

The Reforms in the Armed Forces of the Republic of Bulgaria

Presentation by General Simeon Simeonov, Chief of Defence,
during the NATO Parliamentary Assembly Spring Session
27-30 May 2011, Varna

**Mr. President,
Distinguished Members of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly,**

I am honoured to take part in the NATO Parliamentary Assembly Spring Session. The gravity of the discussed problems presumes the great responsibility and commitment to the specific topics and issues.

In the beginning of my presentation, I would like to thank the hosts of this forum and in particular - the Chairman of the Bulgarian Parliament Permanent Delegation to the NATO Parliamentary Assembly Mr. Dobroslav Dimitrov – for the opportunity to share with you fundamental views on the military capabilities transformation. I am pleased to present to your attention the topic of “The Reforms in the Armed Forces of the Republic of Bulgaria”.

The 21st century security environment will be characterized by high dynamics, uncertainty, ambiguous and complicated for prognostication processes. It will be influenced by globalization, asymmetric and other transnational risks and threats, regional instability with its various forms, the Euro-Atlantic and European integration processes, the international community’s pursuit of threats prevention and timely crisis response.

At present, the threat of a large-scale international military conflict is considerably reduced. Nevertheless, the conventional threat cannot be ignored. Countries with poor governance but with increased capabilities of acquisition of modern military capabilities and various self-interested non-governmental structures will contribute to the generation of risks and threats to the Euro-Atlantic community. The fundamental changes that have been commenced in North Africa and the Middle East will destabilize the region for long, with the subsequent effects on security, economy and policy.

The advance of terrorism not only in the Arab world but also in democratic Europe, its increased capabilities of influence based on the modern technologies and the easier access to chemical, biological, and nuclear components, the activation of extremist groups provoked by the death of the leader of Al Qaeda and the related threats addressed to the democratic community, confirm the assessment that at present terrorism remains the biggest and direct threat to the citizens of the NATO member countries, to international peace and prosperity.

The cyber-attacks become more and more aggressive and organized. They cause more and more big and costly damages to the public administrations, businesses and economies and those damages could grow into a threat to security and stability of the individual member countries and of the Euro-Atlantic community as a whole.

The risk of natural cataclysms, accidents, and pandemics will grow considerably. It is confirmed by the catastrophic earthquakes in Haiti, Chile, and Japan with thousands of victims and huge damages.

To cope with all those challenges and the resulting risks and threats, the democratic world looks to the comprehensive approach and collective efforts. The leading international organizations, UN, NATO, and EU continue their transformation by uniting and complementing their crisis prevention and conflict resolution efforts, including with non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The lessons learned from Afghanistan, Iraq, the Western Balkans, Africa and some Black Sea countries necessitated to give a new meaning to the goals and objectives of the pursued policy of more effective counteraction to the asymmetric risks and threats and of further development of the military and civilian capabilities of crisis management, stabilization and reconstruction of the affected countries and regions.

In the contemporary unpredictable world, NATO remains a major source of stability. Counting on the collective defence, the Alliance focuses its efforts on the active commitment to crisis management and cooperative security.

The Lisbon Treaty gives the EU the required legal framework and tools for implementing the European policy, including in the area of Common Foreign and Security policy. Preconditions are established to increase the mutual assistance and enlarge the role of the member countries during joint disarmament actions, execution of missions and peacekeeping operations, consolidation of international security, crisis management and fight against terror.

The current security policy of the Republic of Bulgaria focuses the efforts on guaranteeing the rights and liberties of the citizens, security and welfare of society and the state; safeguarding the sovereignty, territorial integrity of the country and unity of the nation; ensuring the legitimate order and democratic values; keeping and developing the national identity; protection of the population and the critical infrastructure during crisis; overcoming the negative demographic processes and ensuring the prosperity of the nation. A major goal of the defence policy is the protection of the country and national interests through maintenance, development, and employment of adequate defence capabilities.

From the foreign policy perspective, our country's defence policy is directly related to the ongoing processes in NATO and EU. In the current strategic environment, we build up our security through the NATO collective defence mechanisms the Common Security and Defence Policy of the EU. That means a shared responsibility for security and demands our adequate contribution and employment of the collective defence mechanisms.

From the home policy perspective, our efforts are focused on consistent establishment of defence capabilities, modernization of our armed forces and their effective employment in the protection of the national interests and fulfillment of the international commitments.

To implement the security policy of the country, the Ministry of Defence accelerated the envisaged reforms not only in the armed forces but also in the whole defence system.

National Defence Strategy was developed during the overall process of adapting the fundamental national documents related to the country's security and defence, in keeping with the requirements of the Constitution and National Security Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria. The National Defence Strategy is in line with the NATO Strategic Concept, European Security Strategy and the international agreements to which the Republic of Bulgaria is a party.

The National Defence Strategy called "*Strategy for Development of Single Set of Effective Forces for Modern Defence*" is the document which sets the goals, functions, tasks, building, development and employment of the armed forces and defence capabilities, on the basis of one realistic military strategic assessment of the security environment.

The National Defence Strategy presents the way the country's defence is planned, prepared and carried out. It sets the major principles and priorities in that area.

The armed forces are the main bearer of defence capabilities. The country's defence will be done within the framework of and with the appliance of the NATO collective defence mechanisms and the Common Security and Defence Policy of the EU, with an effective employment of the national defence capabilities.

During the implementation of the defence strategy, the efforts and resources are focused on prevention and if needed neutralization of the military threat and active formation of a favourable security environment.

A key priority is the development of a modern defence industry, based on an integrated system for effective defence management under a permanent civilian and parliamentary control, with a potential of institutional flexibility, timely planning and effective reaction.

The assessment of the security environment and the goals in the area of the defence sector, set in the National Security Strategy, did not necessitate changes in the armed forces' role, missions, and objectives.

The missions remain three in number – Defence, Support to International Peace and Security, and Contribution to National Security in Peacetime, with the resulting tasks.

Furthermore, the strategy specifies the principles, forms, and order of the armed forces employment.

The Republic of Bulgaria is building a single set of forces for peacetime and wartime and continuously develops them according to the changes in the security

environment, preparing structures and personnel capabilities - adequate to the new requirements and challenges. To respond to this challenge, the document introduces a defence planning system, founded on a capability based approach.

The strategy specifies the methods of providing the human, material, information and financial resources, required for the achievement of the set goals.

Our ambitions are the MoD budget to be a relatively constant portion of the GDP (Gross Domestic Product) - not less than 1.5 %, and with the inclusion of the other defence expenditures and the expenditures for pensions of the military – not less than 2 %.

The National Defence Strategy is with a ten-year horizon. It is an open document. Its updating depends on major political, conceptual, and military strategic changes.

With the National Defence Strategy, the military capabilities transformation process is continued in order to achieve the main goal – protection of the national interests and fulfillment of the country's international commitments. On the basis of the National Defence Strategy, in the beginning of this year we started an improvement of the system of doctrinal documents and plans that specify in details the principles, forms, and methods of building and employment of the resources required for that activity. In order to function properly, the system has a hierarchical and functional organization.

For the purpose of successful planning, execution and support of the military operations, the military experts currently develop a comprehensible and widely adopted fundamental **Doctrine of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Bulgaria**. Based on the existing national doctrinal and conceptual foundation, it will present the effect of the transformation on the military capabilities, it will specify the new approaches to the operations and the principles of their execution. The doctrine will define the goals of the operations and the forces required for their achievement. It will consider the various types of operations and the main concepts for their nature and characteristics. The doctrine will present the approaches for crisis management and the method of decision making. It will present the command and control process, its nature, relationships and mechanisms, as well as the process of planning and execution of the operations.

The doctrine is fundamental in the hierarchy of the national doctrinal documents. It serves as a basis of the development of the doctrines on personnel, intelligence, operations, logistics, planning, communications, training, resources and finances and civil-military cooperation. These documents present the philosophy and the foundations of the specified areas, being further developed at the next hierarchical level – the level of the supporting doctrines and are worked out in detail through the regulations, instructions, and standard operating procedures.

The contemporary strategic security environment, the accumulated considerable imbalance between the planned capabilities and the resources allocated for their establishment and maintenance, the ineffective defence management and the

negative impact of the world economic and financial crisis, necessitated in the beginning of last year the conduct of Force Structure Review (FSR).

The goal of the FSR was to accelerate the armed forces reform through finding proper approaches to solve the accumulated problems in the area of their transformation.

The main efforts were focused on the priority of building capabilities adequate to the package of likely and most probable military scenarios that will be implemented in peacetime, during military and non-military crisis management, and in wartime – namely, building of maximum employable and effective armed forces capable to participate in joint and expeditionary operations.

The FSR enabled us to select a balanced package of required capabilities, ensuring the transition to a united set of the armed forces that execute a wide range of missions and tasks in order to fulfill the country's national interests, taking into consideration the resource and financial limits.

The conceptual part of the FSR ended with the elaboration of the White Paper on Defence and the Armed Forces of the Republic of Bulgaria in its capacity of a **program for the development of the armed forces**.

That program will be carried out in practice through the Armed Forces Development Plan and the MoD Investment Programme Until 2020.

The Armed Forces Development Plan encompasses the major activities for development of the MoD and the armed forces in the period **2011–2014** and with regard to the establishment of new capabilities, modernization and rearmament – even **after 2014**.

It is an open document. Its update is done every two years and depends on the changes in the security environment and the NATO defence planning system.

As regards function, the armed forces are divided into Deployable Forces and In-Place Forces; as regards organization, they comprise: the Bulgarian Armed Forces, the Military Police Service, the Military Information Service, the Military Colleges and the Military Academies, the Military Medical Academy, the National Guard Unit, the Reserve of the armed forces, the Military Geographical Service and Stationary CIS.

The armed forces comprise also the structures that are directly subordinate to the Minister of Defence as well as the military personnel from the MoD.

The Bulgarian Armed Forces comprise:

1. Joint Forces Command (JFC) and military formations that are directly subordinate to the JFC Commander;
2. three services of the armed forces: Land Forces; Air Force; Navy.

As of 31 December 2010 the armed forces size is **44 100**, of which:

- military personnel– **34 700**;
- civilian personnel – **9 400**.

After the transformation of the armed forces, the MoD personnel, and the structures that are directly subordinate to the Minister of Defence, as of 31 December 2014 the Bulgarian Armed Forces size will be **not less than 37 100 and up to 3 400 reservists**. By categories, that personnel comprises:

- military personnel – **not less than 29 000**;
- civilian personnel – **up to 8 100**;
- reservists – **up to 3 400**.

As of 31 December 2014, the reduction¹ of the MoD peacetime personnel, the structures that are directly subordinate to the Minister of Defence and the Bulgarian Armed Forces (without the Reserve) will be **7 000** of which:

- military personnel – **up to 5 700**;
- civilian personnel – **not less than 1 300**.

The Ministry of Defence will be reorganized and its personnel will be reduced from **980** to **750**.

In 2014 the Bulgarian Armed Forces will have 80 tanks, 280 combat armoured vehicles, 96 artillery systems, 16 combat aircraft, 7 transport aircraft, 6 combat and 19 transport helicopters, 6 war-ships and 11 combat support and auxiliary ships.

The transition from the current to the new structure of the armed forces will be made in the period **2011–2014** and the main events by years are:

During **the first semester of 2011** the main activities will be focused on the restructuring of the command and control structures at strategic and operational level, the three services Commands resubordination to the JFC Commander.

In 2012 mainly the formations at the tactical level will be restructured.

During **the first semester of 2013** the Logistics Brigade will be restructured and the depots and bases for storage of armament, equipment and materials will be consolidated in a united structure.

In the first semester of 2014 it is envisaged to disband depots and bases for storage of armament, equipment and materials and part of them will be disbanded after the materials release (realization or utilization).

The MoD Investment Program Until 2020 has the goal to ensure the acquisition of the capabilities set in the Armed Forces Development Plan and it forms a united integrated framework of the capital expenditure, comprising acquisition, integrated logistic support, phasing out and/or upgrading of armament, equipment and defence infrastructure through realization of investment and infrastructure projects.

Through it, our ambition is to establish order and transparency in the process of spending of the capital funds from the MoD budget and to outline the major areas for modernization of the Bulgarian Armed Forces, the main principle being achievement of a balance between the requirements for armed forces capabilities and the available resources.

¹ **For reference:** The personnel reduction by years is: 2011 - 1600 people; 2012 – 3600 people; 2013 – 700 people; 2014 - 1100 people.

The investment projects that are given priority are:

1.Establishment of a Battalion Battle Group from the structure of a mechanized brigade, the purpose of which is to establish a mobile formation for planning and participation in independent and joint operations on the territory of the country and outside it.

2.Modernization of frigates class E-71 (modernization of anti-ship missile complex), which consists in acquisition of anti-ship missile complexes for the frigates class E-71 and provision of capabilities of combating adversary surface ship located beyond the range of radar visibility.

3.Acquisition of a new type of main combat aircraft and provision of integrated logistic support, which will ensure a capability of safeguarding the Republic of Bulgaria's air sovereignty in the NATO integrated air defence system, thus overcoming the critical technological backwardness from the NATO allies.

4.Provision of the Mig-29s flight suitability through restoration and maintenance of the Mig-29s flight suitability with the purpose of safeguarding the Republic of Bulgaria's air space in the NATO integrated air defence system until the MiG-29 serviceability expires or the new multi-role fighter is fully operational ready.

5.Integrated logistic support of Cougar and Panther helicopters, which is achieved by maintenance of helicopters flight suitability in pursuance of the Republic of Bulgaria's NATO and EU commitments to provide air lift, combat search and rescue, and air medical evacuation.

6.Modernization of Navy ships navigation systems with the purpose of improving the capabilities of controlling the navigation and executing joint and multinational expeditionary operations and tactical deployment in extreme weather.

7.Acquisition of a module for communication and information support of a contingent, which will provide the communication and information support to the Bulgarian military contingents during their participation in operations and the establishment of network enabled and data exchange capabilities for the purpose of national command and control.

8.Acquisition of a ground terminal through the NATO Allied Ground Surveillance programme through building a ground terminal for information exchange in accordance with the NATO Allied Ground Surveillance programme.

9.Development of strategic intelligence technical systems, which is achieved through maintenance and development of capabilities to carry out effective strategic intelligence and to execute operational tasks for the purpose of timely collection of reliable intelligence information from abroad and from the territory of the country.

10. Further development of the Special Operations Forces through maintenance of a capability of effective command and control of the Special Operations Forces and further development of capabilities of training and execution of operations.

11. Establishment of Joint Operational Centre in the Joint Forces Command which consists in maintenance of a capability to command and control operations (according to each of the planning scenarios) on and outside the territory of the country according to the three missions of the armed forces, with capabilities to deploy the Joint Operational Centre as a command post.

12. Cybernetic Defence Project, which provides capabilities of cybernetic defence of existing military systems and networks, military systems and networks that are being established or are going to be established. The project also provides establishment, maintenance, and development of CIS Observation and Analysis Centre and Response and Recovery Centre.

13. Development of the Automated Information System (AIS) for the Ministry of Defence, Bulgarian Armed Forces, the Operational and Tactical HQs with the ultimate goal of establishing a Net-Centric Information Environment for the functioning of the Command and Control (C2) System at all levels – strategic, operational and tactical. The unified AIS will enhance significantly the overall activities of the MoD structures through ensuring uninterrupted, fast and reliable access to and sharing of common data arrays.

In total, the estimated funds for capital expenditure for the period 2011-2020 amount up to 2 billion levs.

The implementation of the ideas, principles and parameters underlying the doctrines and plans will guarantee the practical conversion of the reforms in the Armed Forces and will make the forces fully capable of fulfilling their constitutional and allied commitments for participation without any constraints in a broad spectrum of NATO-led operations.

Regardless of the reforms underway, the participation of the Bulgarian Armed Forces in operations within the framework of our policy in NATO and EU Common Security and Defence Policy remains the most fundamental and significant defence and security commitment of our country, being a member of both organizations, thus always attaching top priority to operations in the priority list of defence and security system.

In 2010, force formations and individual servicemen from Bulgarian Armed Forces participated in operations and missions abroad under the auspices of UN, NATO and EU on three continents – Europe, Asia and Africa. Bulgarian military personnel participated in the missions in Afghanistan, Iraq, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Liberia, Georgia and in the coastal waters of Somalia. The total number of personnel in our contingents towards the end of the year exceeded 750 in nine missions and operations altogether. The acquired operational capabilities and

equipment, provided to us by our coalition partners as well as the support rendered to us by the lead nations in the mission areas contributed to the full-bodied performance of our expeditionary forces. The acquisition of new types of armoured equipment with better maneuverability, firepower, ballistic and mine protection, improved significantly the quality of force protection and contingents' operational capabilities. The established Communication and Information System of the Bulgarian military contingents operated normally and provided the required support to the C2 system, ensuring uninterrupted information sharing.

At present, the practical dimensions of our expeditionary force policy are the following:

In NATO-led operations and missions

- Operation of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan.

The ISAF Operation has retained its place of a principal priority for the Republic of Bulgaria. Our country supports the new approach in the operation conduct, the augmentation of the Alliance's forces, the increase in the strength of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) and the improvement of their role and capabilities.

The adopted by NATO leadership Afghanistan Exit Strategy, envisaging gradual transfer of responsibility in the security area to ANSF by the end of 2014 will contribute to the stability efforts in the region.

The Republic of Bulgaria participates in ISAF with a National Element, staff officers, APOD Force Protection Company in Kandahar, KAIA Ground Defence Area Company in Kabul, Military Police detachment, medical teams in Herat Kandahar and Kabul, HUMINT team and four OMLTs in Kabul and Kandahar.

- NATO Training Mission in Iraq (NTM-I).

The current situation in Iraq has demanded an extraordinary Review of NTM-I. It dwells upon the necessity of continuing the implementation of NTM-I and developing an overall exit strategy in tune with the envisaged long-term Structured Cooperation Framework between the Alliance and the Iraqi Government for building effective and sustainable Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) training structures.

The Republic of Bulgaria participates in the mission with military instructors in the ISF Training Center at the Iraqi Military Academy Ar Rustamihar (IMAR) in Bagdad.

- NATO Mission in Kosovo (KFOR).

KFOR operation is being conducted in a complex and relatively calm but dynamic environment. The security situation as a whole remains stable and it allows transition to the second interim stage, the so called Gate 2 from Phase 3 – Deterrent Presence. The process of handing over the policing of Sector 1 of the Kosovo border with FYROM to Kosovo police has been finalized.

Bulgaria participates in the operation with military personnel in KFOR HQ in Pristina and a HUMINT team.

- NATO Operation „UNIFIED PROTECTOR” implements all military aspects of UN Resolution 1973 related to the protection of civilians, the no-fly zone and the arms embargo in Libya.

In this recently initiated NATO operation Bulgaria participates with one frigate - "Drazki", with a Special Operations Task Unit onboard – 160 military personnel in total.

- NATO Operation „OCEAN SHELDT” - deterring and disrupting piracy off the coast of Somalia.

Bulgaria participates with staff officers in the HQ of the Standing NATO Maritime Group 1 (SNMG 1).

In EU-led Operations and Missions

- EU NAVFOR Somalia - Operation „ATALANTA“ is the first naval operation of the European Union for disrupting and deterring the acts of piracy off the coast of Somalia.

Republic of Bulgaria contributes to Operation „ATALANTA” with military personnel in the operational HQ (OHQ) in Northwood, Great Britain.

- The EU-led military operation in Bosnia & Herzegovina (BiH) - EUFOR ALTHEA.

Operation „ALTHEA“ adds in a significant way to the EU’s political engagement to help BiH make further progress towards European integration. The military-political situation remains unchanged. The financial and economic crisis makes the social-economic situation even harder. The social unrest provoked by the economic policy of the rulers, the continued impoverishment of the larger part of the population and the lowered life standard create breeding ground for street protests. The present assessments of the situation show no military threat to EUFOR.

Our country contributes to Operation „ALTHEA” a national element, a light infantry coy with force protection tasks in Camp „Butmir”, a Liaison and Observation Team (LOT) in Bugojno, a HUMINT team and military personnel in Force HQ in Sarajevo.

- EU Monitoring Mission in Georgia – EUMM Georgia.

Bulgaria participates in this mission with military observers.

- EU Police Mission to Afghanistan (EUPOL Afghanistan).

Bulgaria participates with military instructors.

In UN Operations and Missions

Bulgaria participates in UN mission in Liberia (UNMIL) with military observers.

In the context of the size and budget of its Armed Forces, the Republic of Bulgaria makes quite a considerable contribution to the international efforts for promoting security, stability and peace in different parts of the world.

The shared understanding, within NATO and EU framework, about the values, interests, risks and threats will define also our future commitments that we will undertake as a member-state in these two organizations. The formats and the duration of our future participation in missions and operations will be adequate to NATO and EU policies for support to the international peace and security, in compliance with our national interests and priorities, the operational needs of each single operation and the political Level of Ambition, that will be determined by our political and military commitments and the available resources and capabilities.

Taking into account the existing political decisions of the Parliament and the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Bulgaria, as well as the level of political ambition on the mission “Support to International Peace and Security” set in the White Paper on Defence and Armed Forces, we plan to participate in NATO-, EU- and UN-led operations and missions with up to **920** military personnel in total.

Our operational priority remains ISAF. In this regard, we plan to deploy a team of instructors to ANA Senior Advisory Team at the Regional Military Training Center Kandahar in the second half of 2011 and with this deployment the number of our personnel in ISAF will reach the figure of around **620** troops.

Distinguished _____,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The world is undergoing a process of globalization and transformation in search of the optimal political construction, ensuring normal life for everyone on the globe. The large-scale political and economic changes are accompanied by significant shifts in the security environment, turning it into a complex and dynamic pattern of confrontations and conflicts. NATO, in its capacity of principal guarantor of the global security, is seeking new ways and forms for expedient response to the rapidly emerging security challenges. To this end, the Alliance is carrying out a large-scale process of transformation aiming at building capabilities for rapid and adequate response to security risks and threats.

Bulgarian Armed Forces are also in process of transformation dictated by the changing security environment, their responsibilities to collective defence and the undertaken commitments to international organizations - EU, UN, OSCE and the regional initiatives. The focus of the efforts of the overall defence system and the armed forces has been placed on operations. The capability of carrying out military operations is the existential meaning of the defence institution in its essence and it is also the benchmark of its effectiveness and functional fitness.

Our immediate task is to build and train effective and employable armed forces, maneuverable and expeditionary in nature and structure; capable of accomplishing tasks in the full spectrum of operations; equipped with modern technological equipment; supported by integrated logistics; with network-enabled capabilities; rapidly transformable from one functional state into another; interoperable with the allied forces; capable of cooperating and interacting with civilian authorities and non-governmental organizations; with well-trained professional personnel.

Thank you for the attention!