

KISS PETRA¹**Dejavu – Enemy Images in NATO-Russian Relations²****Dejavu – Ellenségképek a NATO-orosz kapcsolatokban****Absztrakt**

A hétköznapiakban is gyakran beszélünk ellenségekről, illetve ellenségképekről, de ez többnyire nem megy tovább azoknál a karikatúráknál vagy politikai vezetők fényképeinél, melyek minden, elnyomó és antidemokratikus rendszerekhez, diktátorokhoz vagy terroristákhoz kötődő negatív tulajdonságot megtestesítenek. Az ellenségkép azonban nem csak a rossz megítélésű személyek vizuális megjelenítéseit jelenti, hanem sokkal nagyobb mértékben a közvélemény megítélése, egy nemzet történelme vagy hatalomban lévő szereplők befolyása útján alakul ki. Ezek a képek befolyásolhatják egyének, de akár országok viselkedését is. Ezt követhetjük nyomon a NATO és Oroszország kapcsolatainak fejlődésében is. Egyes NATO tagállamok esetében az orosz megszállás vagy az orosz agressziótól való félelem nem tud feledésbe merülni. Az Ukrajnában lezajlott események csak tovább fokozzák ezeknek az országoknak a fenyegetettség érzetét. Az Oroszország jelentette ellenségkép erősebb, mint valaha.

Kulcsszavak: ellenségkép, NATO, Oroszország

Abstract

We very often talk about enemies and enemy images but in many cases it does not exceed caricatures or photos of political leaders which embody all imaginable negative characteristics related to repressive or antidemocratic systems, tyrants, or even terrorists. Enemy images however are not simply visualizations of negatively judged people, they are determined by the thoughts of the public, the history of a nation or by the influence of powerful actors. These images can influence behavior of individuals or whole countries as well. This is what we can observe in the development of NATO-Russian relations. Some NATO countries cannot forget the years of Russian occupation or the fear from a Russian aggression. The Ukrainian events did only multiply the perceived threat of these countries'. The

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enemy image of the Russian Federation has not been demolished but it is stronger than ever.

Key words: enemy images, NATO, Russia

ENEMY IMAGES BEYOND THE CARICATURES

Louis Oppenheimer describes enemy images as a “*specific form of a negative stereotype*”.³ Although the author is going to examine the effect of such images on the level of nations or alliances, it is important to articulate that those images are born on the level of individuals. There are various elements which strongly influence the individuals’ perception such as family, education and society. Individuals and groups usually identify themselves with differentiating “us” from “them”. The basis of the identification is the contrast to other groups, *what they are and what they are not*.⁴ This way individuals and groups tend to generalize the characteristics of some members of other groups and they establish an image, a *stereotype* which is used for all members of those groups.⁵ This image does not have to be negative but if it is, the “others” become “opponents” or “enemies”. The members of the own group will be perceived as positive actors, and the “others” will be viewed as unfriendly, hostile or even aggressive. Everything will be seen through this binary system. Such *stereotypes are very often self-fulfilling and self-reinforcing*. The “opponents” which are thought to be aggressive will establish a very similar picture from the first group and tend to act or respond more aggressively and while doing that they will confirm the initial negative image was correct. The image about “us” is a tool to defend the members of our group because all problems come as the result of hostility of the “others”.⁶ These stereotypes are often based on historical events, experiences coming from the past or they serve the interests of groups and/or elites. It is easier to maintain those negative images if people (members of the group) have only limited access to information and political matters are not openly discussed. Nonetheless, there are certain dynamics we can observe which can be influenced by internal as well as external factors. Theirs power, effects or intensity can never be foreseen because – as it was mentioned before – they are based on subjective experiences. Enemy images become problematic when there is a threat to the identity

³ Louis Oppenheimer: “The Development of Enemy Images: A Theoretical Contribution.” *Peace and Conflict. Journal of Peace Psychology*, 12 (2006/3), 269–292.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/247503946_The_Development_of_Enemy_Images_A_Theoretical_Contribution (14. January 2018.)

⁴ Janet Gross Stein cited by Louis Oppenheimer: *Ibid.*

⁵ Heidi Burgess: “Stereotypes, Characterization Frames” 2003.

<https://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/stereotypes> (14. January 2018.)

⁶ Louis Oppenheimer: *Ibid.*

and/or to the existence of the group and tensions increase.⁷ This can lead to conflicts or even to war where according to Oppenheimer the role and the importance of these negative images are often underestimated.

According to Janet Gross Stein the less emotions there are behind enemy images, the easier it is to change them. She mentions internal conditions which can stimulate the learning process such as structural changes, changing political coalitions or new generations of leadership. Talking about intentionally changing enemy images Stein suggests two strategies in which only one participating party initiating changes is needed.

In the first situation one party has to make an irrevocable commitment. Stein brings the unprecedented move of Anwar el-Sadat, Egypt's president in 1977 when visiting Jerusalem as a typical example for such a step. In this case the Egyptian president's main intention was to stop the prolonged conflict between the two countries but it was also beneficial for Israel. Both leaders were interested in this peace settlement and signed the Egypt-Israeli Peace Treaty which stopped the war after 30 years. Sadat and Menachem Begin, president of Israel were awarded with a Nobel Peace Prize in 1978. The fact that these leaders could be awarded with such a unique prize shows us that ruining enemy images through fruitful negotiations is rather an exceptional process. Although Egypt benefited in many aspects of this peace treaty: finishing the war not only saved lives but brought billions of foreign aid, increased the country's exports and the reduced defence spending allowed to concentrate on economic development.⁸ Similar advantages could be foreseen by ending many "hot" or even "cold" conflicts nowadays, nevertheless it is not the aim of the actors.

The second strategy Stein mentions refers to Charles E. Osgood's⁹ Gradual Reciprocation in Tension Reduction (GRIT).¹⁰ The GRIT technique is based on a unilateral announcement of one party in order to reduce mistrust and decrease the possibility of escalation. If the other party reacts similarly further steps can be taken. There is a certain risk to initiate another concession for the first party hoping that it will be reciprocated but this can also lead to significant improvements. With such a conciliatory approach the high level of tensions can be reduced and the enemy images about the opponents become moderate.¹¹

⁷ Dylan Baun: From Social Tension to Protracted Civil Conflict Using fsQCA to Analyze Conflict in Lebanon. Compass Working Paper 2011-66. 2011. <http://www.compass.org/wpseries/Baun2011.pdf> (14. January 2018.)

⁸ David Makovsky: Reviewing Egypt's Gains from Its Peace Treaty with Israel. *The Washington Institute*, 7 March 2011 <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/reviewing-egypts-gains-from-its-peace-treaty-with-israel> (27. January 2018.)

⁹ Charles E. Osgood (1916–1991) was an American psychologist, a professor of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

¹⁰ Although Osgood created GRIT for international relations, the overwhelming majority of subsequent research on GRIT focuses on reducing interpersonal tensions.

¹¹ Craig D Parks: Graduated Reciprocation in Tension Reduction (GRIT) In: John M. Levine – Michael A. Hogg (ed.): *Encyclopedia of Group Processes and Intergroup Relations*. SAGE Publications, Thousand Oaks, California, USA, 2010, 309–311.

When Osgood proposed GRIT in 1959, the relations between the USA and the Soviet Union were extremely tense and since both superpowers possessed enough nuclear weapons to launch a devastating strike this idea seemed to be a slow but beneficial way to move forward. Nonetheless Osgood admitted, as well, that this technique can be able to facilitate to prepare the atmosphere for negotiations.¹²

ENEMY IMAGES IN A NEW FORM – NATO AND RUSSIA

The NATO-Russian relations have had a long history. The tense period of the Cold War has already mentioned above and the author does not intend to analyze the relations between the two superpowers. More interesting are, however, the relations after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War. The historic events created a very new environment in Europe where new rules had to be created, old-new actors claimed their role in international fora.

The relation between NATO and Russia has not been smooth – not even in the „good old days”. In the middle of the political changes of the 1990s the newly formed Russian State tried to get up from the ruins of the Soviet Union and would have expected the „old” institutions of the previous era to come to an end as well. A new structure, a new initiative was supposed to get the main role in the Euro-Atlantic area: according to the Russian point of view the OSCE¹³ was able to fill this role, which covers the Northern part of the globe from Vancouver to Vladivostok and in which both countries, both Cold War superpowers, the USA and Russia are equal participants. Furthermore, as a cooperative security organization, the OSCE has a looser structure. This kind of Russian attitude has been determining these relations even nowadays.¹⁴

On the contrary, NATO did not collapse but transformed itself, it was ready to react on the changes of the international security environment and the Alliance took over new tasks. However Russia did not consider the existence of a Cold War alliance as justified or legitimate in the post-Cold War era. According to Moscow NATO supposed to be disbanded – just like the Warsaw Pact.¹⁵ Nonetheless it did not happen, moreover NATO started to build partnerships not only with the Eastern European countries but also with states in the Mediterranean area and Russia saw it as an expansive efforts of the USA-dominated military alliance.¹⁶ In the eyes of Eastern European countries which were led by the Soviet

¹² Deborah Welch Larson: „Anatomy of Mistrust: US-Soviet Relations during the Cold War. Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London, 1997, 26–30.

¹³ Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

¹⁴ Lionel Ponsard: „Russia, NATO and Cooperative Security. Bridging the Gap.” Routledge, New York, 2007, 64–66.

¹⁵ Hannes Adomeit: Inside or outside? Russia’s policies towards NATO. Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik. 2007 http://www.swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/arbeitspapiere/NATO_Oslo_ks.pdf (August 1. 2016.)

¹⁶ Ponsard: Ibid. 17–18.

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Union for decades, NATO became more and more sympathetic. None was surprised when these nations started to declare their intentions to join the „West”. But the former eastern superpower being in an instable and uncertain position and did not want to simply accept these political processes.¹⁷

In spite of all these factors, following the principle of „who falls behind is left behind”, Russia wanted to be part of the platforms where the decisions of the „Western World” are made. This is why it joined the Partnership for Peace program (PfP) in 1994 and the G8¹⁸ in 1997. Through these fora Russia expected to have the right and be able to influence NATO’s decisions, affect the „West” understanding and operation. This was the way Russia handled and managed the relations.¹⁹

Russia and NATO were not enemies anymore but still kept some elements of their former adverse characteristics in the other party’s eyes and these contributed to a bizarre mixture of the old hostile image and some positive components of the recent year’s new beginning. In the mid-1990s the parties started to institutionalize their developing relations. In 1997 the NATO-Russian Founding Act was signed, which is an overarching political document introducing a framework for their cooperation. This cooperation exceeded the simple political principles and included common exercises as well. After that the Permanent Joint Council (PJC) was formed which became the primary forum of the dialogue besides the PfP program. The parties, however, stated that the dialogue between them will not affect NATO’s and its member states’ or Russia’s internal affairs. Furthermore, the Act does not entitle the parties to exercise veto over the activities of the other, and it will not restrict the parties’ decision making mechanisms. They reiterated that the Alliance has no intention, no plan and no reason to deploy nuclear weapons on the territory of new members – not at the time of signature or in the foreseeable future.²⁰ Regarding the deployment of conventional forces NATO confirmed that in accordance with the CFE Treaty (Conventional Armed Forces in Europe – 1990) it will carry out its tasks (collective defence and other missions) transparently by reinforcing its forces in the current structure rather than permanently stationing further troops. The reinforcement – if necessary – will happen in

¹⁷ Russia created a particular „Monroe-doctrine”. In the countries, which Russia considers as “near-abroad”, there were 25 Million people with Russian origin. This fact provided the basis to keep these states really “near”.

¹⁸ The G7 (United Kingdom, USA, France, Italy, Canada, Japan, Germany) was an economic forum of 7 countries. Russia was invited to join in June 1997 and thus it became G8. See more: Denver Summit of the Eight <http://www.library.utoronto.ca/g7/summit/1997denver/g8final.htm> (August 5. 2016.)

¹⁹ Martin A Smith: Russia and NATO since 1991. From Cold War through cold peace to partnership? Routledge, New York, 2006, 57–67.

²⁰ It is often cited regarding NATO’s forward presence in the Eastern flank and building up NATO’s ballistic missile defence system.

harmony with the UN Charter and CFE Treaty. Russia agreed with this principle and stated that it will exercise similar restraints.²¹

Besides the cooperative political declarations, Russia presumed adversary intentions behind NATO's operations in the 1990s, as well, because this was the only way these out-of-area operations of a collective defense organization could be considered.²² During the operations in the Balkans the diplomatic relations broke off for a few months between Russia and NATO, but it was only a little political battle over the silent practical cooperation. Russia took part in the crisis management operations in the Balkans, but in the meantime Russia – demonstrating its power and showing off its status and importance – definitely surprised the international community by occupying the Slatina Airbase (Kosovo) before the NATO forces (KFOR) arrived.²³ Similarly to the “entrée” in Kosovo, later on Russia did surprise NATO very often with its decisions, steps, and measures.

WHEN THE DICE TURNS

When we talk about enemy images related to NATO-Russian relationship there was always a clear line between “us” and “them”. However, when there is a third party which threatens both with hostile behavior the situation can change and the former clear differentiation can become blurry. A common enemy, has been bringing the parties closer. In 2001, after the terrorist attacks in the USA, NATO and Russia took actions together against terrorism. The common threats built bridges between them, so at that time both parties agreed to deepen their relations.²⁴ We should not forget that for the West this meant the acceptance of the Chechnyan Wars as anti-terrorist operations.²⁵ The result of this course was the re-thinking of NATO-Russian relations which was followed by a declaration at the Rome Summit in 2002 bringing a new quality into the relations between NATO and Russia.²⁶ The focused

²¹ The realization of this part has become very much questionable nowadays. NATO-Russia Founding Act May 27. 1997. Paris http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_25468.htm (August 5. 2016.)

²² Ponsard: Ibid. 66–72.

²³ On the 15th June 1999. Russian forces (originally deployed to SFOR) occupied the Slatina Airbase as a pre-emptive action. Even though it was only a symbolic step considering the number of troops involved (200), but this made the Alliance think about the relations with Russia and how to react on these events because the parties were about to start a close cooperation in KFOR. See more: Smith: Ibid. 80–88 and John Norris: Collision Course. NATO, Russia, and Kosovo. Praeger Westport, 2005, 237–267.

²⁴ The war on terrorism and the policy of president Bush brought NATO and Russia closer and at the same time it caused a lot of stress within the Alliance. According to a statement attributed to Condoleezza Rice, American national security advisor, the Europe-policy of the USA was led by the aim of “punishing France, ignoring Germany and forgiving Russia”. See more: Michael R. Gordon – Eric Schmitt: Russia's Military Drills Near NATO Border Raise Fears of Aggression. *The New York Times*, July 31. 2017. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/31/world/europe/russia-military-exercise-zapad-west.html> (28. January 28, 2018.)

²⁵ See more: Ponsard: Ibid. 77–86.

²⁶ The Founding Act of 1997 remained still valid.

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cooperation areas were reflecting the new security environment and a new institution was formed, the NATO-Russia Council (NRC).²⁷ As a result, – as Lord Robertson, former NATO Secretary General put it – NATO and Russia learned how to be capable of disagreeing without falling out and of having different opinions without walking out of the room. Although this positive development was not a long lasting one.

BACK TO THE OLD IMAGES?

During the last two and a half decades there were several areas where NATO and Russia cooperated in practice very well but we saw many disagreements and trouble between the parties as well, which brought the cooperation down: the Alliance's intervention in the Balkans, the Georgian war in 2008, deployment of NATO's ballistic missile defence system, NATO enlargements, the out-of-area operations just to mention some examples. After all these events we arrived in 2014 when Russia annexed Crimea and with the support of Russian forces there has been ongoing fighting in Eastern Ukraine. NATO's official response to the Russian aggression was clear and straightforward: The Alliance does not recognize the annexation of Crimea which violated the international law and calls for peaceful solutions. NATO suspended all practical civilian and military cooperation with Russia but it is still open for political dialogue if it leads to a solution or any positive development in the current situation. NATO reiterated that without significant changes of Russian behavior it will not go back to the "business as usual".²⁸

The events in Ukraine, however, bring us far beyond the change in NATO-Russian bilateral relations. The Alliance had to review not only its approach to Russia, but also its own situation after the "strategic surprise" in 2014. Although the three core tasks (collective defence, crisis management, cooperative security) which were defined in 2010 haven't been changed,²⁹ NATO's member states undoubtedly turned back to the Alliance's very fundamental function, and once again prepare for collective defence. These events have woken up and activated the Cold War enemy images in many countries – not because the situation would be exactly the same as many decades ago but because of the mentioned subjective elements, the memories of individuals, families and social groups. Considering that people today who lived under Soviet pressure are still alive and the population still

²⁷ In the NRC Russia was not only an additional actor besides the NATO members as the Permanent Joint Council was designed by the Founding Act in 1997 but it was an equal member of this forum with the 19 NATO members at that time. (Szatmári 2008) Thus, during the sessions of the NRC not the previously agreed (as Lord Robertson, former NATO Secretary General put it, the pre-cooked) NATO position met the Russian point of view, but there were possibilities for real discussions and substantial cooperation among the NRC members.

²⁸ Statement by NATO Foreign Ministers - April 1. 2014

http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news_108501.htm?mode=pressrelease (August 5. 2016.)

²⁹ See more: Strategic Concept For the Defence and Security of The Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation – Active engagement, modern defence" <http://www.nato.int/lisbon2010/strategic-concept-2010-eng.pdf> (August 1. 2016.)

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remember the threats posed by the Soviet military, therefore some countries still feel the need to prepare for conventional attacks from the East. On the other side, Russia sees the NATO as institution highly dominated by the USA. For them this means a crucial threat in their closest neighborhood. (See Figure 1)

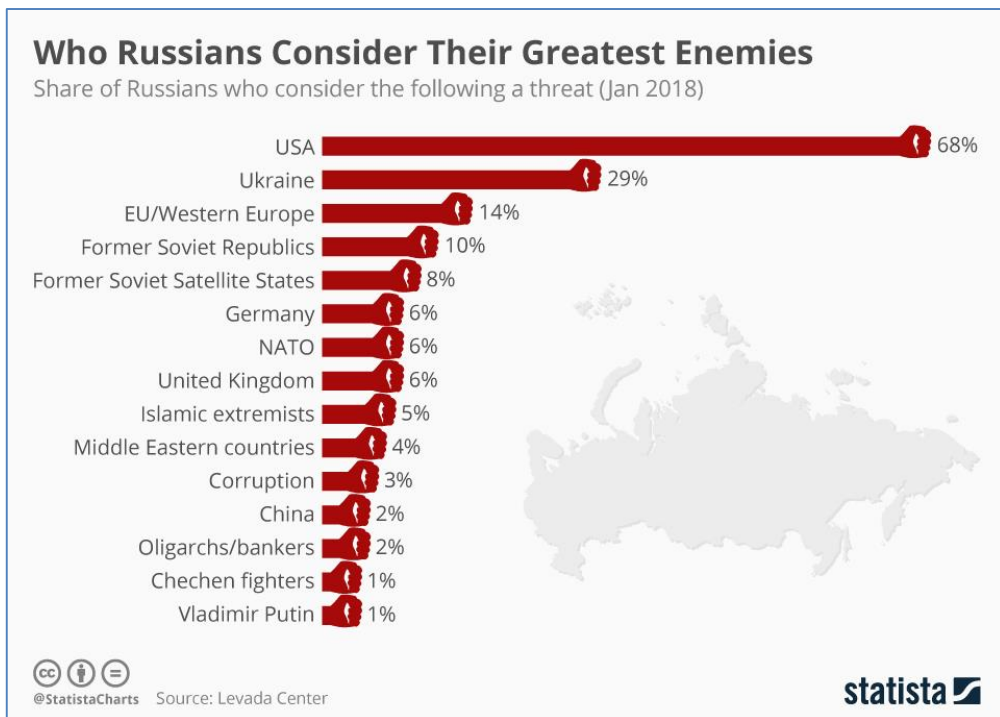


Figure 1: Who Russians consider their greatest enemies (January 2018) Source: Statista 2018³⁰

The threat perception of the „Eastern flank”, especially of Poland and the Baltic states, is driving NATO towards strengthening its deterrence and defence capabilities and emphasizing its credibility. Important topics like political and legal consequences of territorial defence, necessary military (and non-military) capabilities, the old-new operational planning and resilience came up and highlighted NATO’s very serious problems on these fields. NATO at its summit in Wales tried to find the way to solve these issues. The Heads of

³⁰ Statista 2018. Who the Russians consider their greatest enemies

<https://www.statista.com/chart/12492/who-russians-consider-their-greatest-enemies/> (January 28, 2018.)

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State and Government adopted several short term and long term measures. In the short run NATO's reassurance measures (including the Readiness Action Plan – RAP, enhanced NATO Response Forces – eNRF), enhanced air policing and naval presence, common exercises have to be realized. In the long run the adaptation to the emerging threats and changed security environment and at the end the transformation of the Alliance is the main goal.^{31 32} We cannot forget however, that even if the Eastern threats were only the catalyzer in the decision making, NATO is going to use the same tools against the threats emanating from the South.³³ To sum up, the year 2014 and the Wales Summit were a turning point in the Alliance's history, even if it made it harder than ever to achieve a consensus among the Allies.

The threat perception of the "Eastern Flank" (especially Poland and the Baltic states) tried to lead the Alliance in the direction to strengthen its defence, deterrence capability and to emphasize its credibility. In the last two years these issues remained in the focus of the Alliance. The most important question was how these efforts could be accomplished. There were more and bigger exercises than ever since the Cold War years. Although the numbers of exercises are not objective factors to describe the armed forces' readiness or capabilities, still they show the Allies' intentions and the so called "exercise-gap" which can be seen between NATO and Russia since 2014.³⁴ At NATO's (and multinational) exercises transparency is highly important (the announcement of the exercises, invitation of international – including Russian - observers etc according to the Vienna Document of OSCE) for NATO. The Allies wanted to avoid any kind of tension and escalation because of misunderstandings or miscommunication. This is the main reason why the Allies (especially the United States) see only the rotational presence as a possible solution on the territory of the eastern member states – in order to prevent the provocation of Russia.³⁵ This way the strategic communication of NATO has nowadays probably a bigger role than during the Cold War.

³¹ Wales Summit Declaration. September 5. 2014

http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_112964.htm (August 1. 2016.)

³² For further details and analysis of the Wales Summit See Zoltán Szenes: Előre a múltba? A NATO Wales után. („Back to the Future? NATO after Wales”) *Külügyi Szemle*, 2014, Autumn 3–25 and Ian Davis – Nigel Chamberlain: An evaluation of the Wales Summit: NATO builds coalitions for conflict on multiple fronts. NATO Watch. Briefing Paper No. 54., 10. September 2014. http://natowatch.org/sites/default/files/briefing_paper_no.54_-_the_wales_summit_final.pdf (30. September 2016.)

³³ See more: Wales Summit Declaration. September 5. 2014

http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_112964.htm (August 1. 2016.)

³⁴ Ian Brzezinski – Nicholas Varangis: The NATO-Russia Exercise Gap. Atlantic Council 2015 <http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/natosource/the-nato-russia-exercise-gap> (August 2. 2016.)

³⁵ It is worth to compare with related paragraphs about deployment of conventional forces in the NATO-Russia Founding Act 1997.

SELF-FULFILLING ENEMY IMAGES (?)

Increasing the defence budgets of NATO countries could be the basis to realize the decisions made in Wales, which was also agreed by the Defence Ministers in September 2014.³⁶ After the global financial crisis in 2008 the defence expenditure of NATO countries – contrary to the Russian military budget – faced drastic cuts, including wealthy countries as well, which should be stopped by all means. Regarding the defence budgets, not only the quantity is important, but much more how the money will be spent. The most member countries could not rise above maintaining their armed forces, they couldn't spend any money on developments. The defence investments a few years ago targeted mostly deployable and sustainable capabilities necessary for expeditionary operations (counterterrorism, peacebuilding, humanitarian intervention), (more heavy) capabilities for territorial defence had not such an important role.³⁷ Decreasing the manpower of the armed forces is not contributing to the developments either.³⁸

Both sides are doing almost the same, the difference is the size, structure and success of their efforts. It is not surprising that NATO's main capability development goals after Wales are almost the same as the Russian capability priorities. The biggest difference, however, is that the conventional Russian offensive capabilities did not go through such cuts and decreases as the European armed forces did. Moreover, the development of Russia's armed forces has been continued even after the global financial crisis in 2008. After 2014 three new army divisions has been established at the western borders (at the eastern borders of NATO). These units (together with the air and space capabilities) are fully manned and fully equipped. Certain combat support capabilities (like combat engineering, bridge construction units) disappeared during the 1990s, but they are needed again, just like urban warfare units. Some other capabilities are very important priorities for Russia: CBRN³⁹ defence, spetsnaz (special operations) capabilities, electronic warfare, heavy

³⁶ NATO countries expressed their intention with the "Defence Investment Pledge" to increase (or at least not decrease) their defence budgets in the coming years and thus to move towards the guideline of 2% of GDP within a decade. Furthermore they will make efforts to use 20% of defence budget for major equipment, research and development. At the very beginning many countries introduced certain measures in order to achieve this aim, however, it is doubtful how much of these will be realized in 10 years.

³⁷ Igor Sutyagin: Russia confronts NATO. Confidence Destruction Measures. *RUSI Briefing paper*, July 6, 2016. <https://rusi.org/publication/briefing-papers/russia-confronts-nato-confidence-destruction-measures> (August 1. 2016.)

³⁸ In order to turn back this process some nations, like Germany made a decision to increase their armed forces. Furthermore, Germany considers the possibility to recruit not German citizens into the Bundeswehr. See more: Verstärkung für die Truppen <https://www.tagesschau.de/inland/bundeswehr-349.html> (30 July 2016) and German White Book from 2016.

³⁹ Chemical Biological Radiological and Nuclear.

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equipments and especially the JISR⁴⁰ capabilities. Even if the Russian defence budget and the proportion of capability development is - in comparison to the sum of NATO countries - very small, the integrated development concepts, coordinated decisions and the possibilities of national defence industry bring Russia in a very advantageous position compared to the fragmented European efforts.⁴¹

NATO's priority is - besides the capability development – to increase the readiness and responsiveness of forces, especially because the decision making process of 29 countries and the decision about using/deploying armed forces cannot be as quick as in case of a single country. To realize responsiveness, the Alliance enhanced and renewed the NATO Response Forces (NRF). The enhanced NRF (eNRF) with its ca. 40.000 troops has the following elements: a spearhead force – the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF) with 2-7 days “notice to move” (NTM), the Initial Follow-on Forces Group (IFFG) with a bit lower readiness and finally the Follow-on Forces Group with an NTM between 1-2 months.

The NRF concept is not a new initiative, there were similar examples in NATO's history. The NRF concept was born in the early 2000s concentrating on out-of-area operations. This way it was the eNRF's predecessor only by name. For a similar content we need to go back to the Cold War years.⁴² The multinational, quickly deployable Allied Mobile Forces (AMF) was supposed to defend NATO's flanks from 1960.⁴³

The leaders of NATO countries made the decision in 2016 at the Warsaw Summit to enhance the Alliance's forward presence (eFP) on the Eastern Flank. Allied nations deployed four multinational battlegroups under NATO command in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland on a rotational basis in order to demonstrate the unity of the Alliance and the enduring relevance and importance of the Article 5 of the Washington Treaty. This presence, however, does not exceed any of the respective international commitments. As for the south-eastern borders of NATO Allies decided to pay bigger attention to those territories, as well. The so called tailored forward presence (tFP) means exercises, training and a more robust presence in the Black Sea Region (Romania).⁴⁴

⁴⁰ Joint Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance.

⁴¹ Sutyagin: Ibid.

⁴² Bieri, Fiskvik et al: Die NATO und Russland: Verteidigungsplanug 2014-2016. CSS Studie. 2016. June. Zürich <http://www.css.ethz.ch/en/services/digital-library/publications/publication.html/9b3ec631-1927-4b1e-98e2-be5b176a5b44> (August 1. 2016.)

⁴³ The AMF consisted of enhanced infantry battalions whose task was to defend primarily to defend Norway and Turkey in case of border violations and smaller conflicts in the border areas. See more: Diego Ruiz Palmer: Az AMF-től az NRF-ig In: „A 60 éves NATO.” NATO Tükör 2009 <http://www.nato.int/docu/review/2009/0902/090204/HU/index.htm> (September 28. 2016.)

⁴⁴ NATO: Boosting NATO's presence in the east and southeast. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_136388.htm (January 28. 2018)

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As the AMF, the eNRF, eFP or tFP are rather political and symbolic tools than means of credible deterrence.⁴⁵ If Russia were intended to, it could occupy the three Baltic states in 36-60 hours – and NATO would be forced to overlook helplessly the Russian movements. This time frame is far from enough for the Alliance to get the political authorization and continue with the actual military movements, redeployment of forces and equipment. The previous statement, which is not surprising at all, comes from Lt. Gen. Ben Hodges, the Commander of United States Army in Europe.⁴⁶ The only surprising factor is that in 2008 Alexander Motyl, a historian and political scientist at the Rutgers University, was writing about the occupation of Narva, a little (“negligible”) town at the Estonian-Russian border, by Russia in a (unexpectedly) negative way, whereas nowadays the occupation of the three Baltic states are visualized similarly in case of a Russian aggression.⁴⁷

These thoughts lead us to a much more serious question, which has been raised by more and more experts: Is there a possibility that tactical nuclear weapons could be used in a conflict violating a NATO member’s territory? Fortunately, since the end of the Cold War nuclear issues have not been in focus unless it was about disarmament or reduction. Although, the topic has been raised more and more often related to Russian war gaming. The annual military exercise, “Zapad” (West), always includes a nuclear scenario, but in a real situation the question of using sub-strategic nuclear weapons was never a crucial issue, not even in a political context. In 2013, the Zapad exercise⁴⁸ – most probably because of the sensitiveness of the current situation – did not consist of any nuclear scenario.⁴⁹ Russia wanted to avoid bringing a nuclear scenario into the exercise in order to avoid misunder-

⁴⁵ The multinational forces embodied a strong link and close cooperation among NATO members, but exactly this multinationality carried with it such political difficulties and technical issues, which the former NRF concept did not show. Crossing the borders of NATO countries, movement and rapid deployment of forces and equipment are only a few of the questions which are mostly of a legal nature but strong political support is needed to solve them. The AMF from the 1960s had the same problems as the eNRF has nowadays. Although the standardization has reached a higher level in the last decades which make an effective cooperation among states easier, but the command and control (national vs. SACEUR’s responsibility), interoperability, cooperation of forces, rapid deployment and national caveats are still problematic. Not to mention all the other issues like enhanced exercise activity, operations, national obligations (in case of Hungary it is contribution to border control and migration) for instance which mean big burdens for the European armed forces and make it very hard to fill the long term rotation plan for eNRF. See more: Bieri, Fiskvik et al: Ibid.

⁴⁶ Zeit Online: Baltikum ist laut US-Befehlshaber kaum zu verteidigen.

<http://www.zeit.de/politik/ausland/2016-06/anakonda-nato-russland-militaer> (August 1. 2016.)

⁴⁷ See more: Alexander Motyl: Would NATO defend Narva? Atlantic Council. 2008 <http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/would-nato-defend-narva> [August 1. 2016.]

⁴⁸ Most probably the Zapad 13 was the last exercise containing such a nuclear scenario. In Russian and English language media there are references of an exercise in 2015, however, considering the international political and security situation it was apparently not executed.

⁴⁹ See more: Liudas Zdanavičius – Matthew Czekaj: Russia’s Zapad 2013 Military Exercise. Lessons for Baltic Regional Security. The Jamestown Foundation, Washington, 2015 http://www.jamestown.org/uploads/media/Zapad_2013_-_Full_online_final.pdf (August 1. 2016.)

standings and possible escalation, as well. Although, it didn't diminish the significance of the exercise, whose "addressees" were primarily Poland and the Baltic states.⁵⁰

THE POWER OF WORDS AND NUMBERS

In 2017 the enemy images have been doing their job again. The robust developments of both parties and the enhanced exercise activities sent the "right" messages. The exercise gap between NATO and Russia still exists (see Figure 1) but strategic communication and the media has their own part as well.

NATO puts a special emphasis on transparency regarding military exercises, which is a key not to escalate tensions and required also by OSCE according to the Vienna Document⁵¹ adopted in 2011 (which is binding Russia, as OSCE member as well). The Vienna Document obligates the member states to notify each other (42 days in advance) about exercises involving more than 9.000 troops. However, Russia did communicate its exercises with 40-50 000 troops (with combat support and combat service support forces altogether ca. 90 000 troops) to the international community as they would not have exceeded the limits described in the international agreement.⁵² Nevertheless, there is no question that NATO's exercise activities are not comparable with the volume of Russian military exercises.

In case of the Zapad 2017 exercise we cannot be sure about the number of troops involved – the Western-European actors (including NATO) estimated it around 100 000 and Russia stated there were only around 13 000 troops mobilized.^{53 54} The Zapad 2017 focused on command and control capabilities and integration of forces. Since the West indi-

⁵⁰ Bieri, Fiskvik et al: Ibid.

⁵¹ The Document obligates the OSCE member states to exchange information annually on their military forces, concerning organization, manpower, major weapon and equipment systems, defence planning, procurements, defence budget and certain military events if they involve at least 9000 troops including support troops. See more: Vienna Document 2011, para 40.1.1.

⁵² According to Russia, they were not obligated to inform the OSCE countries. The rationale behind this was that the forces involved were organized in smaller units, battalion groups whose structure was flexible and of an ad hoc nature. In one particular military district the exercise involved less than 9000 troops except one occasion when Russia avoided the applicability of the Document with the reasoning that the voluntary military forces did not leave the barracks at all, so officially they were not part of the exercise. The related forces were not subordinated to a central commander, so this condition did not activated the Document either – according to the Russian explanations. For more details see Sutyagin: Ibid.

⁵³ Gordon – Schmitt: Ibid.

⁵⁴ Mathieu Boulégué: Five Things to Know About the Zapad-2017 Military Exercise. Chatham House, September 25. 2017. <https://www.chathamhouse.org/expert/comment/five-things-know-about-zapad-2017-military-exercise> (January 28. 2018.)

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cated this exercise to be much bigger and much more aggressive, they overreacted and Russia had the opportunity to appear as a victim in this situation.⁵⁵

The heads of state and government of NATO countries many times reiterated that NATO does not seek confrontation and poses no threat to any country, including Russia, but they are ready to “deter and defend against potential adversaries and the full spectrum of threats that could confront the Alliance from any direction.”⁵⁶

The adopted summit communiqué in Warsaw is (considering the high level of the summit) unusually long and detailed – 139 paragraphs. In 23 out of 139 is Russia explicitly mentioned besides the parts where collective defence, NATO’s resilience and the decisions made in Wales are elaborated and which are doubtlessly responding to the threats posed by Russia.⁵⁷

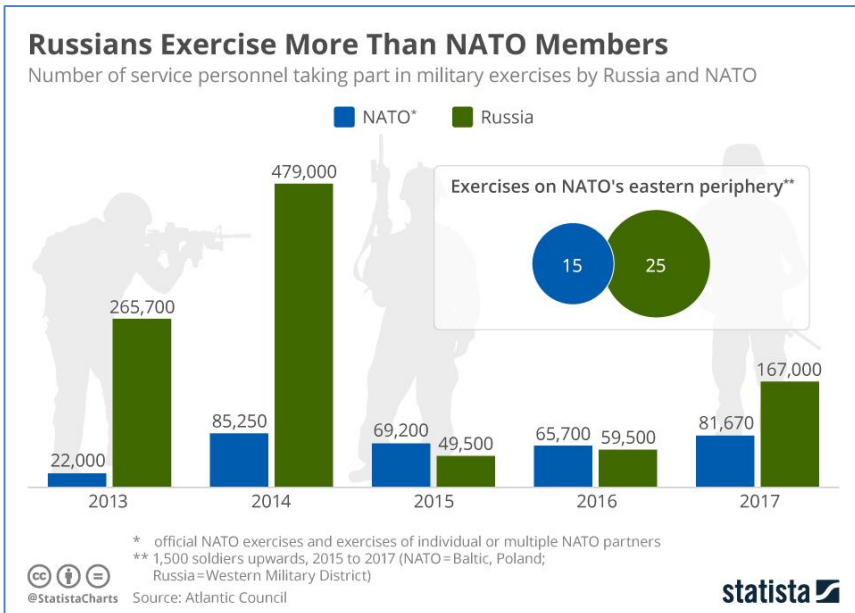


Figure 2: Russians exercise more than NATO members. Source: Statista 2017⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Bouléque: Ibid.

⁵⁶ Warsaw Summit Communiqué. July 9. 2016.

http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_133169.htm [August 1. 2016.]

⁵⁷ For further detailed analysis of the Warsaw Summit see Zoltán Szenes: Meglepetések nélkül: A varsói NATO csúcs értékelése. („Without surprise: Evaluating NATO’s Warsaw Summit”) 2016 <http://biztonsagpolitika.hu/kiemelt/meglepetesek-nelkul-a-varsoi-nato-csucs-ertekelese> [August 7. 2016.] and James Stavridis: The NATO Summit’s winners and losers. Foreign Policy, 11 July 2016. <http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/07/11/the-nato-summits-winners-and-losers/> [September 30. 2016.]

⁵⁸ Statista: Russians exercise more than NATO members 2017

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We can see interesting changes in the wording of these documents. The communiqué uses the expression „potential adversary” many times. The 2010 Strategic Concept however uses the word „adversary” only one time, in the paragraph which says „The alliance does not consider any country to be its adversary.” The Wales Summit Declaration in 2014 mentions Russia in 19 paragraphs, but doesn’t use the word „adversary” at all. In these 19 paragraphs related to Russia international law, condemnation of the events in Ukraine, NATO’s concerns and avoidance of confrontation are in the focus.

Poland, the Baltic States, Romania and Bulgaria try to make the Alliance give priority to the eastern flank when deciding about NATO’s future steps. However, NATO insists on its 360 degree approach. Regarding Russia, NATO’s main tools are transparency, predictability and foremost, avoiding misunderstanding and escalation. The Alliance after the Warsaw Summit continues its path started in Wales. The first core task, defence and deterrence, has grown in importance. The unity of the Allies on that is crucial, although, it is more difficult to achieve than ever. Europe is facing many security challenges (terrorism, migration etc) nowadays, which are affecting the member states in different ways and to varying extent and which might not be answered by NATO. Accordingly, NATO members have different priorities. NATO continuously maintains its “dual-track” approach which means they will not get back to the former “business as usual” unless there will be significant change in the Russian behavior regarding the situation in Crimea in order to solve the problems peacefully and in accordance with the international law. NATO is still open for political dialogue, since this is the only way to find a solution together and make the situation better.⁵⁹

The NATO-Russia Council (NRC) – after two years break - had few meetings in the recent years. Nonetheless the very fact that the parties sat down to talk again can be seen as a step forward, but besides the maintenance of the dialogue there has been no significant results. The parties’ main topic of the NRC meeting was Ukraine and the implementation of the Minsk Agreement, and they also concentrated on NATO’s forward presence and talked about how to avoid the “incidents” in the border regions. Another important issue for the NRC is the situation in Syria or Afghanistan, both of them could be the basis of future prac-

<https://www.statista.com/chart/11088/number-of-soldiers-taking-part-in-military-exercises-by-russia-and-nato/> (January 28. 2018.)

⁵⁹ Warsaw Summit Communiqué. July 9. 2016.

http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_133169.htm (August 1. 2016.)

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tical cooperation.⁶⁰ Not only the Alliance but Russia took the initiative, as well. The Russian Deputy Minister of Defence raised the issue during a meeting of foreign military attaches and offered a possibility for consultation to the Ministries of Defence of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Sweden and Finland. He suggested managing together mutual concerns caused by military activities in near-border areas and preventing air and sea “incidents”.⁶¹ Was it initiated to lead to a real cooperation or was it only a well communicated political maneuver of Moscow?

WHAT'S NEXT?

According to the researchers of the SWP⁶² institute in Berlin, the time of the NATO-Russian “strategic partnership” is over, it failed, and the future path for development of these relations is very narrow. The experts described three possible scenarios for the near future.⁶³ In the first scenario the two parties will confront each other as a result of misunderstanding, lack of trust or escalation of miscommunication. The second possibility foresees ad hoc (practical) cooperation in some cases between NATO and Russia but they will not be able to solve the main issues. According to the third scenario they will be able to get over their differences, they will cooperate but at the same time it means they would de facto recognize and/or approve all the events and actions taken in the past.

In the author's view (knowing the past of these relations) we cannot expect a long term confrontation, it would deliver too serious consequences for both parties. Furthermore, we shouldn't forget that NATO members have different views regarding Russia. This was reflected among others in the speech of the French president, Francois Hollande in Warsaw: “NATO has no role at all to be saying what Europe's relations with Russia should be. For France, Russia is not an adversary, not a threat. [...] Russia is a partner”⁶⁴(quoted by Peterson 2016) The second and third scenario could be both realized. However, if we take the Alliance's “no business as usual” approach seriously (and NATO will go with it), we can

⁶⁰ Dan Alexe: After Warsaw: second NATO – Russia Council in two years. 2016 <https://www.neweurope.eu/article/warsaw-second-nato-russia-council-two-years/> (August 4. 2016.)

⁶¹ Anatolij Antonov, the Deputy of the Russian Minister of Defence came up with the idea of rethinking the Cooperative Airspace Initiative (CAI), cooperation against ISIL/DAESH and offered the opportunity to the military attachés of NATO countries to attend Russian military exercise events including the Kavkaz 2016 exercise in September 2016. See more: TASS. Russian News Agency: Russian military ready for consultations with Baltic states on near-border activities. August 1. 2016. <http://tass.ru/en/defense/891876> (August 12. 2016.)

⁶² Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik.

⁶³ Margarete Klein – Claudia Major: Perspektiven der NATO-Russland-Beziehungen. Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik. Szeptember 2015. https://www.swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/aktuell/2015A81_kle_mjr.pdf (August 2. 2016.)

⁶⁴ Quoted by Nolan Peterson: Russia Threat Takes Center Stage at NATO's Warsaw Summit. *The Daily Signal*, July 10. 2016. <http://dailysignal.com/2016/07/10/russian-threat-takes-center-stage-at-natos-warsaw-summit/> (August 12. 2016.)

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count only on the second scenario to come true. Later the international security situation can change and the cooperation between NATO and Russia can be needed and desirable again. This way the Alliance will justify implicitly and de facto recognize what happened in Ukraine, just like did it one and a half decades ago with the Chechen Wars.

Nonetheless these future options do not influence the enemy image about Russia in the Eastern Flank. They do not see changes in the aggressive Russian intentions and try to make as much as they can to defend these countries' territory and independence.

SUMMARY

After all we can only conclude that any prediction for the future would be irresponsible. The ongoing processes which we can observe nowadays are unprecedented in the post-cold war era, extraordinary and were not foreseeable. Russia's role and behavior in international relations hasn't changed in the last decade, but the usual way how Moscow used to push its interest based on "soft power" (see the Russian-Ukrainian gas disputes) were altered surprisingly by engaging the country in military actions not only in Ukraine but in Syria as well. NATO has always been concerned about the Russian way of conflict management in Eastern Europe but the events in the last three years radically changed the tone. NATO was forced into a new situation, the Alliance's policy needed to be re-oriented, re-defined. If NATO will insist on its collective defence approach and will not activate the cooperation with Russia and not diminish the Ukrainian situation for another issue (which could be seen as more important at the moment – may it be for fight against terrorism, for Syria or the Middle East), then the currently frozen relations between them cannot be expected to change in the near future. From the Russian side there will be no new course of action because it would mean the loss of its prestige and position against the "West", unless the Russian internal affairs do make it necessary. Whether we define NATO and Russia as real enemies or only the heirs of a Cold War burden and the related old enemy images, we can see that such negative stereotypes have a big role preventing them from moving forward. We cannot expect in the short term any unilateral step from either side. It is not only about politics and the elites, the population is willing to take part in these efforts, as well. Nonetheless, the author believes, we cannot exclude the chance to see an attempt for cooperation when a common enemy will emerge again.

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