



NATO - GUARANTOR OF REGIONAL AND GLOBAL SECURITY AND STABILITY

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Abstract: *The North Atlantic Alliance has developed permanent political and military structures taking into account the profound changes in the security environment, especially after the Cold War. Alliance structures and policy changes reflect the commitment of member countries to maintaining political and military cooperation essential to their security policy. We believe that the essential role of the military component of the Alliance, in addition to guaranteeing the security of the Member States, is to ensure the free expression of their international affairs without any constraint or aggression issues that may arise at a time, and the management under UN mandate of crises and conflicts that do not fall within its area of responsibility.*

Keywords: *NATO; security environment; political-military organization; military dimension.*

During the last two decades, NATO has assumed the role of world leader and has become an important contributor to the general effort to ensure international security. The Alliance proves its desire to act as a positive force at global level and the fact that it has the capacity to manage the security challenges specific to the 21st, fully covering the spectrum of crisis response operations: from combat and stability actions, to surveillance, logistic support, and humanitarian actions.

This treaty lays the foundation of an organization based on security guarantees and mutual commitments, having as common goal the preservation of peace and the defence of freedom through political solidarity and an adequate military system, conceived in order to discourage and, if needed, repulse any form of aggression against its member states.

From its foundation, NATO has established as its fundamental objective the defence of the freedom and security of all its members through political and military means, in accordance with the North-Atlantic Treaty and the United Nations Charter.

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Based on the common values of democracy, human rights and rule of law, the Alliance manifested its interest in obtaining and maintaining peace in the Euro-Atlantic space, simultaneously with the ensurance and support of the economic and social development of the member states.

1. The North Atlantic Alliance in the international security equation

At present, beside the ensurance of the defence and security capacity of its member states, the objectives of NATO have also gained other significances and dimensions, aiming more and more to create and guarantee a regional and global security system. Today, the fundamental security tasks envisage:

- the assurance of a stable Euro-Atlantic security environment, based on democratic institutions;
- the peaceful resolution of disputes;
- the acting as a forum of consultations between allies on any issue which might affect their vital interests;
- the deterrence and defence against any threat of aggression against any NATO member state.

In view of strengthening the security and stability of the Euro-Atlantic space, the Alliance is prepared to contribute to the efficient prevention of conflicts, to actively engage in crisis management, to widely promote partnership, cooperation and dialogue with other countries from the Euro-Atlantic space, in order to increase transparency, mutual trust and the common action capacity with the Alliance.

*"The Alliance is engaged into a wide approach to security, taking into consideration, beside its military dimension, factors of a political, economic, social and environmental nature"*¹. Together with the other organizations actively involved in the field of security, it contributes to the stability and security of the Euro-Atlantic space by preserving the transatlantic connection, maintaining an effective military capability that is sufficient for deterrence and defence, and to the fulfilment of the entire spectrum of NATO missions by developing the European Security and Defence Initiative (ESDI), a complex capacity for crisis management, by the constant development of partnership relations, cooperation and dialogue with other countries (as a part of the approach of Euro-Atlantic security issues through cooperation).

The threats, risks and challenges that NATO countries are currently confronted with are very different from the ones of the Cold War. NATO no longer perceives a



conventional, large scale military threat to the territory of the Alliance as real.

Instead, the current threats to security include instability, ethnic and religious rivalries, the competition for natural resources, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, failed states, mass migration, genocide, organized crime, cyber attacks and terrorism. The major challenge is to manage an ever wider spectrum of requirements and new types of operations. This is one of the reasons for which the allies have undertaken a process of transformation of their military forces: the current and future operations will continue to require more agile and interoperable forces, well trained and led, with modern, deployable and sustainable structures. The North Atlantic Alliance has permanently developed political and military structures while keeping in mind the profound transformations in the security environment, especially after the end of the Cold War.

"Article 5" represents the essence of the collective defence of the Alliance, providing security guarantees to the allies: *"The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all and consequently they agree that, if such an armed attack occurs, each of them, in exercise of the right of individual or collective self-defence recognised by Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, will assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking forthwith, individually and in concert with the other Parties, such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force, to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area"*².

In April 1999 at the Washington summit, the allies approved the new *NATO Strategic Concept*³ which identifies the goal of the Alliance and its fundamental security tasks, the characteristics of the current security environment. It also states the elements of a wider approach to security by the Alliance, providing the necessary directives for continuing the adaptation of the military forces. The new strategy of the alliance adopted in Washington oriented the future political and military development of NATO. In this respect, a number of organization measures were taken in order to adapt the allied military forces to the new conditions and requirements.

Thus, the North Atlantic Council adopted a new military concept (CJTF - Combined Joint Task Force). This concept is at the basis of the operations carried out by NATO member and partner countries under UNO or OSCE authority. The concept allows the Alliance to respond to the new missions in a flexible manner, also ensuring the necessary framework for the participation and integration of the



military effort of the partner countries in NATO led operations.

The modifications in the structures and policies of the Alliance reflect the commitment of the member countries to maintaining the political-military cooperation essential to their common security. Concurrently, they extended their cooperation towards new partners in Central and Eastern Europe in order to promote security and stability in the whole Europe.

One of the components of these transformations was to intensify the dialogue and to establish links with the states in Central and Eastern Europe, as well as with the states of the former USSR, within the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council and, later on, within the Partnership for Peace (PfP). Another transformation is the adoption of a new strategic concept which requires the development of coordination and cooperation with other international organizations, such as the UNO, OSCE, EU, as well as the agreement that NATO resources and experience are made available in order to support international stability and support European Union and UN operations. In this regard, the collective defence of its members is fundamental to its credibility and to the security and stability of the Euro-Atlantic space.

Aiming to put into practice its policy to preserve peace, prevent conflicts and strengthen security and stability, NATO wishes to prevent conflicts in cooperation with other organizations in the field of security, and in cases of crises, to be able to intervene in order to manage and resolve them by applying the norms of international law or by carrying out non-article 5 crisis response operations (stability and support operations).

The conclusions resulted from the proceedings of the ensuing summits strengthened the preoccupations of the member states to adapt the Alliance to the newly created political and security context, among which: the decision to operate changes in the NATO defence planning and force generation processes (Istanbul, 2004); the declaration of the NATO Response Force as operational, the continuation of the measures to improve the military capacities and the publication of the "Comprehensive Political Guidance" (Riga, 2006); the re-affirmation of the basic principles and common values, the necessity to continue the transformation and to adopt a new Strategic Concept, the decision taken by France to come back to the Alliance structures (Strasbourg / Kehl, 2009).

The "Comprehensive Political Guidance" (CPG), being a major political document which sets the framework and the priorities for the development of the Alliance capabilities and the directions of defence planning for the following



10-15 years, emphasizes the fact that the Alliance has to be able in the future to carry out two major joint operations (MJO) at the same time, while maintaining the capacity to carry out six small joint operations (SJO). As a logical consequence of this vision, the priorities for the development of the necessary capabilities are defined, beginning with expeditionary forces and their possibility to deploy and sustain themselves in an area of operations. For putting it into practice, a CPG management mechanism was created, which allows member states to establish, through the NATO defence planning process, the level of military ambition regarding their individual and collective participation, and to build their capacities fact which envisages two aspects: the monitoring and evaluation of the achievement of the established capabilities and the improvement of the NATO processes for the identification, development and the putting at disposal of the required capabilities.

At the Lisbon Summit in November 2010, the leaders of the allied states approved the new Strategic Concept for Security and Defence “Active Engagement, Modern Defence”; the decision to develop an anti-missile shield to protect the population and territory of Europe, complementary with the deployment of forces and concomitantly with the invitation addressed to Russia to participate in this project; the adoption of a comprehensive approach to crisis management, including a larger role for NATO with regard to stability, reconstruction, and creation and training of local forces; to maintain in an adequate equilibrium the conventional and nuclear forces; the adoption of the capability package (Lisbon Capabilities Package – LCP) which identifies the critical needs to manage the emerging threats; the agreement to elaborate a cyber defence policy and an action plan for its implementation; the reorganization and improvement of military command structures.

According to the new Strategic Concept, the *essential mission* of NATO remains that to “ensure that the Alliance is an unmatched community of freedom, peace, security and common values”⁷⁴, whose fundamental and permanent *goal* “is to protect the freedom and security of all its members through political and military means”⁷⁵. We believe that, by showing flexibility and mobility, the North Atlantic Alliance has adapted to the political changes that occurred in the international environment, asserting itself as the main stability and security factor in the world. Following the intensification of relations with Central and East European states, they began to perceive the Alliance as a genuine source of security, as a credible advocate of democratic values, an essential condition for economic development and social prosperity. In the context of the amplification and development of



international cooperation and collaboration in the field of security, the extension of the Alliance demonstrated that the time of a divided Europe ended, and a new era of globalization, integration and cooperation began.

2. The military dimension of the North Atlantic Alliance

The military dimension of NATO is perhaps the most important attribute of the Alliance, through which the fundamental objective of the Alliance is achieved. We are of the opinion that the essential role of the military component of the Alliance, besides guaranteeing the security of its member states, is to ensure their free expression in international matters, without fear of constraints or aggression that might appear at a certain moment, as well as the management, under UNO mandate, of crises and conflicts outside its area of responsibility.

The NATO Ministerial Directive for 2003⁶ states that the North Atlantic Alliance "*needs modern, robust, interoperable, credible forces and capabilities, apt to carry out collective defence operations, to keep away risks that might emerge, to rapidly deploy anywhere and anytime required in order to address the crises that might occur; capable sustain themselves without the support of the host country; to apply decisive force based on efficiency and accuracy against threats, including threats with nuclear, bacteriological and chemical weapons; to operate in the same manner as the forces of the rest of the allies*".

Unfortunately, at present, although peace is obtained and preserved mainly through diplomatic means, through political cooperation and solidarity, using instruments such as high level integration and communication, due to the new risks to global security and the vulnerabilities in the current security architecture, there are moments and situations when, in order to obtain peace and implicitly security, the use of military forces is required, both in order to deter military aggressions (military actions specific to armed combat), and also to manage various crises (military actions in support and stability operations).

Due to the major changes in the current international environment and taking into consideration the tendencies and forces manifesting in the international security environment, the armed forces of the North Atlantic Alliance have gone through a series of important transformations meant to constitute a flexible and operational capacity able to respond when the situation requires it.

These transformations have occurred both at the level of concepts, elaboration of strategies and the staffs of the allied forces, and also at the level of planning,



organization and operation of existing troops. At the same time, a major focus has been placed on cooperation between the armies of the Alliance member states, in order to obtain the interoperability and standardization of the multinational troops within the Alliance.

In order to obtain efficiency in actions and, at the same time, to rapidly respond to the requirements of the new security system, the allied forces must carry out a great amount of common effort based on cooperation and interoperability. We identified the following factors which are at the basis of the achievement of the principle of collective effort:

- collective planning of forces;
- common financing;
- common operational planning;
- multinational structures;
- integrated air defence system;
- equilibrium of roles and responsibilities among allies;
- establishment and deployment of forces outside national territory when it is the case;
- arrangements (including planning) for crisis management and support;
- common standards and procedures for equipment, training and logistics;
- joint multinational doctrines and exercises;
- cooperation with regard to infrastructure, armament systems and logistics.

Based on the elaboration of a new concept with regard to the current role of the Alliance, its military dimension is defined within certain new parameters, the achievement of operational capacities being able to respond to the new requirements being necessary. In NATO's modern vision, these new requirements refer to the capacity to engage effectively, deploy rapidly and provide the necessary mobility, the superiority of forces and infrastructure and support, including logistics and force rotation.

The proceedings of the Conference for Security held in Munich in 2011 concentrated on the theme "Building security in an age of austerity" and emphasized three possible major consequences on European security in the context of defence budget cuts by European NATO member states, as a result of the economic and financial crisis:



- the risk of a divided Europe – only a handful of large European nations would become security providers on the continent, while the rest of the countries would become only beneficiaries, which undermines the principle of collective defence and allied solidarity, which are the basis of the North Atlantic Alliance;
- the risk of a weak Europe – the reduction of the potential to prevent and manage crises, which can affect credibility in upholding the principles and values specific to open societies, such as individual freedom, democracy, free trade and the rule of law;
- the risk to “disconnect” Europe from the USA – if Europe fails to preserve its contribution to global security, the USA may turn toward other reliable partners.

In order to avoid such risks, the opinion of the NATO Secretary General is that the Alliance and Europe implicitly need a “new approach: *Smart Defence* - providing an increased security with less money, but working together with higher flexibility”⁷. At the reunion of the North Atlantic Council in Chicago on 20 May 2012, in order to strengthen the availability of the Alliance to develop the necessary capabilities to carry out its essential missions undertaken through the Strategic Concept, the participating heads of states and governments adopted the Chicago Declaration in the field of defence and the Defence Package, which represent a vision and a pathway toward achieving the objective set by the NATO Forces 2020.

The missions of the armed forces of the Alliance bear the mark of the new characteristics of the security environment, including the involvement of forces in managing various conflicts: conflicts of an ethnical or religious nature which can be both interstate and also intrastate conflicts, as well as special actions to combat terrorism.

The missions carried out in such conflicts are characterized by a larger preponderance of peace operations which require military conflict prevention (CP), peace building (PB), peace making (PM), peace enforcement (PE) actions. These military operations are carried out on the basis of a UNO or OSCE mandate, the armed forces of the Alliance acting with the observance of the general principles established by the international bodies and sanctioned by the norms of international law. These principles make reference to the legitimacy and neutrality of force, its impartiality and objectivity, as well as to its method of action on the basis of a clear and precise mandate.



Another type of operations carried out by the armed forces of the Alliance are those combating terrorism, this phenomenon spreading and becoming the main threat to world's security in the 21st.

After the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 on New York and Washington, it became a necessity to find solutions for combating terrorist actions. At the Prague summit on 21 November 2002, referring to the increase of the military effectiveness of NATO, the heads of states and governments of the Alliance decided to strengthen the military capacities necessary to the defence against terrorism, including the optimization of the participation in the common intelligence and crisis response arrangements system.

We can not say about the war against terrorism that it is one of a classical type. It is based on the use of light infantry, helicopters and aviation, as well as of other weapons and special forces engaged in punctual directions and objectives for the annihilation of groups of terrorists, the combat gaining a general aspect of anti-guerrilla warfare, in which military actions are based on⁸:

- precise armament systems;
- light and heavy infantry armament used punctually;
- use of attack helicopters;
- other modern armament systems;
- services of intelligence and protection structures.

Nowadays, the international organizations and their member states are not the only ones involved in the fight against terrorism as then are other states that closely cooperate and collaborate with them, their goal being to annihilate this phenomenon which constitutes one of the greatest threats to the security of states and of the world in general.

In order to have a guarantee of the success of the actions and operations undertaken, both in the armed combat and also in the special stability and support operations, it was necessary to elaborate operational concepts which would answer in an optimum manner to the new requirements and changes that have emerged in the current international environment.

In conclusion, we can certainly state the fact that the military structures of the North Atlantic Alliance constitute one of the instruments which ensures the achievement of the political objectives which aim to obtain security and stability on the globe, their existence under the leadership of the political element and through the eyes of International Law being absolutely necessary..., "*without excluding the*



*idea of national defence by means of own forces in exceptional situations, limit situations and only for short periods of time, collective defence is seen as the result of the common inter-allied effort, with the prevention of aggression as its trump card*⁹.

Let us imagine where Afghanistan would have been without the support of the North Atlantic Alliance, where the acceptance of a Taliban dictatorial regime would have taken us, with its support and shelter provided to the Al-Qaeda terrorist network... probably to chaos. Where would the world have gone to in the end by tolerating the dictatorial regime in Baghdad, accepting a Saddam Hussein's wish for expansion and conquests? It is certainly better not to find out these answers. These questions certainly reflect the importance of NATO and the similar structures and forces.

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