# NATO CONCEPT EVOLUTION – CONSEQUENCE OF THE CHANGES OCCURRED IN THE INTERNATIONAL SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

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*Abstract: We initiated our endeavor staring from an undisputed reality, that is, NATO changes its strategies and, implicitly, concepts, according to the developments occurred in the international security environment, in order to be able to respond to any challenge operatively and adequately. We would like to emphasize that regardless of the concepts formulation and application, the Organization's fundamental values, and particularly its purely defensive character and the principle of collective defense do not alter.*

*Keywords: NATO concepts, international security environment, changes, unpredictable and complex challenges.*

Throughout its existence, the North Atlantic Alliance has been permanently preoccupied with the alignment of its strategies and concepts with the alterations occurred in the international security environment, which is extremely fluid and unpredictable, and marked the worldwide community's evolution after the Second World War, in order to respond to the challenges that threatened peace and democracy so difficultly gained. The historical events of the last decades have changed the world and led to increasing attention paid to develop doctrines and actions, for some threats have appeared and affected large parts of the planet, requiring immediate response in order to avoid tremendous life losses. One could hardly put these events into a certain order of importance, but one must mention the collapse of communism, terrorism, and nuclear threats.

In our opinion, a crucial moment in NATO's strategic evolution is the dissolution of the Warsaw treaty, for the enemy was becoming harder and harder to identify, which called for a new course of action. It is interesting to mention what one of Gorbachev's collaborators, Alexei Arbatov [1], stated: "The USSR will do you the biggest harm possible: it will deprive you from your enemy" ("Le Figaro", Paris, 10 January 1990) [2].

When this assertion was made, few analysts took it into consideration, but when the Warsaw treaty ceased to exist, one could notice how

necessary it was to modify NATO's strategy, among which we consider that the most important ones are those elaborated during the summits of Rome, November 1991 and April 1999, Washington, and the new concept developed after the Summit of Strasbourg / Kehl, 3-4 April 2009, which is to be approved during the next NATO reunion, by the end of this year.

We do not intend to elaborate on these concepts, but rather present their main provisions, in order to notice how much they have changed in no more than two decades, whereas the process of NATO concepts and strategy adaptation is still on going.

All the three concepts we envisage emphasize the concern to preserve the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's fundamental values: defensive character, collective defense, and the Alliance's military dimension as the means to reach these objectives.

The principles of the 1991 concept may be concentrated as follows: the Alliance has a purely defensive character; security is indivisible, and an attack upon one of its members is regarded as an attack upon all the members; NATO's security policy is based on collective defense, including an integrated military structure, as well as on cooperation agreements; the preservation of an adequate balance of nuclear and conventional force in Europe in necessary in the light of the foreseeable future.

Mention should be made that in only eight years the situation has changed so radically that the 1999 concept brings about significant changes related to new courses of action: the Alliance should assume not only collective defensive roles, but also roles in ensuring peace and stability in the greater Euro-Atlantic area, thus contributing to conflict prevention; maintaining structures and procedures appropriate for conflict prevention and crisis management, effective partnership with non-NATO countries on cooperation and dialog premises; Alliance enlargement by applying an open-doors policy for potential new members; continuing the effort for disarmament and non-proliferation in order to ensure stability in the Euro-Atlantic area based on the consolidation of democratic institutions and peaceful conflict resolution; mediating and advising the allies in matters affecting their vital interests; protecting NATO members from any threat and aggression; promoting partnership, cooperation, and dialog with other countries from the Euro-Atlantic area in order to ensure transparency, mutual trust, and action within the Alliance; strong engagement in the transatlantic relationship; maintaining the Alliance's military capability to increase military operations' efficiency; a more comprehensive approach to security in the sense of including political, economic, social, and environmental factors. One can notice the introduction of a two phrases that play a crucial role in the Alliance's way of action: "out of area operations", and "non-article 5 operations", which have been widely discussed and debated.

During the summit of Strasbourg / Kehl, 3-4 April 2009, the state and government leaders of the NATO countries have required that the Secretary General should elaborate a new NATO strategic concept known as the new concept NATO 2010. This task must be completed by the next NATO summit, which is expected to take place towards the end of the year 2010.

The Secretary General will summon and lead a large group of

professionals who will establish the reason for a new Strategic Concept. This will be accomplished in active collaboration with NATO most important decisional structure, the North Atlantic Council.

The first question is: why does NATO need a new strategic concept? And the answer may be the following: a transatlantic consensus of NATO's roles and missions regarding its strategy to address the security challenges is essential for the organization's proper functioning; the strategic concept is NATO's fundamental document which establishes and reflects this consensus; the security environment has changes, therefore the Alliance must update the current concept of 1999, when NATO had 19 members, compared to the present 28 members; NATO must focus on European challenges; the new Strategic Concept must be developed and approved by all the 28 members; it must take into account the security challenges' evolution, that is, the emphasis on energy supplies; terrorism, and climate changes; the new Concept shall not be merely an analysis document. It will have to provide the member countries with guidelines concerning the way to further transform the Alliance to successfully accomplish NATO fundamental roles.

NATO's main duty is reiterated: collective defense, as follows: the 5th Article does not change, but its requirements have altered in their form; the member states protection from armed aggression must be sustained not only by military capabilities, but also by drawing up plans for crisis situations, rapid reaction, and logistics.

Protection from non-conventional threats remains of paramount importance as NATO stays focused in this respect, with an emphasis on threats related to weapons of mass destruction, terrorist and cyber attacks; to ensure its security, NATO must update its approach to territorial defense.

An extremely important issue is to establish orientation directions for operations outside the Alliance's borders, for NATO cannot be the sole answer to every problem affecting international security; NATO is a regional, not global organization, and its authority and resources are limited, which is why the new concept must offer guidelines in making decisions connected to operations abroad.

The new concept aims at enabling success in Afghanistan, because: NATO's mission in Afghanistan is of unprecedented magnitude in the Alliance's history. NATO's experience gained there is a valuable source of lessons learned in terms of cohesion, efficient planning, and public diplomacy, civil-military matters, and the need to deploy forces at a strategic distance for a long period of time.

Emphasis is placed upon the necessity for permanent consultation in order to overcome or manage crisis situations, starting from the following facts: given the current risks, the allies ought to be more creative and take advantage of the article 4. It refers to preventing crisis situations prior to an imminent threat, which would require imposing the article 5. The 4th article fosters information exchanges and opinion convergences [3].

A new partnership era is envisioned: the new strategic concept must admit that the NATO of the year 2020 will not act alone; NATO must clarify and thoroughly examine its relations with the key partners, as well as to initiate new relations and

widen the partnership coverage.

The new international situation implies complex involvement in complex matters, as follows: sound partnerships provide NATO with the opportunity to continue searching for solution to complex problems affecting security; generally speaking, a complex approach should combine military and civilian elements.

The new concept comprehensively deals with its relationship with Russia: the NATO-Russia partnership was conceived as a way to ensure security in the Euro-Atlantic region; the Alliance remains focused on this objective. The main communication forum is the NATO-Russia Council, which has not always been used properly, but was set up to prevent crises, examine events, and decide upon common actions. Although the Alliance and Russia do not regard each other as a threat, there are doubts on both sides in terms of the other party's intentions and policies. One should reiterate NATO's willingness to support the instauration of a Euro-Atlantic order based on cooperation with Russia alongside restating that the member states' security and interests will be protected. The envisaged objectives in this respect refer to non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, armament control, counter-terrorism, anti-missile defense, crisis situations management, peace operations, maritime security, and fight on drug dealing.

The open doors policy is maintained on the following premises: since the end of the Second World War, NATO has reached a number of 28 member from 16; this policy has been a progress engine for building a free and united Europe; the new accessions refer to western Balkans, i.e., Georgia and Ukraine. The process regarding to new memberships must continue as every candidate meets the accession requirements, for NATO is based on voluntary membership.

The nuclear policy is on going: peace support solidarity implies the following: NATO's military and political engagements are meaningless unless they are supported by capabilities; the strategic concept should include the clear presentation of defense priorities accompanied by a set of new or improved reforms; NATO forces must be able to protect the Alliance's territory, to assume missions at strategic distances, to contribute to building a safer security environment, and to address various issues where and when required. Therefore, there is a need for continual NATO's forces transformation from the powerful, but static status (during the Cold War), to a flexible and mobile one nowadays.

A new mission emerges now – the anti-missile defense, as defense against a ballistic missile attack in Iran led to an essential mission for NATO, when Barack Oabama's decision was to deploy an anti-missile shield will provide a more rapid and efficient protection than the previous one. Also, the anti-missile defense is placed in a NATO context, for it is more efficient when performed as a common action, within which NATO-Russia cooperation is preferable.

The new concept attempts to address the cyber-attacks risks, starting from their increasing frequency. Consequently, NATO must enhance its efforts to face up such threats by protecting its own command and communications systems alongside helping its members to prevent and recover from such attacks, as well as to develop their defense capabilities in this sector.

The aforementioned are possible

by implementing reforms to build a more agile alliance, so the new strategic concept should authorize and encourage the Secretary General to continue the reforms meant to make the Alliance more capable of making quick decisions, including the costs point of view.

The new concept 2010 was anticipated in an interview for the PE site given by mr. Anders Fogh Rasmussen [4], NATO Secretary General, in November 2009. The main idea he starts from is that "it is all about consensus building". The interview is considerably ample, but – for the relevance of our hereby endeavor – we shall concentrate on its final part, when mr. Anders Rasmussen [5] answers two fundamental questions for the Alliance's future, which we will reproduce entirely:

1. Is NATO overstretched, if there were another conflict would it be able to find the resources?
NATO is currently the world's strongest military alliance with a huge capacity, but of course right now we are very much focused on our mission in Afghanistan, because a lot is at stake for the Afghan people, but first and foremost for our own security and for the international community. Let me stress why we are in Afghanistan. It is because of security. The terrorists who attacked the US on 9/11 2001 were rooted in Afghanistan and the following day the NATO alliance invoked, for the first time in its history, Article 5, the collective defense clause, which states that an attack on one member is considered an attack on all of them. The mission is still not accomplished - so right now we are focused on Afghanistan. This is also about territorial defense. I would like to stress that the core task of NATO

is territorial defense of allied nations but we have to realize that in today's world the defense of our own borders very often starts far away like in Afghanistan, so right now this is our number one priority.

2. NATO is in the process of developing a new strategic concept. Countries like the US, the UK, Holland and Denmark prefer a more global strategy, while France and many of the newer member states would prefer a more regional focus. What would you prefer?
I don't see any contradiction. This will be one of the core items on the agenda in our new strategic concept exercise. Since NATO was established 60 years ago territorial defense according to article 5 has been our core function it will remain so! Today, we are also faced with new threats, including cyber attacks, and in order to address these new threats properly, we need to transform our armed forces. Around 70% of our armed forces in Europe are stationary. I think that if we are to make our territorial defense credible, then we have to make sure that we can actually move people around, we have to have a more mobile, a more flexible and more deployable military. In conclusion, I do not see any contradiction between territorial defense and a global reach and a global perspective. My role will be to build this bridge."

In the hereby article, we have attempted to bring forward arguments to sustain the idea that NATO is undergoing a remarkably dynamic transformation due to the frequent, profound, and unpredictable changes occurred in the security environment worldwide. After the NATO summit at the end of this year, when the new concept 2010 will be officially approved, we will return with

potential new aspects emerged in the wake of debating it in the presence of all the Alliance's members.

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