

SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE IN QUEST OF NATIONAL SECURITY AND EURO-ATLANTIC INTEGRATION

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INTRODUCTION

This paper highlights the problem of national security that has been a subject of extensive debates in the South-Eastern Europe since 1989. After the collapse of the USSR in late 90's, the most Eastern European states have decided to join Western institutions. The main questions of the integration are: Which new national security concepts do emerge in the region of SEE? How were challenges for security defined in these concepts? How did Bosnian tragedy influence on the improving of security concepts? Will NATO be considered only as the military power or as organization able to accelerate economic modernization in South-Eastern Europe? When will NATO countries accept the idea of enlargement? Which are the basic requirements for the candidate states? How did NATO enlargement influence on NATO transformation? Does NATO Membership Action Plan have any new peculiarities?

The theoretical frames of this article are based on the Regional Security Complex Theory. RSCT demonstrates why particularly the security determines the development of all other spheres of social and political life in the peripheral (unstable) regions. The security of each actor in the region interacts with the security of the other ones. There is strong security interdependence within the region, but not among regions. This feature has an impact on the region and makes the regional security an interesting area of study. The purpose of this paper is to analyse the process and results of formulation of the new security agenda in South-Eastern Europe.

THE BEGINNING OF THE NEGOTIATIONS OF EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES WITH NATO

The economic and political priorities of the Eastern European countries were clearly related to the purpose of joining the EU, while the problem of national security has been the subject of extensive debate. It was not a coincidence, as during the Soviet times, the countries of this region did

not have their own national security concepts; all of them were defined by the Soviet Union.

The most efficient in creating of the new concept of the national security were the Polish military analysts and the experts in international relations. This can be explained by the fact that Poland has the longest border with the former Soviet Republics, where according to the Polish estimations of 90's were 76 regions of potential ethnic conflicts. Furthermore, Russia has been permanently unstable and unpredictable (Koval, 1999). The only way out, which the new political elite of the Republic of Poland saw, was the quick location under NATO "umbrella".

The other concepts of national security of states in this region do not talk about "the threat from the East", but the possible local conflicts in the former socialist countries, and in particular, on the territory of SFRY, are considered as the main challenge. But the real threat was in the internal security challenges: the growth of nationalism, which was deliberately stoking and using by the populist leaders in the struggle for power; an insecure status of the national minorities and the beginning of their struggle for equal rights; worries about the revision of the post-war borders, etc.

The negotiations with NATO were begun by the Czech President Václav Havel, who during the speech at NATO headquarters in Brussels in March 1991, openly demanded from NATO to provide the new European states with the security guarantees. In three months after the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact (October 1991), was held the meeting of the Ministers of foreign affairs of Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia. These three states officially expressed their desire to join NATO (Michta, 1992). Their aspirations to join NATO provoked a sharp reaction of the USSR. Someone considered that "The Visegrad Group" would benefit from the permanent East-West confrontation as the only way to ensure its own *raison d'être*; that their accentuating and sometimes excessive politico-military loyalty to the West, was the key strategic resource, the main "export product" of the region (Bojčova, 2004). The rejection of NATO expansion to the East by the Soviet Union perturbed even the conservative circles in the Eastern Europe. Now the renouncement of the idea of joining NATO would have meant the recognition of Russia's right to put a veto on their decisions and the actual limitation of sovereignty.

The concernment in cooperation with NATO was stoking by the numerous failed attempts to fill the security vacuum through the creation of the new multilateral structures within the Visegrad Group, "Pentagonal" ("Geksagonal"), CEI in the early 90's. The ideas such as the "belt of neutral states" (the idea of the head of the Supreme Soviet of Belarus Stanislav Shushkevich), the "safety zone" (the idea of the President of Ukraine Leonid Kravchuk), and "NATO-bis" (the idea of the Polish President Lech Walesa)

were also promoted, but have never been implemented. The most longstanding was an attempt to establish close cooperation between the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and Poland within the framework of the Visegrad Group. The official statement about the contract termination has not still been adopted despite the fact that the membership in NATO and the EU allows that. The primary goal of the Visegrad Group was the mutual support in order to join the EU and NATO as soon as possible. So, from the very beginning, the union was considered as temporary by its members. It is hardly a surprise that after joining the EU and NATO, the Visegrad Cooperation has not almost been mentioned.

At first, 16 NATO countries led by the U.S. expressed the temperate enthusiasm in regard to the idea of enlargement. At the first stage, the main deterrent was the position of the Soviet Union. Its claims were based on the "Treaty on the Final Settlement with respect to Germany", the Article 5, which prohibited the stationing of foreign troops or nuclear weapons on territories of the East Germany. The Soviet elite broadly interpreted the article as a general ban for NATO to extend its influence in the East (Rahmaninov, 1997).

The task to transform NATO within the framework of the "new security structure" was put forward after the long-term discussions at NATO Summit (Rome, November 1991). NATO, the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE), the EU, the WEU, and the European Council should complement each other. Thereafter, in order to revive the dialogue between the former opponents was created the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC), opened to all European states. In 1992, it has already included 37 countries (Koval 1999). However, in May 1993, the Minister of Defense of the Federal Republic of Germany Volker R  he at the parliamentary session of the North Atlantic Assembly in Berlin advocated for accession of the CEE states to NATO (Rahmaninov, 1997). Despite the fact that it was not the incentive of U.S., but the main reasons for changing of NATO position was to use the weakness of Russia and to maintain NATO as a tool of leadership in Europe and other continents.

In autumn 1993 Anthony Lake, the Assistant to the U.S. President for National Security Affairs conceived the "enlargement strategy", where he laid the emphasis on providing the assistance to the states, which took the path of democracy and market economy. The other version of this concept was submitted to the Congress by the President Bill Clinton as the "National Security Strategy of the United States (1994 - 1995), engagement and enlargement". The stress was laid not on the promotion of democracy and market, but particularly on the security issues. On October 13, 1993 in Prague, the President Clinton stated that "it is not referred to the problem whether NATO should admit the new members, but to the question - when

and how". The U.S. State Department also announced that this issue would be only under the NATO consideration, and it should not be a matter of dispute for the other OSCE's participants (Rahmaninov, 1997). This statement was not coordinated with the U.S. allies in NATO, including the United Kingdom and France, which at that time did not share the American opinion about the NATO enlargement. France proposed own "Stability Pact" project, and its approval would make meaningless the vision of CEE states as a "gray area" of the potential danger. In January 1994 at the meeting of NATO member states in Brussels, an official statement about the launching of the new program "Partnership for Peace" was made. Its key requirements were: 1) the democratic control over the military forces; 2) NATO's access to the process of national defense planning and funding; 3) participation in peacekeeping and humanitarian operations of the UN and the OSCE; 4) interaction with NATO member-states in peacekeeping missions with military component, in field training exercises, etc. The first states which joined the Partnership for Peace were Romania, Lithuania and Poland (Brusylovska, 2007).

On the one hand, the Partnership for Peace can be regarded as a transitional form of the cooperation just before the full NATO membership. On the other hand, the idea of NATO transformation from military-political alliance to an instrument of peace and security safeguarding, was still on the agenda.

THE NEGOTIATIONS: STAGE 2.

The radical change in NATO position took place in 1995. In the U.S. policy emerged the formula of the "intensive dialogue" with the candidate states. The reason for this apparent policy revision was a fear of the U.S that the weakening of NATO will lead to a discredit of the American leadership in the world. In turn, Germany was waiting for the repeal of Article 5 of the "Treaty on the Final Settlement with Respect to Germany" if NATO expands eastward. But the most radical changes underwent the French position. According to its calculations, it would be better if the CEE countries joined NATO now, and only over a certain period of time became the member of the EU. The desire of the military-industrial complexes of NATO member-states was an important motive to create the new trade areas for their products (Maksimichev, 1996). Actually for the United States there was no considerable economic interest, unlike for Germany and other developed economies of Europe, which regarded the Eastern European region as the potential "gold mine". The American politicians and experts also pointed at the importance of geo-strategic factor in the process of NATO enlargement. Jeffrey Simon (Washington Institute for National Strategic Studies) said:

“Today, the geostrategic role of the candidate states is taking into account more than ever. Slovakia and Slovenia appear as the “bridge” to Hungary; Romania and Bulgaria “restrain” Serbia and “stabilize” Macedonia, at the same time bind Hungary, Greece, and Turkey” (Simon, 2004). Further it should be pointed out that Poland and the Baltic States “restrain” Russia. All this has of a great importance in the context of an explicit gravity of NATO toward the Caspian region and the Middle East – the sources of energy. Brussels also understood that the accession to NATO membership can be used as one of the main tools of control over the general processes in post-communist Eastern Europe. In Hungary and Poland, the attractiveness of NATO helped to achieve national consent in implementation of the radical political and economic reforms. Not only the former communists, but also liberals and conservatives in the government and in the opposition, understood the necessity to meet all the requirements of NATO. The achieved social consensus without doubt contributed to the success of democracy in the region.

In order to become a potential candidate for NATO membership, states had to demonstrate the significant progress in a settlement of conflicts with their neighbors by peaceful means and their loyalty to the idea of the multiethnic democracy. For example, in the mid-90s it was the starting point of the rapprochement between Hungary and Slovakia. In the speech to the Parliament the Prime Minister of Hungary Gyula Horn, claimed: “What do the EU and NATO want from us? They have firmly declared that we should adjust the relations with our neighbors. Neither the EU nor NATO is going to admit the states with unsettled border disputes or problems, connected with the minority rights” (Iden, 1995). In 1995 Hungary and Slovakia have signed an agreement under which they agreed to respect the existing boundaries. The similar agreement was reached between Hungary and Romania: the borders were recognized inviolable, and at the same time the rights to the Hungarian minority in Transylvania were guaranteed.

The Bosnian tragedy, ended with the Dayton accords in 1995, was an additional argument for the states in this region. It showed the weakness of the OSCE and the fact that NATO remained the most powerful military force in Europe without any alternative. Despite all the shortcomings of the organization, only NATO membership could ensure that a conflict like the one in Bosnia would not occur within the territory of these states.

The nation’s leadership of the Eastern Europe hoped that the accession to NATO would accelerate the economic modernization and strengthen their position in the international economic arena. The membership in the strongest military organization had to become an important factor in attraction of the foreign investment.

At that point in time, NATO had already finished the formulation of terms for the Eastern European states, which wanted to join the Alliance. Warren Christopher announced the basic requirements at the meeting of NATO foreign ministers in December 1994: 1) completed and unwavering loyalty to the principles and structures of NATO; 2) ensuring of parliamentary control over the military sphere, appointment of civilians to heading positions in this field; 3) the armed forces must be professional, apolitical and strictly perform the function of deterrence and defense; 4) abidance of the democratic and international conduct standards by a candidate state. New members had to adhere to the basic principles of the UN Charter, to promote democracy, individual freedoms and rule of law (Brusylovska, 2007). Thus, along with the specific requirements for the reform of army, the candidate countries should achieve a certain stage of the democratic state system, but this purpose was rather generally formulated.

There were long fierce debates on the need to change the NATO's role in the post-bipolar world, which in turn determined the need of its transformation with laying an emphasis on the political structure, and less on the military one. Despite this, it was finally decided to perform the next NATO enlargement. If to take into consideration the critical basis for this decision, it is clear that it requires the further explanation. From the point of view of the U.S, such solution was optimal. The U.S. has always viewed NATO as its main tool of the European policy. NATO in its current form - as a military and political organization - completely satisfied the American elites. Such a shift in emphasis of its activities could only cause damage to the interests of the U.S. It is not so easy to explain the position of the Western European allies of the U.S. At first, they were opposed to the enlargement, in favor of transformation, especially France, which even had not joined the NATO military structure. But then the Western Europeans let themselves to be persuaded. The main purpose of this change was the priority of the EU enlargement issue for the European great powers. First of all, the accession to NATO membership of the Eastern European states on an individual case basis could be considered by the Europeans: 1) as a "litmus test" of their actual situation at that point in time; 2) as an opportunity to acquaint the United States with the cost shifting for the accomplishment of the post-communist transformation.

In July 1997 at Madrid Summit, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland were invited to the negotiations with the purpose to join NATO in 1999 (the 50th anniversary of the Alliance). Slovakia, another member of the Visegrad Group, was not invited to the talks; the main reason was the pro-Russian policy of Vladimír Mečiar and signing of the Slovak-Russian agreement for military-technical cooperation on the eve of Madrid Summit. But in Madrid was announced that other countries, regardless of their

geographic location, might be eligible for membership in the future according to “their evolving” toward democratic government and the market economy (Molnar, 1998).

THE NATO ENLARGEMENT AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

On December 16, 1998 in Brussels, the foreign ministers of Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Poland signed a protocol of accession to the Alliance. On March 12, 1999 in Independence (Missouri, USA) after the Ministers of Foreign Affairs have deposited "instruments of accession", Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic officially became NATO members. The goal of further reformation of the armed forces until 2006 was set. The program consisted of about 200 goals and more than 100 tasks related not only to the changes of the main standards of the material resources, but also to the structural and personnel modernization. The funding was provided primarily from the state budget and secondly from NATO (Brusylovska, 2007).

Because of the Kosovo crisis, in 1999 at the NATO summit in Washington was announced not only the new approach to local conflicts and enlargement of the traditional area of its responsibility, but also, in general, to the European security in the context of NATO – EU relations. This approach was named “European Security and Defense Identity” (ESDI). The Alliance activated the creation of the new European security architecture, which was aimed at complementarity of the functions and roles of NATO, the OSCE, the EU, the WEU, the Council of Europe, and others.

Also, in 1999 the governments of NATO states ratified the decision to increase the flexibility of the structures of the Alliance through the use of the Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF). According to this new mechanism, NATO member states are not obliged to participate in separate missions, if they feel that their vital interests are not affected, but they cannot prevent other members from participation in operations. In 1999 these decisions marked the beginning of a new era in the history of NATO.

At Washington Summit 1999 nine more candidate states were named: Slovenia, Slovakia, the Baltic States, Bulgaria, Romania, Macedonia, and Albania (Croatia, perhaps, supposed to be the tenth). There substantive divergences were over the issue of one or another candidate state. Thus, Albania and Macedonia did not look as more stable than Serbia or Bosnia; however, some of them became candidates, while others did not. The stand of Germany, France, and England on a matter of the further enlargement was quite restrained. But the new members supported the U.S., whose position within the Alliance has become much stronger. The reasons of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic were quite clear: due to the expansion to

the East these states would not be on the last defense line any more. Besides, they were counting on the U.S. support in the matter of their early entry into the EU, but putting it mildly, the major European states did not hurry with that. The certain fears of the Czechs and Poles were also related to the German factor, but the influence of the U.S. had to prevent that.

NATO membership has been quite clearly associated in the minds of the Eastern Europeans with the need of the preliminary implementation of the radical internal reforms. For example, Peter Weiss, the leader of the Socialist Party of Slovakia, declared: "Although our country was named as one of the first candidate states for NATO membership, first of all we should meet a number of conditions, including: compliance with the rules of democracy, which are the norm in the participating countries; progress in the development of market economy; enforcement of human and civil rights and freedoms of Mass Media. We must admit openly the fact that our partners consider the Slovak democracy as unstable, this cannot meet our interests" (Brusylovska, 2007). The similar arguments are adduced in the report of Anthony G. Brown independent group: NATO enlargement will help the Central and Eastern European countries to consolidate the reforms, ensure their protection from the internal instability and external aggression. In turn, only by means of enlargement, NATO can complete its transformation from a military alliance since the Cold War times to more political entity and integrated military structure for crisis management, and, in general, for joint actions in the Wider Europe (Is the enlargement of NATO necessary?).

The famous American researcher Michael Mandelbaum sticks to a different point of view. He has quite unexpectedly remarked: the foreseen extension is not sufficiently wide, if the new NATO mission is the promotion of democracy. Exactly these states, which are touched upon, can implement the successful transition to democracy and market economy much better than others even without NATO. Another factor - the possible revival of the Russian imperial policy - also does not explain the choice of NATO. From the viewpoint of West, Ukraine is under the greatest threat of the revival of aggressive Russia. However, no one proposes Ukraine to join NATO. Consequently, the expansion in the form in which it was planned, is counter-productive and will work only towards a new division of Europe and to the renewal of the "Cold War" atmosphere (Mandelbaum, 1995).

Each of these positions was well reasoned, it was obviously that the chosen by NATO officials form of the expansion was far from being the best. But the events on September 11, 2001 significantly accelerated the growth of the number of supporters of NATO enlargement to the East. The process of searching for strategic partners became the global task for all states. Therefore, considering the possible candidates for the accession, their

internal characteristics became less important than the external, connected with the international system factor.

In March and April 2004, just a month before the EU enlargement, there was another NATO enlargement - the affiliation of seven new member states: Slovakia, Slovenia, Bulgaria, Romania, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. It is evident that the new NATO members did not have sufficient political experience of harmonization of the Atlantic partnership with their own national interests. The governments of Poland, Romania and Bulgaria consented to deploy the American military installations on their territories. We understand the motivation of Romania and Bulgaria: they rely heavily on the American lobbying of their interests in the EU, but we should not forget about the negative experience of Turkey. It is NATO member since 1952, but for almost 20 years it has been trying and failed to obtain a membership in the EU. Poland, which considers itself as the main partner of the U.S. in the Eastern Europe, must bear even a more crippling burden of cooperation than it is provided by the formal agreements. For example, Poland played an active role in the reformation of NATO. In September 2002, when NATO came up with an idea to create the rapid reaction forces, Poland initiated the foundation of Warsaw Response Forces of NATO. In the report of this group in 2004, special attention was paid to the need of strengthening the ties between the U.S. and the EU (Brusylovska, 2007).

The new NATO members become an outpost in combating international terrorism; therefore, the threat of terrorism is potentially increased for these states. The terrorist attacks in Madrid and London have shown that NATO's military operations contain a threat to the civilian population of the European states and they become a hostage at this struggle. Such problems as refugees, military expenditures for carrying out of missions, in areas which previously were not in NATO's responsibility zone (Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, and Iraq), are intensifying. The necessity to increase defense expenditures, especially for the candidate states before their accession to the Alliance, became another negative consequence related to NATO joining. Thus, in 2003, Romania increased its military budget by 20% - to 1.2 billion dollars, while the standard of living remained one of the lowest in Europe. For the transition economies, the need to reduce severely the size of armies was troublesome. From 1993 to 1999 the Czech Republic reduced the armed forces posture from 93 to 53 thousand people, thus it had an impact on the unemployment rate (8.5%) and the social tensions heightened (Serfaty, 1999). Other states of the region followed the "Polish scenario": they decided to rearm their troops through the purchasing of military equipment in the U.S. Now they depend on the US companies (e.g. "Lockheed Martin") in such matters as maintenance and repairing of new

military equipment (Brusylovska, 2007). And, in global sense - their defensive ability totally depends on the U.S.

Comparing the defense budget size of the U.S. and the European countries, it seems that they are not members of one block (pact). In 2003 the USA increased their defense spending by 48 billion dollars – it is more than the total defense budget of any European state. In 2003, the defense spending of all European NATO member states accounted for a half of the U.S. spending. It is obviously that even the economic leaders of Europe cannot compete with the U.S. in the military sphere (Brusylovska, 2007). So, what we can say about the newcomers is that their contribution to the modernization of weapons and the transformation of arm forces is minimal, but it imposes an additional burden on the national budgets.

The attempts of certain countries to reduce the defense spending after joining NATO caused a sharp reaction of the NATO leadership. For example, in 2004 in Brussels Hungary was officially reproached that its military budget was not answerable to the minimum, which the Alliance determined. In order to temper the criticism, the Hungarian leadership had to make the concessions on the more important for the United States Iraq issue. At the end of 2004 in accordance with the decision of the Parliament the Hungarian military units left Iraq, but the Government immediately decided to continue the participation in the settlement of the situation in Iraq and sent there 150 experts for training of staff from the local defense and law enforcement departments and agencies (Brusylovska, 2007).

On the other hand, the example of Poland shows that the incentive in NATO is encouraged. According to the data of 2003, the Alliance became the most significant investor in the economy of the state. The share of Poland in NATO budget is 78 million dollars per year, while at the same time, NATO investments in Poland are estimated at about 700 million dollars per year. Until 2008 the Alliance planned to invest more than 2 billion zloty in the expansion of the military infrastructure of Poland (modernization and construction of ports, airports, oil storage tanks, control systems). The projects that have already been carried out include the construction of the supply systems of sea ports in Gdynia, laying of the landing strips in Malbork near Gdansk. In 2005 was signed the agreement for building of the training center for NATO joint forces in Bydgoszcz (the project was estimated at 33 million euro) (Brusylovska, 2007). All this goes to prove that in the new NATO, Poland holds a key and advantageous position of integrator.

After analysis of the potential threats and benefits from joining NATO, the other countries of South-Eastern Europe gave the precedence over the advantages. We can understand them: the difficulties were mainly determined by the transition period collisions, and the task of the national

security assurance was always up to date; so very slight doubts remained in relation to the effectiveness of NATO.

In 2004 the Alliance complimented Albania, Croatia, and Macedonia on their progress as the candidate states, as participants of “NATO Membership Action Plan” (MAP). Since the very beginning in 1999 Albania and Macedonia took part in it, Croatia - since 2002. In 2003, they also signed the Adriatic Charter with the U.S., according to which the United States should support their prompt accession to the NATO membership.

Current participants in the MAP are the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, which has been participating in the MAP since 1999, and Montenegro, which was invited to join in December 2009. A welcoming progress was made in its reform efforts in April 2010 when the Allies formally invited Bosnia and Herzegovina to join the MAP. However, the North Atlantic Council will only accept the country’s first Annual National Programme when the immovable property issue had been resolved. Allied leaders agreed to invite Macedonia to become a member as soon as a mutually acceptable solution to the issue over the country’s name has been reached with Greece.

Each participating country chooses those component parts of the MAP, which are best of all consistent with its requirements, and sets its own planned targets and timelines. NATO representatives constantly keep watch over the implementation of the MAP. The advisers get to the heart of all matters related to the key aspects of future membership of candidates: politics, economy, defense, resources, information, security, and law. First of all, the candidates sent troops for participation in NATO operations beyond the Euro-Atlantic region (Iraq, Afghanistan). As the partners they also participate in many types of NATO activities (military servants from these countries serve in NATO headquarters and commanding units, study at NATO Schools in the West European states).

On April 1, 2009 Albania and Croatia joined in the sixth enlargement. So, since 2009 NATO is an Alliance that consists of 28 independent member countries. Albania is in favor of the extending cooperation with the other countries in the region - Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina. It must help to break with the old stereotypes - considering the Balkans as the “Tinderbox of Europe”. So, the idea of accession of all Eastern European countries to NATO is getting more and more real.

CONCLUSION

At the turn of the Millennium, NATO looked like anachronism; the organization was interesting neither for the USA nor for the Western Europe. The USA tried to help their allies in the maintenance of the organization, and

began to embody the idea of collective security and collective responsibility. According to G. W. Bush, it meant that the EU had to provide its own safety and to find the means to reequip their military forces with new technologies. To some extent the political leaders of the European Union continued to dream of the impossible - to keep the presence of the U.S. in the Old World, but under the EU control. However, in 2004 NATO's position strengthened with its transformation from the Euro-Atlantic organization to the global politico-military structure. The Eastern European states, which wanted to be placed under the NATO's "umbrella", were engulfed in conflicts "necessary" for the U.S., but all members had to bear the responsibility for the actions of NATO on equal terms with Washington. To a greater extent the Western Europeans lost the confidence to create their own center of power that would extend its influence far beyond the Europe. Thus, the strengthening of NATO strengthens primarily the American power, but in the longer term, it does not mean that the U.S. partners "have lost".

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