Title: The Provision of Security in an Age of Austerity: The Transformation of NATO, the Production of Trans-scalar Spaces of Intervention, and the Future of the West

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Abstract: This dissertation traces how NATO has evolved from a defensive alliance concerned with the collective defense of its members to a global security nexus engaged in preemptive crisis management interventions. In reaction to what I see as the limitations of traditional methodological approaches in the discipline of International Relations I develop an alternative research program that places the production of space and trans-scalar interactions at the heart of my analysis. I discuss how NATO reacted to the end of the Cold War and the emergence of a new geopolitical order as neoliberalism spread across the planet and the United States became a global hegemon. Particular attention is paid to the effect of the 2007 Global Financial Crisis upon NATO. The new era of austerity, which followed, accelerated and deepened changes that had begun within NATO starting in the 1990s. NATO now sought to form partnerships with countries across the world and adopted a far broader understanding of security that saw it intervening far from its traditional European area of operations. The impact of austerity is also readily apparent in the two interventions NATO has carried out thus far in the 21st century in Afghanistan and Libya. NATO’s sustained peacekeeping operation in Afghanistan contrasts sharply with its aerial assault on Libya in 2011. I posit that the intervention in Libya can best be understood as a trans-scalar space of intervention, a concept I develop to analyze how and why NATO became embroiled in the country. I conclude the dissertation by examining Russia’s recent actions in Ukraine and hypothesize that they will lead to a renewed focus on collective defense within NATO.

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Today, NATO continues to serve a familiar purpose but, in the wake of the War on Terror, has focused less on enemy nation states and more upon international terrorist organisations such as al-Qaeda, the Taliban and Islamic State that may threaten the West. However, as of 2014, it has become incredibly skeptical of Russia - yet again, though no longer as the Soviet Union - due to its illegal annexation of Crimea from Ukraine. NATO’s purpose was and is to militarily unite North America and Western Europe in order to cooperate in the way of national defence and security. As of 2016, there are 28 NATO Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen told NPR he sees the Libya operation as a template for future NATO missions and proof that the United Nations can outsource its muscle to the alliance. "I don’t see that as a negative" he said. "On the contrary, it’s very, very positive that NATO is able to support the United Nations Security Council and help implement its decisions. He says getting European NATO members to spend more wisely on defense, especially in a time of austerity, will be a key mission of his until the next big alliance gathering in Chicago next spring. But only 5 of the 28 NATO members are meeting the NATO requirement, which calls for members to spend at least 2 percent of their GDP on defense, according to the alliance’s own figures.