NON-TRADITIONAL SECURITY THREATS AND NATO'S RESPONSE IN THE CONTEMPORARY SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

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ABSTRACT

This research paper emphasizes the importance of NATO's adaptation to non-traditional threats in maintaining stability and security in the changing security environment. It highlights the need for NATO allies to prioritize the development of strategies and action plans that address emerging issues such as new technologies, energy security, climate change, hybrid threats, and cyber threats.

The paper suggests that in order to effectively counter these non-traditional threats, NATO must remain current with the latest technological advancements. As such, the paper recommends that NATO allies develop new strategies and action plans without delay to counter these threats and ensure security. The relevance of NATO can only be ensured through its transformation and adaptation, which in turn makes its existence self-justified.

Key words: Non-traditional threats, NATO, security

INTRODUCTION

The Center for Eastern European Studies has recently published a report titled "Non-Traditional Threats and NATO" wherein non-traditional threats are defined as those that cannot be fully resolved by conventional forces and weapons. (Scrima and Vedrickas, 2020) The 2010 strategic concept of the Alliance, contained clauses related to the need to adapt the alliance to the new environment and to face increasingly complex threats such as: terrorism, cybercrime, security of transit routes for trade and energy, trends the new from the field of technology and global climate change and health. Since then, the security environment has changed significantly, so the transatlantic alliance has an immediate need to adapt to this new strategic environment.

Non-traditional threats have been significant concern in the range of challenges identified by the reflective group selected by Secretary General Stoltenberg, and the alliance's preparation to confront them is emphasized in their recommendations. *(NATO 2023: United for a New Era, 2020)*

The current NATO Strategic Concept (2022) highlights that the challenges faced by NATO are diverse and complex and require a comprehensive approach. The organization must navigate a range of security threats, including the rise of authoritarian actors, terrorism, conflict and instability in Africa and the Middle East, and cyber threats. Authoritarian actors pose a significant challenge to NATO's interests and values, investing in conventional, nuclear, and missile capabilities with little regard for international norms and commitments. Strategic competitors, meanwhile, seek to exploit the openness and digitalization of NATO member nations, interfering in democratic processes and institutions and using hybrid tactics to target the security of citizens. Terrorism in all its forms represents a direct asymmetric threat to international peace and prosperity, with terrorist organizations seeking to attack or inspire attacks against NATO member nations.

Conflict, fragility, and instability in Africa and the Middle East directly affect NATO's security and the security of its partners. These regions face a range of interconnected security, demographic, economic, and political challenges that are aggravated by climate change, fragile institutions, health emergencies, and food insecurity. These conditions provide fertile ground for the proliferation of non-state armed groups, including terrorist organizations, and enable destabilizing and coercive interference by strategic competitors.

Pervasive instability results in violence against civilians, conflict-related sexual violence, attacks against cultural property, and environmental damage. It also contributes to forced displacement, fueling human trafficking and irregular migration, which pose serious transnational and humanitarian challenges. Cyberspace is another contested arena, with malign actors seeking to degrade critical infrastructure, interfere with government services, extract intelligence, steal intellectual property, and impede military activities.

In light of these threats, NATO must stay up to date with the latest technological advancements to maintain stability and security. Allies will need to shift their focus towards developing strategies and action plans to address these security challenges over the coming decade.

NEW TECHNOLOGIES

NATO considers technology to be one of its top strategic challenges. The emergence of new technologies brings not only challenges, but also opportunities. The emergence and disruption of new technologies offer both prospects and dangers, changing the nature of conflicts, acquiring a more significant strategic role, and becoming critical arenas of worldwide rivalry. Technological superiority is increasingly crucial for achieving success in military operations. (NATO Strategic Concept, 2022) In order to fulfill its core role of collective defense against a range of threats, NATO must keep pace with the latest technological advancements. By effectively addressing these challenges, NATO remains a modern alliance that is well-equipped to meet its objectives. NATO remains interested and committed to utilizing Emerging and Disruptive Technologies (EDT) to fulfill its mission and duties in maintaining security. The significant impact of EDT on the security of NATO members and the people living within its borders makes it essential to adapt to these technologies and utilize them effectively.

In this context, NATO's current challenge is to transform into an organization that can adjust and integrate new technologies at a rate that aligns with the constantly evolving landscape of Emerging and Disruptive Technologies (EDT). A group of experts conducted a study on the development of new technologies and the challenges they pose to NATO, which identified the need for the alliance to adapt and adopt these technologies at a pace that is compatible with the rapidly evolving landscape. (*NATO Advisory Group on Emerging and Disruptive Technologies Annual Report*, 2020)

CLIMATE CHANGE AND TRANSATLANTIC SECURITY

The concept of energy security cannot be examined in isolation, as it is intricately linked to both climate change and environmental security. Climate change represents one of the most pressing challenges confronting mankind in contemporary times. This fact has significant implications for the future operational activities of NATO, as the organization is recognized as the world's largest military force and holds a leading role in safeguarding global security. Given its genesis during the Cold War when the realist theory dominated, NATO's actions in the 21st century are defined by the organization's threat perception, which determines its purpose and outcomes. (Causevic, 2017)

As part of its ongoing efforts to integrate climate change threats into its operations, NATO has adopted various frameworks over the years, including the Green Defense initiative and the Wales Summit Declaration of 2014. These frameworks aim to enhance the effectiveness of energy usage, thereby conserving resources and promoting environmental sustainability. In the context of global efforts to combat climate change, the pledge of achieving zero emissions is a significant commitment that has been primarily made by the developed countries of the Western world. The stabilization of global temperature increase is expected through the reduction of carbon dioxide to zero by 2050, as stipulated by the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement. During the June 2021 summit, NATO declared that its members had committed to "significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions from military activities." (BBC News, 2021) In a report released on 28 June 2022, NATO acknowledges climate change as an overarching challenge of the current era, one that is projected to substantially heighten security risks and exacerbate as global temperatures continue to rise. NATO calls for a fundamental transformation in its approach to defense and security, positioning itself as a premier international organization committed to comprehending and adapting to climate change. The report presents a sobering assessment of the current state of affairs and underscores the imperative of swift and comprehensive action. (Climate Change & Security Impact Assessment, 2022) The inclusion of climate change in NATO's new agenda highlights the growing recognition of this issue as a matter of global defense and security.

TERRORISM

Terrorism has emerged as a paramount challenge in the new millennium, warranting significant attention and investigation in the field of research. In contemporary times, terrorism has become a crucial phenomenon and a pressing issue in the realm of global security. The phenomenon of terrorism poses a significant contemporary challenge, endangering international peace, security, and stability. The rise of terrorism has not only become a major challenge for the international system but also for national systems, where it challenges the traditional Westphalian order, in which the state holds a monopoly on the use of force. Although terrorism has been a recurring issue throughout human history, the devastating impact of the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, prompted many scholars to consider it as a defining moment for the new world order. As a result, the era that followed September 11 has been widely regarded as a new epoch, marked by significant global changes and security challenges. During the early pre-modern era, certain groups resorted to violence as a means to achieve their political objectives and overcome their adversaries. The origins of modern-day terrorism can be traced back to the late 19th century, during the rise of insurgent anarchism in Europe. Notably, the Macedonian Internal Revolutionary Organization, recognized as a terrorist group during the Ottoman era, employed the slogan "propaganda par le fait" or "freedom or death". In his book, Brzezinski discusses this threat and argues that it is not a new phenomenon. He notes that:

"It was widespread in Europe and in Tsarist Russia from the mid-nineteenth century until the start of World War I, involving thousands of violent attacks, including high-profile assassinations and blowing up buildings. About 7,000 officials and policemen were its victims in Russia alone, including even the Tsar. Its most spectacular manifestation was the assassination of the Duke of Austria-Hungary, Franz Ferdinand, in Sarajevo, which ignited the First World War."

(Brzezinski, 2006)

Although the United States may perceive terrorism as a relatively new threat, historically, violent acts aimed at defeating adversaries or achieving political objectives have been employed as a tactic for centuries. Renowned terrorism researcher David Rapoport has identified four distinct eras of terrorism based on the varying characteristics of violence use, goals, and mode of action by terrorist organizations in modern times. These eras have a lifespan of approximately three to

four decades before gradually fading out. The first era, known as the anarchist era, emerged in the 1880s, followed by the anti-colonial wave starting in the 1920s. The third era, known as the New Left or red terrorism, emerged in the 1960s. The fourth and ongoing era, religious terrorism, emerged in 1979. Rapoport's categorization offers a valuable framework for comprehending the evolution and patterns of terrorism in contemporary times. (Rapoport, 2002)

In the field of terrorism studies, the task of defining terrorism and achieving a consensus on a universally accepted definition is widely regarded as one of the most challenging aspects. Alex Schmid, a prominent researcher in terrorism and counterterrorism, outlines four reasons why defining terrorism is a difficult task. First, terrorism is a contested concept and different political, legal, and social contexts give rise to different interpretations. Second, defining terrorism is related to the legitimization, delegitimization, and criminalization of certain groups, which makes it a sensitive and politically charged issue. Third, there are many different types of terrorism, each with its own unique characteristics and manifestations. Finally, the term "terrorism" has undergone changes in meaning over the more than two hundred years of its existence, further complicating the process of definition. (Schmid, 2011)

Although a widely known academic consensus definition from 1988 exists, researchers and policymakers are still making efforts to come up with a generally accepted definition of terrorism. (Schmid, 2011)

Terrorism represents today an immediate and asymmetric threat. The threat of terrorism has evolved from being primarily a national concern to becoming a global one. Terrorist groups are regarded as transnational actors that operate beyond national and regional boundaries, thereby conferring upon terrorism the characteristic of a transnational phenomenon. The danger posed by terrorism cannot be solely measured by the number of deaths it causes. According to scholars Nye and Welch (2014), national terrorism has caused fewer than five thousand victims per year over the past fifteen years, excluding September 11 and the insurgent attacks on foreign targets in Afghanistan and Iraq. Despite the relatively low death toll, terrorism remains a significant contemporary threat due to the fear and insecurity it instills in people. The constant threat of terrorism has created a state of emergency that permeates daily life and generates fear among individuals and communities. This situation poses a significant threat to national security, particularly in Western countries that have been targeted by terrorist attacks.

The challenge of combating transnational terrorism is formidable due to its complexity and the fact that it operates across borders and jurisdictions. Following the September 11 attacks, the American national strategy was refocused on the goal of combating terrorism, which was declared by President Bush to be the primary objective. This effort, known as the Global War on Terrorism, involves international cooperation to counteract the threat of terrorism worldwide. After the 9/11 attacks, President Bush launched two distinct military preventive operations. The first, Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, aimed to dismantle the infrastructure of the terrorist organization responsible for the attacks, Al Qaeda, and to remove the Taliban regime. The second was Operation Iraqi Freedom, which involved the invasion of Iraq due to suspicions of developing a program to produce weapons of mass destruction and its alleged support for Islamic terrorism. One of the greatest concerns of the West was rooted in the potential for these weapons to be acquired by terrorist groups, which would have catastrophic consequences. Although the first mission was considered a success, both in achieving its goals and gaining wide international support, the second mission was believed to have had a negative impact on the fight against terrorism. This intervention has generated extensive debate and criticism, leading to a significant cooling of relations between transatlantic allies.

The Obama administration adopted a new approach to American foreign policy, abandoning the use of the term "war on terrorism" and advocating for the use of non-traditional methods of warfare to combat non-traditional forms of conflict. The struggle against terrorism, according to Brzezinski, should not be an end in itself, as he advocates for the same approach. The primary strategic concern, according to Brzezinski (2006), is to determine with whom and by what means the United States can effectively shape a better world. This demands the implementation of persistent transatlantic and transpacific policies. Despite ongoing instability and the persistent threat posed by organizations such as the Islamic State (ISIS), NATO completed its withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan on the twentieth anniversary of the 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States. Meanwhile, a renewed commitment to the region remains in effect for Iraq. The mission established in October 2018 following a request from the government of Iraq is a non-combat advisory and capacity-building mission. Its goal is to assist Iraq in building more sustainable, transparent, inclusive and effective armed forces and security institutions. The aim of this mission is to enable Iraqis to stabilize their country, fight terrorism, and prevent the return of ISIS. This mission was launched during the NATO Summit in Brussels in July 2018. The current global

security environment has undergone a significant transformation, presenting critical challenges regarding the role of the state and the struggle of ideologies. According to Phil Williams, the initial significant threat to the American unipolar order post the Cold War didn't come from a state but rather from a terrorist network. He argues that terrorist groups have an advantage over the state because they are agile, distributed, well-organized, and capable of transforming themselves under pressure, whereas the state is often seen as clumsy, sluggish, hierarchical, and bureaucratic. (Baylis et al., 2013)

Terrorism presents the most significant challenge to the transatlantic doctrine. This is because the implementation of the collective defense clause of Article 5 of the treaty, which forms the core of the transatlantic doctrine, occurred only once after the terrorist attacks of September 11, making terrorism the biggest challenge to the doctrine. The NATO's 2022 strategic concept describes terrorism as the primary asymmetric threat to both global security and the safety of individuals within the strategic environment section. Terrorist groups aim to attack or inspire attacks against the transatlantic allies. These groups have increased their influence and abilities while utilizing modern technologies to expand their scope and power. Furthermore, non-state armed groups such as transnational terrorist organizations and state-backed actors exploit political instability and ineffective governance to bolster their recruitment, mobilization, and territorial expansion. (NATO, 2022) Even though the responsibility for the fight against terrorism primarily falls on individual NATO member states and not the organization as a whole, the willingness and readiness of potential new members to participate in this fight has played a significant role in the decision-making process for their NATO membership. The Atlantic alliance needs to address the challenge of terrorism as a form of warfare alongside the challenges of traditional warfare, hybrid warfare, emerging technologies, arms control, disarmament, and weapons of mass destruction. To successfully combat terrorism as a hybrid threat, a polycentric and comprehensive approach is required. Therefore, political and intelligent methods should form the basic ingredients for creating the strategy and action plan of the allied states.

ARMS CONTROL, DISARMAMENT AND WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION

Arms control is at the top of the list of international security challenges and cannot be excluded from the transatlantic alliance's agenda. In the realm of security studies, strategy, and international relations literature, the term "arms control" is commonly linked to the concepts of disarmament, weapons of mass destruction, and international initiatives aimed at regulating their proliferation. Using these three terms interchangeably requires defining them at the outset of any study on these issues.

Hedley Bull, a researcher in the field of international relations, defines arms control as "limitations placed at the international level on policies related to armaments, including their level, type, distribution, and use." (Bull, 1961) NATO defines arms control as the broadest term among disarmament, non-proliferation, and arms control. It typically involves mutually agreed restrictions or controls on the development, production, stockpiling, proliferation, deployment, and use of troops, small arms, conventional weapons, and weapons of mass destruction, usually between states. Arms control also encompasses agreements that promote transparency of military capabilities and activities to reduce the risk of misinterpretation or miscalculation. In contrast, disarmament refers to the elimination or abolishment of weapons, including teaching weapons, either unilaterally or reciprocally. It can refer to reducing the number of arms or eliminating entire categories of weapons. (NATO, 2023) Hedley Bull (1961) defined disarmament as the reduction or removal of armaments. In a study of disarmament policies conducted in 1962, researchers Spanier and Nogee established a clear distinction between arms control and disarmament. They elucidated that disarmament pertains to the complete or partial removal of the human and material resources of war, while arms control concerns the restrictions that can be imposed on the employment of nuclear weapons. (Spanier and Nogee, 1962)

The third term - "weapons of mass destruction" gained prominence in the international discourse following the terrorist attacks of 9/11. Previously, the term "weapons of mass destruction" was primarily used by professionals within their respective fields of interest and was not commonly known or used in international public discourse. It was first institutionalized in 1946 by the United Nations General Assembly in a resolution that referred to them as "weapons capable of mass destruction". However, the term "weapons of mass destruction" soon became the

preferred usage and defined the concept in the form that became the starting point for all future uses of the term. According to this definition:

"Weapons of mass destruction are atomic explosive weapons, radioactive material weapons, lethal chemical and biological weapons, and any weapons developed in the future which have characteristics comparable in destructive effect to those of the atomic bomb or other weapons mentioned above." (Carus, 2012)

Buzan and Herring are recognized as influential security scholars who have made significant contributions to the field, particularly in the areas of arms control, weapons of mass destruction, and related contemporary challenges. In their published work, they have defined weapons of mass destruction as "weapons of which small numbers can destroy life and/or inanimate objects on a vast scale very quickly". (Buzan and Herring, 1998) Weapons of mass destruction pose a threat not only due to their existence but also their potential for proliferation. Hence, when discussing the challenges and risks in the contemporary global security landscape or the transatlantic challenges of the 21st century, the term "weapons of mass destruction" from the previous century is commonly paired with the word "(non)proliferation." The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction has been defined by the transatlantic organization as the deliberate actions taken by state or non-state actors to develop, acquire, produce, possess, transport, transfer or use nuclear, chemical or biological weapons and their means of delivery, or related materials, without regard for the obligations and rights of signatory states to treaties on the non-proliferation and limitation of these weapons. This definition highlights the grave concern that such proliferation poses to global security and underscores the need for international cooperation to prevent it. (NATO, 2023)

Although nuclear weapons were first used at the end of World War II, their development and deployment became a defining feature of the Cold War. During the Cold War period, nuclear weapons and other unconventional weapons, commonly referred to as strategic weapons, were widely considered as weapons of mass destruction. The production of these weapons was seen as maintaining a "balance of terror" between the two opposing blocs, NATO and the Warsaw Pact, for almost half a century. After the Cuban Missile Crisis, the United States and the Soviet Union made their first efforts towards cooperation in arms control and limitation, recognizing the great danger posed by the uncontrolled arms race. After the Cuban Missile Crisis, the two superpowers

took the first steps towards arms control and limitation, recognizing the dangers of the arms race. Two significant treaties, the Partial Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (1963) and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (1968), were signed during this period. These agreements paved the way for cooperation during the détente phase, exemplified by the security plan at the Conference on European Security in Helsinki, which was discussed in the first chapter. During the period of détente, talks between the two blocs had led to the signing of two landmark treaties aimed at limiting the arms race involving long-range or intercontinental ballistic missiles equipped with nuclear warheads. These treaties were known as SALT I and SALT II. While SALT II was not ratified until 1982, it was nevertheless respected by both parties. The cooperation between the two opposing blocs in the sphere of security provided strong evidence that both powers were aware of the ultimately self-destructive effects of a nuclear conflict. The vital interest of both sides became the avoidance of a nuclear war, which led to the growth of mutual trust and the preservation of relative peace in the globe for half a century. Critics of arms control argue that the signatories of these treaties did not adhere to their commitments and continued to produce significant quantities of weapons, even enhancing their quality through advances in technology.

Following the end of the Cold War, the nuclear arsenal of the Soviet Union emerged as a primary concern for Western powers. This arsenal was left in the former Soviet states, which were going through a difficult transition in the process towards democratization, raising concerns about the possibility of weapons falling into the wrong hands or being sold on the black market. The transatlantic allies were increasingly concerned about the Soviet Union's nuclear arsenal after the end of the Cold War, which was left in the former Soviet states that were undergoing a difficult transition towards democratization. This concern was further heightened by the possibility of the weapons and nuclear material falling into the hands of non-state actors or being spread beyond the Euro-Atlantic territory. Thus, President Reagan's initial proposal for a Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty between the two nuclear powers was realized in 1991 through the START treaty, which represents the largest arms control effort ever attempted. By 2001, its implementation had resulted in the elimination of about 80% of all strategic nuclear weapons belonging to both superpowers. As a part of the SALT I agreements, the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM) was signed in 1972, which limited the deployment of strategic missile defense systems to 200 interceptors (later reduced to 100) and prevented the emergence of a destabilizing arms race in the field of missile defense. The United States unilaterally withdrew from the ABM Treaty in June 2002, with the

justification articulated by President Bush that the treaty prevented the development of US defenses against possible terrorist attacks or "rogue states" with ballistic missiles. This decision was met with criticism from some experts and countries who argued that it would lead to a destabilizing arms race, and it also prompted Russia's unilateral withdrawal from START II.

> *"Our Nation also needs a clear strategy to confront the threats of the 21st century, threats that are more widespread and less certain. They range from terrorists who threaten with bombs to tyrants and rogue nations intent on developing weapons of mass destruction. To protect our own people, our allies and friends, we must develop, and we must deploy effective missile defenses. And as we transform our military, we can discard Cold War relics, and reduce our own nuclear forces to reflect today's needs." (Bush, 2001)*

According to him, Russia no longer represents an enemy. The Press Secretary's announcement regarding the withdrawal from the ABM Treaty stated that Russia is no longer seen as an enemy, but rather as a partner in addressing new security threats. These threats include the growing pursuit of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems by terrorist groups and rogue states, which pose significant challenges for both the United States and Russia in the current security environment. (*ABM Treaty Fact Sheet*, 2001) Subsequently, the American National Strategy for weapons of mass destruction was unveiled, which sparked a significant scholarly debate between disarmament advocates and realists. The latter argue that nuclear arsenals serve as a deterrent against attacks from other states and help maintain relative peace, as was the case during the Cold War's bipolar system. Despite changes in the global security environment and the evolving challenges faced by transatlantic allies, Russia has once again emerged as a top security concern. Meanwhile, weapons of mass destruction remain a worldwide threat. The widespread availability of weapons of mass destruction and the risk of them falling into the hands of non-state actors, such as individuals, terrorist groups, or unstable states, pose the greatest threat to global security. As a result, significant efforts have been made to prevent the spread of these weapons in recent times. President Obama's announcement in 2009 marked a significant shift in the international discourse on arms control. He expressed a strong commitment to achieving "a world without nuclear weapons," and pledged to pursue an arms reduction treaty with Russia and to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. (Obama, 2009) Despite the Comprehensive

Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty not being ratified, President Obama's commitment to seeking an arms limitation treaty with Russia and establishing a new treaty was fulfilled with the implementation of the New START treaty in 2010. The treaty's term was recently extended for another five years in February 2021. (*United States Department of State*, 2021)

Russia is seen by the West as an international actor that disregards agreements and persistently violates them, including the recently renewed New START treaty. However, the most pressing challenge to the Western world regarding nuclear proliferation arises from North Korea and Iran, the two nuclear powers. North Korea withdrew from the non-proliferation agreement and conducted its first nuclear test in 2006, while Iran persists in pursuing its nuclear energy program, making diplomacy and multilateral international forums the only viable options for addressing these two countries. Pakistan is one of the countries that possess nuclear weapons and is considered a problematic state in this regard. Its potential threat should not be overlooked due to anti-Western sentiments, political, state, and institutional instability, conflicts with neighboring countries like India, Iran, China, and Afghanistan, as well as widespread terrorist activity within its borders. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which is a legally binding agreement to comprehensively prohibit nuclear weapons with the ultimate goal of their complete elimination, represents one of the latest efforts by the United Nations to disarm and control weapons of mass destruction. The treaty was approved in 2017 and entered into force in January 2021. (Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, 2017)

Simultaneously, NATO allies have signed several treaties, including the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Biological Weapons Convention, the Ottawa Convention on Mine Action, and various other agreements that promote arms control, disarmament, and the prevention of weapons proliferation, not just weapons of mass destruction.

Despite not being a party to any treaties on arms control and non-proliferation, the Atlantic alliance is still deeply committed to this issue. NATO supports the control of weapons and their mechanisms, but only to the extent that it does not impede deterrence, including nuclear deterrence, which is still seen as a vital tool for maintaining peace and security in the organization's realistic worldview.

CONCLUSIONS

Global security faces significant challenges originating from the increasing sophistication of warfare and evolving methods of combat. The international landscape is undergoing profound changes driven by technological advancements, particularly in artificial intelligence, increasing the complexity of contemporary conflicts. These shifts challenge the established concept of state sovereignty that has underpinned the Westphalian system for centuries, encouraging a reconsideration of the role of states as primary actors in international relations.

As warfare becomes more complex and non-state actors gain prominence, the need for adaptation is vital. The transatlantic alliance, NATO, stands at a crucial moment where its transformation is not just advisable but imperative. The insights collected from our examination of terrorism underscore the rise of transnational challenges that transcend borders, necessitating a collective response beyond the capabilities of individual states. Terrorism, as a hybrid threat, demands a polycentric and comprehensive approach, aligning with the multidimensional challenges of the contemporary security environment.

Moreover, our analysis of arms control highlights the complex network of international agreements and the imperative for global cooperation to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. This aligns with the broader theme of adapting to an unpredictable world where non-state actors have significant influence. NATO's commitment to arms control and disarmament, despite not being a party to specific treaties, showcases its dedication to fostering global stability.

In essence, NATO's transformation becomes self-justifying in light of these challenges. It serves as a vital platform for collective defense and security cooperation among member states, bridging the gap between traditional concepts of security and the complexities of the modern international order. As NATO evolves, it not only safeguards the interests and values of its members but also contributes to the broader mission of upholding international law and human rights in an ever-changing global landscape.

Adapting to these changes is not merely a strategic choice but a fundamental necessity for the international community to maintain peace and security. NATO's continued evolution positions it

as a cornerstone in addressing the challenges of the current international environment, reaffirming its relevance in preserving a stable and secure future.

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