

SECURITY AND DEFENCE SOURCES FOR THE ARMED FORCES OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC

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The article deals with some aspects of security and defence sources for the armed forces of the Slovak Republic. It compares the possibilities of several NATO states in terms of their Gross National Product (GNP) and their expenses for the armed forces. The article refers to the negative impingement of expenses reduction on the position of the SR and the Slovak armed forces developed with its NATO and EU partners . It also focuses on the possibilities to obtain funding sources for the development of armed forces from special NATO programmes.

Key words: *armed forces, defence sources, strategy, transformation, development, research, programme, cooperation.*

1. INTRODUCTION

By establishing Regulations on the Common Security and Defence Policy (within the meaning of Article 42 of The Lisbon Treaty signed by the top leaders of the EU Member States on 13th December 2007) some obligations that are related to the military capabilities of EU and NATO Member States' armed forces of ARE being adapted. Article 42 paragraph 1 states as follows: The common security and defence policy (CSDP) is an inseparable part of common foreign and security policy. It shall provide for an operational capacity drawing on civilian and military assets of individual countries. The Union may use them on missions for peace-keeping, conflict prevention and strengthening international security in accordance with the principles of the United Nations Charter. The performance of these tasks shall be undertaken by using Member States' capabilities. Paragraph 2 states: CSDP shall include the progressive framing of a common Union defence policy... and paragraph 3 further specifies: Member States shall make civilian and military capabilities available to the

Union for the implementation of the common security and defence policy, to contribute to the objectives defined by the Council. Those Member States which together establish multinational forces may also make them available to the CSDP.

In the case of the Slovak Republic, the military capabilities are the main assets that may be provided for the implementation of the common security and defence policy of the Union. How did we manage to fulfill this task over the past decade? How are we doing in comparison to other Member States of the EU and NATO? In order to compare, we may apply some indicators that shall demonstrate the ability of the development of armed forces.

2. COMPARISON OF DEFENCE EXPENDITURES AS GDP PERCENTAGE OF NATO AND EU MEMBER STATES

An analysis of a relatively long period of 6 years (between 2004 and 2010) that coincides with Slovakia' accession into NATO and EU indicates a gradual reduction (decline) in the defence expenditures

among 12 Member States: 6 countries had defence expenditures more less under control, and 9 countries managed to increase defence expenditures in most years (United Kingdom, Canada, Bulgaria, Greece, Denmark, Albania, Poland, Spain and Slovenia [1]).

From the perspective of the annual increases in expenditures according to the percentage of GDP of NATO Member States, the most significant year was 2009, when 14 Member States witnessed an increase in their GDP whereas 13 countries were confronted with a decrease of their GDP. In 2010, the increase manifested only in the case of 7 Member States (United Kingdom, Slovenia, Portugal, Poland, Luxembourg, Denmark and Albania) and a decline was recorded by 20 countries, of which the highest decrease was in Bulgaria (by 0.56%), Czech Republic (by 0.32%) and Slovakia (by 0.27%).

From the point of view of the allocated percentage of GDP between 2004 and 2010, the following data may be provided:

- On average, there were 7 NATO Member States that reached 2% of GDP and more – Bulgaria, Croatia, France, Greece, Turkey, United Kingdom and the USA (in most years);

- 1.8% to 2% of GDP was reached by 1 NATO Member State - Poland (in most years);

- On average, there were 3 NATO Member States that reached 1.6% to 1.8% of GDP – Estonia, Norway and Romania (in most years);

- On average, there were 5 NATO Member States that reached 1.5% to 1.6% of GDP – Albania, Czech Republic, Portugal, Slovakia and Slovenia (in most years);

- On average, there were 3 NATO Member States that reached 1.3% to 1.5% of GDP – Denmark, Germany and The Netherlands;

- On average, there were 6 NATO Member States that reached 1.0% to 1.3% of GDP – Belgium, Canada, Hungary, Italy, Latvia and Lithuania (in most years);

- Under 1% of GDP was confirmed by 1 NATO Member State – Luxembourg.

From the perspective of the development of the annual defence expenditure of the Slovak Republic according to the GDP percentage allocated and the ranking of NATO Member States between 2004 and 2011 in this respect, the situation is as follows [2]:

- From the perspective of the percentage of GDP, Slovakia ranks 13 of 27 NATO Member States, and it ranked 14 in 2005, 12 in 2006, 14 in 2007, 15 in 2008, 20 in 2009 and 2010;

- In the years preceding the accession to NATO, Slovakia had higher annual defence expenditure in terms of the GDP percentage than after its accession to NATO: in 1997 – 2.0%, in 1998 – 1.8%, in 1999 – 1.6%, in 2000 – 1.6%, in 2001 – 2.0%, in 2002 – 1.9% and in 2003 – 1.87%;

- Having joined NATO, Slovakia noticed lower annual defence expenditure in terms of GDP percentage than before its accession: in 2004 – 1.68%, in 2005 – 1.72%, in 2006 – 1.63%, in 2007 – 1.52%, in 2008 – 1.49%, in 2009 – 1.53% (1.34%) in 2010 – 1.26% and in 2011 – 1.08%.

3. NATO MEMBER STATES' GDP GROWTH (DECLINE) AND ITS IMPACT ON THE POSITION OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC

Looking at the real annual GDP growth between 2004 to 2008 within 18 selected European countries (Greece, Portugal, Hungary, Ireland, Island, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Spain, Great Britain, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Germany, Austria, Poland, Slovakia, Czech Republic, and the USA, it becomes obvious that Slovakia gradually reached one of the largest growth in the real GDP compared to these countries:

- In 2004 by 5.0% and in 2005 by 6.7%, which ranked it the 6th among 19 compared countries;

- In 2006 the growth was by 8.5% placing it the third among the same countries;

- In 2007 the growth was by 10.6% and in 2008 by 6.2%, that positioned it on the first place.

Slovakia has not been affected by the crisis so much in comparison with

other states. In 2010, it had fastest growing economy in the EU and the growth in reached 4 % whereas, for example the GDP of Latvia decreased by up to 18 % in 2009. According to the International Monetary Fund, a positive trend shall continue and affect Slovakia in a way that by 2016, in the category of per capita GDP, Slovakia will have outrun Portugal and Malta according to the purchasing power parity, and

ranked just behind Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Slovenia and Spain.

Together with Slovenia and the Czech Republic, Slovakia could form a group of the economically most successful post-socialist countries by 2016, **despite the fact that its defence expenditure continued to decline until the country gradually fell to one of the last places in this respect within the Alliance (Figure 1).**

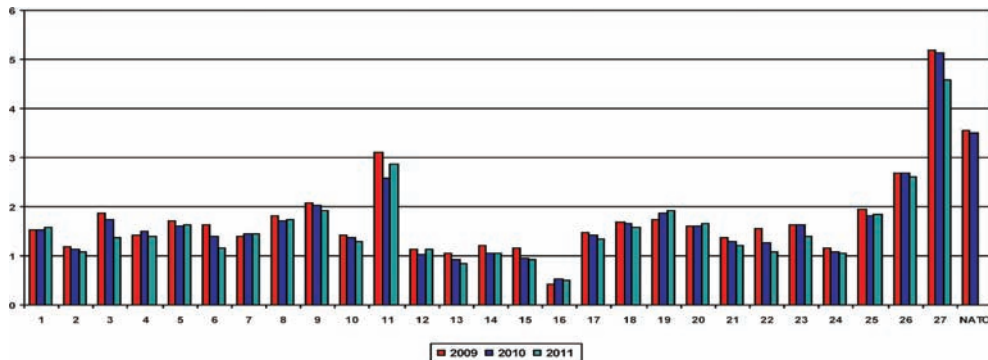


Figure 1. The GDP defence expenditures percentage in NATO member states between 2009 and 2011 (%)

- 1 – Albania; 2 – Belgium; 3 – Bulgaria; 4 – Canada; 5 – Croatia; 6 – the Czech Republic; 7 – Denmark; 8 – Estonia; 9 – France; 10 – Germany; 11 – Greece; 12 – Hungary; 13 – Italy; 14 – Latvia; 15 – Lithuania; 16 – Luxembourg; 17 – the Netherlands; 18 – Norway; 19 – Poland, 20 – Portugal; 21 – Romania; 22 – Slovakia; 23 – Slovenia; 24 – Spain; 25 – Turkey; 26 – Great Britain; 27 – the USA, 28 – NATO (datum for 2011 is not available)

Failure to comply with its commitments has had a negative impact on Slovakia and, in particular, on its armed forces, which is being reflected in [3]:

- The failure of the Slovak Republic to ensure defence capabilities in the field of International Security as well as at national level. That may lead to mistrust among political and military partners as to the real political willingness and readiness of the Slovak Republic to be a real partner when sharing expenditures as part of the joint effort undertaken in a changing security environment.

- Long-term planning documents approved by the Government and the National Council of the Slovak Republic (Long-term Plan of Armed Forces Development MODEL 2010, 2015 and 2020, The Armaments Strategy of the armed forces of the Slovak Republic,

National Armaments Strategy of SR, Master Armaments Projects, etc.) have become obsolete and unfeasible in terms of their content (military capabilities) or the time horizon since the beginning of their implementation.

- Significant delays of the SR in relation to the implementation of the planned and approved force objectives (collective defence) that are caused by a long-term disproportion between tasks and resources.

- Allocated forces of the armed forces into NRF NATO and the EU Battle group do not mostly meet the quality standards for military capabilities and at the same time, their likely deployment is limited by low resources for individual rotations and for keeping these in operations.

- On a long-term basis, the real financial resources allocated for the

Army do not secure the basic tasks and needs of the Army, and almost all fail to meet its development (armaments by weapons systems and technique).

- Although having been certified, declared units reached readiness only at the lower limit of the prescribed capabilities.

- The financial assurance of unplanned maintenance and deployment of the armed forces in international operations is systemically unresolved.

- A huge financial deficit has appeared in the field of armaments and modernisation since the premise of the Government concerning the progressive financing of big modernisation programmes through additional resources from the General cash administration of the Slovak Republic has not been applied, which has a negative impact on the entire process of transformation and development.

- A major technological, technical and physical obsolescence looms ahead since the service period of most of the land forces technique ends in 2015.

- No innovative social programmes for professional soldiers have been developed from the long-term and prospective point of view, neither has the amendment of the law on civil service been made.

In the event that the Slovak Republic is not able to financially and materially fulfil the commitments, it shall search for a common and acceptable bilateral or multilateral solutions whether within NATO or the EU, or countries of V4.

4. POSSIBILITIES OF DRAWING ON RESOURCES FROM NATO PROGRAMMES

The security investments offered by NATO might be one of the possibilities where to find resources for the armed forces. It does not necessarily relate to the reserve of NATO STO (Science and technology organization), noted for its 7 panels after reorganisation in recent years:

- Applied vehicle technology (AVT);
- Human factors and medicine (HMF);
- Information systems technology (IST);
- NATO modelling and simulation group (NMSG);
- System analysis and studies (SAS);
- System concepts and integration (SCI);
- Sensors and electronics technology (SET).

Less known programmes among which we can add the following may also represent another possibility of funding the armed forces [4].

The Science for Peace and Security Programme NATO (SPS) is an established and prestigious grant mechanism that has the potential to attract other sources of financing (*i.e.* it acts as a catalyst of available resources).

NATO offers the possibility of financial support for cooperation between individuals or institutions of Member States and partner countries in the field of support of NATO operations, cyber and energy security, the fight against terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the environment, social impacts and changes. Support of initiative projects shall not be excluded as long as they relate to other security threats. Educational activities, workshops, and also the purchase of equipment or software belong among supported forms of cooperation [5].

Project proposals are assessed by the panel of independent experts, where Slovakia is represented as well, twice a year. The decision on specific financial support is consequently adopted by representatives of the Member States acting as permanent representatives to NATO.

Although there are no formal limits on the amount of the funds for which it is possible to apply, the average support from SPS for individual long-term projects is between 250 000 and 300 000 Euro, and in the case of short-term projects it is approximately 50 000 Euro.

The funds of the Public Diplomacy Division (NATO PDD) is another option offered by NATO and that draws on

the funds of PDD that are intended to promote public debate on security and defence in order to influence public opinion in the Member States and to inform about the main NATO policies. They are meant for individuals, universities and non-governmental organizations. These programmes also include visits of politicians, academics, scientists and non-governmental organizations at NATO headquarters and also sponsorship of conferences and seminars. Although there are no formal limits on the amount of the funds for which it is possible to apply, the average support for projects is between 10 000 and 20 000 EUR.

The aim is to promote the dissemination of information about the role and policies of the Alliance in partner countries, and thus create an open debate on security in the Euro-Atlantic area. Non-governmental organizations or Universities in partner countries are trying to organize such events and can apply for financial aid, and co-organisers may be academic and scientific institutions within NATO Member States. NATO usually covers more than 50 percent of the total cost up to a maximum amount of 10 000 EUR. Funding is also available to cover travel expenses of participants from partner countries invited to participate in conferences and seminars on security in NATO countries.

NATO Security Investment Programme (NSIP) was joined by the the Slovak Republic once it joined NATO in 2004 as a part of its membership SR is also contributing to the co-financing capabilities of NATO in the establishment of comprehensive infrastructure necessary to meet operational needs identified by SACEUR and SACT.

NATO Security Investment Programme is a capital investment fund with the purpose of financing the required capabilities – their development and building (construction, maintenance,

renovation, modernization, further development of Communication and Information System - KIS, etc.). The implementation of capabilities is realized through a capability package (CP) that represents a set of required capabilities from the perspective of the technical and operational aspects, as well as of the source frames. NSIP is a part of the joint military funding of NATO and it focuses mainly on the financial requirements for the provision of basic coverage capabilities of Alliance and it reflects the objectives and priorities laid down by the main NATO military representatives. Preparation and execution of all activities under the programme NSIP shall be carried out with the use of funds that are remitted to the Host State's account by contributing countries from their national contributions subject to fixed criteria and principles (eligibility, affordability).

There are several successful projects that have been founded from the NSIP programme in the Slovak Republic. An example of an already implemented and very successful NSIP project has been the modernisation of the Sliač airport. The modernization of the airport Sliač took place on the basis of an agreed package of capabilities CP 5A0062 "Provide operational facilities in seven new nations". This package has been approved on the basis of the requirement of the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) in such a way that NATO Squadron could operate in an area of the airport with the overall logistical support.

5. CONCLUSION

Although the current Concept of Defence of the Slovak Republic states that in the run up to 2020 there shall be no vast conventional military conflict in the Euro-Atlantic area, the reality proves that the security environment, in connection with the conflicts in

Syria, Ukraine as well as the increase in terrorism (France) and the Western isolation efforts concerning Russia, is rapidly changing and is gaining a dangerous course. Slovakia shall individually, but also in the context of its membership to NATO and the EU, be prepared by enhancing its defence capabilities and security, upgrading the armed forces of the SR and entire security system of SR. In this regard, sufficiency of funding is mainly required. It is high time to find a common consensus on adequate solutions for future defence planning by the Executive and legislative authorities of the State.

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