



The course of adaptation: main conclusions from NATO Summit in Warsaw

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Enhancing deterrence of NATO

NATO Summit in Newport (Wales) in September 2015 was undoubtedly one of the most important achievements of the Alliance since the end of the Cold War. Its main idea was an extensive enhancement of the NATO's military capabilities, primarily on its eastern border, aiming to eliminate concerns of some of its members feeling to be under the direct threat from Russia. Collective defence, as one of the three priorities defined by the last NATO Strategic Concept, along with crisis management and cooperative security, achieved again the main political attention of the NATO leaders.

Almost two years since then, another NATO summit in Warsaw (8-9 July 2016) declared the fulfilment of tasks to build up the NATO Response Force (NRF) to a larger and more capable force (up to 40,000 soldiers) and to achieve operational readiness of its special part (Spearhead Force) ready to start its deployment within 2-3 days in size up to 5,000 soldiers (Very High Readiness Joint Task Force - VJTF). In 2015, temporary units of VJTF have been established under the leadership of Germany, the Netherlands and Norway and certified by Exercise Noble Jump conducted in Poland in June 2015. Spain leads the VJTF brigade since the beginning of 2016 and its potential deployment has been exercised during the Trident Juncture exercise in 2015. In Warsaw, the United Kingdom announced taking the command of VJTF over in 2017, followed by France, Germany, Italy, Turkey, Spain and Poland annually until 2022.

Since 2015, NATO could rely upon its small force integration units (NFIU) in case of the potential deployment of its rapid reaction force. So far, they have been built in six countries - Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Romania. Slovakia and Hungary also declared their interests to establish such units with later operational capability. These multinational command and control elements (each of approximately 40 officers) will not only ensure that such a deployment is as flexible and smooth as possible, but they will also contribute to the collective planning and coordination of the multinational training and exercises.

In sum, summit in Warsaw declared the fulfilment of the Readiness Action Plan (RAP), which was a systematic follow-up to the immediate action taken by NATO shortly after the outbreak of the Ukrainian crisis and annexation of Crimea by Russia in April 2014. At the same time, the Plan was the foundation for future wider military reorganization with far-reaching implications for planning, exercises, equipment and logistics.

As a consequence, NATO declared in Warsaw an establishment of four new battalions totalling 3,000 to 4,000 troops in northeastern Europe on a rotating basis. According to Jens Stoltenberg, NATO Secretary General, „these battalions will be robust and multinational and they make clear that an attack on one ally will be considered an attack on the whole alliance“.¹ The U.S. will lead a battalion in Poland, United Kingdom in Estonia (a battalion of 500 soldiers will be sent to Estonia while 150 troops will be

¹ NATO agrees to reinforce eastern Poland, Baltic states against Russia, 8.7.2016, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-nato-summit-idUSKCN0ZNL2feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews>

based in Poland), Canada in Latvia and Germany in Lithuania. Other nations will supply troops.

Speaking about the United States, Americans will deploy a battalion of roughly 1,000 soldiers to its location in Poland. In addition, when the new U.S. armoured brigade begins rotating through Europe early next year, its headquarters will be in Poland, too. Currently, there is already a continuous presence of the U.S. troops in Poland with the aviation detachment at Lask Air Base. Americans continuously rotate personnel and aircraft into Poland within the European Reassurance Initiative (ERI), which was announced by a president Obama as a one-year, 1 billion USD emergency response to Russian aggression in June 2014.

ERI was intended to “reassure allies of the U.S. commitment to their security and territorial integrity as members of the NATO Alliance.” It supported increased U.S. investment across five categories: 1. presence; 2. training and exercises; 3. infrastructure; 4. prepositioned equipment; and 5. building partner capacity. In the beginning of 2016 president Obama announced increase of the ERI’s budget for 2017 to 3,419 billion USD compared to 789,3 million USD enacted for 2016. According to this plan, additional more than 5000 military personnel will be deployed in Europe in 2017. Out of 3,419 billion USD, almost 2 billion will be invested to the enhanced prepositioning and more than 1 billion to the increased presence of personnel. The rest will be invested into additional bilateral and multilateral exercises, improving of infrastructure and building partnership capacity.²

“Multi-vector” NATO

The strategic adaptation of NATO, however, include “multi-vector” measures as some allies called for taking a balanced approach towards current threats. Therefore, NATO declared its decision to develop tailored forward presence in the southeast part of the Alliance territory, within which a multinational framework brigade will be established to help improve integrated training of Allied units under Headquarters Multinational Division Southeast. Also, NATO decided to terminate its article 5 naval anti-terrorist operation Active Endeavour (which was launched after 11/9) and start a new non-article 5 operation Sea in Guardian in Mediterranean. It will strongly complement and/or support, upon European Union request, the EU’s Operation Sophia through the provision of a range of capabilities including intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, and logistics support and through contribution to capacity building of the Libyan coastguard and navy. In addition, NATO members declared their preparation to enhance the Alliance’s contribution to the efforts of the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL by providing direct NATO AWACS support to increase the coalition’s situational awareness. This support is planned to start in the autumn 2016. Also concrete support for building of capabilities in Iraq is under consideration.³

Moreover, NATO allies recognised cyberspace as a domain of operations in which NATO must defend itself as effectively as it does in the air, on land, and at sea. Member nations should aim to develop the fullest range of capabilities to defend their national

² *European Reassurance Initiative*, Department of Defense Budget, Fiscal Year 2017, February 2016, http://comptroller.defense.gov/Portals/45/Documents/defbudget/fy2017/FY2017_ERI_I-Book.pdf

³ See more in *Warsaw Summit Communiqué*, Issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Warsaw 8-9 July 2016, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_133169.htm

infrastructures and networks. This includes: addressing cyber defence at the highest strategic level within their defence related organisations, further integrating cyber defence into operations and extending coverage to deployable networks.⁴

Finally, NATO Secretary General signed a joint declaration with the highest officials of the EU on enhancement of the NATO-EU cooperation. Their main goals are to boost the ability of both organizations to counter hybrid threats, including by bolstering resilience, working together on analysis, prevention, and early detection, through timely information sharing and intelligence sharing between staffs, broaden and adapt operational cooperation including at sea, and on migration, through increased sharing of maritime situational awareness as well as better coordination and mutual reinforcement of NATO and EU activities in the Mediterranean and expand mutual coordination on cyber security and defence, including in the context of their missions and operations, exercises and on education and training.⁵

Effects on NATO-Russia relations

One of the main expectations on Warsaw summit was that NATO will, after almost two years, make more clear its position towards Russia. There is a long-term consensus in Europe, that although it is likely that the Russian president Putin is aware that a direct military confrontation with NATO would be suicidal for Moscow, the Russian behaviour cannot be underestimated

In Warsaw, NATO repeated it does not seek confrontation and poses no threat to Russia. At the same time, it stressed that Alliance cannot and will not compromise on the principles on which security in Europe and North America rest. Nevertheless, many NATO political leaders, including German Chancellor Merkel, described NATO's plans, such as those for four battalions, as a "deeply defensive concept" to warn Russia of the organisation's commitment to protecting its nations. NATO allies also agreed that they need to maintain "a firm and united stance" on Russia and that Moscow "has to deliver" on its commitments under the Minsk agreements designed to stop the fighting in eastern Ukraine. On the other hand, there is a need to "keep an open dialogue with Russia, because we need to talk about Syria and Iraq."⁶

One of the main critiques is coming from Kremlin because of NATO Ballistic Missile Defence. NATO SG Stoltenberg announced the initial operational capability of BMD elements in Warsaw. To make it simple, it means that American ships in Spanish maritime space, radar in Turkey and anti-ballistic system located in Romania are already able to cooperate under the command and control of NATO. Also Poland will be hosting an Aegis Ashore site at the Redzikowo military base. Although NATO SG declared the system is purely defensive and cannot be offensive (because of its technological limitations), negative reactions from Russian occurred very quickly. As an

⁴ See more in *Cyber Defence Pledge*, 8.7.2016,

http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_133177.htm

⁵ See more in *Joint declaration by the President of the European Council, the President of the European Commission, and the Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization*, 8.7.2016,

http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_133163.htm

⁶ *NATO agrees to reinforce eastern Poland, Baltic states against Russia*, Reuters, 8.7.2016,

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-nato-summit-idUSKCN0ZN2NL?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews>

example, Mikhail Gorbachev, former Soviet president, accused NATO on the second day of the summit that it is escalating new Cold War into the “hot” war.