

Smart Defence in Times of Austerity

Since the foundation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) in 1949, the core values remains the same- NATO is the ‘safeguard’ of the freedom among the Alliance states, which are based on principles of the democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law,¹ and NATO has become the greatest political-military alliance, which is based on European-transatlantic military cooperation. The power and capabilities of NATO are unique because it acts in all levels- national, regional and international. To maintain the ‘safeguard’ position in times of technological expansion, all NATO member states have be updated by the newest technological means. But this development process has been affected by 2008 financial crisis. As a result of the crisis, in most of the member states austerity process took place and tightened governments’ spending. The defence budgets were affected as part of the austerity in result decreasing rapidly. As the result of austerity, the financing system of NATO was influenced and it got under pressure. In 2011, NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen at the Munich Security Conference introduced with a new concept how to build security in an age of austerity- by using Smart defence. However, the Global crisis was not the only reason of establishment of Smart Defence, the Libyan operation in 2011 showed how broad capabilities are required to address modern conflict, and changes of Euro-Transatlantic power shifts moving towards to Asia had impact of the development of it. This concept has become as one of the core principles of NATO and Rasmussen believes that tighten cooperation may bring countries even closer as never before.

The Smart defence consists of three elements- to pool and share capabilities, to set the right priorities, and to better coordinate efforts.² Its usage helps to achieve security goals with fewer resources, but more cooperation and coordination (ensuring greater security, for less money, by working together with more flexibility³). This is especially important for Europe to maintain its credibility of security and stay as one unit, not divided by capabilities of state. From realistic point of view, this is the only way how small countries can keep up. This model of effective and flexible cooperation requires identifying the areas in which NATO allies need to invest, to encourage multinational cooperation by working in smaller groups to combine their resources and build capabilities that can benefit the whole alliance.⁴ At the Chicago Summit in May 2012, NATO leaders agreed to Smart Defence as the core element of

¹The North Atlantic Treaty, Washington D.C., 4 April 1949,

http://www.nato.int/nato_static/assets/pdf/stock_publications/20120822_nato_treaty_en_light_2009.pdf

² NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen, “Building security in an age of austerity”, 4 February, Munich, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/opinions_70400.htm

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Anders Fogh Rasmussen, “NATO After Libya”, *Foreign Affairs*, vol.90, no.4, July/August 2011, p.2-6

the “Summit Declaration on Defence Capabilities: Toward NATO Forces 2020”⁵. During the Summit NATO allies approved a set of multinational projects that are the main illustration of the new model of cooperation among NATO nations. There are currently 24 Smart Defence multinational projects that represent a renewed multinational collaboration in order to provide cost-effective security in times of economic austerity. These projects will be funded by NATO allies.⁶

However, cooperation between countries to reach defence capabilities is nothing new for NATO, but still the concept is needed for the Alliance because it is a way how to meet targets if some countries cannot do it on their own. But there is a concern of to what extent multinational interests may to conflict with national defence priorities? Obviously, NATO allies have different national defence priorities, as well as diverse and competing industrial capabilities. As the NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen at the Munich Security Conference in his speech stressed out, the crisis makes cooperation between countries no longer a choice. It is a demand because Europe simply cannot afford on its own to develop and to meet all security challenges. Few months ago, Ambassador Alexander Vershbow, NATO Deputy Secretary General at the 48th Annual Security Conference of the Norwegian Atlantic Committee, Oslo, Norway on February 2013 referred to the Obama Administration’s attitude towards the Europe. It has made a clear that European Allies have to take on a bigger share of the burden for Alliance defence in general, and for European security in particular.⁷ In the United States is opinion that European countries are “freeloading” at the expense of the United States.⁸ After all, the United States are the cornerstone of NATO in some key areas, but European Allies are also participating in every single one of the 24 Smart defence multinational projects.

In the conclusion, Smart defence is mainly technical issue, but it involves political elements for NATO allies. It is a key element of establishment synergy with other institutions. NATO should tight up relations with the EU since 21 out of 28 NATO allies are also EU members. Specialization of particular fields at the time of austerity can be solved by cooperating at the regional level. Smaller nations should define groups and fields in which they may complement each other. In such perspective geographical criteria could be determinant with regard to neighbouring countries, like, a “Baltic”, a “Balkans” and others. For bigger nations, can be applied national approach- specialisation in assets that are the most

⁵Summit Declaration on Defence Capabilities: Toward NATO Forces 2020, Press Release (2012) 064, 20 May 2012, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_87594.htm?mode=pressrelease

⁶ NATO, Multinational Projects, Media Background, October 2012, http://www.nato.int/nato_static/assets/pdf/pdf_2012_10/20121008_mediabackgrounder_Multinational-Projects_en.pdf

⁷Ambassador Alexander Vershbow, NATO Deputy Secretary General, the 48th Annual Security Conference of the Norwegian Atlantic Committee, Oslo, Norway, 11 February 2013, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/SIDD67C668695E2A35A/natolive/opinions_98350.htm?selectedLocale=en

⁸ *Ibid.*

relevant for their national security, like Denmark (Navy and Air Force).⁹ Although, NATO alliance should use multinational cooperation due to the fact that it is the most effective way how to ensure security worldwide. Overall, “NATO’s essential mission will always remain the same: “to ensure that the Alliance remains an unparalleled community of freedom, peace, security and shared values.”¹⁰ Thereof, Smart defence is a way of thinking of the 21st century and it is a “game changer” for addressing modern conflicts by modern means of cooperation. It is a way how to safeguard peace and security for society globally.

⁹ Colonel Jacon Henius, “Specialization – the Gordian Knot of NATO’s Smart Defence?”, p.37

¹⁰ NATO, Active Engagement, Modern Defence. Strategic Concept for the Defence and Security of the Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation,