

Chapter 15

NATO Without the USA: How Long Will the Alliance Survive Without American Leadership?

Przemysław Łukasik

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2358-9770>

Pedagogical University, Cracow, Poland

ABSTRACT

The NATO without the United States concept seems to be on the verge of futurological discourse and science fiction. This does not change the fact that the discourse on the possible duration of the North Atlantic alliance with the limited participation of the American partner existed in the past and will probably continue in the future. The discourse conducted by politicians, political scientists, and journalists reveals questions for Europe not only about the quality of the transatlantic agreement in the 21st century, but also about the shape of the European integration project and the political, economic, and defense condition of the old continent in general. The aim of this chapter is to look at the projects of European defense sovereignty from the perspective of the concepts, means, and political will needed to implement them. The analysis is designed to take into account the perspectives from both sides of the Atlantic.

INTRODUCTION

There is only one thing worse than fighting with allies, and that is fighting without them. Winston Churchill

The idea of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization without the United States seems to be a science-fiction idea. Although the transatlantic relationship has its better and worse moments, it seems very unlikely from the perspective of over seven decades of NATO's existence. This is due to the assumptions of the alliance that emerged in 1949 which assumed the protection of Europe through America's military umbrella (including the nuclear one). It forced a permanent military presence of US forces on the Old Continent. The end of the Cold War did not change much, both in the eyes of the European members of the Alliance, and in Washington's perspective. Contrary to the principle of alliances falling apart when

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-7998-7118-7.ch015

they win, the Pact continues. Stanley R Sloan in his book *Defense of the West: NATO, the European Union and the Transatlantic Bargain* (Sloan, 2016) recalled that the founders of the Alliance assumed a kind of transatlantic agreement: the possibility of joint action of post-war Europe, and the US helping to protect the continent. However, the transatlantic agreement is evolving with the Alliance. The last 30 years are the history of modernization through Alliance adaptation. We are talking here about both: the expansion of the geographical scope of operation and the perception of a new type of threat. The pace and nature of Alliance-change do not satisfy everyone equally. The idea of no US military presence in Europe, however, appears more and more often, provoking various speculations. President Barack Obama announced that the country will focus on Southeast Asia. During the term of President Donald Trump, the US withdrew from the treaty on the liquidation of intermediate and medium-range missiles (INF) and the possibility of Americans withdrawing from the North Atlantic Alliance was suggested several times (Trump, 2018; Barnes and Cooper, 2018; Amid, 2019). The good climate of transatlantic cooperation within the alliance was also not guaranteed by claims that the European allies would not bear the financial burdens of the alliance.

These events sparked a sense of unease and even fear in Europe of the American ally leaving, especially in the view of a possible return to the arms race. The French president suggested turning America's back on the European project by using the phrase "NATO is becoming brain-dead" (Emmanuel Macron warns Europe: NATO is becoming brain-dead, 2019). An expression of this concern was the discourse of politicians, political scientists and journalists on the prospects of the alliance's existence without America, and the chances of "European sovereignty" in the area of security. By analyzing the meanders of this discourse, we can see several of its levels: a review of the evolution of the nature of transatlantic relations and changes in the global order and challenges to international security; European security autonomy as a way to prepare Europe for the functioning of the Alliance without the United States; debate as means to transform transatlantic relations towards making the European Foreign and Security Policy an equal pillar of NATO's security partner.

TRANS-ATLANTIC LOVE-HATE STORY

"Understanding is based on a share basis, and those were and still are the values personified by Western civilisation, which, like a bridge over the Atlantic Ocean, connects two cousins with some precious blood ties. (...) Understanding, ultimately, should rely on common sense, which avoids extremes and the squabbling between opposites. Some tensions in transatlantic relations do, and will, remain" (Lukasik, Arnold, 2012, 54).

William Shakespeare was called "the great author of America" by German immigrants to the USA in the 19th century (Cullen, 2007, 36). The dramas, poems and sonnets of the English playwright were widely known in America. Shakespeare can also be regarded as intermediary and interlocutor between love and hate that is the main content of his plays. Particularly outstanding and well known is his tragedy *Romeo and Juliet* that he wrote at an early stage of his career. Tragedy of lovers from two warring families in Verona demonstrates a fight between people of the same kinship, blood relationship, and culture (Lukasik, Arnold, 2012, 24).

We can safely call the history of the transatlantic alliance a kind of love and hate story. According to a formula often attributed to NATO's first secretary-general, Lord Hastings Ismay, 'NATO was designed

14 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage:

www.igi-global.com/chapter/nato-without-the-usa/286732

Related Content

The Healthcare Financing and Health Outcomes in Zambia

Ali Syed and Urooj Afshan Jabeen (2019). *Human Rights, Public Values, and Leadership in Healthcare Policy* (pp. 65-86).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/the-healthcare-financing-and-health-outcomes-in-zambia/217255

Evaluation of the Results of the Implementation of the Financial Control Principles

(2023). *Principles of Financial Control in the Public Sector* (pp. 143-159).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/evaluation-of-the-results-of-the-implementation-of-the-financial-control-principles/324377

Public Procurement and Stakeholders: Assessing Namibia's Consultative Processes and Challenges

Clayton Peel, Anna Mwadina Hamalwa and Godwin Kaisara (2022). *Interdisciplinary Approaches to the Future of Africa and Policy Development* (pp. 137-149).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/public-procurement-and-stakeholders/299718

Methodology for Studying the Principles of Financial Control

(2023). *Principles of Financial Control in the Public Sector* (pp. 105-125).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/methodology-for-studying-the-principles-of-financial-control/324375

An Analytical Study of Biomedical Waste Management in Indian Healthcare

Nishika Bhatia and Siddharth Tandon (2024). *Bridging Health, Environment, and Legalities: A Holistic Approach* (pp. 111-139).

www.irma-international.org/chapter/an-analytical-study-of-biomedical-waste-management-in-indian-healthcare/338118