

Transformed NATO in the Post-Cold War Era and New Threat Perceptions

Özlem Arzu AZER

Assistant Prof. Dr., Istanbul Arel University, TURKEY

Abstract

During Post-Cold War era, economic and political transformation realised in the world. NATO lost its meaning by the collapse of Soviet Union in December 1991 and the fall of Berlin Wall in November 1989. With the end of the Cold War, NATO remained unfunctioned by ending the threat of communism. However, NATO revitalized by redefining its functions under the effects of 11/9 terrorist attacks.

During Post-Cold War era, geostrategic balances changed and the strategic importance of the Black Sea Region grows as parallel as new threat perceptions. The most important of these new threats and risk perceptions is global terrorism and proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Hence, in this study, it is tried to analyse new threats and risk perceptions as parallel as transformation of NATO in the Post-Cold War era. Within this framework, security threats in the Black Sea Region and strategies of NATO are discussed.

Key words: Black Sea, NATO, Post-Cold War

Introduction

NATO which was founded as West Alliance against the threat of 'communism' in 1949 lost its meaning of existence with the collapse of USSR. NATO employed for security in Western block, changed its structure by losing its function in the Post Cold-War era. In this context, NATO decreased its command structure officer number by 45% and number of general and admiral in Command Structure by 35% (Yılmaz,2009:s.412).

NATO had begun to be interrogated since losing its function as a result of ending threat of communism with the end of Cold War; however it was restructured by focusing on recent threats such as ethnic and religious inner conflicts/wars and then as a result of terrorist attacks experienced in USA in 2001. The current Strategic Concept was accepted in the 1999 Washington Summit. According to the principles of Strategic Concept which enables its global security mission and expands the radius of NATO action, the legality was provided which includes 5th article and enables NATO to conduct off-site operation.

The terrorist attacks which were carried out in USA World Trade Organization and Pentagon on 11th September 2001 played the most important role besides the threat of increasing number of internal conflicts in the world to restructure NATO. The 9/11 events had been a land mark both economically and politically. Following the September 11 attacks, the political discourse has transformed on a more insecure basis from 'collaboration' to 'security' (Arıboğan,2007:s.315).

Following the 9/11 events, the terrorist attacks occurred in Spain, Turkey and England created a mood of panic against terror especially in the developed countries. Defense sector has accelerated both by increasing



the sale of individual arms of defense such as gas mask, building panic room in house under the effect of fear society and secret propaganda mechanism; and due to increased budget of 'war against terror' of NATO according to new paradigm.

Following 11/9, the USA budget of defense not only increased, but also a new budget item has been initiated under the title of "homeland security". Defense sector has accelerated under the effect of 'war against terror', strengthening of NATO with re-construction, by terror fears in the world and inner conflicts which increased after Cold War. According to the data of US Office of Management and Budget; while the investments of Ministry of Defense increased as of 35, 7% between the years of 1963-86 in the period of Vietnam War; this rate was around 56% between 1999-2006 (Cypher,2007:s.31).

Transformation of NATO

NATO conducted its structural transformation with a new defense concept. The new threat perceptions of NATO contains drug and human trafficking, organized crimes, counter-terrorism, ethnic and regional conflicts, migration, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). NATO is exposed to off-site intervention with recent concept of security. 'Ethnic conflict and abuse of human rights' which is among the new threat perceptions of NATO, is included in the scope of off-site intervention. The article 5 of NATO was applied within the scope of off-site intervention for the first time in Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1995 and in Kosovo in 1999.

The threat perceptions of NATO has altered with the collapse of USSR, and the threats of new period has become primarily internal conflicts caused by identity in the axis of changing form of war and increasing nationalist movements; migration, drug and arms trade, global terrorism, proliferation of mass destruction weapons. Another perception of threat is the countries which have not adopted western values and where democracy has not settled. In this framework, collective security operations by Security Council for interventions towards societies and states which have not adopted Western values are possible (Ari, 1996:s.185).

In the framework of 'Preventive War Doctrine', the right of intervention was given to NATO against countries which harbor terror and shelter terrorists. While declaring Global War on Terror/GWOT, two poles which have found themselves in the Congress speech of USA President Bush as 'in favor of us' and 'against us'; countries which are asserted to be supporting terror were defined as 'evil axis'. Iran, Iraq, Libya, Syria, North Korea, Cuba and Sudan which are considered in the category of 'rough state' were evaluated within this evil axis. Rough states were regarded as elements which intercede to terrorism and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and by this way threaten international peace and security (Tanter, 1999:s.250).

Increasing geo-strategic importance of Black-Sea Region after the Cold War

That the Black Sea Region was under the dominion of USSR in the Cold War period prevented the West to develop a strategy in this region. With the collapse of USSR and foundation of new independent states, a new period has started and so the West changed its perspective towards the Black Sea Region. Geostrategic importance of the Black Sea Region is profound due to being close to oil and natural gas reserves and at the heart of energy canals; therefore it has taken top ranks in the dominion target of the West after the collapse of USSR.

The main reason of rise of geopolitical importance of the Black-Sea Basin and Caucasus in the eye of the West is energy security. The region which owns natural gas and oil reserves is at the top of security issues list in the sense of energy canals brought to Europe. It is clear that the region will be on focus point of the West in the future as well as today since features of being both 'energy source' and 'energy canal' makes the region indispensable.

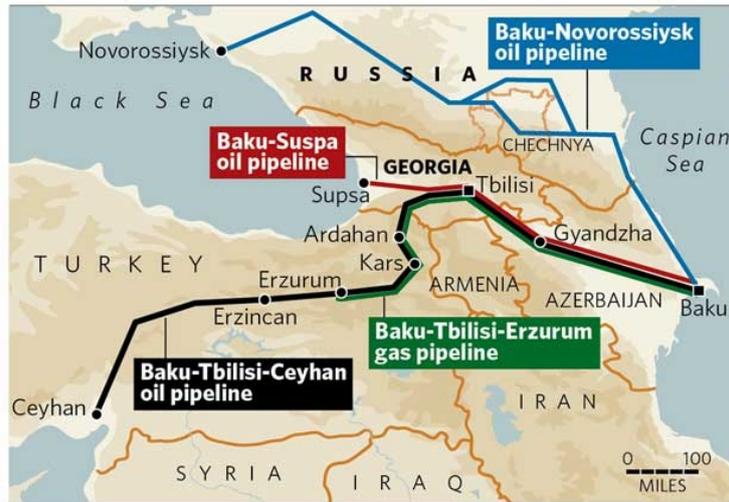


Figure 1: Caspian Pipelines Map.

Source: European Dialogue, (22.05.2011) <http://www.eurodialogue.org>

Due to having oil and natural gas reserves, it is thought that ethnic oriented and border conflicts in the Black-Sea Region and Caucasus will sustain in the future as they are within the field of hegemonic war; autonomous and independent new states will be founded and they will be directed by supra-national institutions in this chaotic environment. As seen in the table below; in the analysis of energy sources, the region’s share of oil generation in the world is 16,9% at the end of 2009 and generation of natural gas was 23,2%. The advantageous countries in the region are primarily Kazakhstan, and then Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan in the sense of oil generation; Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan in the sense of natural gas generation. Being an alternative to the Middle East in the sense of energy generation and transit road of energy lines explains increasing interest of the West under conditions of Post Cold-War period.

Table 1: Proved Reserves in the Caspian at the end of 2009

	Proven Oil Reserves (billion barrels)	Share of Total %	Oil Production (million tonnes)	Change 2009 over 2008	2009 Share of Total %
EU	6,3	0,5%	50,6	-6,1 %	2,6%
OECD	90,8	6,8%	860,1	-0,2 %	22,5%
OPEC	1029,4	77,2%	1574,4	-7,3 %	41,2%
Non-OPEC	180,9	13,6%	1602,0	0,1 %	41,9%
Former Soviet Union	122,9	9,2%	643,9	3,0 %	16,9 %
Total World	1331,1	100,0%	3820,5	-2,6%	100,0%
	Proven Gas Reserves (trillion cubic metres)	2009 Share of Total %	Gas Production (billion cubic metres)	Change 2009 over 2008	2009 Share of Total %
EU	2,42	1,3%	171,2	-9,3%	5,7%
OECD	16,18	8,6%	1127,2	0,4%	37,9%
Former Soviet Union	58,53	84,2%	694,9	-12,2%	23,2%
Other EMEs			1164,9	2,3%	38,9%
Total World	187,49	100,0%	2987	-2,1%	100,0%

Source: BP Statistical Review of World Energy, June 2010, www.bp.com



The biggest share in the total world consumption of energy is belonged to oil by the rate of % 35 in 2009, coal by the rate of %29 in 2009, natural gas by the rate of %24 in 2009.

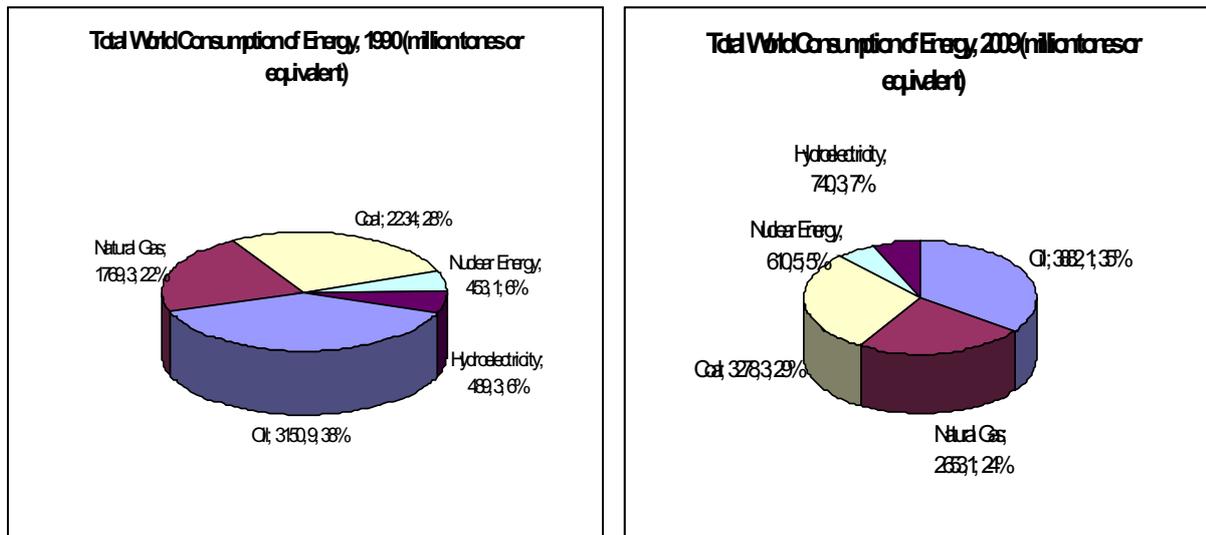


Figure 2: Comparison of Total World Consumption of Energy from 1965, 1990 and 2009

Source: BP Statistical Review Data, May 2011, www.investis.com

Georgia is one of the leading countries whose importance has increased though not having any oil and natural gas reserves. Geostrategic importance of Georgia which is one of the new coastal countries of the Black-Sea has increased due to being transit point of Caspian oil and natural gas reserves after the collapse of USSR. Besides being at the transit point of Baku-Supsa oil-pipeline; Baku-Tblisi-Ceyhan oil-pipeline and Baku-Tblisi-Erzurum natural gas pipeline; its being new coastal country of the Black-Sea caused its geo-strategic importance to increase (Yevseyev). Various pipeline projects are being developed in the region. While the importance of Georgia increases due to being transit country; on the other hand problems experienced with South Ossetia and Abkhazia occupy its agenda.

The Black-Sea Region and Caucasus in the transformed NATO agenda

Due to the intervention towards Afghanistan after 11/9 which is the economic and political turning point of the world, USA formed new military installations with countries in the field of former Soviet. Due to military bases located on these countries, a sustainable relationship on the basis of security was constructed (Khagani, 2007: 224).

The number of military base has increased in the scope of regional strategies and security issues. In the parallel of improved relations with NATO, domain of NATO and USA is thought to spread on geography from the Black-Sea Region to Caucasus, then from Caucasus to Afghanistan. As parallel, 25 military bases of Russia (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakystan, Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine, Tajikistan, and Moldova) maintain its activity in the field of former Soviet (Lackowski, 2007:53). In fact, construction of both Russian and USA-NATO military bases are the indicator of hegemonic war in the 21st century.

In the scope of energy security of the West, new independent states were mentioned to participate the West Alliance. NATO has developed some programs in order to increase the ability of collective operation as parallel to the new threat perceptions. One of the most important program is the formation of Partnership for Peace-PfP which aims military cooperation with former socialist countries which are not member of NATO, which includes fields of activities such as peace keeping operations, crisis management, air defense, logistic, enquiry (Peksari,2007: s.56). The 'PfP' project started to operate in January 10-11, 1994 Brussels Summit. In the framework of adaptation to NATO, military and security collaboration is enabled thanks to military training

former socialist countries in Caucasus, Middle and Eastern Europe as well NATO strategic principles and basic values are adopted. Countries which are not member of NATO, but included in the program are as such:

Former Soviet Republics: Kazakhstan, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Armenia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Uzbekistan, Moldova, Russian Federation, Turkmenistan

Former Yugoslavia states: Serbia, Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina

Conclusion

During Post Cold-War era, Caucasus and the Middle Asia gained the most important place in the enlargement politics of NATO. While it is aimed to decrease the activity of Russia in the Region which has critical importance in the sense of energy policies, joining of the countries in the Region to the Alliance plays vital role for enabling energy security and strategic superiority. However, countries in the Region cannot join the Alliance due to their ethnic problems and border conflicts. Regarding this situation within the new Strategic Concept of NATO, off-site intervention because of any kind of ethnic or religious conflict seems possible besides possibility of formation under the dominion and supervision of supra-national institutions after conflict as a result of this kind of conflict.

In the conflict environment of the post-modern world, another important result of internal conflict to be terminated by the collapse of nation-states. Another important result is to become a dynamic of the underground economy where political instability occurs or increases and security gaps occur during conflict period as well as Post-conflict period. Underground economy spreads on a wide range primarily on drug and arms smuggling, women trafficking.

The instability in the region not only includes political instability caused by internal conflicts but also economic instability caused by the unbalance in income distribution. In these old socialist transition economies, apart from problems caused by the settlement of democracy and adaptation to capitalist market system; problems of integration global trade are also experienced due to infrastructural inadequacies.

Instability causes alliances such as NATO to behave abstentiously about membership. Caucasus is at the center of war of powers in the 21st century with its oil and natural-gas reserves, for being the starting/transition point of pipelines, for both the geography spreading through Middle East and passage to the Black-Sea. The reflections of these hegemonic wars is observed sometimes in rebels organized by Civil Society Institutions, sometimes in change of governments, and sometimes in internal conflicts and border conflicts which increased in countries where military bases are located.

Although the Black-Sea and Caucasus are the privileged region in the enlargement politics of NATO where USA is an active power, countries in the region being included in the project within the scope of ‘PfP’ rather than membership of Alliance due to instability, points to the potential of increase in the conflict in these countries.

These countries named as transition economies, experience structural difficulties in the process of adaptation to liberalism while they cannot develop economically for being the target of dominion policies as transition country or owning natural-sources and oil-natural gas pipelines, as a result, they stay behind the world in the axis of political instability.

Geostrategic importance of the region, its borders being neighbor to Afghanistan on one hand, Balkans at the other side of the Black-Sea on the other, both bears the risk of spreading instability and chaos environment and shows that it will be the target of war for powers in the future as it is today for being in the position of target region.

References

- Arıboğan, Deniz Ülke (2007) "Thought of Foreign Affairs," Bahçeşehir Üniversitesi Yayınları
- Arı,Tayyar (1996) "International Relations and Foreign Politics," Marmara Kitap Merkezi, 7.Baskı, 2008
- BP, BP Statistical Data, 22.05.2011, www.investis.com
- Cypher, James M. (2007) "From Military Keynesianism to Global Neo-liberal Militarism," Monthly Review, Sayı:15
- European Dialogue, Caspian Pipelines Map, <http://www.eurodialogue.org/International-Security-Influence-Fuel-Energy-Complex-Caspian-Region>
- Khagani, Malikov (2007) "Geopolitics and Energy Security in the Caspian Region," The Journal of the Study of Modern Society and Culture, N:38
- Peksarı, Derya G. (2007) "Change of NATO Conception," Asil Yayın, Ankara
- Lackowski, Zdzislaw (2007) "Foreign Military Bases in Eurasia," SIPRI, SIPRI Policy Paper No:18,
- Tanter, Raymond (1999) "Rough Regimes: Terrorism and Proliferation," Macmillan, USA
- Yevseyev, Vladimir "International Security and its Influence on Fuel and Energy Complex of Caspian Region," <http://vestikavkaza.ru/>
- Yılmaz,Sait (2009) "Ulusal Savunma: Strateji, Teknoloji,Savaş," Kum Saati Yayınları