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**MAIN ASPECTS OF COLLECTIVE DEFENCE
RECONFIGURATION THROUGH THE LENS OF NATO
SUMMIT IN CHICAGO. USA AND RUSSIA
– STRATEGIC REORIENTATIONS**

Gheorghe MINCULETE, PhD

Logistics, Finance and Accounting Department / “Carol I” National Defence University/
Bucharest / Romania

Daniela RĂPAN

Centre for Defence and Security Strategic Studies / “Carol I” National Defence University
/ Bucharest / Romania

Abstract:

In the context of the current economic crisis, at the latest NATO Summit in Chicago efforts were made to reshuffle the Alliance on better and more equitable foundations. Essentially, it was an attempt of rebalancing between Europe and USA, on the one hand concerning budget contributions, and on the other hand concerning responsibilities. The cohesion of the Trans-Atlantic Community is under pressure because of the scarce financial resources, the political quasi-paralysis, the substantial institutional inertia and the emergence of new world powers, among which Russia and China. In its turn, USA is in a round-the-clock race for reducing its responsibilities in Europe and Afghanistan, reorienting itself towards the Asia-Pacific area. This summit has been described as the largest in the Alliance history, but also as one of austerity, Western armies being forced to cooperate more in order not to lose technological supremacy.

Key words: summit, alliance, smart defence, costs, political uncertainty, antimissile shield.

1. Problems among allies before the summit

Just one week before the NATO Summit in Chicago, tensions within the military Alliance were more visible than ever. Americans were upset because the French, Italians and Germans sold state of the art weapons to Russians. On the other hand, British will endow their new carriers and thus, interoperability with the French Air Forces will no longer be possible, although recently, an agreement was signed between the two countries in this direction. Moreover, former British defence ministers claimed that the US are spending money on useless military projects¹.

Just two days before the summit, a US Congress committee report warned that unprecedented arms sales to Russia risk destabilizing the very security that the Alliance is committed to protect. The contract by which France engaged to deliver the Russian army four Mistral-class assault ships are the first sales of a NATO state of modern offensive

¹ Paul Ciocoiu, *NATO - Summitul aliaţilor dezbinăţi*, available at <http://www.evz.ro/detalii/stiri/nato-summitul-aliatilor-dezbinati-981065.html>, accessed on August 27, 2012.

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military capability toward Russia. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, as well as other NATO countries particularly expressed concern over the possibility that Moscow relocate these ships in the Baltic Sea.

United States opposed from the start to the agreement, which was signed in June 2011, warning that the decision is likely to send the wrong message to Russia and allies in Central and Eastern Europe. Congressional report criticizes Germany's decision to build in Russia a modern training centre, as well as an agreement whereby the Italian government will deliver tens of armoured vehicles to Russian army.

2. The agenda of the summit

NATO Summit in Chicago, attended by leaders of 28 NATO Member States and of 13 partner countries, was considered the most important since the creation of the organization; the outcome was a joint declaration signed by participants. The main topics approached at the event were the anti-missile shield, withdrawing troops from Afghanistan according to a concrete timetable, relations between NATO and Afghanistan after 2014, smart defence, the nuclear status quo and Alliance's partnerships.

NATO Alliance was faced with major decisions regarding future prospects – short-term, but especially long-term strategy. Chicago list also included issues such as: enhancing agreements on NATO transformation from the Lisbon Summit, the future NATO missile defence and the future of U.S. tactical nuclear weapons in Europe². It is at this summit that NATO declared operational the first phase of missile shield designed to protect Europe. This is the first of four stages in which European missile shield is to be installed, the defensive system being completed by 2020.

NATO formally announced that the anti-missile shield is going to be installed in Eastern Europe, essential elements being placed in Romania. The shield is an interceptor system of missiles that could target Eastern Europe from Iran; Russia, however argues the system is actually directed against it. The US-Romanian missile system is not a NATO integrated project. Missile capabilities installed in Romania will become operational from 2015. After this date, the two countries will discuss integration of this system within NATO framework. U.S. President Obama said in presenting the results of the summit that participants agreed that NATO "is declaring an interim capability for the system"³. Although the missile shield is strongly criticized by authorities in Moscow, the leader of the White House reassured them that it is not directed against Russia.

NATO leaders decided to continue the mission in Afghanistan by the end of 2014, when international forces' troops (130,000, soldiers) are going to be withdrawn, the responsibility for security of the country's being gradually transferred, and then Afghan authorities will have full responsibility on security. This issue included the establishment of the organization of Afghan troops, whose number could be reduced from 352,000 to

2 Adrian Marius Dobre, *Summitul NATO de la Chicago: fără Putin, cu apărare pe bani puțini și cu retragerea trupelor din Afganistan*, available at <http://pesurse.ro/2012/05/22/summitul-nato-de-la-chicago-fara-putin-cu-aparare-/>, accessed on August 27, 2012.

3 President Obama on Results of NATO Summit, The White House Office of the Press Secretary, *Remarks by the president at a NATO press conference*, South Building Chicago, Illinois, available at <http://london.usembassy.gov/obama268.html>, accessed on August 27, 2012.

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228,000 soldiers and policemen. Also, starting with 2015, NATO will provide over four billion dollars annually to fund Afghan troops⁴. According to estimates, Washington could provide about \$ 2.5 billion, but the rest is expected to come from Europe.

NATO involvement in this country for nine years has produced what some have described a collective fatigue among European and questioned the NATO engagement in conflicts outside Europe. After the mission in Afghanistan ends, NATO will remain without a major operation for the first time in the last 20 years.

The second challenge is the sovereign debt crisis in Europe, which forced the Alliance states to reduce their military spending. Before the crisis in Greece, NATO spending had dropped by 21% compared to 1991⁵.

Enhanced military cooperation is intended to mitigate the negative impact of reduced military budgets and meet Americans' exigencies, requiring Europeans to assume more defence responsibilities and obligations⁶. In this regard, the summit was a real springboard for the initiative called 'smart defence', which is about pooling funds to purchase military equipment. According to the NATO website and declarations of Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen, smart defence aims to encourage allies to cooperate in the development, acquisition and maintenance of military capabilities in a more economically efficient way in a new era of economic austerity and cuts in defence budget. The goal is to do more with less money by changing mentality of NATO members on how to make purchases and be "smarter" when investing in defence capabilities.

A total of 25 projects were launched in Chicago, many of them referring to training of helicopter pilot and teams that serve these appliances on the ground. For instance, one project refers to earth monitoring system (Alliance Ground Surveillance, AGS) which would be financed by 13 allies, including Romania. The five drones (unmanned devices) will give the Alliance a platform for surveillance, intelligence and reconnaissance, otherwise exactly the kind of capability that proved crucial in the Libya campaign.

However, the U.S. administration has a problem in this respect, because it disagrees with the low level of defence spending and military relaxation in Europe. In order to reduce defence spending in the current global crisis, it is imperative that the U.S. administration convince European leaders to adopt a plan of military empowerment – structures, people, logistics, procurement.

North Atlantic project for smart defence is a multinational project, with shared responsibilities, doubled by cooperation projects such as joint air defence of Baltic states or Alliance Ground Surveillance (AGS) program that provides for the acquisition of five Global Hawk aircraft by NATO.

Individual projects such as precision munitions, mine defusing robots, maritime patrol aircraft, air armament centre, maintenance of mine-resistant armoured vehicles were

⁴Paul Ciocoiu, *Summitul NATO de la Chicago, cel mai mare din istoria Alianței*, available at <http://www.evz.ro/detalii/stiri/summitul-nato-de-la-chicago-cel-mai-mare-din-istoria-alianței-prioritatile-de-pe-agenda-982292.html>, accessed on August 27, 2012.

⁵Luciana Pop, *NATO caută rețeta de supraviețuire*, available at <http://www.evz.ro/detalii/stiri/nato-cauta-reteta-de-supravietuire-982181.html>, accessed on August 27, 2012.

⁶ Paul Ciocoiu, *Summitul NATO de la Chicago, cel mai mare din istoria Alianței*, available at <http://www.evz.ro/detalii/stiri/summitul-nato-de-la-chicago-cel-mai-mare-din-istoria-alianței-prioritatile-de-pe-agenda-982292.html>, accessed on August 27, 2012.

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assigned to Denmark, Italy, Germany or the U.S., which will coordinate actions taken by the Alliance on these sectors.

An important issue for the Alliance that was not tackled at this summit was NATO enlargement. Although the summit did not address the expansion, analysts consider that NATO leaders must be extremely careful in future actions. Maintaining the enlargement project is necessary and reaffirming the potential adhesion to NATO of the four candidate countries – Georgia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina – remains a goal. Securing the Balkans, especially in the current context, is also a challenge for NATO and its commitment to Europe.

3. USA's perspective on the Alliance in the new context

According to expert assessment, for 20 years, paying bills in the Alliance has been disproportionately distributed between the two sides of the Atlantic, the consistent effort, of about 75% today, belonging to the United States. Thus, an overdebted Washington hit by the economic crisis is not willing anymore to financially support the huge stowaway called Europe. In addition, another aspect that can not be neglected is the circulation of elites. On Capitol Hill, where it is decided how taxpayers' money is spent, there are emerging young legislators that do not have Euro-Atlantism in their blood. For many of them, "Atlanticism is no longer lived, it has to be learned"⁷. Meanwhile, politicians trained in the tradition of the Cold War, for which the contact with Europe via NATO axis represented their world, are becoming an endangered species. In this light, former secretary of state Robert Gates⁸ warned that future U.S. leaders might conclude that the benefits do not justify the costs of investment in NATO.

The new fiscal reality, complemented by the changing of elites and rebalancing of its priorities to the Pacific, forced Washington to rethink its policies depth towards Europe. Libya intervention was the first signal in this regard, the United States opting to "lead from behind". American participation was necessary, but not sufficient to ensure successful operation. It was Europe that has taken the leading position. This was the first time that the balance of forces in a NATO mission was decisively reversed between the two sides of the Atlantic. In this sense, Libya was the inverse of the operation in Kosovo: 75% of European air strikes were European, 90% of the aviation was European, pilots were Europeans, and European ammunition was launched. In reverse, in Kosovo, 90% of smart ammunition used was American.

USA's plan to transfer the most of its fleet in the Pacific

At present, China has control over the Panama Canal, owns all Greek ports, 90% of "rare earths" – minerals necessary for armaments industry and modern technologies. At the

⁷ Lord Robertson of Port Ellen, Robin Niblett, *Transatlantic Relations: A Case for Optimism*, 6 July 2011, available at <http://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/060711robertson.pdf>, accessed on August, 27 2012.

⁸ Kingston Reif, Emma Lecavalier, *Parting words: Gates and tactical nuclear weapons in Europe*, 14 July 2011, available at <http://www.thebulletin.org/web-edition/op-eds/parting-words-gates-and-tactical-nuclear-weapons-europe>, accessed on August 27, 2012.

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same time, China produces 80% of the components used by the U.S. Armed Forces. Moreover, China is the largest operator of natural mineral resources, has mines in Australia, USA, Middle East and Canada⁹.

In these circumstances, the United States has planned to transfer most of its naval fleet in the Pacific Ocean by November 2020 under its new military strategy focused on Asia. The announcement was made in May this year by the U.S. Secretary of Defence Leon Panetta, who, while in Singapore, said that the fleet movement from the Atlantic to the Pacific will take place before 2020, at the same time with the increase of collaboration with Vietnam and the Philippines¹⁰.

According to U.S. Secretary of Defence, the US Navy will reposition its forces from a proportion of about 50% - 50% at present, between Pacific and Atlantic at 60% - 40% for Pacific, including six carriers, as well as most of the ships and submarines. However, Asian experts wonder if Washington finds the money to meet the commitments made in the region.

The U.S. Navy has about 285 vessels, of which about half are conducted in Pacific. In turn, the Chinese navy increases rapidly, with warships and sophisticated missile systems. China announced this autumn the entry into service of its first aircraft carrier, in a context of strong territorial tensions with Japan, linked to several islands in the China Sea, in a conflict in which Taiwan intervened as well¹¹. However, Beijing seems determined to dominate the rich oil resources of the South China Sea, without taking into account the ambitions of Vietnam or the Philippines¹².

Although U.S. defence representative said that the relocation is not aimed at controlling China's military power, Beijing has suggested that it is not thrilled about strengthening U.S. presence in the Pacific.

In early January 2012, President Barack Obama presented the new U.S. military strategy, which equally aims a reduction of armed forces in the context of austerity measures, at the same time with the maintaining of America's military superiority in the world.

4. Russia's fear and reaction towards the USA antimissile shield in Romania

Launched in 2010, the missile shield project became one of the main contention issues between NATO and Russia, the latter considering it a threat to its security and urging security guarantees in writing that the system will not compromise its ability of

9 Adina Mutar, *Profilul Chinei in strategia Bilderberg*, Ziarul Național, 31.05.12, p. 7.

10 Luciana Pop, *Panetta: SUA își vor transfera cea mai mare parte a flotei în Pacific. Reacția Chinei*, Evenimentul zilei, available at <http://www.evz.ro/detalii/stiri/panetta-sua-isi-vor-transfera-cea-mai-mare-parte-a-flotei-in-pacific-reactia-984743.html>, accessed on August 27, 2012.

¹¹ Online news, September 25, <http://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-international-13290766-video-primul-portavion-chinei-construit-coca-fabricata-urss-intrat-functiune-ziua-care-taiwanul-intervenit-criza-chino-japoneza.htm>, accessed on September 26, 2012.

¹²Luciana Pop, *op.cit.*

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nuclear deterrence, but the Alliance refuses to give them, as it desires a strategic space of manoeuvre¹³.

The missile defence shield – which has just reached an interim operational capability – is under the sign of the following new logic: Poland, Romania, Turkey will host components of the “American Pillar” of the ballistic shield; other European countries will have a series of national contributions in the form of Patriot missile batteries and radars located on offshore platforms which essentially will form the backbone of the European pillar of the shield; NATO, as an organization, will provide the command and control infrastructure that will connect the two pillars in a whole.

Russia believes that the declared enemy for which NATO shield in Europe is being built, Iran, is just a cover for the real reason for the Allies. Iran has no missiles that necessitate such a shield and it has no technology to produce them in the near future, writes the Russian daily Pravda. Therefore, the objective remains getting close to strategic Russian areas.

The first two phases of the European defence system poses no threat to Russian missiles and submarines. However, the last two phases engender a risk for the Russians. What will Moscow do to eliminate the risk? The chief of the General Staff of the Russian Army, General Nikolai Makarov said in this respect: “Taking into account a missile-defence system’s destabilizing nature, that is, the creation of an illusion that a disarming strike can be launched with impunity, a decision on pre-emptive use of the attack weapons available will be made when the situation worsens”¹⁴ In plain words, if it considers it necessary, Russia will be ready to attack preventively the defence system in Europe, and, as U.S. is far overseas, Bulgaria and Romania will have to cope with that.¹⁵

With this purpose, in May this year, as announced by Russian spokesperson of the Defence Ministry, Vadim Koval, Russia successfully launched a new intercontinental missile, whose objective is to counter missile defence system, including missile shield developed by NATO¹⁶.

¹³ According to national press agency Agerpres, *Rusia se pregătește de contracararea scutului antirachetă: lansare, cu succes, a unei noi rachete intercontinentale*, May 23, 2012, available at <http://www.agerpres.ro/media/index.php/international/item/123689-Rusia-se-pregateste-de-contracararea-scutului-antiracheta-lansare-cu-succes-a-unei-noi-rachete-intercontinentale.html>, accessed on August, 27, 2012.

¹⁴ Andrew E. Kramer, *Russian General Makes Threat on Missile-Defense Sites*, May 3, 2012, available at http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/04/world/europe/russian-general-threatens-pre-emptive-attacks-on-missile-defense-sites.html?_r=0, accessed on August 27, 2012.

¹⁵ Adina Mutar, *Rusii au testat „atacul preventiv” asupra scutului antiracheta al NATO*, National, May 23, 2012, available at <http://www.enational.ro/live/rusii-au-testat-%e2%80%9eatacul-preventiv-%e2%80%9d-asupra-scutului-antiracheta-al-nato-155879.html/>, accessed on August 27, 2012.

¹⁶ ***, *Rusia se pregătește de contracararea scutului antirachetă: lansare, cu succes, a unei noi rachete intercontinentale*, Agerpress national news agency, available at <http://www.agerpres.ro/media/index.php/international/item/123689-Rusia-se-pregateste-de-contracararea-scutului-antiracheta-lansare-cu-succes-a-unei-noi-rachete-intercontinentale.html>, accessed on August, 27, 2012.

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The tested device has achieved the target area of Kura polygon in Kamchatka peninsula located in the Russian Far East, near the Pacific Ocean; thus, the objective of this launch has been achieved¹⁷. The launch was carried out from a mobile platform in Plesetsk, northern Russia. This was the second missile test, after the failure of the first experiment on September 27, 2011. The first test was done with the first new Russian strategic missile, a ground-to-ground missile, an enhanced version of the Topol-M intercontinental missile with a range of over 10,000 km, which failed, the device falling shortly after takeoff. Several officials from the Russian military said the missile test was designed to counter NATO missile defence system in Europe, whose initial phase was declared operational in Chicago NATO summit.

5. Conclusions

The political uncertainty, which currently affects almost all major world economies, combined with economic unpredictability create a more uncertain context for the global markets. In this regard, changes in U.S., Europe and China have a direct impact on collective defence and global trends.

NATO countries have adopted in Chicago a comprehensive package allowing the Alliance to preserve an operational capacity adequate to the list of missions undertaken in its official documents. The program established under 'smart defence' concept requires conducting acquisitions and multinational investment in order to develop operational capabilities considered essential, but in a form of collective ownership. One of the projects engaged plans to create intelligent munitions multinational stocks; another project is about creating a multinational centre for training helicopter pilots. The principle is at the basis of NATO's strategic programs.

Unsurprisingly, the recent NATO Summit did not solve all problems. Among other things, Afghanistan is still far from the desired stability, and Russia, led again by President Putin will continue to be a difficult partner. NATO, especially European allies will have to find ways to balance expenditures within the Alliance. European allies cover only 21% of the Alliance's military spending, while Washington is increasingly expressing dissatisfaction in this regard. In time, this may reduce Washington's interest to ensure Europe's security.

The fundamental idea detached from the summit relating the nuclear status quo is that "as long as nuclear weapons exist, NATO will remain a nuclear alliance"¹⁸. In this respect, American officials stated that NATO is willing to reduce its number of nuclear missiles in Europe provided that Russia, whose stock is judged to be far more consistent, will do the same¹⁹.

¹⁷ According to Russian Ministry of defence spokesperson, Vadim Koval, quoted by Interfax news agency.

¹⁸ *NATO Strategic Concept*, p. 14, available at http://www.nato.int/strategic-concept/pdf/Strat_Concept_web_en.pdf, accessed at August 27, 2012.

¹⁹ Lucreția Berzintu, *Summitul speranțelor împlinite*, available at http://romaniadindiaspora.ning.com/profiles/blogs/summitul-speran-elor-mplinite?xg_source=activity; <http://www.europalibera.org/content/article/24589490.html>, accessed on August 27, 2012.

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After Chicago, we have a different NATO, an alliance that assumes political responsibilities as well, and the tendency of this organization is to become global, highly influential. Following this summit, NATO is stronger. Until now, it had two pillars that offered security: conventional forces (army, navy and air) and nuclear forces to deter threats; now, the third pillar was created: the missile defence system²⁰.

At least in the near future, it is difficult to believe that the European NATO members will significantly increase military spending, given the economic problems faced by many of these countries. Under these conditions, the development of joint projects in the 'smart defence' or EU 'pooling and sharing' initiative should be of particular interest for European leaders.

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²⁰ *Declarațiile președintelui Traian Băsescu după Summitul NATO de la Chicago*, <http://ghimpele.ro/prahova/declaratiiile-presedintelui-traian-basescu-dupa-summit-ul-nato-de-la-chicago/>, accessed on August 27, 2012.

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