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ANALYSIS

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TRANSFORMATION OF NATO THROUGH THE FRIEND-ENEMY DIFFERENCE

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In his work titled “The Catiline Conspiracy” written by the Roman historian Sallustius, Cato the Younger addressed the Senate as follows: “There were some values that made our ancestors great, but we did not have them and have forgotten them. These; “A competent administration at home and a fair administration abroad, decisions we make in consultation with each other, free from all ambition and with our completely free will.” (Warner, 2014:65). While the Alliance was looking for a slogan to reflect the understanding of partnership and friendship in December 1959, Sallustius’s words “to consult with free will” - animus in consulendo liber - were brought to the agenda and accepted. The slogan is currently displayed on the wall of the main council chamber at NATO headquarters in Brussels, behind the President’s chair, and continues to emphasize the organisation’s bonds of partnership (NATO Unclassified, 1976:18).

Although the perception of actual partnership is important, to examine how the awareness of partnership is established in an intellectual sense; The history of NATO is extremely important in understanding how it brings together various countries with different concerns and goals. Ultimately, NATO, as a political and military organization, must be able to establish partnership awareness on an existential basis. This existential basis gains meaning with the distinction of “friend-enemy”. As a political-military alliance, NATO bears the responsibility of identifying its foe before its friend in order to concretely demonstrate its reason for existence. The organizational structure, which creates another for itself by drawing the enemy line, creates the opportunity to attract its friends to its ranks. The organization added a legal framework and binding force to the distinction between friend and enemy with Article 5 in its founding agreement.

“Each Member State undertakes to consider an armed attack against one of its Member States in the areas defined by Article 6 as an attack against all of them. In the event of such an attack, each member state must assist “by taking whatever action it deems necessary to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area, including the use of armed forces” (The North Atlantic Treaty, 1949).

The distinction between friend and enemy, which will be discussed in this study, is not only a distinction between good and evil, but it does not show an unchangeable rigidity. As a matter of fact, this study will analyze how the perception of the enemy can transform in different periods in NATO’s 75-year history. In the first part of

the study, the Cold War period will be discussed, and in the second part, how the order formed after the collapse of the Soviet Union transformed NATO. In the third part, the ineffective side of this transformation through Türkiye will be discussed.

Cold War: Construction of The Enemy (1949-1989)

With the end of World War II, Europe became a ruin. The major European actors of the pre-war period had to cede the stage to the two victorious powers, the United States of America (USA) and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). It was immediately understood that these two powers would soon engage in a struggle to

determine the future of the old continent. As a matter of fact, after the victory in Europe, a conference was planned in Potsdam between the three leaders of the victorious side - Winston Churchill, Joseph Stalin and Harry Truman. However, in the weeks before the conference, Prime Minister Churchill and President Truman met several times to discuss their approaches to the "rising threat from the east." Although President Truman was aware of this threat, he refrained from making an early move against Stalin (Kissinger, 1995: 434-436). Although the perception of the Soviets in the eyes of the USA began to take shape while the war was still ongoing. William Averell Harriman, ambassador to Moscow at the time (1943-1946), wrote in his notes: "We must clearly recognize that the Soviet program was the establishment of totalitarianism - in Eastern Europe - and the end of personal freedom and democracy as we know and respect them." Additionally, Harriman said, "It must be understood that the Soviets will not abide by the general rules of international politics, so caution must be exercised when working together." (McCullough, 1993: 372) and stated the potential of his enemy.

The atmosphere of mutual distrust that escalated between the Soviet Union and the Anglo-American front after 1945 began to form the structural framework of NATO in theory, if not yet concretely. Realizing that its policy of infidelity was no longer valid, the United States saw that it had to assume the protection of its old friend Europe in the face of this new enemy. However, the most important problem in gathering friendly countries under a political umbrella is that the economies of these countries are in serious danger. Thus, President Truman will reveal the pillars of the newly formed US system with the

following words: "Supporting free peoples who resist attempts at subjugation by armed minorities or external pressures... helping free peoples to determine their own destiny... shall be primarily through the economic and financial assistance necessary for economic stability and an orderly political process." (Acheson, 1987: 222). This policy, whose purpose and framework was determined by the Truman Doctrine, was instrumentalized by Marshall Aid. The strengthening and deepening ties between the USA and Europe reached an important turning point in 1948. The communist coup in Czechoslovakia showed that it was time to take action against the enemy. The Brussels Treaty was signed by the Benelux countries, the United Kingdom and France in April 1948 (Isby and Kamps, 1985: 13). However, it was understood that it would not be possible to remain strong against the Soviet Union without the presence of the USA. The Berlin Blockade, which occurred with the intervention of the USA, showed the Western world the uncompromising nature of the enemy in the east. Learning from its experience, the Western world signed the North Atlantic Treaty on April 4, 1949 (Miller, 1989). The first NATO Secretary General, Hastings Ismay, demonstrated in 1949 that the organization made the friend-enemy distinction a *raison d'être* with his statements "to keep the Russians out, the Americans in, and the Germans down" (Reynolds, 1994: 13).

Construction of The New Enemy After The Cold War (1989-2001)

In a short period of two years, starting with the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and ending with the dissolution of the USSR, NATO found itself enemyless and unrivaled as a global political and military power. The fact that its nemesis, the Warsaw Pact,

took its place in the yellow pages of history, left NATO with an existential crisis. As a result, NATO, an alliance of friends shaped on the idea of an enemy, has faced questions about the necessity of its existence in a plane where there are no longer enemies. It would be healthy to understand the steps taken by NATO to solve the existential crisis by looking at the various views put forward during this period.

Kenneth Waltz looked at NATO from a new realistic perspective and said that the organization's years, if not its days, were numbered (Waltz, 1993: 76). Liberal and constructivist theory, on the other hand, saw the future of NATO a little more certain. The prediction of liberalism was that an alliance based on common values would continue to function stably even if there was no common threat (Reicherd, 2006: 111). According to Sloan, there was no reason for NATO to collapse. Moreover, in his view, NATO has come to serve as both an advisory body for allies and a safety net against any setback in the advancement of democracy in the former Soviet Union (Sloan, 1990: 511). The view that cooperation between allies will continue is accepted due to the length of time spent trading, working and trusting each other. Institutionalist theory similarly predicted that NATO would take the alliance in new directions by taking advantage of existing practices and mechanisms to deal with new problems, rather than declaring victory and turning to creating new institutions (McCalla, 1996: 464). Despite these views, most countries in NATO agreed that the Alliance should remain, whether as an advisory body, as a hedge against new risks, or as a check against a backslide in the liberalization of the Soviet Union. Likewise, we see the concrete expression of this in the words of

former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher: "You cannot cancel your home insurance policy just because there have been fewer thefts on your street in the last twelve months" (McCalla, 1996:455).

The existence theories put forward for NATO were put to the full test as the domino effect that started with the dissolution of the communist front reached the Balkan lands. The communist enemy has now given way to the threat and violence posed by extreme nationalism. The ultranationalist threat posed by fascism years ago has arisen again. The wars that broke out in Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1993 and then in Kosovo in 1999 required NATO to intervene, as the United Nations troops could not provide a complete solution (NATO handbook, 2006: 143-144). Thus, NATO, whose existence was questioned, passed the Balkans test and found a place for itself in the new order.

As a result of the Balkan Wars, Europe realized that it could not solve its own problems without the involvement of NATO. Realizing this situation, NATO extended an olive branch to the countries that were the remnants of the former enemy, the Warsaw Pact, as a symbol of friendship. Discussions have begun over the idea of expansion for NATO, which won first against communism and then against the extreme nationalism that replaced it. George F. Kennan, an American diplomat and one of the advocates of the containment policy, stated that the idea of expansion "can be expected to have an adverse effect on the development of Russian democracy, to re-establish the Cold War atmosphere in East-West relations, and to push Russian foreign policy in directions that they will definitely not like" (Kennan, 1997). Even though it

did, stagnation was not seen as an option for NATO. However, when we look at the theses put forward by Russia to legitimize its military intervention against Ukraine in 2022, it becomes clear how right Kennan was in his concerns.

New Enemy Again: Terror (2001-Present)

The turn of the century brought with it very sharp changes. The global terrorist threat, a legacy of the September 11 attacks, caused NATO - again and again - to find a threat it had never seen before and to take a position against it. The threat of global terrorism, in addition to contributing to the continuation of NATO's *raison d'être*, has also paved the way for NATO to operate outside Europe. However, since this new enemy can also manifest itself in non-state structures, the existence of terrorism has become a new phenomenon for NATO. For this reason, it is extremely important for NATO to consider global terrorism as the main threat of the 21st century in order to better understand the threat posed by its enemy. Likewise, the United States Ambassador to NATO stated at a NATO summit: "With the fight against terrorism now engaged, it is difficult to imagine a future without the Alliance at the center of efforts to defend our civilization." (Sloan, 2005: 215).

Although the areas opened to NATO by the global terrorist threat are important, there are also problematic areas it brings. The most important of these areas and one that needs attention is the relationship between NATO and Türkiye in the context of terrorism. Türkiye has had to struggle with security threats for years due to its geopolitical location. Despite the new order that emerged both during the Cold War and after the Cold War, Türkiye's biggest threat perception has been

terrorism and security almost uninterrupted. Ultimately, Türkiye saw terrorist attacks as a threat to its national security and sovereign rights.

NATO's perception of friend and foe has enabled it to be a successful organization against the threats it faces. However, when it comes to Türkiye, questions have arisen regarding the nature of friendly relations. As a matter of fact, Türkiye, which has always been important to NATO in terms of its military capacity, experience and power, asked NATO to address its concerns about terrorism and security through the law of friendship. However, the interesting part is that both NATO and various NATO allies, let alone listening to Türkiye's concerns about terrorist organizations, have provided some aid and support to terrorist organizations and their members. This inconsistent situation contradicts the perception of friendship, from the French judiciary, which could not see ASALA members as terrorists during the Cold War, to NATO allies who allow aid activities and propaganda activities on behalf of the PKK today - despite it being recognized as a terrorist organization by both the European Union and NATO (Gunter, 1985; Aksünger, 2022).

Another important issue that contradicts Türkiye-NATO friendship arose during the coup attempt on July 15, 2016. Even days after the coup attempt that day was prevented, some NATO member allies did not condemn the attempt and maintained their silence (Karataş, 2021: 165). Moreover, the fact that the officers of NATO allied countries who served with the soldiers who attempted the coup did not detect the preparations for the coup or did not convey information to the Turkish government was interpreted by some as support for those who attempted the coup

(Kibaroglu, 2017: 8). Likewise, the asylum of people affiliated with terrorism in NATO countries makes friendly relations erosive and difficult (Mango, 2005: 44-45).

When we put all these events aside and look at the other side of the coin, Türkiye and NATO have a very long common history together. Despite all these threat perceptions that Türkiye hears, there does not yet appear to be an alternative option other than NATO. Likewise, from NATO's perspective, Türkiye is a country that cannot be ignored due to its strong defense industry, state experience and proximity to important conflict areas. Based on this, it should be understood that it is essential for Türkiye and NATO to take steps to strengthen their friendship ties at a time when the problems and threats in today's international relations, far from decreasing, are constantly increasing.

Conclusion

From Ancient Greece to the Roman Empire, from Medieval Europe to the Bipolar order, a "dual" structure has always been observed through the existence of the "other". Barbarians for Ancient Greece, Germans for the Roman Empire, non-Christians in the Middle Ages, and the communist front in the bipolar world formed the other side of this dual structure. NATO, which is examined as the main element of this study, was not structured outside of this historical context. The Eurocentric perspective, which always finds the other in history to exist, has also been theoreticalized in a military security organization such as NATO. As a matter of fact, Portugal's inclusion in NATO while there was a totalitarian government, or Türkiye's and Greece's remaining in NATO despite their democracies damaged by coups in the past,

are manifestations of distrust in the other. NATO, which does not build its understanding of friend around a pure ideology, has positioned its enemy, that is, the other, within a precise ideological framework.

The study tried to put into a theoretical context with historical examples why NATO did not disintegrate, but instead emerged from these turning points by getting stronger, through three important turning points - the rise of communism, extreme nationalism and global terrorism. The study carried out this effort with the propositions of the constructivist and institutionalist perspectives. The conclusion that the perception of friend and enemy is not fixed but rather represents a transformational situation has been reached through examples from the historical process. Moreover, acting with the mentality of an institution, NATO has maintained its drive to reposition itself by acting proactively to preserve its organizational structure. The fact that NATO maintains its structure in the period between the disappearance of the enemy that threatens its existence and the emergence of a possible new threat shows that NATO has an institutional consciousness.

With the examples given based on Türkiye's security concerns, it was aimed to emphasize how open to change the perception of NATO as a friend is. It has been concluded that the distinction between who is friend and who is foe is not made with the same determination in every member country, that threats are evaluated relatively among friendly countries, and as a result, NATO's friendship ties may lead to internal wear and tear.

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