



Evaluation of Possibility Assessment of Russia - China Cooperation on Atlanticism (2011-2021)

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Abstract:

The expansion of NATO to the East under the policies of Atlanticism is one of the current issues of international relations, which has a lot to think about for the countries involved in this policy, their neighbors and the international order. After the expansion of NATO to the east, what will happen in the spheres of influence of NATO and the neighboring countries of those spheres and the conditions created, causes predictions in this field; One of them is the evaluation of the feasibility of cooperation between China and Russia with their own special conditions against this action, that is, Atlanticism. The cooperation and positions of the two countries have come closer, especially towards the policies and actions of America and even Europe. Russia's concern about the presence of NATO in its borders and China's concern about the close military cooperation of the West with Taiwan have caused the two countries to work harder for mutual cooperation and their development fields. The concept of new Atlanticism provides a framework for analyzing security and normative challenges facing Europe and the world. This work and many similar works emphasize the fact that the behavior of America and its allies in the international system has become the basis for the creation of various coalitions and alliances. From the perspective of this research and emphasizing the threat balance theory, when the hegemon country and its allies create threats, or show threatening behaviors; They will create coalitions and alliances. In this article, an attempt was made to discuss the feasibility of expanding cooperation between China and Russia against Atlanticism by using the theoretical framework of threat balance. And the topic of these cooperation was examined according to the concepts, general capabilities such as (population, economic power, military power, etc.), geographical proximity, offensive capabilities and offensive intentions from the perspective of the threat balance theory.

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Introduction

With the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union, a new structure was formed in the international system, and theories about the end of Atlanticism and plans for an independent European defense policy emerged from the ashes of these developments. Some, such as Robert Kagan, argue that the changing structure of US-European relations, especially the large and growing power imbalance between them, led to the decline of Atlanticism. Robert Kagan writes: "Americans are from Mars and Europeans are from Venus." "This situation is not temporary; it is a product of the American elections. The causes of the transatlantic divide are deep, developing, long-standing, and likely to persist" (Kagan, 2003, p. 3). Despite the predictions of people like Kagan, Atlanticism not only did not decline; Rather, after the spread of terrorist acts in America and Europe, the effort to adopt and shape a coordinated military policy between Europe, America and Canada increased day by day.

Although at first the American attack on Iraq was met with resistance in Europe, the developments in Syria and the spread of ISIS terrorist activities even to the heart of Europe forced the countries of this continent to demand the strengthening and development of NATO. The expansion of NATO to the East and the developments in Ukraine once again showed that the idea of Atlanticism is strongly moving towards development and confrontation with its opposing countries. Meanwhile, China as an emerging power at the level of the international system and having completed the

modernization of its economic and political power, together with Russia as the main heir of the Soviet Union under the leadership of Putin; They have started a double effort to challenge the thinking of the Atlantic world. After experiencing many ups and downs in the relations between China and Russia, these two countries have gradually expanded their comprehensive cooperation since the mid-1990s in order to achieve a strategic partnership. In the last two decades, Russia and China have developed a unique partnership. These two countries have established a wide range of cooperation between the two countries, such as mutual economic needs, changes in the structure of the international system, the political, military and economic movements of the United States, the expansion of NATO to the east, and the vast developments near their borders. And it has provided the grounds for the formation of cooperation between Russia and China.

For example, the 400-billion-dollar gas contract signed between the two countries in 2014 is considered one of the pillars of economic cooperation between the two countries. Another field of cooperation between the two countries can be mentioned in their participation in establishing a number of regional and international organizations such as the Shanghai Regional Cooperation Organization and the BRICS Trans regional Cooperation Organization. At the same time, the almost similar positions of China and Russia in the UN Security Council in a number of regional and international issues showed that the fields of cooperation between China and Russia have taken more serious steps. The following are

among these common positions. Using the joint veto in issues such as intervention in Syria and the extension of the arms embargo on Iran; The removal of some Taliban sanctions and even China's abstention on the resolution condemning Russia's attack on Ukraine due to the global volume against Russia.

In the meantime, the expansion of NATO to the east is one of the important political, military and security issues, which has led to the expression of common concern and at the same time the closer cooperation and positions of the two countries, especially regarding the policies of the United States and Europe. The presidents of China and Russia met in Beijing on the eve of the 2022 Winter Olympics and responded to these concerns by issuing a statement. In the final joint statement of the meeting as a strategic document, Moscow and Beijing criticized Washington's destabilizing role in global security and the further development of NATO while requesting to respect the security, interests and sovereignty of other countries. They also asked the members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization to abandon the ideological approaches of the Cold War era. At the same time, the governments of China and Russia expressed their concern about the efforts of the United States and its allies to strengthen their ballistic missile defense capabilities. Their real fear is that these strategic defense systems, compared to the strong nuclear offensive capabilities of the Americans, will enable the United States to achieve nuclear superiority against China and Russia. The totality of this process along with common threats has finally led China and Russia to cooperate more in various fields. And now, by relying on these collaborations, they see themselves as having the ability to show strength in many global developments or to stand up against the West and the thinking of the Atlantic world.

Russia's concern about the presence of NATO in its borders and China's concern about the close military cooperation of the West with Taiwan have caused the two countries to work harder for mutual cooperation and their development fields. Now this discourse focuses on China's foreign policy, that the West's success in encircling Russia will be a prelude to the implementation of the same strategy against China in the near future, especially in the event of any conflict with the West, especially regarding Taiwan. Based on this and considering the regional and international policies of China and Russia; The strategy of the two countries is to cooperate in all common fields, which can lead to confronting Atlanticism policies, especially in the spheres of influence of the two countries. In this regard, this research was designed and will answer the questions raised.

Background

Nezafati and Keshishyan (2023) in an article entitled "Strategic Alliance between China and Russia against American Unilateralism and its Effect on the national security of the Islamic Republic of Iran 2009-2021" believe; After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the structure of the international system took a unipolar form, the main characteristic of which was the unilateral approach of the United States as the ruling superpower. But during the two decades after the 21st century, Russia and China have succeeded in competing and challenging America as great powers. This competitive trend has also affected the national security of other countries. The main question of the research is what effect did the alliance between Russia and China have on Iran's national security in 2009-2021 against the unilateralism of the United States? The strategic alliance between China and Russia against the United States was based on

competition and containment of Washington's hegemony to strengthen Iran's national security. The results show that the alliance of China and Russia against the United States will affect Iran's national security in the political dimension of Iran's emphasis on the role of the United Nations, Iran's membership in the Shanghai Organization, the search for new horizons in BRICS; In the military dimension, confronting Western sanctions and promoting military cooperation with China and Russia; In the economic dimension, the promotion of economic cooperation has affected the purchase of Iranian oil and gas, and in the environmental dimension, the cooperation of the two sides with Iran has been affected. Of course, this article has many differences from the current research, and that is that the mentioned article emphasizes the national security of the Islamic Republic of Iran if the discussion of the present research will be done with an emphasis on Atlanticism.

Mousavizadeh et al. (2020) in an article entitled "Security Alignment of China and Russia in Facing the Threats of the United States" examine the developments after the end of the Cold War and its impact on international politics, and they emphasize that the collapse of the Soviet Union broke the bipolar structure of the global system and paved the way for the United States of America to be the only remaining superpower in the world. At the same time, in this article, an attempt has been made to discuss the relations between the People's Republic of China as the second economic power in the world and the Russian Federation as the inheritor of the superpower of the East. The authors are trying to talk about the formation of a kind of security alignment between China and Russia in the international system by looking at the increasing process of

cooperation from soft policy areas to problematic policy areas. The difference between this article and the current research is that in this research, unlike the aforementioned article, the factors of convergence and conflict between China and Russia are generally paid attention to. In the present study, the possibility of cooperation and participation of two countries in the issue of confrontation with Atlanticism will be considered.

Yazdaniyeh et al. (2020) in an article entitled "The Role of Russia and China in the Transition of the international system from Unipolar to Multipolar" believe; The collapse of the Soviet Union was the beginning of the claim of the theorists of the unipolar system who called liberal capitalism the end of history. And they emphasized that the new world, in which the United States is the superpower, has no rival, and in the era of the weakness of Marxism and the collapse of communism; The dominance of the liberal capitalist discourse will make the military, cultural, political, economic and social dominance of the White House inevitable. This article emphasizes that this model of the international system is not permanent and another model, which is the multipolar system, is being formed. The difference between this article and the current research is that in this research, unlike the aforementioned article, the factors of convergence between China and Russia and the new model in the international system with the role of Russia and China are generally considered in the above article; In the present article, attention will be paid to the issues of cooperation and participation of the two countries, especially in opposition to Atlanticism.

Zare (2018) in a book entitled "NATO expansion to the East and the positions of China and Russia in relation to it" examines the policies,

measures, and strategies of China and Russia in relation to the expansion of NATO to the East. And in this way, it deals with the history of the conflict between the two blocs, East and West, and the collapse of the Soviet Union system, and finally, it points to the reasons and consequences of NATO's expansion to the East. The general and historical view of this book on the issue of positions and policies of Russia and China is different from the present research.

Asgarkhani and Mohammadi (2016) in an article entitled "Transformation in NATO missions and the necessity of strengthening the monitoring regime in international law (NATO accountability strategy)". They examine the grounds of NATO's formation and the legal examination of the evolution of NATO's nature and missions after the end of the Cold War and NATO's violations and violations from the perspective of international law in compensating for the damages caused by these violations. The authors also try to address the gap in international law on the implementation of Security Council resolutions, especially in cases of NATO violations. The difference between this article and the present article is in the way of looking at NATO's actions and also the confrontation between China and Russia with this pact.

Eder (2016) believes in a book entitled "China-Russia Relations in Central Asia (Energy Policy, New Beijing's Self-Exercise, and 21st Century Geopolitics)"; The energy issue plays an important role in the foreign policy of China and Russia, and Central Asia has become one of the focal points of this relationship. The author emphasizes that with the signing of the "Good Neighbor Agreement and Bilateral Cooperation between the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation" in July 2001 and the strengthening of the Shanghai Treaty Group, the source of

extensive developments and developments between the two countries has taken place. The difference between this book and the current research is that the mentioned book focuses on the relations between Russia and China, but in the current research, attention will be paid to the possibility of cooperation between them and its effect on the confrontation with Atlanticism.

Simbar and Hosseini (2016) in an article entitled "Investigation of factors affecting the convergence and conflict between Russia and China in the post-Cold War era" have investigated the transformation that has taken place in the international system after the Cold War, which can increase the fields of convergence or conflict in the world. Also, the authors have tried to investigate the most important factors affecting the convergence and conflict between Russia and China in the post-Cold War era, especially components such as economic, political, and security cooperation between the two countries and their effects. The difference between this article and the current research is in two issues, firstly, in the mentioned article, the theoretical framework of convergence is used, while in the current research, the threat balance theory is considered. In this research, unlike the mentioned article, which generally focuses on the factors of convergence and conflict between China and Russia, the cooperation and participation of the two countries will be considered, especially in the issue of confrontation with Atlanticism.

Haq Shenav and Bavir (2011); In an article entitled "Methods of Russia's confrontation with NATO expansion to the East"; examine the developments after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990 and the concerns of the Western European countries and the United States in the field of bringing the Eastern European countries into the Western camp and preventing them from re-uniting with Russia. The

authors deal with the issue of NATO expansion to the east and Russia's view on this issue. Researchers are looking for ways to confront Russia with NATO's expansion to the east, as well as ways of cooperation between Russia and NATO. While the mentioned article only deals with the confrontation between Russia and the West in the issue of NATO expansion to the East, in the present research we will deal with various aspects of the confrontation between Russia and the West, especially in the issue of Atlanticism. Also, in this research, the main topic of cooperation between China and Russia will be in this field.

Koolaei and Tisheh Yar (2006); In an article titled "Geopolitical transformations and changes in the mission, structure, and function of international institutions (case example: NATO)" try to address the reasons for the development of NATO. The authors believe; It was expected that all the institutions and structures that emerged from the Cold War would also disappear like the Cold War itself. However, unlike the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization was not only not dissolved, but by emphasizing the political-economic-social unrest and crises in the Balkans and various regions of Central Eurasia, it prepared itself for new duties. In this article, the consequences of geopolitical transformations at the end of the 20th century on global institutions with a focus on NATO are presented. The obvious difference between this article and the current one is in the nature of looking at NATO's move to the East and paying attention to Atlanticism thinking.

Vadilich (2022) in an article entitled "Three possible options for future military cooperation between China and Russia"; They examine the three options of continuing cooperation

after the war in Ukraine, maintaining the status quo, reducing or strengthening the relations between Russia and China in order to significantly strengthen the relations after the war in Ukraine. The author finally comes to the conclusion that according to the policies of China and Russia towards Ukraine; The relations between Russia and China will be expanded in areas such as cooperation in purchasing key Russian technologies from China, periodic exercises, joint military patrols and confronting American expansionist strategies, military and security relations between the two countries. The difference between this article and the present research is in the type of theoretical framework and multidimensional view of cooperation between Russia and China. In fact, in the current research, unlike the mentioned article, which only mentions the security aspect of this issue, it will deal with the military, security and economic dimensions.

Min (2022) in an article entitled "China-Russia strategic partnership and the logic behind it" discussed the reasons for the expansion of relations between Russia and China and believes that this move will lead them to a strategic alliance. The author considers three reasons effective in this field. First, China needs Russian natural gas and other energy sources, and Russia needs Chinese investment, goods, and market. Second, on the world stage, both countries are standing against American hegemony. Third, they face the power games imposed by NATO's eastward expansion for Russia and the conflict over the Taiwan Strait for China, and both countries feel chronically victimized by the behavior of the West. The difference between this article and the current research is that in this research, unlike the aforementioned article, the factors of

convergence and conflict between China and Russia are generally paid attention to. But in the present research, the alliance and participation of two countries will be considered especially in the confrontation with Atlanticism. Garelson (2018) in a book titled "Searching for influence: Sino-Russian relations in world politics, 1991-2016" examines the strategic cooperation between Russia and China and its consequences for international politics. The author believes that there was an expectation that the increasing threat of China's emerging power to the traditional powers of the international system, such as Russia, would expand Moscow's cooperation with the West. But the military development of the West towards the East and Russia's concern has led to extensive cooperation between Russia and China. At the same time, the two countries are against the concept of liberal international order led by the West, which has also provided a common ground for a lasting relationship between them. The difference between this book and the current research is that the mentioned book pays attention to the relations between Russia and China, but in the current research, attention will be paid to the influence of the fields of cooperation between them in opposition to Atlanticism.

Garelson et al. (2015) in a book titled "China and Russia - A Study of Cooperation, Competition and Mistrust"; They are trying to compare the way the two countries perceive themselves and their role in the world by analyzing the relations between China and Russia from a political and economic point of view. China and Russia cooperate and compete with each other in many fields, and their interests and ambitions are reflected in their policies in Central Asia and Asia-Pacific. Throughout the report, the role of the United States as a competitor and partner of both countries is discussed. In this book, most of the authors'

attention is focused on the 2014 Russian attack on Ukraine and its effects. In this research, unlike the mentioned book, which generally focuses on the factors of convergence between China and Russia, the cooperation and participation of the two countries will be considered, especially in the issue of confrontation with Atlanticism.

Huyan (2015) in an article titled "The New Geostrategic Game: Will China and Russia Form a Coalition Against the United States?" It tries to argue that despite the ideological, material, and strategic differences between Russia and China, a perception of threat about Washington; has led China and Russia to form a "soft coalition" against the United States. The author tries to conclude that the future of China-Russia relations still depends on the policies of the United States and Europe towards China and Russia. The difference between this article and the current research is that in this research, unlike the mentioned article, which points to the convergence factors of China and Russia in confronting America, attention will be paid to the alliance and partnership of the two countries against Atlanticism.

Bolt (2014) in an article entitled "China-Russia relations in the changing world order" examines the strategic partnership between China and Russia and focuses on the drivers of this relationship as well as its friction points. It then examines China-Russia economic, security, and Central Asian interactions and considers the implications of China-Russia engagement for the United States. The author tries to provide solutions to America to prevent this strategic partnership. The difference between this article and the current research is that in this research, unlike the aforementioned article, which generally focuses on the factors of convergence and conflict between China and Russia; The fields of

cooperation and participation of the two countries in the issue of Atlanticism will be taken into consideration.

Here, the main question and sub-questions of the research are specified, which are:

The main question of the research: What are the fields for the cooperation between China and Russia, the realization of which will lead the two countries to a common effort against Atlanticism?

Sub questions:

Sub-question 1: What effect has the expansion of NATO to the East and security-military cooperation between NATO members and the neighboring countries of Russia and China had on the formation of cooperation between the two countries in opposition to Atlanticism?

Sub-question 2- How has the fields of cooperation between China and Russia in the field of energy become influential components in the confrontation between the two countries with Atlanticism?

And the hypotheses are:

- The main hypothesis: the development of Atlanticist thinking, which is characterized by the expansion of NATO to the east, has led to the provision of cooperation between China and Russia in the framework of the balance of threats. And it can provide conflicting conditions between Russia and China and the Atlantic world.

- Sub-hypotheses:

- Sub-hypothesis 1: The expansion of NATO to the East and the military and security cooperation between NATO members and the neighboring countries of Russia and China have had a significant effect on establishing cooperation between the two countries. And this issue has become the basis for the

confrontation between Russia and China with the Atlantic world.

- Sub-hypothesis 2: China's need for oil and gas and Russia's need to reach China's reliable and high-consumption markets have become influential components in the formation of cooperation between China and Russia in opposition to Atlanticism.

Research objectives

1- The main objective:

Explanation of the development of Atlanticism thinking, especially the expansion of NATO to the East, which has led to the provision of cooperation between China and Russia in the framework of the balance of threats. This situation can expand the confrontation between Russia and China and the Atlantic world.

2- Specific objectives:

- Explaining the impact of NATO expansion to the east and the military and security cooperation between NATO members with the neighboring countries of Russia and China and its significant impact in establishing cooperation between the two countries and laying the groundwork for confrontation between Russia and China with the Atlantic world.

- Clarifying the effect of China's need for Russian oil and gas resources and Russia's need for China's reliable and high-consumer markets and turning them into influential components in the formation of cooperation between China and Russia in opposition to Atlanticism.

Definition of applied concepts of research

In this chapter, at the beginning, we will define some practical research concepts, which will be: Atlanticism, balance, threat balance, alliance, NATO and the expansion of NATO to the East; Then we will go to the theoretical framework of the discussion and we will talk about the threat balance from Stephen Walt's

point of view and we will pay attention to the things that this theory refers to. In this chapter, we will also mention the conditions of cooperation between China and Russia regarding Atlanticism with the framework of threat balance. Now, with this introduction, we will go to define the important concepts of research.

Atlanticism

The term Atlanticism or Atlanticism is used to show a certain type of identity and political and military orientation based on the geographical location, for the historical links of Europe, America and Canada. Here, Atlanticism refers to the Atlantic world that has brought together the United States, European countries and Canada, and its main manifestation was the NATO treaty. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was established in Washington on April 4, 1949, invoking Article 51 of Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter as a collective defense organization against any aggression against member states. In the fifth article of the agreement, an attack on one or more member countries in Europe or North America is considered as an attack on all member countries, and the signatories of the agreement undertook to deal with it. Therefore, the formation of this pact was in response to the threats and events of February 1948 and the coming to power of the Communist Party in Czechoslovakia and to prevent the Soviet forces in particular and the Warsaw Pact forces in general from attacking Western countries in the North Atlantic region. (Daalder, 1999, p. 87). As the Cold War became more serious, this agreement became more important, but with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact, there was an expectation that NATO would lose its former position. But in 1999, when Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic joined NATO, this military bloc found a new role. In March

2004, the Baltic Republics (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania), Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia joined it; After that, Albania and Croatia joined NATO in April 2009 (Richard Sakwa, 2015, p.2). In fact, the Atlantic world is a world whose member countries are developing their territory as a political and military pole and confronting its enemies. The expansion of NATO to the east is one of the serious signs of Atlanticism. Of course, this word in its Russian meaning is mentioned under the title of Russian Atlanticism, which is not what we mean in this research.

Balance

Equilibrium is a state in which no single power is in a position of superiority to legislate for others. The term balance usually brings military power to mind; But it also refers to other types of power in world politics. A simple balance of power requires the equality of power of both sides. While the complex balance of power or situation associated with the presence of three or more competing powers, the emergence of gross power inequalities among them does not necessarily put the strongest member in a superior position because others have the possibility to unite against him. (Doherty and Pfaltzgraf, 2011, p. 45)

Balance of threat

The term balance of threat was proposed by Stephen Walt against the term balance of power and to address its shortcomings. According to Walt's opinion, countries do not seek to create coalitions and alliances against any country, but a country whose power endangers the security of other countries causes others to go to create coalitions to deal with this threat. (Walt, 1986, pp. 110-113). In fact, this issue causes Walt's first question, when do governments form alliances? And what

element determines the choice of their alliance? Do governments tend to establish a balance against strong or threatening powers by uniting against them? Or they may choose the follow-up strategy by uniting with the most powerful or threatening governments. (Nia-kouie and Sotoudeh, 2015, p. 121)

Coalition

Coalition is a foreign policy orientation in which countries adopt this strategy based on the existence of some common features or facing common threats. If countries are not able to achieve their predetermined goals or deal with threats and problems on their own, they turn to alliances and coalitions with other countries. Similarly, the coalition usually has political, economic and diplomatic goals (Dehghani Firouzabadi, 2017, p. 212).

NATO

The common defense system and the strengthening of relations between Europe and the United States to deal with military and security threats in 1948 led to the signing of the Brussels Security Treaty as the first step in the process of extensive cooperation between the United States and Europe in security matters. But with Canada joining this movement in 1949, the North Atlantic Treaty (NATO) was formed in the framework of security guarantees and mutual obligations between Europe and North America for extensive military and security cooperation. (Mousa Zadeh, 2009, p. 343). Valid and reliable defense against the Soviet Union during the forty years of the Cold War was considered as the main special task of this treaty. Although, from the beginning, the main task of NATO was not only to defend the allies against the Soviet Union, but

NATO became to institutionalize the relationship between North America and Western Europe (Madcalf, 2005, pp. 12-13).

NATO expansion to the east

The term NATO expansion to the east was promoted after the idea of NATO's Partnership for Peace. In October 1993, for the first time, US Defense Minister Les Aspin proposed the development of NATO and the joining of all European countries to deal with threats (Koolaei, 2015: 271). This program, which shows the entry of the West into the backyard and, as the Russians say, Russia's "near abroad" and taking the security role of the whole of Europe and Eurasia, led to the admission of 25 new countries to NATO. Except for three countries, all the new members were former members of the Warsaw Pact or former Soviet republics (Seyfzadeh, 2006, p. 297). In this way and with this program, the scope of NATO practically expanded to the eastern regions of Europe, especially Eurasia.

Theoretical Framework

The term balance of threat was proposed by Stephen Walt against the term balance of power and to address its shortcomings. According to Walt's opinion, countries do not seek to create coalitions and alliances against any country, but a country whose power endangers the security of other countries causes others to go to create coalitions to deal with this threat. (Walt, 1986, pp. 112-113). Stephen Walt is one of the most well-known thinkers related to defensive realism, who worked hard to open up the main propositions of the balance of power theory. The non-fulfillment of the hypothesis of the powers against the potential American hegemon after the Cold War led Stephen Walt to shift the focus of realism

from the balance of power to the balance of threats, so that he could untie the blind knot of realism. By criticizing the principle of balance of power and proposing the theory of balance of threat, Walt stated that what causes countries to move towards balance is the level of threat they perceive (Zamani and Niakouie, 2019, pp. 99-100). In fact, this issue causes Walt's first question, when do governments form alliances? And what element determines the choice of their alliance? Do governments tend to establish a balance against strong or threatening powers by uniting against them? Or, possibly, by uniting with the most powerful or threatening governments, they choose the follow-up strategy (Niakouie and Sotoudeh, 2016, p. 121). According to Walt, countries do not seek to create coalitions and alliances against any country; Rather, a country whose power endangers the security of other countries causes others to be led to create a coalition to face this threat (Simber, Padrovand & Ezzati, 2017, p. 10).

According to Walt's opinion, countries do not seek to balance every power, but they seek to balance against a country whose power increase is considered a threat. In this context, Walt says: the governments that are considered as aggressive, turn the balance of others against them (Walt, 1986, p. 116). In modifying the theory of balance of power, Walt described four components as threatening factors:

1- General capabilities (population, economic, military power, etc.): this index is the common feature of the balance of power and the balance of threats; The more powerful the aggressor (rival) country is, the more dangerous it is. These material factors such as population, economic power, military power, and geopolitics are considered to be factors that determine the power of governments.

2- Geographic proximity (threat proximity): There is a direct relationship between threat perception and geographic proximity; This case emphasizes that the closer the aggressor (rival) actor is, the greater the risk. Walt says that the closer the country is; The danger is more tangible, he also adds. All other things being equal, those countries with a smaller distance are more dangerous.

3- Offensive capabilities: The higher the offensive capabilities of a country, the greater the security concerns of that country. This means that the greater the competitor's capability and military capability, the greater his risk (Daheshyar, 2012, p. 299); And the feeling of concern and threat of other actors towards that country increases equally. In this way, the third indicator of Walt's regional threat can be seen as the "offensive ability" of actors who seek to upset the balance (Mosala Nejad, 2011, p. 154).

4- Aggressive intentions: States with aggressive intentions involve more threats compared to states that maintain the status quo (Walt, 1986, p. 117). This issue was stated by Walt and it means that the more the hostile intentions of the actor, the more difficult the danger and threat are (Daheshyar, 2012, p. 299). Therefore, there is a direct relationship between the level of threat and the aggressive intentions of countries, and the more aggressive an actor shows, the higher the perceived threat of him by other countries (Mosala Nejad, 2011, p. 155).

Having the mentioned factors can be a sign of threatening the government. Therefore, the threat is a combination of the aggressive power of the government, military capabilities, geographical proximity and their possible aggressive intentions. Therefore, what motivates governments to balance is their perception of each other as a threat and not just the amount of power of each of them. From Walt's

point of view, governments choose the balancing method for two reasons: first, they try to balance before their survival is threatened by potential power; Secondly, the connection with the weaker party increases the influence of the new member within the alliance because the weaker party needs help (Walt in Rabiei et al., 2016, pp. 66-67). One of the most important topics in threat balance is the search for security. Governments try to increase their relative security against the threatening power. Therefore, governments only want to increase security and only try to expand their power when they feel insecure. As mentioned, the balance in Walt's theoretical framework is based on the need for fear, not the mere accumulation of power. What requires balance is the hostile intention in the sense of "trying to replace the superior power". In other words, increasing the challenging power alone does not create balance, but the nature of the country's power is increasing, which requires balance. Therefore, the equation includes the power and intentions of those in power. In Walt's definition, governments seek to increase their relative power over other governments. Otherwise, governments will reach a point where they have to submit to an aggressor with increasing power in order to avoid unnecessary expenses or failure (Daheshyar, 2012, p. 297). Walt believes that countries do not act on the basis of the balance of power, but instead use the balance of threat as a criterion (Mosala Nejad, 2011, p. 197). Stephen Walt is of the opinion that governments face threats that balance and threaten all foreign powers. And what leads to the necessity of balance is the existence of hostile intentions, in other words, an attempt to replace the superior power. Power is an important part of the equation, but it is not the only element that

shapes it, because this equation includes the power and the intentions of those in power (Daheshyar, 2012, pp. 298-297). Even if a government that is only looking for its own survival without knowing the intentions and capabilities of its competitors, it cannot argue that there is a threat and a balance should be created against it. Therefore, these threats include their intentions as well as their abilities. For example, the behavior of the United States with its other allies is completely different from the nuclear weapons of Britain or France with North Korea (even Iran) (Burchill and Linklater, 2016, p. 62). Walt's studies, which focus on the process of alliances and alliances in the 20th century, proved that nations are not against power, but against the threat they balance. Their goal is to create the necessary conditions for stability, security and balance by creating a balance against (threatening) countries. Therefore, the main factor affecting the foreign policy of countries is based on the level of threats that competing actors create to increase their power and security at the expense of other countries (Mosala Nejad, 2011, pp. 147-150).

Walt emphasizes: "Balance is not an immediate or automatic process" (Ademi and Noorani, 2019, p. 119); And the balance against the threatening rival power means that the governments should unite against the threatening government and try to create an alliance or coalition (Moshirzadeh, 2016, pp. 134-135). Therefore, according to Walt, an alliance is a formal arrangement of regional and international developments or an informal arrangement for security cooperation between two or more independent states. And governments mainly integrate and unite their forces in order to balance against major threats (Qavam and Imani, 2012, pp. 42-58). But it should be noted

that "governments that are either weaker or think that the victory of one side is more likely, probably implement the policy of accompanying that side" (Moshirzadeh, 2016, pp. 135-135).

As Sakwa also points out in his article (2015) the hegemonic power represented by the Atlantic Alliance; emphasizes that as always in international affairs, the development of a supposed hegemonic force provokes resistance; which has now emerged in the form of intensifying efforts to create an anti-hegemonic alliance system, above all through the development of associations and alliances such as BRICS, as well as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization along with the intensification of Eurasian integration efforts. The author believes that a new model is emerging in world politics and the expected multi-polarity is finally taking shape. The concept of new Atlanticism provides a framework for analyzing security and normative challenges facing Europe and the world. This work and many similar works emphasize the fact that the behavior of America and its allies in the international system has become the basis for the creation of various coalitions and alliances. From the point of view of this research and emphasizing the threat balance theory, when the hegemon country and its allies create threats or show threatening behaviors, they will cause the formation of coalitions and alliances.

Emphasizing Stephen Walt's theory of general capabilities such as (population, economic, military power, etc.), the stronger these indicators become, the commonality will be the balance of power and the balance of threats; And the more powerful a country like the United States of America is with its European allies, the more dangerous it is and will force its enemies to form alliances.

Also, the geographical proximity of the said country, because there is a direct relationship between the perception of the threat and geographical proximity; Therefore, the risk will be greater. According to what Walt says, the closer a country like America gets to the borders of its competitors like Russia through Ukraine and China through Taiwan; The danger is more tangible. Therefore, the feeling of danger will create a coalition.

On the other hand, as the theory of threat balance states, offensive capabilities, the higher the offensive capability of a country, the greater the security concerns of that country for others. And this means that the greater the competitor's capability and military capability, the greater his danger; Therefore, if the United States takes action in the form of NATO and its allies, it will make the conditions much easier for its rivals to enter into alliances.

And finally, aggressive intentions: states with aggressive intentions involve more threats compared to states that maintain the status quo, and this means that the more hostile the actor's intentions are, the more difficult the danger and threat are to follow. Therefore, there is a direct relationship between the level of threat and the aggressive intentions of countries, and the more aggressive an actor shows, the higher the perceived threat of him by other countries. And this issue is fully manifested in the aggressive behavior and intentions of the United States of America and its allies in NATO, and causes other countries to unite against this behavior. The establishment of BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization can also be evaluated in this context.

Conclusion:

The expansion of NATO to the East is one of the important political, military and security issues; which more than ever has led to the expression of common concern and at the same time closer cooperation and positions of the two countries China and Russia, especially towards the policies and actions of America and even Europe. The presidents of China and Russia met in Beijing on the eve of the 2022 Winter Olympics and responded to these concerns by issuing a statement. In the final joint statement of the meeting as a strategic document, Moscow and Beijing criticized the destabilizing role of Washington in global security and the further development of NATO while requesting to respect the security, interests and sovereignty of other countries. They also asked the members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization to put aside the ideological approaches of the Cold War era.

At the same time, the governments of China and Russia expressed their concern about the efforts of the United States and its allies to strengthen their ballistic missile defense capabilities. In fact, their fear is that these strategic defense systems, compared to the strong nuclear offensive capabilities of the Americans, will enable the United States to achieve nuclear superiority against China and Russia. The totality of this process along with common threats has finally led China and Russia to cooperate more in various fields. And now, by relying on these collaborations, they see themselves as having the ability to show strength in many global developments or to stand up against the West and the thinking of the Atlantic world.

Russia's concern about the presence of NATO in its borders and China's concern about the close military cooperation of the West with

Taiwan have caused the two countries to work harder for mutual cooperation and their development fields. Now this discourse focuses on China's foreign policy, that the West's success in encircling Russia will be a prelude to the implementation of the same strategy against China in the near future, especially in the event of any conflict with the West, especially regarding Taiwan. Based on this and considering the regional and international policies of China and Russia, the strategy of the two countries is to cooperate in all common areas; which can lead to confrontation with Atlantism policies, especially in the spheres of influence of the two countries.

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