

UKRAINE-EUROPE: IN SEARCH OF A COMMON RESPONSE TO NEW THREATS

September 2001

Tempora mutantur... Times change... Sometimes sooner than we are able to comprehend their essence. A lack of comprehension results in inadequate and overdue answers which, in their turn, lead to negative, sometimes, as in the USA, tragic consequences.

The international professional conference «NATO -EU - Ukraine Triangle: New Threats Demand New Approaches and Joint Efforts» held on September 26 by the Alexander Razumkov Ukrainian Centre of Economic and Political Studies (UCEPS) with the assistance of the NATO Information and Press Office was an attempt to comprehend and assess the essence of the dynamic processes forming a new European security structure, along with Ukraine's role and place in them.

The Razumkov Centre had planned to address this problem long before the tragic events in the USA that only added to the experts' concerns as to European security. Assisted by the «Vidrodzhennya» [Revival] International Fund, UCEPS issued a special edition of the «National Security and Defence» journal (No. 9) with the Center's analytical and sociological research as well as the opinions of leading experts from Ukraine, the USA, Poland, Russia, Great Britain, Ireland, Italy, Germany, the Netherlands and France.

In the course of the survey, the UCEPS experts obtained some unexpected results.

-10 years after the «cold war» (!), with «non-military threats» (terrorism, illegal migration, illegal arms and drugs trade etc.) evidently increasing, Europeans still associate the problem of security primarily with military security.

-Ukraine maintains fruitful and potentially beneficial cooperation with NATO, but nearly a half of Ukrainians regard NATO as an aggressive bloc and are critical about the Alliance's eastward expansion.

The EU's military structure - the rapid deployment force - is still in its initial stages, little known, but those Ukrainians whose stance on the European Union is positive prefer Ukraine's military cooperation with the EU to that with NATO.

The general conclusion, however, is that there are objective prerequisites for a united Europe to become, sooner or later, a much more weighty global player, not only in the economic and political, but also in the security spheres. For Ukraine, the development of the European Union's security structures is an opportunity to develop, parallel to strengthening its special partnership with NATO, its security and defence cooperation with the EU, joining which is now Ukraine's strategic goal. As the European Union's interests are concentrated not only in politics and economics, but in security as well, this country is gaining more chances to attain its strategic goal.

European security: Eurocorps to fight terrorists and illegal immigrants?

The UCEPS survey has shown that there are very few specialists with a clear vision of the essence of the current processes in the sphere of European security, - even EU experts often have contradictory approaches. Moreover, the viewpoints of politicians and experts from both NATO and EU leaderships do not always coincide, either - for instance, on the geographical zone of activity by the nascent EU rapid deployment force. This uncertainty is covered in the West by an «en-vogue» thesis of «constructive ambiguity».

Therefore, we shall first dwell upon the general specialties of the current processes in the sphere of European security which are formally determined above all by the changing security relationships between NATO and the EU, in fact - between the USA and its European allies.

The substantial reduction of the US military presence in Europe after the «cold war», NATO's transformation and the EU's stronger economic position prompted the member-countries of that largely economic organization to form a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). The EU countries have gradually become firmly convinced that an economic union of such a size, with a population of over 400 million and a

\$ 8,500 billion GDP cannot develop in the future without effective security and defence capabilities.

Until 1999, CFSP had existed only on paper, but recent years have witnessed a rapid development of a component security structure within the European Union's CFSP - the Common European Security and Defence Policy (CESDP) which envisions the creation of viable structures under EU auspices.

The formation of CESDP was fixed in the new revision of the European Union Treaty (Amsterdam, 1997). Apparently, this decision was prompted by the dramatic events during the settling of the 1992-1995 Bosnia and Herzegovina conflict - the Europeans saw that they were unable to localize the conflict in the centre of Europe without US assistance. To limit the consequences of the Balkan conflict (200,000 lives, 1.8 million refugees) which the European nations failed to prevent, the EU has spent 20 billion euros.

In order to implement the decisions on CESDP, the EU has set up a number of executive bodies: the Office of the EU High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy (with a 40-strong planning group), the Policy and Security Committee, the Military Committee and the EU Military Staff (130-150 members). By the end of 2001, these structures are supposed to ensure the European Union's capability to conduct humanitarian, search and rescue and peacekeeping operations.

The immediate plans provide only for the creation of an EU rapid deployment force (corps) by 2003. The table «General Characteristics of the EU Rapid Deployment Force» presents the prospective image of this military structure.

Thus, within the frameworks of the nascent EU structure - CESDP - the only concrete steps to be made are in the creation of a rapid deployment force. That is, the idea of security is so far limited to defence problems- the new bodies are currently engaged in defence issues. They are not integrated or coordinated with Europol or the Committee for Civil Aspects of the Settlement of Conflicts, the latter charged with the limitation of the consequences of natural and technogenic disasters. But the new threats to European security do not always have an exclusively «military» nature.

Among the modern threats, the greatest risk of military conflict is posed by interethnic and religious conflicts. There are many such conflicts in Europe, now at various stages and in various forms, including those close to Ukraine's borders: in the Caucasus (Abkhazia, Nagorny Karabakh, Ossetia, Chechnya), in Moldova (Transdnistria), in Cyprus, in the Balkans (Yugoslavia, Macedonia, Albania and other countries), and in Turkey. The developed European countries are not always able to ensure stable interethnic and inter-confessional peace by the traditional (legal, social, cultural) levers of state policy.

A real threat to European security is international terrorism. The colossal number of victims and material damage, the psychological shock experienced by people in the United States and across the world, prove that controlled reaction to terrorist organizations must be regarded as the top priority task for all security structures, including the European ones. The technical capabilities of the terrorists are growing, particularly in the area of advanced data technologies. The use of such technologies by systems of state management and in public life makes them especially vulnerable to terrorist acts.

The threat of terrorism must be considered from the angle of the possible use of mass destruction weapons by terrorists, chemical and biological weapons being much more affordable than nuclear ones.

The problem of fighting the illegal spread of arms and drugs is becoming ever more acute since, besides its immediate negative effects, it helps channel the bulk of these criminal profits to the funding of terrorists and participants in armed conflicts.

The flow of illegal immigrants is growing; moreover, a great number of them, having problems with legalization, add to the shadow sector of the economy: according to expert estimates, the shadow sector of the EU economy currently employs about 20 million people. The living standard stratification among countries increases the number of those who want to escape from poverty to richer West-European countries, especially with labour markets shrinking in some EU member countries. According to Europol, organized illegal immigration is an alarming problem for EU nations. Every year, hundreds of thousands of immigrants illegally enter Europe. Their number is tentatively estimated at 10% of Western Europe's population.

This and other threats tend to become interlinked, have a transborder character and are often accompanied by heavy casualties and economic losses. Therefore, their localization requires a complex of coordinated efforts by many nations.

Thus, ten years after the cold war, the situation in Europe is characterized by increasing transnational threats. The traditional military means (employment of the available NATO forces or the proposed EU forces) appear to be far less efficient in resisting these threats. As previous experience in settling local conflicts in Europe has shown, a military force can only damp down the open phase of a conflict. But the military have never been able to resolve the problem itself, and the conflicts are «smouldering», threatening an outbreak under certain conditions. So there are doubts about the adequacy of the proposed EU military structures to respond to the new, mostly «non-military», threats.

Who conducts «the military music» in Europe?

The EU rapid deployment force is being created despite continuous criticisms by the USA claiming at various levels that the volume of military spending by the 17 European NATO member countries (11 of which are EU members) are inadequate to the combat capacities of their armed forces, and consequently - that the balance of responsibility for European security between the USA and the EU is unfair.

That's true - the personnel of the European component of NATO is numerically twice as big as that of the USA's, but the EU's military spending totalled a mere 64% of the USA's in 2000 (\$165 M vs \$296 M).



personnel of the European component of NATO is numerically twice as big as that of the USA's, but the EU's military spending totalled a mere 64% of that of the USA's (\$165 b. vs \$296 M). According to various estimates, the combined combat potential of the European NATO member countries is a mere 10% - 30% of the US potential, because the European countries do not spend as much on military research and new armaments than the United States does. Besides, in comparison with European armies, the combat readiness requirements are much higher in the United States. For example, the European air force pilots flew 160 hours on average annually in the late 1990's (180 hours required by NATO), while USAF pilots flew 220 hours.

The lack of proportion between the military capacities of the USA and its European allies became most visible during NATO's operation in Kosovo in 1999. It involved 13 member countries, but 80% of high precision strikes, 85% of nighttime and bad weather sorties, 95% of cruise missile strikes were delivered by the USAF. In fact, that campaign was a rather unpleasant awakening for European leaders: it showed that European countries were lagging far behind the United States in deploying military contingents, in using modern military technologies, computer and reconnaissance systems.

The Europeans' declared desire to narrow the gap between their and the US military capacities is not so far backed by resources. Immediately after Kosovo, the aggregate defence expenditure by the European NATO member countries increased (by \$8 b. in 1999), but then the growth stopped, and the figure began to drop. According to calculations by French experts, the implementation of CESDP will require almost a doubling of the annual spending by the EU for modernization and the purchase of new arms - from the current \$30 b. - \$35 b. to \$60 b. Considering the fact that the defence budgets of the EU member countries are no longer increasing (and were even cut in 2000), the prospects for CESDP do not look optimistic.

So far, the Europeans fail to make sufficient provision even for the sectors defined as priorities - means of transportation and space reconnaissance. The USA invests 10 times more in these sectors than all the EU countries put together. Unwilling (unable) to make heavy sacrifices in their social programmes to increased defence spending, the European countries try to enhance their armed forces in two ways: by the more efficient use of available resources and by reforming their armed forces (making them more professional).

In calculating its resource needs, the EU appears to ignore the real conditions of fulfilling military tasks. The declared creation of a 60,000-strong rapid deployment force means that the member countries ought to have a contingent at least three times larger - 180,000 - 200,000, because if a 60,000-strong contingent is deployed, there have to be as many stand-by personnel in the preparation and rotation mode, and in the case of a long-term operation, another third will restore the combat strength and rest after completed missions.

Another problematic issue is the EU's uncertainty as to its security strategy and the zone of its responsibility within the CESDP framework. It is especially obvious concerning the geographical zone of responsibility. How far should it stretch? Should force be used beyond the borders of the member countries, as determined by NATO, or otherwise? Should the zone extend to all regions (countries) where the EU has interests (i.e. unlimited), or should the EU act within the radius of 4000 km from Brussels, as proposed by some European leaders? There are no definite answers to these questions. Moreover, the diplomatic vocabulary of the EU and NATO already has a term «constructive ambiguity» behind which they try to conceal the already existing controversies between all sides and disagreements between positions within the EU and NATO, let alone the positions of the non-member countries.

Many experts believe that the situation demands new solutions, but NATO, with its specific organization of collective defence, cannot always offer them. Obviously, this space will have to be filled, sooner or later, by the Europeans, within the CESDP frameworks.

The nascent EU rapid deployment force will be able to counter threats at the stage of a direct collision between conflicting sides, the stage of a conflict's escalation, but they will only partially tackle the other phases of emerging conflicts - growing tensions between the sides, mounting crisis phenomena, separation of the sides after a conflict as well as post-conflict settlement.

Thus, the process of creation of new EU security and defence structures, despite intensive action and many declarations, still gives rise to a number of questions. With the available powerful and capable defence structure - NATO - the new security structures are being created not as its organic supplement, but rather as its European affiliate. Instead of being directed at preventing and counteracting new threats to European security where the existing international structures are still poorly organized and ill-prepared - that is in the sphere of non-military threats - there are at the moment only attempts to direct peacekeeping operations, now under the EU, not NATO auspices, and only if the USA or NATO do not deem it necessary to participate in them. So Europe still has no adequate response to the changed character of the threat.

The peculiarities of the latest stage in the development of the security sphere in Europe were assessed in a most exhaustive manner by Dr. Andrei Karkoszka - a representative of the Centre of Armed Forces Democratic Control (Switzerland): there is still no clear division between the military and the non-military spheres of security, nor is there a distinct line between the internal and the external security of nations. The world is becoming globalised, and no neutral status or strong visa regimes can insure against the modern threats.

Therefore, new threats really demand new approaches and joint efforts from all sides of the NATO - EU - Ukraine triangle.

Ukraine is posed for active cooperation both with NATO and the European Union: it maintains a fruitful relationship of special partnership with the Alliance and tries to develop a relationship of strategic partnership with the EU. According to Ukraine's Foreign Minister Anatoly Zlenko, «Ukraine's policy reflects the concept of a new Europe founded on the European Union, the Council of Europe and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. These institutions are the key milestones of Ukraine's European course».

Ukraine wants to be a reliable partner and offers its assistance in solving European problems. This is its right and duty as Europe's inalienable part, for the security of Europe is the security of Ukraine.

Ukraine - NATO through the eyes of Ukrainians: a chain of problems and paradoxes

Ukraine and NATO have a constructive relationship based on mutual understanding and a determination to establish and maintain peace in the «problem areas» of the planet. NATO regards Ukraine as an integral component of Europe. To Ukraine, its distinctive relations with NATO are a prerequisite for deeper cooperation with NATO member nations and for rapprochement with the EU. The formation of CESDP gives Ukraine an additional opportunity to use its partnership with NATO to build a new system of European security.

Among NATO's 27 partner countries, Ukraine has a very large, if not the largest cooperation program . Ukraine and Russia are the only nations among the other participants in the Partnership for Peace program (PfP) with which NATO keeps distinctive partnership relations.

In addition to purely defence matters, NATO renders Ukraine considerable assistance in lawmaking, introducing democratic public control over the military sector, it helps the adaptation of discharged military servicemen, supports non-governmental research organizations and individual scientists, renders information and technical assistance etc. Cooperation in limiting the consequences of natural and technogenic disasters also has a good future.

With NATO's assistance, Ukraine is currently taking a practical part in strengthening stability and security in the European region and worldwide. Besides active military contacts in the PfP frameworks, Ukraine is cooperating with NATO in peacekeeping operations in Kosovo and Macedonia.

A turning point in Ukraine's relations with NATO was NATO Secretary General George Robertson's statement that «the measures of cooperation between Ukraine and NATO is aimed at complementing the general process of reforms in Ukraine. They clearly testify to the Alliance's determination not to leave Ukraine alone on its way to the future.»

In these difficult times for NATO, after the terrorist attack on the USA, Ukraine stated its support for the Alliance. «NATO and Ukraine, - says the September 12, 2001 statement by the NATO-Ukraine Commission, - resolutely condemns these atrocious acts and is unanimous that the guilty must be punished. In the spirit of a special partnership with NATO, Ukraine declares its readiness to do everything possible to ensure this goal».

At the same time, besides the official position of Ukraine's leadership, there is the position of its population which should not be underestimated, although it should not be overestimated, either.

So what is NATO in the eyes of Ukrainians?

It should be remembered that, according to the Democratic Initiatives Fund, in January, 1997 only 17.3% believed NATO to be an aggressive bloc. Since then, the number has grown sharply. There has been a continuous trend towards Ukrainian citizens' visibly negative attitude to NATO. It can be seen from the returns of nationwide sociological polls conducted by UCEPS in June, 2000 and August, 2001. The respective figures are presented in the diagram «What is NATO primarily?».

What is NATO primarily?

	2000	2001
Aggressive military bloc	46.2%	48.1%
Defence alliance	21.5%	17.6%
Peacekeeping organization	16.5%	17.3%