

## ALLIED STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT\*

NATO Strategic Concept is an official document that formulates the purpose and nature of the Alliance's activity, the basic tasks in the security sector, the main features of the security environment, approaches to its provision, lines of adaptation of NATO's political and military capabilities. The Concept gives the Alliance a strategic vision of the ways of dealing with challenges in the security sector and its future political and military evolution. Transformation is a permanent feature of NATO's activity. Since its foundation, the tasks and goals have been regularly analytically reviewed in line with the security environment development.

Preparation of the first Strategic Concept began in October, 1949. Preparation of each subsequent strategic document was prompted by changes that took place in the world and could not be envisaged by NATO founders and developers of the previous strategic concepts.

Meanwhile, despite all changes in the security environment and nature of NATO's activity, cooperation in the Alliance invariably remains focused on the main principles of the Washington Treaty, namely: collective defence, peaceful settlement of disputes, and the defensive character of NATO. Political decisions are passed by consensus, being one of the key preconditions for the Alliance's stability.

Except tasks of collective defence of the Washington Treaty member states, NATO is increasingly playing the role of a global forum for discussions and consultations on the defence of common values resting on the principles of democracy, individual freedoms and rule of law, cooperation in the defence and security sector, since the Alliance not only unites Europe and North America, but generates multinational initiatives involving partner countries.

### The 1999 Strategic Concept

Currently effective is 1999 Strategic Concept (hereinafter – Strategy-99) that specified the purpose and tasks of the Alliance, strategic perspectives at the time of its approval, the Alliance's approach to security in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and guiding principles of its military forces. By and large, Strategy-99 obliges the member states provide common defence, peace and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area.

### The purpose and tasks of the Alliance

The primary purpose of the Alliance is to guarantee freedom and security of all its members by political and military means, support democratic values, guarantee human rights and the rule of law, and promote peace and stability in the whole Euro-Atlantic area. For the attainment of that purpose, the following tasks are set in the security sector:

*Security:* To provide one of the indispensable foundations for a stable Euro-Atlantic security environment, based on the growth of democratic institutions and commitment to the peaceful resolution of disputes, in which no country would be able to intimidate or coerce any other through the threat or use of force.

*Consultation:* To serve, as provided for in Article 4 of the Washington Treaty, as an essential transatlantic forum for Allied consultations on any issues that affect their vital interests, including possible developments posing risks for members' security, and for appropriate coordination of their efforts in fields of common concern.

*Deterrence and Defence:* To deter and defend against any threat of aggression against any NATO member state as provided for in Articles 5 and 6 of the Washington Treaty.

*Crisis Management:* To stand ready, case-by-case and by consensus, in conformity with Article 7 of the Washington Treaty, to contribute to effective conflict prevention and to engage actively in crisis management, including crisis response operations.

*Partnership:* To promote wide-ranging partnership, cooperation, and dialogue with other countries in the Euro-Atlantic area, with the aim of increasing transparency, mutual confidence and the capacity for joint action with the Alliance".

### Strategic perspectives

Strategy-99 carries an assessment of the security environment, challenges and risks. It notes that threats specific of the Cold War times substantially went down, but new complex risks arose, posing a threat for peace and security: terrorism, ethnic conflicts, violation of human rights, political and economic instability, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and means of their delivery.

### The approach to security in the 21<sup>st</sup> century

According to Strategy-99, NATO's approach to security rests on a broad definition. Apart from the defence dimension, it recognises the importance of political, economic, social and environmental aspects, including:

- the preservation of the Trans-Atlantic link;
- the maintenance of effective military capabilities for the full range of Alliance missions;
- the development of European capabilities within the Alliance;
- the continued commitment to conflict prevention and crisis management;
- the pursuit of partnership, cooperation and dialogue;

\* Draw up after the materials published on the NATO web site. For more detail see: [www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics\\_56626.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_56626.htm)



- enlargement and NATO's continued openness to new members;
- support for arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation.

### Guiding principles for the Alliance's military forces

Strategy-99 sets the guiding principles for the Alliance's military forces, with a call for further development of military forces and means necessary for performance of the entire range of the Alliance's missions (operations): from collective defence to maintenance of peace and conduct of crisis management operations.

### Strategy making. Drafting Strategy 2010

The process of drafting and approval of NATO strategic documents was somewhat amended with time, but strategic concepts were normally approved by the North Atlantic Council (NAC), after many stages of discussion and editing. For instance, starting from 1949, NAC approved all strategic documents except secret military document MC 14/3, approved in 1968 by the Defence Planning Committee.<sup>1</sup>

During the Cold War, strategic concepts were mainly developed by military, and approved – by political bodies of the Alliance. After the end of the Cold War, the procedure of strategic concept preparation changed: they are developed by political bodies, while the military only extend consultations. Such radical change was conditioned by the introduction of the above-mentioned broad definition of security.

Furthermore, while concepts of the Cold War times were secret documents, starting from 1991, they are drawn up as unclassified documents and released to the public (for background see "NATO strategic documents 1949-1991").

As we noted, the current Strategic Concept was approved in 1999, when NATO celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. But, as it happened previously, the global developments were so dynamic that almost immediately, there arose the need to revise

and supplement it. First, the terrorist attacks of 11 September, 2001, put to the forefront the threat of terrorism and weapons of mass destruction. NATO faced the need to expand its activity beyond the Euro-Atlantic area. That is why the Alliance implemented far-going reforms with the purpose of adaptation of military structures, forces and means to the new tasks.

*Second*, the Alliance had to accelerate transformation processes to establish a new level of political relations, deepen and expand partnership, develop of stronger operational capabilities required to respond to ever more globalised and difficult challenges and threats.

In view of those developments, in April, 2009, NATO leaders at a summit in Strasbourg-Kehl approved the Declaration on Alliance Security and rued to prepare a new Strategic Concept before the end of 2010.

The process of its preparation has its specifics.

First of all, it is seen as a possibility to achieve mutual understanding of the concerned parties and win broad public support for the update and rethinking of the modern key principles, functions and strategic approaches of the Alliance. Furthermore, it involves not only member states but also partner countries from all regions of the world and international organisations. Discussions involve representatives of the public, independent experts, journalists from NATO member states and partner countries. For the first time in NATO history, those discussions are initiated and guided by the Secretary General.

The process of document preparation includes three phases: *first* – broad discussion of challenges facing the Alliance involving the Group of Experts;<sup>2</sup> *second* – consultations of the Group of Experts in each member state and presentation of a report to the Secretary General; *third* – preparation by the Secretary General of a draft Strategic Concept for approval by the NATO high level summit (before the end of 2010).

On May 17, 2010, the Group of Experts released the report *NATO 2020: Assured Security; Dynamic Engagement* with analysis of and recommendations on the new Strategic Concept.

### NATO STRATEGIC DOCUMENTS 1949-1991.

*Historical reference*

During 1949-1991 five Alliance's Strategic Concepts were approved. Determining principle of the first strategies were defence and deterrence, but during the last two decades (after the end of Cold War) increasing attention is paid to dialogue and détente. Therefore, since 1991, a broader approach is being applied, in which the fundamental concepts of defence and deterrence are supplemented by cooperation and security issues.

#### 1. The Strategic Concept for the Defence of the North Atlantic area

*Approved on 6 January, 1950*

The document defined the main function of NATO as deterrence of aggression, and provided that NATO forces would be employed only in the event of an attack. The emphasis was

to "insure the ability to carry out strategic bombing promptly by all means possible with all types of weapons, without exception".

It set the goal to create by July, 1954, reliable defence forces, whose key task would be to convince the USSR that war would not pay, and to create capabilities for successful defence of the North Atlantic area in case of aggression.

<sup>1</sup> The Defence Planning Committee in its area of responsibility has the same powers as NAC. The decision on such powers was prompted by France's withdrawal from the military organisation in 1966, which made NATO leadership to rest responsibility for defence issues with the Defence Planning Committee, where France was not a party.

<sup>2</sup> The Group of Experts includes 12 representatives with vast practical and scientific experience from different NATO member states. The Group is chaired by the former US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright.

The document's key elements included requirements to complementarity and standardisation, along with contribution of each member state to collective defence, proportional to its economic, industrial, geographic and military potential.

## 2. The Strategic Concept for the Defence of the North Atlantic Area

*Approved on 3 December, 1952*

Development and adoption of the new Strategy were conditioned by structural changes within NATO, admission of Greece and Turkey to the Alliance, the Korean War. Meanwhile, it preserved the key principles of the previous document.

## 3. The Overall Strategic Concept for the Defence of the NATO Area

*Approved on 23 May, 1957*

The document rests on the principles of use of nuclear arms and the "forward strategy". The document was the first NATO Strategic Concept that advocated **the idea of "a retaliatory strike using weapons of mass destruction"**, which became the key element of the new allied strategy. A degree of flexibility was provided, for the event of some large-scale forms of aggression, which envisaged employment of conventional arms. However, the Strategy did not accept the concept of limited war against the USSR: "If the Soviets were involved in a hostile local action and sought to broaden the scope of such an incident or prolong it, the situation would call for the utilization of all weapons and forces at NATO's disposal".

Apart from the idea of "a retaliatory strike using weapons of mass destruction", the document also reflected other political and economic concerns beyond the North Atlantic Area, that became especially relevant in the context of the Suez crisis and the Soviet crushing of the Hungarian uprising in 1956: "Although NATO defence planning is limited to the defence of the Treaty area, it is necessary to take account of the dangers which may arise for NATO because of developments outside that area".

Drafting and adoption of the new Strategy was preceded by study of the problem of **strengthening the Alliance's political role** that was becoming increasingly topical. In particular, in December, 1956, the Report of the Committee of Three or Report on Non-Military Cooperation in NATO was published, drafted by three NATO foreign ministers – Lester Pearson (Canada), Gaetano Martino (Italy) and Halvard Lange (Norway). The Report contained recommendations on peace settlement of disputes among the Alliance member states, economic, scientific-technological, cultural cooperation, cooperation in the information sector, and therefore gave a new impetus to political consultations of NATO member states in all aspects of relations and contributed to expansion of the strategic framework of the Alliance's activity as the first step towards a more coordinated approach to security issues.

## 4. The Overall Strategic Concept for the Defence of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation Area

*Approved on 16 January, 1968*

Specific features of the new strategy included "flexibility and escalation". The principle of flexibility presented the basis of the concept of deterrence, meaning that it prevented the potential aggressor from predicting with confidence NATO's specific response to aggression, which would lead it to conclude that an unacceptable degree of risk would be involved

regardless of the nature of its attack. "Escalation" meant a triple concept of military response:

- (1) defence adequate to the aggressor's means;
- (2) threat of use of nuclear forces;
- (3) nuclear strike as the last resort.

After the adoption of the third Strategic Concept, there were international developments that questioned the strategy of a retaliatory strike using weapons of mass destruction. Since that strategy largely relied on the US nuclear forces, Europeans began to cast doubt whether the US President would sacrifice an American city for salvation of a European one. With the growth of the Soviet nuclear potential, NATO's competitive advantages in terms of nuclear deterrence went down, and the world faced the threat of "mutually assured destruction".

The Berlin crisis (1958-1962) added to doubts about NATO's ability to respond to threats below the total attack level – since means of nuclear deterrence failed to stop the USSR from threatening the position of Western Allies in Berlin. Concerns arose about the practicability of limited warfare and probability of exchange of nuclear strikes started by accident or miscalculation. In October, 1962, the Cold War reached its climax due to the Cuban missile crisis.

To identify strategic tasks of the Alliance for the next 20 years in the height of the Cold War, the "Harmel Report" or the "Report on the Future Tasks of the Alliance" was drawn up (December 1967). The report contained analysis of changes in the security environment after the North Atlantic Treaty signing and advocated the need to maintain adequate defence while seeking a relaxation of tensions in East-West relations and working towards solutions to political problems dividing Europe. The Report put forward the notions of deterrence and dialogue. It was the second step (after the report of the Three Wise Men Committee) towards a more logical approach to security issues, ultimately shaped in 1991

Despite periods of détente and gradual movement of both blocs towards confidence-building, starting from mid-1980s, mutual mistrust remained specific of East-West relations. Only after the fall of the Berlin wall, relations could be built on a new basis. In 1991, the Soviet Union ceased to exist, Russia and other former enemies became partners, and later some of them joined NATO. For the Alliance, that period brought development of dialogue and cooperation, along with other new methods of promoting peace and stability, including multinational crisis management operations.

## 5. Strategic Concept 1991

*Approved on 7 November, 1991*

NATO's first strategic document drafted and approved after the end of the Cold War.

The document fundamentally differed from its predecessors. *First*, it rested on a broad approach to the definition of security (the approach preserved in the following Strategy-99).

*Second*, it was a non-confrontational document: along with maintenance of the Alliance member states' security as its basic goal (i.e., collective defence), it demonstrated an intention to enhance security and extend it to the whole of Europe through partnership and cooperation with former enemies.

*Third*, it provided for reduction of nuclear forces to the minimum level sufficient for maintenance of peace and stability.

Finally, from the viewpoint of the procedure of document drafting and its nature, Strategy-91 has been unclassified since its development.<sup>3</sup> This started a new tradition of drafting and release of the Alliance's strategic documents, still in force. ■

<sup>3</sup> Noteworthy, both Strategy-91 and the following Strategy-99 were accompanied with classified military documents (respectively, MC 400 and MC 400/2).