

Lt. Col. Tamás Kender:

## THE EMPEROR'S NEW CLOTHES

*“...promises made in 2014 at the NATO summit and ratified in Warsaw in 2016, ‘to strengthen collective defence’, have not been met. They tell him that, its decision to deploy four battalions to the Baltic states and Eastern Poland, far from building a credible deterrence, NATO is erecting a Potemkin village”<sup>1</sup>*

ABSTRACT: *Although we have not realized it, the war has begun. Or, possibly it has just never ended. As some sceptics might say, there was but one World War with a not too long truce in between and since then only the ways have been changed. The West and the East have been fighting for regional hegemony, or even for the dominance over the World. Their century-long struggle for supremacy brought most of the countries from all continents into the same arena, sometimes even against their own will. So, as it seems, this fight is not over, there is just the shooting has not started, yet. However, the current conflict is somehow different. This new type of fight goes on at all possible levels and with all means of power (politics, economy, military but mostly information) and the recent scale, dynamics and types of the challenges have made our world of traditional rules and reactions obsolete. Nevertheless, in this competition the West seems to participate halfheartedly. The only question is how we want to win this fight without putting enough, if any effort in it.*

KEYWORDS: *deterrence, NATO contribution, enhanced Forward Presence, capabilities*

### ARE WE PREPARED?

NATO is struggling. The organization is wrestling internally as reluctant member states do not seem to wish to contribute equally to the collective cause of standing up against the ever-growing external threat. Although all allies share the common understanding of the *ends*, they become more hesitant to agree on the *ways*, but their real foot-dragging starts when it comes to the *means*. Thus, while carrying out the three core tasks of NATO set out in the Strategic Concept<sup>2</sup> is undisputable, resourcing them remains an evergreen challenge. In order to gain the undivided support from their political principals, convincing has always been a part of the job of the military leadership. The recent drastic changes in the global security environment however, demanded some more determination. So, leading countries and NATO staff leaned in to get more attention to the cause.

First the persuasion was focused on demonizing the old adversary who appeared in a new robe a couple of years ago in Crimea, comprehensively employing conventional and

<sup>1</sup> Shireff, R. *War on Russia*. London: Coronet, 2016. 20.

<sup>2</sup> Collective defence, crisis management, and cooperative security. *The Alliance Strategic Concept, PO(2010) 0169*. 19 November 2010.

unconventional means, or in a “hybrid” way<sup>3</sup>. Still, today there are other not-too-new challenges dividing the Alliance with exploiting the members’ different understanding of risks and threats against their cohesion. The Russian power-plays draw our attention around the globe fast as they do multiple moves, like deploying forces in the High-North<sup>4</sup>, threatening the Baltics with massing forces for exercises<sup>5</sup>, and supporting the Assad regime in Syria<sup>6</sup> simultaneously. However, besides these well-seen external actions, their indirect approach goes under our skin as they master information operations in order to influence and alter the political will in other countries<sup>7</sup>. NATO nations are concentrating on their own direct and most imminent difficulties in their regional and local area of interest. Therefore, while the Baltic states are facing Russian forces deployed annoyingly close to their borders, the Southern flank suffers from the migration crisis induced by the Syrian civil war, and the countries in the West must deal with fundamentalist terrorism, and all of these events are multiplied by fake news that target the mind of the population.

As it seems, NATO’s Center of Gravity, cohesion is also our weakness. The individual interests of the 29 nations made NATO indecisive, or just too slow when it comes to the common good. It is like in the old saying, when “everyone agrees on that someone should do something, but no one does anything”. The most common and single reason for that is generally coming from the financial thinking and internal politics. Thus, as a result, the nations are contributing to NATO, like the tailors in the tale who are offering new clothes to the emperor to wear, but without real material.

When the Russian president decides on launching a snap exercise with tens of thousands of troops in the Western district, in no time paratroopers fall off the sky and armored units move to their training area of operations<sup>8</sup>. While these divisions are not only ready to threaten North – Eastern Europe, but they are really doing so, NATO response was to decide on an enhanced NATO Response Force in Wales<sup>9</sup> and on enhanced Forward Presence at the Warsaw summit.<sup>10</sup> The first question that might come to mind is what the word enhanced means in this context; and second, why we need it.

<sup>3</sup> Chivvis, C. S. “Understanding Russian ‘Hybrid Warfare’ And What Can We Do About It: Testimony presented before the House of Armed Services Committee on March 22, 2017”. RAND Corporation. [https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/testimonies/CT400/CT468/RAND\\_CT468.pdf](https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/testimonies/CT400/CT468/RAND_CT468.pdf), Accessed on 11 June 2017.

<sup>4</sup> “Russian Military Deploying Nearly 200 Troops to Arctic for Mystery Mission”. *Sputnik News*. May 20, 2017. <https://sputniknews.com/russia/201705201053811551-russian-troops-mystery-arctic-deployment/>, Accessed on 11 June 2017.

<sup>5</sup> Smith, A. Bishop, M. W. and Kube, C. “Russia kicks off huge Zapad 2017 military exercises with Belarus”. *CNBC News*, 2 Augustus 2017. <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/russia-plans-huge-zapad-2017-military-exercises-belarus-n788741>, Accessed on 8 August 2017.

<sup>6</sup> Rahman-Jones, I. “Why does Russia support Syria and President Assad?”. *BBC*. April 11, 2017. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/newsbeat/article/39554171/why-does-russia-support-syria-and-president-assad>, Accessed on 11 June 2017.

<sup>7</sup> Fisher, M. “Russia and the U.S. Election: What We Know and Don’t Know”. *The New York Times*, 12 December 2017. <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/12/world/europe/russia-trump-election-cia-fbi.html>, Accessed on 6 June 2017.

<sup>8</sup> “High alert: Russia tests army’s readiness in massive snap exercise in West & South”. *RT Web*. 25 August 2016. <https://www.rt.com/news/357146-russia-snap-exercise-alert/>, Accessed on 13 April 2017.

<sup>9</sup> “Boosting NATO’s presence in the East and South”. *NATO*. 10 September 2018. [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_136388.htm?selectedLocale=en](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_136388.htm?selectedLocale=en), Accessed on 13 October 2018.

<sup>10</sup> “NATO Response Force (NRF)”. *NATO*. 16 January 2017. [http://www.nato.int/cps/pl/natohq/topics\\_49755.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/pl/natohq/topics_49755.htm), Accessed on 13 April 2017.

In NATO's history there have been many ups and downs while new challenges were met. Once questioning even the necessity of its own existence after bringing the Soviet era down, then on the contrary, the enlargement of the Alliance with former Warsaw Pact countries which had a double effect. First, it increased the perception of their security and second, posed a threat to Russian interests. Thus, the new members enjoying the freshly acquired NATO umbrella started military reforms that in reality meant big defense budget-cuts and downsizing their forces, concentrating them on peacekeeping only. The harsh changes of the operational environment in the close neighborhood however, brought the attention to the Balkans and NATO had a purpose again: Peace Support Operations to keep problems out of the territory. The immediate response tools for crises, ARRC and AMF<sup>11</sup>, have been used effectively, however, NATO could not deny a Russian task force securing the military airfield in Pristina, Kosovo. Hence the demanding operational challenges NATO trusted happy endings and continued on the path of Peace Support, and that thought was reinforced by the follow-on missions after the US-led coalition wars in Iraq, then Afghanistan were initiated by 9/11. War on terror brought NATO's focus away from Europe and the NRF concept was born, while member states continued cutting their defense budget and contribution to the far end of possibility.

Further increase of membership, however, reached the borders of Russia, which insolence annoyed the "sleeping bear". The promising new leader, who predicted getting rid of decadent elite and making Russia great again, achieved real internal political changes. Rising prices of oil indirectly helped<sup>12</sup> to increase economy and the slow development started bringing back the country to power that provides Russia with the tools for a much stronger foreign policy<sup>13</sup>.

This weird progress of restructuring and downsizing, while expanding in Europe versus the growing strength in Russia resulted that NATO could not and did not react effectively when the Ukrainian crisis was followed with a fast occupation and annexation of Crimea. Not having the credible power to deter or react, the World's international community, including NATO, could do no more but monitor and condemn the events.

Without having the nations' unified political will NATO Response Force (NRF) has never been fully deployed or employed and the Ukrainian crisis was not an exception either. Realizing the lack of real reaction capabilities, the NATO summit in Wales resulted revising collective defense plans, introducing the Readiness Action Plan process, with the enhanced NRF concept and the brigade size Very High Readiness Force within.<sup>14</sup> But, what difference did that make? Even with increased readiness and power, forces still need a North Atlantic Council (NAC) decision to be deployed. That takes time, and time is what the Eastern flank does not have. Their nervousness demanded real actions and in Warsaw the nations decided on the enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) concept, which is in a nutshell; deploying battalion task forces, or Battle Groups forward into the three Baltic states (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) and Poland integrated into the local defense forces in order to show NATO's unified effort and deter any Russian aggression.<sup>15</sup> So, what? One might ask. What can four battlegroups do

<sup>11</sup> Allied Rapid Reaction Corps and Allied Mobile Force

<sup>12</sup> As natural gas sales are affected by oil prices, the increasing brought billions to Russian economy.

<sup>13</sup> Newnham, R. "Oil, carrots, and sticks: Russia's energy resources as a foreign policy tool". *Journal of Eurasian Studies* 2/2. 2011. 134–43. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S187936651100011X>, Accessed on 21 May 2017.

<sup>14</sup> "NATO Response Force (NRF)".

<sup>15</sup> "Boosting NATO's presence in the East and South".

against divisions? Is that all NATO could offer in terms of collective defense? Or is it just a further escalation of the already developing crisis? Answering these questions might generate some more, but first we must get to the common understanding of definitions and terms.

## WHAT IS DETERRENCE?

While there is a civilian way of understanding deterrence as: it is the inhibition of criminal behaviour by fear especially of punishment, there is the military description, where deterrence is the maintenance of military power for the purpose of discouraging attack, such as nuclear deterrence.<sup>16</sup> Analyzing these two approaches we can find three common elements. The ends, the means, and the way.

So, the purpose is to prevent someone from doing something by punishment, and for that you threaten the other with power to create fear. In military power this means forces with strength, capabilities. Concluding Schelling's thoughts, one needs the power to hurt to set conditions for coercive bargain<sup>17</sup>. This is not possible without advertising real power. For this announcement one needs to introduce these capabilities using all possible means from the lowest to the highest level, such as Strategic Communication.

However, there is a fourth element that is still missing: the will. While the tools are there, the question is: are you ready to use them? Do you have it in you? In the past these elements were seen when the belligerent states were threatening each other by controlled explosions of nuclear warheads, or ballistic missiles tests. Until today though, we do not know if any of those countries were really ready to start a nuclear war risking that they would erase humankind – including themselves – from the face of the Earth. This fear of overkill from both sides prevented us to fight the Third World War. So, what has changed, if anything; and what makes the difference today?

The superfast development of technology has provided us not only with high-tech weapons and other gadgets of mass destruction but it has also changed the size and ratio of the battlefield dimensions. Technology shortened time for military actions, with that also increased the battlespace to be global, and fed us overwhelming real time information expanding the operational environment to the cyberspace. In this new era of the modern war, rules have also changed. Although rules of war were never exactly black and white, nowadays alongside the well-recognized combatants we must also deal with paramilitary and special units in the grey zone; moreover, temporarily armed civilians and insurgents; and those who fight without shooting any rifles, but just sit in front of a computer capable of damaging our infrastructure, life support system or our brain indirectly; and without detection, consequently retaliation. Do these latter ones kill anyone? If not in person but with their indirect action, they can, they do. So NATO recognized also cyber-attack as a possible casus belly for Article 5 actions. What do all these factors have to do with deterrence? Well, if we agree with Clausewitz, that in war a country must use all of its resources, capabilities or sum of available means to defeat the enemy,<sup>18</sup> then imagine all of these above-mentioned capabilities advertised to deter the adversary.

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<sup>16</sup> *Webster II New Riverside University Dictionary*. Rolling Meadows, IL: The Riverside Publishing Company, 1984.

<sup>17</sup> Schelling, T. C. *Arms and Influence*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967.

<sup>18</sup> Clausewitz, C. von. *On War*. Ware: Wordsworth Editions, 1997. 8.

But how do we know that deterrence was, is successful? Is it measurable? Actually, it is easy to say that until your adversary does not attack, deterrence works. During the Cold War the two sides deterred each other, neither attacked the other, so both of them achieved their goal. Thus, maintaining military power at the same level as your adversaries seems to be a solution. To make the other step down, however, one needs more than that. More armament on one side to imbalance the ratio provokes arms race, challenging the economy.<sup>19</sup> It worked once, would it work again?

The recent wars cost the US billions of dollars, and the European nations also spent a lot on the aftermath, like sending troops and support to Afghanistan and Iraq. Meanwhile rising oil and gas prices payed off for Putin to yank back Russian economy and with that military power to normal and above. First test of Russian power was in Georgia, when the so called first European war – since the II. World War – was launched in 2008. Then the new Gerasimov doctrine in Ukraine followed as the non-linear warfare was tested.<sup>20</sup> While Georgia was a “far-away” land, the Crimean action was on the doorstep of Europe, and the only response triggered was an embargo on Russia. Within NATO some members wanted immediate and harsh actions to be taken, on the other hand other countries are still hesitant because the European embargo caused as much, if not more detriment to them than Russia. Not to speak of those downsized, under-equipped and under-manned forces, which had been organized, trained and deployed rather for Peace Support, or Stabilization Operations. That means lack of heavy forces, decreased readiness and even not having their own air force, Baltic states today need NATO contribution to conduct Air Policing. So, building up credible forces from the ashes now is quite a challenge without increasing the numbers in strength and in budget in order to get back what had been wasted during the past decades. Thus, NATO sends troops to border countries to show unity and will.

The question seems to be obvious. How to deter Russia from further aggression without escalation? What makes this problem more difficult for NATO is to answer the how to deter the adversary, how to counter the new challenge of Hybrid threat.

## (IN)CAPABILITIES

In this new era of war there are many challenges that NATO should understand and overcome. One of them is the ever-changing environment with its dimensions; another is the adversary and finally the need to see ourselves better. We already talked about the first two. Now the third and the most demanding challenge should be discussed.

In this power game everyone sees NATO as one actor, and as it is, of course it acts as a whole. However, it has 29 different voices, or more like 29 individual intentions depending on the nations’ political ambitions and interests. Thus, to make a decision, all of the nations should agree and vote with the same supporting yes, which is crucial in case of initiating Article 5, or Collective Defense operations. Understanding the differences of, or even variances among nations is a key for adversaries to exploit as a weakness. Therefore, our center

<sup>19</sup> Tian, N., Fleurant, A., Wezeman, P. D. and Wezeman, S. T. “Trends in World Military Expenditure, 2016”. Sipri Fact Sheet. April 2017. <https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/Trends-world-military-expenditure-2016.pdf>, Accessed on 13 April 2017.

<sup>20</sup> “The ‘Gerasimov Doctrine’ and Russian Non-Linear War”. Moscow’s Shadows. 6 July 2017. <https://inmoscowshadows.wordpress.com/2014/07/06/the-gerasimov-doctrine-and-russian-non-linear-war/>, Accessed on 13 December 2017.

of gravity, cohesion, is easy to undermine and the decision-making mechanism slows down or stops. But NATO is made of, and will be as good as its nations. However, the political rhetoric is not equal to military reality.

These differences are usually derived from history or recent internal political or economic problems. Most countries do not want to spend on defense until being attacked, and for that reason they think twice before giving support to one another. What is more, if that country is a “far away” land, the threat also looks minor. e.g. in the case of the Baltics, their problem might seem too unrealistic for farther European countries to spend extra coins on expeditionary capabilities. Although all members agreed on the increased NATO presence in the region, not every one of them wants to contribute with combat troops, equipment or even enablers. So, as a result, four strong nations<sup>21</sup> took the lead and frameworked for battalion-size task forces having other states to contribute with sub-units and deployed to the North-Eastern part of Europe as enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) to show unity and resolve. Is it deterrence? I do not think that this size of formations, whatever capabilities they might have, is a real challenge to the divisions near the Baltic borders. However, that is not their purpose anyway. Is it an escalation? Regarding the fact that so far there has been no increased NATO presence in that area, the obvious answer is yes. Some might think it as a provocation, that needs answer, most probably increasing Russian presence. Here can we start a “chicken-or-egg” discussion, but it would not help to find the best solution if there is any.

## PATTERNS OF THE NEW WORLD'S CONFLICTS

Those who read history, especially military history, can easily recognize the patterns since the beginning of human conflicts till this post-modern era of warfighting. However, knowing the past can also mislead us and we can come to the wrong assumptions. As in the euphoric post-Cold War times, Addington said perhaps it is reasonable to predict that in our near future armed conflicts will be regional, fought among and within lesser states, and with occasional U.N.-sanctioned interventions or interventions by regional organizations. While there has been a discussion on a standing military force under the control of the United Nations for repelling aggression and enforcing peace, for the foreseeable future international military interventions under U.N. auspices will probably be conducted by ad hoc collections of military forces, such as those that liberated Kuwait from Iraq in 1991<sup>22</sup>. Since this optimistic view thirty years have passed and we concluded that the UN might have lost its weight on this issue due to the fact, that within the Security Council the Cold War has not ended, yet. However, changing the term regional organization for NATO makes more sense, but also leads us to interventions instead of collective defense.

As Kissinger states, the UN Security Council – of compelling formal authority but deadlocked on the most important issues – is joined by regular summits of Atlantic leaders in NATO and the European Union, and as a result he sees that the nature and frequency of these meetings work against elaborations of long-range strategies.<sup>23</sup>

Also, in Addington's opinion the UN and regional organizations will probably rely chiefly on the USA for major military interventions as long as there is a will and there are means to

<sup>21</sup> US to Poland, Canada to Latvia, Germany to Lithuania and UK to Estonia

<sup>22</sup> Addington, L. H. *The Patterns of War Since the Eighteen Century*. Second ed. Bloomington, Indiana: University Press, 1994. 325.

<sup>23</sup> Kissinger, H. *World Order*. London: Penguin Random House, 2015. 370.



serve in that capacity.<sup>24</sup> The sad fact is that this is as true today as it was in the 90's and as it seems, until the US provides the bulk of just about everything, the nations are not urged to improve their own capabilities.<sup>25</sup> He states, that perhaps the most encouraging pattern that seems to be emerging from a geopolitical point of view in the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in the post-Cold War era, is a willingness of the great powers to seek accommodation with each other and even cooperate, at least occasionally, to repel international aggressions and promote the peaceful settlement of clashes among lesser states or factions.<sup>26</sup> And that we saw in Afghanistan and the Balkans, where peacekeepers tried to manage the conflicts, and in today's Syrian war, where this cooperation turned into competition and a secret war. Thus, we can agree that while the world continues to seek peaceful resolutions to the conditions that breed war, new patterns of war unfortunately continue to evolve.<sup>27</sup>

## EVOLUTION OF WARFIGHTING

The old saying, that history repeats itself is as true today as it was centuries ago. The problem is that any progress in war starts with unnecessary bloodshed and masses of casualties. The generals of the American civil war e.g. were and still are celebrated like rock stars, but no one mentions that there had been more lives lost in that conflict than in all of America's wars together. One reason for this is that the West Point graduates learnt and applied Napoleonic war tactics massing major attacks against modern weaponry. Thus, close formations marched and shot at each other with rifles that were more accurate at longer range than their predecessors half a century earlier. The same thinking caused the century's bloodiest battles of the Great War, when the foot soldiers charged in lines one after another against the deadliest weapons, trenched machine guns.

However, inventing and employing new tactics have always been prickly and taken time till being proven and approved. It should not surprise anyone either, that such revolutionary thinking was derived from pure survival instinct, and has always come from the soldiers on the field, not from the academy of high military science.

Besides, the new challenges usually meant that a new technology appeared on the battlefield that the soldiers were not ready for in any way, either mentally or technically. They had to improvise, adapt, and overcome<sup>28</sup>, which meant inventing and employing new procedures that also affected each other. As advanced fire capabilities had maneuvers changed, new technical improvements followed, new command and control measures were adapted, and so on. Thus, understanding the evolution, we must realize that the warfighting functions have always been there, only they have been continuously interacted with and progressed.

For centuries, these changes were state-owned, as nations, although intermingling with the others, kept their military's progress on a national basis. Building coalitions, however, brought interoperability in the foreground and countries had to make compromises, and balance between national interest of power (security, economic etc.) and national interest

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<sup>24</sup> Addington. *The Patterns of War Since the Eighteen Century*. 325.

<sup>25</sup> This attitude seems to be changing since the election of Donald Trump as US president, who urged NATO nations in the Brussels Summit 2018 to contribute more. However, real results might be able to be seen on the long run, not today.

<sup>26</sup> Addington. *The Patterns of War Since the Eighteen Century*. 325.

<sup>27</sup> Addington. *The Patterns of War Since the Eighteen Century*. 325.

<sup>28</sup> The unofficial mantra of the United States Marine Corps.

of survival. That meant and means sharing. When it comes to NATO, that collectiveness means sharing responsibility, sharing the burden of providing troops and sharing information. Having a look at the warfighting functions<sup>29</sup> we must realize however, that this distribution of will seems to have some discrepancies in practice.

First, we must understand the battlespace, as it is key to success in war. The operational environment keeps changing as its dimensions are rapidly widening, growing. The modern era's battlefield's most impressive dimension is information that influences all functions.

While the elements of command and control (C2) have always been there on the battlefield, one component of all, information flow evolved at light-speed, so fast that we call it real time information regardless the distance. Having information before the enemy is key to success, so this new dimension of the modern battlefield, Cyberspace has become strategically indispensable.<sup>30</sup> In today's conflicts commanders are not only obliged to but also obsessed with computer driven tools and procedures. They are used to giving orders by Microsoft Office Power Point Presentations (MS PPT) via Video Telephone Conference (VTC); utilizing the network for collecting Reports and Returns (R2), building databases for the Common Operational Picture (COP); and controlling complex weapon systems. This Network Centric Warfare (NCW), however demands qualified people rather than athletes, which drives us to change our standards of soldiering as soon as possible. As America's elite corps' commander general Neller<sup>31</sup> during his speech at U.S. Naval Institute acknowledged, that it will take more than riflemen to win future wars. Growing the Marine Corps should not focus on adding infantry troops but instead on building up those high-tech capabilities to support those traditional Marines who are trained to fight at the tip of the spear<sup>32</sup>.

Within NATO Command Structure (NCS) C2 is and will always be a major challenge to overcome, as building, maintaining and expanding an up-to-date secure system costs a lot of time and resources. Within the Force Structure (NFS) and NATO led operations this problem is becoming more difficult, when nations using their own systems cannot or do not want to connect to the existing central command system or to each other<sup>33</sup>. When NATO-led troops deploy to mission, their interoperability is, even if it is a decisive condition, still a standing issue to deal with.

The digitized battlefield brings us another challenge to overcome that we need shifting paradigm for. As computers took over control of every system that needs global network communication, the scale of users also increased, and external, or non-military actors are gaining access to it causing damage deliberately or accidentally. In this new era of information, when the non-kinetic actions have as much – if not more – effect as kinetic ones do on the battlefield and/or in the country, the entity of combatant, or non-combatant could also be questioned self-reliantly of status of war or peace. As a result of the recognized cyber threat NATO used countermeasures and also founded a Cyber Center of Excellence (CoE)

<sup>29</sup> “Command and control, intelligence, maneuver and fires, force protection, information operations (Info Ops), sustainability, and civil-military cooperation (CIMIC)”. “Allied Joint Doctrine for the conduct of operations: AJP 03(B)”. NATO. March 2011. 1–11.

<sup>30</sup> Kissinger. *World Order*. 346.

<sup>31</sup> General Robert B. Neller is the 37<sup>th</sup> Commandant of the United States Marine Corps.

<sup>32</sup> Schogol, J. “Every Marine a rifleman no more?”. *Marine Corps Times*, 7 May 2017. <https://www.marinecorpstimes.com/articles/future-of-the-marine-corps>, Accessed on 16 May 2017.

<sup>33</sup> In NATO ISAF mission the Hungarian PRT requested US Blue Force Trackers in support of US troops operating in the PRT Area of Responsibility. Denying the request resulted extra time and difficulties when US troops tried to ask for assistance on other channels.



in Estonia. However, all steps NATO has done are defensive, and member nations have a different view of developing and employing offensive capabilities. So, while accusing the Russian Federation of active information operations, our counter-actions are exhausted in defensive measures.

Regarding intelligence, it is our common consideration that accessing, absorbing, understanding and using data faster than the adversary would make our decision cycle more effective, even decisive. In this world of information however, advanced technology provides us more, or let us say an overwhelming amount of data, that are either not relevant, false or contain malicious information that must be filtered, cleaned, and tailored to serve the need. Thus, the systems in service of intel community are different and dependent of the national, international organizations, who use (own) them. Because of the different interests, the systems are also different, and for their own protection cannot communicate with each other. If they do, sharing information is also an issue as nations do not share national intelligence with each other.

The consequence then is obvious. Intel collection in NATO is always subject to the nation's ability and willingness to share. Thus, for example finding, identifying and destroying hostile targets is a challenge for the system, including means and procedures from targeting to fires.

Although massive fire support capabilities, or fire power are still present on the battlefield, precise weaponry takes over as mankind is becoming more "humanistic" in war. These long-range missiles do ensure that their employers are able to destroy their target from a relatively safe location. Relatively, because their safety rests on also the enemy's capability to find and destroy them. The simple reason is that automated fire systems rely on high tech, and that could be also their vulnerability, and that leads us back to the command and control, or C4I2SR<sup>34</sup> systems with the lack of interoperability. In order to provide Joint Fire Support to the troops the structure needs fire assets, reconnaissance and C2 system, ammunition supply etc. In NATO however, different nations have different approach to identify their own requirements and some have built their capabilities on the hope of being supported by other partners of the Alliance occasionally. Some degraded their own amount of fire assets to light batteries of mortars and towed howitzers, have got rid of radars and/or reckon units risking that rebuilding these lost capabilities will cost more money and time than maintaining the existing ones. The problem is that these pieces of art hardly connect to each other without the required elements, and even NATO troops have a large number of assets not working as a system.

Also, when it comes to it, that becomes another question whether our traditional understanding of maneuver is still applicable or should be revised a bit. Although, there are still Army Corps, divisions, and brigades threatening each other, what we see today is that these intimidations are staying behind national borders fixing the adversary and the real war is going on at other levels and in different dimensions. Thus, when Russian troops without insignia and any identification of origin walked on the streets of Sebastopol, they took the key terrain without resistance, like Turkish janissaries took Buda in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

By traditional understanding maneuver is when we achieve success by positioning our forces, or implementing our fires, or both, in a way that supports the highest effectiveness. Thus, by destroying its forces or threatening them with it, we do defeat the enemy. Therefore, using any means to make the enemy give up on the cheapest way is a maneuver. That means

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<sup>34</sup> Command, Control, Communication, Computer, Intelligence and Information, Surveillance and Reconnaissance

what Russia did in Crimea was a well-prepared and decisive maneuver whether we like it or not. That also means that not only must NATO prepare for understanding the nature of this kind of maneuverist approach, but also be ready to utilize it. To defend against it, or employ it.

Recently NATO does not have a common understanding<sup>35</sup> of “Hybrid” war and it is still working on the comprehensive approach. Thus, we are still to stick to the good old way of massing troops forward, and relying on Strategic Communication, like a magic tool.

Moreover, another challenge is that NATO territory in collective defense has a wide area of different terrains with different weather features, including extreme conditions, we must also realize that maneuvering in the area also demands a wide spectrum of equipment applicable for given possibilities. Meaning, that when countries develop their defense systems, including all warfighting tools, their priority should be the adaptation for local and regional environment, rather than expeditionary. That, however trials the collectiveness, forasmuch as the forces to be sent to defend in different weather and terrain conditions they are set for need additional if not extraordinary preparations to be able to make their movement. Thus, maneuvering troops in a larger than tactical arena is a serious restraint for the nations.

Another challenge NATO must face is that downsizing forces meant losing capabilities. So, as river crossing used to be a priority in the past, today NATO has a very limited capability for that and has become more dependent of the static (national) infrastructure. On the other hand, laying mines is seriously restricted by the Ottawa-agreement, thus many NATO countries plant their mines against armor only if they have any in store. Engineers, the former pride of the Warsaw Pact, have become only shadow of their predecessors, and NATO combat support of mobility and counter-mobility capabilities also have serious limitations today.

The recent Peace Support Operations in Iraq and Afghanistan have had a thoughtful effect on the nations and troops involved. The nations did not tolerate the losses of lives due to roadside attacks by Improvised Explosive Devices (IED), or ambushes by small arms fire so they demanded an increased level of protection for their soldiers. However, the new and better-protected equipment became heavier too. That means that these vehicles cannot move on as many types of roads as they used to earlier, and it also means that the soldiers they carry are becoming so addicted to their well-protected vehicle, that they will not want to get out of it anymore. The heavier the equipment becomes the more on sustainment it relies. This also goes for all electronic devices, gizmos, but most importantly for the soldier. He/she needs ammunition, water and food supplies, medical treatment etc. That highly affects – again – our mobility and maneuver capabilities. When in another country, all supplies are to be transported or provided by sea and air transportation or local, contracted suppliers, and none of them for free. Finally, we got back to the original problem of defense, its funding.

So, the Alliance suffered both the end of Cold War and the fast expansion. The early happiness of the coming “World Peace” and getting rid of military equipment left no choice but accepting new members without meeting the requirements.

In a nutshell, we can see that developing all areas of the combat functions are not only interdependable, but we also need a new mindset to utilize them. Sticking to the “national approach” and “not-sharing” assist the adversaries, ready to exploit and overcome.

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<sup>35</sup> There is no existing NATO doctrine, or STANAG regarding Hybrid warfare.

## CONCLUSION

We all live in a complex world, which is still shaking because of the sudden imbalance of the Post-Cold War era. Believing that the collapse of the Soviet empire brings everlasting peace to the globe was quite a utopistic dream. Today we see Russia regaining its strength, China going from regional to global actor, the EU struggling with internal power plays, and the US fighting for world dominance with more agility than ever. Global conflicts are fought comprehensively in every domain, often using and affecting the lesser states violently. As Kissinger concludes if the major powers come to practice foreign policies of manipulating a multiplicity of sub-sovereign units observing ambiguous and often violent rules of conduct, many based on extreme articulations of divergent cultural experiences, anarchy is certain.<sup>36</sup>

Our Trans-Atlantic Alliance is also suffering from the consequences of this chaotic world and continuously adapts its strategy to the everchanging environment stating that NATO's fundamental and enduring purpose is to safeguard the freedom and security of all members by political and military means.<sup>37</sup> We tend to understand NATO as a primary military organization, with capabilities and tasks to fight. However, we should face the fact, that as NATO is a political alliance, its primary means are always political. Nevertheless, supporting political will and achieving strategic/global objectives military power is still a must have. Thus, the Alliance Strategic Concept describes the overarching strategy for NATO via three core tasks: collective defense, crisis management, and cooperative security. None of these can be conducted without military means.

To achieve the overall purpose dictated by strategy in 2017 SACEUR has identified priorities, such as: Ready and posture forces; Strengthen the Alliance and partners; Adapt to the strategic environment; Resilient service members.<sup>38</sup>

In short, NATO needs to be a real political and military power capable of defeating the enemy – whoever it might be – and having this capability ready to use is the reality of deterrence.

By defeat I mean to win. For that the military power of the enemy must be destroyed, that is reduced to such a state that prevents them from continuing to wage the war. The country must be conquered or a new military force may be formed out of the country. The will of the enemy is to be subdued, that is its government and its allies must be forced into signing a peace, or force the people into submission.<sup>39</sup> To have competence for this, NATO needs changes. One is real commitment and contribution, instead of long term promises from the member states. Second is a paradigm shift in understanding and fighting a war. Third, standing, capable, and deployable forces without restriction to have reliability. The only problem with this utopistic thinking is that nations show no real commitment at all, they are just waiting for others to make it for them.

Therefore, the real quality at stake here is credibility. In this case credibility means the capability of winning, which I see currently missing. Thus, the ever-changing NATO, the recent ruler of the world follows fashion as its member states dictate, tailoring budget, organization, and forces to the end. The only result of this could be the risk that our (NATO's) recent and future potential adversaries will once realize that the emperor has no clothes.

<sup>36</sup> Kissinger. *World Order*. 368.

<sup>37</sup> The Alliance Strategic Concept.

<sup>38</sup> Kreutner, T. "Building Strategy for Alliance Land-Power". *Land Power Magazine* 3/1. 2017. 26.

<sup>39</sup> Clausewitz. *On War*. 5–6.

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