

NATO Expands

The idea of converting NATO into a body with the faculty of deciding an attack on any country without prior UN authorization has a number of sponsors, including high-level US advisors and certain Europeans who have lost the compass of continental sovereignty and are abandoning efforts to equip themselves with their own defense system without US tutelage, pressure and jostling.

It is about a clan made up of "stable democracies" in any latitude which, having NATO as a skeleton, would act wherever they consider it necessary or it suits them. Something so distant from international legality minimizes the deficiencies of the current UN structures, which at least achieve certain balances and moderations covering a number of mistakes.

The military pretension has its antecedents. The NATO intervention in Bosnia Herzegovina which changed the course of the internal dispute in the early 90s was undertaken by NATO outside the framework of the UN. The bombardments of the then Republic of Yugoslavia in '99 likewise lacked the corresponding approbation of the international agency and, in that same Balkan scenario, another close and poisonous file warns of conflicts to come: the unilateral proclamation one year ago of Koso-van independence. It is known that Condoleezza Rice's second in command directed the Albanian-Kosovars to make the announcement on a Sunday so that Russia or China would be unable to convene the Security Council and veto a sovereignty that is in flagrant breach of UN resolutions and opens up perfidious references.

Those deadly aerial attacks on the former Yugoslavia initiated the era of "humanitarian intervention," a concept that is not excluded from the remodeled moulds seeking to utilize NATO as a replacement for the UN.

Apart from having acted AT DIFFERENT MOMENTS in line with Washington's decisions, NATO has utilized and maintains connections with countries that have nothing in common with European security or with a threat from the east, which never was, and even if there had been, it has disappeared.

Barack Obama has recently indicated that he is seeking to improve relations with Moscow, but this will not happen if NATO's growth is the cost of making friends with the Kremlin, where a logical displeasure at the gradual positioning of distant troops in such close vicinity to its borders prevails. Within that, such an increase in two former Soviet republics, Ukraine and Georgia is inadmissible. For the time being, this danger has been averted by the pragmatic realism of the Europeans, not refuted by Washington on this occasion.

While a rapprochement with Moscow is being proposed, there are other statements, like those of US General John Craddock who, addressing Congress, said that the Kremlin is trying to "weaken NATO," and predicted tense links with Moscow and the West, because Russia, according to him, wants to reduce European devotion to the USA and daunt its influence.

NATO and an alliance of democracies should impose the hegemony of the Western world and access to resources, by force if necessary, according to Ivo Daalder and James Goldgeier in the *Foreign Affairs* magazine, in reference to possible projections for the Alliance. Ivo was a member of Obama's team of

advisers and the new and decisive US ambassador to NATO. Those ideas indicate that natural resources are part of the arena, not pious actions or anti-terrorist battles, although they might be dressed up as such.

France's possible return to decision-making levels of the Pact could tangentially fortify these dubious projects. In 1966, General de Gaulle ordered the withdrawal of US bases and their transfer to the NATO headquarters, then in Paris, an action via which he gained sovereignty and France's own voice.

At this point in time, the economic crisis is conspiring against a "new" and shady NATO. Will Europe accept an increase in its war budgets when companies are shutting down, banks going bankrupt and unemployment rising on account of a crisis that Washington exported to the European nations? □ *[Contributed]*