



THE CIVIL WAY

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Q. In light of diminishing strategic relevance of NATO, it has become an imperative for the Indo-Pacific to seek new and independent security strategies. Analyse. 10 M

NATO is a **collective defence organization** formed in 1949. The organization which was once **central to the security strategy** of the West against a communist USSR now faces a **diminishing strategic relevance** as can be seen from:

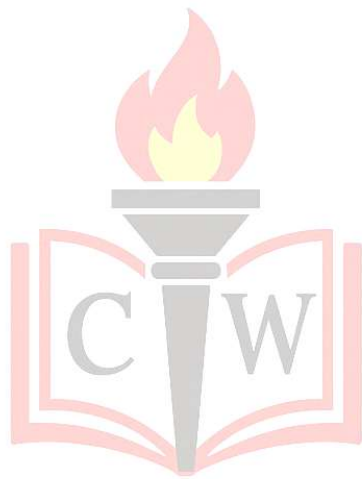
1. **Loss of a common interests:** The hay-days of NATO were energized by **common interest for all the members** as propounded by **Lord Ismay** to- “**Keep America in, Russia out, and Germany down**”; the same has since been changed. E.g., Germany has emerged as the **economic dynamo of Europe** and a possible leader.
2. **National interest** of the countries has weighed more prominently over the idea of **collective defence**. E.g., **America’s reluctance/apathy** towards **carrying the financial burden**.
3. The idea of NATO has also seen a **diminishing effect** as unlike the post-world war 2 era, now different countries face **different level and quantum of threats**. E.g., while Italy views **instability in wider Mediterranean** as immediate threat, Poland, Germany, France, Britain view Russia as the biggest/imminent threat.
4. **Strategic incoherence** between the **USA and the European countries** has called for **internal calibration** diminishing the **relevance of NATO**. E.g., while European nations view Russia as a **political and military aggressor**, the Trump administration has repeatedly called for **bringing Russia back into G7 making it G8**.
5. **Anomaly in membership** (Turkey’s presence): The **dichotomy in the national interest** of the member countries also raises questions about the **relevance and utility of NATO** as a collective defence organization. E.g., The **support of the USA to PKK** is highlighted as an **existential threat** by **Turkiye**.
6. The **clink in the NATO’s armor** is also visible from the **tacit reluctance** of many NATO members to fight the war in Iraq or in Afghanistan.

The **diminishing relevance of NATO** is also **clarion call** for the Indo-Pacific to cultivate **new and independent security strategies** such as :

1. **Inclusive**, rather than exclusive, vision for **Indo-Pacific to promote security cooperation**. E.g., **Indian vision for Indo-Pacific**, inclusive of both Russia and China augurs well for the **stability and growth in the region**.
2. Centralizing **connectivity and economic growth** as a marker for **security cooperation** in the Indo-Pacific. E.g., **India-Myanmar-Thailand trilateral highway** creating a new axis of economic activity in the region.
3. Prioritizing **political dialogue**. E.g., **revival of Russia India China (RIC)** grouping to promote **dialogue and diplomacy** for resolving disputes in Indo-Pacific.

4. Regional groupings to **mainstream the conventional** as well as the **human-centric security issues**. E.g., leveraging Forum for Indo-Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIC) to understand, adapt, and mitigate the challenges in the region such as **climate change, piracy** etc.
5. **Regional Maritime Cooperation-Security** strategy in Indo-Pacific should revolve around the **maritime cooperation between the littoral states**. E.g., **Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS)**; **SAGAR strategy** of India to become a **net security provider** and **'preferred responder'** in crisis.

In the **era of complex interdependence**, it is peremptory that the **shared interests** should gain preference over **bilateral disputes**. In this light, it is an imperative for the **littoral countries** to ensure a **free, open, sustainable, secure, and inclusive** Indo-Pacific.



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