

SMART DEFENSE – A CONCEPT ALIGNED TO THE CURRENT PHYSIOGNOMY OF THE MILITARY PHENOMENON

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NATO has constantly focused on aligning its Strategy to the developments in the international security environment with a view to permanently being able to accomplish its missions in the fields of peace and democracy insurance and human rights protection all over the world. In this respect, one of the major concepts strongly advocated for by the present NATO Secretary General, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, and prone to changes in accordance with the current physiognomy of the military phenomenon is the one of “Smart Defense”.

Key words: *strategy, smart defense, less defense, international security environment, military phenomenon.*

The changes brought to NATO Strategy as a result of the developments in the international security environment is an axiomatic truth noticeable especially during NATO summits and other major events that the authors of the article have tackled in numerous scientific communications and research articles. As a result, the aim of this article is to focus on the concept of “Smart Defense” and on its implementation as detailed during the NATO Parliamentary Assembly organized on 7-10 October 2011 in Bucharest, Romania and attended by 350 Parliament representatives from 28 NATO member countries.

As presented by NATO Secretary General, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, the concepts of “Smart Defense” [1] and “Less Defense” are to be understood as follows: “*The concept of Smart Defense refers not simply to increasing expenditures for defense but to their prioritization. Smart Defense can work if it is implemented together. Smart Defense should not be an excuse to lower defense budgets. Our choice is between Smart Defense and Less Defense. We must search for multinational solutions to common problems. A common defense means Smart Defense. If you think that security is money, remember that it is cheaper than insecurity.*” As for the concept of Less Defense, its name is

self-explanatory and, in this respect, the Pentagon warned against the possible consequences of reckless budgetary cuts.

Thus, the choice is a clear one: between Smart Defense and Less Defense. As a result, the Alliance must develop its relationships with other countries interested in cooperation regardless of their geographical positioning within the requirements established by the concept of Smart Defense.

When referring to the same concept, the President of Romania, Traian Basescu [2] made the following statement at the Parliamentary Assembly of November 2011: *“Smart Defense is about the mutual use of means in order to meet the increasing demands raised for NATO in an economic context characterized by austerity”*.

Romania has constantly focused on the concept of Smart Defense and a sign of its commitment was the meeting between the country's President and NATO Secretary General that took place on 30 January 2012 with the following items on the agenda: the anti-missile shield, the gradual withdrawal of the troops deployed in Afghanistan, the concept of Smart Defense, as well as the preparation of the NATO summit of May, from Chicago. The complexity of the issues approached during this meeting is evidence enough of the appreciation of Romania's efforts as a NATO member.

Since the focus of this article is Smart Defense, we have to underline that currently Romania is part of 31 Smart Defense programs (out of the 168 ongoing at NATO level). Moreover, due to its commitment to alliance's goals the country will get involved in all those programs that involve fewer costs and increased

efficiency. In this respect, the statements issued by the two officials upon the closure of the meeting [3] are relevant:

“Romania is a powerful ally. (...) We will continue to count on Romania in establishing relationships with our partners, especially with those in the Western Balkans and with those from Eastern Europe where Romania takes an active role”, declared NATO Secretary General, Anders Fogh Rasmussen.

“It is only after Romania's accession to NATO that we all have the feeling that the country's security is guaranteed. We certainly know that security is not a gift and that when you are part of a club whose objective is collective security, you must also make your own contribution”, said Traian Bănescu.

As a result of the new NATO Concept, several members have been pooling and sharing resources in order to achieve the objectives they assumed. Such an approach has been viewed as one of the most valuable initiatives [4] in the field since the current NATO Secretary General assumed his mandate because of the benefits it purports: fewer costs and increased efficiency.

It is worth reminding the position taken by Romania's President on the new concept and its advantages: *“Before its accession, Romania pledged to purchase 48 aircrafts compatible to NATO's. As a result of the Smart Defense concept we, alongside with other nations in the region, will be able to ensure the necessary air capabilities, especially those in the field of air patrol in times of peace, as well as those required in outreach interventions. For the states involved, that actually means sharing expenditures. Thus, let us*

just think that instead of purchasing 48 aircrafts, we would buy fewer provided that other state were willing to join us in this acquisition effort aimed at guaranteeing, for the beginning, the region's air security. During the NATO summit from Chicago we want to approach the antimissile system issue. In this respect, Romania's objective for the summit is to have the interim capacity of NATO in the field of the antimissile system declared (...) since Romania signed the agreement and is about to meet its legal commitments concerning the system's implementation at Deveselu". [5] In addition, the President reiterated that security is beneficial even though it requires efforts, the financial ones being the most significant.

During the same meeting, some examples related to the application of the new concept were provided. One such example was the Heavy Air Lift Wing within the Strategic Airlift Capability that enables the access of 10 NATO member/partner countries (Romania being one of these) to three C-17 Globemaster III transport aircrafts. Another model of Smart Defense is the agreement in the field of defense signed in 2010 between Great Britain and France. As a result of this, the two states will cooperate in the following fields: air carriers and transport aircraft operation, submarine construction, mine sweeping, communications, air-to-air refueling, passenger transport, UAVs, information security, counter-terrorism, research and development in the field of defense, and the creation of a joint intervention force. Moreover, this Smart Defense model also involves the development of niche military capabilities such as Special Forces, naval demining,

human intelligence and cyber security.

Romania is involved in important ongoing programs in the field of Smart Defense. A consequence of its commitment to such a concept is its advocacy for the purchase of multi-role airplanes by states from South-Eastern Europe. The accomplishment of such a goal would ensure the security of Croatia's, Romania's and Bulgaria's air space. On short and even medium term these countries will no longer be able to defend their air space since the MiG-21s will be out of use. Thus, Croatia and Romania stringently need to replace these airplanes. [6]

At the end of the aforementioned meeting, Anders Fogh Rasmussen declared: *"Romania is a powerful ally. It has made a valuable contribution to our Afghanistan and Kosovo operations, as well as to the protection of people from Lybia. Considering the current economic difficult situation, Romania's contribution is even more valuable since it acknowledges that our security is priceless. (...) We must form an alliance that is capable to meet current challenges and to guarantee future security. Even though we will not be able to spend more on defense, the expenditures must be well made and must also be shared. That is what we call Smart Defense. Romania is already part of projects in this field and, as a result, will host parts of NATO's antimissile defense system that will defend two continents against major and ever growing threats. That is an excellent example of Smart Defense implementation". [7]*

All of the above considered, it clearly results that the new Smart Defense concept is an important means of aligning NATO's strategy

to the current developments of the contemporary military phenomenon that unfold against a global economic crisis. Moreover, this concept grants the Alliance's capacity to accomplish its missions through an appropriate use of the available means and through an extended cooperation among allies. If NATO were to use less defense, that would only mean an increased exposure to the risks and vulnerabilities characteristic of the contemporary insecure world. Thus, it is already obvious that, on medium and long term, Smart Defense is cheaper than Less Defense.

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