



NATO's Problems

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NATO approaches the Bucharest summit with a serious problem: Afghanistan. It is widely held that the troops deployed there by NATO are severely insufficient to face the growing threat posed by both the reestablished Taliban forces and the terrorists, which form a part of global jihad. Even more serious, is the fact that only a small portion of the soldiers in the Allied forces is prepared to face, fight and defeat the enemy. Many of them, including the Spanish contingent, are only permitted by their respective governments to assist with the reconstruction of infrastructure, and, if necessary, in the worst-case scenario to act out of self-defense. Overall, however, Afghanistan is not the cause of the hardships facing the

Atlantic Alliance today. Afghanistan, in reality, is only one of its many problems. It's an additional symptom, but not the illness itself.

NATO is now burdened with a number of deep-rooted divisions. The solutions to these divisions will be extremely complex no matter how much hope the highest political representatives place on the coming summit. Firstly, there is the traditional disagreement between America and the European Allies regarding NATO's strategic approach and the role that the Alliance should play. The United States has a global vision, pressured by the war on terror, and based on the desire to spread liberal democracy throughout the world. It wants to expand

NATO eastwards and beyond. This goes completely against the goals of the Europeans, who greatly fear a global NATO. Secondly, both old and new European states are divided, as the deployment of the ballistic missile shield has been brought into sharper focus. While the older members of NATO are concerned about their peace missions, Central European members are still highly concerned about Russia and are desperately seeking Washington's help in order to counter the influence of Moscow. One of the most controversial debates deals with the question of how to handle Russia and what kind of relationship it must have with the United States. A third question is related to the relationship between the Allies and non-NATO countries and to what extent they play a role in current operations and in ensuring international security. Relating to this subject, Japan, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand and Israel cannot go

unmentioned. There is much disagreement within NATO on how these countries should be integrated within the Allied framework. Lastly, there is the eternal division between those who have the military capacity to take action wherever necessary and those who do not- the latter forming an extremely worrisome majority.

These problems are at the root of the current crisis facing the Atlantic Alliance. Unfortunately, an obvious and effective way to overcome them does not exist. The fact that NATO is facing serious problems is no longer being denied. We will have to wait and see whether homeopathic therapy, which is always favored by bureaucrats, will be sufficient to resolve this situation. If not, NATO will only have one option; an option which it has refused since the emergence of these problems in 1989: shock therapy.