor closer cooperation with NATO, even if on a piecemeal basis for now. There are various stages of partnership and of informal and formal relationships with NATO that can be traversed before facing the question of full membership; and after the intermediate stages have been traversed, the final step of membership can have an air of inevitability. This was the approach suggested a quarter century ago, in a paper for the Committees for a Community of Democracies by James V. Martin, a retired East Asian expert of the State Department. Our review of the obstacles that have been encountered in each of the prospective new member countries suggests that this is still the most likely approach.

In Eastern Europe the sense of exhilaration about rejoining the Western world after the liberation from Communism enabled unified national elites to win over initially skeptical populations, and overcome the inertia of numerous obstacles and objections to such a major step as NATO membership. Among the Asia-Pacific democracies there is no such exhilaration, just a decades-old entrenched reality of bilateral security arrangements with the U.S., quiet security cooperation with NATO, and membership on the economic level in the all-Western arrangements. The obstacles remain unmoved by any grand elite enthusiasm. The gradual path into NATO seems the most likely one.



¹⁵ NATO Press Release, "Bucharest Summit Declaration," 3 April 2008 <http://www.nato.int/docu/pr?2008/p08-049e.html>, accessed 20 May 2008