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## Adopting “Smart Defense”

The Balkans must come together to reduce the cost and boost the effectiveness of military and security forces

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The origin of the “smart defense” concept is linked with the preparation of the NATO New Strategic Concept of Lisbon, November 2010. NATO Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen, advised by the “Wise Men Group” led by Madeleine Albright, supported a substantial change in the way the Alliance does business. He further elaborated his vision in a speech at the European Policy Centre in Brussels on September 30, 2011:

“I know that in an age of austerity, we cannot spend more. But neither should we spend less. So the answer is to spend better. And to get better value for money. To help

nations to preserve capabilities and to deliver new ones. This means we must prioritize, we must specialize, and we must seek multinational solutions. Taken together, this is what I call Smart Defense.”

Later, smart defense was one of four key topics on the agenda of the NATO summit of May 2012. The Chicago Summit opened a new way for the practical implementation of the concept. Allied Command for Transformation (ACT) was tasked to provide ways and approaches for a smart defense in this summit. Prioritize, specialize and provide multinational solutions on collective defense:

Multinational airmen take part in a ceremony to inaugurate the joint Heavy Airlift Wing initiative in Pápa, Hungary. Twelve nations operate C-17 transport planes in support of NATO, the EU and the UN.

Those were the three key points for discussions before, during and after the Chicago Summit.

Perceptions vary about smart defense. Some proponents are ambitious; others are skeptical. Some say it might be important for NATO as a whole, others say it is relevant only for big NATO countries, while still others say it might be effective for all allied countries, whatever their size. The authors of this article are aligned with the third group.

In the Balkan region, frankly speaking, smart defense is in its early stage. The region can offer very few “smart” examples at a regional level. Other countries have already developed several tools of smart cooperation, such as the France-UK Cooperation, the Baltic Experience, the Visegrád Group country cooperation, the battle groups, the NATO Centres of Excellence and other best practices. This article is particularly focused on how to apply smart defense to the Balkans, especially the community of A5 Adriatic Charter countries.

The Balkans is a region of small countries with a total of about 550,000 square kilometers and a population of more than 50 million people. In our opinion, smart defense in our region may require a specific approach. We initiated regional cooperation with the Vilnius Group after the Washington summit. Later came the A3 Initiative with the U.S. in May 2003 involving three countries (Albania, Croatia and Macedonia). Since October 2008, our group has grown to five, together with Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina. We expect to grow more. In this new regional framework, we should not act in isolation; we should wisely build our multinational and regional approaches in the interest of our peoples.

Based on this experience and others, the time is right to identify specific options for our countries – bilaterally, multilaterally and regionally. In this evolutionary effort, we have to overcome some historic barriers linked to the traditional development of security services and the armed forces and adopt new approaches based on the Lisbon Strategic Concept and Chicago messages.

Today and in the future, each country in the region will face budgetary pressure from which the defense budget cannot be excluded. There is an urgent need for new solutions. How does a country develop more capabilities with fewer financial resources? This is the smart question that requires smart answers.

### National and regional approach

To be more practical, we have employed a “food for thought” approach below to some of the priority areas that we can use in connection with the application of smart defense in Albania and the Balkan region/A5 community.

In our opinion, we should further extend smart defense to a broader “smart security” agenda at the national and regional level. We believe security and defense are

interrelated topics that cannot be separated. This approach will better promote the armed forces as one of the instruments of national security and serve the taxpayers as well. Some key issues:

*First, we need a smart defense at the national level.* When building national capabilities, we should avoid parallel capabilities in the armed forces, police, information services, border control units, customs services, etc. We cannot develop a bit of everything everywhere – we need to prioritize. And under smart defense, we need to further prioritize. There are still duplications of national capabilities among security institutions covering tasks in land, air and maritime areas. Small countries of the region cannot afford to maintain or build national capabilities with the same mission in different national security institutions. There are many areas in which to employ dual-use technology, such as civil and military. Using the Pashaliman naval facility in Albania to build civilian and military ships can be one such area. Other areas are those related to maritime and airspace management systems, communication equipment, maintenance and logistic facilities, training and education institutions, and integrated procurement.

To promote the right capabilities for security and defense as a NATO country, Albania is currently conducting a Strategic Security and Defense Review (SSDR). We are working also to develop a new Security and Military Strategy, which will consider elements of the smart security and defense concept.

*Second, smart defense is about development of the most critical capabilities through elimination of surpluses, obsolete capabilities or units of low frequency use.* The concept of usability is a primary test for future forces. Again, we cannot afford to develop and maintain military units that belong to the past and do not rise to existing or expected security requirements. SSDR is the right tool to identify the surpluses and shortages of smart defense.

As Secretary Rasmussen rightly argues: “Our guiding principle should be to cut fat, and build up muscle. Rather than spending on fixed infrastructure and soldiers, who are essentially stuck in their barracks, we should redirect our investments towards more flexible, mobile and modern armed forces – armed forces that we can actually use, against the challenges we actually face.”<sup>1</sup>

*Third, we need the development of a smart defense concept at the regional level.* Together we should build a new mentality for better cooperation in the area of joint and common capabilities needed to face common threats and risks to the region. In the emerging security situation, no country in the region can develop all of the capabilities required to deal with the full spectrum of threats we face today and tomorrow. Where necessary, regionalization of some defense capabilities, based on NATO standards, is a smarter choice. The best security is shared security, Rasmussen said.<sup>2</sup>

*Fourth, we need smart defense for the development of collective defense capabilities of the NATO Defence Planning Process.* This smart defense has to do with the implementation of the Capability Targets or Partnership Targets package of our countries. Capability Targets/Partnership Targets are an important area for cooperation. NATO is in the transition phase of the New Defense Planning Process, and we should take advantage of this period to develop the capabilities we need for Article 5 or Non-Article 5 contributions. To build more and spend less, we can develop a regional framework for the development of specific Capability Targets/Partnership Targets. As ACT Commander, General Stéphane Abrial said: "I do believe that by working together we can achieve surprising results. We all know the old maxim that necessity is the mother of invention. I also subscribe to the belief that financial adversity can also be the mother of invention or of new ways to achieve the most from what we have available."<sup>3</sup>

For the successful implementation of a smart defense, the Alliance will strive to act as the "honest broker and ... facilitator," enabling nations to work better, more effectively and efficiently together.<sup>4</sup> And, as a centerpiece of NATO's smart defense initiative, ACT presented a platform for multinational collaborations at the Chicago Summit, with a final report with more than 150 ideas, a dozen of which are already in place, especially in the maintenance, logistics, and training and education fields.

Development of the concept of a "Single Set of Forces" for NATO Force Structure, such as the SEEBRIG type or EU Battlegroups (especially the Balkan Battlegroup) and UN Pool of Forces is a rational type of smart defense for the countries of the region. We cannot afford the development of specific forces/capabilities for each international

organization. Furthermore, all forces assigned for international operations should be available any time to support national operations as well.

*Fifth, we need a smart defense with regard to joint participation in NATO, European Union, UN or coalition led missions.* Joint participation in NATO led operations, based on the experience of A3 countries' medical teams and the current POMLT case in International Security Assistance Force, is a good example of how much better and cheaper joint operations are than going it alone. This is an area of great interest.

*Sixth, we need a smart defense with special focus on the development of specialized niche capabilities.* All of our countries have traditional units and specialties, for which NATO is in real need. Today, NATO and the EU need not mechanized nor motorized battalions from our countries, but EOD, C-IED, MP, OMLT, POMLT, CIMIC, PRT teams and other small specialized capabilities that smaller nations can better provide.

*Seventh, we need a smarter defense with regard to civil emergencies.* Civil emergencies should be the primary area for cooperation and development of joint capabilities. Albania had a flooding crisis in December 2010 and received help from other countries in the region. We are committed to do the same, and we should continue this approach of helping each other when in need.

*Eighth, we need a smart defense through applying a "pooling and sharing" approach at the bilateral, multinational and regional level, where possible.* Pooling and sharing could be a better way to develop capabilities that exceed the possibilities of our individual nations, such as a regional airspace management or regional air policing system. Also, our countries are not able to develop strategic airlift, reconnaissance or other highly expensive capabilities, but we can work on alternative approaches based at the national, regional or collective level.

*Ninth, we need a smart defense in support of education and training, infrastructure and maintenance.* There is a large area of research on how to use our precious available resources effectively at the local or regional level. Pooling and sharing some of the national training and educational institutions, where necessary, is an efficient tool to help unify regional armed forces and save considerable money. The efforts made so far in this area are to be appreciated, but the renewed promotion of a regional cooperation framework on training and education capabilities under the smart defense concept is worthy of support. Among other capabilities, Albania has made available a Senior Regional Course on Security and Defense, and it has been successful so far.

Pooling and sharing can be further extended when building and using the capabilities of existing and future regional centers of excellence or facilities for training and exercises in individual countries. Albania is working to finish the Biza Training Center that can be used by countries in the region and beyond. We appreciate the capabilities provided by other regional countries in this direction. This is a very important area to be further explored our regional experts.



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U.S. President Barack Obama stands with NATO Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen, right, and Albanian Prime Minister Sali Berisha at the NATO Summit in Chicago in May 2012.





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Using infrastructure, maintenance and logistics capabilities of countries in the region, or at a multinational level, is an area of smart cooperation deserving further exploration. For example, for a small region such as the Balkans, instead of having separate capabilities in all countries, we can share excess ammunition destruction sites, repair and maintenance factories, shipbuilding and shipyard facilities and many other services. Communication is another area of interest to promote interoperability of our forces, provided the appropriate legal arrangements are made.

*Tenth, but not least, smart defense will not be complete without a research and development element.* We cannot find smart solutions without research and development in our defense institutions. Smart solutions require smart people and smart institutions based on knowledge and innovation. The Albanian Ministry of Defense is using the full intellectual potential of the Defense Academy and the Center for Defense Analyses to bring smart defense solutions to the national and international security agenda. In our opinion, research and development in the security and defense area should become a new item on the region's agenda for cooperation.

## Conclusions

We identified 10 ideas to facilitate initiation of a smart defense approach in our region. Of course, there may be many others to explore. They should be discussed at roundtables based on a top-down or bottom-up approach, depending on the situation. After Chicago, the way ahead is open for debates and discussions for the good of our countries, which we should be open-minded and promote.

Small countries like those in the Balkans cannot develop all required capabilities on their own. Being flexible and

Albanian commandos gather at Tirana Airport before leaving on a peacekeeping mission to Chad in 2008. Multinational missions are a way for European nations to avoid duplication of resources.

pragmatic, rather than conformist and traditional, is part of a smart defense. A new vision should be developed, a new mentality articulated, and a new era of cooperation initiated. Capabilities unaffordable at a national level can be developed together. The successful approach of the Baltic countries is a good example to follow.

Smart defense may require short-, mid- and long-term solutions. It depends on using existing capabilities and building new ones. As concerns existing capabilities, smart defense requires only their identification and common use. But building new capabilities requires an initial common vision and good will, followed by short-, mid- and long-term planning and ultimately implementation.

Application of smart defense requires, first of all, strong political will at the national and regional level. It will require new legal arrangements from all countries, either current or aspiring NATO and EU members. The new changes should be reflected in the national security and military strategies of our countries. Security and defense can no longer be viewed in isolation. We have common challenges and regional and transnational risks and threats that must be managed through regional approaches, capabilities and solutions. □

*The ideas in this article are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the positions of the institutions to which they belong.*

1. Secretary Rasmussen, Munich Security Conference, 4-6 February 2011.
2. Secretary Rasmussen, speech at the European Policy Centre in Brussels, 30 September 2011.
3. General Stéphane Abrial, ACT Commander Speech at Defense Ministerial meeting in Brussels, 5-6 October 2011.
4. ACT Industry Newsletter, August 2011, Issue 4.