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MULTINATIONAL APPROACHES IN MILITARY ACQUISITIONS

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Abstract:

Political and military decision makers are trying to influence the future global security in a positive way. In the effort to tackle the new challenge, among other actions, EU launched the initiative for *pooling and sharing* while in NATO *Smart Defence* is at the heart of this new approach. Political environment has to strive to make *Smart Defence* successful. Is it possible to have the top priorities for NATO as the top priorities for each nation? Implementation of the *Smart Defence* concept is an opportunity for the revitalization of the defence industry particularly in EU.

1. Introduction

“Gentlemen, We Have Run Out Of Money; Now We Have to Think”
W. Churchill

Present times bring a political, social and security environment inconceivable at the end of WW II. This was possible due to unexpected developments in some fields: technology, demography or natural resources. The trends of the mentioned aspects and others interrelated with them put the future in the area of unpredictability. Therefore, what can be done? Should we remain in the reactive posture or should we try to have a proactive one? Being proactive is not an easy task anyway, but shaping, to some extent, the future is reasonable. The sum of all actions in this direction will affect finally the security environment that is the most important for contemporary and future society. Thus, political and military decision makers are trying to influence global security in a positive way.

In line with the unforeseen developments, already depicted, Europe has to cope with the extended economic crisis. The immediate reaction was to reduce the defence budgets.

Stockholm International Peace Research Institute provides data showing the defense spending in Europe increased by 4.1 %, during the 1st decade of present century, main contributors being UK and France, while in the most other European countries the spending was decreasing or stagnating. Conversely, China increased defence budget by 189 percent, Russia by 82 percent, the United States by 81 percent and India by 54 percent.¹ In 2011, for the first time, Asia spent more than Europe on defense.

Former U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates warned on the risk of the “demilitarization” of Europe because an increasing number of nations cannot provide appropriate forces to NATO (or EU) operations.

¹ All data from SIPRI Military Expenditure Database 2011, <http://milexdata.sipri.org>.

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In the effort to tackle the new challenge among other actions (severe reductions in forces and equipment, restructuring of the armed forces), the initiative: *pooling and sharing* was launched. To emphasize the importance given by EU to this initiative **I inserted the text below.**

European cooperation on pooling and sharing of military capabilities represents a common response to European capability shortfalls, aiming at enhancing operational effectiveness in a context of financial austerity and a changing strategic environment.

In this context the Council welcomes the significant progress on concrete cooperative initiatives facilitated by the European Defence Agency (EDA) such as on Air-to-Air Refuelling, Medical Support, Training (Counter-IED, Helicopter Training Programme, Air Transport Crew, Fast Jet and Naval) and Maritime Surveillance.[1]

At the same time NATO was forced to take similar measures. The concept launched in the field of capabilities is *Smart Defence*.

Smart Defence is at the heart of this new approach. [...] technology grows more expensive, and defence budgets are under pressure, there are key capabilities which many Allies can only obtain if they work together to develop and acquire them. We therefore welcome the decisions of Allies to take forward specific multinational projects, including for better protection of our forces, better surveillance and better training. [2]

The declaration stipulates achievements and developments in the context of *Smart Defence* such as: interim ballistic missile defence capability as an initial step to establish NATO's missile defence system, Alliance Ground Surveillance system, air policing mission in the Baltic states, a new, leaner and more effective command structure, extended NATO's air command and control system and others.

Table 1 gives a synthetic image of the trans-atlantic cooperation on capabilities.

NATO Strategic Concept	Functional Category	Industrial relevance	TADIC relevance	New Element in NATO?
Collective Defence	TBMD	H	H	Y
	CBRN WMD	H	H	N
	Cyber	H	H	Y
	Anti-Terrorism	H	H	N
	Energy security	H	L	Y
	Emerging technology assessment	H	H	N
Crisis management	Civil-military approach	M	L	Y
	Monitor and analyse the international environment	H	H	N
	Enhance intelligence sharing	H	H	N
Cooperative Security	EU	H	H	Y
	Russia	H	M	Y
Reform and transformation	Reorganisation of NATO – Agencies	H	H	Y

Table1 (Involvement Trans-Atlantic Cooperation in the Lisbon Capabilities Package)[3]

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Burden sharing is a challenging endeavor in all multinational enterprises, but capabilities sharing are even more complex. This approach raises a number of concerns both military and non-military. Thus these concerns approached below should be addressed when dealing with *pooling and sharing* or *Smart Defence*.

2. Non-military concerns

2.1 Political environment has to strive to make *Smart Defence* successful from the national perspective, but mainly in a concerted action, to bring it at the expected level in order to provide required capabilities for the alliance.

Sovereignty concerns are difficult to be addressed within legal-cultural context. Although sovereignty seems to be bounded with the in border aspects, for the time being it is equally important abroad, especially within contemporary security environment; for instance, to protect economical interests. At the same level of importance, but on the pragmatic side, there are the *budgetary allocations*.

Beyond these areas, not new when dealing with military acquisitions, the *perspective* and the *comprehensive approach* are important because the political decision makers have the means to streamline the processes among military, economic and research and development organizations to meet the necessary coherence for a *Smart Defence*.

One of the main benefits of the new concept is the *economy of scale*. This is a well known economical concept that is not working only for the acquisition phase, but also for the lifecycle expenditures.

An additional aspect related with political domain is to align, the allied *level of ambition* with individual nations ones. The challenging part is to correlate them and multinational approaches on capabilities.

2.2 Economy is a crucial part of the system, having the *industry* as a main vector. Defence industry has the major task to balance among *profit*, *enduring existence* and the *protection* of corporate sensitive information.

Taking into account the tough competition for markets, it is a major endeavor for the defence industry to find the appropriate ways for long term cooperation, particularly under *Smart Defence* umbrella. Coherent and coordinated actions should be taken, mostly for the European defence industry, at least to maintain the position on the market.

Although, the governments are using all means to preserve national capabilities in the defence industry, providing a relative safety for the companies, a deep analyze and appropriate actions are necessary for the whole European specific industry, based on current developments and the decreasing European military budgets. The main directions will be toward limitation of intra-European competition and duplication of effort, then focusing on the developments in complementary areas within European space and Northern American industry as well.

2.3 Technology becomes a key factor in all aspects of human life, having a particular magnitude when discussing about military capabilities. In this case it is decisive in terms of efficiency and effectiveness. Preserving technological advance provides an important advantage in modern conflicts but it could be even more important if is shared among allies.

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Some of the characteristics of the modern warfare, accurate information, mobility, precision strike can make the difference only using state of the art technologies. But it is tremendously cheaper to diminish this gap in the era of hybrid conflict than to maintain or increase it. Therefore, it is the alliance duty to find the means to lead the technological field in an efficient way, making it available at a different scale, even through multinational capabilities.

2.4 Research and development has its essential contribution for a praised *Smart Defence*. What makes it special? This is the field that is dealing only with future. It is responsible to find not only what, but largely, how, offering viable solutions for future capabilities. These activities are expensive and, is difficult to determine their efficiency in short term. Thus, the simplest way to reduce the cost is to avoid duplication of effort, directing important resources to other areas according well justified priorities. There are a lot of initiatives in this direction between NATO and EU, for instance. It is still a lot to do from national perspective if the industry is put into discussion.

3. Military concerns

3.1 Defence Planning is the main process in the development of capabilities. A main issue arises from the different systems that are used by the alliance and by the nations, being difficult to evaluate the *effectiveness* in this case.

Furthermore, discussing about planning of multinational capabilities how can we deal with *prioritization*. Is it possible to have the top priorities for NATO as the top priorities for each nation?

Considering *perspective* as vital factor in planning the situation becomes even worse when managing medium term or long term planning, making almost impossible to keep the focus.

3.2 Capabilities are the aim of the processes depicted above and, to be more specific the effects obtained using them. The demanding modern battlefield and the shifting role of the forces in operations impose versatility as a requirement. Consequently a particular effect can be obtained using various capabilities. But *uncoordinated development of capabilities* may lead to some unfilled gaps in terms of effects.

Due to the changes in current operations the weight of the attack capabilities is downsizing. Conversely those capabilities required for protection have an increasing trend, raising the question: who is responsible for which capabilities?

Moving to multinational owned capabilities, to manage a growing number, can become an issue. In the same context – to which extent *modernizations* are affordable for all contributors?

3.3 Specialization is another vector of *Smart Defence*. This is not a new concept in NATO or in operations. It is normally used in current operations for the same reason that brought it as a decisive factor for *Smart Defence*, cost efficiency. But the dimension makes the difference. Whilst during operations it is considered only for that particular case, when we are talking in the context of the new NATO concept it is expected that a number of nations will be specialized on a number of capabilities for a non determined period of time.

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Under present severe circumstances, for small countries will be a great challenge. They will be forced to “bet” a significant amount of the resources on those capabilities. For those that cannot be provided they should rely only on the allies. This approach will conduct to deployed capabilities to cover the permanent gaps. This means to choose wisely the specialization for each country, keeping an eye on the complete pool of capabilities.

Moreover should be established which of these capabilities will be multinational and which only national.

Actually, the process of specialization, better said “despecialization” has been started in NATO, but in an erratic way, through dismantling capabilities in an uncoordinated fashion.

Besides the aspects mentioned above specialization may have a critical impact if a “specialized nation” don’t want to take part in a specific operation.

3.4 Operations are the ultimate confirmation for the effectiveness of military capabilities.

Sovereignty issues or particular interest of the contributor countries to multinational capabilities may lead to avoidance of involvement in operations with the crews.

On the other hand these types of capabilities are an important way to solve, even partially, one of the main issues: *interoperability*.

Modern conflict brings new challenges for operations planners, mainly in counterinsurgency in urban environment. Hence, the weight of kinetic missions was downsized in favor of non-kinetic missions. This doesn’t lead to the development of new capabilities, but to the different use of those from inventories. In this case *multinational training capabilities* may be used. Otherwise they will be difficult to be maintained by a unique nation for a decreasing number of specialized personnel.

3.5 Exchange of information is critical for the military field. Although is often used information sharing, for the purpose of this paper is better used the other term that shows a bidirectional flow. Capabilities developed multinationally contribute to an increased exchange of information among the nations, at least about best practices.

There should be treated carefully the aspects related sensitive information.

3.6 Operating and maintenance can be linked with two principal positive aspects, already brought into debate – *economy of scale* and *interoperability*.

Weak points may be connected with provider of maintenance, for instance, or the suppliers, or externalization of some services. Can this be treated in a different way for operations?

3.7 Logistic footprint is one of the major concerns for the current operations. Complexity of military equipment, both combat and support, diverse spectrum of missions, battle rhythm, operations in austere or remote environments, increased force protection and other factors contribute to the unpredictable escalation of the required logistic support. If some of the areas, mainly non military, can be covered through specialization or externalization, all the others should be provided by contributing nations. This means huge expenses and difficult management. Multinational capabilities are part of the solution.

3.8 Personnel are another part of the system. It becomes more and more difficult to provide the necessary qualified personnel due two significant reasons: *number of military*

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specializations and the duration and complexity of the education and training. Of course these can lead us to the financial resources, being perfectly justified. But this is only a part of the problem. Sometimes the entire structure of the personnel in the armed forces is not in line with the developments in fields like, operating and maintenance, operations, training and so on. In this case time is the critical factor. *Smart Defence* can be an answer allowing the covering of the deficits from a larger pool of personnel.

3.9 Education and training could be a good reason for the implementation of specialization. This approach doesn't affect the national capabilities and can be both efficient and effective. The resources (funds, equipment, trainers, etc.) will be managed centralized. Speaking about effectiveness, this approach allows the use of the best equipment, trainers or procedures. It provides a better visibility of the process from allied perspective.

4. Conclusions

4.1 Political spectrum should be determined, coherent, and acting in synergy, using all legal means available to move *Smart Defence* from the conceptual side into the pragmatic side for the benefit of the alliance and countries.

4.2 Comprehensive approach meaning, political, military, industry, R&D and any other stakeholders should find a common understanding of the concept, and contribute in a coordinated manner, avoiding useless competition.

4.3 Curtailment of the budgets and consequently the number of military capabilities is not a reason but a part of the current environment with a heavy impact on security, thus any initiative to balance the situation should be taken seriously into account.

4.4 Implementation of the *Smart Defence* concept is an opportunity for the revitalization of the defence industry particularly in EU.

4.5 Perspective for the long term commitments should be kept as a first priority in defence planning, having multinational capabilities with an increasing role within this process.

4.6 NATO, EU and national Defence Planning Systems should be adapted to ensure correlation and coordination in order to overcome the facilitator role of NATO.

References:

- [1] Council conclusions on pooling and sharing of military capabilities, 3157th Foreign Affairs Council meeting, Brussels, 22 and 23.03.2012
- [2] Chicago NATO Summit Declaration on Defence Capabilities: Toward NATO Forces 2020
- [3]"SMART DEFENCE SMART TADIC" Trans-Atlantic Defence Technological and Industrial Cooperation (TADIC) Conference of Armaments Directors (CNAD) 14.10.2011