



## POST-LISBON TRANSFORMATIONAL CHALLENGES

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### **Abstract**

The Alliance has entered the second decade of the third millennium with a New Strategic Concept, which is to respond to new-domain challenges. In this respect, the NATO's Strategic Concept could also be called a »cyber concept«, owing to the age we are about to enter. It could also be considered transformational with regard to the second transformational decade. The need for reform and further transformation is clearly emphasized, with the economic crisis as a special factor. Transformational changes have, of course, not been conceived as the changes for the poor. The implementation of novelties requires resources and it is mainly the latter that enable the introduction of new technologies and solutions. We therefore claim that transformation represents a challenge for everybody, but is also attainable for everybody. All this also reflects at a national level, although very often in different forms. Both views are very much relevant with regard to the preparations for NATO Summit in Chicago this year. The article presents certain transformational challenges of the Alliance and their influence on national defence and military sphere. In this respect, the reflections about further development of Slovenian defence and military system focus on the answers to transformational challenges. The central message of the reflections contained in the paper intends to clarify the needs and opportunities for changes. This is also one of the prerequisites for a successful implementation of transformational challenges.

### **Key words**

Transformation, NATO's Strategic Concept, transformational challenges, Slovenian defence and military system, Slovenian Armed Forces.

### **TRANSFORMATION AGE**

Due to a vast scope of the subject, the discussion on post-Lisbon<sup>1</sup> transformational challenges could be carried out from different perspectives. Often, information age challenges and related new millennium changes are referred to as "transformation", and the age itself as

“transformational” (Alberts, 2003). We thereby emphasize that, in the future, defence systems and armed forces will be subject to great changes, which will require not only political, but also technological and organizational solutions (Binnendijk & Johnson, 2004). It should be reminded that transformation is based on non-violent and well thought-out changes in defence and military structures, organization and tasks. In addition, it is also based on knowledge and information age advantages, as well as on the new roles of the military in a society (Šteiner, 2009). In both, allied and national defence and military sphere, the processes of transformation bring about great expectations, but also doubts. The latter are also reflected as a fear of loosing the national or even classical military.

The term “transformation” refers to new forms or the paradigm of change, which points to the trend of becoming a new theory of changing the defence and military organization. NATO Handbook (2006, pp.20-21) refers to this approach as the transformation process. In addition, the transformation is a proactive and innovative process of development and integration of new concepts, doctrines and capabilities, with a view to enhancing interoperability. It should be noted that a number of professional and scientific debates on transformation have been carried out, both, within the Alliance and nationally (Binnendijk & Kugler, 2006). These provide conceptual and theoretical bases for practical solutions and their verification and implementation in the areas they deal with.

It can be established that the 1999 NATO Strategic Concept emphasized transformation mainly on a global and transnational level and as a guideline for a continued development of a military force in a society. The 2010 concept continues in the same manner, expanding even more on a national level. Consequently, with the NATO’s New Strategic Concept we are also facing a new age of transformation. This statement is based on the fact that the direction of the transformation from the previous decade has also been changing in a way. There is now tendency to build it from the bottom up, so that the combined efforts, such as the idea of Smart Defence, coming from the Secretary General and the Supreme Allied Command Transformation would enable guiding from the top down. In other words, the aim is to link and gather theoretical models and good practices and, thereby, enable their exchange and, consequently, upgrading. The above-mentioned fact is also important, since it enables the Alliance to enforce transformation processes in national environments at different speed and intensity, namely with regard to respective levels of development and involvement in joint transformation processes. As we mention the countries entering transformation processes, it is also important to consider the situations in which changes can be successfully introduced, especially if we know that transformation does not support radical nor forcible changes. This applies even more in times of global economic crisis and recession, when large and small countries are affected.

## **SOME POST-LISBON TRANSFORMATIONAL CHALLENGES OF THE ALLIANCE AND POSSIBLE APPLICATIONS**

The debate about post-Lisbon transformational challenges and their applications must start by stating the characteristics of NATO’s New Strategic Concept (Šteiner, 2011). It includes a very obvious intent to renew the Alliance so that it is fit for purpose in addressing the 21<sup>st</sup> century security challenges. These mainly include the spreading of threats to a non-military area, while military threats typically obtain asymmetrical character. In addition, the new concept calls for reinforcement of the national and the preservation of the allied defence and military identity and thereby somehow refers back to member states. For this reason, the

prioritization of national defence over a common one gives an impression of returning back to primarily national military domain.

The main purpose of NATO's New Strategic Concept is to encourage and create links (Abrial, 2001). It aims at encouraging member states and enabling them to provide a more effective and successful performance from a defence and military perspective. This, on the one hand, reflects in the intent to establish connection and cooperation in four domains, namely states, think tanks, academic sphere and industry. On the other hand, however, the areas of assured access to the global commons include international waters and air space, outer space and cyber space. The aforementioned facts point to new, also transformational horizons. It is also often emphasized that the role of consent and NATO is to set strategic guidelines, identify possible areas of cooperation and mutual information as well as to enable exchange of best practices.

NATO's General Secretary has on numerous occasions referred to the second part of the Modern Defence Concept as "Smart Defence". On the basis of responses to the adoption of the New Strategic Concept it can be established that member states hold great expectations regarding the continuation of the reform activities. We thereby deal with a dilemma what is essential for national defence, what is considered priority for the Alliance and how to synchronize both when we have limited resources. Should priority be given to the capabilities intended only for national defence or primarily to those which can, in addition to national needs, also contribute to common allied deployable capabilities?

NATO remains a global and key actor in the provision of international security and crisis management (Di Paola, 2011). The enlargement of the Alliance is not as much in the foreground as the aspect of establishing large partnership, finding forms of forming interest groups, cooperating and emphasizing regional initiatives in order to foster secure and stable global environment.

NATO and Russian Federation will in the future develop an important and special strategic relationship (Di Paola, 2011). In order to intensify this relationship, some persistently authentic Cold War and bipolarity obstacles or fears will have to be eliminated. This also applies to the issue of further enlargement of NATO to include former Soviet countries which belong to a sensitive Russian area of interest, especially when countries rich in current and future fuels and other strategic materials, or the areas intended for their transport (gas and oil pipelines etc.) are concerned. In general, energy security is one of the important motives for future cooperation and integration also in the defence and military area. Important, if not central challenges refer to the future and the relation among conventional military, nuclear deterrence and missile defence, asymmetric warfare and cyber domain. The first one is unknown and the second one dangerous, while the third one is completely unpredictable and the fourth one very vague. The new concept sets up a modified ratio between nuclear posture and deterrence, collective defence and cyber defence. As it has been explained, collective defence shines a new light on the attitude towards national defence, and Article 5 of the Washington Treaty remains the central postulate of the Alliance even as new solutions and mechanisms for connecting national defence systems and capabilities for attaining cooperative security are being sought.

In missile defence, two characteristics should be mentioned. The first one is the change in the approach to erecting a missile shield and the redirection of effort to a better link among national capabilities, whereas the second one relates to cooperation between NATO and

Russia in missile defence, which is a unique transformational challenge. Russia is emphasizing or testing the Alliance with the idea of integration, when talking about global missile defence and the establishment of arranged common interception areas for missile threats. The Alliance, on the other hand, puts more emphasis on cooperation. Consequently, when it comes to missile shield, we face two aspects – “integrated” and “cooperative”. We can presume that cooperation will continue with a “cooperative” form; however, when the trust deepens and some of the obstacles are removed, the integrated form of cooperation could also be feasible.

Let us stress that, when defining cyber domain, it is still not completely clear what it entails. This consequently raises a number of questions regarding the definition and substance of cyber defence and cyber security, as well as offensive cyber operations. In addition, there are also questions regarding the type of the domain, whether it is national or transnational, and who are the trustees or, better said, owners managing it. Beyond or in addition to that, it is important to achieve cooperation and consensus with regards to cyber space policy and control of information flows and traffic, and consequently the distribution of information.

Another thing to be explained is the question of asymmetry. First, it should be stressed that, in the New Strategic Concept, this question somehow replaces counter-terrorism and global war against terrorism from the previous concept. However, this does not mean that counter-terrorism has been omitted from the concept. Characteristic of asymmetry is that it ignores restrictions and uses the surprise and impact factors, especially on people and public opinion. Its inventiveness and ingenuity is testing those who use it, those who try to defend against it as well as those who study it. By using unusual means with the aims and in the ways that threaten certain achievements of the civilization, asymmetry very much resembles nuclear deterrence or general threat arising from nuclear potentials.

Both, nuclear deterrence and asymmetric threats are, indeed, close to being uncontrollable, threatening with either total destruction or complete insecurity. Moreover, asymmetry counters the basis of force balancing, which in warfare usually manifests through arithmetic balance of military power and, in some respect, also substitutes and responds to the changes in this balance. The Strategic Concept considers asymmetry of central importance, which is based on the experience and challenges posed by terrorist attacks in the last two decades, and by military operations in Afghanistan.

When describing the challenges and implications of NATO's Strategic Concept, we cannot avoid changes and relations regarding the EU. It is important to mention that transformation impacts are being transferred and intertwined between the two structures, since even in the EU we witness changes of transformational character. In this respect, the EU Military Staff puts its shirt on the European Defence Agency (EDA), encourages integration of national capabilities and looks for a model of their joint use within the EU Battle Group concept, which represents European joint rapid reaction forces, and within the Pooling and Sharing concept, which aims at establishing a joint range of national capabilities and links among them.

The reduction in defence budgets in a majority of the countries calls for a new reality which is to find solutions to the slack in defence budgets even after the financial crisis. This is conceivable with a changed defence planning, an effective approach to crisis management and, especially, to political decision-making, as well as with a comprehensive approach to modern operations and use of capabilities. The key challenges are related to the improvement

of capability development, both, joint and national, and the establishment of links among them. An important transformational aspect which arises in the correction of deficiencies identified so far is direct cooperation with the industry and the formation of mechanisms to establish multinational capabilities.

The reductions in defence budgets in a majority of member states evoke the issue of maintaining multinational capability building initiatives, and related multinational or even regional approaches. In this respect, various speeds of capability building and attainment of goals are being consented to. An exposed role of interactions, not only with the industry, but also with development and research institutions should be added here. The challenges, even transformational ones, include joint or multinational capabilities and questions of material support and cost sharing during their construction; cost bearers during the life cycle and operational use of capabilities, and last but not least, their ownership.

The Lisbon Summit brought an initiative about an innovative approach to cost-effective capability development. Joint investments and capabilities provide an answer to the issue of prioritizing, whereby the Lisbon package<sup>2</sup> capabilities will be given priority, namely nuclear, biological and chemical (NBC) defence, nuclear capabilities, defence reforms and reforms of the security sector, maritime capabilities, military medicine, counter improvised explosive devices, intelligence capabilities, stabilization and reconstruction operations etc. In the post-Lisbon period, many ideas and activities have been initiated within Multinational and Innovative Approaches (MNA) to supplement the LCCC's package.

The reinforcement of NATO's civilian component work in modern operations represents a great challenge (Abrial, 2011). The attempts to set up civilian capabilities and their use, or better, their involvement in joint actions with the military should be specifically mentioned. There have been attempts to achieve this before with the effect-based approach to operations (EBAO) and the comprehensive approach (CA). Consequently, the enhancement of civilian contributions to crisis response operations also occurs as a crucial part not only in the Afghan exit strategy, but also in the challenges of all joint performances in the ongoing or new operations.

The changing of NATO's Command Structure represents an important and exposed application. NATO will change the integrated military command structure and design it in a way that it becomes more rational, but still adequately responsive (Di Paola, 2011). Other applications refer to the maintaining of unified standards regarding the equipment and military training, as well as military operations. This will provide interoperability in common actions as well as further development of overall interoperability within the allied forces. Training and education according to unified standards, joint trainings and joint use of infrastructure constitute basic and key factors providing future joint operations. This also facilitates the use and expansion of lessons learned and the implementation of innovations.<sup>3</sup> Allied Command Transformation has drafted a program for this purpose.<sup>4</sup>

The label "transformational" with regard to NATO's Strategic Concept is also confirmed by the expansion of these activities. If the Washington concept<sup>5</sup> had triggered allied transformational activities, it could be claimed that with the Lisbon one these efforts have grown to become national transformation imperatives.<sup>6</sup> This concept trusts in a better use of Alliance's transformation achievements as well as in the needs of member states. This thereby reduces doubts of sinking into multinational or transnational military structures and, consequently, losing national military identity. The implementation of the transformational

challenges described above is directly linked to the challenges at national levels, while others are linked indirectly. This statement brings us before Slovenia's transformational challenges in the defence and military area.

## **TRANSFORMATION CHALLENGES OF THE SLOVENIAN DEFENCE AND MILITARY SYSTEM**

Slovenia has so far contributed its share to NATO through contributions to the work of integrated joint institutions, a credible contribution to NATO-led crisis response operations and a contribution to a joint command structure. As a majority of small countries, Slovenia also finds it challenging to make a contribution with fresh ideas and innovations, especially when it comes to regional initiatives and transformational changes, as well as endeavours how to provide, for example, for NATO's better public image and support. It can be concluded that the majority of transformational challenges contained in the New Strategic Concept, will also apply for Slovenia as a member of the Alliance, even though the implications will not be entirely comparable.

After joining the Alliance in 2004, which coincided with joining the EU, the process of integration has intensified, for which a special plan of integration and affiliation has been made. This plan was finalized in February 2010, a year ahead of the deadline. With the integration, the Slovenian Armed Forces has set its way well into following the process of transformation in the Alliance (Šteiner, 2010). So we had not only had seven years of integration period behind us, but had also faced a period of preparations for transformation in line with NATO's New Strategic Concept.

The announcement of the transformation of Slovenian defence and military system is obvious from the establishments of the 2009 Defence Sector Strategic Review<sup>7</sup>. On the basis of this review, in 2010, the Parliament adopted the Resolution on General Long-Term Development and Equipping Program of the Slovenian Armed Forces up to 2025. Both documents clearly demonstrate the continuation of transformation efforts and the acceleration of further transformation of not only the military subsystem, but also the subsystem of civil defence and the civilian part of the Ministry of Defence. Their aims are to improve organization, to achieve rationality and cohesion, and to follow transformational efforts within wider environment and the Alliance.

A special question refers to the relation with the national system of protection against natural and other disasters, which is fairly independent and only partially linked to the defence and security system of the Republic of Slovenia. It does, however, function as a constituent body within the Ministry of Defence and, hence, represents a unique particularity in the EU. Central questions regarding future transformation relate to the rationalization and integration within subsystems, and the search of solutions with regard to cost sustainability of structures and functions, including the oversized civilian and administrative part of the MOD and the commanding part of the military structure. The question is whether or not, in times of highly limited resources, we should continue to independently design capabilities in both areas and link them only during the implementation. Should we, on the other hand, permit the partnership and overlapping which seemingly interfere with the normatively clearly distributed competences and tasks? When it comes to national security and protection domain, a question arises whether the armed forces should be allowed to directly and autonomously perform certain tasks, related to protection and rescue activities. And, on the other hand, can protection and rescue units of Civil Protection be used to support military intentions in a

national territory, and under what conditions? If none of this is feasible or possible, there is still a question about a synchronized design of capabilities in order to achieve rationality and avoid duplication.

In addition, the professionalization of the Slovenian Armed Forces was also underway. All the professionalization processes have not finished yet, thus important challenge is to finalize them with regard to transformational efforts. Some questions about personnel management are still open and not solved properly. More than anything so far, we have to settle the departures from the armed forces and find solutions with regard to retirements and reintegration of contract service members into civilian society and work environment. Equally important for the professionalization of the armed forces are also internal mobility and the competitiveness of the personnel as well as the enforcement of a competence model well-known in the armed forces with longer traditions.

A special transformational challenge is related to the future character of armed forces and their organizational models. The armed forces must retain their combat character; otherwise they are deprived of their actual value. The character of the armed forces is also influenced by a number of other factors, such as universality versus specialization, multi-purpose character versus exclusive use for military needs, modularity and ability to adapt the structure to tasks, as well as the ability to quickly adapt and operate within a wide range of national defence tasks, multinational environment, protection and rescue, and provision of assistance to other state authorities. Slovenian solutions applied so far show that, in small-size armed forces, such a model can be rather demanding when established. However, it is possible and can prove successful. Nevertheless, it could be hampered by further reductions in size and structure of armed forces.

The next finding is related to the organizational structure and the number of command and control levels in the armed forces. The composition was so far oriented towards an organizational structure of a brigade and a rather large number of battalions. The question when in the process of size reduction it would be suitable to abandon the brigade model and replace it with another one, is a very demanding technical, but also a sensitive one. Indeed, we would have to renounce certain branch units or even the entire model of branch organization. This also opens the question of introducing new branches or specialties in the armed forces, which would be related to, for example, cyber security and defence or stabilization and reconstruction operations in a multinational environment, which demands correlation or even integration with civilian capabilities.

NATO's New Strategic Concept follows the example of modern and smart defence and the principle that more can be done with less resources. Transformational changes have of course not been conceived as the changes for the poor. Therefore, the main national transformational challenge is connected with a new reality in which it is clear, that a country could not reach promised percentage of gross domestic product for defence. How should we carry out the transformation of the armed forces and the entire defence and military sphere with less financial resources? At the same time, we are faced with a question of what to preserve, what to abandon and what to bet our money on and transform. Should we, due to the severity of the decision, simply wait for individual segments and technical aspects of capabilities to become anachronistic and fall off on their own?

The emergence of the economic crisis and recession after 2009, has also ended the period of growth and, consequently, the numerical enhancement of the armed forces, and has very

much limited their further modernization. At the same time, financial resources are being reduced, not only for acquisition, but also for operations, so that in 2011 on the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the development of the armed forces has been practically stopped. There are efforts to stabilize the structure and size of the armed forces and, above all, retain its vital parts so that we do not lose the combat character and motivation. The integration into the Alliance, which was concluded in this period of time, therefore represented a framework for further changes and involvement in transformation processes, but also the basis for hopes for a better future of the defence and military sector. Thus, the question of whether or not tackle future transformational challenges points at the urgency of defining the time dimension of the transformation.

What future will bring for the upcoming defence and military organization in Slovenia depends mainly on the wisdom of politics and its vision of what to do with it. Of course, it also depends on the influences of the Alliance, defence professionals and military brains that prepare and implement in practice the solutions drafted on the basis of political guidelines. Slovenia does need good armed forces and is able to sustain them. It may be small, professional, but it has to be organized in a way to be able to effectively fulfil its mission and meet national needs, as well as to contribute to international peace and stability in accordance with the national policies. Such armed forces will continue to successfully face future transformational challenges and will in the best possible manner.

## **CONCLUSION**

The article has shown in which areas transformational challenges directly meet and are implemented in practice and where they differ, because they occur in a small country with certain specifics in the defence and military system. By this, we do not try to imply that member states should receive special treatment because of their small size or national particularities. However, their particularities should be understood when it comes to dealing with global transformational challenges within the Alliance.

NATO's New Strategic Concept has opened questions of cyber defence, cyber operations and security in its broadest sense, which is, on the one hand, still considered unknown. On the other hand, however, it represents a challenge which needs reflection or a redefinition of roles of nation states, international organizations and entities, including alliances and partnerships, as well as the establishment of mechanisms that would enable effective protection, management and even defence. However, this is only one aspect of changes, which points at the fact that we stand before the processes and activities of transformational nature leading into the reconstruction of defence and military systems and into a new spectrum of preventive operations and management of the new forms of crisis. The nature of the other aspect does not only concern the expectations or worries about what the future holds. It concerns the hope that the economic crisis will not end the erosion of defence and military structures.

Therefore, the article emphasizes the claim that NATO's New Strategic Concept is cyber and transformational in nature, but it also represents a concept of hope. This means that the processes of applying changes in the armed forces will continue in a way that transformational trends will prevail. The 2012 NATO Summit in Chicago will continue in this manner, and will bring answers appropriate to discuss in an article as well.

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## Endnotes:

<sup>1</sup> NATO's New Strategic Concept was adopted in November 2010 at NATO's Summit Meeting in Lisbon under the title: Strategic Concept for the Defence and Security of the Members of The North Atlantic Treaty Organization: Active Engagement, Modern Defence.

<sup>2</sup> Lisbon Critical Capabilities Commitment – LCCC is a set of ten priorities regarding joint capabilities and investments in joint operations.

<sup>3</sup> More in SACEUR's Annual Guidance on Education, Training, Exercises and Evaluation (ETEE), also marked as SAGE, available at Transformational Network.

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<sup>4</sup> Ibidem. Training Integration Plan – TIP will be supported with a special e-tool (e-TIP) and available on the Internet. In addition, a new Education and Training Opportunities Catalogue – ETOC has been drafted, which is to replace the old one.

<sup>5</sup> Adopted in April 1999 at NATO Summit in Washington at NATO's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary; under the title The Alliance Strategic Concept. Until then, the allied strategic concept adopted at the 1991 Summit in Rome had been in force.

<sup>6</sup> More in Abrial (2011) Transformational imperatives are in fact encouraging states to prioritise transformational domains.

<sup>7</sup> More in The Summary of Key DSSR 2009 Conclusions, available at:

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