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## NATO MILITARY SHORTFALLS AS CRUCIAL HINDRANCE TO OPERATIONS

**Summary:** Findings of this research are focused on NATO capabilities in the light of requirement and planning assumptions required to conduct missions tailored to certain operations<sup>1</sup>. The key aspects are related to the strategies of the International Organizations and its implementation while facing an unpredictable threat in hostile environment. The overarching issues are the features of contemporary asymmetry. The author is confronting his practical observations of the scenarios of conflicts with known scientific theories relevant to the asymmetry.

**Keywords:** Strategy, Asymmetric Threat, NATO, Capabilities, International Security Environment, Counterinsurgency.

Enhanced globalization process has played a substantial role in the termination of the era of the Cold War (Stiglitz, 2006)<sup>2</sup>. Right after the successful peaceful revolution gains of the Polish Solidarity movement and the fall of the Berlin wall, changes have been introduced into the World's geopolitical order and resulted in moving security environment from bipolar to unipolar shape (Monteiro, 2012)<sup>3</sup>. This systemic, however occasionally chaotic process has triggered a number of unpredictable consequences in many domains of international security (Fukuyama, F. (2009), i.e. Civil War in the Balkans 1991-2002 (Huntington, S.P. 1993). The dilemmas of complex nature have appeared and have had

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<sup>1</sup> Long term research from 2001 – up to the present, covering interdisciplinary fields relevant to the topic has been conducted by the author. Furthermore, in the middle of 2013, NATO SPS project (draft) titled *States and International Organisations vs. Tribes: Counterinsurgency and Tribal Politics* has been developed and thus introduced with the administrative and scientific support of Cianciara, A. (University of Wrocław) in order to identify relations amid state and non-state actors (the project is in an administrative preparation phase at DSW – University of Lower Silesia, The Security Research Center).

<sup>2</sup> It is important that “in spite of expected achievements and effects, the globalization process has brought also the lack of stability”; in addition (Nuno P. Monteiro, 2001/12) he has noticed: “I place the end of the Cold War in 1989, when the Soviet Union allowed the self-determination of its client states in Eastern Europe”. (see footnote #23 in *Unrest Assured*).

<sup>3</sup> It is strongly recommended to follow one of such perceptions: “Polarity in international relations is any of the various ways in which power is distributed within the international system. It describes the nature of the international system at any given period of time. [...] The type of system is completely dependent on the distribution of power and influence of states in a region or internationally. The post-Cold War international system which is unipolar”.

serious impact on the mission, functions, tasks and responsibilities of International Security Institutions (i.e. NATO, UN, EU and OSCE), as well as on foreign policy of its member countries playing a key role in the decision-making process of resolutions of conflicts present in the contemporary world in the light of the growing role of non-state actors (Jean, 2003). As a consequence of these new circumstances and the horrible 9/11 Al-Qaida terrorist attack on WTC, the international community was forced for collective action for the first time since WWII<sup>4</sup>. It is so important for researchers to recognize a legal basis for the rights and legitimacy of participation in the driven model of strategy introduced by the US. The worldwide-known strategy GWOT (Global War on Terror) introduced by President G.W. Bush right after 9/11 has been replaced smoothly in 2007 in Pentagon by Overseas Contingency Operations and introduced with the old name as strategy COIN (Counterinsurgency Strategy) (GWOT, 2006). Some of the scholar practitioners are arguing that COIN is not a strategy but operations relevant to the theater level (Gentile, 2011).

Such operations, conducted in the last decade, had become more and more complex with an unpredictable outcome, since uncertainty in the threat perception played a substantial role in the forming of the new paradigm of war (Smith, 2007). Therefore, commonly known approaches<sup>5</sup> for the strategy-formulation model were transformed from the conventional to asymmetric methodology (CACI and NDU, 2008). It is worth to notice that the deep scientific research of the US Revolution in Military Affairs beginning from early 1970s, may provide us with findings on effect-based planning and network-centric capabilities required to fight the asymmetric war (RMA, 1993). In the following part the nature of the asymmetric environment will be examined and, secondly, the capabilities sought by the network centric requirement.

### **Political game over the NATO level of ambitions versus capabilities testbed**

In the past ISAF consisted of a huge number of actors constrained by limited political will, with unequal combat roles, making forces more vulnerable (Deren, 2009). Thus, systemic and holistic approaches are required to counter the unique challenges of the Afghan war. Furthermore, a successful conclusion to this complex process is the only way to prove NATO's credibility to an increasingly skeptical public. In a non-permissive scenario development it is foreseen that the withdrawn process of forces (2014) might trigger a nightmare scenario for political cleansing of an unknown number of citizens who have been involved in any kind of cooperation with Allied or Coalition Forces. Taking it

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<sup>4</sup> NATO members had evoked Art.5 of the NATO Charter. However, neither of the NATO member states participates in the execution of the Art.5 in Afghanistan. Nations are deployed to a different extent, either in the coalition forces: Operation Enduring Freedom OEF (no mandate in accordance with the international law to use the Force) or as ally troops with NATO International Assistance Security Forces ISAF (UN SCR adopted).

<sup>5</sup> i.e. US military doctrines for operational planning process.

into account, it is recommended that even a limited presence of NATO and US Coalition Forces, as it is so far foreseen, would allow to achieve the required final operational capabilities by Afghan National Security Forces NSF, and soon reach an effect-based modern planning methodology.

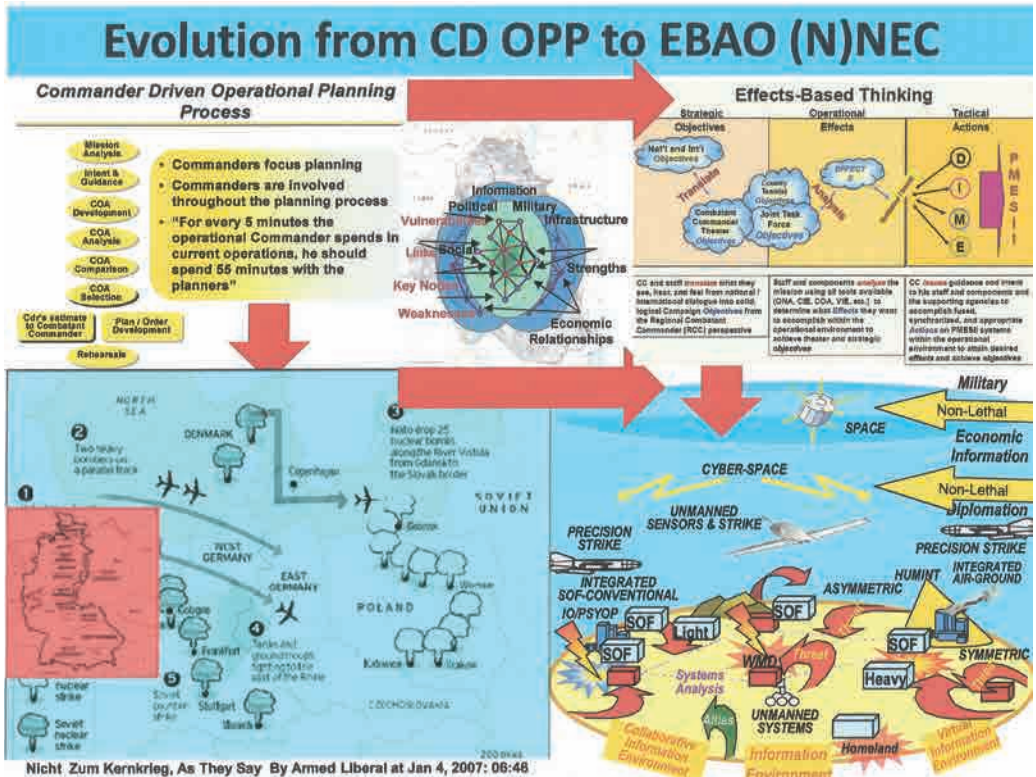


Fig. 1. Evolution in Approaches for Operational Planning Process (OPP)

Source: Deren, J. (2005), *Own development sourced from conventional threat and EBAO theory*. EX Urgent Victory, Germany, US V Corps 2005.

The Afghan security environment is undoubtedly shaped by the asymmetric threat caused by an unpredictable enemy, the number of actors within the theater using various approaches to planning, command and control issues. (Fig. 1.) Moreover,, in evaluating the NATO-Afghanistan situation as a whole, it should not be forgotten that the Strasbourg-Kehl Summit assigned the task to the Secretary General to develop a new strategic concept, based for the first time on a transparent and open public discussion. Furthermore, the key priorities regarding NATO's ability to counter insurgencies and terrorism were agreed upon by the Ministers of Defense in their October (2009) meeting – not only in the Afghan context, which is a drastically more complicated situation. Significantly, this was the first time that the international community was given a chance to assess a confi-

dential report at this level of command – later declassified and published by the Washington Post – when ISAF Commander General Steven A. McChrystal stepped out of NATO command under his US hat to deliver the material to the national authority (Kagan, W.F and Kagan, K. 2009a). Shortly thereafter, the Force Requirements, also known as the US Strategy, were issued (Kagan, W.F and Kagan, K. 2009b). This act proves that the contemporary international policy in the age of globalization is under the strict scrutiny of the media and public opinion. Therefore, the decisive points of Afghan operations and the enemy’s center of gravity are publicly well known. (Fig. 2.) Only the aim of such behaviour remains unclear. These facts notwithstanding, NATO’s public opinion campaign concerning the serious course of action that should be undertaken regarding the war in Afghanistan is insufficient. Authorities of NATO and Non-NATO Troops Contributing Nations face a very hard decision and its time-frame is unclear due to the lack of nations’ support for the war. Neither “political will” – as center of gravity nor capabilities are at the level specified by the operational requirement. It pertains to the vacuum shaped by political – military dilemmas (Strange, J. 1996).

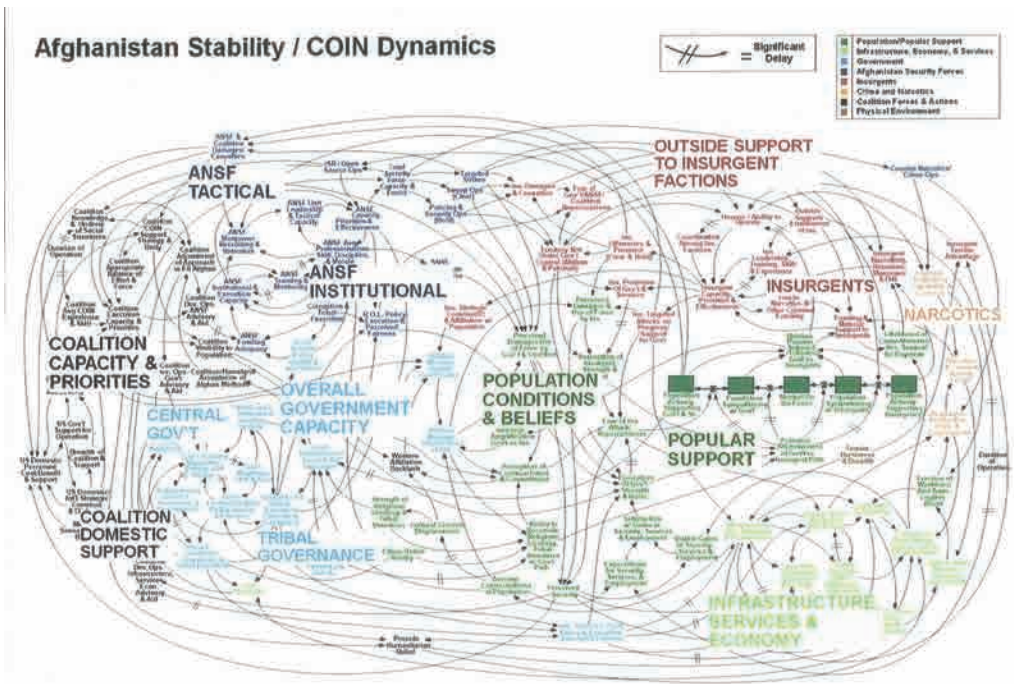


Fig. 2. Afghan Stability / COIN Dynamics used by ISAF Commander (former) gen (R) S. McChrystal  
 Source: Dynamic Planning for COIN in Afghanistan; PA Knowledge Limited 2009.

Thus, planning for who and when these capabilities will be provided is problematic. In addition, from time to time, rumors emerge that withdrawal plans are unclear and under consideration who and when will exit their area of operational responsibility.

If such a goal – the free end state – is not achievable, to avoid wasting resources and human life, NATO must consider the recommendations given in the resignation letter of the former USMC Captain and Foreign Services career officer Mr. Matthew How (Howu, M. (2009). He argued that a transition to an Afghan-led strategy should top the NATO agenda in the near future. During the last months and weeks, we witnessed the turbulence in the international community concerning the Afghan presidential election, which gave a less than permissive forecast for an honest future.

Staff writers explain in the Washington Post that “*McChrystal intended to use the 30,000 U.S. reinforcements authorized by Obama and as many as 7,000 soldiers pledged by other NATO nations to protect key cities and towns in the southern and eastern parts of the country, where the Taliban insurgency is strongest*” (Chandrasekaran, R. and Jaffe, G. 2009).

By focusing on securing population centers, he hopes to reverse enemy momentum, foster a more responsive local government and, where possible, persuade Taliban fighters through a mixture of pressure and incentives to lay down their arms. Thus, planning for who and when these capabilities will be provided seems less problematic, since “*Many of the things we are talking about, we have already started,*” said Brig. Gen. John Nicholson, who until last summer oversaw the military reconstruction effort in southern Afghanistan (Chandrasekaran, R. and Jaffe, G. 2009).

In order to avoid further waste of resources, a few recommendations might be given (as of 2009):

- In light of the new US strategy, the operational concept for the ISAF mission should be revised. The NATO defense planning process should be directed towards a broader international community with the aim of altering base assumptions, with accurate assessments of the present strategic situation. It should show critical shortfalls and even a permanent lack of capabilities in some areas that hamper the completion of the ISAF mission.
- Allies deploying troops to ISAF follow the NATO Force Generation Process (FGP), which is viewed as a mechanism for improving overall capabilities. However, in reality, FGP often serves in the theatre only as the mechanism by which nations’ flags show up, regardless of deployed troops’ inability to conduct the required tasks. This process also requires an urgent review.
- Not all NATO members properly understood that the Afghan War is not only a US war in spite of the already explained constraints and restraints drawn from the international law with regard to “after 9/11” when Article 5. was invoked by the consensus of all NATO Nations. However, there is still a misunderstanding, since neither ISAF nor Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) are not the NATO’s allies according to the provisions of Art.5. Therefore, NATO Commanders must be convinced that they are doing the right job executing the UN mandate and National Contingents should follow ISAF operational plans.

## Lack of Capabilities and its Impact on Operations

Member states must be able to reach the operational capability target in order for the Alliance to meet the security obligations that have been outlined in the new Strategic Concept (Deren, J. 2010). As was agreed by the highest NATO authorities as the result of the decision-making process led by the Nations, the common standards for technology and administrative procedures are necessary to conduct Combined Joint Task Force Operations, thus Standardization and interoperability are key to NATO force planning<sup>6</sup>. Defense priorities must not promise more than capabilities can deliver, since the political will is not enough. NATO Level of ambition must be realistic in regards of threat assessment and even Effect Based Approach to Operations (EBOA) (Fig. 1.), and meet entire spectrum of capabilities sought by Minimum Capabilities Requirements (MCR), (Fig. 4.).

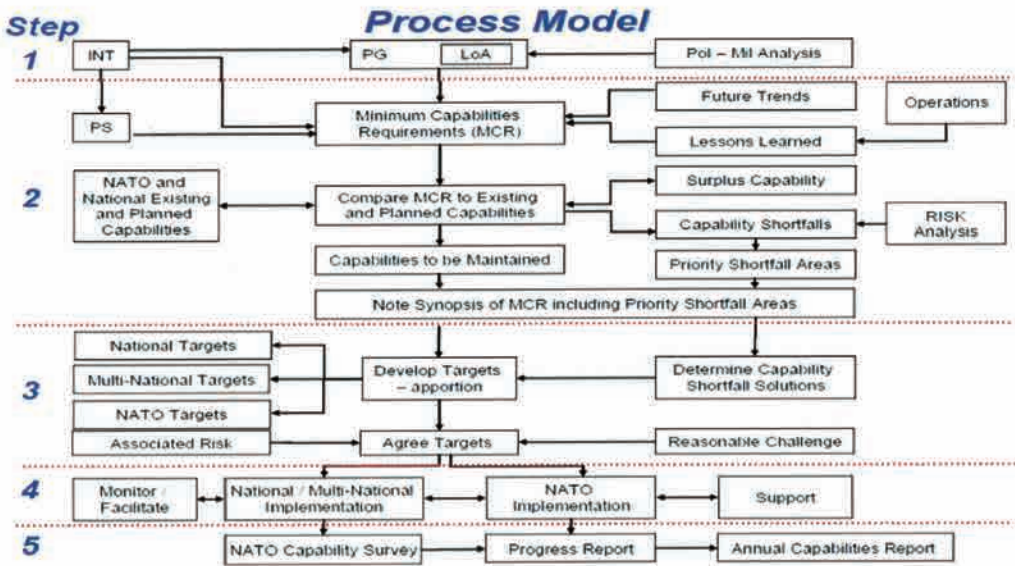


Fig. 3. NATO Defence Planning Process (NDPP)

Source: ACT and NATO Defence Planning Process (2012)

When analysing the report from the Group of Experts on NATO’s new Strategic Concept, it is worth stressing that the results of initiatives and summit directives were not

<sup>6</sup> Interview conducted by the author with General Stephane Abrial: “I see interoperability as taking first place: it is called a force multiplier. To me, interoperability means making our existing capabilities interoperable, as well as making sure the future ones will be. This pragmatism calls for closer coordination with nations, notably in developing and implementing capability improvements for forces preparing to deploy on operations.” General Stephane Abrial, Supreme Allied Commander Transformation. [http://www.atlantic-community.org/index/articles/view/General\\_Abrial%27s\\_Answer...](http://www.atlantic-community.org/index/articles/view/General_Abrial%27s_Answer...) 2012-01-15

very encouraging. (NATO Strategic Concept, Lisbon 2010)<sup>7</sup>. It is assessed, that **shortfalls are a killing factor for NATO** – they generate a huge gap between political guidance, planning assumptions and the capabilities provided by nations in spite of a well prepared and still being improved planning mechanism. (Fig. 3).

The Alliance suffers primarily from the lack of *operational enablers* to support combat deployable forces, such as strategic lift, attack and transportation helicopters, interoperability, and multinational logistics<sup>8</sup>. Only the US is capable of providing all of the required operational capabilities. ISAF experience has proved that such circumstances seriously hamper expeditionary operations. Although NATO possesses an excellent planning capacity, the ability of member states to meet agreed targets is critical. Political will is not enough to accomplish assigned missions and tasks. The Holistic Approach is a key factor for process-planning and, in addition, NATO should conduct a worldwide information campaign to convince the public that contemporary civilization must deal with the multidimensional networked nature of today's transnational terror threat.

The challenges of operating in a counterinsurgency can be greater than in a large-scale conventional combat, "*since the adversary has more flexibility to determine how, when, where, and whether to fight*" (Mattis, J. 2009). Shaping the strategic and operational mission's future by coordinating activities between IOs, NGOs, the NATO Training Mission, and the US-led Coalition Command, with a special focus on the development of the Afghan National Security Forces NSF), is strongly recommended. NATO must understand that now is the last chance to prove, and even enhance, its credibility (Deren, J. (2012b)). It should be taken into account by political top brass that a prerequisite for the success is the introduction of interoperability rules developed in the planning process in line with the requirements driven from real life scenarios and generated by a global approach for operations. Troops should be **highly technologically skilled, mobile, deployable and expeditionary, equipped with tactical and transportation aviation and strategic lift availability** (NATO strategic Concept 2010, Lisbon 2010).

NATO's engagement in the ISAF mission presents a demanding new challenge for force generation coordinated with the force planning process. The following recommendations can be offered:

- NATO Force Planning (with the associated discipline of Defence Planning) requires further synchronization and integration with the Standardization (AAP-6, 2013)<sup>9</sup> and Interoperability (AAP-6, 2013)<sup>10</sup> process and programme. Interopera-

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<sup>7</sup> Details: p.6. Core Tasks and Principles, a. Collective defence., in particular the data introduced under the "Guidance in the Past Decade".

<sup>8</sup> The Joint Logistics Support Group Core Staff Element will form the nucleus of a theatre-level logistics Component Command. Once stood-up, that JLSG HQ is to be regarded a critical enabler for NATO expeditionary operations. <http://www.nato.int/fchd/FCHD/djse-concept.html> (01.07.2013)

<sup>9</sup> "The development and implementation of concepts, doctrines, procedures and designs in order to achieve and maintain the compatibility, interchangeability or commonality which are necessary to attain the required level of interoperability, or to optimise the use of resources, in the fields of operations, material and administration."

<sup>10</sup> The ability to act together coherently, effectively and efficiently to achieve the allied tactical, operational and strategic objectives."

bility attainment must be kept as a crucial factor in shaping capability requirements (Deren, J. 2008).

- NATO Force Generation requires a review by NATO Headquarters, command centers, and task forces. Further effort to introduce a global approach is required.

In spite of the effort made for the introduction of new initiatives after the Chicago NATO Summit (Chicago Summit Initiatives, 2012), deep reforms are required to develop a new formula for the operational force generation process because of the steady expansion of NATO's operational roles, both functionally and geographically. The Alliance should seek to move towards a situation where NATO's military transformation and its operational commitments are genuinely symbiotic rather than antagonistic. Again, a holistic approach is required. It is proved that the linkage between the reform of NATO's operational funding arrangements, force generation and the progress of the Alliance's broader military and political transformation goals has been made a central theme of the Alliance Summit in November 2010. In the long term, a more effective force generation system can only complement the broader reforms in force structure and capability<sup>11</sup>. (Larrabee, F.S., Johnson, S.E, Gordon IV, J., Wilson, P.A., Baxter, C., Lai D., Trenkov-Wermuth C. 2012)

Alliance members must make an effort to review the 'Comprehensive Political Guidance' (CPG) document, which sets priorities for NATO in regard to capability issues, planning disciplines and intelligence. The review should focus on the capabilities of achieving CPG goals in the short, middle and long-term. Such work is already underway, and the mainstreaming of CPG ideas must be continued in line with the Summit Initiatives as Smart Defence and Comprehensive Approach. Defense priorities must be made feasible, based on the calculation of political will. This will help to avoid the further generation of capability shortfalls and ultimately reduce the number of casualties on the battlefield.

## Conclusions

It is worth stressing one extremely negative and disheartening factor towards the accomplishment of the NATO missions, officially known as 'national caveats'. Their presence creates a situation where forces of the National Contingent are hampered by the lack of core capabilities as Command and Control assets (C2) to conduct the planned tasks (Ricii, F.J., Schutzer, D. 1986). Moreover, in the international community, they undermine the fragile unity of command and of effort (Deren, J. 2011/2012).

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<sup>11</sup> Key factors are covered in this phrase prepared for the Office of the US Secretary of Defense.: "Financial and economic constraints are redefining NATO's ability to provide security in the coming decade. While the fact that the European members of NATO face pressures to make serious defense cuts is widely recognized in Alliance capitals, the discussion to date has tended to underestimate the magnitude of the cuts on NATO capabilities and their long-term strategic impact. NATO faces more than a simple, short-term budget squeeze: It is confronted with a secular trend that will have a serious impact on NATO Europe's ability to deploy and sustain military power".



The safety of the people must be of utmost importance and NATO guided by this principle in the troops deployment should take into account the following:

- density and character of the security challenges, opportunities, risks and threats do not rise around the world evenly, but they may spread in any direction;
- ongoing globalization, demography and migrations based on climate change- generate challenges, opportunities and risks posed by the mix of people of different cultures working and living together (Center for Systemic Peace, 2010).

The national security environment goes global, instead of traditional categories, soon we may have to refer to the spheres of human beings' global environment: socio-, techno- and biosphere. Shaping the strategic and operational mission's future by coordinating activities with IOs, NGOs, the NATO Training Mission, and US-led Coalition Command with special focus on Afghan National Security Forces development is therefore strongly recommended.



Fig. 4. Overview of NATO SPS Programme

Source: Deren J., *Developed in line with recommendations*, prepared by: <http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/78209.htm>

NATO must understand that now is the last chance to prove and even enhance its credibility (Dereń, 2012a, s. 7-40).

In order to support NATO in the activity within the operational domain and to easier cope with such a complex security environment, the author has commenced research on “*States and International Organisations vs. Tribes: Counterinsurgency and Tribal Politics*”<sup>12</sup>. It is considered that it might significantly contribute to the formulated overall goal and main objectives of NATO SPS Programme (Fig. 4.) The overall goal of this project is to provide scientific solutions suitable for states’ and international organisations’ soft power policies and security strategies toward tribes in the turbulent environment of war-torn countries. In order to achieve it, the project is focused on four main questions:

- Might tribalism pose threat to the international security environment?
- Do counterinsurgents (international organizations, states, either external power or local government) develop soft power policy and/or military strategy towards tribalism?
- How counterinsurgents address tribes (how was/is the strategy toward tribes implemented)?
- What were consequences of the implemented strategy towards tribes? Did that strategy allow to establish freedom of movement in the area and help to: a) reach particular goals of the external power/local government; b) implement a cease fire agreement, make peace and reach long term cooperation between tribes; c) make peace between tribes and local government?

Justification for particular research is laid down in assumptions that although the idea of tribal politics might sound outdated, in the vast region that spreads from Northern Africa to Central Asia tribalism is still deeply entrenched and even getting more into the power (2012-2013). Various tribes and clans play different but always significant roles in political, social, economic and military life of their societies. In wartime tribes often enter into alliance with insurgents, fight against each other, or cooperate with external power and local government. The example of the so-called Anbar Awakening, the 2006-07 Sunni tribal uprising against Al-Qaeda in Iraq, illustrates how critical role tribes might play in the course of military operation. Hence, understanding tribalism in contemporary societies is absolutely crucial for any future counterinsurgency and peace operations that might be conducted in the aforementioned region. Moreover, knowledge of tribal structures and information on methods of how to cooperate with tribes might be useful not only in planning future military operations, but also in enhancing state-building efforts and promotion of regional security and cooperation. The proposed project constitutes a response to the need of comprehensive knowledge on this matter. The idea of launching the project was inspired also by limited availability of scientific works that would address the issue. There are many works on counterinsurgency and separately on contemporary tribes as well as those from the past (Evans, M (Sir) 2002). However, there is no overarching study on the relationship between counterinsurgency and tribalism. The project is aimed to fill this gap. And expected results are focused on the clarification of the **common pattern in counterinsurgency strategy** and **soft power policy** toward tribes (Nye, S.J. 2013). Here, the expected results are twofold. Firstly, it might be found that there are no general rules or common patterns across all studied cases. That would

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<sup>12</sup> See commentary on NATO SPS in footnote # 1.

imply that the successful strategy adopted in one country cannot be replicated in another one. Secondly, the study might show that there is a common denominator. Such result would mean that future counterinsurgents cooperating or fighting with tribes could use solutions which worked in the past in similar, but not the same conditions. Both results could be important for **improving security and effectiveness of future military operations**. On the one hand, the results could warn against replicating strategy that worked in the past, but arguably will not work again. On the other hand, results could show which methods and solutions might be useful in future operations despite different conditions.

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## BRAKI W ZDOLNOŚCIACH MILITARNYCH NATO ISTOTNYM OGRANICZENIEM OPERACYJNYM

**Streszczenie:** Rezultaty badań skupiają się na zdolnościach NATO w kontekście wymagań obronnych i ocen planistycznych, koniecznych do prowadzenia misji odpowiadających operacjom. Zasadnicze tezy odnoszą się do strategii organizacji międzynarodowych oraz ich wdrażania w warunkach nieprzewidywalnych zagrożeń w rejonach konfliktów. Nadzrędnym celem badań są cechy charakterystyczne asymetryczności. Autor porównuje osobiste doświadczenia operacyjne z rejonów konfliktów z teoriami odnoszącymi się do asymetryczności

**Słowa kluczowe:** Strategia, zagrożenia asymetryczne, NATO, zdolności, środowisko bezpieczeństwa międzynarodowego, działania przeciwpartyzanckie.