

**OD WASHINGTONU PO LISABON: NOVÁ STRATEGICKÁ KONCEPCE NATO****FROM WASHINGTON TO LISBON: A NEW NATO STRATEGIC CONCEPT**

*Pavel NEČAS, Peter TEREM, Miroslav KELEMEN\**

**Abstrakt**

*Představení nové strategie bylo očekáváno na 60. výročním summitu NATO v Bukurešti, jelikož předchozí Strategická koncepce NATO byla schválena na oslavách 50. výročí NATO před 10 lety. Tento záměr znemožnila řada faktorů. Přes zájem, a to zejména členů, kteří do NATO vstoupili po konci studené války, na novém strategickém základu NATO, mnoho jiných členů vyjádřilo pochyby, protože nová strategie NATO by musela zvládnout oba problémy – specifikaci role Aliance a podporu její existence. Proto se musí jednat o hybridní dokument, který se soustředí na politické a vojenské rozhodování v NATO i na veřejnost v rámci Aliance i mimo ni. Musí poskytovat strategické vodítko a být základem pro budování veřejné podpory potřeb bezpečnostní politiky.*

**Abstract**

*The new strategy was supposed to be presented at NATO's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary summit in Bucharest, as the previous Strategic Concept was agreed upon when NATO celebrated its 50th birthday ten years before. A number of factors baffled this intention. Despite the interest, particularly among the NATO members, who joined the Alliance after the end of the cold war, in a new strategic foundation for NATO, many of some other members had their doubts, because the new NATO strategy would have to take on both problems; the specification of the role of the Alliance and the promotion of its existence. To do so, it has to be a hybrid document, addressing the political and military decision making level in NATO as well as the publics inside and outside the Alliance. It has to provide strategic guidance and should be the foundation on which to build public support for security policy needs.*

**Klíčová slova**

Strategická koncepce Aliance, rozvoj strategie, globální asymetrické prostředí, nově vznikající hrozby a výzvy, prohlášení o bezpečnosti aliance, Lisabonský summit.

**Keywords**

Alliance's Strategic Concept, Development of the Strategy, Global Asymmetric Environment, New Emerging Threats and Challenges, Declaration on Alliance Security, Lisbon Summit.

\*\*\*

**INTRODUCTION**

Strategic concepts in general should offer latitude with regard to foreseeable developments, but with sufficient precision to be useful to the officials responsible for policy implementation, and should reassure partners about the predictability of the adopted policy, yet contribute to the deterrence of aggression and coercion. In a rapidly changing world, however, no strategic concept offers the "final word" on the Alliance's purposes and plans. The Alliance's Strategic Concept

\* E-mail: pavel.necas@aos.sk, peter.terem@umb.sk, miroslav.kelemen@aos.sk

stands high in the hierarchy of NATO policy documents, second only to the North Atlantic Treaty as an expression of the Alliance's policy. It has furnished a broad framework for the full range of the Alliance's pursuits and it has been complemented by other documents, including summit statements and regular ministerial communiqués approved by the North Atlantic Council that build upon and update each strategic concept.

Historically, the Allies have not prepared strategic concepts frequently. They have done so only when convinced of the political and practical necessity of such a complex, sensitive, and cumbersome undertaking. The 1991 Strategic Concept was prepared in light of the end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact. Prior to 1991, the Allies had not prepared a strategic concept since 1967, when they approved MC 14/3, widely known as the military strategy of "flexible response."<sup>1</sup> In 1967 they also endorsed the Harmel Report, which set forth the Alliance's broad political strategy for relations with the Soviet Union and its Warsaw Pact allies.<sup>2</sup> MC 14/3 and the Harmel Report together, covering political as well as military strategy, dealt with approximately the same areas encompassed by the 1991 Strategic Concept. The fact that the Allies saw no compelling need to prepare a new strategic concept during the 24 years from 1967 to 1991 may be attributed not only to factors such as the stability of the East-West stalemate and the intrinsic latitude of the 1967 policy statements, but also to acute awareness of the political difficulties and risks involved in preparing such documents.

The multipurpose functions of strategic concepts since 1991 present a further deterrent to undertaking a revision lightly. Prior to 1991, the Alliance's strategic concepts were classified documents dealing with military strategy for deterrence and defense and corresponding force requirements. The Allies composed the 1991 and 1999 Strategic Concepts with this purpose in mind, but also with the objective of communicating the Alliance's political strategy to their own citizens and to non-allied governments and publics. As a result, since 1991 the Alliance's strategic concepts have been unclassified statements with many purposes, above all, offering a coherent framework for the Alliance's many activities, providing guidance for military policy, including operations and force development, promoting public understanding of the Alliance's policies and communicating the Alliance's intentions to potential adversaries as well as current and prospective partners.

### CONCEPT GENESIS AND PHILOSOPHY

Since 1991 the Alliance's security environment and activities substantially changed. The Allies have undertaken major non-Article 5 operations and have dramatically increased the scope of their outreach and cooperation with former adversaries and other countries in the Euro-Atlantic region. In the 1991 Strategic Concept the Allies acknowledged the risks of ethnic and territorial conflicts in central and Eastern Europe, but expressed little expectation of performing non-Article 5 missions, such as crisis management and peacekeeping. In fact, rather than anticipating the major operations of the 1990s, the Deliberate Force Operation air strikes in August-September 1995, followed by NATO-led Implementation Force (IFOR) and Stabilization Force (SFOR) deployments in Bosnia, and the Operation Allied Force air campaign in March-June 1999 and the subsequent Kosovo Force (KFOR) mission, the authors of the 1991 Strategic Concept focused on the Alliance's Article 5 task: collective defense against aggression affecting the Alliance's territory, rather than intervention beyond that territory. The language of the 1991 Strategic Concept suggests that, at that time, NATO did not envisage participating in any crisis management or peacekeeping operations as they came to be understood in subsequent years: "The Alliance is purely defensive in purpose: none of its weapons will ever be used except in self-defense. The role of the Alliance's military forces is to assure the territorial integrity and political independence of its member states, and thus contribute to peace and stability in Europe."<sup>3</sup>

Similarly, while the 1991 Strategic Concept envisaged dialogue and cooperation with non-NATO countries, it did not refer to the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC), which was

not founded until the following month. The NACC was designed to promote constructive interactions with former adversaries, initially defined as former members of the Warsaw Pact.<sup>4</sup> When the Soviet Union disintegrated in December 1991, the NACC was expanded to include all former Soviet republics. In January 1994, moreover, NATO established the Partnership for Peace (PfP), a program of cooperation open to all countries in the Euro-Atlantic region, defined as the territory of the members of what was then called the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE).<sup>5</sup> In other words, PfP was (and remains) open to countries in addition to those that were formerly part of the Warsaw Pact or the USSR. NATO has offered its PfP Partners a security consultations pledge with wording similar to that in Article 4 of the North Atlantic Treaty.<sup>6</sup> In the Mediterranean Dialogue, founded in 1994, the Allies have pursued bilateral exchanges of views with several North African and Middle Eastern nations. In May 1997 the Alliance founded the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council, which replaced the NACC and brought together the Allies and all PfP members. During the 1990s the Alliance also substantially deepened its interactions with Russia and Ukraine. It was accordingly appropriate that the Alliance first publicly announced its intention to examine the 1991 Strategic Concept with a view to updating it in the May 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Act.

One of the main features of the 1999 Strategic Concept remains its redefinition of the Alliance's fundamental security tasks. The Allies deleted the references in the 1991 Strategic Concept to maintaining "the strategic balance within Europe," which Moscow had found so offensively reminiscent of the Cold War.<sup>7</sup> Three missions remained essentially unchanged in the 1991 and 1999 Strategic Concepts: serving as a forum for consultation, providing for collective defense, and supplying "one of the indispensable foundations for a stable Euro-Atlantic security environment, based on the growth of democratic institutions and commitment to the peaceful resolution of disputes, in which no country would be able to intimidate or coerce any other through the threat or use of force."<sup>8</sup> To reflect the Alliance's principal new post 1991 activities, the 1999 Strategic Concept listed two additional fundamental security tasks: crisis management, including conflict prevention and crisis response operations; and partnership, including dialogue and cooperation, with other nations in the Euro-Atlantic region.<sup>9</sup>

The Allies finessed without resolving the most controversial issue at hand when they composed the 1999 Strategic Concept: the legitimacy of using force in non-Article 5 operations (that is, for purposes other than self-defense) without an explicit mandate from the UN Security Council. "NATO recalls its offer, made in Brussels in 1994, to support on a case-by-case basis in accordance with its own procedures, peacekeeping and other operations under the authority of the UN Security Council or the responsibility of the OSCE, including by making available Alliance resources and expertise. In this context NATO recalls its subsequent decisions with respect to crisis response operations in the Balkans."<sup>10</sup> In the latter sentence the Allies acknowledged obliquely that they had used force in the Kosovo conflict without an explicit authorization from the UN Security Council. While all Allies held that Operation Allied Force was justified on grounds of humanitarian necessity, some Allies also based their policy on interpretations of relevant UN Security Council resolutions, including Resolution 1199 of 23 September 1998, although no UNSC resolution explicitly authorized the Alliance's use of force in the Kosovo conflict. The Allies agreed that they had an "appropriate" or "sufficient legal base in international law" for their use of force, but they did not agree on its specific content. The Allies were therefore not able to make a common declaration about the official legal basis for their use of force. Each Ally was responsible for formulating its own national justification, and some Allies chose to make reference both to humanitarian necessity and the UN Security Council resolutions.<sup>11</sup> Several Allies declared that NATO's use of force in the Kosovo conflict was an exceptional case that should not be regarded as a precedent, but no such statement was included in the 1999 Strategic Concept.

The 1999 Strategic Concept also differed from its predecessor in devoting more attention to efforts to promote nonproliferation and to deter and counter the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), and this extended to defining the preferred characteristics of Allied

conventional forces. "As NATO forces may be called upon to operate beyond NATO's borders, capabilities for dealing with proliferation risks must be flexible, mobile, rapidly deployable and sustainable."<sup>12</sup> The discussion of nuclear forces nonetheless remained almost unchanged in the 1991 and 1999 Strategic Concepts. The most noteworthy revisions included the judgment in 1999 by the Allies concerned that "The circumstances in which any use of nuclear weapons might have to be contemplated by them are extremely remote", and their announcement that "NATO's nuclear forces no longer target any country."<sup>13</sup> At the same time, the Allies tacitly endorsed a role for nuclear forces in deterring WMD proliferants, if one assumes that official references to "forces" encompass these capabilities. According to the 1999 Strategic Concept, "The Alliance's forces contribute to the preservation of peace, to the safeguarding of common security interests of Alliance members, and to the maintenance of the security and stability of the Euro-Atlantic area. By deterring the use of NBC weapons, they contribute to Alliance efforts aimed at preventing the proliferation of these weapons and their delivery means."<sup>14</sup>

### **NEW STRATEGIC CONCEPT: SUPERFLUOUS?**

The terrorist attacks against the United States on 11 September 2001 led to the first invocation of Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty in history. The Allies promptly took a number of measures, some of which have continued to this day, such as Operation Allied Endeavor, the maritime security effort in the Mediterranean. If the 1999 Strategic Concept were to be re-written today, it would accord much more attention to terrorist threats than seemed necessary in 1998-1999. However, the 1999 Strategic Concept calls for protecting "the Alliance's forces and infrastructure against terrorist attacks," and notes that "non-state adversaries may try to exploit the Alliance's growing reliance on information systems through information operations designed to disrupt such systems."<sup>15</sup> It even highlights the dangerous prospect of links between terrorists and WMD proliferation: "Commodities and technology that could be used to build these weapons of mass destruction and their delivery means are becoming more common, while detection and prevention of illicit trade in these materials and know-how continues to be difficult. Non-state actors have shown the potential to create and use some of these weapons."<sup>16</sup>

The North Atlantic Treaty and the 1999 Strategic Concept have thus provided points of departure for the Alliance's actions in response to terrorist threats. The Allies have, for example, built upon these documents to formulate a path-breaking and multi-faceted Military Concept for Defense Against Terrorism.<sup>17</sup> In other words, despite the sketchy perfunctory treatment of terrorism in the 1999 Strategic Concept, the Allies have been able to move forward on a number of fronts in the campaign against terrorism. Moreover, with regard to proliferation, the 1999 Strategic Concept referred to the need to improve the Alliance's defense posture against WMD delivery means, "including through work on missile defenses."<sup>18</sup> In November 2002, at the Prague Summit the Allies went beyond Theater Ballistic Missile Defense for the protection of deployed forces when they decided "to examine options for protecting Alliance territory, forces and population centers against the full range of missile threats."<sup>19</sup>

The 1999 Strategic Concept says less about possible activities beyond the Euro-Atlantic region than would be said in a new concept, but it is nonetheless remarkably explicit about such options. It notes that the achievement of one of the Alliance's longstanding aims "a just and lasting peaceful order in Europe", "can be put at risk by crisis and conflict affecting the security of the Euro-Atlantic area."<sup>20</sup> For this reason, the Alliance expressed "determination to shape its security environment and enhance the peace and stability of the Euro-Atlantic area."<sup>21</sup> Indeed, in addition to hedging against the risk of armed attack on Allies, "Alliance security must also take account of the global context. Alliance security interests can be affected by other risks of a wider nature, including acts of terrorism, sabotage and organized crime, and by the disruption of the flow of vital resources."<sup>22</sup> Such principles have provided an adequate basis for the Alliance to provide support and leadership for the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Kabul and other activities

in Afghanistan, as well as training for Iraqi security forces (NTM-I). The principles are general enough to provide scope for further activities outside the Euro-Atlantic area, should the Allies choose to undertake them. Only the strict pursuit of an enhanced Mediterranean Dialogue and the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative, launched by the Allies in 2004, may eventually create grounds for recasting part of the 1999 Strategic Concept into the new one.

The Alliance's continuing enlargement process presents no grounds for revising the 1999 Strategic Concept. This process remains governed by the Alliance's September 1995 document *Study on NATO Enlargement*. In adopting the 1999 Strategic Concept at the Washington Summit, the Allies also established the Membership Action Plan (MAP) as a systematic method of supplying "advice, assistance and practical support" to candidates for membership.<sup>23</sup> The 1999 Strategic Concept affirms that "no European democratic country whose admission would fulfill the objectives of the Treaty will be excluded from consideration,"<sup>24</sup> and it is not clear what a new Strategic Concept will add to the agreed principles and the MAP.

When the Allies put the current Strategic Concept into final form in April 1999, the European Union's formulation of its European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) was at an early stage. Britain and France had called for an ESDP at their December 1998 Saint-Malo summit, but certain basic principles and modalities, notably regarding the Western European Union's future, did not receive formal approval until the June 1999 European Council in Cologne. It is for this reason that the 1999 Strategic Concept still refers to the obsolete notion of a European Security and Defense Identity (ESDI) "to be developed within NATO" and to "close cooperation between NATO, the WEU and, if and when appropriate, the European Union."<sup>25</sup> However, in the April 1999 Washington Summit Communiqué the Allies simultaneously approved fundamental guidelines for the development of effective NATO-EU cooperation. These guidelines, including "assured EU access to NATO planning capabilities able to contribute to military planning for EU-led operations" and "the presumption of availability to the EU of pre-identified NATO capabilities and common assets for use in EU-led operations,"<sup>26</sup> have been incorporated into the EU-NATO Berlin Plus agreements. In other words, despite its outdated references to ESDI and the WEU, the 1999 Strategic Concept has not constituted an impediment to the development of NATO-EU cooperation in support of the EU's ESDP, including NATO support for the EU peacekeeping operation (ALTHEA) in Bosnia that replaced SFOR in December 2004.

In *Pratica di Mare*, close to Rome, the Allies and the Russian Federation agreed in May 2002 to replace their Permanent Joint Council with a NATO-Russia Council based on new decision-making principles, (in the new decision-making mechanism, the NATO Secretary General chairs the NATO-Russia Council replacing the "troika" chair of the previous Permanent Joint Council and members act in their national capacities, with no pre-coordination of NATO positions), but the basic document governing the relationship remains the May 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Act. As noted in the May 2002 document establishing a "new quality" in the relationship and outlining the new decision-making mechanism, the NATO-Russia Council "will focus on all areas of mutual interest identified in Section III of the Founding Act, including the provision to add other areas by mutual agreement."<sup>27</sup> The list of areas for consultation and cooperation in the "new quality" declaration is for the most part a selection from the more extensive list in the Founding Act. Indeed, the only areas listed in the "new quality" document that are not in Section III of the Founding Act are "search and rescue at sea" and the vaguely worded "new threats and challenges" paragraph; and the part of the latter paragraph dealing with "civil and military airspace controls" is covered in Section III of the Founding Act. In short, the Founding Act remains the bedrock declaration of political intent defining NATO-Russia relations.

It is not also clear what a new Strategic Concept will add regarding Russia, unless a dramatic deterioration in NATO-Russia relations is suspected, something which is not realistically foreseeable at present. Even in this regard, however, the 1999 Strategic Concept contains subtle references to such a contingency, notably in its observation that "The existence of powerful nuclear

forces outside the Alliance constitutes a significant factor which the Alliance has to take into account if security and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area are to be maintained.”<sup>28</sup>

### **NEW STRATEGIC CONCEPT: ILL-TIMED?**

As a hidden agenda in the background of the political scene, some NATO allied governments generally regard the preparation of a new strategic concept as inopportune and counterproductive at present, largely because of the sensitivity of several issues in the post-Iraq War context. Launching a new strategic concept review could re-open wounds and revive the intense controversies of 2002-2003. This would be contrary to the reconciliation in trans-Atlantic relations that Allied governments would prefer to pursue. The divisive issues include how to assess and deal with threats and risks, including those involving terrorism and WMD proliferation, and whether and to what extent NATO governments should intervene to change regimes and promote democratization.

These issues are sensitive because they could reignite the disputes preceding the Iraq war. While Allies that argued that the threat of Saddam Hussein’s government developing WMD was effectively contained by the inspections and sanctions, they have little interest in revisiting the pre-war debate and thereby complicating reconciliation with London and Washington. The issues raised in that debate remain relevant including the legitimacy and prudence of strategies of preemption and preventive war. With respect to Iran, for example, it has long been apparent that major Allied governments agree that Tehran should be persuaded not to acquire nuclear enrichment facilities that would enable it to produce fissile materials and nuclear weapons. European governments have favored negotiations, reassurance, and positive inducements, while the United States has not excluded taking the question to the UN Security Council or use of force (particularly during the Bush administration). However, European and US officials appear to be closer to reaching a consensus on how to deal with the Iranian nuclear challenge.

How to justify and legitimize the threat or use of force has remained sensitive since the Kosovo conflict. Non-Article 5 contingencies involving the threat or use of force are inherently more controversial than collective defense, because no Ally has been directly attacked. As a result, Allies have to decide whether specific conflicts truly constitute threats to their values and interests that would justify the risks and responsibilities of intervention and whether particular emerging dangers of terrorist attacks and WMD proliferation call for preventive or preemptive action. The latter dangers are evidently situated closer to the Article 5 pole of the spectrum, but it is politically more difficult for democracies to initiate military action than to respond to attacks. A number of Allied observers are consequently wary of renewing discussion of these fundamental principles, particularly at present; and they doubt if it would be constructive to seek greater precision than may be found in the vague formulas of the 1999 Strategic Concept concerning the legitimacy of resorting to force.

Given the continued commitment of the United States to the principles articulated in the 2006 National Security Strategy, such as preemption, some Allied observers are concerned that initiating a new strategic concept review will offer Washington an opportunity to shape and drive NATO policy in directions they do not favor. In effect, a new strategic concept review might force them to choose between actively resisting US policy prescriptions regarding strategy, operations distant from Europe and political order in the broader Middle East and beyond or grudgingly accepting abstract principles they regard as potentially dangerous grounds for future disagreements about how to handle actual cases. The argument of political inopportune can always be raised, because discord among the Allies has been almost constant since the Alliance’s formation. If one waited for a time of relative harmony to undertake the process of revising the strategic concept, it might never get done. Moreover, even if the intra-Alliance political circumstances appeared propitious at the outset of the process, they might soon be thrust into turbulence by unexpected rifts.

A stronger argument for the inopportuneness of a new strategic concept review resides in the fact that the Allies already have a full and ambitious agenda. If the 1999 Strategic Concept is in fact quite adequate for all currently foreseeable purposes, launching a new review would be a distracting diversion of political and bureaucratic capital better applied elsewhere. The more urgent tasks on the Alliance's agenda may include narrowing the investment and capabilities gaps among the Allies; improving the usability, interoperability, deployability and sustainability of Allied forces; conducting the missions in Afghanistan, the Balkans, and Iraq; and pursuing outreach programs, notably with Russia and Ukraine and in the Mediterranean Dialogue and the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative.

The Allies have already proven their capacity to build on the 1999 Strategic Concept and to adapt it to new circumstances and requirements. At the Istanbul Summit, heads of state and government directed the North Atlantic Council produced Comprehensive Political Guidance (CPG) in support of the Strategic Concept for all Alliance capabilities issues, planning disciplines and intelligence, responsive to the Alliance's requirements.<sup>29</sup> The "opening of Pandora's Box" concern, which came up during the 1990-1991 and the 1998-1999 strategic concept reviews, has genuine validity. It should not be over-stated, however. Precisely because Alliance decision-making remains based on the consensus principle, governments will be able to block impulsive and reckless departures. Indeed, extremes of caution and vagueness constitute greater risks than impetuous and excessive adventurousness.

### **WANTED: COMPENSATION FOR FLAWS**

Having recovered from one of the most severe transatlantic crises in history, NATO has been drifting into calmer waters. The current absence of a major Euro-Atlantic disagreement needs to be used for intense reflection on NATO's strategic and conceptual foundations. Transatlantic reconciliation notwithstanding, NATO is plagued by two closely intertwined difficulties. The first problem is that some European members of NATO in particular are less and less committed to the Alliance. For instance, promised force improvements in Afghanistan often remain a dead letter. As a result, NATO's SACEUR or Secretary General has to waste endless time to literally go begging for a few helicopters here or a few police units there. For many, some members of NATO seems to be "nice to have", but they do not appear to regard the alliance as the core of their security policy. What is worse, hardly anyone in NATO cares that they don't care, a classic circle of silence.

As a consequence, there is the second problem that NATO has lost its function as the primary forum for achieving political consensus on security questions. Slowly but steadily, NATO is improving its military capabilities. At the same time, there is less and less consensus on how and for what purposes these forces will be used. Does NATO have to tackle drug trafficking in Afghanistan or will NATO need to be more engaged militarily in Iraq or what about the security challenges beyond the classic NATO agenda (North Korea, Iran) and finally, what is NATO's view on the final political status of the Balkans? Regrettably, in the last three years there has not been a single NATO meeting at ambassadorial level dealing with Iran. Instead, Brussels is overburdened with day to day operations. How can an alliance which is hailed as the linchpin of Western security dare to ignore crucial issues like Iran?

Some have suggested a new Harmel Committee to develop suggestions on how to overcome these problems. Nevertheless the suggestion misses a crucial point. It is not so much the advice of experts that is needed, but action by the member states. There are NATO members actively blocking, for example, coordination between NATO and the EU because they want to block these developments and refuse to consult other partners effectively. Some of these countries are not likely to change their minds simply because politicians or committees say so – we may find many example cases from the NAC/PSC or other relevant subordinate Committees' daily routine meetings, being held in Brussels.

## **GLOBAL, COMPLEX AND CHALLENGING ERA**

Over the last two decades NATO has adopted a number of tasks which were not foreseen in its initial design as a means for Western self determination and self defense against the Soviet threat. The fact that NATO has evolved from a Eurocentric defense alliance to a global security provider has blurred the lines between the various requirements of security, deterrence, defense or stability. In consequence, there is an urgent need to define NATO's role in the international security environment.

Although NATO is currently more active than ever before in its history, the positive attention it receives remains comparably low. The engagement of most publics in member nations in security policy requirements is traditionally limited, and thus it is still difficult to gather political support for providing sufficient resources for military operations. Many governments take the lack of interest of their electorates in defense issues for granted and refrain from any attempt to counter this trend. The consequences can be seen with regard to NATO's engagement in Afghanistan: fewer national governments make an effort to explain to their electorate the need for NATO to act far beyond its territorial borders.

## **THE DIFFICULTIES ENVISAGED**

The new NATO strategy will have to take on both problems; the specification of the role of the Alliance and the promotion of its existence. To do so, it has to be a hybrid document, addressing the political and military decision making level in NATO as well as the publics inside and outside the Alliance. It has to provide strategic guidance and should be the foundation on which to build public support for security policy needs.

Why does a new strategic concept appear to be a feasible option and what steps should be done? Some may argue that NATO already has a viable strategy. Indeed, NATO already has a Strategic Concept, but this document was agreed upon in 1999, in the midst of the Kosovo war. That was before NATO took on a new type of peace enforcement in the Balkans, before September 11<sup>th</sup>, that altered threat perceptions and the political priorities of the entire Western world, before NATO assumed a crucial role in Afghanistan, before the Iraq war led to a fundamental discussion on the role of "preemptive" defense and before NATO took in seven new members, a major increase which has led to severe problems of assimilation.

The problem is that none of these crucial security and defense related strategic developments are mirrored in NATO's present strategy. Furthermore, the United States and the European Union have come up with new post September 11<sup>th</sup> strategic documents which make the need for NATO's strategic adaptation even more pressing. Instead, NATO has only been able to agree on certain summit declarations, or individual documents such as the "Strategic Vision" paper released by SACT and SACEUR, but not on a cohesive new strategy. The reason is as simple as it is disastrous: it appears to be too cumbersome and too time consuming to work on a common wording. Moreover, there are concerns that a strategic debate could reveal just how deep the frictions in NATO really are, and could therefore lead to further transatlantic estrangement. However, NATO cannot escape the process of strategic adaptation, since shaky strategic foundations are an impediment to successful common action.

Is a new strategic concept a panacea for all difficulties? Of course not, but even an agonizing strategic debate with dissenting views and "agreements to disagree" would have at least two crucial advantages; a/ all NATO members would be forced to clarify and precisely express their own positions. Such transparency would increase the general pressure to adapt the individual engagement to commonly agreed positions. Free riding would become much more difficult; b/ by definition, NATO would become the center of the transatlantic security dialogue again. Furthermore, popular misperceptions of Europeans humbly accepting US orders would be countered.

Assuming that NATO agrees on such a strategic debate, what would its content be? What are the points to be tackled in a new strategic concept? Two fundamental insights, often disguised by political rhetoric, need to be taken into account. First, the incontestable dominance of the United States not only in military but also in economic and political terms is going to persist for many years to come. This American "hyperpower" is not per se "good" or "bad", but it has to be taken into account, whether one likes it or not. This has two vital implications, any future direction of NATO will be determined crucially by the national preferences of the United States and "multipolarity" in the sense of counterbalancing American supremacy is not going to happen any time soon, even if the call for a multipolar world is constantly repeated in Paris, Beijing or Moscow. Moreover, it is far from sure whether such a multipolar world with America, Europe, Russia, China, India and other potential "poles" would be a more stable one. Second, the buildup of a true European Security and Defense Policy will take longer than expected, since the EU member states are not prepared to bolster their ambitious political goals with adequate financial means. This has positive as well as negative implications. Positive, since the idea of ESDP being a counterweight to the perceived American hyperpower will remain an illusion. Negative, because the beneficial concept of ESDP providing synergetic means to complement American military capabilities will take longer to realize as well.

Given these fundamental factors, a new Strategic Concept will have to address the following questions as:

- Will it be possible to harmonize the different threat perceptions on both sides of the Atlantic? Apparently agreement has to be found between American hype on terrorism and European nonchalance with regard to pressing risks.
- Are stabilization and reconstruction operations a future priority of NATO, and if so, what are the political and military implications? Will NATO need not only a NATO Response Force (NRF) for the fighting business but also a NATO Stabilization Force? This would pose fundamentally new questions with regard to military requirements, training and operations.
- Will NATO become a "transatlantic clearinghouse" to discuss key security problems and then decide what coalition of the willing is going to cope with the problem? If so, how will this affect the character of NATO and its level of integration?
- Beyond nebulous summit declarations, what will NATO's role in the broader Middle East be? To what extent can the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative help the Alliance to become a factor of stabilization and democratization?
- Will further enlargement of NATO focus only on European states or will NATO also expand its membership to Israel or even to a democratic Iraq? What consequences will this have for the Washington Treaty?
- A not so remote issue: what will the future role of nuclear forces be? Can NATO still justify the presence of American nuclear weapons on European soil? Simple statements of "last resort" will not do the trick any more.
- How will NATO cope with the question of an anticipatory use of military force, i.e., pre-emption?<sup>30</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The Secretary General is in charge to finalize the new Strategic Concept. The last paragraph of the DAS contains carefully negotiated wording on how the new Strategic Concept will be drafted. While previous NATO core documents were drafted by the NATO Council, this time the NATO Secretary General is responsible for the process. According to the DAS, he will develop the

strategy based on the Wise Men's suggestions and will keep the NATO Council "involved throughout the process". The deadline for the final document is cryptically formulated. It appears to be the next NATO summit in autumn 2010 in Lisbon. Apparently, in order to have some flexibility in case an agreement on the wording of the document cannot be reached, the DAS requires the Secretary General "to submit proposals for its implementation" by the time of the summit in Portugal.

The sore process of forging consensus on key strategic positions cannot be avoided. Even if NATO concludes some of the issues only at the lowest common denominator, it is the process, as much as the result that will count. A true strategic debate on the Alliance's role has been woefully lacking in NATO over the last ten years. Entering into such a debate will require each member state to clearly define its own positions and priorities and make them transparent. Speaking about approval by all member states, much will depend on the question of whether the new strategy will be an overhauled version of the 1999 Strategic Concept, or whether an at least partly new document will be written. So far, views in NATO on this question differ significantly. Some tend towards a "blank sheet approach" which takes a fresh look at future challenges and roles for the Alliance. The result would be a concise strategic guidance, much shorter than the 1999 strategy and tailored to NATO's missions in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Others opt for carefully polishing the existing Strategic Concept and just adapting those parts which have been overtaken by events, to keep the contested issues as limited as possible. Some of NATO's key members still seem to be undecided. On the one hand, they even publicly opt for a careful approach of simply polishing the existing strategy; on the other hand they constantly emphasize that NATO needs a "new" Strategic Concept.

The process leading to a new NATO strategy is in its initial stage. It remains to be seen whether the procedures currently envisioned can sustain the complex grid of NATO's decision making processes. A serious and thorough strategic discussion, despite all the dangers of displaying frictions and disunity, can already have a re-committing and re-engaging effect. In the wake of the fundamental changes in the international security landscape throughout the last decade, the expectations of a new Strategic Concept are very high. Given the wide spectrum of national preferences, regional priorities and political differences among 28 NATO member states, forging consensus will be an extremely demanding task. But NATO should not miss its goal of formulating a concise, coherent and forward looking strategic guidance that can satisfy political leaders, military planners and public elites at the same time.

## NOTES

---

<sup>1</sup> MC 14/3, *Overall Strategic Concept for the Defense of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Area*, approved by the Defence Planning Committee in Ministerial Session on 12 December 1967, is available in Gregory W. Pedlow, ed., *NATO Strategy Documents 1949-1969* (Brussels: NATO Information Service, 1997), pp. 345-370.

<sup>2</sup> The Harmel Report, named after Pierre Harmel, then the Belgian Foreign Minister, is available under its formal title, *The Future Tasks of the Alliance*, Report of the Council, Annex to the Final Communiqué of the Ministerial Meeting, December 13-14, 1967, in *Texts of Final Communiqués, 1949-1974* (Brussels: NATO Information Service, 1975), pp. 198-202.

<sup>3</sup> North Atlantic Council, Strategic Concept, 7 November 1991, paragraph 36.

<sup>4</sup> See Ronald D. Asmus, *Shattered Confidence in Europe*, The Washington Post, September 9, 2009.

<sup>5</sup> The CSCE became the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in December 1994.

<sup>6</sup> The North Atlantic Council declared in January 1994: *NATO will consult with any active participant in the Partnership if that Partner perceives a direct threat to its territorial integrity, political independence, or security*" Partnership for Peace Framework Document, approved by the North Atlantic Council, 11 January 1994, par. 8.

<sup>7</sup> North Atlantic Council, Strategic Concept, 7 November 1991, paragraphs 14, 21.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, paragraph 10.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*, paragraph 10.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, paragraph 31.

<sup>11</sup> LEURDIJK, Dick A. *NATO as a Subcontractor to the United Nations: The Cases of Bosnia and Kosovo*, pp. 130-132, 135-137.

<sup>12</sup> North Atlantic Council, Strategic Concept, 24 April 1999, paragraph 56.

<sup>13</sup> North Atlantic Council, Strategic Concept, 24 April 1999, paragraph 64.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, paragraph 41.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, paragraphs 53 and 23.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, paragraph 22.

<sup>17</sup> NATO's Military Concept for Defense Against Terrorism [online]. *International Military Staff*, October 2003, available at <[www.nato.int/ims/docu/terrorism.htm](http://www.nato.int/ims/docu/terrorism.htm)>.

<sup>18</sup> North Atlantic Council, Strategic Concept, 24 April 1999, paragraph 56.

<sup>19</sup> North Atlantic Council, Prague Summit Declaration, 21 November 2002, paragraph 4g.

<sup>20</sup> North Atlantic Council, Strategic Concept, 24 April 1999, paragraph 6.

<sup>21</sup> North Atlantic Council, Strategic Concept, 24 April 1999, paragraph 12.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, paragraph 24.

<sup>23</sup> North Atlantic Council, Washington Summit Communiqué, 24 April 1999, paragraph 7.

<sup>24</sup> North Atlantic Council, Strategic Concept, 24 April 1999, paragraph 39.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, paragraph 30.

<sup>26</sup> North Atlantic Council, Washington Summit Communiqué, 24 April 1999, paragraph 10.

<sup>27</sup> *NATO-Russia Relations: A New Quality*, Declaration by Heads of State and Government of NATO Member States and the Russian Federation, 28 May 2002.

<sup>28</sup> North Atlantic Council, Strategic Concept, 24 April 1999, paragraph 21.

<sup>29</sup> NATO Summit, Comprehensive Political Guidance, Endorsed by NATO Heads of State and Government, 29 November 2006, Riga.

<sup>30</sup> NECAS, Pavel. *Beyond tradition: New Alliance's Strategic Concept*, p. 162.

## LITERATURE

- [1] BUČKA, Pavel. Significant changes in NATO's command structure. *5<sup>th</sup> International conference New Challenges in the Field of Military Science 2007*. Budapešť, Hungary : Zrýnyi Miklós National Defence University, 2007. p. 8. ISBN 978-963-87706-3-9.
- [2] BUČKA, Pavel., SZABO, Stanislav. Security and defence policy of the Slovak Republic challenges for Armed Forces. *IVth International Symposium on Defence Technology 2006*, 19-20 Apr 2006 Budapest, Hungary : Zrýnyi Miklós National Defence University, 2006. 4 p. ISBN 1416-1443.
- [3] ČECH, Ľubomír. Od strategickej koncepcie 1999 po strategickú víziu 2004. *Strategická vízia NATO – výzva pre Ozbrojené sily SR : zborník vystúpení zo seminára : 23. júna 2006*, Liptovský Mikuláš : Národná akadémia maršala A. Hadíka, 2006, pp. 4 -9.
- [4] EICHLER, Jan. *Mezinárodní bezpečnost na počátku 21. století*. Praha : Ministerstvo obrany České republiky - AVIS, 2006. 303 p. ISBN 80-7278-326-2.
- [5] FRANK, Libor., KHOL, Radek. Evropské bezpečnostní struktury. *Obrana a strategie*. 2003, roč. 3, č. 2, pp. 17-27.
- [6] HOFREITER, Ladislav. NATO v novom európskom bezpečnostnom systéme. *Zborník Vojenskej akadémie*. Liptovský Mikuláš : Vojenská akadémia, 1998. pp. 9-16. ISSN 1335-0935.
- [7] HOFREITER, Ladislav. Security and securitology. *Science & Military*. 2006, Vol. 1, No. 1 pp. 79-82, ISSN 1336-8885.
- [8] *North Atlantic Treaty Organization* [online]. 2009. [cit. 2009-05-11]. Available on WWW: <[http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news\\_52838.htm?mode=pressrelease](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news_52838.htm?mode=pressrelease)>.
- [9] KAMP, Karl H. Bush and the Future of NATO. *Defense News*, 21 February 2005.

- [10] KAMP, Karl H. *The Way to NATO's New Strategic Concept*. Rome : NDC, 2009. Research Paper No.46.
- [11] KHOL, Radek. *European Security and Defence Policy – National Perspectives*, Prague : 2002. IIR.
- [12] KREJČÍ, Oskar. *Mezinárodní politika*. Praha : Ekopress, 2007. ISBN 978-80-86926-21-7.
- [13] KRÍŽ, Zdeněk. *Adaptace Severoatlantické aliance na nové mezinárodní bezpečnostní prostředí*. Brno : Masarykova univerzita, 2006. 217 p. ISBN 80-210-421-4.
- [14] LEURDIJK, Dick A. *NATO as a Subcontractor to the United Nations: The Cases of Bosnia and Kosovo*. WIJK, Rob., BOXHOORN, Bram and HOEKSTRA, Niklaas. eds. *NATO After Kosovo* (The Hague, The Netherlands : Netherlands Atlantic Association, Netherlands Institute of International Relations “Clingendael,” and the Royal Netherlands Military Academy, 2000), pp. 130-132, 135-137.
- [15] MOLNAR, Ferencz. NATO influence on Democratization of Civil-Military Relations in Hungary. In *Euroatlantic Integration and Ukraine*. Kyiv : NISS, 2004. Available on WWW: <[http://www.dcaf.ch/news/past\\_2002/ev\\_kiev\\_02092728\\_Molnar.pdf](http://www.dcaf.ch/news/past_2002/ev_kiev_02092728_Molnar.pdf)>.
- [16] MOLNAR, Ferencz. Cultural Challenges in Military Operations: Hungarian Considerations and Experiences. *Cultural Challenges in Military Operations*. Rome : NDC, 2007. Occasional Paper 23.
- [17] NECAS, Pavel. *Beyond tradition: New Alliance's Strategic Concept*, NATO. Roma : NATO Defense College, Roma, 2004. ISBN 88-87967-26-1.
- [18] SOPÓCI, Milan. Membership in Alliance and Security of Country. *Security and Safety Management na Public Administration: Proceedings of Conference*. Praha : Policejní akademie České republiky v Praze, 2008. pp. 334-338. ISBN 978-80-7251-289-8.
- [19] TYRALA, Pawel. Education for complex security. *Bezpečné Slovensko a Európska únia - zborník príspevkov z 2. medzinárodnej vedeckej konferencie*. Košice : Vysoká škola bezpečnostného manažérstva, 2008. pp. 378-387, ISBN 978-80-89282-28-9.
- [20] VYROSTEK, Juraj., KELEMEN, Miroslav. Synergia občianskej, národnej, medzinárodnej bezpečnosti a nové výzvy vojenskej vedy. *Bezpečné Slovensko a Európska únia - zborník príspevkov z 2. medzinárodnej vedeckej konferencie*. Košice : Vysoká škola bezpečnostného manažérstva, 2008. pp. 397 – 399, ISBN 978-80-89282-28-9.