

# **STRATEGY**

## **FOR TRANSFORMATION OF THE PARTICIPATION OF THE ARMED FORCES OF THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA IN THE OPERATION OF THE NATO-LED INTERNATIONAL SECURITY ASSISTANCE FORCE (ISAF) IN AFGHANISTAN**

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The Strategy is intended to define the political approaches and practical measures for their implementation with a view to transforming the participation of the Bulgarian armed forces in the operation of the NATO-led Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan.

The Strategy outlines Bulgaria's potential future commitments to the process of confirming democracy, stabilization and reconstruction of Afghanistan, the strategic goals related to implementing further participation as well as the organization and management of the processes connected to these goals.

The Strategy is developed as an element of the overall policy on Bulgaria's participation in international operations and missions. It incorporates the requirements of basic strategic documents of the Bulgarian Government and organizations of which Bulgaria is a member. The strategy assesses the trends in the development of the situation in Afghanistan as well as the experience and the best practices regarding the participation in operations and missions outside the territory of the country. It reflects to the full extent the changes in NATO's plans for the operation until 2014 and beyond.

The Strategy is developed taking into account the national interests, and it complies with the assessments of organizational, resource and other prerequisites specific to the country in relation to its participation in international peacekeeping forces.

The document has long-term importance, and after its approval by the Council of Ministers it will be a fundamental guidance for the elaboration of current and future plans for participation of Bulgarian servicemen, military formations, civilians and structures in maintaining security, stabilization and reconstruction of Afghanistan.

### **II. POLITICAL AND MILITARY-POLITICAL GOALS**

1. The basic goal of adopting the strategy is to organize and assist, at the highest state level, the implementation of the Bulgarian armed forces' participation in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan as a long-term process which includes stage-by-stage transformation of the forces and means in the period 2012-2014 and intentions regarding possible participation in the period beyond 2014.

2. The strategic goals which the Government establishes are the following:

2.1 Confirmation of the Republic of Bulgaria's political commitment to the success of NATO's operation in Afghanistan mandated by the United Nations Security Council.

2.2 Preservation and enhancement of Bulgaria's authority as a reliable and predictable ally in the Alliance and in the international coalition in Afghanistan.

2.3 In coordination with the NATO allies, timely, planned stage-by stage transformation of the Bulgarian armed forces' participation in ISAF in the period 2012-2014.

2.4 Rational national contribution to meeting new priority needs for military assistance with respect to training, provision and support of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) in the period beyond 2014.

2.5 Establishing conditions for long-term development of the relations with Afghanistan on a bilateral basis, and within the framework of the partnership relations of NATO and the EU.

2.6 Decreasing the expenses on maintaining the military contingent in Afghanistan, and re-directed the freed resources to other operations or spheres in the defence sector.

### **III. REALITIES**

In order to formulate the goals and approaches to the transformation of the participation of the Republic of Bulgaria in NATO operation in Afghanistan, we took into account the military assessment and the recommendations of the Chief of Defence approved by the Minister of Defence, the position of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on this assessment and we summarized the evaluations and findings in the following basic spheres:

1. State of play and prospects for the development of the situation in Afghanistan in near and medium-term perspectives;

The security environment in Afghanistan is characterized by a high degree of threats caused by the intensified terrorist activities of the rebel groups whose aim is to discredit the Government and to oppose the efforts of ISAF directed towards stabilization of the state (the total number of armed incidents in the third quarter of 2011 surpasses 13 000). The risk threatening the security and interests of the countries participating in ISAF (including Bulgaria) still remains. The complicated situation hinders ISAF in its efforts to hand over the responsibilities for keeping the public order to the Afghan National Security Forces, and impedes the implementation of the program for national reconciliation and reintegration of the rebels in society.

The results of already conducted international conferences dedicated to Afghanistan (London, February 2010 and Kabul, July 2010), as well as the expectations with regard to the conference in Bonn (5 December 2011), categorically point to the leading importance of the process of enhancing the responsibilities of the Afghan authorities in all spheres of society. In this context, we identify the importance of the agreement reached between the Government of Afghanistan and the countries participating in ISAF on the stage-by-stage transfer of responsibilities to the Afghan Government, and related to guaranteeing the security of the country until 2014. An emphasis is laid on the long-term commitment of the International community in the period after 2014 in support of the future development of the country including training and professionalization of the security forces of Afghanistan. A priority is given to the civil aspects of the transition, the support for the political process as well as the long-term commitments of the international community within the framework of the region.

A general conclusion can be made that the situation in Afghanistan, parallel to the complicated situation in Kosovo, the other security-related problems in the Western Balkans, the conflicts and crisis in the Middle East and Northern Africa and other regions as well have a negative influence on the internal security environment.

#### **2. Implementation of the Transition Phase of NATO operation in Afghanistan**

The commitment to Afghanistan is among the leading priorities on NATO's agenda.

The transition and handover of security-related responsibilities to the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) until the end of 2014, a process which started in compliance with the decisions of NATO Summit meeting held in Lisbon (19-20 November 2010), envisions to gradually pass from active military operations conducted by ISAF forces to lending assistance for operations conducted by ANSF. This process establishes conditions

to take steps towards a gradual decrease in the size of NATO's and the operational partners' forces as well as towards restructuring their contingents and responsibilities. In this context, there is political and military expediency related to a consistent decrease in the Bulgarian participation as well, and to optimizing the fulfillment of the tasks performed by our contingent.

The implementation of the transition involves the following principles:

- solidarity and continuation of the commitment to the operation;
- reinvestment (re-directing) of the efforts through geographic regrouping of forces depending on the specific necessity;
- reinvestment (re-directing) of instructors and counselors in order to reinforce the specialized training and development of the institutions at specific locations;
- transformation of the Provincial reconstruction and development teams.

The expectations with a view to final results are for the Afghan National Security Forces to assume responsibility for the whole territory of Afghanistan by the end of 2014.

### **3. Role of other international organizations and countries from the region**

NATO's efforts, concentrated on the successful implementation of the transition including through the application of the comprehensive approach, are an integral part of the international community's commitment to the stabilization and reconstruction of Afghanistan.

The United Nations remain an organization playing a decisive role in guaranteeing the peace and stability in Afghanistan as well as a unifying factor of the efforts of the whole international community.

Parallel to the NATO-led operation, the European Union Police Mission (EUPOL) in Afghanistan plays a substantial role in improving the capabilities of the Afghan Police Forces. The firm commitment of the EU to remain a strong and reliable partner to Afghanistan after the transition is completed was confirmed by the Foreign Affairs Council, which on 14 November 2011 approved a negotiating mandate for a Cooperation Agreement for partnership and development with Afghanistan and prolonged the EU Police mission (EUPOL) until the end of 2014.

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) also gradually broadens its commitments in support of the process of stabilizing the situation in and around Afghanistan, and contributes to increasing the capabilities of the Afghan administration.

Afghanistan's security has also direct influence on the countries in Central Asia. The increased regional cooperation is an effective means in support of security, administration and development of Afghanistan. The neighboring countries, and especially Pakistan, play a key role in achieving the goals of the operations.

## **4. Political and legal basis, basic assumption points, limiting and deterring factors, criteria to evaluate success and desired final state**

### **4.1. Political framework of the Strategy**

The political framework is consistent with the evaluation expressed at NATO Lisbon Summit that the transition in Afghanistan is related to achieving concrete conditions with regard to security and not to a time schedule, and it will not simply constitute withdrawal of the military formations of ISAF. The political framework is based on:

(1) NATO's political-military decisions on the progress in the process of handing over the security-related responsibilities to the Afghan National Security Forces including NATO Strategic Concept on gradually handing over the responsibilities for the country's security to the ANSF (October 2009), with a deadline the end of 2014.

(2) Preserving the participation of the Republic of Bulgaria in ISAF Operation as an important priority of the country's foreign policy in a long-term perspective.

(3) The military assessment and the recommendations made by the Chief of Defence approved by the Minister of Defence on a stage-by stage transformation of the Bulgarian armed forces' participation in the NATO-led operation of ISAF in the period 2012-2014, and intentions related to a possible participation after 2014.

#### **4.2. Legal basis**

On a national scale, the legislation is harmonized with the requirements of NATO and the EU, thus allowing rapid application, if necessity arises, of amendments concerning international participation of formations of the armed forces of the Republic of Bulgaria.

The legal regulation of Bulgarian servicemen's participation in NATO operation in Afghanistan is provided for by the application of the following basic documents:

a. Resolution 2011 (Year 2011) of the UN Security Council on Afghanistan adopted on 12 October 2011, extending authorization of the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan until 13 October 2012.

b. Law on Defence and Armed Forces of the Republic of Bulgaria – Article 22(1) assigning the implementation of the general guidance of defence and the armed forces to the Council of Ministers; and Article 76 assigning to the Minister of Defence the organization and coordination of all activities on provision, manning and preparation of the armed forces' formations in relation to sending and employing them outside the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria.

c. Order of the Minister of Defence № OX-024/29.09.2011 on implementing the decisions the Minister of Defence made at a session held on 21.09.2011 by the Defence Council to the Ministry of Defence.

The enumerated legal documents provide for the implementation of the strategy.

#### **4.3. Basic assumption points in the Strategy**

(1) Meeting the planned deadline for handing over the security-related responsibilities in Afghanistan to the Afghan National Security Forces until the end of 2014;

(2) Preserving the successful completion of ISAF operation in Afghanistan as NATO's key priority;

(3) Continuing the international community's commitment to Afghanistan after 2014, including the commitments of the countries which have made contribution to ISAF with a view to assisting the efforts made by the Government of Afghanistan;

(4) Continuing cooperation with the US Government on the provision of the Bulgarian contingent in Afghanistan.

#### **4.4. Limiting and deterring factors**

(1) Transformation of the participation by assuming other tasks, in another geographical region in Afghanistan (i.e. reinvestment).

(2) Expected foreign-political influence with a view to re-directing and/or increasing Bulgaria's participation in other NATO and EU operations at the expense of resources freed from Afghanistan.

(3) Attaining the level of the country's political ambition with respect to our participation in operations and missions outside the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria as defined in the White Paper on Defence; resources and budget constraints.

(4) Making a military assessment of NATO Allied Command Operations on re-dislocation of forces and materiel means within the scope of the operation.

#### **4.5. Criteria to evaluate success**

(1) Timely adoption of the strategy and development of a plan for stage-by stage transformation of the Bulgarian armed forces' participation in ISAF;

(2) Conducting, at a high qualitative level, the activities to achieve the strategic goals within the defined deadlines;

(3) Timely revision of the tasks depending on the changes in the situation and the intentions of the countries committed to security and the processes of stabilization and reconstruction of Afghanistan.

#### **4.6. Desired end state**

(1) The transformation of the Bulgarian participation in Afghanistan at the end of 2014 in compliance with the priorities of the foreign policy, resources availability and operational needs;

(2) Formulating and starting the process of additional contribution through rational employment of forces and means in the period following 2014.

### **IV. STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK**

The strategic framework is defined on the basis of the military assessment, and the suggestions made by the Chief of Defence in a way, which is coordinated and synchronized with the participants in the operation and with ISAF Command by taking into consideration the political-military decisions in NATO and the processes of handing over the security-related responsibilities to the Afghan National Security Forces.

The Strategic framework includes two periods.

**The First period, 2012 to 2014**, comprises the state-by-stage transformation of the participation of the armed forces of the Republic of Bulgaria in NATO operation of ISAF<sup>1</sup>; it is divided into three stages:

(a) **First Stage** – termination of participation of the Bulgarian medical team in Herat - until the end of 2012, which amounts to a decrease in approximately 2% of the total size of the personnel of the Bulgarian contingent as in 2011.

(b) **Second stage** – termination of the participation of a maneuver company in the close protection area of Kabul airport – at the beginning of 2013, which amounts to a decrease in approximately 30% of the total size of the personnel of the Bulgarian contingent as in 2011.

(c) **Third stage** – termination of the participation of a forces protection company at the internal zone of Kandahar airport – until the end of 2014, which amounts to a decrease in approximately 78% of the total size of the personnel of the Bulgarian contingent as in 2011.

**The Second period after 2014** comprises participation in training and preparation of the Afghan Security Forces.

The Strategy is flexible and is subject to a survey in 2014 when the parameters of participation during the Second period will be specified.

### **V. ORGANIZATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGY**

#### **1. Development of a Plan for transformation the participation of the Republic of Bulgaria's armed forces in NATO operation in Afghanistan**

A plan is to be developed for the stage-by-stage transformation of the participation of the Republic of Bulgaria's armed forces in the NATO-led operation of the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan in the period 2012-2014, as well as for the intentions concerning possible participation in the period beyond 2014. The preparation and confirmation of the plan are within the power and responsibility of the Minister of Defence, and the strategic and operational structures and headquarters subordinated to him.

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<sup>1</sup> The Bulgarian participation is concentrated basically in Kabul and Kandahar: with national elements, a forces protection and a maneuver company, 4 operational mentor and liaison teams, medical teams, teams of counselors and military police servicemen, totally 612 servicemen

In the process of development and implementation of the plan, the Strategy envisions holding an active dialogue and consultations with the other allies and partners in order to identify potential concern and specific interests as well as their concrete ideas and recommendations on the implementation of the planned activities.

## **2. Logistics for the provision, support and implementation of the plan**

The provision and support have to be planned within the System for Unified Logistics of the Bulgarian army, the effective agreements on mutual support, in compliance with a plan designed by the Joint Forces Command (JFC) of the Bulgarian army, and in coordination with the Logistics Directorate.

The Joint Forces Command interacting with Logistic Directorate organizes, plans and applies a unified Strategy for the surplus materiel property of the Bulgarian contingent in Afghanistan (dislocation, storage, sale, grants, transportation, guarding, utilization etc.)

The Joint Forces Command (JFC) interacting with Logistics Directorate organizes the coordination of strategic transport, the transportation of property, conclusion and implementation of contracts on the overall logistics, provision of interaction and cooperation with organizations within NATO etc.

The Minister of Defence exercises control over the logistic support.

## **3. Preparation of the formations, command and control of the contingent in compliance with the plan**

The considerable budget expenditures made so far on the preparation and modernization of the equipment for the Bulgarian contingents participating in Afghanistan lead to substantial improvements in the quality of the fulfilled tasks.

Adequate organization, prepared personnel and acquired experience in effectively meeting the contemporary requirements, related to the preparation and participation in operations outside the territory of the country, are available at the Ministry of Defence and in the Bulgarian army, guaranteeing the implementation of the Strategy. In order to fulfill the tasks on the participation in the operation of ISAF, the above quoted elements have to develop in compliance with the new requirements and challenges arising as a result of the changes in the environment.

The practical implementation of the Strategy requires improvement in the system for personnel training and preparation, which allows fulfillment of new tasks according to the plan, achieving integrated quality in the formations, and interoperability with the other participants in the operation. The provision of modern equipment and combat gear as well as heightening the degree of their employment has to be a priority with the Bulgarian participation.

The functions of the command structures have to be defined in compliance with established unified standards taking into consideration the respective legal decisions at all levels of command.

The acquired combat experience and the achieved interoperability with the allies and the coalition partners are positive results of the participation so far, they are also a prerequisite for the expected benefits for the armed forces with regard to the participation of Bulgarian military formations in the future.

## **4. Human resources**

The participation in the operation requires specific individual preparation and acquisition of new knowledge. The employment of modern armaments and devices as well as high technology equipment requires a high level of personnel competence conforming to the specific mission.

In the Bulgarian army, there are certain difficulties in attracting and keeping highly qualified specialists, first and foremost in the sphere of employing high technology

equipment on account of conditions related to uncompetitive remuneration and career development perspectives in other sectors.

The positive influence of the strategy's implementation on the human resources is determined by the availability of more than 5 800 troops who have participated in the operation so far i.e. servicemen having acquired the necessary preparation and experience.

Employing military formations manned in advance by professional personnel has to be the base of the rotation of the Bulgarian contingents in NATO operation in Afghanistan for the period of the implementation of the strategy until 2014. In the period after 2014, personnel selection is to be conducted by applying an approach based on functional criteria, with the goal to build operational mentor and liaison teams.

### **5. Medical support**

The medical support has to be accomplished according to a plan designed by the Joint Forces Command interacting with the Military Medical Academy, and in coordination with Logistics Directorate. Being an element of the comprehensive support of troops and a key capability with respect to protecting the personnel in the operation, medical support has to be concentrated on preserving servicemen's life and health in a period of preparation to leave the zones of dislocation in the area of the operation, on conducting a transition and transportation to areas where new tasks in Afghanistan have to be fulfilled, and until returning to Bulgaria after the mission is accomplished.

### **6. Financial provision of the operation**

Planning on an annual basis is conducted within the framework of the budget of the Ministry of Defence.

Planning and control over employment and spending of resources is conducted in accordance with the Planning, Programming and Budgeting Concept in the Ministry of Defence and the Armed forces.

Financial means necessary for the implementation of the Strategy have to be analyzed on an annual basis, and the budget has to be updated in coordination with the Ministry of Finance.

## **VI. REVIEW, EVALUATION AND CONTROL OVER THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGY**

The Strategy is open, a possibility is foreseen to review and update it in case of potential abrupt changes in the situation in Afghanistan as well as in the conditions for its application in a manner which reflects the strategic understanding about Bulgaria's participation as a member of the international force in Afghanistan, the national interests, capabilities and resources under the altered conditions.

The time horizon of the Strategy is ten years.

An intermediate review of the implementation of the Strategy which has to define more accurately the intentions regarding participation in the period beyond 2014 has to be conducted until the end of 2014.