

## STRATEGIJA IN VOJAŠKE ZMOGLJIVOSTI ZA ODVRAČANJE

## STRATEGY AND MILITARY DETERRENCE CAPABILITIES

**Povzetek** Za zagotavljanje varnosti mora Slovenija v prihodnji strategiji upoštevati tudi silo, še posebej pri odvracanju groženj. Ob upoštevanju omejenih virov in spremenljivega, izzivov polnega okolja, je težko najti celovito strategijo, ki bi omogočala varnost, napredek in ekonomski razvoj Slovenije. Rešitev vidimo v odvracanju, tako z zavezniki kot z lastnimi silami. Da bi bili verodostojen partner v zavezništvu, moramo prevzeti svoj delež bremena in razviti lastne, z zavezniki dogovorjene zmogljivosti. Z vojaške perspektive so vidni trije pomembni elementi sprejemljive strategije: močno zavezništvo, razvite lastne vojaške zmogljivosti in odpornost družbe. Pri razvoju zmogljivosti mora Slovenska vojska upoštevati dogovorjeno metodologijo. Ključnega pomena za uspešen razvoj zmogljivosti in bojevanje v »večdimenzionalni bitki« je poveljevanje s poslanstvom.

**Ključne besede** *Slovenska vojska, odvracanje, vojaške zmogljivosti, strategija, poveljevanje s poslanstvom.*

**Abstract** Slovenia will use coercion – deterrence by denial in particular – as a basic concept for Slovenia's future defence strategy. Taking into account scarce resources, and a dynamic and volatile environment, it is difficult to find a wholly adequate strategy to provide for the safety, progress, and economic development of Slovenians. Deterrence – created by both our own capabilities and those gained through NATO membership – is our best way forward. In order to be a reliable partner in NATO Slovenia must carry its share of the burden, and develop its own capabilities. From a military perspective, there are three key elements for successful strategy: strong alliances, well-developed national military capabilities, and the resilience of society. In developing its military capabilities the Slovenian Armed Forces (SAF) must apply a DOTMLPF framework. Here we see mission command as pivotal for success in development and in Multi Domain Battle.

**Key words** *Slovenian Armed Forces, deterrence, military capabilities, strategy, mission command.*

## Introduction

Slovenia, as a sovereign and independent state, is fully aware of the challenges and changes in the global world, and it takes seriously the full responsibility for its own and regional security. Of course Slovenia is also concerned with international security, but as a small nation it realises its limitations. This article will focus on coercion – deterrence in particular (Schelling, 1966) – as a basic concept for Slovenia’s future strategy. The United States’ Department of Defense, through its Joint Doctrine (JP-1), organises the instruments of power into four broad categories: Diplomatic, Informational, Military and Economic (DIME). Here we will focus on the military element of national power while remaining cognizant of the other elements of national power, and the way in which they interact with military power. As John Troxell has explained, military power is the most important instrument for the nation-state, and is used to protect the nation’s interest by influencing competitors, and also partners (Troxell, 2015).

The purpose of this article was to determine a basic concept for Slovenia’s strategy. We found that deterrence, in particular, is a basic concept for Slovenia’s future strategy. We used a descriptive method to define the strategy, and we analysed many primary and secondary sources. In this article the term ‘strategy’ refers to the Slovenian national or grand strategy, and strategy is defined as “a calculation of ways and means directed towards the accomplishment of ends, balanced against a continuous assessment of risk.”<sup>1</sup> The military capabilities of the Slovenian Armed Forces (SAF) are essential to credible deterrence: they communicate the Slovenian will to deny invasion or attack by any adversary.

The article begins by explaining Slovenia’s current threat environment, and potential routes to conflict. It then outlines a general security strategy, highlighting and focusing on the military means within that strategy. Within military means we will focus specifically on “mission command” as a requirement for the smart and purposeful use of military capability and expertise (Cohen, 2002). Using these key concepts the article will demonstrate that robust and intelligently-designed military capabilities are crucial to the deterrent capabilities of a small state – and thus to its ability to survive and thrive in the international system.

## 1 THE STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT

To date, the 21st century has seen considerable change in the international security environment. The possibility of large global armed conflicts has decreased, but the vulnerability of modern states has increased as a result of new threats, challenges and risks to security. Flows of economic and war refugees, international terrorism,

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Army War College, Department of National Security and Strategy. *Directive – National Security Policy and Strategy* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, 2016), 4. As Tami Davis Biddle mentioned, it is essential for any scholar or practitioner who studies and/or works in the field of international security to articulate his own definition of the terms “strategy” and “grand strategy,” or to select from among the many available in the existing literature. See her essay *Strategy and Grand Strategy: What Students and Practitioners Need to Know* (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College, 2015), 2.

the hybrid war in Ukraine, the Russian annexation of Crimea (in 2014), and other threats to stability and security have grown into direct national threats to Slovenia.

Slovenia is/was part of the Eastern Mediterranean migration route; between October 2015 and March 2016 a total of 477,791 migrants and refugees arrived in Slovenia, with most continuing their journey to Austria and other Northern and Western European countries (International Organisation for Migration), with a peak of almost 13,000 in one day (Surk, 2015). Many of the security threats Slovenia faces are transnational, since borders, especially in Europe, are open or at least porous. Defence against these threats requires a high degree of international cooperation and a concerted response to crises.

Slovenia is particularly alert to several significant changes in the global environment. These include: the redistribution of economic, political, and military power; the formation of a multipolar world; the increasing volatility of modern societies as a result of the information revolution; environmental issues; energy-related issues; societies with fragile democracy and lawlessness; the transnational character of terrorism; the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, and the changing nature of conflict – from conventional to hybrid. Some of these security challenges could be addressed by the SAF; some must be addressed by Slovenian society; and some can be addressed or managed only by the entire global community working in concert. Slovenia must be ready and able to participate at every level, and the SAF must have the ability to understand where and how it can contribute to Slovenian security across the board.

Strategist Colin Gray has argued that no particular style of warfare is permanent; technological development, for instance, will bring specific, novel challenges and will ensure that, for every new solution, new problems will be discovered (Gray, 2010). He adds that: “War/warfare is a duel and a dynamic, unique, and unpredictable product of interaction between friendly and unfriendly forces, together with the workings of friction and chance. No matter what else changes, we can count on historical continuity in the form of a self-willed adversary,” (Gray, 2010, pp.12-13). If our adversaries have the capacity to adapt and learn, so must the security organisations that we set against them.

In a volatile and changing environment, Slovenia continues to seek security through institutions, in particular NATO, which Slovenia joined on March 29, 2004. Mary Foster (2017) has observed that “the U.S. and its European allies must not let family member squabbles undermine the security of the home they have built and shared for almost 70 years”. But in order to receive support and security assurance from NATO’s Article 5, (which specifies that an attack on one member shall be considered an attack on all (Coalson, 2015)), a member state must, according to the NATO

treaty's Article 3, be able to defend itself first.<sup>2</sup> This is a fundamental requirement in an anarchical international system that has its harshest edges softened by institutional cooperation. In order to receive security, Slovenia must be ready to aid in the security of others. Accordingly, Slovenia has recently deployed a number of troops to Afghanistan, Kosovo and elsewhere. Indeed, at one point recently, Slovenia had deployed more than 10% of the Slovenian Armed Forces (SAF) (Osterman, 2017). This is a testament to Slovenia's serious commitment to the principle of fair burden sharing.

The United Nations (UN), the European Union (EU), NATO, and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) – plus other regional organisations and institutions that contribute to the solving of global conflicts and enhance regional integration – have key roles in providing for European security. They have the potential to provide frameworks for multilateral cooperation. Thus they will continue to play a significant role in stabilising the international security environment in the future (Furlan et. al., 2006). Slovenia is anxious to participate usefully and cooperatively in these institutions.

Slovenia is a member state of the European Union (EU). By treaty and by arrangement with NATO, existing EU forces are meant to complement – not parallel – NATO forces. Under the 'Berlin Plus' agreement, the EU is to handle humanitarian relief, peacekeeping, and crisis response, not combat missions (Furlan et. al., 2006). Slovenia perceives the EU as complementary to NATO regarding security – a means for gaining synergy and further leveraging the strength of international cooperation.

When operating in a NATO context, the military operations of the SAF will be multinational, joint, combined, high intensity and full spectrum. The SAF accepts and embraces the NATO doctrines (AJP-01, AJP-3.2) and also the US Army's Field Manual 3-0, Operations FM 3, and the concept of a broad and complex security environment (FM 3-0). This environment includes the rapidly-evolving capabilities of potential adversaries in new domains such as cyber, information and the electromagnetic spectrum. The SAF understands the need to be prepared for multi-domain battle. In this environment Slovenia and NATO could face major nation-state competitors who will fully emerge as peers on the battlefield.

Simultaneously, as Robert Brown and David Perkins (2017) have observed, conflicting interests and increased suspicion will dominate international relationships, creating an environment more vulnerable to miscalculation. Brown and Perkins (2017) predicted that beyond 2030 we can be certain that adversaries will continue to challenge US supremacy, if they have not already surpassed it in one way or another. Both technological and political developments over the next decade will continue

<sup>2</sup> *In Article 3 of the Alliance's founding treaty: "In order more effectively to achieve the objectives of this Treaty, the Parties, separately and jointly, by means of continuous and effective self-help and mutual aid, will maintain and develop their individual and collective capacity to resist armed attack."* NATO, "Resilience and Article 3" (22 June 2016), [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_132722.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_132722.htm), (accessed October 15, 2017).

to shape the changing character of warfare through violent activity, as well as an increase in technological dependency and complexity.

To answer this challenge, Slovenia must be prepared to defend herself according to the NATO treaty's Article 3.

Slovenia and the SAF, as pointed out by Brown (2017, p. 4), must break their overreliance on technology and build a future force as an integrated system.

The SAF must look to the future, assessing likely threats with a keen and alert eye, so that it will understand how to provide security – and to do so in an ever-changing, volatile, and resource-constrained environment. It must also stay in alignment with the needs of its partners, and their own ongoing adaptations to a complex threat environment.

## 2 SEEKING A SUITABLE STRATEGY

The work of Thomas Schelling (1966) is rich in ideas that are directly relevant to the SAF; his core concepts about coercion – and in particular his explanations of the nuances of deterrence – are very useful in the context of Slovenia's security situation. Schelling (1966) argued that compellence (a threat intended to make an adversary do something) is inherently harder than deterrence (a threat to keep him from doing something). Seeking a suitable strategy, Slovenia must maintain freedom in its strategic options by building on Schelling.

In their new book, A. Wess Mitchell and Jakub J. Grygiel describe a strategy of accommodation, where nations should not place all their eggs in one basket (2016, p.101). In this strategy, nations are engaged in military self-help and regional alliance building without formally announcing their security links to the United States or to neighbouring small powers, in order not to limit their strategic possibilities (Mitchell, 2016, pp.101-102). Limited war – or simply forms of conflict that fall beneath the threshold of “war”, but still produce disruption and discontent – shifts the psychological burden of conflict away from the aggressor and places it on the shoulders of the defender. It raises the likelihood that a defender will perpetually under-respond to ambiguous provocations (and thus will lose control of strategically vital spaces by default) or will over-respond (and thus risk or provoke war) (Schelling, 1966).

Slovenia is a committed member of NATO. However, it is prudent for any state, even if it is a member of a strong alliance, to be as capable and self-reliant as possible. This not only makes it a better alliance partner, but also makes it able to respond to a wide range of threats, even those that may fall below NATO's threshold for action. As a small state Slovenia must realise that her adversaries may try to operate beneath NATO's threshold, or may try to split the Alliance over interests that do not align across all member states. In such situations Slovenia must have the resources

to work with her close neighbours, or to work on her own to defend her interests. This requires internal cohesion, resilience, strong civil-military ties, and up-to-date military capabilities.

In line with Slovenia's strengths, resources, and elements of national power, a key element of her security strategy must be "deterrence by denial." Drawing on the work of Schelling, A. Wess Mitchell (2015) has recently argued that there are two basic ways to deter an enemy. The first is deterrence by punishment: one deters by threatening the attacker with punishment (pain or harm). This form of deterrence depends on the fear that the defender will inflict a level of pain that exceeds whatever gains the attacker hoped to achieve through aggression. For deterrence by punishment to work, the defender's threat must be credible (Mitchell, 2015). A second way to deter an enemy is deterrence by denial: the defender deters by threatening to make it physically difficult or impossible for the attacker to achieve his objective. This form of deterrence also depends on fear, but this time of costs that will be inflicted during the act of aggression, in the place where it occurs (Mitchell, 2015, p.1).

Coercion relies on the threat of future military force to influence an adversary's decision-making and structure his incentives. One must assume that one's adversary is willing and able to undertake cost-benefit calculations relevant to his own decision process. This includes the assumption that a potential attacker will understand the defender's capability and will. For most nations, the primary role of a national military is to deter an attack on the nation's home territory, and to fight if deterrence fails. The willingness and ability to fight is central to deterrence by threat of denial.

As Mitchell (2015, p.1) argues, however, deterrence by threat of punishment is becoming increasingly difficult for defenders as they face an array of contemporary threats. In other words, it has become difficult to threaten punishment, or to actually punish adversaries as they develop tactics to stay under a retaliatory threshold, or to obscure any target for retaliation. This places a greater emphasis on deterrence by threat of denial, wherein a nation (and national military force) relies on its ability to check and counter an adversary's actions across a full spectrum of threats. Even a small nation, when faced with a much larger aggressor, can succeed in deterrence by denial by threatening to make its territory 'indigestible' (Mitchell, 2015, p. 4).

Slovenia will rely on its own capabilities for deterrence, but it will also rely on the extended deterrence provided by its NATO partners (Troxell, 2015, pp. 4-5). Extended deterrence carries some risks, of course. One must rely on an ally to take a risk or make a sacrifice beyond its immediate self-interest; one must trust the ally's pledge to do this on behalf of the alliance. But the robustness of extended deterrence relies in part on the willingness and ability of any given alliance partner to defend its own territory, and in part on the willingness of the alliance members to act on a threat that may not be, at any given moment, of vital importance to them. Adversaries can complicate alliance pledges and alliance cohesion by staying below a threshold that provokes a clear response. NATO's system of extended deterrence is working, but as

Grygiel and Mitchell (2016, p.137) point out, the system is weakening, and some of the allies doubt the political willingness of United States to intervene on their behalf in the event of military crisis.

Slovenia's reaction to this dilemma must include improving her ability to defend herself in the event of a crisis, and maintaining levels of military capability and competence that will enable her to participate effectively in NATO's deterrence and war-fighting missions. This would include possessing a "reputation for military virtues" that would turn the SAF "into an unattractive target, promising an aggressor costs incommensurate with any potential gains," (Rothstein, 1968, p.187). This reputation could be gained and sustained by participating in NATO's operations and exercises, and by cooperating with NATO's military goals, planning, and mechanisms for developing and maintaining military competence.

Alliances provide benefits to major powers too, of course. This is why NATO exists, and why it has worked up to this point. According to Grygiel and Mitchell (2016, p.137), alliances fill gaps in one's own capabilities; they provide for a physical presence beyond the limits of one's own territory, and for power projection into distant regions. Allies offer human, material, and geographic resources not otherwise available. They enable a single state to contend, potentially, with multiple rivals. The United States (US) is part of NATO because NATO serves US interests. But for this situation to continue, the NATO allies must provide resources and forms of support valuable to the US.

Consequently, Slovenia must prepare itself for future security challenges and find an adequate strategy to provide, long-term, for the safety, progress, and development of its people. Slovenia must establish a security policy and set up a political objective which will bring an appropriate result. Above all, we must be able to deter our potential adversaries. In most cases, though, Slovenia cannot do this alone. As a small state, Slovenia must rely on her alliance partners. But this means, equally, that we must earn our status as an ally: we must be perceived by our partners as capable, resourceful, and dependable. We must contribute to European security in an ongoing and productive way.

Slovenia has developed an armed force as an instrument of national power, with specific missions and tasks. The Slovenian Armed Forces can provide military defence independently or within the framework of an alliance, in accordance with international agreements.

For the Slovenian Armed Forces the only feasible deterrence is deterrence by threat of denial, in which the forces of the defender have the capability of denying the aggressor the attainment of his objectives (in space, time, function, etc.), ideally in close cooperation with allies. Deterrence by threat of punishment, in which the

defender raises the price that the aggressor will have to pay for the attainment of these objectives, is possible for Slovenia only by a direct contribution from her allies.<sup>3</sup>

As a small nation, Slovenia probably never will have any serious capability to attack an aggressor outside Slovenian territory. For this reason Slovenia must cooperate with its allies, and participate in alliance activities, to demonstrate that it is a credible partner. It is in Slovenia's interest to show every possible aggressor that the nation will defend itself, and that NATO will defend Slovenia.

Smaller states in an alliance, such as Slovenia, need assurances that they will not be abandoned in case of war. But alliance dynamics inevitably create complications for stronger states, since they pose a looming risk of those states being dragged into war over the local interests of smaller allies (Mitchell, 2017).

This balancing of risks and advantages is an unavoidable part of alliance participation, for all partners. Smaller states will thus work to make themselves useful as partners, and will seek to create a sense of responsibility and obligation among larger alliance partners. This is one of the reasons that Slovenia's troops are deployed in Afghanistan, Kosovo, Latvia, Lebanon, Mali and other countries.

The most difficult question the Slovenian Armed Forces must face is: What if deterrence fails and/or we have to fight alone? In an anarchical international system, every state must be prepared to defend itself in the event of a failure of deterrence. The Slovenian Armed Forces must be able to make the revisionist's coveted object harder to obtain or keep. Mitchell (2017) points out that "this is usually the best option when the ally in question is too weak to mount a credible defence but possesses sufficient willpower to make it indigestible for an attacker. Since the ultimate goal of revisionist powers is to achieve quick, easy grabs, this strategy seeks to make them prolonged and costly – what could be called the 'bitter pill' strategy". In addition to its contributions to NATO, the SAF must develop defensive techniques and build small but well-trained forces to advertise indigestibility to predators, and it must, in the worst case, be capable of waging guerrilla warfare against an attacker in order to outlast and drive out occupiers.

As we contemplate these questions we must look for solutions in the resilience of society. Resilience is the optimal answer to many modern threats, particularly

<sup>3</sup> *This price can either be exacted from the forces of the aggressor which are attacking the defender, or from other forces or valuable assets of the aggressor, including in the aggressor's homeland. The capability to deter is often divided into three components:*

- The capability to deny attack or to punish an aggressor*
- The will to use this ability if challenged*

- Communication of the existence of this ability and will to the potential aggressor, to the defender's own population, and to third parties. All three components must be present for deterrence to work, but they may exist in different proportions, depending on the nature of the deterrent." Discussion in SAS-ET-DD, NATO STO, The Threshold Concept for and by Small Forces, Chair Alf Christian Hennum (NOR), Paris, 01 March 2016.*

those in “the Gray Zone.”<sup>4</sup> The Gray Zone can be described as a war without war, “techniques short of major conflict – more gradual, less violent, and less obvious,” (Mazzar, 2015, p.1). For example, a cyber-attack on a nation’s vital systems has the potential to bring a society to its knees. According to Michael Mazzar (2015, p. 2), we can understand economic coercion, fifth column activities, clandestine disruption and sabotage, and information operations or propaganda, as techniques used in the Grey Zone.

Each modern state needs to have the resilience to withstand shocks like natural disasters (hurricane, heavy snow, floods), failure of critical infrastructure (internet network, pipelines, highways, power lines), and military attacks. NATO (2017) defines resilience as a “society’s ability to resist and recover easily and quickly from shocks, combining civilian, economic, commercial and military factors.”

The resilience of society – the combination of civil preparedness and military capacity – is the most important factor in dealing with modern threats. It connects the people, the government and the military, described by Clausewitz (1976, p. 89) as the “remarkable trinity.” The intrinsic links in this trinity may be the first target in any future conflict involving Slovenia, and this is why we must ensure that these links are robust and able to withstand shock and pressure. Slovenia must strengthen the links between the elements of her trinity, to build bonds between the people and the government. The most important is good governance, rule of law, and respect for human rights. These values, written into Slovenia’s constitution, will bond the people and the government. The SAF is highly respected by Slovenians, but it must work hard to maintain this respect and bond with the people. The most important virtues, even in peace time, are professionalism, subordination to civilian authorities, and completion of all tasks.

## 2 ASYMMETRIC RESPONSE

The alternative to overwhelming a stronger adversary is to mount an asymmetric response. In many cases, the willingness of a state to do this will give its potential adversary second thoughts about aggression. If Slovenia must cope alone with military aggression, the most promising strategy will be guerrilla warfare. This form of warfare has proven itself throughout history as a way for militarily weaker states to successfully oppose stronger ones. It proved successful, for instance, in World War II when the people in what was then Yugoslavia fought against Hitler’s more powerful troops. Guerrilla warfare is very costly to those who wage it: it exacts a high price in human casualties and imposes a high cost in time. But many states have

<sup>4</sup> Michael J. Mazzar, “Struggle in the Gray Zone and World Order,” *War on the Rocks Online*, December 22, 2015, <https://warontherocks.com/2015/12/struggle-in-the-gray-zone-and-world-order/> (accessed August 30, 2017). At an April 2015 US Army War College conference, the Deputy Secretary of Defense, Robert Work, used the term “The Gray Zone”. He argued that adversaries were increasingly using: agents, paramilitaries, deception, infiltration, and persistent denial to make those avenues of approach very hard to detect, operating in what some people have called ‘the gray zone.’

seen it as a viable alternative to tyranny, oppression, or physical extinction. A clear willingness and ability to fight asymmetrically may prevent a state from ever having to do so.

In this context, James K. Wither (2018) perceives modern guerrillas as state forces that employ new technology and asymmetrical methods of warfare. For Slovenia that would mean maintaining regular forces, including Special Operations Forces (SOF), as well as territorial defence units (reserve). These soldiers are defined by their war-fighting methodology which, therefore, could include both conventional war-fighting and guerrilla warfare. Wither (2018) suggested that it is envisaged that guerrilla units could be employed in all three phases of warfare: during hybrid operations before the formal outbreak of war, during conventional war-fighting following an invasion, and finally during national resistance after the occupation of territory.

Naturally this kind of warfare relies heavily on the direct and indirect support of the population, and this in turn places additional importance on the resilience of society. National values, tradition, and history have important roles; the willingness to make sacrifices is based on a belief that what one owns is worth preserving, even at the cost of pain and deprivation. Any adversary considering hostile action must carefully calculate risks as well as potential gains.

### 3 DETERRENCE

As we search for a robust but affordable deterrent posture, we must ask and answer the following questions:

- How can a smaller country make the threshold for a potential attacker as high as possible, but within affordable limits?
- What strategies or military concepts can smaller countries choose from, and how can we design cost-effective force structures to deter an attacker?
- How can smaller countries exploit small, light information, surveillance, target acquisition and reconnaissance (ISTAR) teams, SOF, and long range precision fires?

These questions involve technological, operational, and political challenges, but the answers have the potential to raise the threshold for a potential attacker” (SAS-131).

In answering these questions we will find solutions for our nation’s defence and future strategy. Right now Slovenian officials are comfortable that deterrence will work, and that it is a reasonable answer to our current and future security (military) challenges. But nothing remains static in the realm of deterrence and defence. No state can afford either over-optimism or complacency. It must, instead, seek out areas for ongoing improvement. It must work, always, to strengthen its indigenous defences and to bolster its alliance ties.

From a military perspective, there are three key elements: strong alliances, well-developed national military capabilities (the SAF), and the resilience of society.

Resilience will be even more important in the future, as new security issues will emerge (including cyber, environmental, and hybrid threats). The SAF can build resilience capabilities through the development of regular forces, including territorial defence forces and niche skills such as cyber defence, or the special abilities honed at the Centre of Excellence for Mountain Warfare. Slovenia's individual commitment to maintain and strengthen its resilience reduces the vulnerability of the NATO as a whole.<sup>5</sup>

These capacities do not replace core military capabilities, but complement them. Additionally, the SAF must be supported and undergirded by robust civil preparedness. In many NATO countries, including Slovenia, defence budget cuts since the end of the Cold War have created a search for innovative solutions. In many cases this search has led to an increased reliance on civilian assets. For instance, in large-scale operations, around 90% of military transport would be chartered or requisitioned from the commercial sector; on average, over 50% of satellite communications used for defence purposes are provided by the commercial sector; and roughly 75% of host nation support to NATO operations is sourced from local commercial infrastructure and services (NATO, 2017). However, national (civil) assets can be vulnerable to external attack and internal disruption in times of peace and war. Examples that come readily to mind include the power grid system, money transfer systems, the water supply system (critical infrastructure), and commercial air transport. By reducing vulnerabilities in these sectors, Slovenia reduces the risk of a potential attack. A high level of resilience is therefore an essential component of a credible deterrence.

#### 4 MILITARY CAPABILITIES AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGY

The overmatch that NATO enjoyed for the last decades has eroded, and our current ways of thinking, executing, and organising constrain our ability to keep pace with change. If the SAF would like to achieve or maintain an operational advantage comparable with other allies they must build a future force – military capabilities.

In joining NATO, Slovenia gained the security of collective defence, made explicit in the treaty's Article 5. But in joining NATO Slovenia also altered its military structure and planning (including the development of certain defence capabilities) in order to focus on those meant to support collective security. Alliance membership requires, among other things, “common defence planning, participation of the Slovenian Armed Forces in setting up joint response forces and their operation in crisis areas, and other forms of integrating Slovenia into Alliance activities to consolidate stability in the Euro-Atlantic area and to combat international terrorism and other asymmetric threats” (Furlan et. al., 2006).

<sup>5</sup> *The resilience of each NATO member country needs to be sufficiently robust and adaptable to support the entire spectrum of crises envisaged by the Alliance. In this context, Article 3 complements the collective defence clause set out in Article 5, which stipulates that an attack against one Ally is an attack against all. Allies need to give NATO the means to fulfil its core tasks and, in particular, those of collective defence and mutual assistance. NATO, “Resilience and Article 3” (22 June 2016), [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_132722.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_132722.htm) 15.10.2017.*

Building military capabilities is a complex, iterative process that is never actually finished, since ongoing adaptation to change is imperative. The process encompasses combinations of operational, organisational, and personnel changes that exploit technological innovation. The main challenge, within an alliance, is tracking and following all the changes in the environment, and developing capabilities in concert with allies. One must be prepared to follow priorities set by the dominant member of the alliance. For example, after 2001 NATO became focused on COIN, developing “light and deployable” capabilities. But since Russia annexed Crimea and fostered unrest and war in Ukraine’s eastern provinces, NATO has shifted its emphasis to heavier mechanised forces.<sup>6</sup> The US Army is moving to “Multi Domain Battle,” which requires the ability to fight a peer adversary in different domains (land, water, air, space, cyber) simultaneously. The abbreviation DOTMPFLI (Doctrine, Organisation, Training, Materiel, Personnel, Finance, Leadership, and Interoperability/Integration) is used by NATO’s Allied Command Transformation (ACT) to embrace the whole spectrum of capability-building and stress the need to synchronise all of its elements. However, the framework also offers a roadmap for developing military capabilities (NATO, 2015).

NATO member states do not develop capabilities in a vacuum; these are determined together with allies in the NATO Defence Planning Process (NDPP). This four-year cycle is the Alliance’s framework for harmonising national and Alliance defence planning activities to meet agreed capability targets in the most effective ways (NATO, 2015, p. 8). For the Slovenian Armed Forces this represents the rationalisation and optimisation of the design and development of current and future capabilities: the process determines where we are and where we want to be as an Alliance member seeking to meet NATO’s ambition (NATO, 2015, p. 8). It represents SAF ambitions as we try to align national and alliance needs within contemporary budget constraints. From a capabilities perspective, it identifies gaps and assigns requirements, based on the principle of fair burden sharing.

Understanding and addressing these issues requires examining today’s operating environment through the lens of the SAF’s main priority: medium battalion battle groups. Within this key framework, the SAF will expand investment in modernisation for greater future survivability, lethality and efficiency; it will build future capabilities through the entire doctrine, organisation, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel, facilities (DOTMLPF) spectrum. Development and implementation, an

<sup>6</sup> *Moving to the present, and the aftermath of the 2014 Wales Summit, the key pivot point in the short-term will be the transition from the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission to the Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan; though recent destabilising events on NATO’s eastern and southern flanks have shown the potential for other challenges to emerge, generating NATO’s Readiness Action Plan response. Although NATO will likely shift from a campaign to a contingency posture, ACT will be provided with a huge opportunity to drive the transformational process given the continuing requirement for ready, flexible, robust and interoperable forces. NATO, Allied Command Transformation, “What is transformation? An Introduction to Allied Command Transformation”, (January 2015), p.iii, [http://www.ieee.es/Galerias/fichero/OtrasPublicaciones/Internacional/2015/NATO\\_Introduction\\_AlliedCommand\\_Transformation\\_Jan2015.pdf](http://www.ieee.es/Galerias/fichero/OtrasPublicaciones/Internacional/2015/NATO_Introduction_AlliedCommand_Transformation_Jan2015.pdf), 14.10.2017.*

ongoing process, is led by the nations with NATO being on hand to provide any additional help that may be required (NATO, 2015, p. 8).

Developing these capabilities to face emerging security challenges represents one of the most important elements of transformation and implied tasks for the Slovenian Armed Forces. The Field Manual (FM) 3-0 identifies eight elements of combat power: leadership, information, mission command, movement and manoeuvre, intelligence, fires, sustainment, and protection. Combat power is closely related to military capabilities; indeed it is one of its most important attributes.

The Slovenian Armed Forces consider Mission Command pivotal for success on the battlefield, and integral to nearly all parts of capability-building. The term “mission command”<sup>7</sup> is explicitly mentioned in Slovenian doctrine, the concept is inherent in our concept of command and control. It is included in Doctrine, Organisation, Training, Materiel, Personnel, Finance, Leadership, and Interoperability/Integration. Application of Mission Command can give us a decisive advantage over an adversary in a Multi-Domain Battle (MDB). In a MDB, mission command offers the ability to: “manoeuvre to positions of relative advantage and project power across all domains to ensure freedom of action,” and to “integrate joint, inter-organisational, and multinational capabilities to create windows of domain superiority and preserve joint force freedom of manoeuvre and exploit temporary domain superiority by synchronising cross-domain fire and manoeuvre to achieve physical, temporal, positional, and psychological advantages” (Glenn, 2017).

According to Slovenian Military Doctrine, Command and Control is one of the key battlefield systems, made manifest by a commander’s activities and through a clearly-defined system. “It is an authority, prescribed by law that the commander needs in order to plan, organise, coordinate and control his assigned forces.” In addition it is a “process in which the commander *impresses his will and intent on his subordinates.*” Based on SAF values, command is comprised of “a commander’s competence and leadership abilities, as well as legal acts that give him professional, formal authority and responsibility, and on an efficient command and control system” (Furlan et. al., 2006).

Although the most recent Slovenian military doctrine was published in 2006 and is thus in need of updating, the SAF perceive the concept of Mission Command as central to full-spectrum high intensity warfare in the MDB – either for the

<sup>7</sup> “The German concept *Auftragstaktik*, often translated as mission command (of the various translations offered for the term *Auftragstaktik*, Mission Command is the one used in American doctrine), denotes decentralised leadership: it is a philosophy of command that requires and facilitates initiative at all levels of command directly involved with events on the battlefield. It allows and encourages subordinates to exploit opportunities by empowering them to demonstrate initiative and exercise personal judgment in pursuance of their mission while maintaining alignment through the concept of the commander’s intent. The approach presupposes the existence of trust in the individual’s ability to act wisely and creatively when faced with unexpected situations, independently from higher authority.” Eitan Shamir, “The Long and Winding Road: The U.S. Army Managerial Approach to Command and the Adoption of Mission Command (*Auftragstaktik*),” *Journal of Strategic Studies* 33, no. 5 (October 2010): <http://usawc.idm.oclc.org/login?url=http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01402390.2010.498244>, , 1.10. 2017.

SAF alone, or in joint combined warfare together with allies. Mission Command is familiar to and accepted by most Western military forces, and by many civilian organisations as well. Core command philosophy in NATO is defined in the Allied Joint Publication - 01 (AJP-01): “Mission command gives subordinate commanders’ freedom of action to execute operations, according to the commander’s intent.” Through Mission Command, commanders in NATO will “generate the freedom of action for subordinates to act purposefully when unforeseen developments arise, and exploit favourable opportunities.” It encourages initiative and decentralised decision-making. Commanders delegating authority downwards must “state clearly their intentions, freedoms and constraints, designate the objectives to be achieved and provide sufficient forces, resources and authority required to accomplish their assigned tasks” (Comprehensive Operations Planning Directive (COPD), 2013).

As Slovenia and the SAF have accepted AJP-01 as a STANAG (Standard Agreement) in our own legal framework as such, we follow a command philosophy wherein command is an intrinsically forceful human activity involving authority as well as personal responsibility and accountability. In NATO, command philosophy has four facets: “a clear understanding of the superior commander’s intent; a responsibility on the part of subordinates to meet that intent; the importance of making a timely decision; and a determination, on the part of the commander, to see the plan through to a successful conclusion” (AJP-01, p. 5-1).

The SAF believes that a commander determines a course of action and leads the command. Commander responsibilities also involve accountability and control. As stated in AJP-01, control is not an equal partner with command, but merely an aspect of it. The commander and staff share the execution of control between them (AJP-01, p. 5-1).

A notable problem which can inhibit the successful implementation of mission command is the perception, among soldiers, of a zero-defects climate. This climate can considerably hinder an officers’ initiative if he believes that initiative can lead to risk of failure, and thus no promotion. David McCormick (1998, p.143) explains, “zero defect also implies a leadership environment in which it is unacceptable to make mistakes and, by extension, officers are less willing, and less able, to demonstrate creativity and initiative.” This environment produces an unforgiving relationship between the commander and his subordinates – a relationship that may hinder a comparative advantage on the battlefield, which is even more unforgiving.

While the SAF has high regard for the concept of mission command, we realise that we have work to do in this area. In particular we must avoid a tendency to control subordinates too much. Senior leaders operating at the strategic level must be willing to delegate responsibility to subordinates, trusting that they will perform to the best of their ability. Thomas Williams (2016) has argued that mission command leadership is not “an act, or a process, or a position.” Instead, “mission command leadership is an evolving social perception concerning authority, relationships, shared understanding, purpose, trust, risk, and environment. In a mission command

environment, ceding control to subordinates is the norm (and paradoxically the best way to gain control, because the soldiers take as much responsibility for the mission as you [do].”

Successful commanders should share leadership. Williams (2016) argues further that,

“Mission command leadership is then the evolving development of relationships towards shared responsibility for the mission and the health of the profession.” Anthony King (2017, p. 7), describes the distinctive character of mission command in the 21<sup>st</sup> century: “By empowering subordinates to take a local decision in line with a superior’s intent, mission command accelerates decision-making while simultaneously maintaining operational unity. It is therefore seen as an optimal solution on a complex, fast-moving battlefield.” Leading empowered subordinates mean that superiors may pay the price for their mistakes, but empowered subordinates are essential to success on the modern battlefield (Brender, 2016).

Contemporary mission command is not only about the relationship between the commander and his subordinates, but also between commanders across levels. Mission command involves the entire network (commanders, all echelons, subordinates, and C2 systems); it requires, as King (2017, p. 8) points out, “intense, professionalised teamwork between commanders”. This concept is well-described by King (2017, pp.8-19), who points out the distinctiveness of contemporary practices through an examination of the generalship of Stanley McChrystal and James Mattis. In the SAF we would like to emphasise “shared consciousness” as practised by General McChrystal in his daily Operations and Intelligence Brief, and the “unified team” approach stressed by General Mattis.

The SAF will continue to aspire to mission command, as a guarantee of success. But that requires, as King (2017, p. 10) argues, “a certain quality of education and a common language.” This means, in turn, intensive and high quality military education and respect for procedures (Troop Leading Procedure (TLP), Military Decision Making Process (MDMP), Operational Planning Process (OPP), and COPD) and cultural dimensions. But this can be complex because national character and organisational traditions also play a part. According to Eitan Shamir (2010), “mission command has both procedural and cultural dimensions.” The former, he argues, “are relatively easy to emulate” while “the latter stem from national character and organisational traditions and are therefore more difficult to transfer.”

The SAF must find solutions to this issue, in particular because it has quite dispersed military education for officers. The SAF’s military education for officers follows contemporary military practice in all western armies, but is dispersed between the national Officers School, Command and General Staff School, and General Staff education. It includes training/schooling by our allies (at the United States Army War College (USAWC) and National Defense University (NDU) in the US; the *Fuehrungsakademie* in Germany; and schools in France, Italy and other NATO

countries). The SAF must learn to consolidate this diverse training and bring it into a common framework for the needs of our nation. A big advantage for the SAF is a lack of anti-intellectualism (McCormick, 1998, p.152). Indeed, all SAF field grades and senior officers are encouraged to graduate from universities and receive Master's degrees, and to embrace the advantages of formal education and the mindset it fosters. By the same token, however, our officers tend to prioritise troop duties and prefer command assignments – a problem sometimes referred to in the US as the “Muddy Boots” syndrome (McCormick, 1998, p. 146). To some extent this can undermine the impact of high educational standards.

As future strategic leaders and as officers who will practise mission command, SAF commanders will strive to improve their skills. As an organisation, the SAF will work hard on mission command, convinced that the effort will pay off in the future when, together with its allies, the SAF will contribute to national and international security.

**Conclusion** The SAF must make assumptions about future threats, calculate risks, and prepare for future security challenges. Taking into account scarce resources, and a dynamic and volatile environment, it is difficult to find a wholly adequate strategy to provide for the safety, progress, and economic development of Slovenians. But deterrence – created by both our own capabilities and those gained through NATO membership – is our best way forward. By contributing to a cohesive and capable NATO we help to stabilise security in Europe and reduce the threat of major regional or global war, both of which could be devastating to the people of Slovenia.

Slovenia will use coercion – deterrence by denial in particular – as a basic concept for Slovenia's future strategy. In order to be a reliable partner in NATO Slovenia must carry its share of the burden, and develop its own capabilities. In developing its military capabilities the SAF must apply a DOTMLPF framework, which connects doctrine, organisation, training, materiel, personnel, finance, leadership, and interoperability/integration. Here we see mission command as pivotal for success in development, and in Multi Domain Battles. Mission command is the brain and nerves of the system, and as such must be well established first. It is useless to have arms and legs one cannot control.

In mission command we have identified several important issues, which must be resolved as soon as possible. An updated SAF doctrine must include and precisely articulate the concept of mission command as it is understood in the West, particularly in the US Army. While mission command is a concept already well-accepted in the SAF, the formal embrace of specific language is important since we are working with allies and need to align with their concepts and language as closely as possible. In addition we must overcome a zero-defects mindset, which undermines initiative. With respect to the diverse education our officers receive, we must be alert to its advantages and disadvantages. Regarding the latter, we must seek to consolidate our diverse training and education, and bring it into a common framework for the

needs of our nation. This is only the beginning of the hard work to be done, since the creation and implementation of military capability is a demanding and never-ending project. It is, however, an essential project. Using key concepts this article has demonstrated that robust and intelligently-designed military capabilities are crucial to the deterrent capabilities of a small state – and thus to its ability to survive and thrive in the international system.

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