



**Gulf Research Center**  
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# **The Regional Roles of NATO** and its Potential Role in the Gulf Region

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**Abdulaziz O. Sager**  
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## Introduction

The United States and its Western allies formed the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1949 to deter the Soviet Union, which threatened to expand the communist sphere of influence from Eastern to Western Europe after the end of the Second World War in 1945. The North Atlantic Treaty, which brought NATO into existence, stated that the parties to the treaty were determined to safeguard the common heritage and civilization of their peoples and sought to promote stability and well-being in the North Atlantic area<sup>1</sup>. The parties agreed that an armed attack against one or more of them would be considered an attack against them all and that they would assist the party or parties attacked.

It is important to refer to the fact that the establishment of NATO coincided with the Marshall Plan to rehabilitate the European economies, which were devastated by the war. The plan, which ran through the period 1947-1952, was praised by US President Harry Truman who said that “the Marshall Plan and NATO are two faces of the same coin.”

This paper gives an account and analysis of the role played by NATO in the Gulf region and a discussion of the role it could potentially play, taking into consideration the various arguments in this respect. The paper has been divided into three parts: the first gives a brief idea about NATO, its establishment, organization and budget; the second deals with the role of the Alliance inside Europe and beyond; the third discusses the potential role of NATO in the Gulf region.

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1 - see website [bbcarabic.com](http://bbcarabic.com) on 10/2/2003

# **NATO: Its Establishment, Organization, and Structure**

## *Establishment and Membership*

The original 12 nations that signed the North Atlantic Treaty and thus became the founding members of NATO included the following: the United States of America, United Kingdom, Netherlands, Luxembourg, Portugal, Canada, Norway, Italy, Iceland, France, Denmark and Belgium. The Alliance was later expanded to include Turkey and Greece in 1952, then West Germany in 1955 and Spain in 1982, bringing the total number of members to 16.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union and the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact in 1991, signaling the end of the Cold War, NATO offered its membership to former Communist Bloc countries. In 1999, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland, joined NATO.

In 2002, during the Prague Summit, seven Baltic & East European states - Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Bulgaria and Romania - were invited to start talks in order to join the Alliance. Upon joining the Alliance, the states adopted programs to restructure their armed forces and adapt them to the standards of western military establishments in terms of doctrine, training and equipment. The new members pledged to achieve certain political objectives, resolve their territorial disputes and pursue true democratic reforms.

The founding members of NATO pledged not to deploy any conventional or nuclear forces against the territories of the new members of the Alliance. In May 2004, NATO

summit approved the membership of the new members, who increased the total membership of NATO to 26 members. Thus, NATO became the strategic arm of the United States, serving its military, political and security interests all over the globe.

### *The Organizational Structure of NATO and how it Operates*

The political and military headquarters of NATO are located in Brussels, the capital of Belgium. The operational military headquarters, Allied Command Operation (or SHAPE), are located in Casteau, forty five minutes drive from Brussels. The highest decision making body is the North Atlantic Council (NAC). It meets weekly at the level of Ambassadors (Permanent Representatives) and periodically at the level of Heads of State and Government, Foreign Ministers and Defense Ministers. The political decision making operates through multiple committees composed of diplomats and military officers, supporting in Brussels the NAC. The Secretary General of NATO is also the chairman of the North Atlantic Council and is appointed by the member countries of NATO for a four-year term. He would usually be a prominent political figure of one of the member countries and would preside over all the meetings held by the North Atlantic Council and when he cannot they are presided by the Deputy Secretary General. He would also manage the daily activities of the Alliance and, in order to do so, he is assisted by six Assistant Secretary Generals. The highest military body is the Military Committee composed of representatives of the Chiefs of Defense of the NATO member countries. This technical military body is subordinated to the North Atlantic Council, which is a political body.

Each of the 26 member states is represented by a diplomatic delegation or mission at NATO's headquarters in Brussels, Belgium. The senior member of each delegation is known as the Permanent Representative, who is generally an experienced ambassador. The Permanent Representatives form the North Atlantic Council, which takes decisions by consensus. There is no voting or decision by majority. This is an important factor that contributed to the success of the North Atlantic Council. The Council would usually hold intensive consultations and lengthy discussions before reaching a final decision on any issue. This is a slow process and takes a long time; the final decision, however, would be conclusive and have the support of all parties. This arrangement respects the complete sovereignty and independent views of member states<sup>2</sup>.

NATO has no full-fledged armed forces or independent military units of its own. The military units remain under the command of their respective nations until the North Atlantic Council agrees an Operational Plan and, through the Military Committee, instructs the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR, Commander of the Allied Command Operations) to generate the forces for deployment in an operation.

Based on the approved operational plan, each of the concerned states is to deploy its component force and put it under the Supreme Allied or the respective theatre commander, as may be agreed upon. Thus, the organizational, training, command and control of such forces would shift from their own commands in their homelands to NATO's

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2 - See website: [www.nato.int](http://www.nato.int).

Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE), under the political oversight of the North Atlantic Council.

### *Annual Budget of the Alliance*

Appendix 1 contains the figures showing NATO's military expenditure on personnel and equipment during the period between 1994 and 2003<sup>3</sup>. There is no common military budget for the military formations working under NATO. The concerned member state is to cover the financial cost of its component force out of its defense budget. With respect to the common expenditures, the member states agreed on three major items<sup>4</sup> :

1. Sustaining the civil structures of the Alliance headquarters in Brussels and paying the salaries of its staff through a civil budget of \$161 million that has been in place since 1955.
2. Sustaining the integrated military commands of the Alliance and their activities, including the Supreme Allied Command of Europe (SACEUR), and the control and early warning systems. This amounts to about \$496 million annually and has been in place since 1966.
3. Sustaining the provision of Petrol, Oil and Lubricants (POL) for various units during deployment in theatres of war, armed conflicts and crisis areas. This is to be done through the infrastructure budget, known as NATO's

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3 - The annual book on "Arms, Disarmament and International Peace" 2004, Stockholm Institute for Peace Research & International Peace, pp 550-5.

4 - see website: [www.cbo.gov](http://www.cbo.gov).

Security Investment Program. It covers the expenses of the means of support such as command, control, communications, intelligence, transport and stores. Unlike the previous two budgets, this one is changing and under continuous reviewing. In 1999, it reached about US\$ 485 million.

The general expenses of the alliance, a by-product of the above items reached about US\$1142 million, of which the share of the United States was 25.2 percent, Britain 15.5 percent, Germany 19.6 percent and France 7.9 percent. The latter which does not participate in NATO's integrated military command, opts out of many activities funded through common budgets and deals with each case separately. When France does not participate, other countries pay a prorated larger share of the military and the NATO Security Investment Program. France's share is about 68 percent while the remaining members pay around one third of the common budget.

It is expected that the new enlargement of NATO, ratified in 2004, would cost about US\$1.5 billion during the next decade. It would cover the required improvements in ground-based and space-based digital communications, air defense systems, including ground-based radars and communication networks between various air defense commands, expansion of airports, air bases and sea ports in order to be capable of serving NATO forces, which could be passing through such countries. In addition, there is a need for providing ground, sea and air training fields to facilitate the training of the NATO forces.

## **NATO's Role inside Europe and Beyond**

It is worth mentioning that there are 19 NATO members who are also members of the European Union. They include: Belgium, Denmark, France, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Britain, Greece, Germany, Spain, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia and Slovenia.

### *The Cold War Period*

NATO's role was quite central for west European nations closest to the United States. This situation remained until the disappearance of the Soviet threat that posed a danger for the Europeans between 1949 and 1989. Under the leading role of the United States, NATO was able to achieve the following:

- a. Secure the comprehensive defense of Western Europe and repel Soviet hegemonic ambitions to spread communism through the use of the military might of the Warsaw Pact against Western Europe.
- b. Total defeat of communism after the collapse of Soviet Union and Eastern European economies. The Soviet Union was no longer able to carry on its arms race program and compete with the United States, which proved its superiority by pursuing massive high-tech programs such as the "Star Wars" program introduced by President Reagan in the 1980s.

Nevertheless, there were no armed confrontations between NATO and the Warsaw Pact all through the cold war era. NATO's major military activities were confined to training programs and military maneuvers to enhance combat

readiness and repel any conventional or nuclear missile attack by the Soviet Union against Western Europe, the United States and other allies. That combat readiness covered all strategic, tactical, operational, and logistics levels aimed at enhancing the capabilities of land, sea, air and space forces.

Despite all the wars and armed conflicts that occurred between the two blocs in various spheres of influence around the world and in spite of the support given by the two superpowers to their allies, rivalries did not push the two towards direct confrontation. Therefore, we can describe the wars and armed conflicts that broke out after the Second World War and until the collapse of the Soviet Union as “proxy wars.” The military activities of NATO and the Warsaw Pact remained limited to developing concepts of various military scenarios, training maneuvers and arms races.

### *NATO’s mission after the end of the Cold War*

The United States and Western Europe adopted new attitudes, chief among which was the reunification of Germany and the expansion of NATO to include new members from East European countries, some of which became members of the European Union.

However, after losing its historical role of defending its member states against the potential communist threat, the Alliance sought to develop its defensive role and reorganized its military structures on the basis of political and security developments that occurred in the Balkans and some East European countries. This was a precautionary measure against any dramatic spill-over of such conflicts that came to endanger Euro-Atlantic security. As a result of the multilateral talks with the former members of the Warsaw Pact and the

Soviet republics, the idea of forming a North Atlantic Cooperation Council came into being. Within the framework of the “Partnership for Peace,” the Euro-Atlantic Council was born. The Alliance began to restructure its forces on the basis of the security and peace requirements of this new partnership in order to fulfill the following missions:

- a. Crisis management and conflict resolution;
- b. Peace-keeping and the maintenance of security and order;
- c. The support of security by cooperation with the new partners.

Based on a UN Security Council resolution, NATO forces during mid-1990s were deployed in the Balkans region, mainly in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, then in Serbia and Kosovo. After the signing of the Dayton Agreement in the US in 1995, NATO brought the war in Bosnia to an end. For the first time in its history, the Alliance formed a “multinational force” based on a mandate from the United Nations to implement the military provisions of the peace agreement in Bosnia. The International Force performed the following campaign:

- Military intervention in Bosnia in 1995 and deployment of peace-keeping forces therein.
- In 1999, NATO carried its first massive military engagement in the Kosovo war, where it waged a 12-week bombing campaign against what was then the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia aimed at preventing the ethnic cleansing of Albanians. That was the first operation in which military force was used against an independent state without a clear mandate from the United Nations.

NATO was a subject of bitter criticism from those who objected to the huge number of civilian casualties resulting from the campaign.

- Decommissioning of weapons in the Republic of Macedonia in 2001.

On February 12, 2000, an agreement was signed in Bucharest, Romania to boost security and stability in Southeastern Europe. NATO started a set of initiatives to meet the new challenges. They included the following important ones:

- The Defense Capabilities Initiative (DCI), which was introduced to ensure that the allies improve their military capabilities through:
  - Improving the combat readiness and mobility of field units and their means of transport;
  - Operation of Command and Control Systems of these forces.
- The European Security and Defense Identity (ESDI), which aims to provide for military contributions under the umbrella of the European Union and in coordination with NATO headquarters in future contingencies. The aim is to achieve the required balance in the relationship between the two sides of the Atlantic in order to meet the new requirements of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
- Establishment of the Weapons of Mass Destruction Centre to prevent potential terrorist threats and proliferation of these weapons.

## *NATO and Russia: a “Partnership for Peace”*

NATO strove to build goodwill relations with former Warsaw Pact countries, including Russia. Due to Russia’s fears of the close proximity of NATO forces to its borders (stationed at about 400 kilometers from its borders) and following NATO’s expansion towards Eastern Europe that led to the admission of former Soviet allies – such as the Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary – the Alliance reached out to Russia and other non-member countries through its 1994 “Partnership for Peace” program. This initiative sought to achieve three main objectives:

- Exchange of information between the two sides in relation to defense matters at all levels;
- Joint military exercises and maneuvers;
- Coordinated peacekeeping missions.

Nevertheless, Russia had its own doubts of NATO’s real intentions. In order to allay these concerns and build confidence, a joint partnership council between NATO and Russia was formed in mid-1997 to give Russia “a consultative role to discuss issues of mutual interest.” Many analysts, however, say that Russia’s views have not been given due consideration at appropriate levels within NATO, which is mainly led by Washington.

## *NATO’s Contribution to Counter-Terrorism and Non-Proliferation of WMDs*

After the events of September 11, 2001, the US adopted a new global strategy pursued under the slogan of the “War on

Terror.” NATO’s role then also became closely associated with the campaign against terrorism. NATO participated in the naval operations against terrorism: in operation “Active Endeavour,” elements of NATO’s standing Naval Forces were sent to patrol the eastern Mediterranean and monitor shipping. Russia sympathized with the US in its war against terrorism, driven by its own fears of suicide attacks by Chechen rebels. The two sides, Russia and NATO, formed the NATO-Russia Council in mid 2002.

Russia came to have a role equivalent to that of NATO in the formulation of policies of combating terrorism and other security threats, including the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. This was a new role for NATO, which came to adapt itself for military operations outside Europe for the first time in its long history. NATO’s forces were then sent to Afghanistan in the wake of the US-led war against the Taliban regime and al-Qaeda in 2002. There are other ideas about the potential role of NATO in Iraq, the Gulf region and the Broader Middle East region, but these have yet to materialize<sup>5</sup>.

### *NATO’s Role in Afghanistan*

At NATO’s Prague Summit in 2002, heads of state and government of NATO member countries adopted a package of measures based on the request by Germany and the Netherlands, to assist the Alliance and provide the necessary

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5 - Speech (paper) delivered by H.E Abdul Rahman Bin Hamad Al-Attiyah, GCC Secretary General to the international conference on "NATO's Transformation and Gulf Security" held in Doha on 19-20 April 2004.

troops, logistic and communications support for the UN-mandated International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan. This multinational force comprises 6,500 personnel from 26 countries, including nine nations from the Euro-Atlantic Council and two other non-NATO members.

The importance of ISAF is that it demonstrates NATO's capability to lead large-scale operations with multinational forces. In August 2003, NATO took over command of ISAF and has since been responsible for its coordination and planning. This is NATO's first operation outside its traditional theatre of Euro-Atlantic area. The initial mission of NATO in Afghanistan was "to keep law and order in the Afghan capital, Kabul and around it, then moving to other areas in Afghanistan." There was an agreement on the formation of ad-hoc reconstruction teams to work in north western part of Afghanistan.

### **NATO's Objectives in Afghanistan**

The Secretary General of NATO, Jaab De Hoop Scheffer, summarized the Alliance's objectives in Afghanistan during his visit to NATO's forces in Kabul soon after assuming his new duties in 2003. They include the following:

1. Maintaining security and order in the country;
2. Assisting Afghan authorities to maintain order, implement the constitution and hold the general elections;
3. Improving the capabilities of Afghan police and armed forces;
4. Operating Kabul International airport and maintaining a group of air liaison officers;

5. Ensuring the implementation of the procedures of the protection force, improving the security environment and taking necessary precautions.

The most important decisions in relation to the NATO's role in Afghanistan were taken by the Istanbul Summit, which was held during the June 28-29 2004. They included the expansion of "ISAF" by new reinforcements to support reconstruction efforts and the general elections in Afghanistan.

### *Reflections on the Role of NATO in the Mediterranean*

Despite the decision taken by the Istanbul Summit in 2004 regarding the enhancement of the naval contribution of the Alliance in the Mediterranean through operation "Active Endeavour" - which is being pursued as part of the "War on Terrorism" - and NATO's initiative of the Mediterranean Dialogue, in addition to cooperation with the respective partners in the Broader Middle East region through "the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative," there is no clear military role for NATO in the security of the Mediterranean. Nor is there any basis for movement in that direction despite the numerous ideas and concepts suggested by both Western and Eastern European countries in relation to the security of this area. In fact, there are many complex problems that make it difficult for NATO to develop a clear role in this issue which involves many players with conflicting interest.

There are many differences between the countries of the Mediterranean region and it would be difficult for any single entity to absorb the political, military, economic and social requirements of this vital region. There are many conflicts in the area and the regional imbalance of power makes it all the

more difficult for the European Union or NATO to play a decisive role in the security of the Mediterranean in the short and middle range.

There are many challenges facing the security of the Mediterranean including the Arab-Israeli conflict, the Turkish-Greek dispute on Cyprus and the challenges to the Euro-Arab relations. The differences between the European and American concerns with respect to the security of the Mediterranean and even the differences in European views towards this latter thorny issue and multiplicity of the players and complexity of their views make it difficult to develop a clear concept and find appropriate solutions.

When the issue of NATO's role in the Mediterranean security was discussed during the meeting of NATO's foreign ministers in Athens in June 1993 and in Brussels in 1994, they stated that the stability and peace of the countries on the southern periphery of Europe are important for the security of the Alliance. However, there was no clear strategy proposed to achieve this aim.

On February 8, 1995, the North Atlantic Council initiated direct dialogue with the Mediterranean non-NATO member countries. The NATO spokesman stated that this was to achieve a better mutual understanding of the Alliance's aims and could lead to a perception of threat.

Egypt, Israel, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia initially engaged in a dialogue with NATO. In late 1995, this dialogue was extended to Jordan. NATO's Mediterranean initiative consists of bilateral political discussions on a biannual basis between NATO and each of the six countries cited above. The initiative also calls for participation by each of the six countries in activities in the field of information and science,

exchange of visits, training courses on matters of peacekeeping missions and the provision of technical assistance by the Alliance's civilian departments during contingencies.

In another meeting held in Rome in 1996, then-Deputy Secretary General of NATO Mr. Balazino stressed that the Alliance had no intention of getting involved or engaging in the efforts to resolve conflicts in the Mediterranean region, demilitarized zones or the provision of economic assistance<sup>6</sup>, as such matters will be left to the European Union. However, he stated that the allies will focus on other issues, including exchange of information, the war on terrorism and organized crime. The Mediterranean response to NATO's initiative was not solid, as there were many misconceptions and negative impressions about NATO in many of the countries of North Africa.

### **The Mediterranean Limitations on the Role of NATO**

There are many challenges that decrease confidence in and hamper the development of a clear and effective role for NATO in the stability and security of the Mediterranean and its impact on Asian, African and European players. The most important of these obstacles are:

- There is no common understanding of the potential role of NATO in the security of the Mediterranean, in addition to

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6 - Mohamed Al-Sayed Saleem, paper on "*The Euro-Mediterranean Partner ship in the 21st Century*", London, McMillan 2000, PP129-146.

the inability to develop a common description of such security and the challenges facing it.

- Not all the Mediterranean players have been engaged in the initial dialogue, including key players such as Syria and Libya.
- Most of the parties in the Southern Mediterranean area believe that the aim of any potential role of NATO would be the containment of possible missile threat from Arab countries against Israel, as the Alliance turns a blind eye to Israel's arsenal of nuclear weapons and its huge stock of conventional weapons.

Therefore, NATO initiatives for achieving the stability and security of the Mediterranean could have no practical outcome unless there is a real change in NATO's understands of the security requirements of the Mediterranean countries.

### *The NATO Response Force (NRF)*

The NATO Response Force (NRF) is the first coherent, multinational force package that is deployable, interoperable and sustainable. NATO's use of its NRF component is a major shift in its attitudes towards the use of forces outside Europe. In September 2002, the US Secretary for Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, put forward a proposal to create a NATO rapid reaction force. The force would reach full operational capability with about 21,000 troops and would be capable of rapid deployment in any place around the world within a period of one week to 30 days. It would include elite elements from US units with supporting elements and would thus form the spearhead in any military action in hostile and difficult environments. It had already reached its initial operational

capacity by the end of 2004 and should be able to reach its full operational capability by October 2006.<sup>7</sup>

It is hoped that this force would provide a new qualitative resource, as the Alliance headquarter would be able to assemble the NRF and deploy it quickly to wherever needed, especially in missions of counter terrorism and the non-proliferation of WMDs. It is quite probable that some elements of the NRF would be deployed in Iraq by early 2007 if the multinational forces continue to pull out of the country. This is expected to happen if there is some sort of agreement between certain European Union countries, such as France and Germany, regarding deploying NATO forces to Iraq in response to a request by an elected Iraqi government.

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7 - The annual book on "Armament, Disarmament and International Peace" 2004, SIPRI, p 153.

## **NATO and the Security of the Gulf Region**

The international and regional interests in the Gulf became all the more complex after the Islamic revolution in Iran in 1979, which overthrew the Shah regime, and were further complicated by the occupation of Iraq in 2003, which put an end to the regime of Saddam Hussein and the Ba'ath party after US-led coalition forces entered Baghdad on April 9, 2003.

In spite of those serious developments in the history of the region, there are still no real signs to the decline of the threats to the security of the Gulf region. Iran's controversial nuclear program is still a time bomb that may trigger a major conflict in the region at any time, despite the relentless efforts by European countries and Russia to resolve this issue.

It is worthwhile here to recall the events of the First Gulf War between Iraq and Iran, which continued for eight years, from 1980 to 1988. The war had negative effects on the Iraqi economy and was seen as being directly correlated to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990.

It is against that backdrop that the US developed its new defense strategy, which began with the second Gulf War in which the US led an international coalition to evict Iraqi forces from Kuwait and liberate it in 1991.

Later, a series of UN Security Council resolutions imposed a strict embargo on Iraq, including weapons and economic sanctions and a no-fly zone in the northern and southern parts of the country to protect the civilian population in Kurdish and Shi'a dominated regions. The UN introduced an "oil for food" program which continued until the 2003 war.

Here we should refer to the fact that NATO had no role in major military operations that were carried as a result of US and British planning. Arab, European and international efforts were very weak and the UN had only the marginal role in helping pass resolutions that brought more hardship and suffering for the Iraqi people.

Therefore, we should tackle the subject of NATO and Gulf Security within three main axes:

- The current environment in the Gulf as a major limitation to the Security of the Gulf;
- NATO's assets in the Gulf and their role (if any) in achieving the security of the Gulf;
- Current and potential limitations to the future role of NATO in the security of the Gulf.

### *The Environment in the Gulf and Limits to a Potential Role by NATO in its Security*

The current environment in the Gulf region has two main characteristics that would like hinder any role by NATO in the security of the Gulf:

#### **1. Comprehensive US Strategy and Intensive US military Presence**

There is no doubt that the US has long had a firm control over the strategic status of the Gulf region. Since the days of the October 1973 war between Egypt, Syria and Israel and the ensuing oil crisis, the Shah of Iran hegemonic ambitions in the Arab Gulf region and his occupation of the three UAE islands of Greater and Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa by military force,

the US started to consider the deployment of forces to protect the oil sources and navigation routes in the area. In so doing, it was seeking to guarantee the continuous flow of oil towards major industrial countries, including the US, Europe and Japan.

The Pentagon continued to train US expeditionary forces on specific combat and logistical operations for that purpose. Later, the focus of US forces shifted towards clearer combat operations that were designed to achieve the overall strategic objectives of the United States in securing its own vital interests and those of its allies in the region. The US did not want to assign this sensitive role of defending energy sources in the Gulf to NATO forces.

During the Cold War period, the US policy of containment of communism was to deny the Soviet Union any chance of establishing a foothold in the Gulf and seizing its huge energy resources. Washington did not form multinational forces out of the industrial nations which depend on the oil resources of this region, such as west European countries and Japan.

In the 1980s, the US military role in the Gulf started to grow gradually. The US started to train its marine troops and formed elite US marines expeditionary units to carry out various scenarios of rapid intervention to repel any possible foreign aggression against the Gulf region.

The literature of most US command and Staff colleges and war and defense academies mentioned that the main source of threat would be the Islamic Republic of Iran, which posed a new regional threat to the Arab Gulf countries. Iran made no secret of its intentions to export its revolutionary model to neighboring countries, including Arab Gulf States. At that

stage, all US contingency plans and scenarios were set to attack Iran using US military assets.

The US major military role in the Gulf became even deeper after the end of the Iraq-Iran war in 1988. Instead of targeting Iran, the US strategy shifted towards challenging the new threat that was coming from the North, i.e. Iraq. The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August 1990 gave the US the chance to implement its strategy; it completed a huge military build-up in the Gulf region, the Red Sea and the Mediterranean and deployed massive assets of land, sea and air formations, leading the UN-mandated international coalition to evict Iraqi forces out of Kuwait. No NATO or multinational forces, however, were involved for that purpose. At that stage, the US was able to draw on the support of individual GCC countries with which it signed separate defense and security agreement. Saudi Arabia was the only country in the region with which the US had no special security arrangement until that stage.

From a political point of view, Washington did not pursue any vital role to stop the first Gulf war between Iraq and Iran, nor did the US take any pre-emptive action to stop Iraq from invading Kuwait in 1990, and protect the security of the Gulf.

## **2. Challenges and Security Threats to the Gulf**

After the US-led war on Iraq in 2003, and as a result of the disbandment of the Iraqi army and the institutions of the Iraqi state, a huge security and administrative vacuum resulted in Iraq. This happened in spite of the presence of about 150,000 coalition troops as well as new Iraqi army and police troops.

With the transfer of authority to the Iraqis at the end of June 2004, it became clear that it was no longer possible to depend on the weak capabilities of the infantile Iraqi army

and police forces. The deterioration of the security situation constituted the main threat to the stability of the country and was a major cause of concern of the possible spill-over to neighboring countries, including GCC states. The situation was exacerbated by an upsurge in terrorist attacks in Saudi Arabia during 2004 and 2005, in addition to Yemen, Qatar and Kuwait in 2005.

Also, a state of regional military imbalance occurred; Iran and Turkey have one million troops while the new Iraqi army was still in the training and formation stage. The new Iraqi army has very limited arms and equipments, and its strategies assets have been reduced to nil.

When the international conference on “NATO Transformation and the Security of the Gulf” was held in Doha on April 19-20, 2004, there were various views on the future role of NATO in the Gulf. These views could be summarized as follows:

**The State of Qatar view:** This was presented by Sheikh Tameem Bin Hamad Al-Thani, the Crown Prince (and Heir Apparent) and Sheikh Hamad Bin Jassim Bin Jaber Al-Thani, the Foreign Minister, who both stressed the important role of GCC states in tackling the internal threats and challenges by way of indigenous GCC arrangements and changes from within, including the following:

1. The necessity to carry out internal political, economic and social reforms to meet the challenges at the domestic level;
2. Enhance popular participation in the political process and bridge the gap between the ruling elite and the citizens of these countries;

3. Launch the establishment of constitutional institutions on the basis of democratic practices. This is the main method of defusing the current state of political congestion in GCC societies;
4. Look for ways and means of further cooperation and integration between GCC military establishments to defend the region and maintain its security. These should be based on a comprehensive defense strategy and appropriate military resources to maintain the security of GCC countries.

**The GCC point of view:** This was introduced by Abdul Rahman Bin Hamad al-Attiyah, the GCC Secretary-General. He described the basic tenets of Gulf security which he summarized into three major dimensions: the internal dimension of GCC countries, the regional dimension of the situation in Iraq and the international dimension of the US vision for the security of the Gulf region.

1. *The internal dimension:* The most important challenge facing the GCC states is their lack of the desire to enhance military capabilities due to shortages of manpower, huge defense costs, and scarcity of water and food resources, terrorism and internal extremism.
2. *The regional dimension:* The major effort of maintaining security and stability in the Gulf depends on the reconstruction of a new sovereign and stable Iraq, giving the Iraqi people the chance to elect their own government and have full control of their national wealth. Yet, the fall of the former Iraqi regime did not lift all the fears of GCC countries; they still have many concerns in relation to the new political system in Iraq and its impact on neighboring countries.

3. *The international dimension:* The US's vision for the security of the region in the foreseeable future is not clear. The events of September 11, 2001 cast dark shadows on the Gulf-US security partnership and created lack of confidence in the relationship. Nevertheless, the nature of this relationship and the magnitude of strategic interests require a joint vision to solve contentious issues and lay the ground for a stable environment in the region.

**The American view:** Dr. Anthony Cordesman of the Washington-based Center for International and Strategic Studies classified the threats facing the Gulf region after the fall of the former Iraqi regime into four main types of threat; they are mainly domestic, regional and other marginal ones.

1. *Iran:* The Islamic Republic of Iran is seen as a source of threat because of the sheer size of its armed forces which number at 520,000 troops in the active service and 300,000 in reserve. It also has a vigorous nuclear program; it acquired nuclear designs advanced technology from China that would save the time spent in developing any nuclear tests, though it denies to have done so, in addition to its development of long-range missiles and chemical and biological programs. Iran is indeed the only source of threat to commercial navigation in the Gulf of Oman.
2. *Islamic Extremism and Terrorism:* All Gulf States are affected by this threat to a certain level. The Iraq War angered the Arab world and created new groups of other extremists and a new wave of terrorist attacks. Widespread violence is crippling Iraq and terrorist cells are operating in Gulf countries; Yemen is also facing serious threats to its national security. These threats are interacting with other sources of tension in the area which include:

- a. The Palestinian-Israeli conflict;
  - b. The difficulties faced in building the new Iraqi state;
  - c. The behavior of the US and Western Europe towards Islam, the Arab world, and the immigrant Arab communities after the events of 9-11.
3. *Domestic threats*: This includes population explosion, problems of education, employment, increase in the number of young people and water shortages. In addition to that, there are the pressures due to lack of reform and political, cultural, social and ideological stability, as well as problems of minorities, tribal, class and educational inequalities. This is in addition to a long history of Arab failure in the fields of Arab nationalism and socialism, dictatorships, patriarchal hegemony and the absence of real democracy.
4. *Other Sources of Threat*:
- a. Heightened tension as a result of the Palestinian – Israeli conflict;
  - b. The expectation that Israel might carry out a preemptive military strike against Iranian nuclear facilities;
  - c. Growth of violent extremism in Yemen and cross-border threats to Oman and Saudi Arabia;
  - d. The probability of the outbreak of a major conflict or miscalculation as a result of the current tension between the UAE and Iran over the latter's

occupation of the three islands of Abu Musa, Greater and Lesser Tunbs;

- e. Emergence of a radical force that could control Iraq, and the outbreak of an all-out civil war involving countries such as Iran, neighboring Arab States and Turkey;
- f. Tackling the security challenges and threats in Iraq.

James Thomson summarized the views presented during the conference held by RAND on “NATO’s Transformation and Gulf Security,” in Doha on April 19-20 2004. In relation to the future of Iraq, the conference recommended certain measures to remove part of the threats, including the following:

1. The importance of formation of an effective government in Iraq, consolidation of peace and stability, transfer of full political power to the Iraqis and the establishment of a strong, modern state.
2. The Iraqi government should be able to deliver and provide security, health care and educational services to its people. This would build peoples confidence in the government and its ability to achieve their aspirations.
3. It is quite possible to achieve a quick and swift victory over the insurgents in Iraq. This would need an overall political strategy to reduce the potential impact of insurgency and its future fall-outs.

## *The Relationship between NATO, Iraq and the GCC states*

### **NATO and Iraq**

The initial relationship between NATO and Iraq started on June 2, 2003, when the NATO Council approved a request by the Representative of Poland that assumed the command of the Multinational Division operating in Middle and South Iraq as part of the international stabilization force. The division was formed by NATO and other allies. The Polish representative asked that NATO provide intelligence and logistical support and assist in troops movement and coordination of force generation and provide communications support<sup>8</sup>.

Thereafter, the relationship between Iraq and NATO developed in a radial way towards achieving some tangible results on ground. The most important of these achievements are the following:

#### a. Training Mission <sup>9</sup>:

The Istanbul Summit of NATO's heads of state and government, which was held in June 2004, made the important decision of offering assistance to the Government of Iraq with the training of its security forces. The training mission was established on July 30, 2004 in response to a

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8 - See website: [www.nato.int](http://www.nato.int) , press release on 3 September 2003.

9 - See "*NATO's Assistance to Iraq: How this policy develops*" on 22 February 2005, see: [www.nato.int](http://www.nato.int)"

request by the provisional Iraqi Prime Minister, Iyad Allawi, whose representative met with the Secretary-General of NATO Jaap de Hoop Scheffer on June 22, 2004. The Summit urged NATO members to contribute to the training of the “new Iraqi army.” A senior US officer, General David Peter Oz was appointed as head of the training mission in addition to his original position as commander of multinational forces in Iraq<sup>10</sup>. The Secretary-General of NATO inaugurated the premises of NATO offices inside the Green Zone in Baghdad on December 1, 2004.

b. Objectives of the training mission:

The objectives of NATO training mission in Iraq included training and mentoring of mid- and senior-level personnel from the Iraqi Security forces in and outside of Iraq at NATO schools and training centers. Since August 2004, the first elements of the NATO Training Implementation Mission, consisting of about 50 officers, has been working on the ground in Baghdad to train and mentor senior-level personnel from the Iraqi Security forces.

c. Expansion of training assistance

The next stage of expansion started on September 22, 2004. On the basis of recommendations by the NATO Training Implementation mission in Baghdad, the NATO Council approved this expansion, which led to further increase of committed troops. NATO will help in establishing an Iraqi

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10 - Article on 6 February 2005, "Danish Major-General Roukas replaces Dutch Major-General Hylder Ink as NATO Commander in Iraq", see website: [www.afsouth.nato.int](http://www.afsouth.nato.int)

Training, Education and Doctrine Centre in 2005 to provide leadership and management training for the middle and senior level of the Iraqi forces. NATO officers prepared detailed operational concepts to assist the instructors. These manuals included “principles of armed engagement to protect own forces” against enemy fire in Iraq. After the Summit meeting of NATO Heads of State and Government at the Alliance Headquarters in Brussels on February 22, 2005, NATO’s training mission will consist of 300 troops and will be fully funded. These troops will train senior and middle ranking Iraqi officers on leadership and administration skills. The mission’s name has been changed to “NATO Training Mission in Baghdad.” After the Summit meeting of NATO Heads of State and Government in Brussels in February 2005, the training mission was upped to 360 personnel. It aims to train about 1,000 Iraqi officers in the country and about 500 outside of Iraq per year<sup>11</sup>. The next stage of expansion, which would lead to a further increase in personnel, will be NATO’s help in establishing an Iraqi Training, Education and Doctrine Centre near Baghdad in 2005. This centre, in coordination with the Iraqi Ministry of Defense, will reopen the command and staff college, prepare the course syllabi and provide the instructors - in addition to the final plans - to establish an advanced war college<sup>12</sup>. Also, there is the task of collection of small arms and the provision of ammunitions to Iraqi Security

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11 - Article on "NATO's Assistance to Iraq, what does mean in implementation terms", 22 February 2005, see website [www.nato.int](http://www.nato.int).

12 - Press report on 10 February 2005, see website: [www.afsouth.nato.int](http://www.afsouth.nato.int).

forces and army troops by NATO member such as Denmark and Romania<sup>13</sup>.

The US concern for NATO's training role in Iraq was reaffirmed by the US Department of State that said that US Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice will discuss the contributions by NATO to train Iraqi troops during the April 2005 meeting of the Foreign Ministers of NATO in Lithuania. Tom Casey, the spokesman for the US Department of State said that "NATO made important commitments to train Iraqi forces."<sup>14</sup>

### **NATO and the GCC states**

Despite the unique political and economic bilateral relations between NATO members and GCC states, they remained to be quite nominal even during the past few years, which saw many military and security problems. There were no serious contacts to find appropriate solutions to the security problems by either NATO or the GCC general secretariat. However, NATO started to seek effective defense relations with Iraq and GCC states under constant US guidance.

One of the events that signify the beginning of a new phase of development in NATO – GCC relations, was the organization of a "Conference on NATO's Transformation and Gulf Security" in Doha, Qatar, 2004. Then the Istanbul Summit was held in Turkey in June 2004 and the NATO Public Diplomacy Division conference on: "NATO and the

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13 - Article by US Army Major Cynthia Teramae on 26 January 2005, see website: [www.afsouth.nato.int](http://www.afsouth.nato.int).

14 - Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), on 15 April 2005.

Broader Middle East Region” in Rome in March 2005. This is in addition to exchange of visits and discussions between key players in the region. Three GCC states, Qatar, Bahrain, and Kuwait, attended the Doha Rand Conference. Sheikh Salman bin Hamad Al-Khalifa<sup>15</sup> spoke about the security challenges and issues facing the Gulf and the Greater Middle East in the wake of the events of 9/11. The Doha Conference also brought together leading policymakers, security experts and academics from the United States, Europe, the Middle East and the Gulf region, and NATO<sup>16</sup>. The Secretary-General of NATO received a message from Sheikh Hamed bin Jassem bin Jaber Al-Thani, the Foreign Minister of Qatar, on the possible areas of cooperation between Qatar and NATO<sup>17</sup>.

### **The Mediterranean Dialogue**

Following the conference on NATO and the broader Middle East region in Rome, March 2005, NATO received the high level delegations of three individual members of the GCC, Bahrain, Qatar and Kuwait. This was held as part of a new initiative towards the broader Middle East region which is called the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative reaching out to countries in the broader Middle East, starting with individual members of the GCC. NATO also has a 10 year initiative called the “Mediterranean Dialogue” including Arab countries such as Egypt, Israel, Mauritania, Morocco Tunisia and

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15 - Abdalla Bishara, (ex-GCC Secretary General) an Arabic article in Al-Bayan daily newspaper of Dubai, 26 April 2005, titled (*majlis Al-Taawun ...Hewarat Ammia maa al NATO*) translated as "The GCC Security Dialogues with NATO".

16 - Al -Ayyam daily newspaper of Bahrain, 19 March 2005.

17 - Qatar News Agency (QNA), 15 February 2005.

Jordan plus Israel. The two initiatives have some common topics.

- a. Creating and maintaining peace and stability in the Mediterranean and in the broader Middle East region;
- b. Enhancing military capabilities and experiences of the concerned countries by training military and security personnel and holding training courses under the supervision and contributions by NATO military commanders;
- c. Exchanging information on matters pertaining to the security of the Gulf region and the Mediterranean;
- d. Developing a framework for cooperation between each state and the Alliance in order to involve bilaterally countries in the broader Middle East region and individually the GCC states in international crisis management and peace keeping operations.

### **Bilateral Visits and Contacts**

a. Kuwait:

On November 19, 2004, the Director of the Kuwaiti National Security Agency Sheikh Sabah Khalid al Sabah and his accompanying delegation met with a number of senior EU and NATO officials in Brussels. The two sides discussed means of enhancing cooperation, especially in the security field. The delegation attended a special symposium on security affairs at NATO headquarters and were briefed on how NATO members deal with crises, issues of weapons of

mass destruction (WMDs) and combating international terrorism<sup>18</sup>.

Sheikh Sabah and his delegation met with the European Union's counter-terrorism coordinator, Mr. Gÿs de Vries and the Deputy Secretary General of NATO, Ambassador Minuto Rizzo. They discussed means of enhancing relations between Kuwait, the EU and NATO. Sheikh Sabah also met with NATO's Secretary-General, Mr. Jaap de Hoop Scheffer and discussed ways and means of developing cooperation between the Alliance and the State of Kuwait<sup>19</sup>.

In the beginning of April 2005, a NATO delegation visited Kuwait to discuss cooperation between the two sides in areas of technical assistance in relation to defense expenditure and budgets, defense planning, military and civil relations and development of bilateral military relations, in addition to efforts of fighting terrorism, exchange of information and non proliferation of WMDs<sup>20</sup>.

The Chief of Staff of the Kuwait Armed Forces Lieutenant-General Fahad Ahmed Al-Ameer met with Mr. Patrick Hardouin, the Assistant Secretary-General of NATO for political affairs on April 13, 2005 during the latter's visit to Kuwait<sup>21</sup>. The two sides discussed areas of cooperation, especially the exchange of ideas through joint symposia and military exercises.

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18 - Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), on 19 November 2004.

19 - Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), on 20 November 2004.

20 - Al Raáy Al-aám of Kuwait, 8 April 2005.

21 - Al-Qabas daily of Kuwait, 14 April 2005.

b. Qatar:

A delegation of NATO military experts visited Qatar at the end of May 2005 to discuss future cooperation at the regional and international levels. This visit was part of the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative which Qatar joined in order to enhance cooperation with the GCC states and maintain peace and stability of the region<sup>22</sup>.

c. Sultanate of Oman:

Oman did not express a clear view towards establishing closer relations with NATO. Yet, the deputy Secretary General of NATO, Ambassador Minuto Rizzo visited the country in mid-December 2004 and discussed a number of regional and international issues with Omani officials<sup>23</sup>.

d. United Arab Emirates:

a delegation from the parliamentary assembly of NATO visited Abu Dhabi in 18 June 2005 to seek opportunities of establishing a partnership between NATO and UAE. The delegation met HH the First Lt. General Sheikh Mohamed Bin Zayed Al- Nahyan, Abu Dhabi Heir Apparent and Deputy Supreme Commander of Armed Forces .The delegation then met HH Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al-Nahyan Minister of Information and Culture.

Staff Lt. General Hamad Mohamed Al- Rumaithi, Armed Forces Chief of General Staff, and Ambassador Abdulla

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22 - Al Sharq daily of Qatar, 14 April 2005.

23 - Oman News Agency, 16 December 2004.

Rashid Al-Nuiemi, Under Secretary of Foreign Ministry, attended the meeting. Means of enhancing cooperation between NATO Countries, Middle East nations and a number of issues of concern to the region were discussed<sup>24</sup> .

Mr. Pierre Loellouche NATO Parliamentary assembly Spokesman and Head of the Delegation said that UAE government has officially requested joining the Istanbul Initiative in a letter addressed to NATO General Secretary recently<sup>25</sup> . NATO declared that UAE has officially joined the Istanbul Initiative for Cooperation with effect from 22 June 2005<sup>26</sup> .

### *Ideas about NATO's Potential Role in the Gulf*

Many political and academic circles have taken great interest in the issue of NATO's potential role in the Gulf. In this context, the international conference on "NATO Transformation and Gulf Security"<sup>27</sup> was held in Doha on April 19-20, 2004. The conference was sponsored by the Qatar Ministry of Foreign Affairs in coordination with RAND and brought together over 80 leading policymakers and security experts from 24 countries in the Arab world and the west. The conference was meant to discuss "the geopolitical transformation of NATO and its impact on Gulf Security." Various topics were discussed, including the domestic and external challenges to the Security of the Gulf and NATO's

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24 - Emirates News Agency (WAM) : 19 June 2005

25 - AFP: 19 June 2005

26 - www.nato.int : press release 28 June 2005

27 - Aaraa journal, Gulf Research Center, First Edition, May/June 2004, p 100.

potential role in the Gulf and the Greater Middle East. The conference also discussed Iraq's future and Gulf security.

There were various views on the role that NATO could play in enhancing security in the Gulf and Greater Middle East. They could be summarized as follows:

### **The State of Qatar's Views**

Qatar's view could be summarized as follows:

1. NATO and the Gulf States could reach common views on protecting the region from constant and potential dangers. The two sides can work to achieve peace, security and stability of the region that could be of mutual benefit;
2. Considerable attention must be paid to constructive dialogue that is based on reality, in order to achieve tangible results in the future;
3. Cooperation with NATO is crucial, especially after its transformation in terms of its objectives and tasks following the end of the Cold War as well as the experiences accumulated by NATO over time;
4. Constructive dialogue that is based on reality as well as the principle of mutual respect, away from the logic of hegemony and imposition, with all effective elements in international relations, is the only way to reach common views to protect the region from constant and potential dangers in addition to the means and mechanisms of such protection.

## **NATO's Views**

This was presented by Gunther Altenburg, NATO's Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs and Security Policy. He focused on the need for continuous consultation and coordination in areas of peacekeeping, security and defense. He spoke of the need for reform and fighting terrorism through military and legal measures, in addition to non-proliferations of weapons of mass destruction. He emphasized the following:

1. The necessity to exchange ideas in relation to the political and security situation in the Gulf region, though it is still quite early to judge the role of NATO in the region after the recent transformation of the Alliance itself.
2. Military requirements include the Gulf region's need for security, defense, defense reform, counter terrorism and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. There is a need for joint cooperation between NATO and the Russians in military issues such as non-proliferation and international peacekeeping operations.
3. NATO's support to Poland, when it assumed command of the Multinational Division in middle and South Iraq, by way of providing intelligence logistics and communication, was an important experience despite the absence of any official role for NATO in Iraq. However, the deployment of NATO troops in Iraq should come in response to a request by an elected Iraqi national government and on the basis of a UN Security Council mandate.
4. At the regional level of the Greater Middle East and the Mediterranean, NATO is not directly concerned with the

Palestine-Israeli issue, although it has been discussed as a major component of this initiative. This problem needs a wider solution involving all the concerned parties which have been, and are still, working on this matter for many years. This is a deep-rooted problem and NATO is not a driving force in the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians.

5. There are continuous discussions about Iraq between NATO and Russia through the NATO-Russia Council. The aim is to decide whether NATO could have a future role in Iraq.

### **Gulf Research Center View**

The Chairman of the Dubai-based, Gulf Research Centre, Abdulaziz Bin Othman Bin Sager presented the Center's view about the possible future role of NATO in Gulf Security and gave some recommendations about this relationship<sup>28</sup>.

#### 1. Concepts:

- a. There is a need for consensus on the reasons and factors of security threats to the Gulf region;
- b. Possible and alternative solutions should be comprehensive in light of the domestic, regional and international complications posed by various parties and players who have conflicting interests in the Gulf region;

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28 - Al-Sharq Al-Awsat daily newspaper, 29 April 2004.

- c. Due consideration should be given to the possibility of implementation by all the parties concerned with managing the security of the Gulf region.

## 2. Roles:

- a. NATO does not need a formal defense treaty as there is no real need for it;
- b. The US does not need a regional security structure to maintain its military presence. US protection would not lead to more stable security arrangements;<sup>29</sup>
- c. GCC countries do not need formal arrangements to determine their own interests;
- d. Experience has shown that NATO is a multi-polar alliance; it could be enlarged and would be ready to enter into a partnership for peace and can adopt a more balanced European engagement in Gulf security.

## 3. Limitations and Constraints:

- a. Bilateral agreements are based on specific threats and ad-hoc arrangements come in response to temporary expediencies;
- b. The peoples and elites of the Gulf region would not welcome a formal role by NATO in the region. They consider such a role as further perpetuation of US hegemony over the region;

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29 - Al-Khaleej daily newspaper, 23 April 2004.

- c. Iran does not accept this role by NATO, especially as it has been excluded from the regional security arrangement until now. Iran could employ certain measures to block any possible cooperation with NATO if US-Iranian relations remained strained.

#### 4. Recommendations:

- a. There should be a list of priorities in terms of the bases and frameworks of cooperation, in order to allow for interaction with other non-NATO regional players;
- b. Focus is required on multiple activities in areas of specialized training of civilian sectors, cooperation in emergencies, natural disasters, intelligence coordination and execution of joint security operations. Also, there is the need to train GCC armed forces on all the security and defense tasks, exchange of information, analysis of regional developments and creation of effective institutional links between various security agencies in the region;
- c. Provision of military cover to US military presence, NATO's role and governments in the region. This US cover should convince the reluctant people of the region to accept the new trends and approaches;
- d. There should be some sort of a solution to the long-standing view that Washington is seeking to achieve its own interests and maintain its role irrespective of joint or mutual interests;
- e. There is an urgent need for solving all regional conflicts and sources of threats to Gulf security,

whether in Iraq, Iran or even within GCC countries themselves.

## *Current and Potential limitations to NATO's Role in Gulf Security*

### **Current Limitations**

1. Differences between the US and European countries (Germany and France) which forced these countries to avoid participation in the coalition forces and the multinational forces in Iraq. These differences could further hamper any role by NATO in Iraq and the Gulf region. However, the rapprochement in US-French relations in the wake of the recent developments in Lebanon (Syrian withdrawal of forces from Lebanon) may lay a better foundation for cooperation between the two sides through the forum of NATO. This may reduce the limitations faced by the Alliance in Iraq and the Gulf region;
2. There are military problems that are related to the absence of independent military forces in NATO. Usually, these forces are formed on the basis of contributions by member countries in what is called a "coalition of the willing." There are certain financial problems that could make it difficult for some countries to participate in an effective manner.

### **Potential Constraints**

1. Kurdish rejection of the involvement of NATO forces in Iraq is quite possible if such forces contain units from Turkey;

2. The people of Iraq may not support the idea of replacing one foreign military presence by another. If this happens, it could intensify the activities of the insurgency and lead to further instability.

### **The Impact of NATO-GCC Relations on other GCC states**

Individual relations between NATO, Kuwait, Bahrain, UAE and Qatar might have caused unease in other GCC states. However, that state of uneasiness might not exacerbate to the level of negative effects on bilateral relations of GCC states or the NATO-GCC relations in general.

There are vested interests for both sides that color the potential role of NATO in the Gulf region and the Greater Middle East. This role has the support of the US and is related to such matters as counter-terrorism, the prevention of terrorists from using WMDs and defending maritime routes and sea ports against any security breaches that could target US, European and other allies.

## Conclusion

NATO is no longer a defense pact whose role is limited to the geographical region in which the Alliance was formed. It is undergoing a process of enlargement towards Asia, after completing its expansion towards the Baltic Sea, and East Europe.

After the US-led war on the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, and the war on Iraq and international terrorism, it could be said that NATO has become a sort of global security organization. It could use the Greater Middle East as its operational launching platform in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The idea to involve NATO forces in the Gulf region could be acceptable in theory, but it is not feasible or possible under current circumstances. The Alliance needs to restructure its strategy towards the Gulf and the Middle East and should avoid old-fashioned Cold War designs that were used against the Soviet Union and Communist regimes.

The current dialogue with the Mediterranean countries could pave the grounds for further cooperation in the fields of maritime security, control of weapons trafficking<sup>30</sup> and counter-terrorism efforts. GCC naval forces are coordinating with other naval fleets in the Gulf and Arabian Sea. NATO's role in the Gulf started with Iraq, but it could expand to other countries, through the two main areas of training and counter terrorism.

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30 - Al-Watan daily newspaper of Saudi Arabia, 30 March 2005.

**Table 10 – B – 1**

**NATO Military Expenditure on Personnel and Equipment (1994 – 2003)**

Figures in US \$ Millions at fixed prices for the year 2000 and exchange rates

Country	Item	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
<b>North America</b>											
<b>Canada</b>	Personnel	5008	4362	3813	3269	3562	3598	3638	3712	3876	3686
	Personnel Change Ratio	5.2	- 12.9	- 12.6	- 14.3	8.9	1.01	1.1	2.0	4.4	- 4.9
	Equipment	1695	1692	1293	992	907	698	1028	960	1194	1404
	Equipment Change Ratio	- 11.5	- 0.2	- 23.6	- 23.3	- 8.6	- 23.0	47.2	- 6.6	24.4	17.6
<b>USA</b>	Personnel	13047	12547	11565	11601	11290	110582	11382	110120	123115	126656
	Personnel Change Ratio	- 5.2	- 3.8	- 7.8	0.3	- 2.7	- 2.1	2.9	- 3.3	11.8	2.9
	Equipment	97685	87269	80030	77029	74076	72373	66121	78072	93668	99183
	Equipment Change Ratio	25.2	- 10.6	- 8.3	- 3.8	- 3.8	- 2.3	- 8.6	18.1	20.0	5.9
<b>Europe</b>											
<b>Belgium</b>	Personnel	2301	2312	2203	2185	2157	2184	2100	2097	2114	2167
	Personnel Change Ratio	- 1.0	0.5	- 4.7	- 0.8	- 1.3	1.3	- 3.9	- 0.1	0.4	2.5



<b>Germany</b>	Equipment Change Ratio	- 8.4	2.7	- 4.5	- 6.5	18.3	6.1	0.2	1.6	0.5	- 2.0
	Personnel	2474	2540	2601	2820	2983	3174	3408	3413	3539	3615
<b>Greece</b>	Personnel Change Ratio	3.0	2.7	2.4	8.4	5.8	6.4	7.4	0.1	3.7	2.1
	Equipment	958	765	898	879	1019	1001	972	811	685	664
	Equipment Change Ratio	0.4	- 17.0	13.0	- 2.1	15.9	- 1.7	- 2.9	- 16.6	- 15.5	- 3.1
	Personnel						348	390	424	456	488
<b>Hungary</b>	Personnel Change Ratio							12.1	8.7	7.5	7.1
	Equipment						156	99	93	103	103
	Equipment Change Ratio							- 36.7	- 6.1	10.6	- 0.3
	Personnel	12162	11410	12924	14750	14829	15552	15994	15947	16768	15340
<b>Italy</b>	Personnel Change Ratio	1.7	- 6.2	13.3	14.1	0.5	4.9	2.8	- 0.3	5.2	- 8.5
	Equipment	2874	2538	2677	2221	2514	2456	3214	2273	2806	2635
	Equipment Change Ratio	- 12.1	- 11.7	5.5	- 17.0	13.2	- 2.3	30.8	- 29.3	23.4	- 6.1
	Personnel	83	84	88	91	95	96	97	110	113	122
<b>Luxembourg</b>	Personnel Change Ratio	12.1	1.0	5.1	3.1	5.1	0.2	1.9	12.9	2.4	8.5
	Equipment	2	2	4	4	8	6	6	19	33	30
	Equipment Change Ratio	- 25.7	10.0	79.2	- 8.9	101	- 21.3	- 5.7	227	70.7	- 8.9

<b>Netherlands</b>	Personnel	3594	3593	3359	3337	3106	3102	3036	2933	3119	3169
	Personnel Change Ratio	- 5.3	- 0.0	- 6.5	- 0.7	- 6.9	- 0.1	- 2.1	- 3.4	6.4	1.6
	Equipment	1036	932	1127	939	912	1052	1018	1018	967	1038
	Equipment Change Ratio	15.7	- 10.0	21.0	- 16.7	- 2.9	15.4	- 3.3	0.0	- 5.1	7.4
<b>Norway</b>	Personnel	1093	1056	1075	1085	1133	1178	1192	1149	1339	1324
	Personnel Change Ratio	1.9	- 3.4	1.8	0.9	4.5	3.9	1.2	- 3.6	16.6	- 1.1
	Equipment	892	717	723	694	751	683	568	623	838	716
	Equipment change Ratio	8.6	- 19.6	0.7	- 4.0	8.3	- 9.1	- 16.8	9.6	34.5	- 14.5
<b>Poland</b>	Personnel						1936	1897	1969	2028	2085
	Personnel Change Ratio							- 2.0	3.8	3.0	2.8
	Equipment						345	267	270	347	465
	Equipment change Ratio							- 22.6	1.3	28.6	33.7
<b>Portugal</b>	Personnel	1549	1643	1644	1665	1685	1781	1804	1855	1985	1847
	Personnel Change Ratio	- 3.8	6.1	0.0	1.3	1.2	5.7	1.3	2.8	7.0	- 6.9
	Equipment	83	124	128	171	78	89	141	122	97	168
	Equipment change Ratio	- 43.0	50.0	2.9	33.8	- 54.6	15.2	57.8	- 13.7	- 20.3	72.5

<b>Spain</b>	Personnel	4343	4467	4472	4432	4444	4458	4476	7796	4532	4521
	Personnel Change Ratio	-4.3	2.8	0.1	-0.9	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.8	-0.3
	Equipment	800	926	888	911	789	779	9.6	897	930	861
	Equipment change Ratio	-18.6	15.7	-4.0	2.6	-13.4	-1.3	16.3	-1.0	3.7	-7.4
	Personnel	3806	3796	3959	4323	4532	4856	4506	4092	4469	4491
<b>Turkey</b>	Personnel Change Ratio	-8.3	2.4	1.6	9.2	4.8	7.2	-7.2	-9.2	9.2	0.5
	Equipment	2186	2271	2634	2412	1931	2634	2828	3019	3071	3253
	Equipment change Ratio	25.3	3.9	16.4	-8.8	-19.9	36.4	7.4	6.8	1.7	5.9
	Personnel	16671	15527	15184	13933	13527	13341	13633	14086	14689	14739
	Personnel Change Ratio	-7.9	-6.9	-2.2	-8.2	-2.9	-1.4	2.2	3.3	4.3	0.3
<b>UK</b>	Equipment	10027	8177	9017	8829	9418	9443	9181	8806	8660	8710
	Equipment change Ratio	-7.4	-18.5	10.3	-2.1	6.7	0.3	-2.8	-4.1	-1.7	0.6
	Personnel	67883	66313	67050	67675	67215	71146	71358	71029	73409	72995
	Personnel Change Ratio	-4.0	-2.3	1.1	0.9	-0.7	5.8	0.3	-0.5	3.4	-1.7
	Equipment	22800	20432	21810	20617	21524	23094	23773	22687	23172	23331
<b>NATO / Europe</b>	Equipment change Ratio	-4.4	-10.8	7.2	-5.5	4.4	7.3	2.9	-4.6	2.1	0.7

<b>NATO / Europe (12) countries</b>	Personnel	67883	66313	67050	67675	67215	68392	68630	68126	7042	69003
	Personnel Change Ratio	-4.0	-2.3	1.1	0.9	-0.7	1.8	0.3	-0.7	3.3	-2.0
	Equipment	22800	20342	21810	20716	21524	22430	23176	22098	22521	22497
	Equipment change Ratio	-4.4	-10.8	7.2	-5.5	4.4	4.2	3.3	-4.7	1.9	-0.1
<b>NATO Total</b>	Personnel	203361	196148	186518	186960	183678	185325	188188	184860	200400	202536
	Personnel Change Ratio	-4.6	-3.5	-4.9	0.2	-1.8	0.9	1.9	-2.1	8.4	1.1
	Equipment	122181	109330	103133	98638	96507	96165	90922	101719	118035	123917
	Equipment change Ratio	17.7	-10.5	-5.7	-4.4	-2.2	-0.4	-5.5	11.9	16.0	5.0
<b>NATO Total (14) countries</b>	Personnel	203361	196148	186518	186960	183678	182572	186089	181957	197393	199344
	Personnel Change Ratio	-4.6	-3.5	-4.9	0.2	-1.8	-0.6	1.9	-2.2	8.5	1.0
	Equipment	122181	109330	103133	98638	96508	95501	90324	101130	117383	123083
	Equipment change Ratio	17.7	-10.5	-5.7	-4.4	-2.2	-1.0	-5.4	12.0	16.1	4.9

**Note:**

The figures in this table have been calculated on the basis of NATO's distribution of defense expenditure by category and the GDP and defense expenditure per capita in US dollar prices for the year 2000. Total defense expenditure in \$ for the year 2000 as given in table 3A10. France has not been included in the data that shows the distribution of defense expenditure by category for the year 1997. Thus, the NATO Europe series does not include figures in relation to France. Also, total NATO figures include countries such as the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland which joined the Alliance since 1999. An additional series (column) showing the total defense expenditures of NATO members only for the period 1994-2003 have been added (12 in NATO/Europe and 14 countries in total NATO figures), for the sake of consistency of data, France has been excluded from these total figures.

**Sources:**

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He has authored a great number of articles and reports in the field of defense and strategic affairs published in military periodicals and daily newspapers.

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