

XXXII

TECMUN

North Atlantic Treaty
Organization

Outline of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is a political and military alliance created in 1949 for the safeguard of the freedom and security of its 28 members from Europe and North America. It provides a unique kind of link between its members for consultation and cooperation in the field of defense and security, and the conduct of multinational crisis-management operations. If diplomatic efforts fail, it has the military capacity needed to undertake crisis-management operations. These are carried out under Article 5 of the Washington North Atlantic Treaty or under a UN mandate.

Topic A

Russian threat to international security, considering military practices taking place near Norwegian and Baltic borders, alongside with threats to Sweden and Finland due to these countries considering applying for NATO membership

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Background

The Russian Federation keeps balking the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The former Soviet state has threatened several European countries, both NATO members and non-members, the countries most directly menaced being the Nordic and Baltic States. Russia has been conducting military practices all around the borders of Norway, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia; and has threatened Sweden and Finland that there would be “consequences” if they apply for NATO membership.

In the last months, there has been a debate in Sweden and Finland about joining NATO because of the increasing amount of Russian troops deployed in their borders, and the constant airspace violations from this country. While Russian military keeps making practices near their borders and violating their airspace saying that they are merely defensive actions, fear has risen in Sweden and Finland that there can be an accident with Russian forces that ends in a military intervention. Both countries will stick together: they will both either stick out of the NATO or apply to be members; as their governments have stated: both countries will apply for membership or maintain their neutral status.

The Russian Federation does not want NATO to expand towards the west, particularly towards ex-soviet states and countries which have borders with Russia, like Belarus, Ukraine, Sweden or Finland. The explanation of their current president, Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin, is that the United States wants Russia to be seen as the provoker of the crisis, as he argues that it was the U.S. who broke a NATO-related promise that said the organization would not expand towards the west. The Russian mandatory also stated that it was the NATO who acted violently, putting military bases all around Russia, and giving as example that the aggregate military spending of all NATO countries is ten times as that of Russia.

As the Russian Federation sees the increasing NATO power as a threat, the government acted quickly, communicating to the Swedish and Finnish governments there would be “consequences” if they applied for NATO membership. An immediate solution has to be reached. Crisis possibilities are rising as tension is growing, and the NATO and the United States (U.S.) have sent troops to the menaced NATO-member countries to protect them, thus making Russian relations towards the NATO worsen. Bilateral talks need to be made to keep peace in the region. The NATO and the Russian Federation must reach an agreement which guarantees the security and sovereignty of all the threatened countries.

The NATO and the Russian Federation have the combined control (the sum of the inventories of both) of approximately 14,815 nuclear warheads, about 96.17% of the total in the world. If tension rises and leads to a military conflict between these two, there is a great possibility that a nuclear conflict starts also, ending up being a conflict that involves a lot more countries. As a nuclear war would have serious effects in the environment of the planet, virtually every country would be affected by it. Entire nations can be swiped off, while millions of people could lose their lives. According to *Rand Corporation*, Russian troops are capable of taking Riga and Tallinn, the Latvian and Estonian capitals, respectively, in just sixty hours.

This conflict targets directly four members of the NATO (Norway, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia), which are at risk of a military invasion, and other two countries that can seek NATO membership (Finland and Sweden). Every single country in NATO would be immediately involved in case of a military intervention due to the fifth article in the North Atlantic Treaty which states:

“The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them [...] shall be considered an attack against them all and consequently they agree that, if such an armed attack occurs, each of them, [...] will assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking forthwith, individually and in concert with the other Parties, such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force, to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area.” (North Atlantic Treaty, 1949, Article 5)

If NATO fails to achieve an agreement with Russia to lessen the tension, the transcontinental country can act violently, provoking an armed conflict. Hundreds of people can lose their lives, their freedom, security and sovereignty of the implied countries may be violated. If there are no negotiations, the countries will not reach an agreement, and there will be more probability of a military conflict. This is why the NATO is in the duty of facilitating talks between itself and Russia, to keep the region's, and possibly the world's, peace and stability.

NATO's influence over the Baltic and Nordic countries

The Baltic Countries

The three Baltic Countries are the Republic of Lithuania, the Republic of Latvia and the Republic of Estonia. All of them were part of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

(U.S.S.R.), dissolved in 1991, alongside other twelve nations, the most developed of them is considered to be the current Russian Federation.

Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia joined NATO together in March the 29th 2004, alongside Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia. This made the Russian Federation to reconsider its defense policies, fearing the NATO would send troops all around the Russian borders. During the year of 2004 tension rose and air surveillance was carried out along the frontiers between the Baltic States and the Russian Federation.

Nowadays, thirteen years after the inclusion of the Baltic Countries in the NATO, similar problems have begun to trouble the region. Russian and NATO troops have been set all around their borders, as military exercises are starting to be made because of Baltic fear of intervention following the 2014 Russian invasion and annexation of Crimea.

In February of 2016, the U.S. Department of Defense announced the spending of 3.4 billion U.S. dollars for the European Reassurance Initiative, operation to deal with Russian threat over NATO allies. Later that year, on April 29th, The Wall Street Journal reported that four armed battalions, with an estimated of 4,000 NATO troops, were to be sent to Poland, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia for defensive reasons in case of a potential Russian aggression. The American defense secretary Michael Fallon, has also confirmed that other 800 U.S. personnel will be moved to Estonia.

In the other hand, Russian Defense Minister Sergey Shoigu announced in early 2016 that three new divisions would be created by the end of the same year in the west of the country, each division with the possibility of exceeding 16,000 men. Russian government has also moved Iskander missile system, which is able to carry nuclear warheads, into Kaliningrad, the Russian Oblast and enclave in the Baltic Sea, action that results uneasying for Baltic and Polish governments.

Nordic Countries

The Nordic Countries are Finland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Iceland. But only three of them (Norway, Denmark and Iceland) are members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization since 1949.

During the World War II, Sweden declared its neutrality and was not involved in the war. That is the main reason of why Sweden has not applied for a NATO membership: because

of the neutrality they have been declaring throughout these years is a contradiction to the North Atlantic Treaty Article 5. However, Sweden and Finland have been actively cooperating with NATO. A clear example is the Host Nation Support Agreement which gives NATO an opportunity to use these countries' territories for its own purposes and activities. There is a thin line between these countries cooperating and applying for a membership, but any of the decisions would not change Russia's interests, as the Russians seek to stop the growth of NATO, whether it is towards their borders or not.

In March 2015, Russian forces did a military exercise that involved 33,000 troops, under these scenarios, Russia launched a simulated assault on four Nordic countries (Norway; some territories from Finland, Sweden and Denmark). Since then, Russia is carrying out a continuous series of military exercises near NATO member countries' borders, involving land, sea and air forces.

In 2016 a four-experts panel commissioned by the Finnish government was held in order to discuss about the implications of being in or out of NATO and the consequences it may bring to the increasing tension between the Nordic countries and Russia. In this panel, the experts concluded that whether in or out of NATO, Finland and Sweden should stick together. According to the experts, the Fenno-Russian relations would take a beating and the political reaction would be harsh.

Russian Negative to NATO's enlargement

The relationship between NATO and the Russian Federation started when Russia joined the North Atlantic Cooperation Council in 1991, since then, NATO has made several tries to build up a partnership with the Russian Federation by pacts and councils like the NATO-Russia Founding Act which provided the formal basis for relations between both and the NATO-Russia Council for consultation, cooperation, joint decision and joint action, but the relationship has become fragile after the military intervention Russia did in Ukraine, this act was condemned by the Allies, and the cooperation between both of them was suspended. NATO considers Russia has been showing a pattern of military activities and aggressive behaviors, which is something NATO has to worry about.

The recent call of Ukraine in 2014 to become a member country in NATO is seen by Russia as a threat from NATO against the Russian Federation and it is even considered by the

president of Russia, Vladimir Putin as illegitimate since he considers Ukraine as rightful Russian land. (Bender, J, 2015)

"This is not the army, per se, this is a foreign proxy, in this case a foreign NATO legion, which, of course, doesn't pursue the objective of national interests of Ukraine [...] they have entirely different goals, and they are tied with the achievement of the geopolitical goals of containing Russia." (Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin, 2015)

However, Russia participates in the current situation of conflict and instability in Ukraine, as seen in the help from Russia troop them to rebels in order to roll back the Ukrainian army. (Bender, J, 2015)

"We are forced to take counter measures", those were the exact words the president of Russia, Vladimir Putin, said. Russia considers the expanding of NATO as a major threat, Putin says they are concerned about the decision-making NATO has, they believe that bigger countries such as the United States of America could easily control smaller countries to deploy missile systems, host bases or even launch missile strikes. President Putin considers the situation could become even worse, he has threatened to strike NATO if he believes it is necessary. (Filipov, D, 2016)

In July 8, NATO stated they will deploy troops to Poland, this caused tension and pressured Russia to do the same thing, this could have all been aimed to reassure the Baltic States and deter Russia from any future aggression. "The decision on the troops is essentially a decision to try to create a symbolic tripwire, particularly in the Baltic States that would make very clear that the US and other countries committing to provide troops are standing behind the Article 5 guarantee. From that perspective, the numbers are much less important than the fact that there would be American, British, or German troops in these countries," said Paul Saunders, Director of the Center for the National Interest. (Saunders, P, 2016)

In fact, the last version of the Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation signed on December 26, 2014, which is a planning document for the armed protection of Russia, assumes NATO as its major adversary by declaring NATO's expansion as a major threat to the Russian Federation: "NATO is undermining global stability and violating the balance of power in the nuclear-missile sphere." that was the translation Defense News made of the actual doctrine. It is also mentioned the need for Russia to expand influences and military presence over the

Arctic by a construction blitz, in other words, a militarization of the Arctic by several actions which include ground troops, aircraft, and naval vessels. (Bender, J, 2015)

As previously mentioned, Russia is being cautious and sees NATO expanding as a threat, so many NATO members are alarmed by the conduct Russia is having, and there is a possibility that some Russian military action happens involving all 28 members, and making it a global issue. Analyzing this situation, both sides may have different points of view regarding on the problem. All this is a merely security dilemma situation, but when one side acts to look for its own security, it contributes to a sense of insecurity on the other side. (Saunders, P, 2016)

Russia considers that the United States of America failed to keep the promise they made in 1990, promise which stated that NATO would not expand into Eastern Europe, so Putin declared that they are being forced to #forestall NATO's eastward march a matter of self-defense. The U.S. may have contributed to the current tensions that we are living in Europe, but this doesn't justifies what Putin has done in Ukraine or Georgia.

Russia considers that the actual unfavorable situation between NATO and the Russian Federation is not their responsibility and they aren't looking for any further confrontation, instead, they consider NATO has created an atmosphere that leads to all the previous mentioned tension and negative consequences between both. (Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to NATO, 2016)

Military Exercise in Eastern Europe

The Warsaw Summit stood out NATO's unity and its focus on defense, deterrence, and projecting stability beyond NATO's borders. However, After Russian claims were exposed, NATO and its member countries decided to deploy their forces as a response to concerns about Russia's assertiveness, threatening its vision of a Europe free and at peace. For that reason NATO is now concerned about Russia's increasing military activities along NATO's borders, which continues to make the Euro-Atlantic security environment less stable and predictable.

NATO is planning to have four battalions in Eastern Europe and the Baltic region in order to reassure its members as well as developing an anti ballistic air-defense system. This measure caused an alarm in Russia and generated more tension between the parties. NATO argued that this "missile interceptor shield" is only for defensive purposes and does not represents any threat to Russia, and that its main intention is to prevent any attack from a problematic country. NATO missile defence is intended to defend against potential threats

emanating from outside the Euro-Atlantic area. Allied leaders will take decisions to enhance collective defense by enhancing NATO's forward presence on the eastern flank through the deployment of one rotational battalion and defensive weaponry in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland (Whitehouse, 2016).

The Warsaw summit resulted in the deployment of four battalions to Poland and the Baltics composed of soldiers from many if not most member states whose size exceeds the bare-minimum definition. The alliance basically attempts to send four battalions to Poland and the Baltics composed of at least 2,000 troops, ideally closer to 4,000. Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States have already agreed to lead three battalions, and Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary have in a separate initiative committed a total of 600 troops to the Baltics. The difficulty of finding another NATO member to head this battalion has generated poor optics both in terms of the alliance's deterrence credibility against Russia.

Meanwhile, Russia continues its military operations inside its territory and in the Middle East, answering to NATO members actions with the continuing of military development and watch of possible threats; but mostly via diplomacy and sharp statements. The Russian President, Vladimir Putin, addressed that for some reason NATO's infrastructure has been expanding and moving closer to the Russian borders, and also on its way to create a ring around Russia NATO is accepting Montenegro that was a close ally of Russia. Putin also called Washington's unilateral withdrawal from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty an issue:

"An outside threat, an outside enemy is needed, otherwise why is this organization (NATO) needed?... If we continue following such logic, act to escalate and intensify efforts to scare each other, then one day we may come to a Cold War. We have a completely different logic, it is aimed at cooperation and search for compromise." (Sputnik news, 2016)

Russia supporters, allies, citizens, Pro-Russian and Pro-Serbian communities have a strong feeling against NATO's intentions. Viktor Baranez, a former Russian defence ministry spokesman, asks why Russia should even consider joint maneuvers after being deceived by the West. NATO, he writes, "has pushed its way right up to our national borders with its guns"(Klussmann, 2009) and stated that Moscow needs to stop treating NATO as a partner of any kind.

Even though the situation in Europe has turned into a problematic area to the point of entering into a crisis NATO has welcomed its members and allies not to use force and call on Russia to reciprocate. NATO continuously enforces that the Alliance does not seek confrontation and poses no threat to Russia. However NATO cannot and will not compromise on the principles on which the Alliance and security in Europe and North America rest. There are measures that have to be taken in order to maintain international security and the peace between the people.

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Glossary

A

Airspace: The part of the sky where planes fly, usually the part above a particular country that is legally controlled by that country.

Aggregate military spending: Sum of military spending of certain countries.

Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty: Treaty, from which the United States barred Washington and Moscow from deploying nationwide defenses against strategic ballistic missiles.

B

Bare minimum: Smallest possible quantity of anything.

Baltic States: The three countries in northern Europe on the eastern coast of the Baltic Sea: The Republic of Lithuania, The Republic of Estonia, and The Republic of Latvia.

D

Deterrence: The fact of making somebody less likely to do something.

E

Ex-soviet states: Former Soviet Republics, part of the USSR.

H

Host Nation Support Agreement: Basic agreement normally concluded at government-to-government or government- to-combatant commander level. These agreements may include general agreements, umbrella agreements, and memoranda of understanding. See also host nation; host-nation support

I

Iskander missile system: Russian missile of almost-ballistic short range that can be transported by land.

M

Military Doctrine: Is the expression of how military forces contribute to campaigns, major operations, battles, and engagements.

Missile defence: a system, weapon or technology with the purpose of detecting, tracking, interception and destruction of attacking missiles.

N

NATO members: States that are members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

Nordic Countries: Group of countries that includes Norway, Finland, Sweden, Iceland, and Denmark.

Nuclear conflict: Warfare involving the employment of nuclear weapons.

Nuclear warheads: a warhead containing a fission or fusion bomb.

O

Optics: the way in which an event or course of action is perceived by the public.

S

Simulated assault: a simulation of a possible assault launched by a country's army towards another's enemy territory.

Soviet: An elected local, district or national council in the former USSR.

Symbolic tripwire: A small military force that serves as a first line of defense; if they become engaged in hostilities it will trigger the intervention of stronger military forces

T

Transcontinental country: state that has sovereignty over territories in two or more continents.

U

Union of Soviet Socialist Republics: Former transcontinental country that existed in Europe and Asia from 1922 to 1991.

W

Warsaw Summit: The 26th formal meeting of NATO members' heads of state and heads of government, hold in the capital city of Poland, Warsaw, on 8th and 9th July 2016.

Topic B

Measures to eradicate the remnant of the extremist groups operating after the United States troops withdrawal in Afghan territory

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In July 2016, there were a series of attacks in the capital city of Afghanistan, Kabul, during a peaceful demonstration. These attacks were just a reminder that terrorist groups are again wanting to gain control over Afghanistan and other countries in the Middle East.

The most known terrorist groups to operate in this region of Pakistan and Afghanistan are The Taliban and the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), the second one assumed responsibility of the Kabul attacks in July, 2016. Both groups are involved with the Taliban movement. A report of the US-Forces-Afghanistan says that the current government only controls approximately the 60 percent of the Afghan population and that the Taliban control or influence the other 10 percent, while the rest is contested. President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani recently attended to a meeting of the “Heart of Asia” where he declared that Afghanistan’s problems are because of Pakistan support on the Taliban, but this declaration will not solve Afghanistan circumstances.

Taliban is an extremist movement that ruled most of Afghanistan in 1996. It provided a safe haven for Al-Qaeda, and that gave this extremist group a base so they could freely recruit, train, and deploy terrorists to other countries. The Taliban held sway in Afghanistan until October 2001, when they were routed from power by the US-led campaign against Al-Qaeda.

From 2001 to 2014 there were some NATO-led missions (Resolute Support Missions) in order to train and assess the Afghan Security Forces to improve the way they operated and the way they fought against extremist groups.

Resolute Support Missions were taken as a measure to protect civilians from these terrorist attacks, in collaboration both, NATO troops and all the Afghan Security Forces. NATO troops left Afghanistan in 2014 after the Afghan Security Forces assumed full responsibility of the security in the country. As a result, these Security Forces had improved the way they operate, but also since NATO troops left, the Taliban movement has been trying to gain the control and influence it had over Afghanistan just like in 1996 when it started. Since 2015 Afghanistan has been under a Security crisis because of these extremist groups, which General John W. Nicholson, assured were more concentrated in Afghanistan and Pakistan’s region.

The Taliban threat and the conflict in Afghanistan

Al-Qaeda attacks on the United States in September 11, 2001 caused retaliation by the U.S. and allied forces, which rapidly ousted the Taliban regime for hiding other terrorist groups leaders. The Taliban converged again in Pakistan and returned as an insurgent movement, targeting Western troops and the nascent Afghan state. The United States is winding down this war, which has become the longest war in its history, while Afghans are left to wonder whether the hard-won achievements can be preserved.

In October 15, 1999, the United Nations Security Council adopted the Resolution 1267, this created the al-Qaeda and Taliban Sanctions Committee, which considers both groups as “terrorist entities” and it enforces sanctions on their funding, travel and arms shipments. The United Nations’ move follows a period of ascendancy for al-Qaeda and its leader, Osama bin Laden, who guided the extremist group from Afghanistan and Peshawar, Pakistan in the late 1980’s and to Afghanistan in the mid-1990’s. The Taliban, which rose from the ashes of Afghanistan’s post-Soviet civil war, provides al-Qaeda sanctuary for operations.

In 2001 president of the U.S., George W. Bush, signed into law a joint resolution authorizing the use of force against those responsible for attacking the United States of America on 9/11 thus invading Afghanistan as it was the land in which al-Qaeda and the Taliban operated. Bush vowed to “win the war against terrorism” and eventually calls on the Taliban regime to “deliver to the United States authorities all the leaders of al-Qaeda who hid on their land.” However, the Taliban assured bin Laden protection after the attacks in gratitude for his assistance on the fight with the anti-Taliban resistance in Afghanistan.

France and Great Britain are supporting the U.S military to start a bombing campaign against the insurgent Taliban forces, officially launching *Operation Enduring Freedom*. U.S. airstrikes on al-Qaeda and Taliban forces were involved in the war’s early stage, anti-Taliban forces helped the U.S. military during these attacks. Over the next weeks the Taliban strongholds begin to crumble after the coalition advanced on its controlled territory. After the *Resolution 1378* was passed by the Security Council, the United Nations invited member countries to send peacekeeping forces to promote stability and aid delivery.

President Bush created a plan for the Afghanistan’s reconstruction by introducing over \$38 billion in humanitarian aid, reconstruction and military assistance to the new government of Afghanistan on its military forces. The U.S. military along with the United Nations is starting a framework in civil affairs to supervise redevelopment in order to expand Kabul’s government. The Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT’s) created to accomplish this task

later were handed over to NATO member states. Nonetheless, the PRT's lacked of central controlling authority, and were disorganized. The criticism to this effort to reach stability in Afghanistan was expected and becomes a common theme in NATO war effort. What keeps the coalition's of being effective is dealing with the various critics. In 2003 NATO assumes control of the International security forces (ISAF) in Afghanistan, being its first operational commitment outside Europe expanding its role across the country. In 2006 ISAF troops increases from 5,000 to 65,000 and takes the command of the international military forces in eastern Afghanistan from the control of the United States.

However, the resurgence of the extremist groups of al-Qaeda and the Taliban increases de violence across the country. The new governance of Afghanistan collapses and more insurgent movements against the new government begin to sublimite. At the summit in Riga, NATO takes control of Afghan's security forces. Even though the lack of assistance of international forces in the territory because of being unwilling to share the risks had the result of losing the control of the armed conflict situation.

By 2011, a decade in, the cost of the military activities in Afghanistan eroded the U.S. public support. President Barack Obama, plans to withdraw all combat troops by 2014, but serious doubts remain about the Afghan government's capacity to secure the country. The only way to avoid new conflicts was to deal with the Taliban who remained active in the country, but, in 2012, the Taliban suspends preliminary talks accusing Washington of renegeing on promises to take control over their people. (Council on Foreign Relations,2015)

Afghan peace process

On December 27, 2016 in Moscow the third round of secretary level talks between Russia, China and Pakistan took place, having as outcome the support from Russia and China to Pakistan's posture by supporting the Afghan peace process, therefore, the initial contact between Afghan authorities and the Pakistan Army Chief had begun in order to re-rail the bilateral peace relations. It is expected that the Kabul government accepts to join the talks and even shows flexibility in its position, in order to find a regional solution to the Afghan crisis that nowadays affects the security of the countries participating in the forum (Khan, 2017).

Another issue that was addressed during the talks was the derogation of the travel ban on the insurgent leaders, which is one of the major requests from Taliban members in exchange for joining the talks. Actually there has been a feeling of contentment from the Taliban towards the taken actions regarding their demand, anyway, the lifting of the travel bans first need to have the US consent, nonetheless, there was a feeling of discontent from this country towards the outcome of the secretary talks.

China has for quite a while been effectively required in the Afghan peace endeavors, being a noteworthy financial specialist in mining and foundation improvement extends in that nation. Its great relations with both the Kabul government and the Taliban have helped Beijing encourage a couple rounds of casual talks between the two warring sides. Beijing has likewise been gravely worried about the expanding shakiness in Afghanistan and late reports of developing IS movement in the nation (Hussain, 2017).

Russia is awakening to an advancing circumstance. Since ending up of NATO battle mission, intra-Afghan battling has incrementally moved to zones of Afghanistan connecting three Central Asian Republics which Russia views as its range of impact. Despite the fact that Russia does not fear an immediate risk from Taliban, it feels that Central Asian contenders could utilize Afghanistan as organizing ground to assault Russian domain.

A couple of Afghan parliamentarians likewise communicated disturbance over "holding the discussions on Afghanistan without Afghanistan." A few MPs depicted the meeting as infringement of Afghanistan's power. A couple of other Afghan pioneers considered it to be "interfering in Afghanistan's inner undertakings", "ill-conceived" and "questionable". Despite the fact that the three taking an interest nations had officially consented to continue with meetings in an extended arrangement and showed to welcome cooperation of Afghanistan (Khan, 2017).

As anyone might expect, the United States was not welcomed to the Moscow initiated process. It is, notwithstanding, untimely to accept that the new nexus could supplant the quadrilateral discussion that incorporated the US alongside Pakistan, China and Afghanistan. The quadrilateral talks have been suspended for just about one year after the fall of endeavors to convey the Afghan Taliban guerillas to the arranging table. The murdering of Mullah Akhtar Mansour, the Taliban boss, in a CIA ramble strike last May has additionally reduced trusts in the discussions to continue.

It is very evident that no peace exertion could prevail without the unsaid support, if not dynamic investment, of the US, which still has around 10,000 troops required in counter-insurrection operations in Afghanistan. Things have turned out to be more muddled with the political move in Washington. Like other remote arrangement issues, there is finished disarray over the Afghan approach in the destined to-be introduced Trump organization (Hussain, 2017).

Authorities in Kabul and Washington have said that Russia is extending its ties with the Taliban battling the administration, however Moscow has denied giving guide to the extremists. Russia is of the view that shade of the savagery in Afghanistan has come about into ungoverned swaths of domains which may fall under the control of Daesh subsidiary substances. China and Russia have reported an 'adaptable approach' to work towards delisting the Afghan Taliban from the UN sanctions list, this is probably going to encourage propelling of tranquil exchange between Afghan government and radical gatherings. Afghan President Ashraf Ghani had a month ago requested that Unified Countries include the Taliban's new pioneer, Maulvi Haibatullah, to its approvals list. The position on delisting possibly a censure for Kabul.

Continuation of this trilateral procedure affirms that Pakistan and Russia have possessed the capacity to put behind their Chilly War period sharpness. It likewise demonstrates that Pakistan, Russia and China have now meeting of supposition on Afghan conflict."(China, Russia and Pakistan) communicated specific worry about the rising action in the nation of radical gatherings including the Afghan branch of IS," and "noticed the weakening of the security circumstance)", Russian remote service representative Maria Zakharova told correspondents

Clearly Russia has taken a choice to dispatch an activity to address saw security risk from the turmoil in Afghanistan all alone. It has overhauled its army installation in Tajikistan combined with joint military moves along the Afghanistan outskirts. Russia has additionally promised \$1.2 billion for limit upgrade of Tajik military. Without a doubt, Russia has set up direct channels with the Taliban for sharing insight about Daesh warriors in northern Afghanistan. The Taliban are determined at liberating Afghanistan from outside word related troops and from a remote political framework that had been pressed upon Afghanistan.

The Quadrilateral Cooperation Group (QCG) initiative is pegged around open ended acceptance of US troops in Afghanistan as embedded in the bilateral security agreement and

the acceptance of the Afghan constitution. With military successes coming their way in numbers, Taliban are not likely to accept either of these proposition. Russia considers the QCG an inefficient process because important regional powers like Russia and Iran are not included in it. Moreover, QCG stands divided as the US and Afghanistan advocate use of military force, while Pakistan and China prefer a political solution through talks.

It is intelligent that exchanges on Afghanistan would not be gainful without cooperation of Afghanistan. In any case, for a long while, Kabul has been instrumental in leaving peace activities on one feeble affection or the other. Pakistan has repetitively expressed that it would bolster all endeavors went for Afghan-claimed and Afghan-drove compromise. It has endeavored energetic endeavors for bringing Taliban on the arranging table. Most recent disclosure demonstrate that Islamabad bolstered peace talks between the Afghan government and Gulbadin Hekmatyar. Military force of Taliban is a hard reality. Hence, no peace exertion is probably going to succeed sans Taliban interest (Khan, 2017).

The remnant extremist practices in Afghanistan, and the its efforts to get stability

2016 was a rough year for Afghanistan, there were several events that tested both the people and the government. According to the National Unity Government of Afghanistan, the Islamic State reemerged after the re-capture of the provincial capital of Kunduz.

Insecurity rose all across Afghanistan in 2016, particularly in the northern and southern regions. In 2015, Taliban forces recaptured the strategic capital city of Kunduz province, in the north, which was recaptured by the government only after intense fighting. Taliban activity also spread to Faryab, Jawzjan and Baghaln provinces, in the north. In 2016 Helmand province, which is constantly disputed between the government and the Taliban, witnessed fights for its control in 2016. Assault groups were also launched by the Taliban on Lashkar Gah, the capital of the Helmand province, which were successfully defeated by Afghan troops. Tarin Kot, the provincial capital of Urzogan province was also heavily attacked by Taliban forces wanting to seize it, but were also repelled by Afghan government forces (Khan, 2017).

Helmand is Afghanistan's largest province, the capital city of the province is Lashkar Gah which was the eleventh state to fall for the Taliban. The Taliban has influence and controls 11 out of 14 districts in the province of Helmand in the northern part of Afghanistan. The main provinces or cities have become target of the Taliban's aim to take control again over Afghanistan. During 2016 there has been a displacement of people from their homes in Lashkar Gah, which has caused a humanitarian crisis and the lack of basic services is increasing along with the number of displacements.

Serious concern has grown among these three countries over the deteriorating situation near their border. Afghanistan saw its most violent year in 2016, with the Taliban forces greatly intensifying their attacks. Yet, the most worrying situation, is the growth of IS, apparently being involved in several terrorist attacks in Afghan soil.

Russia has begun to be particularly alarmed by the increasing activities of the group in northern Afghanistan, close to Central Asian countries' borders. Fear has risen in Moscow of IS planning attacks among the Muslim population, especially as the Chechens form one of the largest foreign contingents in the IS war against Iraq and Syria. That has been a reason for Russia to contact the Afghan Taliban who have been fighting IS. (Hussain, 2017)

Taliban forces have demonstrated being more organized and better equipped than ever with these significant gains; they also have exposed the inefficiencies in the Afghan government's management of security. A new report shows that the Afghan National Army has more generals than the U.S. military, for example. Security gaps are further exacerbated by a tendency to appoint inexperienced people in security section positions.

Throughout 2015, due to a collective offensive from the Afghan and Coalition forces, the Islamic State activities in the eastern part of the country decreased, anyway they failed to defeat it. Nonetheless during 2016 ISIS was again consider as a security threat inasmuch as the terrorist group carried out bloody attacks against civilians. It is thought that for 2017 the Islamic State will continue to gain power unless it is defeated with the cooperation of international forces, whether by Afghan government forces or the Taliban, which see the Islamic State as a threat and as an adversary.

While if there should arise an occurrence of contentions in Syria and Ukraine, Russia and the US have had contrast of discernment, the two had comparability of perspectives concerning Afghan clash and its reasonable arrangements. Russia had given a free hand to

Obama organization and had collaborated on issues like medication trafficking and provisioning of coordinations support to ISAF/NATO troops. At the point when Pakistan blocked stream of American supplies after Salalah assaults, Russia went over the edge in assembling an option course called Northern Appropriation System to give the coordinations a chance to continue streaming unhindered.

Evidently, Russia might separate both from the US and in addition its protégé the Afghan government. The despite everything us has about 10,000 troops in Afghanistan. Joined US-Afghan military exertion is, for all viable purposes, hindered notwithstanding military exercises by the Taliban. Various Afghan commonplace capitals have over and over gone under weight from the Taliban amid a year ago. Components like high causality number, renunciation rate, poor troop inspiration and low quality administration have tormented the capability of Afghan National Security strengths (ANSF). Probability of emergency of ANSF of ethno-partisan lines is a particular plausibility.

A senior Afghan authority expressed: “Bilaterally, we have struggled to convince the Russians on certain issues because they increasingly see us only as part of this larger game with the United States”. Afghan government is worried that rise of contending medicines as to peace process and Taliban's immediate contacts with imperative capitals may not forecast well for the forward development of peace process. No doubt Kabul's clamor over the third trilateral session in Moscow are at the American provoking who are getting apprehensive that the Russians are getting to be distinctly proactive in Afghanistan. This comes when the US has heaved charges that Russia is in contact with the Taliban (Khan, 2017).

Challenges for Afghanistan

In December 2016, following the meeting of the North Atlantic Council, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg shared information about the future of the Resolute Support missions as a measure to maintain the Afghan Security Forces strong and help them to fight terrorism.

“The security situation in Afghanistan is and will remain difficult and tough. The Afghan Security Forces have taken many casualties, but they are defending the Afghan people with determination and courage.

NATO will continue to train, advise and assist the Afghan forces through our Resolute Support Mission. Because we know that training local forces to fight

terrorism and stabilise their country is the best way to project stability beyond our borders. This is part of the broad international support for Afghanistan.”

(NATO`s Secretary General, Jens Stoltenberg, December 2016).

In the Warsaw Summit in July 2016 the Heads of State and Government of the nation contributing to the Resolute Support mission, and the president of the National Unity Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan discussed about the support that is going to be given to the Afghan Government by the NATO member countries.

“Our aim remains that Afghanistan will never again be safe haven for terrorist groups who can pose a threat to our security; and that it is able to sustain its own security, governance, and economic and social development, while respecting human rights for all citizens, notably those of women and children.”

(Warsaw Summit, 2016)

Afghan government needs to address and solve the several challenges that nowadays has, on the political area, corruption is a major issue since a recent survey suggests that Afghans pay \$3 billion in bribes to get everyday tasks done, also the government has not developed any strategy for key reforms at the administrative level. Both problems only worse the growth and prosperity in Afghanistan.

Another problem area is security, Afghan government must strengthen its security by hiring experienced professionals in order to overcome gaps. This will only be possible if the government applies decisive reforms to the security apparatus. Additionally, employment opportunities have to be generated considering that in 2015 there was a 40 percent of unemployment.

A challenge Afghanistan must face is to convince regional players like Russia, China, India, Pakistan, and Iran that by carrying out conferences without Kabul`s participation such as the Russia-China-Pakistan conference and their outcomes will not bring any benefit, and will not solve or even improve the Afghan crisis, instead it will only complicate the Afghan situation and can have a negative impact on state-to-state relations. If it fails to it, Afghanistan will turn into a buffer state between Russia and the United States, a superpower rivalry that the country have previously experienced during the Cold War. 2017 will be a rough year for Afghanistan, the government needs to develop efficient foreign policies in order to ensure that larger powers understand the stakes in Afghanistan.

There is no unanimity within the fractious Afghan administration, even on the issue of negotiations with the Taliban. There is also a question mark over the Taliban agreeing to formally sit across the table with the Kabul government without any preconditions, particularly at a time when they have achieved significant success in the battlefield. According to some reports, the Afghan officials have informally met the representatives of the Taliban's Qatar office. But formal peace talks are a completely different ballgame.

To bring the Afghan peace process out of the deep freeze, it is most important to end the frosty relations between Islamabad and Kabul. There has been some breaking of the ice with the recent telephonic contact between Afghan leaders and Pakistan's new army chief. But is this enough to clear the huge wall of distrust between the two countries? (Hussain, 2017)

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Glossary

A

Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF): Formed by the Afghan National Army (ANA) and the Afghan National Police (ANP), these groups are mentored and trained by ISAF forces.

C

Civil affairs: Affairs and operations of the civil population of a territory that are supervised and directed by a friendly occupying power.

Cold War: Period of time in the second half of the XX century in which the USSR and the USA made efforts to impose their ideologies all around the globe.

E

Endeavors: a strenuous effort, attempt.

Extremist movement: Groups supporting extreme doctrines or practices.

G

Guerrillas: A member of a small independent group taking part in irregular fighting, typically against larger regular forces.

H

Humanitarian aid: Humanitarian actions to ensure a coherent response to emergencies, advocating the rights of people in need by facilitating sustainable solutions.

Humanitarian crisis: Situation in which there is an exceptional and generalized threat to human life, health or subsistence.

I

Insurgent: A person fighting against a government or invading force; a rebel or revolutionary.

Insurgent movement: a violent revolt against a government, in which the non-governmental part is not recognized as a belligerent.

ISAF: UN program with the objective to enable the Afghan government to provide effective security across the country.

M

Military assistance: the assistance of a country to another to its efforts of defence or to maintain control over its own territories.

N

National Unity Government: Government formed by a coalition of parties, especially in time of national emergency

O

Organizing ground: piece of land where a group or army is meant to prepare and organize operations.

P

Peace exertion: effort to convince another faction to reach a peace agreement.

Peacekeeping forces: Military forces which main objective is to achieve peace in the places where they are sent by implementing several operations.

Political framework: political context of an event or a situation.

R

Regime: An institution with clear substantive and geographical limits, bound by explicit rules, and agreed on by governments.

Resolute Support Missions: a NATO-led mission which helps Afghan troops to train, advise, assist and help them concerning counter-terrorism efforts.

Retaliation: The action of returning a military attack; counter-attack

S

Safe haven: Protection given by a country to someone from another country who is in danger because of a war or other serious problems in their own country.

Secretary level talks: dialogue between people who have the status of secretary of a government.

Strongholds: A place or area where a particular belief or activity is common.

T

Taliban movement: Sunni Islamic fundamentalist political movement with strong presence in Middle East, particularly in Afghanistan.

Terrorist attack: Attack involving the deliberate use of violence against civilians in the hope of attaining political or religious aims

Terrorist group: Group with political ends that uses terror and victims as a weapon to achieve its goals.