

NATO'S "SMART DEFENCE" BETWEEN THEORETICAL CONCEPT AND REALITY

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The article briefly presents the developments in time of the cooperation of the NATO member countries over the complex issue of constituting common defence capabilities with bigger emphasis on the last few years (2010-2012) following the difficulties emerging after the effects of the world economic crisis.

The author presents how the wording of the "Smart defence" concept was reached and presented in detail to the NATO Summit in Chicago, on May, 20-21, 2012, its content and constitutive elements in the vision of NATO's officials, the agreement of the member states inclusively of Romania on its implementation in the coming years.

In the end, we approach how Romania can contribute to the concept and its weaknesses related to the defence budget, the defence industry situation and the political will of the people responsible with the national security and the defence of the country.

Keywords: NATO Summit, Chicago, C4ISR, cooperation, the New NATO Strategic Concept - Lisbon 2010, Romania and „Smart defence“.

1. Developments in time

For a long time there have been debates in the NATO structures and the member countries framework **on the creation and operation** of some common military capabilities (i.e., equipment, services, maintenance, personnel training, resolution of complex issues related to compatibility and interoperability), without formulating a clear concept of the „**Smart defence**“ type.

In reality, a thorough analysis of the North-Atlantic organization history reveals many and consistent examples of close cooperation between some

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members, particularly between USA and the United Kingdom; the United Kingdom – France – Germany – Italy; Spain – France, etc. in various concepts regarding the common development of some weapon systems (e.g. airships, ships and submarines, C4ISR systems, different sensors, spatial equipment, personnel training, etc.).

The unhappy debut of the global economic crisis in 2008 and the deepening of it in the following years inclusively in 2012, and possibly in 2013, exerted a huge pressure on the budgets of the member states and, as usual, especially in the new member states, the first and the most damaged field was defence.

This reality imposed and still imposes to find new ways and means to provide NATO's military capabilities under the new economic-financial circumstances regarding the possible good faith and the political will of the member states (?!).

A clear signal was transmitted to the Lisbon Summit in 2010, where the member countries represented by the chiefs of states and governments together with NATO's civil and military officials finalised and approved the new "**Strategic Concept – Lisbon 2010**", a document from which resulted also aspects now being part of the "**Smart defence**" **Concept**, as follows:

- **The Alliance should** respond to the emergence of any threats and challenges.

- **The Alliance should** be prepared to act with a range of instruments and to cooperate with other actors in order to contribute to a comprehensive approach that will efficiently combine the political, civil and military elements for a full accomplishment of its security objectives.

- **The support of reform efforts** in the security and defence sectors; these can include also engagement of contractors' support (Romania - ?!).

- **It is possible that** stabilization and reconstruction **efforts** be needed in all the crisis phases. Therefore, the Alliance should have the capacity to **plan, prepare and undergo reconstruction and development** activities.

- **C4ISR** capabilities are pivotal enablers for the flexible and efficient accomplishment of the Alliance's security objectives. This fact needs the definition and implementation of a clear C4ISR strategy in order to provide consistent consultation and robust, flexible and measurable command functions. C4ISR systems need to benefit the most recent technologies, and also the ones forecasted to be developed in the future. Still, such arrangements will be efficient only if they

will be adopted on a large scale by the allies by using the same basic philosophy especially as regards the ratio they are ready to share sensitive information or to allow the access to those by mechanisms depending on the technological access between **federations of networks**. In the end, here comes the nations' availability to make possible a NATO Network Enabled Capability.

- **NATO**, and also nations', **planning** should also take into account the potential effects of the allies' access to the communication, transit and vital transport routes, energy delivery, the probability of cyber attacks against the Information Technology Systems or against other vital systems of Alliance's nations;

- **NATO** will intend to diminish the strategic impact of asymmetrical threats with improvised explosive devices (IED);

- **Interoperability** is a multiplying factor that will allow the Alliance to develop **in partnership** a package of capabilities/forces, able to conduct combat actions in any environment;

- **The Alliance** should have its own capability for the assessment and control of the impact of technologies, the expertise of the technical and scientific community, of the challenges and information capabilities of the international community in the security field related to the operational environment assessment, the destructive potential of the emergent technologies, of the influence over the Alliance's defence and deterrence capabilities.

- **The quality of member of the Alliance** also involves the equitable distribution of risks and responsibilities roles. In this context, **the defence budget allocated from the national GDP**, and also the percentage of this budget set for the procurement expenses are indicators of a member state's effort in the defence field. In principle, it is recommended for the member states to grant a constant 2% or more of GDP for the defence (**Romania** = engagement 2.38% in 2011 – 0.8%, 2012 – on paper 1.3%, in reality 0.9%). The member countries frequently allocating resources below this percentage are recommended to stop this tendency and to increase the budgetary allocations in conformity with their commitments.

- **The efficiency of costs** will continue to be a factor of utmost importance. This asserts (also for Romania) the prioritization on investments, the increase of efficiency as regards the costs of operations and for maintenance, and also the reorientation of the resources allocated to obsolete structures and programs toward other priorities.

- **In order to increase efficiency** as regards the costs it is also recommended to **use international cooperation mechanism** in using the allocated

funds and to create some others which **are impossible to fulfil by a single member**. In this sense the following areas will be encouraged: **the multinational approaches and cooperation** in the procurement, training and education fields, logistical support field, the creation of large multinational units, and also in the development of some civil capabilities to cause the increase of interoperability and operation planning and execution; even in this context there are a series of technical and legal obstacles in this regard (i.e., legislative requirements, different provisions over the industrial offset, existence of some different agreements and terms regarding the cooperation between the armed forces being parts of other countries, and also between the armed forces and the civil society of the same country) for the development of capabilities at reduced costs.

- **The efficient use of critical resources** requires from the NATO and EU states to identify/develop common capabilities of both organizations.

2. NATO's "SMART DEFENCE"¹ Concept

Along the years 2011 and 2012, starting from the reunion of the defence ministers from the NATO member countries (February 2011) and continuing by conferences, statements, analyses and pro's and con's analyses, the basic elements of the NATO "Smart defence" Concept were concretized and presented *per se* upon the NATO Summit in Chicago, on May 20-21, 2012.

Upon the aforementioned Summit, **the Secretary General of NATO, Anders Fogh Rasmussen** announced the essential data of the Concept, underlining that essentially **"Smart Defence means to build security with less money, working together and becoming more flexible"**.

During the summit works a series of conclusions were drawn and the member countries agreed on the following ideas:

- **"Smart Defence"** is a new cooperation culture aligned with the national priorities and also with the specialization where necessary and with the multinational cooperation (the capabilities of some member countries in certain fields were analyzed).

- The concept refers to equipment, human resources and critical aspects of operational and technical interoperability.

¹ Author's analysis, based on the 600 titles (i.e., documents, analyses, statements, comments) identified using the Google search engine for "smart defence concept" (accessed 28.08.2012).

In the preparatory documents of the Chicago Summit and during the works a series of ideas and principles was stressed out and approved:

- **NATO officials and chiefs** of states and governs agreed that in these times of austerity each euro, dollar or sterling pound counts. "**Smart Defence**" is a new way of thinking about the generation of modern defence capabilities the Alliance needs for the last decade and for long term. It is a renewed cooperation culture encouraging the allies to cooperate in the development, acquisition and maintenance of military capabilities to fulfil the Alliance's tasks in the framework of the new **NATO Strategic Concept** (Lisbon – 2010). This means the common use and sharing of capabilities, settlement of priorities and coordination of efforts.

- **Certain events** proving the need for a new approach of the "Smart Defence" type were:

- **The economic crisis** starting in 2008 and which, unfortunately, continues;
- **The Libya crisis**, NATO's involvement and conclusions drawn over certain weaknesses of the allies (excepting the USA);
- **The lack of political will** of some allies in rebalancing the defence budgets (Romania 0.8-0.9% of GDP).

- **Some concrete constitutive elements of the Concept were crystallised in the first phase, as follows:**

- **The concept is based** on critical capabilities for NATO, particularly meant to put in practice the "New Strategic Concept" – "Lisbon 2010".
- **The alliance's nations** must give priority to those capacities NATO needs, specialise in what they do the best, to reach for solutions to common problems. NATO can act as an intermediary and catalyst helping the member countries to settle what they can do together at a lower cost, more efficiently and with lower risks.

- **These constitutive elements were defined as follows:**

- **Prioritization:** the alignment of national priorities to the ones of NATO capabilities was a challenge for the past years; now, by "Smart Defence" a new opportunity is opened for a transparent, cooperative approach which takes into account the cost-efficiency balance in order to meet the Alliance's requirements in the "Capabilities" field.

- **Specialization:** with the budgets under pressure due to the economic crisis and also to the bad governance, some NATO countries (Romania included) take unilateral decisions to postpone or abandon some capabilities. This directly

causes the increase of the other allies', especially the USA efforts and this is not fair. The defence budget cuts, uncoordinated within the Alliance's framework, seriously damages the capacity to successfully deal with the multiple challenges of the 21st century. Thanks to its new "Smart Defence" concept, NATO is ready to encourage the "on-project" specialization and thus to help its members to focus **on their strong national elements**, in cooperation with all the members or with some of them, **consequently maintaining the national sovereignty for their final decision;**

- **Cooperation:** By acting together, nations can have access to capabilities they cannot afford individually. Cooperation can take different forms, as a small group of nations led by a former-nation, or the strategic sharing between those in a close geographic area, culture or common equipment;

• **Upon the Chicago Summit the "Smart Defence Mechanisms"** were settled as possible and agreed on:

- **Also the special representatives were appointed by the NATO Secretary General, Anders Fogh Rasmussen:**

❖ **Gl. Stephane Abrial**, Chief of the Allied Command for Transformation;

❖ **Ambassador Claudio Bisogniero;**

❖ **Ambassador Alexander Vershbow.**

- **The coordination with the partners**

❖ NATO, by working together with all the allies, also looks for cooperation with other players outside the Alliance, and also with the European Union's organization for defence – the European Defence Agency (EDA) – in order to avoid the unnecessary duplication, the allocation of research resources and funds for the same objectives. An important factor is represented by the cooperation of industrial factors from all the member countries.

• **On long term, some actions over "Smart Defence" were considered:**

- **NATO leaders** convened to embrace the "Smart Defence" Concept (we are about to see how much honesty and political will be involved, inclusively for Romania²) as an innovative vision, in order to provide the Alliance to develop, get and maintain the needed capabilities to reach its objectives for "2020 NATO Force".

- **The Chicago Summit** was the first essential step in the application of the **Concept**. The chiefs of states, the NATO civil and military officials, the governments of the member states approved a concrete package of multinational

² Author's note

projects, inclusively for a better protection of the NATO forces, better development of C4ISR systems and better training of the personnel. These projects, and also others which will be identified and convened on in the future, will provide the enhancement of operational efficiency, the economy of resources and closer connections between the NATO forces. On long term, these projects and demarches will also offer richer experience in the "Smart Defence" field;

- **It is considered** that, in the Concept framework, the C4ISR systems interoperability, the operational procedures and the personnel training are the key-elements.

- **Examples** of success regarding the cooperation with some NATO member countries in the area of specialization for the common resolution of complex issues, impossible to solve by a single country (e.g. development of transport and combat aircraft, UAVs, antimissile systems, C4ISR systems, fighter's protection, etc.) **are presented.**

3. Romania and the "Smart Defence" Concept

As already known, **Romania** has been a NATO member since 2004. Between 1995-2004, the Romanian civil and military officials (mainly from the MoD) acted with responsibility and dedication in order to meet the political and military criteria for our country's integration into NATO.

In the adherence treaty, negotiated and signed by Romania and NATO, the rights and duties of the parts are provisioned, among them being stipulated that our country commits itself to allocate for defence, in the following years, at least 2.38% of its GDP.

In the coming years, starting with 2005, these commitments were quickly forgotten and the budget designed for defence became continuously and dramatically lower, to 0.8-0.9% in 2011 and 2012; this lead to the freezing of any significant acquisition of defence equipment and services.

In this context, it is hard to estimate what Romania could contribute the cooperation programs under the "Smart Defence" Concept (launched with such determination by the NATO Secretary General) despite the excessively optimistic statements of the Romanian officials, from which we quote:

• **President Traian Băsescu** (Brussels, 30.01.2012, meeting with Anders Fogh Rasmussen, NATO Secretary General) "Romania is a full supporter of "Smart Defence" implementation in the strategy of equipment acquisition (?!)". "Romania is interested in developing some niche military capabilities", such as:

- Special forces;
- Naval mine clearance;
- Human intelligence;
- Cyber security.

„There are rumours Romania is involved in 69 (which are those?), out of the 168 programs undergone under the aegis of „Smart Defence” Concept and I would like to include:

- The acquisition of multi-role aircraft together with Bulgaria and Croatia;
- The common acquisition and use of UAVs.”

• **Mircea Geoană –Chairman of the Romanian Senate at that time (06.10.2011)** upon meeting the chiefs of diplomatic missions of NATO countries, before the NATO PA, Bucharest, 07-09.10.2011:

- “One of the topics addressed by NATO PA will be how the economic crisis affected the defence budgets of the member states”.
- “Also in Romania, we are very worried about (is it so?!) this economic crisis affecting the defence budgets, at least in Europe. We understand (?!) our American friends and allies worry about the existing decline, sometimes abrupt, **and for Romania a very abrupt decline**, able to damage, on long term, not only our capacity to act together but also our Alliance’s coherence”.
- “When Romania became a NATO member state, it committed itself to allocate 2.38% of the GDP for defence, and this year (2011), the Romanian state provided only 0.8% of GDP”.

• **Statements**, in the same note of support of the new “Smart Defence” concept, also made the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Cristian Diaconescu (before the Chicago Summit in May 2012) and also other Romanian civil and military officials.

From the analysis, done with good will, of Romania’s involvement in the NATO matters, its contribution to the common defence effort and to the fulfilment of the commitments, the above statements become simple words, good only to be exported.

From the study of the 600 documents, statements, analyses and commentaries posted on the Internet on the “Smart Defence” field, a different understanding of the matters by the politicians and also by the commentators is

obvious. Surprisingly, the commentaries of the politicians and military people from important NATO countries (Germany, France, the United Kingdom, Italy, or Spain) are missing. Perhaps they are still analyzing the Concept.

As regards Romania and its real participation in the Concept, it is noteworthy that it does not have what to put in the common "basket" and here I do not mean only the allocated budget (0.8-1.0% of GDP) but also the negative developments in the defence field constantly and consistently registered **in-between 1990-2012**:

- A precarious situation of what remained from the so-called „defence industry”.
- The wrong policies applied in the maintenance and consolidation of some branch fields with technological and scientific potential;
- The application of a bad and sometimes dishonest management, a phenomenon fully contributing to the bankruptcy of some productive units;
- The existence and tolerance of some illegitimate interests over the co-option of terrains where there were production units of fighting equipment;
- The discouragement by legislation and aberrant bureaucratic measures of the private firms that appeared in Romania with products and services for defence and the appeal (sometimes without arguments) only to imports;
- The total lack of care of the political factors (any in fact for 22 years) about the military procurement and the insufficient financing of important projects, the exclusively negative budgetary rectifications and the institution of strong bureaucratic and other barriers to lead to the start of auction procedures barely in September-October of each year resulting in the loss of financing because of lack of time (the action seems utmost programmatic);
- The lost of valuable experts, some with unique specialities, who, lacking the resources and the prospects, were forced to leave to other fields or even to emigrate;
- The total indifference of political factors with responsibilities in the national security and defence regarding the export of equipment and services from the defence field on the markets Romania used to have and for those products remaining or able to become competitive;
- The transformation of the planning process of military procurement (the well-known PAAP) into a genuine joke, as almost nothing is respected and at the end of the year is given formal explanations.

- **As conclusions**, I think Romania and the Romanian Military have many things pertaining to the extreme passive and less to the active.

We all hope the manner the issues are risen about NATO along the 2010-2012 years and especially to the Chicago Summit in May 20-21, 2012, over the fulfilling of the commitments by the member countries and the development of some consistent future actions in the "Smart Defence" concept framework will cause a change of attitude of the Romanian political and military responsible staff, with direct obligations in country's defence.

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