

## NATO PO LETU 2014 NAZAJ H KORENINAM ALI NAPREJ V PRIHODNOST?

### NATO AFTER 2014 BACK TO THE ROOTS OR FORWARD TOWARDS THE FUTURE?

**Povzetek** Naslov kljub vprašaju in možnosti poenostavljenega razumevanja ne predstavlja nujno dileme o prihodnosti razvoja zavezništva. Nazaj in naprej ne pomenita dveh smeri, temveč bolj združevanje naučenih lekcij in poudarjanje veznega tkiva, ki je Nato skozi zgodovino ohranjalo tako močno, ter opremljanje tega zdravega jedra z mehanizmi, ki nas bodo še naprej ščitili pred celotnim spektrom groženj. Pred tistimi, ki jih poznamo, tistimi, ki jih lahko predvidevamo, ter nekako tudi pred tistimi, ki jih ne moremo predvideti. Pri slednjih je ključna beseda fleksibilnost. V takšnem prikazu lahko prepoznamo daljnovidnost zavezniškega koncepta iz leta 2010, ki kljub pretresom v Vzhodni Evropi in na Bližnjem vzhodu ter s tem povezanim povečanim občutkom ogroženosti v nekaterih zaveznicah ostaja temeljni smerokaz organizaciji tudi za prihodnja leta.

Vračanje h koreninam pomeni zagotavljanje prepričljive pripravljenosti na kolektivno obrambo, usmeritev v prihodnost pa možnost uporabe zmogljivosti za obrambo pred spektrom različnih groženj in izvajanje drugih temeljnih nalog zavezništva. Za zagotavljanje verodostojnosti organizacije ni nujna revolucija, temveč preprosta izpolnitev preteklih zavez za zagotavljanje zmogljivosti. Prav s tem so imele članice veliko težav in ravno njihova počasnost je negativno vplivala na zavezniško verodostojnost. S tega vidika je lahko rusko-ukrajinska dinamika samo priložnost za obrambne sisteme, da opozorijo politične elite na pomen obrambe in dejstvo, da ta stane.

**Ključne besede** *Nato, zasedanje vrha, Strateški koncept, mednarodno varnostno okolje, transformacija, kolektivna obramba, partnerstva.*

**Abstract** In spite of the question and the possibility of a simplified understanding, the title "Back to the Roots or Forward towards the Future?" is not necessary a dilemma regarding the future development of the Alliance. Back and forward is not about two directions, but more about the need to combine the lessons learned, while

strengthening the bonds that have been underpinning NATO throughout its history, and reinforcing the strong core of the Alliance with the mechanisms that are going to provide the necessary protection against the full spectrum of threats. Threats that are known, the ones we can predict and those that cannot yet be foreseen. The key word for the latter is flexibility. With this in mind, we can clearly recognise the farsighted nature of the 2010 Strategic Concept, which remains the guiding document for the Alliance for the future years despite the turmoil in Eastern Europe and Middle East and the related increased perception of threat felt by some Allies.

Going back to the roots means ensuring a credible preparedness for collective defence, while going toward the future signifies the importance of being able to use the capabilities for defence against the whole spectrum of threats, and perform other core tasks of the Alliance. There is no need for the revolution to ensure the credibility of the Alliance, but there is a 'simple' demand to fulfil the commitments given in the past regarding the provision of capabilities. This has been a challenge for many Allies, and their slowness has had negative implications for the Alliance's credibility. In light of this, the Russian-Ukrainian dynamics can also be an opportunity for the national defence systems to convince the political elites that defence matters and that there are costs associated with it.

**Key words** *NATO, Summit, Strategic Concept, international security environment, transformation, collective defence, partnerships.*

**Introduction** In 2010, upon the adoption of the new NATO Strategic Concept, many experts questioned the relevance of the Alliance and importance of defence. Today, however, these voices are much quieter and more isolated.<sup>1</sup> In 2014, the Euro-Atlantic security environment undoubtedly changed, especially the perception of its stability. Russian activities in Ukraine and the subsequent "panic" in some Eastern Allies bring us somehow to the turning point, since on the one hand, NATO is going back to its roots, and on the other hand, the organization as political and defence alliance is further gaining in importance and visibility. Security and defence are "in fashion" again.

Even without the recent violent changes of borders in the East of the Old Continent, the Alliance was at the stage of development when, due to various factors, it should rebalance its posture and future priorities. NATO operation in Afghanistan (*International Security Assistance Force – ISAF*) is coming to an end, along with quite a challenging period in the history of the organization. Until recently, the main challenge was how to, after a strong and financially demanding operational tempo, prevent us from giving in to the temptation of trying to put defence and the related costs on the back burner. Such events would increase the risk and likelihood of a greater divide between Europe and the United States. Also due to the latest security crisis, we avoided that risk for the time being, at least its political aspects, although a risk remains that the different views on the sharpness of resolving the crisis can

<sup>1</sup> See Lampret, Novak, 2010.

again highlight the difference in estimates and ambitions between the two sides of the Atlantic. At the end of the planning cycle of the NATO Defence Planning Process (NDPP) in June 2014, we gained a very representative overview of the availability of individual capabilities, and a clear assessment of the deficits and the associated risks with regard to the level of ambition of the Alliance. At the end of the calendar year, a new NATO defence planning cycle will start, with the preparation of new political guidelines, which will be based on the commonly accepted assessment of the security environment and will, in particular, redefine or confirm the Allied level of ambition.

The dynamics associated with Ukraine introduced something new into the cycle of the Allied planning, especially a re-consideration of the Alliance's defence posture and its geographical balance. In political terms, it will probably be difficult to talk about the reduction of common ambitions, although before the "transfer of sovereignty" over Crimea, some Allies were relatively open to that. Future discussions will certainly have to take into consideration the financial constraints, since the lack of measurable progress in this area will increase the risk of it being "all talk no action". The NATO Summit in Wales should represent a turning point in terms of money. During the months of preparation for this event, there is an increasing pressure on European Allies to finally move from rhetoric to concrete action. Pressures or rather clear expectations are understandable, as they result both from United States announcement of future focus on the Asia-Pacific region and the changed security environment, which is at present perhaps the most important element.

Although we do not expect a major deviation from the development direction outlined by NATO in the 2010 Strategic Concept, we cannot overlook the significance and consequences of the recent Russian actions. The mechanisms available to the Alliance, its mission and tasks will not change significantly. However, the defence posture of the Alliance will change, building on the demonstration of solidarity, internal cohesion and fundamental principles and values of the Alliance. NATO has already responded to the Ukrainian crisis and the planning community cannot simply overlook this crisis. Certainly, in the next medium-term period, one of the scenarios of the use of the Allied Forces will involve a conventional conflict with an Ally that is comparable in terms of technology, at least in individual parts. This will require the maintenance of certain capabilities which have often been arbitrarily abandoned by individual Allies (armoured manoeuvre, helicopters, mine hunters), and undoubtedly the increase in the frequency of exercises, with the inclusion and cooperation of all the three services of the armed forces. In order to maintain credibility, the Allies have to stand together at the forthcoming Summit and indicate the direction of problem-solving and of NATO's role, and in particular to fulfil their commitments. This will of course require adequate resources, for which public support is crucial. Thus, the Summit in Wales requires a multifaceted approach, and public diplomacy is certainly one of those areas where the Alliance simply may not fail.

The current security dynamics also indicates the fact that the need for the ability to carry out collective defence is not a remainder from the Cold War, but the foundation of the future cohesion of the Alliance. The sense of imminent threat in some of the Allies has increased significantly. Therefore, it is necessary to visibly strengthen some segments of defence preparedness which have in the past two decades been neglected, primarily to maintain political unity of the organization.

This is very closely related to the responsibility of all the Allies to provide their own defence capabilities and contribute to the Allied effort in the fulfilment of the three core tasks - collective defence, crisis management and cooperative security. To increase the credibility of the defence posture, the costs will be divided among all 28 Allies, despite different national assessments of the security threats posed by Russia's actions in Ukraine. This will present a unique challenge.

This article builds on the achievements of NATO, which, in this year, is celebrating an impressive 65 years, and deals with individual key topics, such as operations, transformation, capabilities, resources, reform and partnerships. Furthermore, it attempts to outline the complexity of the issues as well as key guidelines for further development of this political and military transatlantic Alliance, as it will be confirmed by Heads of State and Government at the meeting in September 2014 in Wales. The conclusion provides a synthesis of thoughts and leads the reader towards the answers to the question about the future of NATO.

This article is based on personal experience of the authors who directly observe the development of the organization from the time before Slovenia's full membership and who have been, for many years, directly involved in the preparation of national guidelines for the current NATO transformation. It relies mainly on the analyses of unclassified NATO documents, statements of the organisation's senior representatives and secondary sources which enable a more comprehensive understanding of the topics covered.

## **1 NATO TODAY**

### **1.1 Changed Security Environment**

The end of the ISAF operation in Afghanistan in 2014 itself provides the opportunity for strategic consideration and shifting of attention of the Alliance to the broad spectrum of potential security threats. The Russian-Ukrainian crisis is only the latest proof that the future is unpredictable, the global security situation multifaceted and intertwined, and the Alliance surrounded by instabilities coming from Ukraine, Syria, Iraq and the Sahel (General Bartels, 21 May 2014).

Despite these changes in the security environment which have mainly been marked by Russian actions in Ukraine, the foundations of NATO remain solid and its role indispensable. As early as in 2010, the NATO Strategic Concept or the fundamental

strategic vision for the future of the Alliance managed to capture the complexity of the contemporary security environment. The concept emphasizes that the possibility of a conventional attack on NATO territory is low, but it should not be neglected. At the same time, other modern threats are also included, such as the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, terrorism, instabilities and conflicts beyond the Allied borders, cyber threats, threats to energy security and the effects of technology development and climate change (Strategic Concept, 2010).

In the era of globalization, intense interdependence and multinational security challenges, the security environment comprises a wide and constantly changing spectrum of challenges for the Allied territory and population. Therefore, the Strategic Concept emphasizes that the Alliance should be able to fulfil three main tasks – collective defence, crisis management and cooperative security. Its main purpose remains the protection of freedom and security of all the members with both political and military means (Strategic Concept, 2010).

Without the crisis in Ukraine, the Alliance and the forthcoming Summit would probably focus on the life after ISAF, transformation, which would arise primarily from the assumption of limited financial resources, and further optimization of defence structures. Numerous mechanisms, initiatives and plans for the future which NATO established based on the decisions taken in Lisbon and Chicago remain relevant despite the crisis, but will need to be re-balanced in relation to the security dynamics in the East. A few months ago, considerations on the reduced participation in operations and the enhancement of readiness (*from deployed to prepared*)<sup>2</sup> were at the forefront. Now, NATO seeks to enhance preparedness in terms of greater flexibility and faster responsiveness. This includes stemming the reduction in defence spending as well as adopting security reassurance measures for Eastern Allies, along with increasing the responsiveness of the Allied Forces and their presence at the Eastern borders of the Alliance.

These efforts have intensified primarily as a result of Russia resorting to swift military exercises, cyber activities and covert operations to achieve their goals (SACEUR General Breedlove, 22 May 2014). The approach is referred to as hybrid warfare. With such measures in Ukraine, Russia, in the name of protection of the Russian-speaking minorities, has thoroughly undermined the international order formed after the end of the Cold War or as early as after World War II, and violated the principles of the UN Charter, such as the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity. With the use of military means to achieve their interests, change of borders in Europe, and disregard for international law, along with the Founding Act of the NATO-Russia Council, Russia has called into question the vision of a free and peaceful Europe (Vershbow, 1 May 2014, and NATO Secretary-General Rasmussen, 1 April 2014).

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<sup>2</sup> See *Munich Security Conference, 2013*.

## 1.2 Consequences of the Changed Security Environment

In the eyes of the Baltic States, Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, as well as the Czech Republic and sometimes Slovakia, which had paid a lot of attention to politics and deterrence measures, including non-strategic nuclear weapons in Europe, the perception of threat represented by Russia only further strengthened with the crisis in Ukraine (Kulesa (editor), 2012; Larrabee et al., 2012, p. 75–76; Asmus et al., 2010). To the forefront again came collective defence, "the first among the core tasks of NATO," as represented by these Allies. In such security environment, it is crucial to preserve solidarity, coherence and unity of all 28 NATO Allies. After the speculations about the "retirement" of the Alliance, some estimate that a new *raison d'être* emerged, or the old *raison d'être* returned to the forefront (Vershbow, 1 May 2014).

Thus, the greatest responsibility of the Alliance remains Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty, or the protection and defence of the territory and population against external attacks, which is the crucial security assurance for the Alliance, based on which the Allies can count on an appropriate response in the event of threat. Indispensable pillars of the Allied strategy for maintaining the security of member states remain deterrence, based on the appropriate mix of nuclear and conventional forces, and the concept of the indivisibility of Allied security.

Response to the crisis in Ukraine also confirmed the significance of NATO as an important transatlantic forum for security policy consultations on all matters relating to the territorial integrity, political independence and security of its members, as provided in Article 4 of the North Atlantic Treaty. At any time, any Ally can initiate the procedure which, through the sharing of information, exchanging of views and, if necessary, creating a common response, contributes to a better understanding and a more effective management of crises. That is precisely what Poland did on 3 March 2014 due to the situation in Ukraine (NATO, 4 March 2014), which "woke up" the entire Alliance and leads to new decisions regarding the future posture of the Alliance to be approved at the September Summit<sup>3</sup>.

### 1.2.1 Resources

Collective defence is ensured through collective responsibility. In the Alliance, each Ally has its own role and each does its best to contribute to collective responsibility, which is called solidarity. NATO membership is not only a privilege, but also an obligation (NATO Secretary General, 9 May 2014). According to NATO Secretary General, if there was ever any doubt about the importance of defence, the crisis in Ukraine finally removed it. This has been confirmed by the Allies themselves through their active involvement in responding to the crisis in Ukraine (NATO Secretary General, 15 May 2014, and NATO, 3 June 2014a).

<sup>3</sup> Up until now, Article 4 has been invoked only four times. Before Poland, due to the situation in Syria, Turkey requested on two occasions in 2012 that the North Atlantic Council (NAC) convene under Article 4, which led to the installation of the Allied Patriot missiles on Turkish territory. Previously, Turkey invoked Article 4 of the North Atlantic Treaty in 2003 due to the situation in Iraq (NATO, 4 March 2014).



During his visit to Brussels, the American President Obama also highlighted the need that all the Allies should contribute their share resulting from their membership in the Alliance by demonstrating the political will to invest in collective defence and to develop capabilities for ensuring international peace and security. Security is not free and all the Allies must demonstrate that they are willing to provide resources for capabilities, personnel, training, in other words, for everything that is required to ensure a credible and effective deterrent posture of NATO (Obama, 26 March 2014a, and Obama 26 March 2014b).

These calls are by no means new; however, they have gained considerably in intensity and importance. With the Russian willingness to intervene with military means in another country, and in light of the fact that in the past five years, Russia increased its defense spending by 10 percent per year, while the Allies drastically reduced their defense budgets (some of them even for more than 40 percent)<sup>4</sup> and acted on the assumption that Russia is a strategic partner and not an imminent threat to the Alliance, it has become clear that NATO members have to reverse the trend of defense spending and once again shift the focus on the key NATO tasks, especially collective defence (NATO Secretary General, 19 May 2014 and 15 May 2014).

Russian actions in Crimea and eastern Ukraine were a "wake-up call" for the Alliance. As stated by NATO Secretary General, Russia thus inadvertently contributed to the consolidation of the transatlantic Alliance. The belief strengthened that security and stability should not be taken for granted. However, the challenges facing the Allies are enormous. The commitment that the Allies should fulfil in the area of defence spending mainly relates to the provision of two per cent of GDP for defence. The first step that is expected today is that those states that have not yet done so should stop the decline in defence spending and start with its increase in a gradual and measurable manner. Collective defence is the object of investments and the question of future priorities, particularly those aimed at NATO goals.<sup>5</sup> In doing so, it is necessary to strengthen the transatlantic ties, with a clear commitment both of Europe and the United States (NATO Secretary General, 8 April 2014). Key to this is cooperation between NATO and the EU, since the strengthening of the European defence results in the strengthening of NATO. The power of the Alliance today, even more than ever, lies in the solidarity and joint action.

### 1.2.2 Security Reassurance Measures

On 1 April 2014, as a direct response to the crisis in Ukraine, the NATO foreign ministers renewed their commitment to strengthen the collective defence of the Alliance, reaffirmed their readiness to assist Ukraine and discontinued practical

<sup>4</sup> *For defence spending of NATO member states, see also NATO, 24 February 2014, and Larrabee et al., 2012, pp. 1 – 3.*

<sup>5</sup> *Many Allies, such as Lithuania, Latvia and Romania, have already responded with the announcements on the rise in defence investments. Poland is already close to the milestone of 2% of GDP, and Estonia already serves as an "exemplary Ally" (NATO Secretary General, 15 May 2014). Further development of this trend will be seen as early as at the NATO Summit in September.*

cooperation with Russia (NATO, 1 April 2014, SACEUR General Breedlove, 22 May 2014). On 16 April 2014, as the next step, the Alliance adopted a package of reassurance measures that should calm the concerns of mainly Eastern Allies by strengthening the presence in the air (AWACS reconnaissance aircraft, air surveillance or Air Policing), and at sea, and with the increased intensity of training and military exercises (Allied Joint Force Command Brunssum, 27 May 2014). In the spirit of solidarity, all the Allies responded according to the "28 for 28" principle and showed their commitment to the fundamental principles of collective defence (NATO, 3 June 2014b).

In a broader sense, however, in response to the crisis in Ukraine and expressed concerns of some NATO Allies, and taking into account also other security threats and challenges, the Alliance must focus primarily on three elements in the future: enhancing preparedness, defence investments and active maintenance of the transatlantic bond. These should also be the central themes of the Wales Summit.

A large part of the response to the recent Russian actions and the related challenges, and at the same time the general response to the current security environment will be included in the Readiness Action Plan (RAP), which was called so by the NATO Secretary General and will be confirmed at the Summit by the Heads of State and Government. Initial ideas included an overview of the development of the defence and deterrence forces and an overview of NATO Response Force (NRF), aimed at providing faster responsiveness, overview of the threat assessment, exchange of intelligence, early warning and crisis response. The Connected Forces Initiative (CFI) is also being thoroughly examined, aiming to provide more frequent, more visible and more demanding exercises, with greater emphasis in particular on Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty. These plans have their price, but the costs of (in) security can be significantly higher, which again leads to the conclusion that there is no collective security without proper investment (NATO Secretary General, 8 April 2014 and 15 May 2014).

### 1.3 The Legacy of the Present NATO Secretary General

During his term, NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen very ambitiously embarked on major reforms of the organization and introduced a number of initiatives that should guide the Alliance in its transformation in the period of limited financial resources, fatigue from participation in the ISAF operation and quite strong indifference of the public. His agenda was to prepare the Alliance for the 21<sup>st</sup> century (NSC Magazine, June/September 2014, p. 5).

#### 1.3.1 NATO Reforms

Since its establishment in 1949 and until today, NATO has repeatedly successfully adapted to changes in the security environment. The current Strategic Concept, which was adopted under the leadership of Rasmussen, highlights the need for constant reform, which, through the improvement of the structures and working



methods of the NATO Headquarters, its agencies, command structure and resource management, should lead to greater efficiency of organizational operation, flexibility and responsiveness of the decision-making. The 2010 Lisbon Summit gave important guidance for achieving greater efficiency (Lisbon Declaration), with the financial sustainability becoming the driving force and motivation of the majority of the initiated reforms. The need was clearly recognised for the organization to somehow "share" the fate of the national defence systems and measurably optimize its scope and operations.

The reform of NATO's command structure is focused on the achievement of a leaner, more efficient and more economical structure (6800 positions in peace), assuming that the Allies will fully man it. The goal should be reached by 2015. After the initial, more artificial reduction in the number of committees, the NATO Headquarters reform focuses primarily on the appropriate transfer of posts within the International Secretariat according to the priorities of the Alliance, seeking to achieve the optimization of the available human resources. Similarly, it also reduces the number of NATO agencies and improves the process of resource management, especially in programming and ensuring transparency and accountability (Polat, 6 April 2014).

At the Wales Summit, we can again expect that the focus will be on reforms and further guidelines of Heads of State and Government, which will be the basis for future adaptation of the Alliance to the changed security environment, particularly in terms of responding to the crisis in Ukraine. In the spirit of the allied solidarity, we can expect that the focus will no longer be on the tightening of the belt, but mostly on finding an appropriate balance between ensuring efficiency and solidarity, the latter above all in relation to the "dispelling" of the fears and doubts sprouting in some Eastern Allied capitals. Even more, as the Allies are slowly recovering from the financial crisis, they are expected to halt further cuts, reverse the flow of defence spending and start to increase defence budgets.

### 1.3.2 NATO Transformation

Adapting to changes in the international security environment and other realities (financial, political, and social) is therefore an inherent part of existence and the future of NATO. Transformation is a process that never ends. Flexibility is the key guiding principle of the Alliance, which must continue to be based on the principles and values on which the Alliance was built.

By adopting the goal of **NATO Forces 2020** at the 2012 Chicago Summit, the Allies committed themselves to building "modern, tightly connected forces, equipped, trained, exercised and commanded so that they can operate together and with partners in any environment". The Defence Capabilities Package was also adopted, focusing on the key areas of the development of capabilities necessary for the realization of the set goal (Declaration on Defence Capabilities, Chicago, 2012).

In order to achieve greater effectiveness in achieving the ambitions, the NATO Secretary General successively introduced two initiatives at the Munich Security Conference in 2011 and 2012: **Smart Defence** and the **Connected Forces Initiative (CFI)**, which should complement the process of the development of capabilities within the NATO Defence Planning Process, which according to some no longer fully provided relevant results (remark: not because of the process, but mainly due to the reduction in defence spending and the inability to meet the obligations of the Allies). The initiatives are based on the strengthening of multilateral cooperation, both among the Allies as with other partners, greater level of trust, strengthening of capacity for joint action, and constant review and maintenance of the achieved interoperability. In the light of the changed security environment and the financial challenges, the Allies adopted them as the only possible *modus operandi* for the future (Declaration on Defence Capabilities, Chicago, 2012).

Maintaining and upgrading the experience gained by the allied forces during several decades of participation in operations, the degree of interoperability and the ability to take collective action, both among the Allies as with other partners, which is a unique element and power of the Alliance, are the elements which brought to the forefront above all the Connected Forces Initiative, especially after the end of the ISAF and, last but not least, from the perspective of the response to the events in Ukraine.

Appropriate training and exercises are identified as some of the fundamental elements of building greater responsiveness of the Alliance and enhancing the visibility of defence capabilities. In October 2013, defence ministers adopted a decision on the high visibility exercise in 2015, which will include a large number of land, sea and air forces. Its hosts will be Spain, Portugal and Italy. Since 2016, these exercises will be conducted regularly and will include the training for all kinds of the Alliance missions, Article 5 Operations as well as Non-Article 5 Operations. A new concept of training and exercises up to 2020 will also be in place. The initiative builds on a better use of technology to achieve greater interoperability, for example, the use of modern simulators (NATO, 24 October 2013).

The motor of the Connected Forces are the NATO Response Force (NRF) and Special Operations Forces (SOF). Response Force is a rapidly deployable, technologically advanced multinational force, which comprises land, air and sea components and Special Operations Forces. It has approximately 13,000 members (active part of the Immediate Response Force) provided by the Allies according to the rotation system. After 2014, based on these forces, NATO should build future operational readiness and further transformation. In the changed security environment, we expect that these forces will strengthen the responsiveness and robustness of the organization and its military character. Also increasing are the role and the recognition of the SOF and their Headquarters, which plans and coordinates the allied missions of those forces and contributes to the improvement of cooperation and interoperability between them (NATO, 24 October 2013).

In addition to those initiatives, another one came to life within the Alliance. It was first introduced by Germany and is aimed at strengthening the common European effort in the long-term building of capabilities which are priorities for the Alliance. The concept called the **Framework Nation Concept** focuses on groups of countries which, under the auspices of the framework nation (only those Allies which have very diverse capabilities are suitable for this role), associate voluntarily in order to build comprehensive sets of capabilities and forces. Currently, Germany is establishing a group that will focus mainly on those capabilities which were identified as a priority at the level of the Alliance, whereas the United Kingdom establishes the Joint Expeditionary Force (NATO Secretary General, 3 June 2014), soon to be followed by new announcements of similar groups.

Multinational cooperation and multinational initiatives have become an important aspect of capability building. Their purpose is primarily to focus and combine the efforts to achieve the set goals and to implement NATO's priorities arising from the NDPP. As also highlighted by NATO Secretary General (15 May 2014), they can help strengthen national efforts, but cannot replace credible national investments.

NATO transformation does not take place only in the area of capability development, but in the wider context of ensuring readiness for the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, which includes ensuring readiness to respond to all the very diverse security threats. NATO must maintain the ability to provide defence and security of the population which, as stated in the Strategic Concept, also includes the strengthening of capabilities to deal with modern security challenges, such as cyber threats, piracy, terrorism and missile defence.

An area in which NATO has made considerable progress in recent years is **cyber defence**. In June 2014, Defence Ministers adopted an enhanced cyber defence policy, which included the progress made since 2011, when the original policy and its action plan were adopted. The new policy, based on the principles of the indivisibility of Allied security and NATO solidarity, places cyber defence in the framework of collective defence and thus of Article 5, which is a great progress in the mentality of the Alliance and shows the importance NATO attributes to cyber defence. It contains provisions relating to NATO's assistance to Allies in the event of cyber attack and in the development of capabilities. In the spirit of strengthening international security, the Alliance also committed to strengthening partnerships, particularly with the EU, and to cooperating with the industry (NATO Secretary General, 3 June 2014, and NATO, 7 August 2014).

The Allies very ambitiously responded to the challenge, with a clear commitment to continue to build capabilities for preventing and detecting cyber attacks, defence against them and recovery from them (Strategic Concept, 2010). NATO bears responsibility for protecting its networks, while the Allies are responsible for the development of their cyber defense capabilities (*ibid.*). In this area, too, the Allies are increasingly willing to participate in joint, multinational projects. Currently, the

level of development of cyber defence capabilities among allies still differs quite a lot, but it is precisely because of the principle "the Alliance is only as strong as its weakest link" that they are forced to ensure minimum standards of protection and an appropriate level of national cyber defence.

### 1.3.3 Partnerships

Cooperative security based on cooperation with partners remains one of the three fundamental tasks of NATO. Partnerships are the key to strengthening NATO's readiness for all challenges, as conceived by Secretary General Rasmussen (NSC Magazine, June/September 2014, p. 9). Partnership policy has many dimensions and includes a network of different partners from the Euro-Atlantic area, the Mediterranean and the Gulf region, as well as those belonging to the partnerships called global partnerships, including the collaboration with many international organizations. In the last two decades, with their contributions to the Alliance operations and other measurable efforts in addressing common security challenges, the partners repeatedly demonstrated their value. A concrete confirmation of cooperation was given at the Lisbon Summit in 2010, when the decision was taken to strengthen partnership cooperation, and in 2011, when the new partnership policy of the Alliance was confirmed (NATO, 31 March 2014).

The Allies as well as partners who supported the organization in times when it was most important managed to achieve an enviable level of interoperability through their active participation in operations. Through the mechanisms for strengthening the capabilities for operations (*Operational Capabilities Concept Programme*), the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) has mechanisms in place for certification of contributions from partner countries in accordance with NATO standards. Compliance with these criteria and standards, which are known in advance and are derived from the overarching NATO Education, Training, Exercises and Evaluation Policy, and from the implementing acts, is a good foundation for establishing and maintaining interoperability also in the future. Also important is the participation in the planning mechanism for Partnership for Peace member states, called PARP (*Partnership for Peace Planning and Review Process*), which focuses mainly on the building of capabilities and is very similar to the process used by member states. New initiatives, such as the Connected Forces Initiative, Smart Defence and the Framework Nation concept, are also likely to contribute to greater interoperability. The Summit will provide an opportunity for NATO and its partners to reaffirm their commitment to maintain readiness and capacity of collective action in the future (Appathurai, 2014 pp. 35-38).

Moreover, the changed security environment, changed dynamics of participation in operations after ISAF and the reservation of the Allied public in supporting the participation in large-scale operations outside NATO territory contribute to the strengthening of the capabilities of the Alliance for the training of local forces (*defence capacity building*) without extensive logistical presence on the ground (Brattberg, 2013, p. 19). This is already an established practice of the Alliance's

operation; however, it has a new qualitative aspect in the light of the latest changes in the international security environment. Such tasks include counseling, assistance, support, training and exercises in the context of defence and security sector reforms of partner and non-partner countries. In this area, the Alliance has accumulated a lot of experience; however, it is necessary to ensure greater responsiveness and better coordination of all efforts, including in relation to cooperation with other international organizations, as also highlighted in the NATO Comprehensive Approach Concept (Appathurai, 2014, p. 42). In the future, this approach could be used in new missions in Afghanistan, Ukraine and Libya as well as in many other areas.

Furthermore, an additional question opened with Ukraine on the dimension of partnerships, not only in terms of the expectations that partner countries can have towards NATO, but also in the sense of the open-door policy. With the NATO response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, it has become clear to everyone that the principle of collective defence continues to apply only for the members and there will be no changes here, even if some countries may wish otherwise. What remains available to partners is NATO assistance in defence reforms, modernization of defence institutions, promotion of integrity, transparency and accountability, and the strengthening of the ability of partner forces to operate together with the Allied forces. Cooperation also takes place in the field of crisis management, assistance in response to natural and other disasters, scientific and technological cooperation as well as response to new security challenges such as terrorism and cyber defence (DSG Vershbow, 13 May 2014).

Nevertheless, we should not ignore the fact that the open-door policy has proved to be one of the most successful policies in history that have contributed to peace and security in Europe. In 2010, the NATO Strategic Concept reaffirmed the commitment to the enlargement to those European democracies which are willing and able to assume the responsibilities and obligations of membership and can contribute to Euro-Atlantic security. The process is not yet complete, but the Ukrainian-Russian crisis brought new dynamics in relation to countries aspiring to membership.

## 2 NATO TOMORROW

The challenges faced by the Alliance "before Ukraine" were quite complex. The strategic environment was very dynamic and unpredictable, ranging from the shift of power from West to East, focus of the United States on the Asia-Pacific region, financial crisis, security challenges that followed the Arab Spring, to the end of ISAF (Brattberg, 2013, pp. 19–20). The events in Ukraine changed the assumptions in ensuring European security, brought collective defence to the forefront and consolidated the transatlantic bond. With a number of security reassurance measures, the Alliance unanimously responded to the requests of its Eastern member states. This will also be reflected in the agenda of the NATO Summit to be held from 4 to 5 September 2014 in Wales in the United Kingdom.

The central theme of the Summit will be *the Future NATO*, which has an impact on all the above-mentioned areas, from the strengthening of transatlantic ties and partnerships, provision of adequate resources for defence, development of capabilities, more training and exercises, to the new allied mission in Afghanistan and the review of relations with Russia. With the new circumstances, more attention will definitely be paid to collective defence, movement and deployment of the Allied forces within the borders of the Alliance, intensity of military exercises and scenarios with high level of intensity and responsiveness of forces, especially the NRF (NATO Secretary General, 26 March 2014, Vershbow, 1 May 2014, and Deputy Secretary General Vershbow, 13 May 2014).

The future of NATO will also be marked by the **start of the term of the new Secretary General** on 1 October 2014. The Allies appointed the former Norwegian Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg to this function, a person characterised by a history of successful negotiations with Russia, a period of growth in the Norwegian defence spending and transformation of their forces and capabilities into high-intensity and deployable forces and capabilities, NATO's calls to focus on security challenges close to the Allied territory, strong advocacy of transatlantic cooperation, including calls for a more equitable burden-sharing, and commitment to the complementarity of NATO and the EU in the provision of European and wider security. (NATO, 28 March 2014)

## 2.1 The Future of the Transatlantic Bond

In the consideration of the future of the transatlantic bond, the spine of the Alliance, we have to take into account the dynamics of the last few years. In doing so, we can build on the writing of Howorth (2013, pp. 33–34), which highlights three elements that have marked the posture of the United States in recent years. The first was evident from the NATO operation “Unified Protector” in Libya, in which the United States assumed the role of the “leader from behind”, while the European Allies were in the forefront. In this way, United States, at least on the symbolic level, showed that they are ready to leave the responsibility for the “European scene” to Europe. Another element was the speech of Secretary of Defense Gates in June 2011<sup>6</sup>, in which he very directly warned the European Allies that they must step up their efforts and assume greater responsibility within the Alliance if they want to maintain a strong transatlantic bond. The third element is the strategic guidance document adopted in January 2012<sup>7</sup>, which announced the rebalancing of the United States toward the Asia-Pacific region<sup>8</sup>.

One of the most vulnerable or controversial areas among the Allies remains the defence spending. As we have already mentioned in the chapter on resources, the

<sup>6</sup> Gates, Robert. *The Security and Defence Agenda: The Future of NATO. Speech by Secretary of Defence, 10 June 2011.* <http://www.defense.gov/speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=1581>, 25 May 2014.

<sup>7</sup> DoD. *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership, Priorities for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Defence. January 2012.* [http://www.defense.gov/news/defense\\_strategic\\_guidance.pdf](http://www.defense.gov/news/defense_strategic_guidance.pdf), 25 May 2014.

<sup>8</sup> Similarly also Larrabee *e tal.*, 2012, pp. 99 – 101.



United States devote over four percent of GDP to defence spending, while the majority of the other Allies is far from two percent. The executive authorities in Washington are faced with an increased pressure from its legislature (the Congress) to reduce the defence spending and to persuade their European Allies more effectively to reduce this gap. From the American perspective, the changed security environment, in which the sense of threat in the very East of the Old Continent increases, further underlines the need for Europe to show and prove that it is willing to bear its share of the burden (Pifer, 2014).

In the light of the changed posture and the complex security environment, the United States will simply need more assistance from its partners and Allies in the future (Obama, 28 May 2014). In other words, Europe should finally move from being "security consumer" to becoming "security producer". A solid transatlantic bond for the future also depends on the military power of Europe (Brattberg, 2013, pp. 20-21, and Coelmont and Langlois, 2013). There might have been intentions in the past for Europe to assume greater part of the burden also in the wider geographical region (Asia, Africa). Apparently, however, this will not happen in the near future due to the recurring need for appropriate and sufficient forces to operate on the "home" continent.

For quite some time, pressures have been coming from the United States for Europe to take a greater share of the burden. However, due to financial constraints facing Europe and the lack of a sense of threat, these have not fallen on fertile ground. It was not until the outbreak of the recent Russian-Ukrainian crisis that the necessary basis was formed, which may lead to the altered posture of the European Allies, with the corresponding generation of political will and public support to ensure investments in security and defence, both in NATO and the EU. Of course, this conviction is not shared by everyone on the continent, and it also brings with it the risk of new divisions, which already became evident during the preliminary discussions, particularly on the future of relations with Russia.

## 2.2 Relations with Russia

While the transatlantic bond is strengthening<sup>9</sup>, relations with Russia are likely to go through some changes. However, their scope and depth depend primarily on resolving the current crisis in Ukraine. In the current circumstances, the implementation of strategic partnership between NATO and Russia, as laid down by the Allies in the Strategic Concept, is unthinkable (*no business as usual*). The Russian actions in Ukraine brought about the loss of confidence of the majority of the Allied capitals, all of them also condemning Russia's violation of international law. In some instances, things went much further, as the old fears surfaced again, already seeing the outlines

<sup>9</sup> *The strengthening of the transatlantic bond is also reflected in the reliance, especially of the Eastern Allies, on the capabilities of the United States as the first response to the crisis in Ukraine. In the atmosphere, reminiscent to some of the Cold War, the two short visits of the US President Obama in Europe in March and June 2014 were thus intended to provide persuasive security reassurances and to convey the message that in spite of the announced focus on the Asia-Pacific region, the US will not turn its back on Europe (Obama, 26 March 2014b, Obama, 3 June 2014, and Obama, 3 June 2014b).*

of Russian tanks on the horizon. In spite of all the changes in the safety assessments, the Alliance must evaluate the situation in a sober and thoughtful manner. Russia borders on NATO and remains a key actor in the provision of the Euro-Atlantic as well as wider global security. NATO will have to find a *modus vivendi* also with the current rulers in Kremlin; however, certainly not at the expense of compromising the security of the Allies. A recurrence of the past, a kind of "mini-Cold War", would not be to the benefit of anyone at this moment, other than individual nostalgists on both sides who have never accepted the fact that the bipolar world, so predictable for some, collapsed.

**Conclusion** For NATO, the period beyond 2014 is above all an opportunity to affirm and strengthen its role of a guarantor of the European security and stability in the wider area. In order to maintain credibility, it is not enough just to build on what we have already done, but most of all to fulfil what we have committed to. Unfortunately, there will be no well-earned respite after the heat of Afghanistan, since we will need to strengthen our efforts in the direction that we have, together and so farsightedly, outlined with the adoption of the Strategic Concept at the Lisbon Summit. What are the strategic challenges that can threaten our "journey"? Their contours are clear and none of them is particularly new. They are all interlinked in some way and can be simplified with a triple axis between the available resources, robustness and durability of the transatlantic bond and the common assessment of threat or its perception. In the absence of the sense of threat, there will be no money. There is also the question whether the Ukrainian crisis is a sufficient incentive for all members to carry out the necessary changes in their budgets. According to the recent signs, only those members reacted quickly who were already at the forefront of recognizing the crisis as the beginning of the "New Cold War".

Even those who are not deprived of sleep due to the Ukrainian crisis should be aware that Europe is facing serious security threats. Syria continues to burn, Islamic extremism is raging in the streets of Iraq and the first consequences of the killings in the Levant have already knocked on the door of the European capitals. Continued lack of European funds is likely to imply the decline in the enthusiasm in Washington for maintaining the imbalance in capabilities and, consequently, the weakening of the transatlantic bond. Undoubtedly, the United States presence in Europe and its defence budget are not led by altruism, but rather the American national interests. However, a more credible European approach to paying the common defence bill is an important evidence of the belief of political elites on both sides of the Atlantic that we are in this boat together and that we have all paid the tickets. Of course, only if we want the United States to stay in Europe, which according to our estimates, is a prerequisite for the continuation of such NATO as we would want it and as our taxpayers deserve. We just have to make sure that they also pay for it.

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