

SLOVENSKE IZKUŠNJE PRI OBRAMBNEM PLANIRANJU IN ČLANSTVO V NATU

THE SLOVENIAN EXPERIENCE OF DEFENCE PLANNING AND NATO MEMBERSHIP

Professional article

Povzetek Ob peti obletnici vstopa v Severnoatlantsko zavezništvo in ob vseh naporih, ki so bili vloženi v pridobitev povabila, v naše dejavno članstvo in spremljajočo transformacijo obrambnega sistema, je ponovno dozorela priložnost, da na podlagi nedvoumno pozitivnih izkušenj in naučenih lekcij opravimo nov kakovostni premik k ustrežnejšemu obsegu ter usmerjenosti obrambnega sistema v prihodnosti. Vse to je tesno povezano z zaupanjem v obrambno zavezništvo, v katerega smo včlanjeni. Skepsa, ki bi se pojavila ob tem, je ne samo napačna, temveč v danih razmerah lahko celo zavajajoča in škodljiva. Dejstvo je, da sta naša gospodarski in politični napredek tesno povezana s skupino držav, s katerimi delimo članstvo v Zavezništvu. Če bi prišlo do preloma danih obljub in zavez, ki nas povezujejo, bi bili na kocki tudi drugi, za državo in ne nazadnje za ves evropski prostor temeljni postulati, ki bi revolucionarno spremenili sodobno podobo sveta, v katerem živimo, kar se ne more zgoditi čez noč. Ko primerjamo prednosti in pomanjkljivosti članstva, se pogosto zgodi, da so zlorabljene tiste najpomembnejše, med katerimi so tudi nenehna opozorila o racionalnosti in smotrnosti trošenja davkoplačevalskega denarja. Vlaganje omejenih virov v obrambne zmogljivosti je pri tem treba gledati s kakovostnega vidika. Članstvo in iz njega izhajajoči ciklusi implementacije dogovorjenih ciljev obrambnega planiranja onemogočajo prikrivanje ali celo izkrivljanje rezultatov dela na področju obrambne pripravljenosti. Rednih posvetovanj v Natu ne smemo razumeti kot diktate tujcev, kot jih nekateri neutrudno razlagajo, temveč kot pomoč pri razvoju racionalnega in učinkovitega obrambnega sistema. V delovanju na vseh področjih, vključno z obrambnim, je ključna harmonizacija prizadevanj posameznih zaveznic, ki mora biti kljub množici interesov in želja uravnotežena, stvarna, ciljno usmerjena, temeljiti mora na izpolnjevanju obveznosti, ki so jih članice sprejele. Brez ustrezne stopnje politične volje nam začrtane smeri ne bo uspelo ohraniti, s čimer je povezano izpolnjevanje danih zavez tako sebi kot našim zaveznikom.

Ključne besede *Obrambno planiranje, obrambne zmogljivosti, nacionalna obramba, kolektivna obramba, mednarodne operacije in misije, varnostno okolje, uporabnost sil.*

Abstract As Slovenia celebrates five years of membership in NATO, and after all the efforts invested in securing an invitation to join, in being a member of the Alliance and in the accompanying transformation of the country's defence system, the time is right for us to re-examine the positive experiences of and lessons learned in these five years, and to take a qualitative step forward towards a defence system of the right dimensions and one that looks to the future. All this is closely linked to trust and confidence in the defence Alliance of which we are part. Any scepticism in this regard is not only wrong but, in the circumstances, even misleading and damaging. The fact is that Slovenia's economic and political progress is closely linked with that group of countries with which it shares membership in the Alliance. If the promises and commitments that were given and which connect us are broken, other fundamental principles for the country, and not least for Europe as a whole, will be at stake, bringing about a revolutionary change to the world in which we live. However, this cannot happen overnight. When one weighs the benefits and shortcomings of membership, it is often the most important ones that are being abused, among them the continual warnings about the need to spend taxpayers' money cost-effectively and wisely. The investment in defence capabilities of what are limited resources must be subject to quality criteria. Membership and the associated cycles of implementation of the agreed defence planning objectives prevent the results of work in the area of defence readiness from being concealed or even distorted. Regular consultations with NATO should not be understood as foreign diktats and interventions, as some never tire of characterising them, but as assistance in the development of a cost-effective and efficient defence system. In the work carried out in all areas, including defence, harmonisation of the efforts of individual Alliance members is crucial; this harmonisation process must remain balanced, realistic and focused, despite the differences in interests and priorities, and must be based on fulfilment of obligations that have been jointly agreed by the members. Without an adequate level of political will, we will be unable to keep to the path we have mapped out and fulfil the commitments to ourselves and our Allies.

Key words *Defence planning, defence capabilities, national defence, collective defence, international operations and missions, security environment, usability of forces.*

Introduction After five years of membership in NATO and the EU, and still being a young democracy and country that has not yet entered its third decade, it is time once again for Slovenia to review its experiences and the lessons it has learned, whatever they may be and however differently we may perceive or understand them. If one looks at the development of defence capabilities, one finds missed opportunities as well as positive achievements, and bolder views and moves as well as more timid ones. What is missing above all is a set of bolder and more robust decisions on where and how we go from here. This paper will not only look back over the last five years of work within NATO but also the period of Slovenia's participation in the Partnership for Peace; and on account of a number of important experiences and dilemmas, it will also glance at the golden age of the Territorial Defence Force

that emerged from the Yugoslav Total Defence Concept (SLO) and National Self-Protection (DS) system, using least a few examples and paradigms. The Territorial Defence Force won distinction for itself with this doctrine in independence-related activities in 1990 and the war of 1991, while its spirit lingered for quite some time after the formation of a professional Slovenian army. The author himself began his professional career at that time and was not just educated and trained in that direction but was imbued with precisely that passion for defence of his homeland in which he was actively engaged; he therefore has an awareness as well as considerable experience of the co-formulation and discussion of different, new and more rational views of the security environment, of threats to national security and responses to them in new and changed circumstances, of integration mechanisms and security and defence frameworks, and of Slovenia's position within them. All these things have a significant impact on deciding what the mission of the defence system will be; this in turn directly dictates the development of defence and above all military capabilities, which is also in essence what we call 'defence planning'. This paper aims to present a number of causal relations between specific periods of development of the Slovenian defence system and explain their influence on the current situation. Even the experiences acquired after five years of active cooperation in the Alliance's defence planning process have not stopped certain of the ignorant and fallacious approaches common in the past from persisting. Some can simply not be understood since they have no link with logical thinking and common sense. It is expected that we will take a step out from the frameworks of past thinking and from a belief in the need for self-sufficiency in national defence, and a step in the direction of more solid trust in our Alliance partners and in the principles of collective defence. On the basis of past experiences, particularly the experiences of those who have worked more closely with the Alliance, it is possible to assert that the process of defence planning that has been established in Slovenia and taken from the Alliance model, which is almost identical to that of the EU, provides us with a mirror in which we can see the real nature of our work and ourselves ever more clearly.

There is not enough space in this paper in which to write a deeper and more comprehensive analysis; it is therefore hoped that it will at least prompt readers to think about the issues presented. The paper proceeds from practical experience, knowledge and deliberations connected with NATO after more than a decade of work with and within the Alliance; it therefore does not follow all the standards applying to traceability of sources and analyses, or the requirement to provide exact references for them. The statements contained herein may, however, be checked against the selection of sources provided at the end of the paper.

1 THE PERCEPTION OF SECURITY THREATS AND RISKS IN LIGHT OF SLOVENIA'S HISTORICAL EXPERIENCE

It is not an easy task today to speak of the security environment of the early 1990s, when we were home to almost 100,000 refugees from the former Yugoslavia, which in addition to everything else added a dimension of reality to the daily pictures

of destruction and wartime atrocity that were appearing on our television screens. In tackling it, we do not wish to suggest that it was one-dimensional – first and above all because it now appears so far in the past, and second because the constant low-level turbulence of the region, which has acquired the name of the ‘Western Balkans’, reminds us of what conflicts can cause and what the consequences of them are. Despite all the negative trends in our wider environment in the 1990s, Slovenes took a crucial step forward with independence, tying its fate at almost all levels to the fates of other European countries economically and politically joined in a single area.

We can cast our minds back to the first years following independence, when war was raging just a few kilometres from Slovenia’s borders and threatened to spill over the Kolpa River, and in particular the fairly unfriendly statements that now and again denied the existence of the country, and even the people, wedged between the Kolpa and the Alps. The decision made by the Slovenian government, especially in light of the UN embargo on the sale of arms to the entire territory of ex-Yugoslavia, was a difficult one: as a young country, to risk being militarily weak or to prepare itself, as far as possible, under the given conditions, very probably aware, given the path that Slovenia had embarked on, that this could have been, in the long term, quite costly and more difficult to justify in the short term. Luckily, the latter proved to be the case, rather than its contrary – which would have been more difficult and, of course, costlier, from all aspects and not just the financial. Criticism of our understanding of NATO and of the work that took place within it in this paper must also be seen from this angle. With its consciousness still pervaded by the threat of a possible attack from the south and the doctrine of the SLO and DS, even though one did not dare voice these fears aloud, Slovenia purchased static towed heavy artillery and modernised its old tanks. The beginning of modern military aviation in Slovenia came when the country bought reasonable advanced training aircrafts for the still-young and enthusiastic flying corps from the former Yugoslav army, who dreamed of soon breaking the sound barrier. Slovenia also has a military patrol boat which does not have a military nor a combat role; but where there is the sea, there is also the navy. With all these things we began to develop the full range of military capabilities – incomplete, highly improvised and based on volunteers, but still.

The swift development of the young country and the Euro Atlantic integration processes it joined and, from the national standpoint of the perception of threat, the democratisation of Croatia and the fall of Milošević in Serbia, very quickly called the beginnings of the creation of a Slovenian army into question (Grayston, 2003). Nevertheless, we are obliged to admit that it would not have been possible to incorporate new aspects, horizons and visions so quickly. In this case we are justified in excusing ourselves by proving that this was indeed impossible. We insisted slightly too long in trusting ourselves only. This is a problem we are still faced with today. A retrospective apology is not in order unless we have learned at least something after five years’ membership in NATO. Appealing to the burden of history is not appropriate here, since there is simply not enough money for everything and there never

will be, and paying for hobbyhorses from the national budget at the expense of the Slovenian army's combat usability is once again irrelevant.

2 NATO DEFENCE PLANNING

It is now appropriate for us to give a structured presentation of defence planning as the key function of the organisation in which we have completed our first five-year period of service.

2.1 Principles of NATO defence planning

The defence planning process, which we can call the backbone of the Alliance without fear of contradiction, comprises the following basic principles which, at the same time, constitute the basis of the collective defence and security of the Alliance as a whole: political solidarity between nations, support for cooperation and firm links between them in all those areas that serve their joint and single interests, the division of roles and responsibilities and the recognition of mutual obligations, and joint efforts to maintain adequate military forces for the support of Alliance strategy and policy.

Defence planning procedures ensure that all essential issues are dealt with collectively, which in turn guarantees that collective and national resources for the realisation of all NATO tasks are utilised to the greatest possible extent. Close cooperation between international civilian and military staff and between NATO military authorities and the governments of the allies is maintained through the regular exchange of information and through consultation regarding national plans. This exchange enables the objectives of individual nation to be matched to the joint requirements of the Alliance and to be reviewed in the light of joint political guidelines, requirements to modernise, and changes to the role and responsibilities of forces.

2.2 Consultation and harmonisation in NATO defence planning processes

NATO defence planning has developed in accordance with the changed threats, risks and challenges faced by NATO members and by the organisation as a whole, the development of technology – the so-called 'Revolution in Military Affairs' (RMA) – and changes in the wider security and political environment, including economic development, experiences in international operations and missions, and as a consequence of the internal transformation process itself. There is actually no unanimously accepted definition of defence planning within NATO. We could define it most precisely as a process in which representatives of allies, NATO's military representatives and the International Secretariat attempt to determine the status of the forces or capabilities that must be available to the Alliance to allow it to carry out the tasks that have been determined unanimously by the members of the Alliance (Pfeiffer, 2008). Capabilities are developed, maintained and provided primarily by nations; their impact on national plans is therefore of vital importance, under the principle of solidarity or 'fair burden sharing' in the realisation of the requirements of a specific structure of forces and the

development of a feeling of collective ownership. The fair share taken on by an individual member country, which should present a reasonable and tolerable challenge, can be a relative category; for this reason, the entire planning process linked to defence reviews and studies is a transparent one and constitutes a balanced combination of professional and political input and the search for an appropriate ratio between needs and abilities. NATO defines defence planning (even though, as stated above, there is no unanimously accepted definition) as a basic process of consultation and harmonisation that enables members to utilise the political, military and other advantages of collective defence to increase security and stability (NATO Handbook, 2006). From this it is clear that Allies do not negotiate with their own Alliance. In Slovenia this understanding of defence planning processes and of the Alliance itself is still very much present and very meaningful.

Slovenian military and political circles are still coming to terms with this method of planning; they are frequently prey to an unclear vision of development and to a lack of political will at home on the one hand, and to the clear and extremely demanding expectations of the Alliance on the other. This is strongly evident as well in the perceptions of the Slovenian public. It is clear that the enforcement of national objectives for the armed forces agreed with NATO has contributed above all to more usable military capabilities. In this way both Slovenia and the Alliance have received confirmation that the objectives set can be achieved by means of consistent defence policy and planning, which must be supported by adequate resources. Special emphasis must be laid on the fact that the defence planning process and the fair contribution of an individual member country are matters of coordination by means of regular consultation; we can do this productively, and come to an understanding of it, when we know what, how and with what resources, and when we know where we want to go. It is an error, and one that is becoming an interference, when people mislead the public by saying that NATO wants something from us; we are, in fact, only one of 28 nations of an organisation in which decisions are taken by consensus and not by members outvoting each other. It is important to realise that we decide together on everything, from strategic orientations to operations themselves, and on specific projects and tasks, at the political and professional military levels. Consequently it is important, not to say imperative, that we do not say things differently in Ljubljana and Brussels – or rather, that we do at home what we talk about abroad.

2.3 NATO defence planning disciplines

NATO defence planning encompass seven planning disciplines: the force planning, resources, armaments or defence investments, logistics, C-3 systems ('Consultation, Command and Control'), nuclear planning and civil emergency planning. Defence planning is also linked to certain other related planning domains, including the planning of air defence, standardisation, intelligence activities and operational planning. The term 'force planning' is frequently replaced by the terms 'defence planning' and 'operational planning' (Colston, 2007). While defence planning is a wider term than force planning, operational planning is used in connection with a precisely determined NATO operation and the crisis response planning.

All NATO members take part in the great majority of these disciplines under the leadership of the North Atlantic Council and, directly below this body, within umbrella committees relevant to a particular area, such as the Defence Review Committee, the Nuclear Planning Group, the Senior Resource Board, the Conference of National Armaments Directors, the Consultation, Command and Control (C3) Board, Conference of National Armaments Directors (CNAD) and the Senior Civil Emergency Planning Committee. The Military Committee and the Allied Command Transformation both have a special role. Made up of defence ministers, the Defence Planning Committee and the Nuclear Planning Group both operate at the same level as the North Atlantic Council, which demonstrates the importance of defence planning for the effective functioning of the Alliance.

2.4 Development of defence planning since the end of the Cold War

The processes following the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Warsaw Pact have considerably reduced the size and readiness of the armed forces of individual NATO members, which was followed by a significant fall in defence expenditure. This was understood as being a 'well-earned dividend' of the end of the Cold War. However, over the same period we witnessed a growth in the number of armed conflicts, the bloodiest of them taking place in Europe. These conflicts led to the first NATO military intervention in the continent's history.

2.4.1 Transformation of the Alliance

The emergence of new conditions and circumstances demanded a fundamental change in the structure of forces and capabilities, which were refocused on ensuring deployability, sustainability, an ability to operate in geographically distant arenas and all-round military superiority. The defence transformation of the Alliance began; this process is still ongoing and, for some, it seems that the constantly changing environment and level of threat mean that it will never end.

The transformation of NATO is taking place at the political level (expansion of basic values and interests, expansion of membership, consolidation of partner relations, etc.) and military level (implementation of operations, development and provision of the required forces, capabilities and other military resources, reformulation of the military command structure, etc.), where greater professionalism and a greater readiness to respond to new global challenges, in line with the agreed strategic directions, are expected from the military component of the Alliance.

The threats that accompanied the Cold War period were fairly well recognised, predictable and static; these have been replaced by a variety of asymmetrical, unpredictable and complex threats. In order to be able to respond appropriately to these new threats, it has been necessary to redefine NATO's 'level of ambition', determining the number and nature of the operations that the Alliance is capable of carrying out. This has led to fundamental changes in the approach to defence planning, which had previously been focused on threats but is now based on the planning of capabilities.

‘Capabilities-based planning’ is more focused on how possible enemies could threaten us than on who is able to engage with them and where (Alberts, 2005). A list has therefore been drawn up of the wide-ranging spectrum of capabilities that the armed forces of the nations will require in order to repel and defeat an adversary who will use surprise, deception and asymmetrical and hybrid forms of combat to achieve its objectives. With capabilities-based planning, we can achieve ‘jointness’ between combined operational concepts and tasks, by employing a full spectrum of possible scenarios and tasks.

This new NATO paradigm is clearly expressed in current strategic and planning documents. NATO enables its members to realise their national security objectives through joint efforts. Achievement of these objectives is based on the equal distribution of tasks, risks and responsibilities, which also brings the advantages of joint defence.

2.4.2 Linking of defence and operational planning

With the new millennium, the terrorist attacks of September 11, the evoke??? of Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty for the first time in NATO’s history and the operation in Afghanistan, the Alliance is faced with a new reality. The successful deployment of NATO forces in Afghanistan is certainly one of the elements that is having a significant impact on defence planning, among other things because it appears that future NATO military operations will have considerable parallels with Slovenia’s joint efforts as part of ISAF. Here it should again be pointed out that national defence planning systems are the processes that ensure adequate forces and capabilities. Despite this, we are once again seeing a gap between the amount of items that they are able or willing to supply and their availability for current operations. Likewise, one cannot ignore the importance and influence of national caveats placed at the national level, which cause problems above all for operation commanders. This is closely linked to countries’ reservations about the serious deployment of capabilities, which is dependent on political will, to which this paper will pay particular attention. And so we once again come to the concept of fair burden sharing – a concept upon which the Alliance is built and whose absence could threaten its very existence.

2.4.3 Comprehensive Political Guidance (CPG) 2006

Changes in the security environment at the start of the decade, and the trends associated with it, led to adjustments to strategic orientations in the form of the Comprehensive Political Guidance, which Slovenia was involved in drawing up. This document, which came out of the NATO Strategic Concept 1999, sets out a further framework and political orientations for the transformation of NATO, and the priorities in the development of capabilities, planning disciplines and intelligence activities over the next ten- to fifteen-year period (to 2020). It shows NATO’s clear commitment to a wide-ranging approach to security and preserves collective defence as the basic purpose, alongside the readiness to work through joint decision-making

to prevent conflicts and ensure stability. Regarding capabilities, the CPG is very clear, emphasising the need for an ability to carry out the full range of tasks and operations, the importance of further development of usable (deployable and sustainable), interoperable, flexible and adequately prepared capabilities, the provision of adequate resources and adherence to the principle of fair burden sharing. The CPG also states that the provision of capabilities requires openness to new technologies, concepts, doctrines and procedures. Their aim is 'the coherent and comprehensive application of the various instruments of the Alliance to create overall effects that will achieve the desired outcome. Such an effects-based approach should be developed further and might include enhancing situation awareness, timely operational planning and decision-making, improving links between commanders, sensors and weapons, and employing and deploying joint expeditionary forces coherently and to greatest effect.' (CPG, 2006)

Former Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) General James Jones, who is currently the US National Security Advisor, summed up the transformation of the Alliance on several occasions as follows: 'We must change from being static to being expeditionary, from having a regional outlook to being global, from engaging in warfare based on the principal of "mass" to warfare based on precision, from a force based on quantity to one based on quality.'

We can assert with considerable certainty that that part of the CPG that sets out development of the usable capabilities of Allies and the Alliance will become the basis for the new NATO Strategic Concept. The CPG was agreed by the North Atlantic Council under the appropriate level of confidentiality in December 2005 so that it could serve as the basis for the new Ministerial Guidance of spring 2006. The Alliance's Riga Summit in autumn 2006 endorsed the CPG at the highest political level, after which it was made public (which is why it bears the year '2006').

2.4.4 Ministerial Guidance (MG) 2006

The strategic guidelines presented in the CPG were followed the Ministerial Guidance for Allied defence planning, which provides more detailed guidelines for them. The MG clearly defines the level of NATO's ambitions and strives for a new balance between combat capabilities, Combat Support (CS) and Combat Service Support (CSS). The result of the new guidelines and emphases in these documents are the Force Goals 2008 (for 2009–2018), which are focused on the development of expeditionary and sustainable forces, the surmounting of deficiencies in the area of support for transfer, and the development of key capabilities for ensure operation (MG, 2006).

The new national force goal packages that have arisen from this process are very demanding, being adapted to the requirements of modern operations. If the goals are to be met, cost-effective and focused resource management and the appropriate setting of priorities will be crucial.

2.4.5 Reform of NATO defence planning processes 2008–2009

An effective defence planning system must, like all others, be constantly adapted to take account of changes in the security environment; for this reason, the Alliance carried out a reform of defence planning in 2008 and 2009 in order to improve the effectiveness and coherence of the previous system. The advantages of the new (or rather, adapted) system, which was endorsed by defence ministers in June 2009, are greater harmonisation between planning disciplines and their executive committees, a tighter connection between force and operational planning, rationality of participants and harmonisation with EU efforts. The revolution that was expected to be instigated in this area by a number of Alliance members did not materialise – nor could it have done. This was not merely because of the principle of consent that applies to NATO decision-making but also as a result of the thorough expert assessment carried out of those areas of defence planning that were working well and of where adjustments or changes could be made. The unfounded accusations – that it was poor defence planning above all that was responsible for the critical shortfall of capabilities in current operations, particularly in Afghanistan – were rejected. If with the help of this NATO mechanism Allies and the Alliance had been unable to move towards a highly satisfactory outcome in the realisation of the force goals established ten years ago, the number of allies able to take part in operations would be very small, which in reality means that NATO itself would not be taking part (Pfeiffer, 2008).

3 POLITICAL WILL

One important element of NATO's joint defence planning is the existence of the national commitments of individual nation to (1) develop and maintain capabilities and (2) make them available when required. Both these obligations are conditional upon political will, which is itself directly linked to political risk, since it is primarily determined by the level of public support. In the narrower sense, political will is chiefly dependent on the cost-effectiveness and justifiability of use of public funds and taxpayers' money; in the wider sense, it is also dependent on other factors that determine the direction and level of public support. These factors include the safety of personnel involved in international operations and missions and the nature of their tasks, especially if these are offensive.

Readiness to contribute and, prior to that, to develop forces and capabilities, is also dependent on subjective perceptions of threat or danger to a country and, not least, to its inhabitants as taxpayers, voters and public-opinion formers (e.g. different nations face different levels of terrorist threat and understand and perceive that threat differently, just as the political decisiveness of their response to it and their prosecution and destruction of, for example, Al-Qaeda, can be greater elsewhere in the world and the public more tolerant).

Offensive military operations, at least when they first occur, can be shocking to the domestic public, as our soldiers are not only keeping the peace but are also being (or

will be) compelled to fight. This would be understandable in the case of self-defence, but to attack and destroy an enemy looks very much like a war that we should not be fighting because it is not ours and is unfolding far from home. Rather bring the soldiers home, for it is none of our business and we are not interested in others' quarrels. Moreover, some seize upon this feeling to drive their own political interests and are capable of blaming our membership in NATO on account of the fact that the Slovenian army is present in crisis zones and more or less at war with insurgents who are destabilising the entire world. For the same reasons, they are able to attribute responsibility for the relatively expensive purchases of military equipment and arms to NATO membership. But not all countries that are present in crisis areas are members of NATO. The governments of various prominent states express their strategic security interest and priorities in participation, in ISAF and for the stabilisation of Afghanistan for example, completely differently, and are, despite the casualties and the high costs involved, capable of explaining this to their respective publics. Are they more mature than the Slovenian government? It would be better not dwell on this further because this could show us at a disadvantage.

We must admit, and it is not difficult to find considerable proof of it, that the Slovenian public is not naive. It is fair and critical and therefore deserves proper answers, and sometimes, perhaps even without vain and self-regarding reports and communications, also a proper vocabulary for describing facts, reasons, interests, obligations and, not least, concern for its security, even though this is happening far from its borders. Communication with people must simply be methodical, regular and honest. Until they understand, believe and trust that investments in the development of adequate military capabilities are necessary and that they are intended for participation within the whole spectrum of international military operations, including the most intensive (what Slovenes, in common with others, call 'war'), where casualties could arise, every bolder decision by the government constitutes an excessive risk of loss of voter support. This is about either expensive purchases of arms or active participation in international operations and missions. Up to what point an acceptable level of political risk should be taken is a prominent and two-dimensional political question. Governments have a responsibility towards national defence, international security and stability, solidarity and credibility within the international community, and must conduct consistent policies in which they also take responsibility for the assumed risks that are a constituent part of them.

Who is able to communicate with the public more credibly and convincingly than a politician? With the solid support of the military profession which cannot do this itself because it has not received a mandate from the voters to do so. We are not talking here about the complete absence of strategic communication, and we should also not overlook the recent real and relatively convincing media activities of the country's first female minister of defence. Nevertheless, she will be unable to achieve the desired effect on her own.

Experience of NATO membership is teaching us a great deal about this. It is particularly worth pointing out that all democratic countries, including all our NATO Allies, are faced with exactly the same challenges. All are relatively successful in keeping in shape. In the last five years many of them have undergone stiff tests connected with political will and public support for the war in Afghanistan – the oldest members, the slightly younger ones and those that joined at the same time as we did, some with far more established models that exist in Slovenia. We can take courage from the positive surmounting of these difficulties by others and believe that Slovenia can do the same – even when, some day, we suffer our first casualties in an international operation or mission.

4 SLOVENIA'S EXPERIENCE OF THE ACCESSION PROCESS

Between expressing its desire and interest to join NATO and full membership in it, Slovenia made considerable progress and overcame quite a number of obstacles. The process began in 1994, when Slovenia joined the Partnership for Peace and formulated its first Individual Partnership Program (IPP). In 1996 we built on this cooperation by joining the Planning and Review Process (PARP), which remained one of the key tools available to us for accession and alignment. On the basis of our own experiences, we are now able to say that, in places, PARP still has a similar visible role that it had in Slovenia at that time. Put simply, this process is one of shadowing the Alliance process, but adapted to Partner countries, and is excellent preparation for the process of adopting specific objectives and assessing national results on the basis of voluntary commitments. This clearly exposes the inconsistency of national objectives and the deviations from the adopted timeframes.

After the NATO summit in Washington in 1999, at which the programme for future candidate countries was enhanced and adopted (the Membership Action Plan, or MAP), Slovenia joined this cycle, the key function of which was, without doubt, the need or obligation for close interministerial cooperation. Slovenia produced five annual MAPs up to 2004, when it became a full NATO member.

In retrospect, the shock when Slovenia did not receive an invitation to join at the Madrid Summit in 1997, especially given that one could hardly say of the three countries that were invited that they had gone further down the reform path than Slovenia had, was a sobering one and left us with the knowledge that we had work to do, having neither the luck nor the geostrategic position of these three new members. This led to a realisation that we had to complete the defence transition process, which could not be done with half-finished or ill-thought-out defence reforms. It was also clear to the Slovenian government at the summit that, with the best will in the world, this project could not be implemented without adequate resources (Kožar, 2008).

Slovenia received its invitation to join NATO at the Prague Summit, along with six other countries. This was followed by a referendum on 23 March 2003 at which 66% of the population voted in favour of membership. Despite the convincing nature of

this majority, it was still considerably below the over-90% level of support for EU membership. As an invited state, Slovenia joined the Alliance planning cycle at the end of October 2003, officially becoming a full member on 29 March 2004.

We should agree that the experiences and knowledge acquired by Slovenia during the PARP and MAP period have been of crucial importance and served as excellent preparation for entry into the NATO club and the management of the national transformation process.

Despite this, we can regret the fact that in this period we missed a golden opportunity to speed up the enforcement of a more rational organisational framework for the defence sector, a more realistic structure of forces, more selective investment in the right priority areas, primarily on the basis of clearly determined strategic political objectives and policies. It seems that we have been successful in that fraught contest between preservation of the old, of dubious usefulness, and the new, which too many people mistakenly imagine is forced upon us by NATO. NATO does not, of course, either order or demand; instead, it strives to influence the development of proper, and therefore usable and beneficial, capabilities. We have managed to preserve almost everything we wished to preserve, and most of this is still too much today, making the problems greater and more painful. The financial crisis is still deepening and revealing the truth. It is a shame that we have not managed or not wanted to make more use of the tools as part of the Partnership for Peace, and particularly of the PARP and MAP processes, or of the first five years of membership. The only thing we have actually proved by this is that the sovereignty of a NATO member country is never in question.

When joining NATO, other Alliance members have stood alongside and supported us to a considerable degree, particularly the UK, US, Germany and Italy, for which we must be grateful. Although there has been positive progress, if we look back we can see that we have not always properly understood or even wanted to understand, still less make full use of, the advice we have received. Despite the long path to membership, we have still not managed to shake off a mistrust of the advice of Alliance representatives; we have therefore continued with our over-extended and over-dispersed development of capabilities of doubtful usability. This could be partly attributed to our nature and to our mistrust of foreigners, our bloody experience of alighting from the burning runaway train that was Yugoslavia, not to mention the suffering of the Slovenian people and their struggle for existence throughout history; and to this we can surely add the enforcement of the partial interests of individual groups and of professional (and sometimes political) lobbies, who pursue their own separate interests within the defence system and are concerned merely with their own patch of ground. For the latter we always find an explanation, adapted to the current mantra, along the lines of: *'We will defend ourselves in our own way, this is what history teaches us; We must build a Slovenian army, not a branch establishment of the NATO army; We are investing too much in NATO forces goals and too little in capabilities to serve national needs; NATO has its own interests and does not want to see militarily strong states in the Balkans, which is why they propose that we have armed*

forces without supersonic aircraft and rationalise the scope, structure and determination of priorities; They only want to use us to do their dirty work around the world. Some of these accusations are a real mix of fairytales and the ceaseless conspiracy theories which, unfortunately, always find an audience within the profession as well as among the general public. We have to admit that the general public is fairly indifferent to most of these issues and is stirred up only upon mention of the money or the costs which, as a rule, it does not approve of. Because, as we have already said, the public does not feel threatened militarily, the 'spirit' of the Alliance has not been internalised; this is because the political world addresses it so rarely on these issues.

5 SLOVENIA'S EXPERIENCE IN THE AREA OF DEFENCE POLICY AND PLANNING AFTER FIVE YEARS OF NATO MEMBERSHIP

Full membership in NATO and the subsequent transformation of the Slovenian defence system have even further dictated the need for a change of the paradigm of defence spending – i.e. where to invest defence funds and how. But before this we must change our thinking, our awareness about where and how we can take care of our own national defence. There can be no more excuses to the effect that we are not yet within the ambit of collective defence, although there is no lack of scepticism of all kinds that generates doubt as to the seriousness of NATO, solidarity between Alliance members and adherence to Article 5 of the Washington Treaty. With entry into NATO, a critical mass of elements was reached for defining new prospects for the development of defence capabilities. Efforts have been made towards the development of a modern, efficient and professional military organisation which, together with NATO, will be capable of ensuring national security, integration within a system of collective defence, and an active contribution to the security and stability of the strategic environment through participation in international operations and missions.

The professionalisation of the army in 2003 brought an end to the conscription system, which in turn reduced the volume of the armed forces. A contractual reserve gradually replaced the compulsory reserve. Integration with the Alliance had to be ensured at all levels and cooperation with Alliance partners facilitated, particularly within the NATO military structure and in international operations and missions. This means there was a significant move away from the development of forces and capabilities intended exclusively for national defence or for territorial operations to those capable of being deployed in collective defence. The Slovenian army redirected its priorities from stationary to mobile forces, while planning, which had been weighed down by direct military threats, became capabilities-based planning for the entire range of NATO operations.

There is still too little understanding of the new circumstances here in Slovenia. Interoperable, mobile and sustainable forces of an expeditionary character are the only useful capabilities, for national and collective defence as well as for participation in international operations and missions. National defence would take place under

conditions of collective defence, which means that Slovenian capabilities would, as part of NATO forces under the command of the Supreme Allied Commander, work with Alliance capabilities – that is, in the most likely scenarios which, in the absence of any direct military threat, we cannot at all conceive of abstractly. The question is raised of whether, in these circumstances, the Chief of General Staff of the Slovenian Armed Forces is the recipient of Alliance forces or provides forces to NATO, even though it would be a question of defence of Slovenian territory, i.e. a question of national defence. This is a similar situation, albeit somewhat simplified, to one in which forces would be provided if another Alliance country were to be threatened or would be transferred there and take part in an operation under Article 5 of the Washington Treaty. The capabilities we are describing are also the only capabilities able to perform tasks within operations led by the UN, EU or NATO. In addition, they are also the most appropriate for support for the capabilities of the system of protection against natural and other disasters or in international rescue or humanitarian operations, if indeed the army is asked to undertake such non-combat tasks. None of the above requires the creation of special military capabilities – which would in any case be completely impossible from financial and other aspects. One set of forces suffices for all the tasks outlined above, although that set of forces does have to meet the criteria of usability and readiness.

By becoming a NATO member, Slovenia signalled its adherence to the principle of fair burden sharing, which is a key principle of Alliance operation and enables every member country to bear a just share of the burden so that it is not simply a recipient of joint security. Burden sharing is manifested in the objectives which all nations must strive to meet. These objectives are a certain share of GDP that must be set aside for defence, and the development of forces and capabilities that are able to operate within NATO's collective defence system and that are, at the same time, suitable for participation in operations on the basis of a joint political decision of all members. As far as the latter are concerned, the sharing of burdens is accompanied by the sharing of risk, since the actual deployment of capabilities is about much more than simply spending money. With everything it is a question of understanding *Realpolitik* as applied to the historically expressed national interest. To just be there and not do anything for the common cause is not the way to proceed (Bučar, 2007).

Conclusion NATO has already begun a process of formulating a New Strategic Concept which will give transformation a more appropriate political context and vision for the future development of the Alliance. Today most people understand what NATO does; however, they are considerably less certain about how this is linked to their own security. We expect the New Strategic Concept to provide a clear framework for the operation of the Alliance in the 21st century – one that will be understandable in any description of the future imperatives and operations of the organisation and in any explanation of why these tasks cannot be assumed by other international bodies or indeed why, given their mission, the division of tasks between the EU, UN, OSCE and AU is necessary. It remains crucial for the Alliance that political elites and the public realise that the understanding of security has changed and that this must be

followed by a change in the measures to ensure security. Operations in remote areas of the world are simply inextricably linked with the modern concept of maintaining security. These operations are hazardous, very expensive and therefore, whichever way one looks at them, demanding and complex, with no guarantee of success. Ensuring security today and in the future will be a considerably more demanding task than in previous decades; nevertheless, security will remain far from ideal. We also expect clear definitions concerning collective defence so that public confidence in all nations returns to this most important segment of NATO – one which the majority of members regard as the glue that holds the Alliance together.

Returning to Slovenia, it cannot be emphasised too strongly that the current security environment makes imperative the need for a different way of thinking, a different mentality, which incorporates a shift away from national to collective defence. Slovenia has to realise that 'we are NATO', that we jointly formulate the decisions within its framework that have to be realised at the national level as well, and that NATO is not some kind of independent supranational organisation that operates independently and places pressure on individual members. Moreover, there has to be an understanding that NATO does not lie only within the domain of ministries of foreign affairs and of defence. Membership encompasses the whole of the country, which is why it is imperative that a comprehensive and coordinated approach is taken that brings together all players, including all ministries, parliament, civil entities and NGOs. Slovenia must be aware of the reasons that led it towards NATO membership and the objectives that it wishes to achieve by membership. At the same time, cooperation between civil and military capabilities must be improved. This must begin at the national level, with joint planning, training, preparations and improvements to the flow of information.

On the basis of the experience gained so far in the area of defence planning, it is clear how important harmonisation with NATO and the provision of links between all planning disciplines are. Realistic national plans must be ensured that lead to realistic expectations on the part of NATO, with an estimation of the scarce and increasingly limited financial resources made as a matter of priority and these resources allocated appropriately. We owe this not least to the taxpayers, since any loss of their trust because of non-transparent and reckless use of their money could backfire heavily on us. From this point of view it should be emphasised that an increase in the interoperability and usability of forces does not simply mean purchasing the latest and most expensive equipment, but securing cooperation with other Allied armed forces, investing in language training, doctrine, training and an understanding of concepts. The most recent Alliance evaluation of our plans emphasised that while they were consistent, they were also complex and demanding in terms of content and timescale, and almost entirely inflexible. The tiniest slip can cause a chain reaction and thus place the final objective at risk – the establishment of Slovenian armed forces that are small in size but efficient, highly professional and with modern equipment, mobile and interoperable. These would be armed forces that are capable, together with NATO, of successfully realising their own national missions and tasks and those of the Alliance. There are more than enough opportunities to slip up during

this current financial and economic crisis, even more so for one of the smallest ally of NATO with such limited frameworks. This has, unfortunately, happened this year.

As far as resources go, we hardly need to be reminded that effective and efficient transformation is not possible without sufficient funds for defence. Securing sufficient financial resources and allocating them properly is the basis of all our efforts. The current trends in this regard are fairly worrying, since we are moving away from a planned total number and losing the target ratio of expenditure on personnel, operations and maintenance, equipment and infrastructure (ratio of 50 : 30 : 20). In the long term, it is imperative that we maintain at least modest real growth in defence expenditure and guard against any possible reduction.

We should also not forget or overlook the experiences we have undergone in international operations and missions, since this year marks the 12th year of Slovenia's participation (1997). The fact that these modern NATO operations take place outside the territory of the Alliance, in very challenging environments and even without the support of the host country, makes them highly complex and demanding affairs and renders the provision of logistical support even more difficult. If we are to ensure our effective participation in operations and improve the development of capabilities, it is crucial that we learn from our experiences and provide the appropriate training. Slovenia must remain active and ambitious in international operations and missions. In the name of fair burden sharing and the fair sharing of risk, we must also assume more demanding tasks, including increasing our participation in NATO Reaction Forces. By doing so we will contribute in the best possible way to international security and stability as well as our own. In simple terms, we are defending our homeland far from its borders.

All the experiences outlined above lead us to find that we must invest only in capabilities with potential; expenditure on anything else is wasteful and, given the current economic climate, as confirmed by numerous warnings and even more pieces of advice, would be unfair to the people of Slovenia. Unfortunately, owing to its objective limitations, which include financial ones, Slovenia will never be able to secure the entire range of capabilities for itself, but a halfway solution could in these cases still be catastrophic. This could easily be proved by the size of the defence budget. If it is only around half a billion euros, the entire range indeed cannot be built; it is therefore necessary to focus on priorities, with almost no flexibility, which the current savings measures clearly confirm.

One element that we wish to point out in this conclusion is the size of our armed forces. The arguments opposing a reduction in the target number are well known; however, we must warn of the consequences that a failure to reduce the current numbers will bring about (the temporary shift from 14,000 to 10,000 is simply a paper exercise). The Alliance has already adopted a political decision on the new more demanding criteria relating to the sustainability and mobility of forces. If the current number of 10,000 members of the armed forces (including the voluntary reserve) remains unchanged, we will have to build capacities that will ensure the

permanent rotation of 1,000 members and ensure mobility and adequate support for 5,000 (we are talking, of course, of numbers that apply to a more appropriate internal structure, which is still not in place). We do not want to make ourselves feel better by comparing ourselves with other Alliance members, but we do have to point out that these numbers are unrealistic from the aspect of national needs and capabilities and also of NATO's expectations. They are also and above all most likely out of step with the expectations of the Slovenian public. If we wish to be more realistic in our national ambitions – by sustaining up to 700 military personnel in international operations and missions, for example – and in the worst case, i.e. collective defence, maintaining a battalion-sized combat group (numbering around 1,200) for one year, we must direct our development in the long-term towards a smaller number of armed forces personnel and develop a better internal structure than we have today.

Defence policy must propose realistically achievable and relevant long-term objectives, together with a financial framework, while a defence planning system can, following political definition by the highest state bodies, define a timetable of development for the medium-term periods and, as far as possible, harmonise the efforts of all planning disciplines with the objectives that have been designed. Adjustments and amendments will doubtless be necessary and present, but the objective must remain clear and must be supported by a robust and unrelenting political will. In this way we will set out the path along which we will travel with NATO and the EU.

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