

Global Strike Force: NATO Summit And Turkey's New Role

The last Nato summit and Turkey's new role

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Although NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen said that “NATO is an unparalleled community of freedom, peace, security and shared values”, we always remember NATO(North Atlantic Treaty Organization) with its wars, injustices, wrongs, and as a servant of the United States.

Controversial the last NATO Summit finished and there are many topics that deserve to be discussed broadly. “Russia-NATO relations”, “NATO’s role in the Afghanistan”, “ Missile Defense” and “Strategic Concept” are among them. Even though we want to evaluate all of these topics, in this analysis we will focus on ‘missile shield system’ planned to be deployed in Turkey and also partially on a ‘new strategic concept’.

The aim of the foundation of NATO was to constitute a Western bloc against Soviet Russia (USSR) after World War II. Although NATO was not a legitimate organization since its foundation, it completely lost its legitimacy after the collapse of USSR. But because it is an imperialist project, NATO always gets a new form through new strategic concepts. When we look at the activities of NATO, we can easily see that it serves American hegemony.

It is possible to evaluate ‘a new strategic concept’ in this respect.

Today, NATO tries to legitimate its own presence. Hence, reading NATO’s new strategic concept and its missile shield project in Turkey accurately is very important. Gilbert Mercier says that Rick Rozoff, from Global Research in Canada, argues that after the Lisbon NATO summit the United States will intensify its military drive into Asia. According to him, Europe has become a pawn in the game, a vassal of the “first global empire”. And President Obama has become the empire’s “latest rotating emperor”.

Up to the present, NATO’s strategies have divided countries or people as supporters of American strategy or not. As Mostafa Zein emphasizes, “once again, NATO seeks after political and military control of the world, and the great confrontation will take place explode in local and regional wars, which will witness changing regimes and perhaps also the borders of some countries.”

The U.S. is always in the center for these strategies. And today, saying that there are some

members of NATO which have independent deciding mechanisms and Turkey, through its new independent foreign policy, has got its demands in NATO summit, becomes very innocently. We are, here, mentioning from NATO; it is the world's gendarme and military mafia. "In other words, it relies on the United States' theory of preemptive wars, so as to `adapt to new threats`, as stated in the document being discussed at the Lisbon Summit today - a document that can be summed up by saying that NATO must 'confront terrorism, secure energy sources and their supply routes, and counter maritime piracy, organized crime and cyber warfare'." says Mostafa Zein.

When we look at the history of NATO, we always see injustices, wars and invasions. Remembering some of them can be very helpful in order to understand what we are trying to say.

NATO's Bloody History

I think John Newsinger's study in April 2009 is very productive in order to summarize the last period of NATO's bloody history:

"Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, NATO has for the first time become directly involved in military action. The alliance had earlier supported the Portuguese in their protracted colonial wars in Angola, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau, but had not actively intervened. Now it intervened in the Balkans as part of the US attempt to reshape the post-Cold War world in their interests. Although NATO's 11-week bombing campaign against Yugoslavia in 1999 was dressed up as a humanitarian intervention, it was in fact a cynical exercise in great power politics. The Balkans had to fit in with the US's new world order.

With the US invasion of Iraq in March 2003, however, only the faithful British were prepared to commit troops in what was an unprovoked war of aggression based on deliberate lies. This war seemed at the time to have seriously weakened NATO, with Germany and France in particular distancing themselves from the US. More recently, however, NATO has agreed to send a training mission to Iraq, but the case remains that in most European capitals the war is still regarded as a great mistake.

Today, however, on NATO's 60th anniversary, the alliance's prospects are fluid, with contradictory factors pulling in different directions. First of all, NATO has dramatically expanded so that today it has 26 member countries, with two more (Croatia and Albania) about to join. This expansion is a direct result of the US victory in the Cold War. In 1999 Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic joined; followed by Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia in 2004. What this signifies is the decisive rollback of Russian power. And the Americans are still committed to bringing in Georgia and Ukraine. Under Bush this confrontational stance precipitated the Russian-Georgian war of 2008. While the British will follow the US anywhere (the British were helping to train the Georgian army and joint exercises were actually planned when the war intervened), the French and the Germans had no interest in confrontation with Russia.

What of Afghanistan? There are troops from all 26 NATO members in Afghanistan and from ten of NATO's "partner" countries, including Ireland, Finland and Sweden. Most of these contingents are demonstrations of support rather than serious military contributions. Once again it is Britain that has proven to be the US's most faithful camp follower. So far 152 British troops have laid down their lives for Uncle Sam."

Additionally, the comments of Fidel Castro Ruz and Rick Rozoff are important.

Firstly, Rick Rozoff's sentences:

`The U.S. has also expanded its military presence in the Middle East: Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar and Yemen.

Two years ago Washington reactivated its Fourth Fleet for the Caribbean Sea and Central and South America and last year's coup in Honduras and this September's attempted coup in Ecuador are proof that the U.S. will not allow developments in Latin America to pursue their natural course unimpeded.

The U.S. has intensified efforts to forge and expand military alliances and deployments in the Asia-Pacific region."

And Fidel Castro:

"The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), a bird of prey hatched in the skirts of yankee imperialism, and moreover equipped with tactical nuclear weapons many times more destructive than the atom bomb that erased the city of Hiroshima, has been committed by the United States to the genocidal Afghanistan war, even more complex than the Kosovo adventure and the war on Serbia, where its forces massacred the city of Belgrade and were at the point of suffering a disaster if the government of that country had remained firm, instead of trusting in the institutions of European justice in the Hague."

NATO's Strategic Concepts and the New One

The comment of Beril Dedeoglu, from Today's Zaman Newspaper, about the last NATO Summit is so: "The NATO summit in Lisbon was a turning point for the global balance of power. When one browses through the main decisions of this summit, it's not hard to see that a transformation lies ahead. However, it's not equally easy to understand against whom the NATO allies and their new strategic partner, Russia, are preparing to defend themselves."

If we want to answer what the turning point for the global balance of power is, firstly we should understand evolution in strategic concepts according to changing contexts. We are over against "the new NATO" and we should examine these new concepts more carefully. Here, we come across a successful categorization of Gulnur Aybet, from Today's Zaman Newspaper:

"While the strategic concepts of 1991 and 1999 were largely "reactive" documents, affirming the changes rapidly taking place in the international security environment, the urgency to revise this became inevitable after Sept. 11. NATO's public diplomacy division has been presenting this transformation in the alliance as the three versions of NATO, much like a computer operating system. Version 1.0 refers to the NATO of the Cold War, when the core function was collective defense against a tangible enemy, the Soviet Union. Version 2.0 refers to the 1990s, when NATO acted more as a collective security organization, intervening to put "humanitarian crises" right, and expanding and building partnerships to absorb the post-communist space into its transatlantic norms of democratic governance, free market economies and human rights. But dealing with the break-up of Yugoslavia, however, proved to be a steep learning curve.

The big challenge for NATO in moving from v.2.0 to v.3.0 has been its response to a post-Sept. 11 world. Afghanistan is not a humanitarian intervention to uphold norms as in the 1990s, but is a collective defense operation. But deploying far beyond the Atlantic treaty area to combat insurgents to create a stable country that will no longer be a breeding ground for terrorists is one thing, defending your actual territory when you have an overwhelming number of Soviet tanks poised on your border is another. Afghanistan and this new “borderless collective defense” have become a very hard sell for NATO.

When tangible threats are replaced by emerging threats, there is bound to be a gap in threat perceptions among allies.”

Actually, this new strategic concept has not very different rationale than others because NATO is changing its strategies according to new contexts. Right here, answering the question of Jonathan Marcus, from BBC, is very crucial: “But is this (new concept) a speedy new software version with added bells and whistles or an attempt to re-package an older product for very different market conditions?”

So, saying that NATO, under the guidance of the U.S., is trying to prepare appropriate conjuncture in order to fight with its so-called enemies, is not the wrong. As Mostafa Zein says, “Based on this division of the world, one notes that NATO’s concerns focus on Eurasia and the Middle East. Those two regions are the sources of energy and terrorism, and controlling them requires the cooperation of a few countries that are friends of NATO and of the United States, such as the Arab Gulf states, Iraq, naturally, as well as Turkey, which is a fundamental member of NATO.”

All the actions and explanations of NATO are the scenario. We should think this process with the words of Akif Emre, from Turkish Yeni Safak Newspaper; “It is not possible to understand things that happened by means of ignoring relations between NATO’s strategic concepts and US’s globally hegemonic strategies”. We showed these scenarios many times. Today, Turkey is becoming the part of this scenario. Before looking at the Turkey’s role, I want to focus on the legitimating process of NATO. Through these scenarios, NATO seems as a legitimate entity. This is a big lie.

NATO as a (Not) Legitimate Organization

“NATO not only survived but thrived in the context of the post cold war era. Today, NATO is still expanding its global reach under the strict leadership of the Pentagon. In order to justify itself, new “global security threats” are either invented, amplified and generously recycled. The perfect example is of course the so called “war on terror”, which was and still is an opportunity for increase militarization, and global policing at the expense of the most basic rights of democracies.” says Gilbert Mercier.

As is known, today, US is using NATO as a means for its invasions. So, its legitimacy is very important. Actually, we can see this process in Obama’s changing liberal policies. Every age has its own context; but the actual reality is: US wants to invade some countries and this requires shaping new policy forms. If we read this picture from this perspective, I think it will be more rational.

As Hassan Behesthipour, from Press TV-Iran, says, NATO’s first task in the Lisbon summit is to decide on new policies for the next 10 years — a task that may prove tough considering the many questions about the justification for NATO and the alliances’ post-Cold War growth

to 28 member states.

On the other hand, the comment of Numan Kurtulmus, leader of the newly established People's Voice Part, on NATO Summit is very crucial in order to evaluate this period accurately: "The [reason] for founding NATO in 1991 disappeared following the demise of the Soviet Union. Since then it has been trying to create new enemies for itself to justify its existence. And it has found its enemies among the Muslim countries... It's a project that could lead to World War III. It's not for defense but for aggression."

"NATO's missile shield project could cause a third World War since the alliance is planning to erect an anti-ballistic missile system that will aggressively target Middle East countries" says Kurtulmus according to the news of Turkish Hurriyet Daily News.

And Turkey...

As you know, the main topic on the NATO Summit was to decide the fate of Afghanistan, and also the adoption of a new "strategic concept" for the alliance.

The U.S. first floated the idea of stationing a radar system in the Czech Republic and deploying 10 missile interceptors in Poland in 2002. Moscow strongly rejected the plan. Then, before this NATO Summit, Turkey has become a current issue and Turkey accepted this role.

Although Turkey has some conditions for the missile shield system, and it is said that NATO members accept the conditions of Turkey, there is no real agreement for them. Let us look at the conditions of Turkey for deployment of this missile shield system.

The conditions of Turkey

According to Shiraz Piracha, "the Turkish authorities insist on building a NATO, rather than an American missile system. Turkey has demanded that the system should be deployed in all the NATO member states and that Turkey will not allow NATO to use the proposed system against a country.

Prime Minister Erdogan wants the proposed missile system under the Turkish command. Some experts believe that the NATO missile system in Turkey is targeted against Iran and Russia but Turkey says that no country should be named as a threat or potential target of the missiles."

Although Turkey authorities evaluate this process as an achievement for Turkey, it is very debatable. According to the Hurriyet Daily Newspaper, Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu spoke to a small group of journalists en route from Xi'an to Shanghai as part of his weeklong China trip:

"First of all, Turkey is not a country that has to be convinced by NATO. Turkey is not alone; Turkey is at the center of NATO.

Secondly, NATO should take into account the principle of "indivisible security," meaning that the alliance should preserve each and every member state's security.

Thirdly, Turkey does perceive any threat in its neighborhood and does not plan to be a frontier country as it was during the Cold War era.

Turkey is not in a position to be a frontier country. NATO, while doing threat planning on this issue, should cover all member states and should remain outside any formula that would geographically set one country against another.”

Actually, these sentences should be critics because Turkey is not a big player in this chess. As Sedat Laciner says, viewpoints of Turkey and the West are very different. Although Turkey sees itself as a mediator between the East and the West, Western leaders see countries like Iran and Syria as a threat. So, if now, there is no disagreement between US and Turkey, this stems from that technical issues are not talked as yet. We mentioned above: “NATO’s concerns focus on Eurasia and the Middle East. Those two regions are the sources of energy and terrorism, and controlling them requires the cooperation of a few countries that are friends of NATO and of the United States, such as the Arab Gulf states, Iraq, naturally, as well as Turkey, which is a fundamental member of NATO.”

But this does not mean that NATO, under the leadership of the US, will accept all the conditions of Turkey. The French President Sarkozy’s insistence on naming Iran as a threat can be an evidence for this argument. So, every person knows that the last word belongs to American command. So, Davutoglu’s “We are not a partner here, but an owner of NATO” sentence is very emotional. I think, right here, Mostafa Zein’s sentences are very meaningful:

“The task of such a coalition would be on the one hand to ward off Iran, and on the other to return to surrounding Russia in Eurasia, after it has been surrounded at the European level.

This explains the pressure exerted on Turkey to allow NATO to deploy its missile shield on its soil. The missiles are aimed primarily at Iran to prevent it from spreading its influence towards the Gulf and the Levant.

They also aim at restoring Ankara to its former position, after it excessively leaned towards the East, nearly forming a coalition with Tehran and Moscow, and aspiring to playing an essential role in the Middle East in collaboration with Syria.”

“With the approval of the missile shield, Turkey has once again become the front country of NATO” says Numan Kurtulmus, leader of the newly established People’s Voice Part. Actually, everyone knows very well: the main target for NATO-the U.S.- is Iran. US changed its strategy against Russia in order to isolate Iran and also it supports Gulf States with weapons for the next future attack against the Iran.

Again: Axial Dislocation Debate

This agreement on the missile shield system brings about ‘axial dislocation debate’ again. While The Turkish President Abdullah Gul emphasizes that ‘axial dislocation finished’, many commentators argue that although Turkey tries to connect good relations with the East, its axis is in the West.

“Regaining Turkey also means breaking the isolation that surrounds Israel, and providing it with the space to be at the core of this strategy without declaring it. Indeed, Israel is the main military base for NATO and the United States in the Middle East. Turkey’s conditions does not prevent the goal of the shield being to confront these countries and to protect Israel, especially as NATO in its new Strategic Concept has specified the zones of danger. NATO operations will not be limited to defense, as it has in fact adopted attack, or

preemptive war, as a new method.” says Mostafa Zein.

As Cengiz Candar, Turkish columnist, says, “the Last NATO Summit shows that Turkey is among the members of Western coalition security system and after that, there will be no ‘axial dislocation’ debate because Turkey positioned beside the West.”

On the other hand, Lale Kemal’s comments on this issue so: “It can also be said that the latest compromise between NATO and Turkey over the missile defense plan has marked Turkey’s allegiance to this Western military club and that may play a role in easing concerns that Turkey has been drifting away from the West.”

So, we can say that Although Turkey knows very well that it is not possible to take radical steps with its neighbors like Iran and Syria despite US, through its populist steps, it tries to convince its voters so: “We are besides Muslim countries”.

Is it a test of loyalty for Turkey?

Yesterday, Turkish Foreign Minister said that this summit was not a loyalty test because there is no any country that tests us like this.

But, actually, his explanations are very optimistic because the U.S. generally has first call on Turkey’s issue. On the other hand, as Mostafa Zein emphasizes, “Turkey has never faced such a test in the past. It is true that it refrained from allowing the United States to invade Iraq from its soil, and sided with Iran in many stances, the latest being voting at the Security Council against sanctions on Iran.

However, this time its options are not many, especially after having crossed a great distance towards establishing itself as a regional power that has its own strategy in the Middle East and in Central Asia, far from the policies of NATO and the United States. Will it then abandon its new Ottomanism to follow Atatürk’s dreams of being European? “

Moreover, evaluations of Gulnur Aybet are so: “Turkey’s objections to the missile defense shield were unfortunately received in Alliance politics as Turkey’s “test of loyalty.” This in turn led to speculations based on the growing concerns about Turkey “shifting East” in foreign policy, away from its traditional transatlantic partnership. That was too simple an analysis to make, given the complexities of the Turkish position, but an understandable one, given how the Turkish leadership has been puzzling the West with its colorful rhetoric on Iran.”

The NATO Summit in terms of the Russia

The NATO meeting also marked a breakthrough in relations with Russia, with President Dmitry Medvedev attending a summit with the alliance for the first time in two years and pronouncing himself happy with his welcome, Agence France-Presse reported.

After the Bush administration, Obama has changed his policies against Russia and explained that US wants to cooperate Russia rather than seeing it as an enemy or rival.

Cem Birsay, from the Hurriyet Daily News, summarizes Obama’s changing policies very well:

“The Obama administration has made three significant changes to the missile-shield project. First, potential missile-system deployment in Poland and the Czech Republic, which would

make the long-range missiles ineffective, was abandoned, and the use of the mid-range, mobile missiles readily available in the U.S. armed forces has been prioritized. This move can be considered a retreat from Russia by the U.S. Even if Poland and the Czech Republic were still involved in the project, they would host missile systems that would not threaten Russia.

Second, although the existing Bush administration's missile-shield system would protect the majority of the United States, it would not protect many of the country's NATO allies. For instance, major portions of Spain, Portugal, southern Italy, Greece and Turkey would be without the protection of the Polish and Czech system. Therefore, the transformation to include "all NATO members" has put these other members' geographies on the agenda. In this context, Turkey's geographical position is crucial for both the U.S. and Europe.

Finally, the Bush administration's missile-shield project was unable to protect other important U.S. allies, such as Israel and Saudi Arabia. Shifting the shield to the Mediterranean and Persian Gulf by means of mobile platforms will primarily serve the concerns of the U.S. While the Bush administration's project would function if Iran had long-range missiles, the revision made by the Obama administration facilitates the functioning of the system in a shorter time under current conditions. In this sense, the Obama administration has taken concrete steps."

On the other hand, according to Iranian columnist Hassan Behesthipour, there is an important question: "Why Russia has now embraced the new plans?"

"To answer this question, we must highlight three clear points;

- 1- Turkey is located south of Russia and the new system would not pose any immediate threats to its strategic western regions.
- 2- The new scenario allows Russia to join the senior league as a main player, whereas the original did not include Russia and even seemed to regard the country as a threat.
- 3- Formerly, the shield was to be set up in Eastern Europe and protect that part of the continent from potential threats, but the new scenario envisions a shield that would protect all of Europe against potential threats from the Middle East. Hence, the system is to be set up in several European countries."

Additionally, "Despite their persisting differences, Russia and NATO look set to turn a page in Lisbon and move on to end the division of Europe into hostile East and West." says Russian writer Vladimir Radyuhin. "According to Mr. Lavrov's cautious expectation, the summit could mark the end of the "post-Cold War period" in Russia-NATO relations."

So, we see that real enemy for NATO-the U.S.- is not Russia; today the most important threat is a political Islamic country, Iran, and political Islamic movements like Hamas, Hezbollah. There is no need to explain it openly. Here, looking at Iran side can be very productive for our analysis.

The NATO Summit in terms of Iran

Although Iranian authorities express their trust in Turkey, they are very worried on this issue. As every person knows it, Iranians also know that this missile shield system is firstly for them. But, Iranian columnist's comments is changing in this issue. While some of them

see this process as not a threat for them, others prefer to revise relations with Turkey.

While Shiraz Paracha said that “at the same time the unashamed Europe expects that Turkey accepts NATO plans to establish a missile system in Turkey, but the popular Turkish prime minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, has made it clear that the West should stop taking Turkey for granted. He has placed conditions for accepting NATO’s missile system... Turkey is unlikely to change its stand over the missile system when the matter will come for discussion at the NATO summit in Lisbon on November 18-19.”, Hassan Behesthipour criticizes Turkey very rationally:

“Now let us look at the big picture. How will this new agreement between Russia and the United States affect the planned comprehensive talks between Iran and Western powers? Currently, Russia’s deal is unlikely to affect Iran’s talks with the P5+1 — the Permanent members of the UN Security Council plus Germany — as Moscow has lost its winning card with its longtime trade partner and neighbor by tagging along wherever the US has led in the past few years.

Another issue is that the deal poses a significant NATO threat against Iran.

Relevant Iranian organizations must study the various ways in which the new plans and NATO strategies could put Iran’s security at risk.

However, one thing they should do is to study why Turkey has agreed to join the defense shield plan. One should question Ankara on whether it actually believes that simply removing Iran’s name from the list of threats would automatically cancel out the threats against Tehran?

Conclusion

“The Lisbon summit approved the third such “concept” since 1991, searching for a rationale for the alliance in the absence of a common enemy... Since its foundation, NATO has always claimed to defend the common values of its member states as well as their territories.” says Ihsan Dagi.

Today, Turkey compromised with NATO members and especially with the America. ‘According to the joint communiqué issued Saturday after the completion of the summit, the North Atlantic Council will develop “missile defense consultation, command and control arrangements” by the time NATO defense ministers meet in March 2011 and have created an action plan to implement the missile shield by June 2011.’

While US is losing its superpower status, through these attempts it recreates its power. In this process, through ratifying this agreement, Turkey is serving in favor of US’s benefits. Turkey should abandon its shield role for imperialism. Up to the present, there is no any fair action in the history of NATO. Always and always, the U.S. makes a decision in NATO and Israel is the most profitable country in this process because America does not take its steps without consulting Israel and its interests. In addition to this, as Beril Dedeoglu says, “The Lisbon summit means that NATO has once again taken Europe under its control and that Europe will have little opportunity from now on to utter dissident voices.”

It should be noted that Turkey’s new role in this NATO Summit is an attempt to re-package an older product for very different market conditions. We should be aware of it. But, Turkey

people are sleeping in this issue. Although there were some protests in Turkey, many Muslim or leftists groups did not say anything in this issue. This means that AKP Government in Turkey convinces Turkey's people; but we should vocalize that this is US's project and its long-term plan.

I think we should listen Akif Emre, from Turkish Yeni Safak Newspaper very well. According to him, this process will cause Turkey to become outpost of NATO and America. He mentions 'magic formula'; it provides that different media groups vocalize same voice: we are winner in this process. If we will not be aware of this 'magic formula', NATO and America would fight Iran or any other Islamic state through our hands. We should wake up from our sleepings. Otherwise, we should be only pawn in this game rather than being a play maker.

After all, NATO is the world's gendarme and military mafia.

We should step back immediately; otherwise, as Pepe Escobar says, Turkey can be NATOstan: "But Cold War remix it is, and Turkey runs the risk of being just a paw in their game. Profiting from NATO's new Strategic Concept, the ultimate goal of the US global missile dome - complete with cyber warfare and Prompt Global Strike - is to encircle the heart of Eurasia and isolate, who else, Russia, Iran and China. War is peace. Welcome to the pleasure dome. Welcome to NATOstan."

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