المجلة الأردنية في القانون والعلوم السياسية

اسم المقال: روسيا وحلف شمال الأطلسي (الناتو) في الشرق الأوسط: علاقات تصادمية
اسم الكاتب: ناصر محمود أحمد طهبوب، ديبي أبو الغنم
رابط ثابت: https://political-encyclopedia.org/index.php/library/8239
تاريخ الاسترداد: 2026/11/02 07:34 +03

الموسوعة السياسيّة هي مبادرة أكاديمية غير هادفة للربح، تساعد الباحثين والطلاب على الوصول واستخدام وبناء مجموعات أوسع من المحتوى العلمي العربي في مجال علم السياسة واستخدامها في الأرشيف الرقمي الموثوق به لإغناء المحتوى العربي على الإنترنت.
لمزيد من المعلومات حول الموسوعة السياسيّة – Encyclopedia Political، يرجى التواصل على info@political-encyclopedia.org

استخدامكم لأرشيف مكتبة الموسوعة السياسيّة – Encyclopedia Political يعني موافقتك على شروط وأحكام الاستخدام المتاحة على الموقع https://political-encyclopedia.org/terms-of-use

تم الحصول على هذا المقال من موقع المجلة الأردنية في القانون والعلوم السياسية جامعة مؤتة ورفده في مكتبة الموسوعة السياسيّة مستوفياً شروط حقوق الملكية الفكريّة ومتطلبات رخصة المشاع الإبداعي التي ينضوي المقال تحتها.

Russia and NATO in the Middle East: Conflictual Relations

Naser Tahboub*

Debbie Abuelghanam**

Received:27/05/2023
Revised:05/11/2023
Accepted:06/11/2023
Published:30/03/2024

DOI:
https://doi.org/10.35682/jjlps.v16i1.621

Corresponding author:
naser1tahboub@gmail.com

All Rights Resaved for Mutah University, Karak, Jordan.

All Rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means: electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

Abstract

This article compares the roles of NATO and Russia in the Middle East in the past decade, focusing on the influence of the Trump administration. This article raises questions about NATO's response to Moscow's renewed influence. – The primary question is: Does the Cold War zero-sum approach still apply to Russia and NATO in the Middle East? Second, what are NATO's concerns and approach to the Russian Federation and its renewed presence in the Middle East? Third, how has Russia interacted with NATO and the West since returning to the Middle East? Fourth, how did the Trump administration's position limit NATO's role in the Middle East? Fifth, is NATO's limited interest in the Middle East just to balance Russia's re-entry into the Middle East or because of the US pull out or some combination thereof? Sixth, is Russia's presence in the Middle East causing Middle Eastern countries to choose allegiance to Russia or the US (West) again or play one against the other? The research found that the two ex-foes share common interests in the Middle East and remain distant from the zero-sum logic of the Cold War era. Nonetheless, their strategies differ significantly.

Keywords: NATO, Trump, Russia, Geopolitics, Middle East

* **Associate Professor-University of Jordan-Amman 11942 Jordan ORCHID# 0000-0002-6243-7078-naser1tahboub@gmail.com - 07 9553 0225**

* **Assistant Professor-University of Jordan-Amman 11942 Jordan ORCHID# 0000-0002-9539-4430-da.abuelghanam@yahoo.com- 07 7924 8035**

روسيا وحلف شمال الأطلسي (الناتو) في الشرق الأوسط: علاقات تصادمية

ناصر محمود أحمد طهبوب*

ديبي أبو الغنم**

تاريخ الاستلام:٢٠٢٣/٠٥/٢٧
تاريخ المراجعة:٢٠٢٣/١١/٠٥
تاريخ موافقة النشر:٢٠٢٣/١١/٠٦
تاريخ النشر:٢٠٢٤/٠٣/٣٠

الباحث المراسل:
naser1tahboub@gmail.com

حقوق النشر محفوظة لجامعة مؤتة، الكرك، الأردن.

جميع الحقوق محفوظة، فلا يسمح بإعادة طباعة هذه المادة أو النقل منها أو تخزينها، سواء أكان ذلك عن طريق النسخ، أم التصوير، أم التسجيل، أم غيره، وبأية وسيلة كانت: إلكترونية، أو ميكانيكية، إلا بإذن خطي من الناشر نفسه.

الملخص

يقارن هذا المقال بين دور حلف شمال الأطلسي وروسيا في الشرق الأوسط خلال العقد الماضي، مع التركيز بشكل خاص على تأثير إدارة ترامب. يطرح هذا المقال أسئلة حول استجابة حلف شمال الأطلسي للتأثير المتجدد لموسكو. أما السؤال الرئيس فهو: هل ما زال النهج الجمعي الصفري من الحرب الباردة ينطبق على العلاقات بين روسيا وحلف شمال الأطلسي في الشرق الأوسط؟ ثانيًا، ما هي مخاوف الناتو ونهجها تجاه الاتحاد الروسي ووجوده المتجدد في الشرق الأوسط؟ ثالثًا، كيف تتفاعل روسيا مع حلف شمال الأطلسي والغرب منذ عودتها إلى الشرق الأوسط؟ رابعًا، كيف قيّد موقف إدارة ترامب دور الناتو في الشرق الأوسط؟ خامسًا، هل اهتمام الناتو المحدود بالشرق الأوسط يعود فقط لموازنة عودة روسيا إلى الشرق الأوسط أم بسبب انسحاب الولايات المتحدة أم مزيج من عدة عوامل؟ سادسًا، هل يؤدي وجود روسيا في الشرق الأوسط إلى انتقاء الدول الشرق الأوسطية مجددًا بين الولاء إما لروسيا أو الولايات المتحدة (الغرب) أو تقديم إحداهما على الأخرى؟ أظهر البحث أن الخصمين السابقين يشتركان في مصالح مشتركة في الشرق الأوسط ويظلون بعيدين عن المنطق الجمعي الصفري في عصر الحرب الباردة، ومع ذلك، تختلف استراتيجياتهما بشكل كبير.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الناتو، ترامب، روسيا، الجيوسياسية، الشرق الأوسط.

* كلية الأمير الحسين بن عبد الله الثاني للدراسات الدولية/ الجامعة الأردنية

* كلية الأمير الحسين بن عبد الله الثاني للدراسات الدولية/ الجامعة الأردنية

On January 9th, 2020, President Donald Trump asked the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to increase its presence in the Middle East, including a proposal to enlarge its membership to include Middle Eastern countries. (Reuters, 2020) Trump's suggestion to create 'NATO–M.E. came days after the assassination of Iranian General Qassem Soleimani during an airstrike mandated by the U.S. (Biscop, 2020). The suggestion advanced: Trump's stand towards NATO has been critical since his inauguration. Doubting the utility and efficacy of the transatlantic coalition, Trump rebuked his European allies for their low financial contributions to NATO, accusing them of excessively burdening the United States financially and asking them to raise their NATO spending to 4 per cent of national GDP. The United States provides 72 per cent of its budget (Zanella, 2020).

Trump's suggestion to create a NATO Middle Eastern branch reopened the debate over the organization's presence—or lack thereof—in the Middle East. (Thompson, 2018) NATO has, since the events of 9/11, increased its attention to regional dynamics, focusing on the fight against global terrorism (Oztig, 2020). However, NATO's non-interventionist approach has proven cautious and vague and failed to contribute to constructing peace and security in the Middle East. The Trump administration's posture toward the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and his "deal of the century" impinges on NATO's problems in the Middle East, such as questions about its legitimacy and independence from U.S. foreign policy. NATO has said its involvement in delivering peace in Palestine would be undesirable (Pastori, 2021).

Recent years have witnessed "Russia's return to the Middle East." The Kremlin is projecting influence in the Middle East region. Russia is a major external power involved in Syria, Libya, and the broader geopolitical scheme of forces. Russia has established itself as a political interlocutor while consolidating economic and energy relations with partners from the Arab Gulf to the Mediterranean (Rumer & Skolosky, 2021). As such, the question arises as to what NATO will do vis-à-vis the influence of Russia.

This study analyses and compares NATO's and Russia's policy approaches toward the Middle East region. It will concentrate on Russia's renewed presence and evaluate how Moscow's return has been bolstered by the U.S. and NATO's policy shortcomings in addressing issues and conflicts in the Middle East region, particularly the Syrian war and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It will show how the Trump administration hindered NATO's effectiveness and range of strategic goals. This emphasizes how Western shortcomings made this renewed influence possible in engaging in the Syrian conflict. Additionally, the Alliance's primary focus was deterring Russian advances in Eastern Europe. Starting with the Syrian crisis, the Russians have been agile in taking advantage of short-term interests with strategic regional actors to gain legitimacy, reliability, and market access (Major & Rathke, 2016).

Methodology

This paper uses the comparative method. The comparative approach can examine society across different ways of life or states. It is used to refocus the narrative, as is the topic of this research paper. This article seeks to compare NATO and Russia's strategies, alliances, ideologies, goals, efficiencies, etc., in the Middle East. It specifically describes and explains the similarities and differences between the two entities. (Shahrokh & Miri, 2019) The methodology is explained specifically in the last two sections, where Russia and NATO are compared, and the section on Russia in the south.

The choice of utilizing NATO and Russia for the comparison is based on NATO as a proxy for the West because Russia perceives NATO as a threat to the West. For this research, a proxy war is 'the indirect engagement in a conflict by third parties wishing to influence its strategic outcome' (Mumford, 2013, p. 1).

Zero Sum Game in the Middle East

The question related to this section is: Does the Cold War zero-sum approach still apply to Russia and NATO in the Middle East? Therefore, it covers the concept of a zero-sum game and how it relates to the new situation in the Middle East. It also covers the Obama administration's relations with NATO and Russia in the Middle East.

The Cold War was based on a zero-sum game.

Two person zero sum game principle of international relations: a situation where player A and B have opposing interests. As the two players have opposing interests, they are completely antagonistic and the sum of their game cancels each other out. In a two-person zero sum game, the win of one actor is the loss of the other; i.e. if A wins 10, B loses 10; and the sum is zero. (Itodo et al., 2021)

The Cold War in the Middle East utilized the zero-sum game. "The grafting of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union onto pre-existing Middle Eastern rivalries and conflicts significantly exacerbated those conflicts in many cases." (Khalidi, 2009, p. 18) On the US side, there was Saudi Arabia, and on the Soviet side, Egypt. Zero-sum all the way.

Since its inception, NATO has been involved in the Middle East; it has protected its organizational unity by acting as a "coalition enabling framework." "NATO can preserve its cohesion and simultaneously engage in the region if it continues this legacy of coalition-making from within the allied framework. Conversely, an effort to engage collectively in the region will likely set off internal tensions to the extent that the alliance itself will be at risk." (Rynning, 2007 p. 905)

Following the end of the Cold War, questions were raised concerning NATO's viability. Yet, NATO is seen as a "dominant institution in contemporary security relations." (Williams et al., 2000, p. 2) While questions of the alliance's survival no longer exist, "they now Centre around the implications of its centrality, and its current and (possible) future enlargement. While disputes remain concerning the wisdom of NATO's policies, the place of the Alliance at the Centre of contemporary relations seems beyond dispute." (Williams et al., 2000, p. 2)

Since this paper covers the last decade (2012-2022), it encompasses the Obama, Trump and Biden administrations. Obama's dealings with NATO include the crises in Georgia, Afghanistan and Libya. Additionally, there has been a discussion of NATO's enlargement to the consternation of the Russians. NATO's enlargement since the end of the Cold War has encompassed states in Eastern Europe, which in the past had been under the sphere of influence of the Soviet Union. The Obama administration supported the Open Door Policy, "keeping open the door to NATO membership in accordance with Article 10 of the Washington Treaty" (Press Release, 2009).

However, it is clear that the Russians disagree with this open-door policy. Instead, they have "Russia's "near abroad," namely Russia's "zone of privileged interest"; policy, which Moscow believes entitles it to interfere, militarily and politically, in the affairs of its border states" (McNamara, 2009).

At the same time, the Obama administration wanted to reset its priorities in the Middle East. The US needed to modify its priorities internationally. According to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, "We will need to accelerate efforts to pivot to new global realities" (Clinton, 2011). This pivot would open the door for states like Russia and China to become more involved in the Middle East. Additionally, the pivot would set the stage for a larger role for NATO in the Middle East as a Western (US) proxy.

NATO's Engagement in the Middle East

The article's second research question is What is NATOs concerns and approach to the Russian Federation and its renewed presence in the Middle East? This segment will cover NATO's internal issues. Their military role, including Istanbul and Brussels summits, and the overall perspective of the Biden administration of NATO, Russia and the Middle East.

NATO's relationship with the Middle East is encumbered by the incongruent NATO members' political agendas, which has prevented any comprehensive program at the political level (Samaan, 2020). The US, Italy and Spain wanted to increase activities outside the Mediterranean area. Turkey interferes with NATO activities where there is a conflict of interest, and France believes that NATO is not capable of diplomacy. At the military level:

With numerous training initiatives, NATO's contribution to military reforms in the Middle East has been significant in defence diplomacy, specifically by enabling the international socialization of local armed forces… NATO's involvement in the operational effectiveness of Arab militaries has been and will remain modest and does not contribute to their much-needed modernization. (Samaan, 2020)

As a non-state actor, NATO wields more sway over international organizations and national governments. (Soydemir, 2021)

Threats might challenge the alliance's resilience from civil war or major powers eager to fill the power vacuum or exploit the conditions of uncontrolled sources. This method of force employment is called hybrid warfare, which involves using proxies, lawfare, and information warfare. Although it is not openly stated, examples of hybrid warfare are monitored in Syria in the form of non-state actors, which can be categorized as proxy groups. (Soydemir, 2021, p. 108)

NATO must be concerned with all unpredictable circumstances threatening its security coherence and flexibility. (Soydemir, 2021)

NATO's military role in the Middle East region is negligible (Jacobs & Samaan, 2014). However, it maintains different external partnerships, i.e., the Mediterranean Dialogue that "contribute to security and stability in NATO's Mediterranean and North African neighborhood, and promote good relations and understanding among participating countries and NATO Allies." Currently, the following non-NATO countries participate in the Dialogue: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia" (NATO, 2021).

The Istanbul Cooperation Initiative fosters cooperation between NATO and several non-NATO GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) members, Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar and the UAE (NATO, 2021). NATO's presence and engagement utilize the umbrella principle of protecting regional stability. Such stability is to be achieved through a confidence-building approach based on political dialogue and practical cooperation. Stability throughout the Middle East is a sine qua non-condition for the Alliance's stability and security (Moore, 2012).

Since 2011, NATO upgraded its activities and efforts. Given the internationalization of the conflict in Syria and ISIS's (Da'esh) threat, the Alliance conducted three summits from 2016–2018, where Syria, Iraq, ISIS, and the war on global terrorism were high on the agenda. At the Warsaw Summit in July 2016, the alliance augmented deterrence and projected stability beyond NATO, especially within the Middle East. (Belkin, 2016) NATO pledged its support for the Global Coalition. Such support was implemented by deploying NATO's Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) surveillance aircraft and enhancing training and capacity building for Iraqi forces in Iraq and Jordan. (Gottemoeller, 2018) In the 2017 Brussels Summit, NATO entered the Global Coalition. However, NATO stated it would not automatically translate into direct combat activities (Pothier & Vershbow, 2017).

In 2018, the Summit in Brussels issued a statement referring to a "Package for the South." While widening NATO's activities from just fighting ISIS, this package included political and practical cooperation initiatives towards a "more strategic, focused, and coherent approach to the MENA" (NATO, July 2018). Three main objectives were: a) strengthening NATO's deterrence and defence against threats from the South, b) contributing to international crisis management efforts in the region, and c) helping regional partners build resilience against security threats, including the fight against terrorism. The "Package for the South" worked to develop further relations with the GCC, the League of Arab States, and the Arab Union (AU). (Brandsma, 2019)

President Biden reassured NATO members about the role of the US, pledging to strengthen its security capabilities because of Russia. Biden's tone differed from his predecessor's: 'I think that over the past two years, there has been an increasing realization that we have new challenges. We have a Russia that is not behaving the way we hoped, and so does China.' (France 24 2021) He stressed NATO's importance to the United States and its interests, highlighting the need for greater coordination among the members. However, the impact of the previous Trump administration's policies continues to reverberate.

Russia's Return to the Middle East

This section examines how Russia has interacted with NATO and the West since returning to the Middle East? The section discusses Russia's perceptions, the Primakov and Gerasmov Doctrines, Russia's interest and use for Syria, strategic security concerns and weapons sales.

The Russian perception was far different.

The West deliberately shies away from spelling out the rules it purports to follow, just as it refrains from explaining why they are needed. After all, thousands of universal international legal instruments are already setting out clear national commitments and transparent verification mechanisms. These Western "rules" are beautiful in their lack of specific content. When someone acts against the West's will, it immediately responds with a groundless claim that "the rules have been broken" (without bothering to present any evidence) and declares its "right to hold the perpetrators accountable. (Lavrov, 2021)

Russia's foreign policy strategy in the Middle East has been based on the Primakov Doctrine of the 1990s. Named after former foreign and Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov, the Primakov doctrine posits that a unipolar world dominated by the United States is unacceptable to Russia and offers the following principles for Russian foreign policy:

- Russia should strive toward a multipolar world managed by a concert of major powers that can counterbalance U.S. unilateral power.

- ❖ Russia should insist on its importance in the post-Soviet space, leading to regional integration.
- ❖ Russia should oppose NATO expansion (Rumer, 2019).

Since 2014, however, there has been a competing doctrine, the Gerasimov doctrine. This doctrine melds the soft and hard power. This would include the concept of "hybrid warfare", where propaganda, proxies and all actions lesser than war could somehow replace the Russian military use of hard power (Rumer 2019). "The Gerasimov doctrine is an effort to develop an operational concept for Russia's confrontation with the West in support of the actual doctrine that has guided Russian policy for over two decades: The Primakov doctrine" (Rumer. 2019, p.1).

Since 2011, the Middle East region has witnessed the return of Russia, taking the role of acting power in the geopolitical reassessment of forces that have been taking place. Russia has become a prominent power, being (militarily) involved in Syria and Libya and having strategic ties binding to Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and the Gulf monarchies. Russia's return to the Middle East follows the logic of open (and semi-open) military involvement, regime support, energy diplomacy, and weapons sales. This return is motivated by Russia's desire to return to being an international interlocutor; Moscow wanted to be seen "as on equal footing with the United States and as a regional power broker…The Kremlin has shied away from large-scale military commitments to the Middle East" (Rumer & Weiss, 2019). They were concerned with continuing the status quo and stabilizing the region.

Russia's intervention in Syria in 2015 heralded the Middle East would again be at the top of Moscow's agenda. Moscow wants to gain influence and negotiate power rather than merely pursuing its security interests. Assad's official request for Russia's military intervention provided an introduction to enhance its role as a powerful international actor. (Stepanova, 2016)

The Kremlin has used the Syrian battleground to pursue several of its foreign policy strategic goals, including entering regional competition as a valuable power broker and gaining access to its markets. Three main goals were pursued. All aim to reinstate Russia's international legitimacy and competitive posture within the international community, especially vis à vis the U.S. and NATO. At a time when the Kremlin was being isolated and sanctioned due to its aggressive foreign policy against Ukraine and Eastern Europe. (Trenin, 2016)

First, Moscow's engagement in Syria aimed at preserving Bashar al Assad's regime and fighting ISIS. Its' strategic ambition is to balance U.S. influence in the Middle East region; this connected the Kremlins' motives to preserve the Syrian regime to Russia's national security concerns over Islamic terrorism. Keeping Assad as Syrian President would prevent ISIS from seizing control of the country and would break the cycle of U.S.-backed democratic political changes that had swept the region. Moreover, contributing to the elimination of ISIS and stabilizing the Syrian regime meant that Russia was placing itself as an equal partner and challenger vis-à-vis the United States. It has widely been recognized that the initiation of Russia's military campaign in Syria was a political and military expedient leveraging its actions against ISIS to regain credibility and an increasingly powerful role on the geopolitical chessboard (Popescu & Secrieru, 2018; Kofman & Rojansky, 2018).

Second, Russia used its assistance to Assad's regime to exploit the country's position on the Mediterranean and challenge the United States and NATO's predominance in those waters. It would increase the competition between Russia, the U.S. and NATO (Rumer and Sokolsky 2021)

in February 2013. Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu emphasized, "The Mediterranean is at the core of all essential dangers to Russian national interests" (Kappis, 2017). Russia had access to its seaports and military bases. In 2017, the Russia-Syria treaty regulated the lease of the Hmeimim Air Base in Latakia and the naval facility in Tartus to Moscow for 49 years. These facilities became part of the Russian military compound on Syrian soil (Reuters, 26 December 2017).

In August 2020, the Syrian government agreed to let Moscow expand its two military bases, allowing for more coastal waters and land around the bases (Middle East Monitor, 2020).

Some believe it is more than that –"but a product of enduring national security requirements, threat perceptions, and economic interests". (Rumer & Sokolsky, 2021) Russia has resumed and nurtured strategic commercial and military relations with North African countries as an alternative to U.S. financing (Egypt) or engaging where the United States and NATO have historically failed to act, Libya (Kofman &. Rojansky, 2018).

Third, Russia's weapons sales to Arab countries in the MENA have risen considerably since the beginning of Russia's air and ground campaigns in Syria. Russia "attaches importance to the volume of the arms export trade, to the diplomatic doors that weapon sales open, to the ill-gotten gains that these sales reap for corrupt senior officials, and to the lever it provides the Russian government in stymieing American interests"' (Bagdonas. 2012, p 65) "Russia's chief aim has been to prevent the further legitimization of the practice of regime change and the ideas that underlie it, as well as defend its position and reputation in the Greater Middle East." (Bagdonas, 2012, p. 72)

The Kremlin has used Syrian battlegrounds to test its latest military technology, train its troops, and refine its operations and strategies. The small number of military resources shows Moscow's desire not to engage in the long term (Weiss & Ng, 2019). The Kremlin's successful military campaign has gained international attention and recognition. Russia's presence in Syria allows them to observe and identify U.S. and NATO technologies through their engagement via the Global Coalition (Cafarella & Zhou, 2019).

Although the United States remains the top weapons exporter, the Russian Federation is gaining considerable market share in this sector. This is sometimes due to the discomfort of the United States and its European allies. Those imported from the Russians in the Middle East include Turkey, the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Arab Gulf countries, and Saudi Arabia.

While the United States and Europeans account for most Middle Eastern imports, the Russian Federation has been agile in filling the voids and turned Western policy lapses in the region to its benefit. Russia's entrance into strategic markets in the MENA has contributed to reinstating Moscow's international position vis-à-vis its European and American competitors.

NATO and the Middle East under the Trump Administration

This section investigates how the Trump administration's position limited NATO's role in the Middle East? It covers Trump's problems related to NATO, the idea of an Arab NATO, NATO's role in the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict, 'The Abraham Accords and moving the American Embassy to Jerusalem.

The Trump administration's policies toward the Middle East region, particularly the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and Iran, provoked international and regional tensions. Three aspects of these policies were particularly controversial: first, the suggestion of opening up NATO to new members in the Middle East, which implicitly rebuked the organization's shortcomings in the region (Opryoska, 2020). Second, the 'deal of the century' programmatic points outraged

Palestinians and provoked discontent in the international community (Yahaya, 2020). Third, the United States withdrew from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), which increased tensions and threats with Iran. (Nuruzzaman, 2020)

Trump's trust and confidence towards NATO and America's European allies on security and burden-sharing issues were historically low. (Kaufman, 2017) Since Trump's inauguration, NATO has come under American fire. The U.S. president strongly criticized America's European allies on financial contributions to NATO and European security. Trump has publicly doubted NATO's relevance and its effectiveness while threatening to stop the United States from honouring the Article 5 Collective Security Clause (NATO Treaty, 1949). This put Europeans and the Alliance at odds with the Trump administration. (Belkin, 2019; Benitez, 2019; Kaufman, 2017)

However, Trump's advisors acted contrary to his campaign promises. In 2019, the Pentagon budget for the European Deterrence Initiative increased by 1.7 million US$. (Scheer, 2019) increased American forces in Eastern Europe for security purposes against Russia. America enlarged its support systems in Eastern Europe and held military exercises larger than ever since the Cold War. (Scheer, 2019) The National Defense Strategy discussed the U.S. support for European allies and how Russia was seen as a competitor (N.D.S., 2018). Trump's advisors and the defence institutions did not change their position with the change of a new president. (Olsen, 2021)

While criticizing NATO, President Trump twice suggested a more active role for NATO in the Middle East. Such suggestions came in two different forms. In 2017, Trump proposed the establishment of the Middle East Strategic Alliance (MESA), comprising countries from the G.C.C., Egypt, and Jordan (Farouk, 2019). The initiative presented in the "Riyadh Declaration" is commonly called the "Arab NATO," a security alliance primarily aimed at countering Iran's destabilizing influence in the Arab Gulf and at taking care of security questions in the Middle East at a comprehensive regional level. However, MESA remains in limbo, with disagreements among countries involved in the initiative. At the same time, the parties within the agreement were seen with suspicion for reflecting U.S. interests in the Middle East. For this reason, in 2019, Egypt withdrew from the security initiative (Kalin & Landay, 2019).

The second form proposed a more effective NATO presence in the Middle East. After an emergency NATO meeting in Brussels, President Trump called for a reinforcement of the Alliance's presence in the region while suggesting expanding NATO's membership to incorporate strategic Arab allies. Trump called it “NATO-ME” (Oprysko, 2020).

Both initiatives relieved the United States' burden of financing NATO-led American troops in the Middle East by delegating its interests to European and Arab allies. However, NATO, after agreeing to increase its involvement, suspended the Alliance's non-combat training mission in Iraq in fear of Iranian retaliation for Soleimani's targeted killing (Al Jazeera, 6 January 2020).

Trump's policy became increasingly contentious among NATO members. First, Trump's aggressive and non-cooperative stand toward Iran was significant for his European allies. "Trump wants to shift U.S. policy on Iran towards aggressive containment and away from the diplomatic openings created by his predecessor" (Geranmayeh, 2017). The White House revision had a substantial emphasis on "neutralizing" Iran's "destabilizing influence and constraining its aggression in the region" (Geranmayeh, 2017).

On the fifth anniversary of the signing of the JCPOA, the E.U. Commission again reminded Europeans of the importance of preserving the Nuclear Deal as 'the only tool to provide the international community with the necessary assurance regarding Iran's nuclear programme',"

(European Union External Access Service, 2020). Following Trump's withdrawal from the Nuclear Deal in May 2018, his European allies saw "The ramifications of U.S. policy go beyond damaging the non-proliferation architecture Europe has helped build. It could lead to even greater instability in the Middle East and severely limit diplomacy with Iran to resolve regional issues." (Geranmayeh, 2017).

The idea of NATO's enhanced presence in the Middle East did not reflect European interests and positions vis-à-vis Iran. It was unlikely a consensus could be reached if European interests were challenged by the United States and its efforts to protect its foreign policy through NATO. Such conflicting realities and interests hinder NATO's ability to act effectively and strategically in the Middle East region, undermining its role as a legitimate and reliable provider of stability and security (Kasapoglu, 2020).

Another point of disaccord between the United States and Europe is evident in the management—or lack thereof—of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. (Moravcsik 2003) Trump again delivered assertive unilateral policy. In contrast, European allies were both at odds with the political implications of Trump's "Deal of the Century." Under the Trump administration, this pro-Israel attitude reached new peaks. Trump's controversial decisions undermined hope of a viable and just resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict according to relevant U.N. resolutions and the two-state principle. (Anziska, 2017) After Trump recognized Jerusalem as Israel's legitimate capital and the opening of the U.S. Embassy there, the Palestine Liberation Organization (P.L.O.) and Palestinian Authority cut off all diplomatic ties with the U.S. (Fahmy, 2020). The U.S. closed the P.L.O.'s representative office in Washington, D.C., and halted every form of bilateral aid to the Palestinians. (Beaumont and Holmes, 2018) In March 2019, the administration recognized Israel's sovereignty over the occupied Golan Heights. (Kattan, 2019)

In January 2020, Trump unveiled his peace plan: "Peace to Prosperity: A Vision to Improve the Lives of the Palestinian and Israeli People." Aspects of the president's proposition regarding the design of borders, the official annexation of East Jerusalem as Israel's rightful capital, and the possible annexation of Israeli settlements in the West Bank shocked the International Community. (Alawieh et al, 2020) Trump's plan undermined the very principle of a two-state solution, casting serious doubts on the United States' commitment to international law provisions regarding the conflict, the occupied territories, and its pledge to work towards a just and peaceful resolution. (Goldsmith, 2017)

NATO's resolve to take an active role in solving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict once again demonstrated fickleness. In 2009, U.S.-led suggestions to have NATO play an active role in the Holy Land were met with scepticism internally. Allies and experts generally considered NATO's involvement in managing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to be hazardous. Three preconditions have been set for NATO to consider a possible role in the long-standing conflict in Palestine: a) reaching a comprehensive peace agreement, b) the parties' consent and c) a U.N. mandate. Given these considerations, doubts remain on the tactical and operational feasibility of a NATO mission in Palestine, which can potentially reveal itself as a 'second Afghanistan' for the Alliance (Gaub, 2010).

The NATO Secretary General, Jens Stoltenberg, restated again that "in general […] NATO as an organization is not directly involved in the Middle East peace process" (NATO, 6 December 2017).

Nonetheless, NATO's presence in the Middle East has become larger and more active. The "Naseem Al-Bahr" manoeuvres carried out by the U.S., NATO and four Arab countries (Tunisia,

Egypt, U.A.E., and Morocco) were conducted in the Mediterranean basin near the Russian border, creating tension both in Russia and regionally (Greer, 2021).

NATO and Russia: Same Goal, Different Strategies

The question for this section is: Is NATO's limited interest in the Middle East just to balance Russia's re-entry into the Middle East or because of US pull out or some combination thereof? The section compares and contrasts the strategies and goals of both NATO and Russia in the Middle East.

Russia and NATO members share more common goals in the Middle East than causes for confrontation. This has been evident on several occasions when military engagement was avoided (in Syria, for instance), and possible escalation scenarios have been defused. Operational coordination has also been common between Moscow and the U.S.

Although NATO has also often expressed concern over the Kremlin's military involvement in delicate crises, it is anachronistic to frame their relations concerning the Middle East region as similar to those during the Cold War. In light of the Russian annexation of Crimea and the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, the Alliance's primary concerns are three-fold. First, Russia's military reform, modernization, and increased defence spending make it a formidable opponent. Second, demonstrated an unprecedented willingness to use force as

an instrument of its foreign policy and an improved capacity to project military power beyond its immediate post-Soviet periphery. Third, the Kremlin has been conducting a far more aggressive, anti-Western foreign policy, significantly ratcheting up provocative military manoeuvres near NATO members' borders with Russia…; there is a growing perception in the West that Russia has reemerged as a revanchist, neo-imperialist, expansionist, and hostile power bent on dismantling the post–Cold War European security system and dividing the continent into spheres of influence (Sokolsky, 2017).

NATO has historically devised a dual-track deterrence and dialogue approach towards Russia, aiming to engage the Kremlin in the international community, responding to Moscow's dangerous withdrawal from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty in 2019 while deterring it from aggressively engaging in Eastern Europe. (Major and Rathke, 2016)

From Moscow's perspective, the possibility of Ukraine joining NATO increased tensions with the Alliance. Russia will not accept the presence of NATO forces near its border (Teslova, 2021). The presence of NATO forces on the Russian border raises the possibility that Russia would ally with Iran and reestablish relations with North Korea and China.

NATO and Russia share the same broad intention: to reinforce their role as reliable security providers. Both suffer from the suspicions they brought upon themselves due to their past actions in the region, and both are trying to reinstate their legitimacy vis-à-vis Arab countries (Alani, 2005). Russia has returned through the Kremlin's on-the-ground activities in major conflicts such as Syria. Russia has also found fertile ground to develop relations with strategic regional actors in Syria. There are three tiers of relations with actors in the Middle East. The first tier came from the Astana talks to resolve the Syrian conflict between Iran and Turkey. The second tier included Egypt, Jordan and Israel (part of the Amman process). The third tier included Saudi Arabia and Qatar, a lesser tier due to past issues between the parties. (Stepanova, 2018) Russia has carefully balanced its foreign policy interests against all these interlocutors, pursuing short-term gains in coordinating with one another. Moscow has been cultivating its ties to the region on different grounds. Using economic cooperation, weapon sales, and energy diplomacy, the Kremlin has reinstated itself as a

significant economic and security partner in the wider MENA region. (Poti, 2018) Since 2015, Russia has asserted itself as a primary third-party interlocutor in the Astana Talks and Sochi, which were unequalled by the rest of the international community. The energy and weaponry markets are where the 'Russian alternative' has proven relevant. Countries in the Middle East region, including the traditionally pro-American GCC monarchies, have increased their energy and weapons exchange with Moscow, proving that Russia has become a reliable and viable partner in sectors traditionally dominated by the United States and EU. (Bagdonas, 2012)

Conversely, the U.S. and NATO's policies toward the Middle East have been elusive and ineffective. Lacking strategic concrete objectives, the American superpower and NATO have consistently avoided engaging in complex conflict situations in the region. (Outzen, 2014) For example, their response to the Syrian crisis, compared to the military and diplomatic engagement that the Kremlin has undertaken since 2015, clearly displays such inaction. In Syria, while Moscow remains a primary partner of Assad's regime, the US has limited itself to deploying 400–900 troops to guard oil and gas fields in Western Syria" (Al Jazeera, October 25, 2019). Questions have arisen on the role of the United States and the international community in the eventuality of a political resolution of the conflict.

Two patterns of doctrine stand at the core of the United States' primary interests in Syria and the wider Middle East. First, the United States' main concern has been waging war against international terrorism (Orfy, 2011). Such a war, however, has been interpreted in its traditional military sense, excluding fundamental strategic social methodologies aimed at on-the-ground de-radicalization and prevention (Solomon, 2015). The United States and NATO have joined forces within the Global Coalition to terminate the threat posed by ISIS. The fight against ISIS drained the United States and NATO's capacities and will to engage in other aspects of the conflict in Syria. This leaves the Russian Federation, Assad's regime, Turkey, and Iran to have their way there, in both military and political terms. Second, while NATO ranks security in the Middle East region relatively high on its agenda, the U.S. has been pursuing military disengagement from the region (Byman, 2015). Trump's calls for increased NATO activity in the region signalled the United States' will to diminish its regional military presence while ensuring its NATO allies secure its interests. Obama did the same throughout his two terms as president.

From observing the White House's foreign policy decisions over seven years, the doctrine can more fully be surmised to be one of Strategic Absence. Strategic Absence is used to describe political behaviour arising from a belief that sometimes, in foreign affairs, it is better to be absent than present (Williams, 2016, p. 85).

Thus, the rush toward the Middle East, as during the Cold War, does not apply to contemporary relations between Russia and the United States and NATO. While similarities exist, these actors are no longer driven by zero-sum logic. While Russia seeks to gain influence and strategic military bases on the Mediterranean—to balance the United States and NATO's dominance there—it has no interest in directly engaging with its ex-foes. Similarly, NATO and Washington seek to enhance regional security to secure their interests. The path of the United States and NATO is that of eradicating international Islamist terrorism using combat and non-combat missions in traditional hot spots such as Iraq and Afghanistan (Dannreuther, 2012).

While NATO chooses to engage with countries in the Middle East with partnerships, political dialogue, and practical cooperation, the Kremlin has focused on short-term common interests with relevant regional players. Russia is regaining its role as a legitimate international interlocutor while

entering the weaponry and energy sectors and presenting itself as a reliable and robust alternative to the U.S. and major European powers. The goal for both Russia and NATO is to place themselves as legitimate and trustworthy influencers in the Middle East region. These two actors share the same fundamental weakness: they lack long-term and well-defined strategic approaches toward their regional partners. In developing the framework, it wishes to project beyond the Mediterranean, NATO is particularly vague. Conflicting European and American interests, NATO as an alliance has little or no space to develop its initiatives toward the Middle East region.

Another fundamental aspect is where NATO's priorities lie vis-à-vis Russia. In 2018, at the Alliance's Brussels Summit, concerns focused on the Kremlin's actions in Ukraine and Eastern Europe (NATO, July 11, 2018).

Conflicts such as in Syria will likely remain the perfect grounds to challenge and reformulate regional and international schemes of power. International intervention sits at the core of the Syrian and other international conflicts. "Moscow does not believe the Security Council should be in the business of either implicitly or explicitly endorsing the removal of a sitting government" (Charap, 2013, p. 36). That international intervention has led to regime change by the US in places like Afghanistan, Libya, and Iraq, threatening the stability of the international system. "Russia therefore uses what power it has to shape the international system… to avoid creating a precedent that could eventually be used against it." (Charap, 2013, p. 37).

The old NATO-Russia bilateral dichotomy is not playing well due to the former's lack of will and the latter's practical calculations. If it seems a Russia-led diplomatic process is likely to be effective, the U.S. will favourably tag along; this would be the proof and legitimization of Russia's ultimate goal of regaining its position as a relevant international power.

Russia's Role to the South

The main question of this section is: Is Russia's presence in the Middle East causing Middle Eastern countries to once again choose allegiance to either Russia or the US (West) or play one against the other? This section addresses how the Russian invasion of Ukraine changed Russia's relationships in the Middle East as a sphere of influence.

Since Russia invaded Ukraine, its confrontational policies are not only with the Ukrainians, but the invasion reinforces its anti-Western and anti-NATO stance. Those south of Russia will have to address the changes and possible realignments that could affect the Middle East's relationship with Russia. (Pierini, 2022)

There seem to be five potential consequences for those with relationships with the Russians. First, the Russian trademark could remain appealing to particular heads of state in the Middle East region. A Russia with anti-Western mindsets can stay as an apprehensive but valued associate, i.e. China, India, etc. "After all, to remain in power, a number of regimes resort to muzzling their political opponents, harassing media outlets and civil society activists, controlling their judiciary, and waging information battles based on false narratives. That is Russia's brand" (Pierini, 2022).

Second, the situation in Ukraine reinforced EU unity. Those governments aligned with Russia have remained united in their position against Russia. Policies related to oil and gas diversification have been implemented, and there have been increases in military spending and less influence by Russia in European political parties. (Pierini, 2022).

Third, there will be more friction between Western and Russian policies and positions taken in international organizations like the UN. Allies on both sides will be asked to choose sides. Many problems will become increasingly serious, and information wars will intensify (Pierini, 2022).

Fourth, there will be important consequences like a rise in import costs,

Negotiations in the United Nations framework over the Syria or Libya peace settlements will involve a harsher competition for support from third countries. Moscow will likely promote its interests by deploying private military companies, military sales, and air and naval basing rights (Pierini, 2022).

Fifth, a belligerent anti-Western Russia will force allies in the Middle East to reevaluate their alliances with Russia. "Ultimately, they could be pushed to choose between political alignment with Russia (which would imply autocracy) and good relations with the West (which would imply democracy)" (Pierini, 2022).

As time progresses, it has become clear that despite the war with Ukraine, the Russians are making further inroads in the Middle East. These inroads seem to be at the expense of the West and the US in particular, even more specifically with those close allies with the US. Take, for example, the increasingly close developing ties between the Russians and Saudi Arabia. Once Saudi Arabia was a close US ally, but with Mohammed Bin Salman at the helm, the relationship between the US and Saudi Arabia is fraught with tension,

Russian President Vladamir Putin and Prince Mohammed "both started wars in neighbouring countries, hold significant sway over energy markets, are known to brook no dissent and to covet spots in history." (Chulov, 2022) Furthermore, they have both worked together with OPEC (Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries), which would disrupt European gas supplies and "further alienate the United States" (Chulov, 2022).

Another case in point is Egypt. "Russia is an important partner for Egypt in various fields, and relations between the two countries are distinguished," el-Sissi said in June this year, speaking at a conference in St. Petersburg, Russia" (Schaer, 2022). Furthermore, Russia goes even further. Egypt is "one of our most important partners in Africa and the Arab world," stated Russian President Vladimir Putin. (Schaer 2022) Egypt has a difficult balancing act between Russia and the West.

Furthermore, in the case of Israel, the Israeli government has had a close relationship with the Russians for an extended period. They have coordinated actions over the issue of Syria. Israel has attempted to stay neutral over the conflict in Ukraine. However, the Russian use of Iranian drones in Ukraine has placed them in a dilemma. (Debre, 2022)

All this time, Israel, like the other two examples, has tried to balance the West vs. Russia. The war in Ukraine is making it more difficult for numerous Middle Eastern countries to maintain the balancing act between those who have been allied with the US and the EU.

Conclusion

While Moscow seems to have been successful in emerging as a reliable security provider and legitimate international actor, NATO suffers from difficulties stemming from the different financial weights and strategic interests among its members. In this way, NATO's presence in the Middle East remains vague, weak, and ineffective, showing a lack of principle. Although NATO has prioritized the Middle East with programs, alliances, training, etc., this weakness creates opportunities for competitors.

The primary question of this article is: Does the Cold War zero-sum approach still apply to Russia and NATO in the Middle East? The answer is there is no zero-sum game. Rather, the research found that the two ex-foes share common interests in the Middle East and remain distant from the zero-sum logic of the Cold War era. Nonetheless, their strategies differ greatly.

The second question is: What are NATO's concerns and approach to the Russian Federation and its renewed presence in the Middle East? NATO operates in the region to incorporate political and practical initiatives. These initiatives include crisis management, deterrence and defence, and helping allies strengthen their capabilities. They want to improve their reasons for their legitimacy. This is being accomplished as a proxy for the West and the US as they shift their focus towards Asia.

The third question is: How does Russia interact with NATO and the West since returning to the Middle East? Russia wants to counterbalance the US. They are totally against the expansion of NATO. They have used their involvement in Syria and Libya to be on equal footing and to become a regional powerbroker with little or no military commitment. Their focus is on the Middle East to have access to the Mediterranean and to improve the sale of their weapons (Syria). More importantly, they want to stop the US cycle of regime change.

The fourth question is: How did the Trump administration's position limit NATO's role in the Middle East? The Trump administration, more specifically the US President himself, wanted to lessen the burden of funding NATO and the US military in the Middle East. Although he severely criticized NATO, he was willing to use them as a proxy as US foreign policy continued to pivot towards Asia. Trump's subsequent policies of JCPOA and the 'Deal of the Century' limited NATO's ability to manoeuvre because of tension within NATO due to the US treatment of European allies.

The fifth question is: Is NATO's limited interest in the Middle East just to balance Russia's re-entry into the Middle East or because of US pull out or some combination thereof? With the US and Europe's interests incongruent, NATO has limited interest in the Middle East because of an internal lack of cohesiveness. NATO is considered a proxy of the West (US) by the Russians and the US. NATO has the same goals and strategies as Russia. However, there is no denying that the balance of power has changed since Russia's re-entry into the Middle East. Does NATO provide balance? They are a substitute for the West, especially as the US pivots towards Asia. However, it seems to be more than that. Yet if NATO's focus moves to Ukraine, will the balance remain?

The sixth question is: Is Russia's presence in the Middle East causing Middle Eastern countries to choose allegiance to Russia or the US (West) again or play one against the other? What the West (US) has offered to the Middle East differs from what the Russians have. Therefore, places like Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Israel, historically staunch allies of the West (US), have been able to balance the two or play both ends against the Middle. The Russian invasion of Ukraine has, until now, not changed the balancing act. However, the strength of this balancing has become more necessary with the US pivot to Asia. There is no longer a zero-sum game because the two sides

mostly do not face off militarily. However, the dynamics in the Middle East have been impacted by the presence of NATO and Russia...

References:

Books

Khalidi, Rashid. (2009). Sowing Crisis: The Cold War and the American Dominance in the Middle East.
Boston: Beacon Press.
Mumford, A. (2013). Proxy warfare, Cambridge: Polity. As cited in Rauta, V. & Mumford, A. (2017).
Proxy wars and the contemporary security environment. The Palgrave Handbook of Security, Risk and Intelligence, 99-115.
NDS. (2018). National defense strategy. Washington, DC: Pentagon
Orfy, Mustafa Mohammad. (2011). NATO and the Middle East. The geopolitical context post 9/11. London: Routledge.
Solomon, Hussein. (2015). Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism in Africa: Fighting Insurgency from Al
Shabaab, Ansar Dine and Boko Haram. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, doi: 10.1057/9781137489890.

Electronic

Alani. Mustafa. (2005, December 1). Arab perspectives on NATO. NATO Review, https://www.nato.int/docu/review/articles/2005/12/01/arab-perspectives-on-nato/index.html
Batmanghelidj, Esfandyar & Geranmayeh, Ellie. (2019, February 7). Trading with Iran via the special
purpose vehicle: how it can work. European Council for Foreign Affairs. https://ecfr.eu/article/commentary_trading_with_iran_special_purpose_vehicle_how_it_can_work/
Cafarella, Jennifer & Zhou,Jason, (2019, November). Russia's dead-end diplomacy in Syria. Institute for
the Study of War. https://www.understandingwar.org pdf
European Union External Access Service. (2020, July 14). JCPOA: Statement by EU High of
Representative Josep Borrell in his capacity as coordinator of the joint commission of the fifth anniversary of the Iran deal. European Union External Access Service. https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/
Farouk, Yasmine. (2019, February 8). The Middle East strategic alliance has a long way to go. Carnegie
Endowment for International Peace. https://carnegieendowment.org
Gaub, Florence (2020, March 10). NATO: peacekeeping in the Holy Land? a feasibility study, NATO
Defense College, Research Paper No. 57, https://lib.ugent.be/en/catalog/ebk01:3810000000350601
Goldsmith, J. (2017). The Trump onslaught on international law and institutions. Lawfare Blog, 17.
https://scholar.google.com
Greer, Stuart. (2021, July 3). Black Sea tensions rise amid NATO, Russian exercises. Radio Free
Europe/Radio Liberty, (Video). https://www.rferl.org

Jacobs, Andreas, & Samaan, Jean-Loup. (2014. December). Player at the sidelines: NATO and the fight
against ISIL. NATO Defense College Research Paper No. 107 https://www.ndc.nato.int/news/news.php?icode=750
Kasapoglu, Can. (2020, February 24). Turkey's military policy in Syria: implications for NATO. NATO
Defense College Policy Brief No. 4. https://www.ndc.nato.int/news/news.php?icode=1422
Kofman, Michael & Rojansky, Matthew. (2018, January). What kind of victory for Russia in Syria?
Military Review. https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Portals/7/Army-Press-Online-Journal/documents/Rojansky-v2.pdf
Morcos, Pierre. (2020). NATO in 2030: Charting a new path for the transatlantic alliance.
http://resp.llas.ac.cn/C666/handle/2XK7JSWQ/306407
North Atlantic Treaty, Washington DC, art. 5, (1949, April 4), 34 U.N.T.S. 243.
https://treaties.un.org/pages/showDetails.aspx?objid=080000028016226c
NATO. (2017, December 6). Joint press conference by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg and EU
High Representative/Vice President Federica Mogherini following the meeting of the North Atlantic Council at the level of NATO foreign ministers. NATO. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_149339.htm?selectedLocale=en
NATO. (2018, July 11). Brussels summit declaration issued by the heads of state and government
participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Brussels 11–12 July 2018. NATO Press Release 074. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_156624.htm
NATO. (2020, June 9). Secretary General launches NATO 2030 to make our strong alliance even stronger. NATO. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_176193.htm
NATO. (2021, June 24). Brussels summit communiqué issued by the heads of state and government
participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Brussels 14 June 2021. NATO. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_185000.htm?selectedLocale=en
NATO. (2021. December 2). Istanbul cooperation initiative (ICI). NATO. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_52956.htm
NATO. (2021, December 6). Mediterranean Dialogue. NATO. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_52927.htm
Pierini, Marc. (2022. March 15). Moscow's southern accent? The Ukraine war will reshape Russia's
influence in the Middle East, the Mediterranean, and Africa. Carnegie Institute. https://carnegie-mec.org
Pothier, Fabrice & Vershbow, Alexander. (June 2017). NATO And Trump: The case for a new
transatlantic bargain. Atlantic Council, 2nd edition. https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/NATO_and_Trump_web_0623.pdf
Press release. (2009, May 7) "Strasbourg/Kehl Summit Declaration,"; issued by the heads of state and
government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Strasbourg/Kehl, item 4, April 4, 2009. http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news_52837.htm?mode=pressrelease .
Rumer, Eugene & Weiss, Andrew. (2019, October 24). A brief guide to Russia's return to the Middle
East. Carnegie Endowment. https://carnegieendowment.org/2019/10/24/brief-guide-to-russia-s-return-to-middle-east-pub-80134
Samaan, Jean-Loup. (2020, May 7). The limitations of a NATO-Middle East military cooperation.

Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. https://carnegieendowment.org/sada/81740
Schaer, Catherine. (2022, November 2). Egypt's difficult balancing act between the West and Russia. DW.
https://www.dw.com/en/egypts-difficult-balancing-act-between-the-west-and-russia/a-63622594
Teslova, Elena. (2021, April 6). Kremlin warns against Ukrainian admission into NATO. Anadolu Agency. https://www.aa.com.tr/en/politics/kremlin-warns-against-ukrainian-admission-into-nato/2200285
Thompson, Jack. (2018, October). Trumps Middle East Policy. CSS Analysis #233.
https://css.ethz.ch/content/dam/ethz/special-interest/gess/cis/center-for-securities-studies/pdfs/CSSAnalyse233-EN.pdf
UN SCOR. (2021. July 8). Egypt, Ethiopia, Sudan should negotiate mutually beneficial agreement over
management of Nile waters, Top Official Tells Security Council, 8816th meeting. UN Doc SC/14576. https://www.un.org/press/en/2021/sc14576.doc.htm
Weiss, Andrew & Ng, Nicole. (2019, March 20). Collision avoidance: The lessons of U.S. and Russian
operations in Syria. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. https://carnegieendowment.org/2019/03/20/collision-avoidance-lessons-of-u.s.-and-russian-operations-in-syria-pub-78571
Wezeman, Peter D., Fleurant, Aude, Kuimova, Alexandra, Lopez Da Silva, Diego, Tian, Nan & Wezeman, Siemon T. (2020, March). Trends in international arms transfers. SIPRI.
https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/2020-03/fs_2003_at_2019.pdf

Journals

Anziska, Seth. (2017). Neither two states nor one: the Palestine question in the age of Trump. Journal of
Palestine Studies, 46(3), 57-74.
Bagdonas, Azuolas, (2012). Russia's interests in the Syrian conflict: power, prestige, and profit. European Journal of Economic and Political Studies, 5(2), 55-77.
Belkin, Paul. (2016, November 14). The Warsaw summit: in brief. Congressional Research Service.
Belkin, Paul. (2019, March). Assessing NATO's value. Congressional Research Service.
Benitez, Jorge. (2019). U.S. NATO policy in the age of Trump: controversy and consistency.
The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs, 43(1).
Biscop, S., (2020). Trump, the Middle East, and North Africa: Just Leave Things to the Proxies? Security
Policy Brief, 2020 (125).
Brandsma, Charolotta. (2019). NATO and the Mediterranean. IE Med. Mediterranean Yearbook.
Byman, Daniel. (2015). Six bad options for Syria. The Washington Quarterly, 38(4), 171-186.
Chapdelaine, Laetitia. (2021). Instex: Europe's tough maneuvering under the influence of US secondary
sanctions.
Charap, S. (2013). Russia, Syria and the doctrine of intervention. Survival, 55(1), 35-41.
Clinton, Hillary. (2011, November). America's Pacific Century. Foreign Policy, 189, 56-63.
Dannreuther, Roland. (2012). Russia and the Middle East: a cold war paradigm? Europe-Asia Studies, 64

(3), 543-560. DOI: 10.1080/09668136.2012.661922
Geranmayeh, Ellie. (2017). The coming clash: why Iran will divide Europe from the United States. European Council on Foreign Relations.
Gottemoellerm. Rose. (2018). NATO delivers: toward a faster, stronger alliance. Turkish Policy Quarterly, 17(2), 25-36.
Itodo, U.F. & Templeman, A. (2021). An appraisal of the politics of disarmament during the cold war. Vejoh-Veritas Journal of Humanities, 3(1).
Kattan, Victor. (2017). The bear learns to swim: Russia's re-emergence in the Mediterranean. Eastern
Mediterranean Geopolitical Review.
Kattan, Victor. (2019). US recognition of Golan Heights annexation: testament to our times. Journal of
Palestine Studies, 48(3), 79-85.
Kaufman, Joyce P. (2017). The US perspective on NATO under Trump: lessons of the past and prospects
for the future. International Affairs, 93(2).
Kilani, Ahmed, Alawieh, Mohammad Ali., Mussaui-Ulianishcheva, E.V. & Ulyanishcheva, L.V. (2020).
Peace to prosperity plan as a one state solution. Journal of Politics & Law, 13, 94.
Lavrov, Sergei. (2021). On laws, rights and rules. Russia. Global Affairs, 19(3), 229.
Major, C. & Rathke, J. (2016). NATO needs deterrence and dialogue: defining the new balance in view of
the Warsaw Summit. SWP Comment, 18/2016.
McNamara, S. (2009). President Obama Must Not Concede to Russian Demands over NATO. Heritage
Foundation.
Moore, Rebecca R. (2012). Lisbon and the evolution of NATO's new partnership policy. Perceptions:
Journal of International Affairs, 17(1), 55-74.
Moravcsik, Andrew. (2003). Striking a new transatlantic bargain. Foreign Affairs, 82, 74.
Nuruzzaman, Mohammad. (2020). President Trump's 'maximum pressure' campaign and Iran's endgame. Strategic Analysis, 44 (6), 570-582. DOI:10.1080/09700161.2020.1841099
Olsen, G. R. (2021). Donald Trump and NATO: limitations on the power of an unpredictable president. World Order Transition and the Atlantic Area: Theoretical Perspectives and Empirical Analysis, 123-141.
Outzen, Richard, (2014). The flawed strategic debate on Syria. Strategic Forum, No. 285, 1.
Oztig, L I. (2020). The transatlantic alliance in the Age of Trump. Global Change, Peace & Security, 32(3), 297-315.
Pastori, G. (2021). The Atlantic Alliance, NATO, and the Post-Arab Springs Mediterranean. The Quest
for a New Strategic Relevance. DE EUROPA, 4(1), 125-140.
Popescu, Nicu, & Secrieru, Stanislaw. (July 2018). Russia's return to the Middle East: building sandcastles? Chaillot Papers, no. 146. DOI:10.2815/639920.
Póti, Laszlo. (2018). Russian policies towards the MENA region. Barcelona: MENARA.
Rumer, E. (2019). The Primakov (not Gerasimov) doctrine in action. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 5 (6).
Rumer, Eugene & Sokolsky, Richard. (2021). Russia in the Mediterranean: here to stay. Carnegie

Endowment for International Peace.
Rynning, S. (2007). NATO and the broader Middle East, 1949–2007: the history and lessons of controversial encounters. Journal of Strategic Studies, 30(6), 905-927.
Schreer, Benjamin. (2019). Trump, NATO and the future of Europe's defense. The RUSI Journal, 164(1),
10–17.
Shahrokh, Zohreh Dehdashti & Seyed Mojtaba Miri. (2019, May 13). A Short Introduction to Comparative Research. Researchgate. ttps://www.researchgate.net/publication/336278925
Sokolsky, Richard. (2017). The New NATO-Russia military balance: Implications for European Security
13, 15). Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.
Soydemir, Abdullah. (2021, May). Involvement of international organizations for ending the Syrian civil
war. The Journal of Defense Sciences, Issue 39.
Stepanova, E. (2016). Russia in the Middle East: Back to a "grand strategy" or enforcing multilateralism. Politique étrangère, 2, 1-14.
Stepanova, Ekaterina. (2018). Russia and conflicts in the Middle East: regionalisation and implications for the West. The International Spectator, 53(4), 35-57.
Trenin, Dmitri. (2016). Russia in the Middle East: Moscow's objectives, priorities, and policy drivers. Carnegie Moscow Center.
Williams, Paul. (2016). President Obama's approach to the Middle East and North Africa: strategic absence. Case Western Reserve Journal of International Law, 48, 83.
Yahaya, Jibrin Ubale. (2020). President Trump peace strategy: emerging conflict between Israel and
Palestine. International Affairs and Global Strategy 82.
Zannella, A. (2020). An Analysis of Burden Sharing in NATO and the Problem of Free Riding. Political
Analysis, 21(1), 5.

Periodicals

Aljazeera. (2019, October 25). US to deploy more troops to eastern Syria to secure oil fields. Al Jazeera.
https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/10/deploy-troops-eastern-syrian-secure-oil-fields-191025022517393.html
Al Jazeera. (2020, January 6). NATO stands with US after Soleimani assassinations and warns Iran. Al Jazeera. https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/01/nato-stands-soleimani-assassination-warns-iran-200106173245219.html
Beaumont, Peter & Holmes, Oliver. (2018, August 31). US confirms end to funding for UN Palestinian refugees. The Guardian. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/aug/31/trump-to-cut-all-us-funding-for-uns-main-palestinian-refugee-programme
Chulov, Michael. (2022, October 5). Putin and the prince: fears in west as Russia and Saudi Arabia deepen ties. The Guardian. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/oct/05/putin-mohammed-bin-salman- russia-saudi-arabia-deepen-ties
Debre, Isabel. (2022, October 10). Israel's balancing act between Russia and the West complicated by
Russia's use of Iranian drones. PBS. https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/israels-balancing-act-between- russia-and-the-west-complicated-by-russias-use-of-iranian-drones

Fahmy, Omar. (2020, February 1). Palestinians cut ties with Israel, U.S. after rejecting peace plan. Reuters. https://www.reuters.com/article/us-israel-palestinians-security-idUSKBN1ZV3PO

France 24. (2021, June 14). NATO is critically important for US Interests, Biden tells alliance at first summit post-Trump. France 24. https://www.france24.com/en/europe/20210614-biden-seeks-to-restore-nato-ties-as-leaders-meet-for-first-summit-post-trump

Gibbons-Neff, Thomas. (2018, May 24). How a 4-hour battle between Russian mercenaries and U.S. commandos unfolded in Syria. New York Times. https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/24/world/middleeast/american-commandos-russian-mercenaries-syria.html

Kalin, Stephen, & Landay, Jonathan. (2019, April 11). Exclusive: Egypt withdraws from U.S.-led anti-Iran security initiative - sources. Reuters. https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-mesa-egypt-exclusive/exclusive-egypt-withdraws-from-us-led-anti-iran-security-initiative-sources-idUSKCN1RM2WU

Middle East Monitor. (2020, August 19). Syria agrees to let Russia expand Hmeimim Airbase. Middle East Monitor. https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20200819-syria-agrees-to-let-russia-expand-hmeimim-air-base/

Oprysko, Caitlin, (2020, January 9). NATO plus ME: Trump proposes NATO expansion Into Middle East. Politico. https://www.politico.com/news/2020/01/09/trump-nato-expansion-proposal-096772

Rahim, Zamira , Macaya, Melissa & Upright, Ed. (2021, June 14). 2021 NATO Summit News Coverage. CNN. https://edition.cnn.com/world/live-news/biden-nato-summit-updates-06-14-2021/index.html

Reuters. (2015, November 19). Egypt, Russia sign deal to build a nuclear power plant. Reuters. https://www.reuters.com/article/us-nuclear-russia-egypt-idUSKCN0T81YY20151119

Reuters. (2017, December 26). Russia establishing permanent presence at its Syrian bases: RIA.

Reuters. (2020, January 9). Trump floats expanding NATO to add Middle East. Reuters. https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-trump-nato-idUSKBN1Z82D4