

## Knowledge Based, Network Centric Approach in Strengthening Transatlantic Link with the New NATO Members in SEE

By Dr. Velizar Shalamanov

### Introduction.

The current diversity of new risks and threats, as well as new opportunities and responsibilities for projection and protection of our common values and interests, are considered by some to be risks in and of themselves for the further development of Euro-Atlantic solidarity and cooperation. There is a real challenge to build common assessments and strengthen perceptions about the security agenda, to define a common set of instruments, especially when it comes to military operations, needed expeditionary forces, their basing, modernization, training and most of all modalities of use, combined command and control, and support “out of area” as well as long term sustainability.

In the context of transatlantic security cooperation, Bulgaria has a very clear record of supporting the first (1990/1) and second (2003) Gulf wars (operations) as well as IFOR, SFOR *Allied Force Operation*, KFOR and *Enduring Freedom Operation*, followed by ISAF. Furthermore, just after 9.11 the Bulgarian Parliament and Government declared full support for the war against terrorism, deciding to act as a “de facto” member of NATO and became “full” member of the antiterrorist coalition with its behavior in the Security Council of UN, with decision to send troops in Afghanistan and Iraq as well as by providing essential logistic support to operations in Afghanistan and Iraq with an airport in Burgas, but not only. At the same time Bulgaria increased its participation in Bosnia in order to free US troops for Iraq and with decision of NATO to take over mission in Afghanistan substantially improved its participation in ISAF and new security programs there. Our country proposed NGO support to Iraq with the project to establish the Atlantic Association in Baghdad (as we did in Belgrade) and considers in addition to offer humanitarian help to provide support for a program of building a new type of Civil Protection Service in support of the Iraqi people. Bulgaria is strongly considering an option to participate with specialists in building the new armed forces of Afghanistan and Iraq. It is seriously discussed how to support, in the best way with the TEREM SHC and Academy of Sciences, research and development capacity, the maintenance and overhaul of Soviet made military equipment and its modernization to be interoperable with western systems in the long term (in close cooperation with western companies) for these countries.

The record of Romania - our northern neighbor – is similar, adding SEEDM (Sought East Europe Defense Ministerial) and BLACKSEAFOR. With a look at the map to see how these two countries are situated in relation to the Western Balkans, Afghanistan, Iraq and having in mind the new US, NATO and EU security strategies and force posture, it is clear that a lot could be achieved.

The paper is focused on drafting a conceptual framework, based on an idea of Knowledge Based, Network Centric Approach in strengthening the transatlantic link with the involvement of the new NATO / EU members in SEE. There are five aspects to this approach:

- New security agenda (case of SEE)
- New Combined Joint Expeditionary Task Forces (CJETF) and new US/NATO/EU footprint in SEE
- New combined joint modernization and training strategies (CJMT) for the new CJETF
- New network of Centers of Excellence (CoE) in the area of Research and Development (R&D) and Education and Training (E&T) in SEE to support NATO / EU security and defense transformation
- New outreach mission - projection of security Eastward - PfP zone and Large Middle East with the Euroatlantic Center for Security and Integration Studies (ECSIS)

All of the above aspects strengthen the transatlantic links in the process of dual enlargement of NATO and EU. They also take into account that a new role of the US and cooperation with Russia demands intellectual efforts to be developed and integrated in a sound strategy, supported politically and economically. Public attitudes are of great importance for the successful implementation. It is why other dimensions of the approach itself is to provide understanding and motivation within politicians, business and civil society to invest resources in pursuing such an action plan.

The paper is based on the experience of the Security Sector Reform Coalition (SSRC) in Bulgaria, working on national basis, in SEE and larger in the framework of the PfP Consortium of Defense Academies and Security Study Institutes (further Consortium) to develop a common vision and gain political, business and public support for its implementation. The focus is on the Bulgarian dimension of the issue, but it is clear that it is combined joint effort and well-orchestrated endeavor in all NATO, EU and even PfP countries is a real key for success. Such harmonization on the intellectual and conceptual level could be achieved through strategic community build around the Consortium with a network of projects, connected with security agenda / crisis management, future of NATO / EU common security and defense policy, security sector reform and the use of new information technologies in education and training.

New security agenda: future of SEE after 2004 dual enlargement of NATO / EU. It is still open transatlantic and even intra-European debate about new threats, risks and associated with them security strategy with a new set of operations assigned to the Armed Forces and Security Sector at large. Most of the issues in the debate are closely related with the future of SEE after dual enlargement of NATO / EU in 2004, footprint of US in the region and projection of stability eastward from the region.

It is clear that new security agenda was a natural way and rapidly accepted in SEE and especially in Bulgaria and Romania – two new invited countries to join NATO with a clear EU commitment for them to enter the union in next less than five years.

Bulgaria is currently considering consolidation of its participation for the operations in Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq (understanding its key geographic and geopolitical role) in the framework of the Strategic Defense Review and wants to accomplish this important security task in cooperation with US, NATO, EU and neighboring states – allies in NATO and in future EU - as Romania, Turkey and Greece. We believe that long-term strategy for security, based on successful participation of Bulgaria and Romania in the framework of NATO and EU enlargement as well as an optimal US footprint in the region is needed, possible and key for transatlantic security and economic cooperation. With the operations and reconstruction / democratization programs in Western Balkans, Afghanistan, Iraq and possibly other places for the next decade, Bulgaria and Romania alongside other allies in the SEE are natural positive elements for success not only in strengthening transatlantic link, but for transforming the political and economic landscape in the greater Middle East and SEE itself.

The only successful SEE project can be in the framework of NATO/EU enlargement and integration of this region with a vision for further cooperation with the adjacent regions on the East, South East and South of SEE. Because NATO and EU themselves are in the process of adaptation. This means that the countries in the region will embrace transformation in this transition period and simultaneously will participate in the transfer of “Transition & Transformation Know-How” Eastward to the Black Sea, Caucasus, Central Asia, Middle East.

Security is a central issue for the SEE project and it is why a SEECAP extension is important as a joint effort between SEE countries, NATO and EU to achieve a cooperative security environment assessment as well as development of the Security Agenda (SA) for SEE. Based on the Bulgarian experience with Security Watch Bulletin (SWB) published monthly a kind of SEE SWB in printed and electronic version prepared by coalition of NGO / academic institutions in the region would be a good tool for development of common SA and SSR priorities.

The two ongoing projects of the SSRC in Bulgaria – one with the Government and one with the Parliament are good prototypes of SSR Action Plan and SSR Progress Report. The first project is named NATO Integration Program (NIP) – aimed to replace MAP after formal accession in 2004 and is really a nationwide program for security sector transformation and integration on agency, national and international levels. The second project is based on an assessment methodology developed in 2001 to monitor readiness of joining NATO, currently updated to evaluate progress in the SSR with a set of criteria and above mentioned NIP blueprint. This experience can be easily transferred to other countries with capable NGO and a network for SEE harmonized national Action Plans and Progress Reports to be established with opportunity to draft regional year reports.

Knowledge based, network centric transformation, both shaped and motivating dual NATO/EU enlargement and stability projection in the framework of US-NATO-EU-Russia strategic cooperation is a current success formula. It has to be supported by instruments of SSR Action Plan / Progress Report mechanism and the main goal is not only reforms in SEE, but long-term security strategy for regions eastward of NATO/EU moving borders. At the same time global war against terrorism is a reality and not only of today – it will be long term driver of security agenda development.

New CJETF and the new allied footprint in SEE. Mentioned strategy is connected with the large spectrum of operations, which will be performed out of NATO/EU area currently and in foreseeable future. There is serious need for CJETF and reconstruction / integration capabilities, both for NATO and EU as well as for US led ad-hoc coalitions. The contribution of new NATO members from SEE is a matter of their security and development through participation. In this context, with the SSRC Memorandum #2 to the Parliament, President and Government of Bulgaria the following proposal was developed:

1. Establishment of a JETF which is to include:

- Joint Special Operation Forces / Gendarme / Police Task Force with helicopter group (400 persons).
- Light infantry (400 persons) plus engineers (200 persons).
- NBC company (100 persons) and Civil Protection team (50 persons).
- Field hospital (rapid reaction medical team of 50 persons).
- Logistics team to support and sustain the deployed elements of the JETF (in Afghanistan, Kosovo, Bosnia as well as in Iraq and other areas - 100 persons).

2. In order to build the JETF, it is essential to consider the following immediate actions:

- request to the U.S. for C4 and force protection equipment in order to provide interoperability and integration with coalition forces, as well as reach-back capability to the National Military Command Center (NMCC) in Sofia.

- freeze wasteful projects, including the current one to modernize the MiG-29 fleet, fixed communication network, artillery fire control and others and redirect the resources to the creation and maintenance of the JETF as a Bulgarian contribution to the NATO Rapid Response Force (NRF) and European Rapid Reaction Forces (ERRF).

- in order to increase the effectiveness of the JETF to establish a dedicated Joint Operations Command (HQ) around NMCC.

3. The existence of the JETF would enable the Bulgarian government to deploy on short notice its various elements. Readiness will be kept on rotational basis drafting units from the collective defense forces and deployable elements of Gendarme, Police and Civil Protection services.

As a second pillar of responding to the challenges of new risks, threats and associated with them operations, the new concept of an allied presence on Bulgarian territory is envisioned. US footprint and allied presence of NATO and EU is connected with dual

use infrastructure, achieving interoperability and most of all combined joint participation in operations, related to the security of Euroatlantic community as well as promotion of peace and stability around, where interests of this community are concerned. This concept is named “Network Centric Integration, Supported by Presence” and will seriously influence SSR in the region, harmonized with the transformation process in NATO, EU and US.

New concept needs more coordination of the process for building new facilities network and cooperation in optimal use of the existing one. New long-term vision could be rather more fruitful if developed jointly and used to optimize the process of SEE integration and NATO-EU cooperation.

In support of the concept as a Memorandum #3 of the SSRC the following proposal was developed:

1. Parliamentarian approval of a comprehensive national strategy for hosting allied military bases including:
  - joint air base to be used as a hub by both the U.S. and NATO (as well as EU in future).
  - joint naval base to be used as a sea entry point.
  - specialized joint training facilities in at least two training ranges as well as the specialized air-defence training facility near Black Sea.
  - joint arms testing facilities for new equipment and munitions.
  - joint educational centre for security sector reform and information technologies management.
  - information infrastructure to support military presence and operations in adjacent regions.
  - coordination cell for military presence management with a permanent U.S./NATO/EU mission.
2. The implementation of the strategy to begin with an exercises of the Bulgarian JETF with allied forces for missions in Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq. Joint exercises to be used as a tool to cascade experience, concepts, armaments and equipment to the Bulgarian JETF as well as to form the Force’s maintenance fund.
3. Identify civilian and military infrastructure components and mechanisms for their joint use by NATO and Bulgaria and possibilities for hosting NATO structures, committees, agencies and working groups as well as for participation in the security sector reform in PfP countries and post-conflict reconstruction areas.

These two proposals are under serious consideration in the framework of the Strategic Defense Review (2003-2004) and hopefully will be implemented in cooperation with US, NATO, EU and the neighbors.

New CJMT for the new CJETF. The above EJTF and presence concept are related to the modernization programs for the military forces and security sector as a whole, especially C4ISR, modern weapons, protection of forces, training facilities, mobility

and logistics issues. Many of these programs can be regional with serious participation of major NATO countries, including reorientation of the local defense industry companies through joint projects and offset programs, based on effective defense industry and business cooperation with leading western defense contractors. The formation of joint ventures, cooperative technological programs in support of current acquisition priorities will allow utilization of future program opportunities over the long run. To reach these objectives Bulgaria and the NATO / EU, member states as well as western defense contractors, need to engage in a discussion on the following issues:

- planning for Bulgarian military capabilities and strategies for cooperation;
- programs for modernization and restructuring of defense capabilities with respective funding (national budget, foreign military assistance, NATO / EU programs);
- joint research and development in pursuing force goals;
- direct / indirect investments and defense acquisition rules;
- program management and training.

In the short run, decision makers are seeking to establish the country's future specialization within NATO / EU as identified by the Prague Capability Commitment and EU Headline Goal. The following capabilities have been listed as the possible areas of specialization in future allied missions:

- special operations module with combat and transport helicopters;
- mechanized (infantry, police, gendarmerie) module;
- engineering and NBC modules;
- logistics module;
- medical support module;
- civil protection module;
- C4 module to integrate the above capabilities.

Meanwhile decision makers are planning to build defense capabilities to be used on the national territory and when needed to support allied missions. These goals require:

- integration in the NATO air defense system;
- developing a system for sea shore and land sovereignty, compatible with NATO / EU standards;
- policing and civil protection system on the territory, compatible with NATO / EU standards.

Finally, the long-term goal of this modernization process is to achieve:

- modernizing the entire security sector, including defense industry;
- national integration of the institutions and elements of the security sector;
- integration of the national security sector in the Euro-Atlantic security sector.

This large modernization strategy is matched with another such one in the area of training, based on interoperable doctrines and force organization with implementation of modern IT – simulation, ADL, wargaming and modern training ranges.

New network of CoE for R&D and E&T in SEE. If Bulgarian Defense Reform Plan 2004 was seen as the reform plan, Plan 2008 should be designed as the transformation plan based on a vision going beyond 2008.

One of the crucial issues in the transformation of the Bulgarian armed forces is the extent of use of new technologies allowing participation in allied missions based on network-centric warfare. This issue cannot be addressed by simply reorganizing and adopting doctrines and training with the available equipment, which was designed in the 1960s and very rarely in the 1980s. What is needed is a technological leap supported by the integrated efforts of the Ministry of Defense (MoD), Bulgarian Academy of Science (BAS), defense industry and western defense companies in the management of the modernization programs.

The transformation's technological aspect is crucial and it cannot be substituted for by geostrategic position, hosting military bases, contribution with traditional forces or logistical and repair functions in the Alliance. The right approach to the issue of technological leap requires a modern organization, which according to the Law on Administration could lead to the creation of a Modernization and Rearmament Agency managing the programs' implementation. The Agency receives the requirements and provides a working system through integrated program teams including clients, scientists, engineers and traders in close cooperation with the NATO counterparts. The Agency would provide advanced technological demonstrations; concept development and experimentation in assisting the transformation process; create CoE, which participate in the NATO arms programs; and in the future in the EC's as well as in the network of the Allied Command Transformation of NATO. The Center for the Study of National Security and Defense (CNSDR), the Institute for Space Research, and the Institute for Metal Studies – all in the BAS are the Agency's natural partners as they have created technological centers and have accumulated expertise in this area.

Without the technological component of transformation, Bulgaria will be unable to become an effective NATO member. However, with very few exceptions, Bulgarian industry does not possess this component. This is barrier to implementing offset programs, creating joint ventures, and joint projects in third countries. The state still has three instruments in this area - investment program for arms modernization, foreign military assistance, NATO and EC's programs; state owned defense companies; and technological centers in BAS. The quick integration of the three instruments in the currently positive military-strategic, political and economic international environment under an affective management can make the transformation of the technological aspect possible.

As CNSDR in BAS must be defined as the R&D partner, the Defense Staff College should be E&T (to change the way of thinking) partner of the NATO / EU in pursuing security sector transformation through network of CoE and sound coordination.

New outreach mission with the ECSIS. Experience in SEE, where the big diversity in the region and links with adjacent regions require *regional coordination and trans-regional know-how transfer* leads to an idea of the ECSIS as physical body to support the process and to be clearing house as well as point of reference for NATO, EU, UN, OSCE and countries on the issues discussed herein. Concept of such a center is developed and largely discussed to be started as Bulgarian contribution to the SSR and post-conflict reconstruction and integration processes, later to be supported by interested states and organizations.

Bulgaria will be in the unique position to be NATO members, working very close with EU in the negotiation process and being a very close ally of US in the war against terrorism. Especially for the countries in Black Sea, Caucasus, Central Asia area the model of Bulgaria, considered in the past the closest satellite of the former Soviet Union will be very useful. We can add that in these countries that Russian language knowledge is great advantage for the teams supporting SSR.

Concept development and experimentation endeavor with ECSIS is with three pillars:

- Integration of the security related knowledge centers (research, education and training) in every country in the form of SSR;
- Using PIMS/ADL and PfP Consortium environment to support internal integration as well as regional cooperation, which can lead to Virtual Distributed Security Sector College;
- Management of a network of projects in security area, which will fill system with knowledge and provide its circulation and projection.

All this is leading to the concept where in addition to government programs the role of NGOs can be of great value if well organized and oriented to “knowledge management” and “knowledge transfer” through regional projects based on successful national models – first in the region and after that from SEE to other regions. In this context ECSIS could be “a joint venture” between administration and civil society organizations, supported by business and with participation of international organizations.

Conclusions. Many of the keywords used in the description of this proposal are not new, but they are organized in a new way in a strategy, tested in Bulgaria, with a clear understanding that NATO / EU – wide action plan is needed.

First of all, the analysis above proves how important the network approach is and how diverse the elements are in the network. It is not only jointness for military services and branches, but includes police, gendarmes, border guards, civil protection, special services as well as the pure civilian emergency forces. At the same time the international dimension is larger, including countries outside NATO, EU, even PfP,



but keeping NATO (even for EU operations) as a main C4ISR back bone. The most important characteristics of the network are adaptability and flexibility not only for force structures, but in legal, public, political and economic arenas.

Secondly, the network's main focus is to be proactive and to reach new "territories". It means outer orientation, outreach programs focus, but using bi-directional approach – active involvement of outer zone.

Thirdly, there are two main tools for shaping the outer space and expanding the network: input by joint R&D and output through joint E&T.

One element of the solution, based on the experience in SEE, is the establishing of ECSIS with focus on:

- Security sector reform, reconstruction and integration studies
- IT role in reform studies (e-security and e-development)
- Simulation and advanced distance/attending learning based training on the above topics for the international groups from international staff

Such a center (part of the network of centers of excellence) is a physical node of integrating different established networks of NATO, EU, UN, OSCE and the opportunity to strengthen not only transatlantic relations, but public-private partnership as well with the involvement of administration, business, civil society (academic and NGO players). As such the center will be a valuable member of the PfP Consortium and as in holography, will be itself a consortium. Geographical and geopolitical hosting of the center along with its joint open character is a key for its success, so the decision to be based in Bulgaria is beneficial simultaneously for Bulgaria and Romania, for Western Balkans and Caucasus, for NATO and EU, for the US and for the greater Middle East.