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Allied Forces in Central Europe

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Abstract

Allied Forces in Central Europe is an overview from World War I until present day. It describes some of the causes of past wars and the principle alliances and treaties used between different countries to preserve peace within Central Europe. Key topics discussed in the paper are the treaties that led to the modern day North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the role NATO plays in preserving peace in Central Europe.

Introduction

"One of the goals of the foreign policies of the Great Powers in the pre-war years was to maintain the 'Balance of Power' in Europe. This evolved into an elaborate network of secret and public alliances and agreements" (Wikipedia, 2007, par. 1.4). When these alliances or treaties are broken it leads to a de-stable and volatile region, often ending in conflict between the countries involved. In order for Allied Forces in Central Europe to preserve peace and stability in the region and the world, countries must adhere to alliances and treaties.

Pre-World War II

WWI

The cause of WWI cannot be faulted on a single incident, alliance or broken treaty. One of the last main friction points began with the assassination of Franz Ferdinand, Archduke of Austria-Este and his family in Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia, in an attempt to separate governmental ties to Austria. Failure of the Serbian ambassador to investigate and the backing of the Serbian government by Russia fueled German support to Austria. Germany reaffirmed its support of the alliance with Austria with

support both political and if necessary military support. After the July Ultimatum was not met by Serbia and an accidental border crossing incident involving a reservist in the Serbian military crossed into Austria This was all Austria needed and began to shell Serbia, thus setting the stage for a large scale regional conflict of many countries due to the honoring of treaties and alliances. Alliances and treaties in Central Europe was a recipe for disaster. If two small nations become involved in conflict many other nations were involved by their obligations to that country through alliances and treaties. The key treaties prior to the beginning of WWI: "The Treaty of London, was a treaty signed on 19 April 1839 between the European great powers and the United Kingdom of the Netherlands. Under this treaty the European powers acknowledged Belgium's independence and neutrality" (Wikipedia, 2007, par. 1). It also accepted the independence of Luxembourg. The Dual Alliance, an alliance between Germany and Austria-Hungary which pledged to assist one another if either was attacked by Russia. It also stated each would remain neutral if one or the other was attacked by another European country. Four years later Italy also joined to support Germany and Austria. The Triple Entente as stated in Wikipedia was the alliance formed in 1907 among Ireland and Great Britain, the French Third Republic and the Russian Empire after the signing of the Anglo-Russian Entente.

Along the same lines the United States, Japan and Spain maintained a non-military alliance to counter the triple threat alliance of Germany, Italy and Austria-Hungary (Wikipedia, 2007, par. 1).

Treaty of Versailles

The Treaty of Versailles ended WWI between Germany, Allied and Associated powers. During negotiations at the Paris Peace Conference, which lasted six months, the treaty was finally signed, although the Allied powers did not meet all their individual country goals with the peace accord. Out of the peace negotiations brought forth the forming of the League of Nations an International league aimed to prevent war, disarm rogue nations, and settle country disputes through diplomacy, negotiation as well as improving global welfare. Germany's violation of the Treaty of Versailles and the signing of the Nazi-Soviet Pact a pact of nonaggression assured Germany it would not need to fight on two fronts leading to Nazi aggression and WWII.

WWII

When nations do not adhere to the treaties and alliances agreed upon such as the case of Germany, instability and war are the final consequence. Hitler's refusal to honor the Treaty of Versailles and the removal of Germany from the League of Nations proved that when countries do not adhere to peace treaties nations will bond together through alliances and treaties to preserve peace and stability to protect their own interests. While numerous alliances were formed before and in the beginning stages of the war the major ones were; Entente Cordiale, Triple Entente, Franco-Polish Military Alliance, and the Anglo-Polish Military Alliance. Countries opposed to the Axis of power continued to join the allied forces as the war continued through agreed upon alliances and treaties to assist in the defeat of the Axis of Power. On June 26, 1945 respective Governments, through representatives assembled in the city of San Francisco, agreed upon 111 articles to form the United Nations in order to promote peace and stability around the world for all nations and its' peoples. The United Nations and corporation by nations set the stage after WWII for a future of Wars without the actual physical clash of nations. Nations were attempting other solutions to settle differences through the use of treaties and Alliances to strengthen their nation and deter other nations from declaring war. With the defeat of the Axis of Power new area began know as the Cold War.

The Cold War

Following WWII the Cold War, a period from the 1940s to the early 1990s marked the struggle to gain world power between the United States and Russia. Countries of Central Europe were vital to each in the power structure and formed the front on which the war was waged. This period, although marked by other wars involving their nations came to an end in the early 1990s by the use of treaties.

North Atlantic Treaty

The most notable Alliances and treaties were; North Atlantic Treaty, a treaty of twelve nations - the United States, Canada, Iceland, Denmark, Norway, Portugal, Italy, Britain, France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg. The United States needed this treaty maintain allies in Europe to contain communist expansion. From this treaty the headquarters of NATO know as the Supreme Allied Powers in Europe was born.

The Warsaw Pact

The Warsaw Pact or was a treaty between Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and the Soviet Union was a similar treaty in response to the North

Atlantic Treaty. With the fall of Russia in the 1980s the Warsaw pact was dissolved in 1991.

The Vandenberg Resolution

The Vandenberg Resolution was a United States guarantee that the United States would support the North Atlantic Alliance if countries of the alliance were attacked by the Soviet Union. Similar alliances such as the European Alliance were formed in order to defend against Warsaw Pact members and to promote independence of the European states through unity. Out of the various alliances and treaties signed during the cold war a need was created to form all militaries under a united command.

Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers in Europe (SHAPE)

The mission of SHAPE was to support the North Atlantic Treaty and act as the military headquarters for the defense of Western Europe. Despite an ill prepared start SHAPE proved it capable of protecting the North Atlantic treaty and has deterred major conflict during the Cold War. Through NATO SHAPE continues to be critical in the stabilization of central Europe. With the fall of the Soviet Union from power and the changing of the world dynamics countries have continued to adapt from the Cold War era to the Post Cold war with regards to their alliances and treaties to protect and safe guard their countries

interests and assets. Most notably the fall of the Berlin Wall between East and West Germany marked the major shift in changing environment.

Post Cold War

With the fall in the Soviet Union from power it was fitting the Berlin Wall fell as well. With the unification of Germany and the fall of the Berlin Wall both the United States State Department and the Nation Security Council agreed that upon Germany's membership in NATO. Pond (2003) stated that "From their different starting points, however, both institutions combined to insist on the continuance of German membership in NATO as an essential guarantee of security for all of Europe" (p. 164). It marked an age of change, once again to defend the future of countries survival through treaties and alliances.

New NATO

The face of the "NEW" North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) began to change. With the reunification of Germany the members of NATO began to grow to fit the ever changing world in which we live. Currently 26 countries are members of NATO and through the membership action plan many others have expressed interest in joining NATO. Membership to NATO is growing and comes at a price for the country joining to add not only

militarily, politically, but monetarily as well. Smaller European countries are expected to share in all aspects to maintain membership. Armed Forces of Central Europe through the control of NATO continue with the supporting one another, honoring treaties and alliances.

Conclusion

Through numerous conflicts nations have bound together to provide support and protect their interests through treaties. Current evidence that treaties and alliances are need to preserve peace has never been as evident as it is today. Although currently national and individual opinions across the globe vary on the war in Iraq, numerous countries within and outside of NATO have pledged support to the Global War on Terrorism. In Iraq, Afghanistan, and other trouble spots in the world nations are continuously pledging support to one another with the signing of treaties to preserve world order.

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