# NATO Expansion versus Consolidation of the EU

## Intra- and interclass Dynamics in the context of the Next Cold War

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**Abstract**

After five years of recession following the financial collapse in September 2008, and with no return to pre-crisis conditions in sight, the global political economy now has taken a turn characterized by substantially stronger state interventions, including not just economic but also military actions. The expansion of NATO towards Eastern Europe had started decades ago, but even after the implosion of the Warsaw Pact on 1st of July 1991 there still remained a north-south band of nation states providing some distance between NATO forces and Russian troops. Only when now - after the Eastern Enlargement of the EU in 2004 – more and more Eastern states became NATO members a more explosive situation emerged.

The crisis itself coincided with a change in US leadership, the Obama administration immediately started to shift the military focus from the Near East to the pacific coast of China. This not only produced new turmoil in the Eastern Mediterranean (see [Hanappi, 2014a]), it showed in a very general and dramatic way that military and political intervention is no substitute for deep economic change.

At that point of the historic time line the special situation of the EU in 2013 has to be taken into account. After five years of disastrous austerity policy (see [Hanappi, 2013, 2014b]) even the most sanguine top decision-makers in the EU recognized that they only are one step away from a total collapse of the European project. This prospect lead to a two-fold reaction: Internally the EU (Commission, Parliament, and ECB) tried to invoke a shift in decision power; away from the heads of state of EU members and towards central common EU bodies. Externally a combined action with NATO was initiated, which was meant to diverge attention of EU citizens towards extra-EU goals; i.e. first to start association agreements with new Eastern states, which then could end as NATO membership. Both action lines ran into severe problems.

The parliamentary elections in May 2014 not only proved that discontent with EU policy has grown dramatically, the aftermath of the fight for the position of the president of the commission makes clear that the conflict between Brussels and the club of heads of state is not decided yet. With respect to the external strategy the case of Ukraine is telling: The dynamics typically are dominated by the military strategies (NATO and Russian forces), and the temporary parallel between the EU's economic welfare goals and the NATO's strategic objectives have rapidly vanished. Today the Ukraine is an economic disaster. Nevertheless the same external EU strategy is repeated in Georgia and Moldavia. The economic and democratic goals of a European Union evidently cannot be assumed to be identical to the expansionary military strategy of NATO.

This paper tries to throw light on the global and European class dynamics underlying these European dynamics. It turns out that a detailed analysis of some national ruling classes and their factions (firm owners, state leaders, bankers) as well as a close study of the class of global financial intermediaries is needed to understand what is going on. In a conclusion the paper provides some suggestions for European class policy of Europe's working classes.

Literature

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