

From Newport to Brussels – NATO adaptation to the Russian threat



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Casimir Pulaski Foundation

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Introduction

On July 11 and 12 the North Atlantic Council meeting was held, on the Head of States and Governments level. It has been the third summit since illegal annexation of Crimea by Russia and its support of separatists in Eastern Ukraine, what caused a rise in tensions between NATO and Russia. That in turn has shown the need for implementing new defense and deterrence measures to reassure the countries located on the Alliance's Eastern Flank. The Brussels Summit seems to a higher extent that the two previous summits – which focused on rapid common response to Russian actions – concentrate on adoption of long-term solutions aimed at enhancing NATO capabilities in collective defense. In spite of tensions caused by White House policies under President Donald Trump, who continuous to pressure the European allies to increase defense spending, bringing many questions concerning the future of Transatlantic relations, it seems that the summit – at least in military dimension – achieved its goals and the processes related to NATO adaptation are moving ahead.

1. The NATO adaptation to date

The NATO-Russia relations after the Cold War were settled by the Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between NATO and the Russian Federation (so-called NATO-Russia Founding Act), in which both sides declared that they would not consider each other as adversaries. As a result of the agreement and to establish a mechanism of consultations and increase the level of trust Permanent Joint Council was founded (it was replaced in 2002 by NATO-Russia Council) with NATO member states pledging not to deploy nuclear weapons on the territory of new member states and “in the current and foreseeable security environment (...) additional permanent stationing of substantial combat forces”¹

Both sides declared that their relations are based on principles such as “refraining from the threat or use of force against each other as well as against any other state, its sovereignty,

territorial integrity or political independence” and “respect for sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of all states and their inherent right to choose the means to ensure their own security, the inviolability of borders and peoples’ right of self-determination as enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act and other OSCE documents”².

The NATO-Russia relations were strained by the NATO intervention in Kosovo in 1999 which targeted the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the Moscow's traditional ally, the decision to establish of US Ballistic Missile Defense system and Russo-Georgian War of 2008, when Russian Armed Forces crushed the Georgian army – a country aspiring to become a NATO member state. The West's relations with Russia improved in the aftermath of the so-called reset policy of the Barack Obama Administration, which brought among others new treaty on reduction of strategic arms – New START of 2010.

The relations between NATO and Russia deteriorated again after the Russian presidential election in March 2012, when Vladimir Putin took the power again (after the 4-year long break, when he was replaced by his Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev). In March 2014 after the deposition of Viktor Yanukovych's government resulting from popular protests (the so-called Euromaidan), caused by the cancellation of the Ukrainian governments preparations to sign Association Agreement with the European Union, the Russian Federation provided military support to separatist forces present in Eastern Ukraine and illegally annexed the Crimean Peninsula soon after. In April pro-Russian rebellions also broke out in Donetsk and Lugansk Oblasts resulting in proclamations of the Donetsk People's Republic and the Lugansk People's Republic. Russia supported separatists by providing them with shipments of military hardware and dispatching the Russian Special Forces into the area, thus complicating the Ukrainian antiterrorist operation against the rebels. According to Atlantic Council Report from October 2015, the satellite imagery shown movement of Russian troops across the Ukrainian border and deployment of Russian military camps along the border, which serve as a hotbed of weapons smuggling.

¹ *Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between NATO and the Russian Federation signed in Paris, France*, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_25468.htm.

² *Ibidem*.

The separatists are also in possession of numerous weapon systems manufactured by the Russian military industry, which have never been fielded by the Ukrainian Armed Forces (T-72B3 MBTs, Multiple Launch Rocket Systems Grad-K or anti-aircraft systems Pantsir-S1).³ It seems that the Russian actions – as in case of Russo-Georgian War of 2008 – were aimed at undermining Ukrainian aspirations to integrate with the Western structures (EU and NATO) and was in clear violation of several treaties that were binding from the standpoint of International Law, including Charter of the United Nations as well as NATO-Russia Founding Act.⁴

In summer 2014 Russian engagement in Ukraine culminated, as Russian military units – according to information provided by representatives of Ukrainian Armed Forces – directly supported separatists.⁵ As Phillip Karber from the D.C. based Potomac Foundation remarked: „In the last week of August, as Ukraine’s “Plan B” (the later nickname of antiterrorist operation) appeared to be nearing its fruition, the Russian army intervened in eastern Ukraine with a counteroffensive to relieve beleaguered Donetsk and open a new Western front in the direction of Mariupol”,⁶ what led to a heavy defeat of Ukrainian forces in the Battle of Ilovaisk.⁷ Moreover, on July 17, 2014 – according to report of the Dutch Safety Board (OVV) – the Malaysia Airlines jetliner (Malaysia Airlines 17) was shot down from the territory controlled by the separatists (the perpetrators of the tragedy are a subject of separate investigation) by the missile launched from the Russian SAM system Buk,⁸ causing the death of 298 passengers (including 198 Dutch citizens) and was condemned by the international community.

Since their very onset, the Russian actions were met with a strong reaction of the West. The sanction

packages were imposed by, among others, the European Union (visa bans and asset freeze of natural and legal persons engaged in actions in Ukraine or connected to the Kremlin, restrictions in access to the EU’s financial instruments market for the Russian state-owned bank and the biggest oil and gas and arms companies, a total ban on credits for 5 Russian state-owned banks, limitations in sales of undersea mining technologies and embargo on armament and dual-use technologies), the United States (freezing of accounts and travel bans for persons and representatives of institutions connected to quasi-states in Eastern Ukraine as well as similar to economic and sector sanctions similar to the EU ones) and other G7 states.⁹

The Russian intervention in Ukraine caused deep concerns of NATO member states neighbouring with Ukraine and Russia, what had to stimulate the Alliance’s activity. First, the Baltic Air Policing mission (within its frameworks aircraft of other NATO state patrol the sky over the Baltic States) was strengthened (from 4 to 16 aircraft). During the NATO Summit in Newport, first after the illegal annexation of Crimea (September 4-5, 2014) Readiness Action Plan was adopted, which assumed permanent rotational presence (e.g. in form of exercises – see tab. 1) of allied forces on the territories of the Eastern Flank countries, as well as some more long-standing measures like tripling the size of NATO Response Force (from 13,000 to 40,000 troops) and extracted from them Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (including e.g. 5,000 land component), to be ready for deployment within several days. Moreover, special cells responsible for facilitating quick deployment of NATO forces – NATO Force Integration Units (NFIU) – were established.

³ M. Czuperski i in., *Hiding in Plain Sight: Putin’s War in Ukraine*, Atlantic Council, <http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/publications/reports/hiding-in-plain-sight-putin-s-war-in-ukraine-and-boris-nemtsov-s-putin-war>.

⁴ Zob. Anna M. Dyer i in., „How Russian Violations of the 1997 Founding Act Influence NATO-Russia Relations,” *PISM Policy Paper* nr 6 (2018) <http://www.pism.pl/Publikacje/PISM-Policy-Paper-no-166>.

⁵ G. Kuczyński, *Największa klęska Ukraińców od początku wojny. Południowa flank przestała istnieć*, TVN 24 z 1 września 2014 r. <https://www.tvn24.pl/wiadomosci-ze-swiatek/2/najwieksza-klenska-ukraincow-od-poczatku-wojny-poludniowa-flanka-przestala-istniec,463760.html>.

⁶ P. Karber, „Lessons Learned” from the Russo-Ukrainian War, The Potomac Foundation, 2015, s. 37-38, <https://prodev2go.files.wordpress.com/2015/10/rus-ukr-lessons-draft.pdf>

⁷ *Ibidem*.

⁸ M. Dura, „MH17 zestrzelił separatystyczny BUK – konkluzja holenderskiego raportu,” *Defence* 24 z 13 października 2015 <https://www.defence24.pl/mh17-zestrzelil-separatystyczny-buk-konkluzja-holenderskiego-raportu>.

⁹ J. Ćwiek-Karpowicz i in., *Sankcje i Rosja*, (Polski Instytut Spraw Międzynarodowych, Warszawa: 2015) http://www.pism.pl/files/?id_plik=19044.

Name of exercise	Date	Place	Number of forces engaged
STEADFAST JAVELIN I	May 2014	Estonia	6,000
SABER STRIKE	June 2014	Baltic States	4,800
STEADFAST JAVELIN II	October 2014	Poland, Germany	2,000
ANAKONDA	October 2014	Poland	12,500
IRON SWORD	November 2014	Lithuania	2,500
BLACK EAGLE	October-December 2014	Poland	2,300
DRAGOON RIDE	March-April 2015	Poland, Germany, the Czech Republic, the Baltic States	No information
STEADFAST JAVELIN	May 2015	Estonia	13,000
BALTOPS 2015	June 2015	Poland, Baltic Sea	5,600
SABRE STRIKE 15	June 2015	Poland, the Baltic States	6,000
NOBLE JUMP	June 2015	Poland	2,100 (first VJTF deployment)
BRILLIANT JUMP DEPLOY 16	May 2016	Poland	2,500
SWIFT RESPONSE	May-June 2016	Poland, Germany	9,000
BALTOPS 16	June 2016	Baltic Sea	5,800
IRON WOLF	June 2016	Lithuania	5,000
SABER STRIKE	June 2016	the Baltic States	9,000
ANAKONDA	June 2016	Poland	31,000
NOBLE JUMP II	April 2017	Bulgaria, Romania	4,000
BALTOPS	June 2017	Baltic States, Poland	5,800
SABER STRIKE	June 2017	Baltic States, Poland	9,000
IRON WOLF	June 2017	Lithuania	5,000
SIIL 18	March 2018	Estonia	10,000
BALTOPS	June 2018	Lithuania, Poland, Denmark, Germany, Sweden, Baltic Sea	4,7000
SABER STRIKE	June 2018	Baltic States, Poland	18,000
SUMMER SHIELD	June 2018	Lithuania	2,500

Table 1. Most important allied and national exercises on NATO Eastern Flank. Based on: https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2018_04/20180425_1804-factsheet_exercises_en.pdf.

What is more important, as Paweł Pacuła from the Polish National Security Bureau indicated, the Wales Summit was a "symbolic conclusion of the expeditionary era of NATO (...) and a back to the roots as well as a will of concentration on basic mission of the Alliance or collective defense is seen".¹⁰

Separate actions in form of proposed in June 2014 in Warsaw European Reassurance Initiative were taken by the United States. Within the framework of the program, with budget in FY2015 was \$1 billion (in YF2017 it was increased to \$3,4 billion) the U.S. launched a wide array of exercises and initiatives aimed at increasing military capabilities of European allies, as Washington decided to deploy an armored brigade of the U.S. Army on a rotational basis (until that time only two U.S. combat brigades were deployed in Europe – airborne in Italy and motorized – Stryker Brigade Combat Team in Germany) and equipment for another unit of this kind.

All of the aforementioned actions did not stop Russia's aggressive maneuvering in the international arena. In spite of adopting the "Minsk II" accord in February 2015, assuming e.g. the ceasefire among the separatists and the Ukrainian Armed Forces, the withdrawal of heavy weaponry and the establishment of buffer zones, the clashes in Eastern Ukraine continue with a varying intensity.¹¹ Russia additionally intensified its Air Force operations over the Baltic and Northern Seas (only in 2016 in response to the Russian activates NATO aircraft took off 780 times, twice as much as in 2015)¹², conducted several large-scale snap-exercises (see: tab. 2) as well as began intensive deployment of additional units and weapons systems in the Kaliningrad Oblast and Crimea Peninsula. In Crimea a wide array of new units based on the former

Ukrainian ones were created, as the strength of Russian forces in the peninsula, according to the Ukrainian Center for Army Conversion and Disarmament Studies, in 2016 was estimated to be 24,000 troops, 30 Main Battle Tanks (MBT), 600 armored personnel carrier (APC) and infantry fighting vehicles (IFV) as well as 130 fixed-wing and rotary aircraft.¹³ Crucially, in Crimea several types of A2AD measures were deployed, including systems like S-300PM, S-400 Triumph and Pantsir as well as Iskander missiles launchers. The coastal defense was developed as well by deploying K-300P Bastion-P systems.¹⁴

Also in Kaliningrad Oblast systems like S-400 (183th Air defense Regiment from Gvardeysk), Iskander (152nd Guards Missile Brigade) and Bastion (25th Coastal Defense Missile Regiment) were deployed.

Russian actions forced NATO member states to adopt further defense and deterrence measures during the Alliance's Warsaw Summit. After difficult negotiations caused by fears of some of the allies that permanent deployment of additional NATO forces on the Eastern Flank would cause further deterioration of relations between Russia and the West, a compromise assuming permanent but rotational presence in the form of an Enhanced Forward Presence was achieved.¹⁵ This measure is based on the deployment on a rotational basis 4 enhanced battalion combat teams in the Baltic States and Poland. These forces along with political significance (reassurance of Alliances resolve to defend the Baltic States) also have a military dimension, especially for the Balts, whose armed forces possess very limited capabilities. Each combat team is multinational and is based on a framework country, which provides it with crucial capabilities.

¹⁰ P. Pacuła, „Szczyt NATO w Newport – implikacje dla bezpieczeństwa narodowego RP, *Pulaski Policy Paper*, nr 16 (2014) <https://pulaski.pl/szczyt-nato-w-newport-implikacje-dla-bezpieczenstwa-narodowego-rp/>.

¹¹ W. Łysek, „Realizacja porozumień Mińsk II,” *Pulaski Policy Paper*, nr 12 (2015) <https://pulaski.pl/realizacja-porozumien-minsk-ii/>.

¹² A. Foxall, „Russia Is Testing NATO in the Skies,” *National Interest* z 23 lipca 2017 <http://nationalinterest.org/feature/russia-testing-nato-the-skies-21621>.

¹³ *Militarization of Occupied Crimea – a Threat to Global Security*, The Center for Army, Conversion and Disarmament Studies, 2016 <https://defence-ua.com/index.php/en/publications/defense-express-publications/914-militarization-of-occupied-crimea-a-threat-to-global-security>.

¹⁴ K. Czerniewicz, *Obwód Kaliningradzki i Krym czyli ufortyfikowane twierdze Rosji*, Ośrodek Analiz Strategicznych <https://oaspl.org/2016/01/28/obwod-kaliningradzki-i-krym-czyli-ufortyfikowane-twierdze-rosji/>.

¹⁵ Author's talks in NATO HQ.

Name of the exercise	Date	Number of forces engaged
Snap exercise in the Western Military District	February-March 2014	150,000
Exercise along the Ukrainian border	April 2014	40,000
Snap exercise in the Central Military District	June 2014	65,000
Snap exercise in the Eastern Military District	September 2014	160,000
Wostok-2014	September 2014	100,000
Exercise in Kaliningrad Oblast	December 2014	9,000
Exercises, which began in Russian Far North and spread into other regions	March 2015	80,000
Exercise of air and air defense forces	May 2015	12,000
Union Shield	September 2015	8,000
Center-2015	September 2015	95,000

Table 2. Most important exercises of the Russian Armed Forces (2014–2015). Based on: Major Russian exercises conducted since 2014 in its European territory and adjacent areas, European Leadership Network, https://www.europeanleadershipnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Major-Russian-exercises-TABLE_ELN.pdf.



Picture 1. S-400 system elements in Gvardeysk (Kaliningrad Oblast). Source: Google Earth.

2. (Im)balance of power on NATO Eastern Flank

Regardless of the measures adopted during the Newport and Warsaw summits, the Russian Federation has a substantive quantitative advantage over the allied forces on NATO's Eastern Flank. Essential Russian Forces deployed in the Western Military District are based on three armies and one army corps:

- » 1st Guards Tank Army with HQ in Odnicovo near Moscow. Its main potential is composed of 4th Guards Tank 'Kantemirovskaya' Division (Naro-Fominsk), 2nd Guards Motor Rifle 'Tamanskaya' Division (Kalininets), 6th Separate Tank 'Częstochowa' Brigade (Mulino), 27th Separate Guards Motor Rifle 'Sevastopol' Brigade (Mosrentgen), 288th Artillery 'Warsaw' Brigade (Mulino), 112th Guards Missile 'Novorossiysk' Brigade (Shuya), 49th Anti-Aircraft Rocket Brigade (Smolensk).¹⁶
- » 6th Army with HQ in Agalatovo near St Petersburg. It is comprised of 138th Guards Separate Motorized Brigade (Kamenka), 25th Separate Guards Motorized 'Sevastopol' Brigade (Vladimirskyy Lager), 26th Missile Brigade (Luga), 9th Guards Artillery Brigade (Luga), 5th Air Defense Brigade (Gorelovo).¹⁷
- » 20th Guards Army with HQ in Voronezh south of Moscow near Ukrainian Kharkiv. It comprises 3rd Motor Rifle Division (Boguchar), 144th Guards Motor Rifle Division (Yelnya), 1st Independent Guards Tank "Ural-Lvov" Brigade (Boguchar), 23th Motor Rifle Brigade (Valuiki), 28th Motor Rifle Brigade (Klintsy), 448th Rocket Brigade (Kursk), 53th Anti-Aircraft Rocket Brigade (Kursk).
- » 11th Army Corps in Kaliningrad subordinated to the Baltic Fleet and responsible for Kaliningrad

Oblast, which is composed of: 7th Independent Guards Motorized Rifle Regiment (Kaliningrad), 79th Independent Guards Motorized Rifle Brigade (Gusev), 336th Guards Naval Infantry Brigade (Baltiysk), 152nd Guards Missile Brigade (Chernyakhovsk), 224th Guards Artillery Brigade (Kaliningrad), 22nd Guards Air Defense Missile Regiment (in Kaliningrad) and 25th Coastal Defense Missile Regiment (Donskoye).¹⁸

Among other units within the framework of Western Military District there are: 76th Guards Air Assault Division (Pskov), 98th Guards Airborne Division (Ivanovo), 106th Guards Airborne Division (Tula), 79th Guards Novozybkov Rocket Artillery Brigade (Tver), 45th Heavy Artillery Brigade (Tambov) and 3 Spetsnaz brigades (45th, 2th, 16th).¹⁹

Currently, an average Russian mechanized brigade (motor rifle) numbers around 4500 troops and is comprised of 4 combat battalions (1 tank and 3 rifle battalions or 2 tank and 2 rifle battalions – around 40 tanks or 45 infantry fighting vehicles in each battalion), an air defense artillery battalion, an air defense missile battalion, 2 self-propelled artillery battalion and a mobile rocket launcher system battalion (3 batteries or 18 artillery or missile systems in each artillery battalion) and combat support subunits. In turn, a Russian division numbers 10000 people and is composed of 3-4 combat regiments, a self-propelled artillery regiment (2 artillery and 1 rocket launcher system battalions), an air defense missile regiment and combat support subunits.²⁰

Russian Aerospace Forces in Western Military District are grouped in 6th Air and Air Defense Forces Army, which HQ has at its disposal 3 fighter aviation regiments (159th, 790th, 14th), 1 composite aviation regiment (47th), 15th Army Aviation Brigade, 2 air bases (378th, 1008th), 549th Army Aviation Air Group and air defense missile regiment S-300 and S-400 systems.²¹

¹⁶ Rozkład rosyjskich sił za K. Grodzki „Zachodni Okręg Wojskowy Federacji Rosyjskiej, Nowa Technika Wojskowa 11, 2017.

¹⁷ Ibidem.

¹⁸ Ibidem.

¹⁹ Ibidem.

²⁰ Ibidem.

²¹ Ibidem.

According to British International Institute for Strategic Studies the Russian Air Forces' combat potential grouped in Western Military District is comprised of 96 fighters, 58 attack aircraft, around 58 attack helicopters and 50 transport helicopters.²² It is necessary to mention also the Baltic Fleet (based in Baltiysk and Kronstadt), which includes combat ships (e.g. 1 destroyer, 2 frigates, 4 corvettes, 2 submarines) and above-mentioned 11th Corps and 72th Air Base with 28 fighters and attack aircraft.²³

The firepower of Western Military District considerably surpasses the potential of NATO forces in Central-Eastern Europe. The Baltic States' armed forces have at their disposal 4 light brigades and supporting light battalions of territorial defense. Among NATO member states neighboring with Russia only Poland has significant,

but still far smaller in comparison to the Russian armed Forces, military potential (2 mechanized and one armored division, 4 independent brigades). The firepower of EFP units one can considered as equal to 1-2 combat brigades. It is also necessary to mention 1 armored brigade of the US Army deployed to Eastern Flank on rotational basis as a part of ERI.

Moreover, Russia's military continues its intensive modernization and overhaul programs. In December 2010 the State Armaments Program for 2011-2020 (GPW 2020) was adopted. According to the document, around 19 trillion roubles (then \$ 600 billion) was expected to be spent for modern equipment as well as research and development of military technologies, in order to increase the rates of modern equipment in the Russian Armed Forces from 10% in 2018 to 70% in 2020. Consequently,

Hosting country	Framework country	Participated countries (number of troops)	Capabilities
Estonia (Tapa)	The United Kingdom	The United Kingdom (800), Denmark (200), Island (1)	1 mechanized battalion, 1 infantry company, artillery and combat support subunits
Latvia (Adazi)	Canada	Canada (450), Albania (18), Italy (16), Poland (169), Slovakia (2), Slovenia (49), Spain 322	1 mechanized battalion, 2 mechanized companies, 1 armored company, combat support subunits
Lithuania (Rukla)	Germany	Germany (699), Croatia (187), France (266), Holland (224), Norway (28)	4 mechanized companies, artillery and combat support subunits
Poland (Orzysz)	The United States	The United States (795), Croatia (72), Romania (120), the United Kingdom (130)	1 motorized (Stryker) battalion, artillery, air defense and combat support subunits

Table 3. Enhanced Forward Presence. Based on: https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2018_02/20180213_1802-factsheet-efp.pdf (data from February 2018).

²² *Military Balance 2016*, The International Institute for Strategic Studies (2017).

²³ *Ibidem*.

the Russian Armed Forces planned to procure e.g.: 600 aircraft and 1100 helicopters for the Air Force, around 100 combat ships, including around 25 corvettes 14-15 frigates and 24 submarines (including 8 Borei-class submarines with submarine-launched ballistic missiles R-30 Bulava) as well as 2300 main battle tanks, 2000 artillery pieces and 120 Iskander-M launchers for the Land Forces. The Russian strategic nuclear forces were also expected to obtain new types of military hardware (RS-24 Yars, RS-12M1/2 Topol-M) and so were the air defense units (around 400 S-400 Triumph and 100 S-500 Triumphator-M).²⁶ Although many optimistic goals of GPW 2020 were not achieved while implementation of any new-generation weapon systems (e.g. T-14 MBT, Su-57 fighters) was suspended due to financial issues, the Ministry of Defense of Russia assures that 70% modernization indicator will be achieved, even if thanks to older but modernized hardware (e.g. T-72B3 MBT, Su-30SM and Su-35S aircraft). What is more, Russia

launched the subsequent State Armaments Program for 2018-2027.

What is important, Russia has intensively exercised capabilities of rapid mobilization of significant forces in order to, on the one hand, be able to exert pressure on weaker states, and on the other, in case of full-fledged conflict, have the ability to win it before any meaningful allied forces are deployed. As general Stanisław Koziej indicated in the aftermath of the Zapad 2017 exercises „the hybrid operations are backed by military means on at least two levels: conventional and nuclear. The former are the continuously trained and perfected military maneuvers and strategic exercises such as Zapad. Those are meant to simulate and practice rapid deployment of large army groupings in order to provide cover for military operations below the threshold of an open war in the territory of a NATO member state”.²⁷

State	Manpower in total	Main Battle Tanks	Infantry Fighting Vehicles	Combat aircraft
Lithuania	6,000 (4,800. in reserve)	-	234	-
Latvia	5,300 (7,800 in National Guard)	-	11	-
Estonia	5,700 (12,000 in Defense League)	-	158	-
Poland	Around 110,000. (including Territorial Defense Forces) ²⁴	985 (638 in service) ²⁵	1838	around 98

Table 4. Combat potential of armed forces of Poland and the Baltic States. Based on: *Military Balance 2016*.

²⁴ Own assessments.

²⁵ B. Kucharski, „Modernizacja T-72 i PT-91: ocena zasadności i potencjalnych kierunków,” *Raport Pułaskiego*, nr 5 (2017) https://pulaski.pl/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Raport_Modernizacja_T72_PT91_FKP.pdf

²⁶ T. Smura, R. Lipka, „Program modernizacji Sił Zbrojnych Federacji Rosyjskiej – stan realizacji i perspektywy powodzenia,” *Pułaski Policy Paper*, nr 2 2015 https://pulaski.pl/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Komentarz_Miedzynarodowy_Pulaskiego_nr_02_15_PL.pdf.

²⁷ S. Koziej, „Strategiczne wnioski z manewrów Zapad 2017: budowa przez Rosję „bezpiecznika” w neozimnowojennej grze z Zachodem,” *Pułaski Policy Paper 2017* <https://pulaski.pl/analiza-strategiczne-wnioski-manewrow-zapad-2017-budowa-rosje-bezpiecznika-neozimnowojennej-grze-zachodem/>.

3. Brussels Summit – crowning of adaptation process?

After the NATO Summit in Warsaw the Alliance has focused on enhancing its capabilities of defending allies threatened by a major conventional conflict to which – as it seems – the Russian Federation is preparing. The military mobility, changes in command structure and follow-on forces became a priority. In the Brussels Summit declaration, the Alliance maintains its assessment of Russian foreign policy, emphasizing that “Russia’s aggressive actions, including the threat and use of force to attain political goals, challenge the Alliance and are undermining Euro-Atlantic security and the rules-based international order”. The declaration also indicates that while NATO obeys its international commitments, Russia breaks rules that formed a basis of bilateral relations as defined in the NATO-Russia Founding Act.

The Brussels Summit, along with confirming the necessity of maintaining defense and deterrence measures implemented previously, endorsed the reform of command structure, drafted in November 2017 on the meeting of NATO ministers of defense. It assumes establishing two new commands. One of them, located in Norfolk will be responsible for maritime communication through North Atlantic (by this maritime route the US follow-on forces will be transported to Europe in case of conflict). Second – in Ulm, Germany – will be responsible for military mobility and logistics in the European theatre. After implementation of these changes, NATO command structure will be strengthened with 1200 new positions.²⁸ Moreover, new Cyber Operations Centre are to be established within NATO structures

As far as military mobility is concerned, the allies committed to implementing significant enhancements by 2024 – the time needed to cross borders and obtain diplomatic accords is to be shortened (5 days at the most starting 2019). NATO member states have also declared to identify main and alternative supply routes

and complementing existing exercises with elements of forces’ redeployment.

The issue of military mobility was also touched upon in the joint declaration on EU-NATO cooperation signed ahead of the Brussels Summit by the NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, President of the European Council Donald Tusk and President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker. In the document both sides agreed to enhance cooperation in fighting terrorism with NATO also expressing its support for the new European defense initiatives such as European Defense Fund and the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO).

From the security of Eastern Flank’s point of view, NATO Readiness Initiative announced on NATO ministers of defense meeting in June 2018 and confirmed during the Brussels summit seems to be the most important. It assumes that by 2022 NATO will have at 30 mechanized battalion, 30 air squadrons and 30 combatant ships at its disposal, ready to be deployed in 30 days or less (the so-called 4x30 initiative). Currently there is lack of details concerning the initiative. The issue of position of new forces vis-à-vis NATO Response Force (they will be a part of them or separate structure), their structure (national or multinational) and contribution to them by particular countries remain a question.

The collective defense capabilities are directly linked to the issue of defense spending. This has remained a thorn in the side in relations between the US and its European allies, which are chastised by Washington for an inadequate military expenditures. On NATO summit in Newport the member states, which did not spend GDP 2% for defense and 20% of defense spending for capabilities’ development declared to stop any further cuts and gradually increase their defense budgets in order to reach 2% level in 10 years (Defense Investment Pledge). According to the data presented by Stoltenberg just ahead of the Brussels Summit all the allies stopped cuts and began process of increasing of defense spending. 8 NATO members are to reach GDP 2% indicator by the end of the year, as compared to just three in 2014. According to individual state goals, the increase of defense budgets

²⁸ Press conference by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg following the meeting of the North Atlantic Council at the level of Heads of State and Government (NATO Summit Brussels), NATO https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_156733.htm?selectedLocale=en.

²⁹ *Ibidem*.

of European NATO members and Canada will amount to \$ 266 billion.²⁹ For the Trump administration the pace of those increases is not enough, which he did not hesitate to express in a rather undiplomatic fashion ahead of his arrival at the NATO summit and during face to face conversation with the NATO Secretary General, what influenced the atmosphere of the meeting.

Putting aside controversies related to defense spending, decisions taken at the Brussels summit seem to be a coherent and logical continuation of measures established in the course of two previous summits in Newport and Warsaw. Once implemented, NATO's Eastern Flank will be guarded by several units (not counting national forces), including: EFP – immediately, VJTF – in 7 days at the most, NRF/30 mechanized battalions/air squadrons and ships – in 30 days. Nevertheless, such designed measures indicate that in case of full-scale conventional conflict NATO will be able to support threatened allies with significant forces in 4 weeks. Meanwhile, the wargames conducted between January and June 2017 by the Pulaski Foundation indicate that Russia seeks to attain its strategic goals very rapidly in order to achieve its objectives, and present them as *fait accompli* before NATO forces enter the theatre of operations. This means that the Eastern Flank states should encourage permanent deployment of NATO units in their respective territories. Thus, the Polish initiative – supported by the Baltic States – aimed at deploying elements of the US Armored division to the region. In practice it means deployment of additional brigade and combat support units on a division level, since one armored brigade is already deployed as a part of ERI. In turn, the Atlantic Alliance need to focus on issues of intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities, as well as on streamlining the decision-making processes in order to ensure the ability to quickly mobilize follow-on forces and deploy them to areas threatened by possible enemy operations. Aside from NATO support measures, the Eastern Flank countries need to have at their disposal sizeable and capable armed forces, able to resist enemy offensive until the allied reinforcements arrive. In this context to the plan of establishing the 4th division of Polish Armed Forces, located in Eastern Poland seems fitting. It has to be underscored, however, that it cannot

be formed at the expense of other units of this level.

4. Conclusions and recommendations

1. Since illegal annexation of Crimea and the beginning of Russia's military operations in Eastern Ukraine the relations between NATO and Russia remain tense. It would appear, that Russian actions in Ukraine were – as it was the case with the Russo-Georgian War of 2008 – aimed at undermining Ukrainian efforts to seek further integration with the West (EU, and later – NATO) and were a clear violation of several binding international treaties, including The Charter of the United Nations, and the NATO-Russia Founding Act. Moreover, against the background of worsening relations with the West in the last 4 years Russia has intensified its Air Force operations over the Baltic and North Sea, conducted several large-scale snap-exercises and started to enhance or form new military units in the Western Military District.

2. As a response to Russian actions NATO launched its adaptation process, and has since implemented several defense and deterrence measures. Among the most important are: Readiness Action Plan continuous rotational presence (e.g. in form of exercise) of allied forces on territories of Eastern Flank states, tripling NATO Response Forces and distancing from them the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF), which was adopted at the Newport Summit. During the Warsaw Summit the compromise formula of Enhanced Forward Presence was coined. It dictates the deployment of 4 enhanced battalions on a rotational basis in Poland and the Baltic States

3. In spite of all those measures, Russia still has a significant advantage in conventional forces over NATO. In the Western Military District alone Russia has at its disposal 4 armored and mechanized divisions, 3 airborne and air assault divisions, 8 independent armored and mechanized brigades and a dozen of other brigades (combat support, naval infantry, Spetsnaz). In contrast,

the Baltic States armed forces have at their disposal 4 light brigades, supported by territorial defense light battalions, while the firepower of EFP units one can consider as equal to 1-2 combat brigades. Among NATO member states neighboring with Russia only Poland has significant, but still far smaller in comparison, military assets (2 mechanized and one armored division, 4 independent brigades).

4. Decisions taken at the Brussels Summit seem to be a coherent and logical development of measures established during the previous summits in Newport and Warsaw. After their implementation, NATO will be fielding a variety of forces available at its disposal, within a varying time frame: EFP will be available immediately, VJTF in up to 7 days, NRF/30 in 30 days.

5. Once the decisions undertaken at the Brussels Summit are implemented, NATO will have the capacity to dispatch

significant forces into the threatened areas within 30 days. A number of simulations has indicated, however, that Russia will seek to attain its strategic objectives over very short periods of time, in order to “freeze” the conflict before NATO reinforcements arrive.

6. Eastern Flank states should seek to establish a major presence of allied units in their Moreover, the Eastern Flank countries need to develop their own military assets that would be formidable enough to resist Russian offensive until the allied reinforcements arrive.

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