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## CONSIDERATIONS ON “SMART DEFENCE”

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**Abstract:**

Smart defense or "pooling and sharing" as it is defined, means developing military capabilities shared by several states. One of the challenges deriving from the concept is that although a first analysis is quite simple, is putting it into practice that is more difficult. In order for the concept to be successfully implemented, the states involved in its development must establish from the very beginning a "protocol of conduct", that should more explicitly consider very well defined concepts and models, establishing from the beginning who, what, where and how these capabilities will be used

*Key words: smart defense, pooling and sharing*

### **1. Introduction**

It is said that lack of money pushes the human mind to new achievements, as it stimulates initiative more than prosperity times. Also, apparently nobody is safe from the effects of the crisis, not even at high levels such as the UN, NATO, or other large international organizations.

Thus, in light of the unpleasant (to say the least) situation we are now in due to lack of money, decision makers within NATO have an increasingly acute need to identify more economical solutions for the proper functioning of the alliance. Such a creative idea, generated at NATO level, is the concept of "SMART DEFENCE", which increasingly occupies the minds of Brussels officials and of the representatives of the alliance nations and not only.

### **2. Why Smart Defense?**

The story started in august of 2011 when the Secretary General of NATO, Anders Fogh Rasmussen first brought into discussion the concept of "smart defense", by saying: "Smart Defense is an about building security for less money by working together and being more flexible. That requires identifying those areas in which NATO allies need to keep investing.[...] Smart Defense also means encouraging multinational cooperation. Nations should work in small clusters to combine their resources and build capabilities that can benefit the alliance as a whole. Here NATO can act as a matchmaker; bringing nations together to identify what they can do jointly at a lower cost, more efficiently, and with less risk."[1]

## ***CONSIDERATIONS ON “SMART DEFENCE”***

In other words, this new concept would come to the aid of the rich countries, which can anyway afford to develop independent defense capabilities, and to support countries with less strong economies, which would not allow the development military of latest generation capabilities. Smart defense or "pooling and sharing" as it is defined, means developing military capabilities shared by several states. One of the challenges deriving from the concept is that although a first analysis is quite simple, is putting it into practice that is more difficult. In order for the concept to be successfully implemented, the states involved in its development must establish from the very beginning a "protocol of conduct", that should more explicitly consider very well defined concepts and models, establishing from the beginning who, what, where and how these capabilities will be used.

There are many skeptics [2] who believe that this concept is actually a creation of "the services," a kind of "Trojan horse" which according to some will benefit only the American war machine. In my opinion, this is not so.

However pro-European some member countries may be and regardless of how much trust they have in military power generated by European countries, it is clear that without the American support, NATO operations are not sustainable on long term. But what would the risks generated if the concept "smart defense" is to fail? First, I consider that the main factor would be trust. In other words, you can develop something in common with another state, as long as between the two countries there is a high level of trust, generated by political factors, social factors and military factors.

Another important factor in my opinion is the "level of ambition", or in other words the capabilities that the state wants to develop jointly with another state, in order to have a fully sustainable project, from the development to implementation, taking also in consideration the financial point of view. I believe that there can be nothing worse than starting on the road as a team of two and halfway down the road to remain alone, because the other teammate no longer has the necessary resources to complete the task the team has agreed upon.

An important issue in the implementation of this concept refers to the will to adopt and embrace it, not as an obligation, but as a self-assumed task, as the implementation of the smart defense “may not be as successful if it is perceived as coming from “the top”, “imposed” on the member countries by allies (such as the US, as a result of the message of not be willing to engage anymore in operations in Europe or in the surrounding area) or by EU officials”.[3]

Another challenge of this new concept is to define the correct priorities. Of these, I dare to name a few that seem most important to me: cyber defense and the fight against terrorism and piracy [4]. These are threats against which it is difficult even for a developed country to fight alone, let alone for a state with an economy not so developed.

Theoretically at least, the concept is rather easy to understand and to accept, because its main purpose is to harmonize the participation of the member countries' military, to save significant amounts for the budgets of the states that adhere to "smart defense programs" and last but not least, to increase the level of technological interoperability of the armed forces.

The road from concept to implementation is hard, with difficulties resulting from an uneven legislation, with issues resulting from unquantifiable factors such as national pride and difficulties related to achieving a level of confidence in the alliance that excludes any dispute ethnically, territorial or economic. Of course, it will be very difficult to find a common denominator in terms of quantifying the financial and human contribution of each

## ***CONSIDERATIONS ON "SMART DEFENCE"***

state, in the research and development of new capabilities or in finding the optimal mix for the joint operation of the developed capabilities and the optimal size of these capabilities.

In my opinion, it will be difficult for a state to give up some capabilities which give a sense of stability and trust, in order to share them fully with another partner. It is not so easy to make available those common capabilities without reservations and at an appropriate level so as to generate maximum security. It will be hard to find a common denominator for all countries, as their military traditions often remain unaltered and are viewed as the main factor that defines a certain army of a state. This may hinder the development in the future of capabilities ruled by a maximum military efficiency.

Despite these difficulties, the present and future status of the "smart defense" concept shows that it is viable and that it can work. In order to prove this, I would like to bring to attention the fact that since 2008, the time when these concepts first appeared, some progress has been made. Thus, ten NATO Member States (Romania, Bulgaria, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway and Poland) signed a memorandum confirming their participation in a Strategic Airlift Capability (SAC) initiative to acquire, support, manage and operate three Boeing C17 strategic transport aircraft.[5]

Another issue that demonstrates the viability of this concept is the Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACs) program, operated by 17 nations, and also the Multinational Logistic Coordination Center (MLCC). Officially opened in 2010, it provides real-time visibility of logistic events between countries and provides a central repository of logistic event data readily available to all countries. The Allied Ground Surveillance (AGS), based on drone technology, is another representative project for the issue of commonly developed capabilities, as it has been adopted by thirteen countries.

The concept of "Smart Defense" is shown in these programs to be viable and it is expected to be extended in the future, "globalized" NATO.

For Romania, the future has already begun, as the Romanian President [6] himself outlined in a speech the importance of implementing this concept, and the fact that Romania has already taken steps in this direction, in the light of the multirole aircraft and missile programs to be initiated.

### **3. Conclusion**

In conclusion, the future of NATO member states will be build around the concept of "Smart Defense" concept, which should lower the cost of maintenance of military facilities, and should help develop the common capabilities of NATO countries. Not least, the concept should generate greater security in the alliance. Personally I look forward to the year 2020 [7], when this concept should be fully functional and I hope that all the steps taken so far do not remain only at discussion level and the challenges identified in this paper shall be overcome.

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## ***CONSIDERATIONS ON “SMART DEFENCE”***

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