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THE IMPORTANCE OF NATO IN THE EUROPEAN SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

Leszek Elak*

RESUME
The article presents the role and importance of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation in creating security in the world as a result of a profound transformation of the international order after the end of the Cold War. NATO had to find its proper place in the new reality and was forced to debate the new security strategy in order to remain the most important organisation in the world and be a guarantor of security of all its members. Moreover, the article elaborates on the importance of co-operation of NATO with the EU, which sometimes becomes even rivalry in responding to crisis in the world.

Key words: NATO, EU, alliance, challenges, threats to international security, crisis response operations, strategic concept, EU-NATO co-operation and rivalry, new tasks for the NATO and the EU.

The concern for the security of existence, development and interests of the State, their defence, can no longer be seen simply as a defence against anticipated threats, but should be looking for an analysis of its own weaknesses in order to reduce the challenges for their own security.[1]

J. - P. Charnay

In the modern world a model of so-called "universal security" has been developed, denoting security not dependent on one particular country, but rather on the international contracts and agreements, associating states capable of solidary defence of its borders and ensuring the broad sense of security. Currently, only the North Atlantic Alliance is seen as a kind of emergent structure of collective security in Europe and worldwide. However, one must not forget that the main objectives of NATO established by the Washington Treaty of 1949 are: the protection of freedom, heritage and civilisation of their people, founded on the

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[1] Jean- Paul Charnay, La Strategie (Paris 1995), Jean- Paul Charnay is a director of Strategy Philosophy Centre in Paris.

principles of democracy, individual liberty and legality and combining [Member States] efforts for collective defence and the preservation of peace and safety.

The former NATO Secretary General Lord **G. Robertson** in one of his speeches stated that the events of 11 September 2001 and the Iraq crisis have shown that we are in a period of fundamental change. The security environment is changing, as is the and way in which we react to it, and to each other (…) the key is to preserve and strengthen those qualities and values, which led us to current level and contribute so significantly to our security, prosperity and well-being (…). The Prague Capabilities Commitment means really a turning point in the adaptation of European capabilities to the requirements of the 21st Century (...). NATO will remain strong and vital organisation, regardless of how many Member States it will include (...). Along with the expansion of the European Union – NATO enlargement will help consolidate Europe as a common security space (...).The new agreement between the European Union and NATO has the potential to transform not only European security, but also the transatlantic relationships. States on both sides of the Atlantic can benefit from the availability of NATO assets and capabilities for operations led by the European Union. The EU will be able to present herself as a serious actor in the field of security (Robertson, 2003).

The above statement clearly points out that NATO is now facing new challenges, different from those it had to cope with in the past. One important factor is the fact that NATO, together with other organisations must cope with asymmetric threats in the political and military realm, mainly posed by terrorism and regional conflicts of varying character. It should also be noted that new threats of a non-military character are constantly gaining importance. The North Atlantic Alliance attempting to adapt to the new political situation, adopted in 1999 a strategy oriented towards broad co-operation with other countries to achieve security and peace in the world, but the 21st Century security environment has been left far behind these doctrinal records.

In this new political situation with radically changing spectrum of threats and increasing globalisation, NATO is the only organisation of a politico-military character capable of ensuring the security and respond to threats on global and regional scale (Tomaszewski, 2005). However, in the broadly understood security sector, the closer co-operation of NATO and other international organisations, especially EU, becomes inevitable when it comes to responding to and resolving crises. This is primarily aimed at the cessation of competition between organisations in matters of international security.

New dimensions of NATO activity

The hazards of the Cold War period gave way to new perspectives, although not free of risks, opportunities and challenges. The threats to international security in the 21st Century can be divided into four main groups (Ziéba, 2001):

- nationalism and ethnic conflicts (and the resulting social problems);
- military (including weapons trade and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction);
- transnational organised crime (especially international terrorism);
- ecological (pollution of air, water, soil degradation, storage waste, urbanisation and infrastructure development, and radioactive hazards).

These elements and the insufficient capacity of the United Nations in Europe, combined with transformations that have occurred in Central Europe (among others the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, the reunification of Germany) have contributed to the changes in international situation and led NATO to join the process of international response to crises. The consequence was taking action to determine possible contribution made by NATO in operations conducted under the aegis of the UN. Therefore, a reform of NATO has been carried out in order to prepare to perform new functions.

Since its inception, the Alliance is using the strategic document presenting the threats it has to face and outlining approaches how to overcome them. NATO's first strategic concept, called *The Concept of Strategic Defence of the North Atlantic Area* was agreed in 1950[2]. The NATO Strategic Concept is used to determine the broad policy framework for the work of the Organisation, and is periodically reviewed in order to reflect the changing security environment and to provide a blueprint how the Alliance should adapt its plans and tasks accordingly. By combining the idea of deterrence and dialogue, NATO has become an important element in bringing a peaceful end to the East-West confrontation. Enormous changes in the strategic environment of the Alliance caused by end of the Cold War are reflected in the Strategic Concept of 1991.

[2] This document was amended in 1957, 1968, 1991 and 1999.

The reform was launched by the London Declaration of July 6, 1990, containing a declaration of readiness of the Alliance to conduct operations beyond the scope of Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, as well as strong emphasis on peacekeeping and humanitarian operations within the scope of co-operation under the Partnership for Peace program, and assisting in the implementation of the mandate of the UN peacekeeping operation in the former Yugoslavia (London Declaration, 1990). These changes culminated in the adoption of the new Strategic Concept at the Rome Summit in 1991, outlining new direction for NATO action, focusing on five very important areas: international dialogue, international co-operation, collective defence, crises response and conflict prevention.

The final outcome of the transformation of NATO's position in the area of international security at the beginning of the 21st Century was announced at the Washington Summit in 1999 in the form of NATO's new strategic concept, defining the direction of the organisation (The Strategic Concept, 1999, Art. 5). It reflects the strategy of NATO in the context of the new reality of post-Cold War period. This conception reflected a new strategy of NATO related to the new realities in the post-Cold War period. The 1999 Strategic Concept concentrated mainly on the need to maintain the common defence, to strengthen transatlantic ties, and to further adapt the armed forces to new challenges (The Strategic Concept, 1999, art. 3). Although the framework of NATO action has been complemented by further relevant documents, including "Military Concept for Defence against Terrorism", "Partnership Action Plan against Terrorism" and "Action Plan for NATO-Russia against Terrorism", it still needs to be updated on an overall assessment of threats, as well as skills and strategies needed to counter it.

According to the Strategic Concept of 1999 the Alliance performs the following tasks:

- security: provide permanent stabilisation of Euro-Atlantic security environment, based on the development of democratic institutions, preferring the peaceful settlement of disputes in which no country would be able to intimidate other countries with threat of force or use of force;
- consultation: to serve, in accordance with Article. 4 of the Washington Treaty, as essential transatlantic forum for inter-Alliance consultation on any matter which relates to their vital interests, including situations posing a threat to the security of members;

- deterrence and defence: to prevent any threat of aggression against a Member State of NATO in accordance with Articles 5 and 6 of the Washington Treaty (The Strategic Concept, 1999, art.10).

In order to strengthen security and stability of the Euro-Atlantic area, the main tasks of the Alliance include:

- crisis response: maintaining readiness, depending on the situation and on the basis of consensus, in accordance with Article 7 of the Washington Treaty; conflict prevention and active engagement in crisis management;
- partnership: to promote wide-ranging partnership, co-operation and dialogue with other countries in the Euro-Atlantic area to improve transparency, mutual confidence and ability to participate in joint actions of the Alliance (The Strategic Concept, 1999, art.11).

The Strategic Concept of the Alliance assumes, like the previous one of 1991, that the possibility of an outbreak of a large-scale traditional war in Europe on is small. NATO also confirmed its comprehensive approach to security issues, taking into account not only military but also political and economic factors. Consequently, bearing in mind the lessons learned from the war in former Yugoslavia and the conflicts in the former Soviet Union, the concept focuses on the new threats to security and stability, such as the rivalry of religious or ethnic groups; territorial conflicts; inadequate or abandoned reforms; human rights violations and the breakdown of the State (The Strategic Concept, 1999, art. 20). An important element of the document is the accentuation of the integrity of the transatlantic Alliance, confirmation of the principle of collective defence and the treatment of Euro-Atlantic region with its peripherals as a single area. The task of NATO is to maintain stability in this area in order to ensure the security of the members of the Alliance, which essentially means extending the zone of responsibility. According to these assumptions the Alliance should become involved in resolving any crisis in the region, even if it is not directly related to its members. A new concept defines rules how to prevent conflicts, as well as effective ways of solving them. The decisions taken should be based on an analysis of the specific situation, achieving a common position of the Allies and the compatibility of the solutions with the UN Charter and International Law. The actions of the Alliance do not necessarily have to rely on the use of force; they should include the use of

"appropriate policy measures (...) and strict political control in every phase of operation" (The Strategic Concept, 1999, art. 32).

At the beginning of the first decade of the 21st Century NATO has taken up three transformation programs, which were adopted in subsequent summits. The first program is called "the Prague Agenda", and was adopted in Prague in 2002; it was initiated by the former NATO Secretary General Lord **George Robertson**. It relates to changes in capacity, mission and structures of the Alliance. Second – "the Norfolk Agenda", whose founder was the former Secretary General, **Jaap de Hoop Scheffer**, was approved at a meeting of Allied Command for Transformation in April 2004. The Agenda focuses on defence planning, force generation and joint financing. The third – "the Munich Agenda" – advanced by the former German Chancellor **Gerhard Schroeder** in 2005, focuses on strengthening the role of NATO as a forum for genuine consultation and strategic decision-making in the field of security between Europe and North America.

Prague Summit, which took place on 21 November, 2002, principally focused on the NATO enlargement to include seven new members, as well as on the agreement connected with the reforms in the structure of the Headquarters and the procedures necessary to ensure the smooth functioning of the North Atlantic Council comprising 26 Member States. Moreover, many other key decisions have been made, constituting an important step in the subsequent transformation of the Organisation, lasting from the time when the threat of global conflict has been averted. It was decided, inter alia, to establish the NATO Response Force (NRF); to reorganise the Strategic Commands and to approve and launch the modernisation programs under the Prague Capabilities Commitment (PCC).

During the Prague Summit NATO announced, inter alia, the new Defence Capabilities Initiative (DCI), updated by the obligations of Prague. This initiative differs from its predecessor from 1999[3] in three respects. It is defined more clearly and is based on a commitment and involvement of the nation. Greater emphasis was placed on international cooperation, which is associated with specialisation given to each Member of the Alliance, as well as the mutual

[3] The Defence Capabilities Initiative was adopted largely as a result of American pressures at the NATO Summit in Washington in 1999. Its purpose is to preserve the ability of allied forces to conduct joint operations effectively. The initiative was focused on the following areas: interoperability, the ability to transit troops and keep them in theatre, and the effective operation of advanced command and control systems.

support the efforts of NATO and the European Union in military capabilities. There have been as well talks about defending against attacks with weapons of mass destruction, ensuring the advantage of the command, communication and information, improving interoperability of deployed forces, as well as providing greater mobility and ability of the armed forces to survive independently (Buckley, 2002).

A significant change in the NATO capabilities reached in Prague was an agreement to create a NATO Response Force. The emergence of these forces enables the Alliance to respond to new threats rapidly and effectively. They are an additional impulse to the necessary structural and organisational transformation of all Allied forces. The decision to create the NRF is one of the most important transformations of the Alliance's military capabilities, adapting it to contemporary needs in the area of security. The creation of the NRF has been guided by two equivalent targets: the intention of enhancing the operational capacity of the Alliance for the rapid and joint response by creating a task force with a high level of readiness, as well as accelerating the processes of modernisation and transformation of the armed forces of the Allies, especially European countries.

NATO Response Force is constantly accessible, technologically advanced, mobile and multinational force with a high level of preparedness[4] and self-sufficiency[5], composed of land forces, navy, air forces and, if necessary, special units. The range of NRF functions exercised of their own or within the larger forces of the Alliance includes the operations under Article 5 of the Washington Treaty. Moreover, these forces should be prepared for antiterrorist and expeditionary actions: stabilisation, humanitarian, recovery, peacekeeping, conflict response operations and prevention actions.

Intention to use the NATO Response Force is not constrained by geographic restrictions on their activity; they must be able to operate wherever the North Atlantic Council deems appropriate. Due to the diversity of the tasks, the NRF is characterised by high flexibility enabling to adapt their final composition and size to specific circumstances and mandate (Madej, 2006). The main tasks of the NATO Response Forces reflect the requirements for immediate response, especially in the initial phase of the crisis in the peace

[4] The duration of their deployment in the area of operations ranges from 5 to 30 days.

[5] A one month period of independent operation has been adopted for NRF, meaning deployment without additional support.

support operations, humanitarian operations, and operations such as emergency response, antiterrorism, removing the effects of contamination by weapons of mass destruction, in order to comply with the imposed embargo and preparation of the operations region for entry of Alliance's main forces and others accordingly to the risks (James, 2004).

So far the decision about NRF activation has been made twice; however, only on a limited scale. In September 2005 the air units from the NRF took part in humanitarian action on the territory destroyed by hurricane Katrina, and from November 2005 to February 2006 around 1200 soldiers of 5th NRF rotation (mainly engineering and medical units) participated in humanitarian help mission in the earthquake-affected areas of Pakistan (Madej, 2006). Elements of the NRF forces were taking steps to ensure security during the Olympic Games in Athens in 2004 and supported the presidential elections in Afghanistan in September 2004. Analysis of current developments and activities of the NRF lead us to conclusion that despite steady progress and success of the program (e.g., the aforementioned operation in Pakistan), it still encounters difficulties that could significantly reduce its real value, particularly as an engine for transformation of the Alliance.

Within the framework of Norfolk Agenda in November 2004, for the first time in its history NATO convened the conference "Global Generation of Forces" to try to reconcile the obligations of individual countries in relation to various changes in the NRF rotation with their obligations relating to anti-crisis operations in Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo. The discussions within the Executive Working Group on improving the predictability of national contributions to the creation of NATO forces have been intensified. Another proposal for generating the forces considered in the Norfolk Agenda assumes that options concerning defence planning will be presented, and Member States will indicate their willingness to provide specific capabilities before the Alliance will take a political commitment to the initiation of intervention in particular crisis or conflict. Regarding the reform of joint financing, the Secretary General initiated the discussion on the increase of joint military budgets – NATO Security Investment Programme (NSIP) and the military budget – as well as using them for the more operational aspects of the current NATO mission related to the deployment of forces (Bell, 2005).

NATO and the EU: security co-operation or rivalry?

The European Union does not have its own armed forces[6]; however, it engages in matters related to security and military missions. It can be argued that it represents some kind of competition with NATO, which is a military alliance. Duplication of tasks performed by the Allies in operations outside Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty and under the Petersberg tasks undertaken by the EU Member States may be judged as a competition. However, it is advisable to find agreement on this issue, because the joint decisions in matters of international security will bring greater benefits to both organisations. According to Professor **A. Pop** (Pop, 2007) these two organisations should adopt a holistic approach to security issues and work together in this field. Although neither geographic nor the functional division of labour are considered to be a reasonable option, in many circles it is now accepted that some form of operations in remote regions, such as peacekeeping actions in Africa and the Balkans, should be sponsored by the European Union, while others – such as ongoing operations in Afghanistan against the Taliban – should be subject to NATO action. The Alliance and the EU must focus on strengthening their respective core capabilities, increasing interoperability and coordination of the doctrine, planning, technology, equipment and training.

The process of blurring of boundaries between member and non-member states becomes increasingly obvious. This is a result of changes in the nature of the threats, the emergence of non-state actors and access to new technologies. These processes are a challenge not only for methods that traditionally have been used by states to ensure security of their communities, but also by the international organisations, which, to meet the expectations of their members, must adapt to new environment. The traditional division of tasks between NATO - a military alliance, which is responsible for collective defence, and the European Union - an organisation whose objective is the security and well-being of Europeans, loses its importance. Overlapping roles and a certain rivalry are therefore to some extent inevitable. It cannot be determined in advance what potential is necessary to conduct crisis management operations under the aegis of NATO and / or the European Union. Context and challenges are different for each operation, but they all require the involvement of military, police, civilian and others measures, which remain in the domain of both organisations (Saryusz-Wolski, 2008).

[6] Despite the existence of Battle Groups, the Union does not have a single European army.

It is worth mentioning that the origins of co-operation between the EU and NATO date back to 1949, when the WEU military tasks were transferred to NATO. However, the breakthrough came in 1991 when a concept to link the European security policy and NATO's role as the basis for the European system of collective defence arose. It is based on the assumption that the EU would use NATO capabilities and resources to prepare and conduct operations in conflict-affected countries under its direction in situations in which the Alliance would not have the intention to be involved. From experience it is known that this co-operation is mainly focused on issues such as mutual consultation, participation of European allies that are not EU members in ESDI, the EU access procedures to NATO planning system, as well as the use of its resources and capabilities. Further development of the ESDI was continued based on the following principles (Koziej, 2006):

- The Alliance accepted an autonomous EU action in situations where NATO as an organisation is not involved;
- Co-operation and reciprocal consultation based on the mechanisms existing between NATO and the EU;
- Taking steps to strengthen the defence capabilities in the context of new tasks, while avoiding duplication of efforts;
- Development and improvement of the concept of NATO assets and capabilities use in EU-led operations.

Development of the ESDI within the Alliance was just one aspect of improving European security. More important was the formation of the Common Security and Defence Policy within the EU. It is a form of EU activity under the Common Foreign and Security Policy. Its main objective is to develop and implement common European defence and protection of common values and interests of the Union, to strengthen security and peace in the European region, promote international co-operation and consolidation of democracy, rule of law and human rights. In order to reduce confusion as to the competence of both organisations, the EU agreed that it would not have planning and command capability autonomous from NATO.[7] This may, however, change with time.

[7] Under the "Berlin Plus" agreement, the EU has the possibility to use the means and capabilities of NATO.

According to **S. Koziej,** despite the joint declaration on the EU co-operation with NATO there is much confusion. As a consequence, the effectiveness of European defence faces many threats and dangers, given that in the same field and area there are two entities responsible for similar or even identical tasks, which is not a good solution (Koziej, 2008). These structures should not duplicate, but rather function on a co-operative basis. The solution of this situation is to bring about such a state in which all members of the EU are also members of NATO. Consequently, two entities would exist within NATO: the European Union and the United States, and their mutual co-operation would yield additional benefits (Brzezinski, 2004; Czaja, 2009). Therefore, close co-operation between NATO and the EU is essential to the development of autonomous operational capabilities of the European Union.

Currently there are numerous factors related to co-operation between the EU and NATO. The most important among them is the fact that most EU members are also NATO Member States; only a few countries are exceptions. Therefore, the capacity for crisis management operations developed by the EU and NATO must be compatible. Moreover, each country has one army, one budget and one security strategy, rather than two, directed specifically towards the EU and NATO. Finally, success in resolving crises and enlarging the zone of stability around Europe depends on the political co-operation between NATO and the European Union. None of the organisations can function independently in the international arena. An example of successful co-operation between NATO and European Union (Pop, 2007) in the security field was the Ohrid Framework Agreement to prevent the outbreak of war in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. In February 2001, at the height of inter-ethnic conflict between the security forces in the country and armed Albanian rebels, NATO and the European Union coordinated the negotiations that led to signing of the agreement.

Important developments in co-operation between the two organisations was the announcement of full operational capability of the NATO Response Forces capable of conducting crisis response operations worldwide, and plan to create both national and multinational EU Battle Groups in accordance with the objectives of the Common Security and Defence Policy. However, to fully exploit the capabilities of both formations, further efforts in coordinating the civil-military operations are needed in order to guarantee the possibility to fully use their potential. With awareness of the potential duplication of tasks and groups NATO and the European Union have begun works aimed at ensuring complementarity

between the two groups of forces (NRF and Battle Groups). Roles of NATO and the European Union in this scope should become complementary and cooperation between these organisations should be modified to ensure the efficient use of funds for acquisition of assets.

The European Union is committed to becoming more confident in civilian missions (including police missions) and military crisis management operations, both in its immediate neighbourhood, as well as in more distant regions. "Berlin Plus Agreement"[8] contracts and an agreement "about the principles of consultation, planning and operations between the EU and NATO" outline in a detailed manned the Union's access to resources and capabilities of the Alliance in carrying out the Petersberg tasks in situations where NATO as an organisation is not or does not wish to be involved. Union could take its first military mission - Operation "Concordia" in Macedonia, and also take over NATO's responsibility for the situation in Bosnia in December 2004 and begin its "Althea" mission. Currently, the EU action is visible in the Balkans, the Caucasus, Eastern Europe, the Mediterranean and the Middle East. In addition, the EU's presence is discernible in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Indonesia.

Co-operation between the two organisations should extend to Afghanistan, which needs more police officers, officials, judges, architects, constructors, as well as humanitarian workers and counsellors in the field of local administration. To a large degree the EU has such a palette of options. In November 2006 the European Commission has approved spending of 10.6 million Euros to promote the availability of services and know-how of the governance improvement methods through the NATO-led Provincial Reconstruction Teams. In addition, it would be useful to support the NATO mission in Afghanistan by the CSDP on the civilian mission to assist in providing rule of law and police training.

According to **A.D. Rotfeld** a priority for NATO in cooperation with the EU in the security field, should be – in addition to integration and efficiency of the EU – the strengthening of the Alliance and the permanent anchoring of the United

[8] This is an agreement between the EU and NATO agreed on 23-25 April, 1999, in Washington. According to this agreement the EU has acquired access to resources, capabilities and NATO planning data when conducting peacekeeping operations without U.S. participation, based on this formula EU provides an agreement with NATO whenever it intends to carry out such operations under the Common Security and Defence Policy. The name comes from the arrangements of the NATO summit held in Berlin June 3, 1996.

States in Europe. This implies the need to take action that not only prevents the marginalisation of NATO, but restoring the proper function of the Alliance as security guarantor of the Member States' territories. Furthermore, the growing political dimension of the Alliance and its new function as a system of collective security have added value, rather than replace the defensive nature of the Organisation. The unity of the transatlantic community countries and closely linked security of the United States and Europe is the cornerstone of the security of all democratic countries of the area covered by the Washington Treaty.

For Europe bilateral and multilateral institutional links between the Alliance and the European Union are important. Both structures, underpinning the democratic states of Europe and North America, need to develop new forms and ways to work together and respond to common threats. In addition to that, the test of Euro-Atlantic security institutions' effectiveness will be agreed and implemented in practice through the common strategy of NATO and the EU in various regions, especially towards Russia. This does not mean isolation of Russia, quite to the contrary, it implies opening up prospects for Russia to engage constructively in the implementation of common security in different parts of the world. This could occur under the assumption that Russia would reject the unfounded rhetoric and propaganda portraying NATO as an enemy group, and more importantly - would subscribe (not just verbally) to a system of common universal values that guide the transatlantic community of democratic nations.

There is an urgent need to look for non-traditional, multi-dimensional definition of the tasks of NATO and the EU in the new security environment. Serious thought needs to determine the strategy of NATO and the European Union in combating terrorism, conducting humanitarian intervention in fragile and failed states, preventing pirate attacks, combating and preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, or in responding to cyber-attacks (such as in case of Estonia). Of paramount importance is to agree on a common security strategy on access to energy resources (Pop, 2007).

Also worth emphasising is the fact that we should aim to make such a transformation of the transatlantic security community which would not close, but open the door for Ukraine, Georgia and all other democratic countries of the continent, interested in joining the security structures. It should be a sovereign decision of the countries concerned, provided they meet the conditions for joining NATO and the European Union. European strategy should avoid both

the "re-nationalisation" of security and diversification of the policies of the major countries in Europe and North America, as well as return to the creation of 19th Century "concerts of powers", "directorates" or other states to impose the will of great and strong powers to the medium and small ones. Neither political nor territorial revisionism is in the interest of Europe, wherever such trends would appear, nor sustaining the separation and competitiveness in security issues between the U.S. and Europe or more broadly - between NATO and the European Union. The approach to security does not require a new "architecture", i.e. setting up a more efficient institution. The key to addressing current challenges will be the ability to define the objectives and ways of their implementation to measure the real needs and opportunities (Pop, 2007).

Trying to summarise the above assertions concerning the security issues and NATO's role in this process it may be concluded that the first profound change in the assumptions of NATO Strategic concept stemmed from the profound transformation of the international order after the end of Cold War. NATO had to find its proper place in the new reality of institutional pluralism and complementary security systems. The end of East-West confrontation accompanied by lowered risk of a large-scale armed conflict has forced NATO to the debate over a new security strategy. With the disappearance of potential homogeneous, massive and immediate threat (Zieba, 2001) new indirect and local challenges have emerged. One of the factors stimulating the debate about the internal transformation of NATO was the civil war in Yugoslavia, when it was necessary to support the peacekeeping mission of the CSCE. Initially, NATO declared that it is ready to support peace operations conducted under the aegis of the UN Security Council (*NATO Press Communiqué, 1992)*, and then opted for carrying out joint peacekeeping operations administered by the UN or the CSCE (*NATO Press Communiqué, 1992)*. This way NATO agreed to expand its military activities with the possibility of conducting peace support, humanitarian and rescue operations outside the territory of Member States, which meant a modification of its strategic doctrine and participation in missions outside the dispositions of the Article 5 of the Washington Treaty (Barret, 1996). The policymakers noted that a new type of crises can develop quickly and therefore require a rapid response. As a result the security policy of the Alliance has three directions and consists of three elements: dialogue, co-operation, and maintaining capacity for collective defence. The assumptions of new Strategic Concept show exactly what type of crisis response operations the forces will be involved in and that they have to prevent the emergence of crises and

overcome them (Strategic Concept, 1999, art. 31).

Earlier changes in NATO strategy documents were somehow forced by major events in the international security environment, which affected the balance of power in the world and its geopolitical shape. It seems that now the reality has left the strategic doctrine far behind and it has become inadequate in relation to real needs. It is essential to define a new hierarchy of tasks to be carried out by NATO and to make the prioritisation of the challenges and non-military threats, which would relate to 21st Century reality. In addition to that, one needs to carefully define the scope and direction of the transformation of the Alliance in military terms, as well as in terms of the reforms of its internal structure. The third equally important issue is the question of further enlargement of the Organisation and its relations with third countries (Hill-Winter, Madej, 2010; Kowalewski, 2009).

NATO should be the guarantor of the security of all its members. However, it is worth considering how realistic this expectation is. According to the assumptions of the Strategic Concept the Member States may help when other NATO Member State is threatened according to their capabilities, but they are not obliged to do so. It is now known that only a few countries are able to wage war and win it. Furthermore, for many years there has been a tendency to reduce the armed forces, which eventually leads to formation of small, but modern armies. But is it enough, given the recent war between Russia and Georgia?

The current actions of the Allies are illustrated by the conducted peacekeeping operations, peace enforcement or humanitarian mission. For example, in the operation in Afghanistan a considerable variation of individual NATO countries involvement in resolving the crisis may be observed. Only the good will of a particular Member State or the urge to appear on the international stage decides on participation and size of the quotas of individual countries in NATO operations. However, taking into account the very hypothetical situation of a NATO Member State being war with another country, one should consider what role NATO would play then. Would it only be the role of theoretical deterrence or the role of real political and military assistance? It is therefore important, when working on a new Strategic Concept, to consider the procedures and tools (the whole mechanism) of a genuine and immediate aid to the assaulted NATO Member State. This will ensure a sense of security for citizens of NATO countries and will increase the credibility of the Alliance. Arrangements currently in vigour guarantee aid to the assaulted state, but not

immediately, and just with specific forces.

In addition to external affairs, the internal NATO affairs are of equal importance. There is a need for closer co-operation between Member States in order to achieve a higher level of capabilities and more efficient use of material and financial resources to conduct operations outside the territory of the Member States. The NATO enlargement and the intensification of consultations on political and strategic level with a reduction of red tape and better use and improvement of the intelligence information exchange, provide key elements of creating a new quality within the Alliance. Consolidation of the European countries is a condition sine qua non for improving the level of global security. It must take into account the "open door policy" and a new quality of relations with Russia (Hill-Winter, Madej, 2010; Kowalewski, 2009). Moreover, in order to ensure the broad Euro-Atlantic security an effective co-operation between the EU and NATO is necessary. It will have meaning when states decide to adapt the armed forces and introduce reforms to the challenges of today and will be eager for practical political, civil-military, legal and police co-operation.

The article presents the role and importance of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation in creating security in the world as a result of a profound transformation of the international order after the end of the Cold War. NATO had to find its proper place in the new reality and was forced to debate the new security strategy in order to remain the most important organisation in the world and be a guarantor of security of all its members. Moreover, the article elaborates on the importance of co-operation of NATO with the EU, which sometimes becomes even rivalry in responding to crisis in the world.

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