

Forum: North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

Issue: Addressing the Growth of Foreign Hostile Organisations

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Introduction

The growth of foreign hostile organisations is a major challenge for NATO, one of the world's most powerful military alliances. This issue is relatively new such that in recent years it can be seen that organisations that are hostile to NATO have emerged. While NATO's membership is limited to Europe and North America under Article 10 of the North Atlantic Treaty, its influence is seen and felt worldwide. Key alliances in the Indo-Pacific, including partnerships with Japan and Australia, help NATO maintain the American-led global dominance that defines it today. NATO also benefits from historical ties to former European colonial territories by the French and British, such as the British Indian Ocean Territory, French Guiana, or more informally France's continued influence in West Africa, an anchor point for NATO's influence.

However, new and hostile organisations are already posing a growing danger to NATO. The rise of BRICS (a bloc primarily comprising Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) and China's informal alliance networks highlights a shift in global power dynamics, with these entities expanding their influence. In the Sahel region, the early 2020s saw a series of coups that led to the creation of the Alliance of Sahel States, an organization characterized by its anti-French and pro-Russian stance. These recent events demonstrate how NATO's sole focus on regional dangers has given way to a rise in opposing global alliances. NATO member states will need to work collectively to address these challenges in order to maintain the alliance's security and global influence.

Definition of Key Terms

1. **NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization):** A military alliance formed in 1949, comprising primarily North American and European nations, aimed at collective defence and security.

2. **BRICS:** An economic and political bloc consisting of Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Egypt, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Iran and the United Arab Emirates, often seen as a counterbalance to Western alliances.
3. **Sahel:** A region in Africa south of the Sahara, marked by political instability, coups, and growing influence from external powers such as Russia and China.
4. **Alliance of Sahel States:** A coalition formed by Sahelian countries, notable for being an anti-French and pro-Russian instance.
5. **Indo-Pacific:** A geopolitical region spanning the Indian and Pacific Oceans, where NATO allies like Japan and Australia play crucial roles.
6. **Chinese Network of Alliances:** Informal partnerships fostered by China to challenge Western hegemony, often aligned with BRICS or regional coalitions.

Background Information

NATO was first created by various European nations as well as the United States and Canada in 1949 after World War 2 to combat the growing power of the Soviet Union at its communist ideologies, and to safeguard allies in the region against the Soviets with a military alliance. Whilst the alliance agreed upon accepting no more nations than those who found it, as time progressed, many new nations were admitted, fueled by the pressures of the Cold War. The vast size of the alliance, paired with the military prevalence of many of its nations, especially the USA, has made NATO the largest military alliance in the world. Even with the fall of the soviet union in 1991, the alliance still stands, and hence many nations, including modern-day Russia, consider NATO a threat, and growing their alliances would aid in their protection from the West. Hence, many alliances have been formed since the creation of NATO that seem to stand opposed to the alliance, whether it be ideologically or militarily.

Warsaw Pact

Currently, there are no true foreign hostile organisations that may pose a strong military threat against NATO, however, many exist that may pose a more economic or influential threat, which are addressed later. With this in mind, there has historically been an organisation that worked against NATO directly, fighting for influence over Europe in the Cold War. This previous adversary was the Warsaw Pact which was created in 1955 as a counterbalance to NATO in the Cold War. The Warsaw Pact consisted of the soviet union and other communist Eastern European nations. Disbanded in 1991 due to the dissolution of the soviet union, the agreement

never truly engaged in military engagements against NATO or a NATO member during the Cold War, however did work to create policies against NATO's influence in Europe.

BRICS

BRICS was officially formed in 2009 during the first formal summit held in Yekaterinburg, Russia. The group originally started with Brazil, Russia, India, and China, but in 2010, South Africa was invited to join. With the addition of South Africa, there's representation from the African continent which made the group more globally inclusive. Through initiatives like the New Development Bank, BRICS aims to reduce reliance on Western financial systems, which weakens the economic leverage of NATO-aligned states. Furthermore, the economic alliance has seen a gradual increase in members, with Ethiopia, Egypt, Iran and the UAE joining in 2024, and Indonesia joining this year making it one of the world's largest economic alliances.

China's Informal Alliance Network

China's activities in Africa, including its economic expansion, military presence, and Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), are steps in creating an informal global alliance network. China is presenting its actions as beneficial for development and mutual prosperity from the nation's perspective, while other nations often conduct these initiatives as strategic efforts to diminish Western influence and expand geopolitical clout.

China is networking with the Sahel States and Africa for various reasons. Africa holds an abundance of natural resources, including oil, rare earth metals, and agricultural products, all of which are crucial for fueling any nation's domestic growth. Expanding trade and networking into the regions helps China to gain such economic benefits. The growing population and expanding middle class in Africa also give a significant market for Chinese goods, services, and technologies. By investing heavily in African infrastructure and offering loans, China can strengthen its influence in the region, allowing diplomatic allies who often align with Beijing in international forums like the United Nations. Such networking allows ports like Djibouti, where China has established a military base, to serve as logistical hubs for Beijing's expanding naval power.

Other nations, especially Western nations, might see such expansion as a form of threat. Such networking could be deemed as strategic expansionism, erosion of Western influence, diplomatic concerns, and possible support for anti-western regimes. It is important to keep in mind that many of the "other nations" referred to here are much more far-right, and aligned with

the principles of capitalism. Many of these nations and NATO-aligned nations view China's presence in Africa as part of a broader effort to challenge the post-World War II international order dominated by the West. For example, China's military base in Djibouti, close to U.S. and French facilities, is being deemed as a shift from purely economic engagement to military projection. The BRI is being perceived as a means to secure strategic footholds under economic cooperation. It is also perceived that China's growing relationships with African nations dilute Western influence, especially in former colonial territories like the Sahel. Which undermines efforts by France and NATO to maintain stability and combat terrorism in the region. Western leaders also argue that China's "debt trap diplomacy" undermines African sovereignty, creating long-term dependencies. However, Western nations still recognize how Chinese infrastructure investments have addressed critical gaps in African development and contributed to local economies. Increased trade and investment from China did indeed spurred growth in several African nations, enhancing regional economic stability.

Sahel States

The Sahel, comprising Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso, Chad, and Mauritania, is strategically significant due to its location, resources, and ongoing security challenges. Historically part of French West Africa, these countries gained independence in the 1960s but maintained strong ties with France, which critics argue perpetuated a neo-colonial relationship. Today, the region faces fragile governance, ethnic tensions, and economies reliant on agriculture and resources, alongside environmental issues like desertification and droughts. Despite decades of French military interventions, instability persists, leading to the rise of insurgent groups and a shift toward new alliances. In 2023, following a series of military coups, Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso formed the Alliance of Sahel States (ASS), rejecting French influence and seeking closer ties with Russia and China. Russia, through the Wagner Group, provides military support in exchange for resources, while China offers economic assistance with no political conditions. This shift has sidelined France's military presence, with French troops expelled from the region. The growing influence of Russia and China in the Sahel challenges NATO's security interests. NATO must adapt its strategies to address the increasing presence of hostile foreign organizations and their impact on regional stability while balancing military support with long-term efforts to stabilize governance and foster development in the Sahel.

Current Situation

BRICS

BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) has evolved from an economic grouping to global governance structures like NATO and the G7. Collectively, BRICS nations contribute approximately 32% of global GDP (purchasing power parity). They have proposed creating alternatives to Western institutions like the IMF and World Bank, such as the New Development Bank. In 2023, BRICS announced plans to expand its membership, inviting countries like Saudi Arabia, Iran, Argentina, and Egypt, signalling a growing desire to increase influence in the Global South. BRICS nations also share a vision of a multipolar world, aiming to reduce reliance on Western currencies and challenge the dominance of the U.S. dollar in global trade.

Furthermore, BRICS countries represent a significant amount of the world's population (over 40%). By uniting the countries in such a group, the nations can gain economic opportunities and address development challenges specific to emerging markets. BRICS itself oversees trade among the members and works on reducing reliance on Western markets. Another aim of BRICS is to minimize the unipolar dominance of the United States by supporting a multipolar world where power is distributed more evenly among nations. Through the creation of BRICS, Initiatives like the NDB can focus on funding infrastructure and sustainable development projects in member states and other developing nations. Each member nation in the group uses BRICS to project its influence within its respective region. For instance, China aims to expand its global reach through initiatives like the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), Russia uses BRICS to counter Western sanctions and expand its Eurasian partnerships, and South Africa positions itself as the gateway to Africa. BRICS members also collaborate on environmental issues, aiming at growth with sustainability as well as investing in research and technology sharing to bolster innovation across member states.

China's Informal Alliance Network and Expansion

China's activities across Asia, Africa, and Latin America are reshaping global geopolitics. China's BRI spans over 140 countries, involving investments in railways, ports, and energy infrastructure. The initiative has expanded to Africa, the Middle East, and Central Asia, with projects like Kenya's Mombasa-Nairobi Railway and Pakistan's Gwadar Port. Critics accuse BRI projects of creating "debt traps" for developing nations, enabling China to secure strategic footholds. China has established its first overseas military base in Djibouti, allowing it to project power in the Indian Ocean and safeguard maritime trade routes. It is strengthening alliances

with authoritarian regimes, particularly in Africa, to counter Western influence and secure natural resources. Trade between China and Africa reached \$282 billion in 2022, emphasizing Beijing's role as the continent's largest trading partner

Sahel States

The Sahel remains a hotbed of insurgencies led by groups like Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State. Military juntas in Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger have expelled French troops and adopted anti-French rhetoric, blaming Paris for their ongoing instability. The Alliance of Sahel States (ASS), formed in 2023, unites these nations under a shared agenda of sovereignty and security, fostering relationships with Russia and China. Wagner Group forces are increasingly active in the region, providing military support to juntas in exchange for resource concessions. China is building infrastructure and resource extraction projects in the Sahel, presenting itself as an alternative to Western aid. Currently, over 29 million people in the region face food insecurity due to conflict, climate change, and economic disruptions. International aid is struggling to keep up with the scale of the crisis.

Major Parties Involved and Their Views

The United States of America

As one of the leading nations in the creation of NATO, the U.S. places special emphasis on preserving world dominance such as fending off BRICS threats and containing China and Russia's expanding power. It also fortifies partnerships with allies like Japan and Australia to balance power in risky and unstable regions.

The French Republic

France focuses on maintaining influence in the Sahel and West Africa while fighting the rise of anti-French groups like the Russia-backed Alliance of Sahel States (ASS). Its strategic role in NATO includes counterterrorism and maintaining its military presence in Africa.

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

The United Kingdom contributes significantly to NATO by defending against Chinese and Russian influence around the world and offering military and intelligence assistance.

The Russian Federation

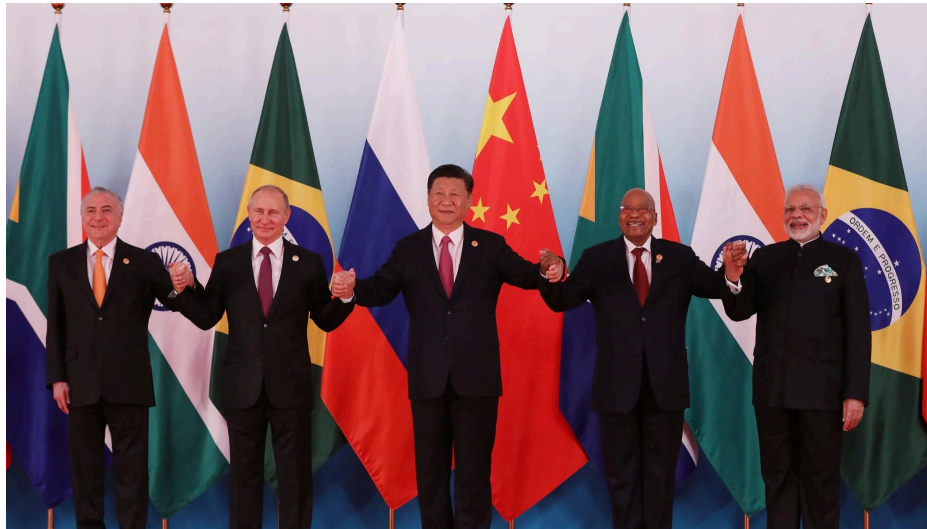
Russia undermines NATO by making alliances like the ASS in Africa and deepening ties with its fellow BRICS nations. Its strategy includes hybrid warfare, proxy warfare and extending influence into regions traditionally aligned with the West.

The People's Republic of China

China challenges NATO through its Belt and Road Initiative and informal alliances in Africa and Asia. Its growing economic and geopolitical influence aims to counterbalance Western dominance.

BRICS Nations

BRICS serves as a counterweight to NATO, promoting alternatives to Western-oriented systems. Led by China and Russia, it challenges NATO's global influence through economic and strategic cooperation



(Left to Right) Brazil's President Michel Temer, Russia's President Vladimir Putin, China's President Xi Jinping, South Africa's President Jacob Zuma and India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi pose for a group photo during the BRICS Summit on September 4, 2017.

UN Involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

- United Nations General Assembly Resolution 73/250 (Cooperation Between the UN and BRICS), December 20, 2018 (**A/RES/73/250**).
 - Encourages enhanced cooperation between the United Nations and BRICS to address global economic challenges and promote sustainable development.
 - Strengthened dialogue between BRICS and the UN on shared goals, such as poverty reduction and climate change.
- United Nations General Assembly Resolution 70/1 (2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development), September 25, 2015 (**A/RES/70/1**).
 - Aimed at fostering global development partnerships to achieve the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- Relevant to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which aligns with SDG goals like infrastructure development and poverty alleviation.
 - Effective in aligning development objectives with initiatives like the BRI.
- United Nations General Assembly Resolution 75/212 (Cooperation Between the UN and the African Union), December 21, 2020 (**A/RES/75/212**).
 - Strengthened UN-AU partnerships, addressing challenges in Africa, including governance, development, and regional integration in areas like the Sahel.
 - Limited success in reducing external influence from powers like China and Russia, as African states increasingly look to non-Western alliances for economic and security partnerships.
- United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), December 10, 1982
 - Governs maritime activities and territorial disputes, which are crucial to understanding China's "Maritime Silk Road" expansion under the BRI.
 - Provides a legal framework for resolving disputes, but China's activities in the South China Sea and its Belt and Road maritime initiatives challenge adherence to UNCLOS principles.
 - NATO and its partners argue that China's actions undermine international maritime norms.
- United Nations General Assembly Resolution 64/211 (Promotion of South-South Cooperation), December 21, 2009 (**A/RES/64/211**)
 - Recognizes the importance of South-South partnerships, a key focus of BRICS and China's expanding alliances in Africa and the Sahel.
 - Encourages countries of the Global South to collaborate independently of traditional Western aid frameworks.

- Paris Agreement (2015), December 12, 2015
 - Relevant to BRICS and China's role in energy and infrastructure projects, particularly in the Sahel.
 - Encourages a shift to renewable energy, aligning with China's investments in green technology.
- Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) Declarations (2000 - Present), October 2000 (ongoing declarations every three years).
 - FOCAC aligns with the UN's development goals and China's expansion of trade and alliances in Africa.
 - Promotes development in African states but also fosters growing dependency on Chinese economic and political partnerships, which NATO and its allies see as a challenge to Western influence.
- United Nations General Assembly Resolution 73/251 (Development of Africa), December 20, 2018 (**A/RES/73/251**)
 - Supports African development and recognizes international partnerships, including those outside traditional Western structures.
 - Helps highlight Africa's development needs, but lacks mechanisms to address the influence of foreign powers like China and Russia in African governance and infrastructure projects.

Possible Solutions

When thinking of possible solutions, it is important to note that current foreign hostile organisations do not pose a significant military threat to NATO, although they may pose certain ideological or political conflicts of interest with the organisation. Hence, solutions should focus on preventing the creation of military organisations between nations opposed to NATO, specifically Russia. These military organisations could stem from the combination of pre-existing assorted military agreements that Russia possesses, and hence solutions should be found that avoid any threats from being created.

International Rapid Response Teams

To address emerging threats from Foreign Hostile Organizations (FHOs), NATO could establish International Rapid Response Teams, composed of experts from member nations skilled in counterterrorism, intelligence, and advanced tactical operations. Equipped with

cutting-edge tools such as AI surveillance and cyber-defence systems, these units would be deployed quickly to neutralize threats before escalation. Efficient command structures and prepositioned resources would ensure operational efficiency. These teams, balancing NATO's collective expertise, could act effectively against destabilizing actors/parties, as highlighted in recent strategic analyses emphasizing the importance of preemptive action in global security.

Deploying Psychological Operations Teams

NATO could expand its use of Psychological Operations Teams to damage the morale and logistics of hostile organizations. By publicizing strategic misinformation, targeting enemy communication channels, and shaping public perceptions in conflict zones, these teams could weaken FHOs from within.

Promoting Stability in High-Risk Regions

Addressing root causes of conflict, poverty, and instability through NATO-led stabilization missions could prevent FHOs from gaining footholds in vulnerable areas. These missions would focus on infrastructure development, governance support, and training local security forces. By promoting development in high-risk regions, NATO can reduce the socio-economic conditions that allow hostile organizations to grow.



Members of the Italian Carabinieri carried out a mission in Iraq as part of a multinational specialized unit in 2005.

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