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THE ROLE OF NATO RESPONSE FORCE IN THE MODERN WARFARE

Absztrakt

A világ biztonsági helyzete megváltozott, a reguláris hadviselést felváltotta az aszimmetrikus válságkezelés. Újszerű kockázati tényezők merültek, illetve erősödtek fel, terjed a vallási-, nemzeti radikalizmus, a szervezett bűnözés, a tömegpusztító fegyverek használatának fenyegetettsége. A tömeghadseregek léte időszerütlenné és költségessé vált, alkalmazásuk lassú és jelentős infrastrukturális háttért igényel. Ezen újszerű kihívásokra nyújt hatékony választ a NATO Reagáló Erők (NRF) alkalmazása. A NATO Reagáló Erők egy technológiailag fejlett egyedülálló haderő, amely szárazföldi-, légi-, tengeri- fegyvernemeket foglal magába és bárhol, gyorsan bevethető ahol erre a képességre szükség merül fel.

The world's safety situation has changed; the regular warfare was replaced by the asymmetric crisis management. Modern risk factors arose, or they grew strong, expands the religious-, national radicalism, the organized crime, for the usage of the threat of weapon of mass destruction. The existence of mass armies turned into untimely- and costly one, their application demands slow and considerable logistical background. NATO Response Force (NRF) application offers an efficient answer for these challenges. The NATO Response Force is a technologically advanced unique force comprising land, air, sea and special forces that can be quickly deployed wherever needed.

Kulcsszavak: *NATO Reagáló Erők, NRF, műveleti képesség, aszimmetrikus válságkezelés alliance military operation, multinational force, asymmetric crisis management, joint military units*

PREAMBLE

„Victory smiles upon those who anticipate the changes in the character of war, not upon those who wait to adapt themselves after the changes occur.”¹

The NATO Response Force is a coherent, high readiness, joint, multinational force package, technologically advanced, flexible, deployable, interoperable and sustainable. It is

¹ General Giulio Douhet, 1921

tailored as required to the needs of a specific operation and able to move quickly to wherever needed. It is not a permanent or standing force. The NRF is able to carry out certain missions on its own, or serve as part of a larger force to contribute to the full range of alliance military operations. The NRF can sustain itself for duration of up to one month or longer if re-supplied. Its precise size and composition is under study and subject of further definition and refinement, up to its full operational capability. Its role is to act as a stand alone military force that can be rapidly deployed by the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation as a collective defense, crisis management or stabilisation force, or to act as an initial entry force for more forces. [1]

The NRF consists of land, air and sea components provided by NATO members. Contributed forces first train together and then become available for a 6-month period before being replaced by the new force.

The purpose of the NRF concept is to provide NATO with a robust and credible high readiness capability, which is fully trained and certified as a joint and combined armed force, able to deploy quickly to participate in the full spectrum of NATO missions wherever required.

HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL BACKGROUND AND MAIN MILESTONES

50 years of NATO memory has a persistent influence on contemporary security structures and policies. To NATO's credit, its 1999 adaptation to the end of the Cold War was fundamental, monumental and appropriate; it finally and formally recognized that its traditional threat was gone; it moved from the static/active defense concepts of the prior decades toward a strategic concept that emphasized security missions outside of traditional NATO areas; and it stressed the importance of developing new capabilities to meet new threats. Furthermore, operations in the Balkans and Afghanistan have accelerated thinking that NATO's military relevancy lies, not in the ability to provide heavy land forces or tactical fighter planes in defense of NATO territory, but rather in the ability to act quickly to stabilize distant situations which, left untended, could break out into a larger conflict. Political, social and economic chaos is the new perceived enemy of the western state. This changed environment requires new tools: better intelligence, quicker force generation, greater power projection, and more precise weaponry. Perhaps the most vexing challenge is developing the command and control mechanism to pull all those tools together and put them to work. [2]

One of the main milestones happened in September 2002 when the US Secretary for Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, put forward a proposal to create a NATO rapid reaction force. The Prague Summit meant the main turning point in November 2002 when member nations made specific commitments to improve the military capabilities of the Alliance in order to find a balance between addressing its traditional missions centred in Europe and tackling new global threats. Among these commitments was the creation of the NATO Response Force.

The participants of Prague Summit declared the result of Prague Capabilities Commitment which includes individual nations' firm and specific political commitments to improve capabilities in the areas of : chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear defence, intelligence, surveillance and target acquisition, air-to-ground surveillance, command, control and communications, combat effectiveness including precision guided munitions and suppression of enemy air defences, strategic air and sea lift, air-to-air refueling, deployable combat support and combat service support units.

The NATO response force was approved by Ministers of Defence in June 2003 in Brussels. On 15 October 2003 the NRF reached its initial operating capability only four months later. The first prototype or rotation of the force, numbering about 9,500 troops was inaugurated barely a year after the announcement of its creation. On 13 October 2004, at an informal meeting of the NATO Defence Ministers in Poiana Brasov, Romania, the NATO Secretary General and Supreme Allied Commander Europe formally announced the NRF had reached its initial operational capability of approximately 17,000 troops and was ready to take on the full range of mission. The capabilities of Response Force were tested in a major live exercise, Steadfast Jaguar 06, in the Cape Verde Islands in June 2006. The challenging location was specifically designed to demonstrate and prove the viability of the NRF concept.

At NATO's November 2006 Riga Summit, the Force was declared to be at full operational capability of with up to 25,000 troops. [1]

OPERATIONAL ISSUES OF THE NATO RESPONSE FORCE

The main aims and purposes of the development of the NATO Response Force: to act as a catalyst for collective allied focus on capability development, to act as the engine for providing the Alliance with an expeditionary capability, to act as the medium for longer term capability development in tandem with Prague Capabilities Commitment.

Rotation: The force gives NATO the means to respond swiftly to various types of crises anywhere in the world. It is also a driving engine of NATO's military transformation.

The Response Force is based on a system of rotations. NATO member countries commit land, air, naval or special forces units to the NATO Response Force for a six-month period. The standards are very high, and participation in the NRF is preceded by a six-month training programme, which includes testing the units' capabilities in complex exercises. Therefore, as the different forces rotating through the NRF meet these high standards, new concepts, technologies and the transformation of military capabilities spread throughout the forces of all member countries. Operational command of the NRF alternates among NATO's Joint Forces Command Brunssum, Naples, and Joint Headquarters Lisbon. At present, the NRF is in its tenth rotation, under the command of the Allied Joint Force Command Headquarters Brunssum.

Joint military force: One of the Response Force's key features is that it combines land, air, sea and special forces into one package. This includes a brigade-size land component with forced-entry capability; a naval task force including a carrier battle group, an amphibious task group and a surface action group; and an air component capable of 200 combat sorties a day. Special forces constitute an additional component of the force, which can be called upon when necessary. The NATO Response Force can be tailored to a specific operation. It can be smaller than envisaged during the six-month training period, the same size, or even larger. Whatever the case, it remains the NATO Response Force.

High mobility: The NATO Response Force, which is driven by the underlying principle: "first force in, first force out", is designed to be capable of carrying out a range of different missions, anywhere in the world: deploy as a stand-alone force for Article 5 (collective defence) or non-Article 5 crisis response operations such as evacuation operations, support disaster consequence management (including chemical biological, radiological and nuclear events), humanitarian crisis situations and counter terrorism operations; deploy as an initial entry force facilitating the arrival of larger follow-up forces; deploy as a demonstrative force

to show NATO's determination and solidarity to deter crises (quick response operations to support diplomacy as required).

Missions: Main Crisis Response (including Peacekeeping) task of the NATO Response Force: support counter terrorism operations, consequence management (including CBRN events and humanitarian crises), peace enforcement, embargo operations – maritime, initial land, and no-fly zone, initial entry force or enabling force, demonstrative force package, quick response operations, non-combatant evacuation,

Logistic support: Very important elements of the NRF are able to deploy within five days and the whole force is able to operate self-sufficiently for 30 days. Depending on the mission circumstances the NRF either operate as an Initial Entry Force to facilitate the arrival of Follow-on-Forces or as a Stand-alone Force. Every contributing nation has its own national logistic support elements and all units has 7 days DOS.

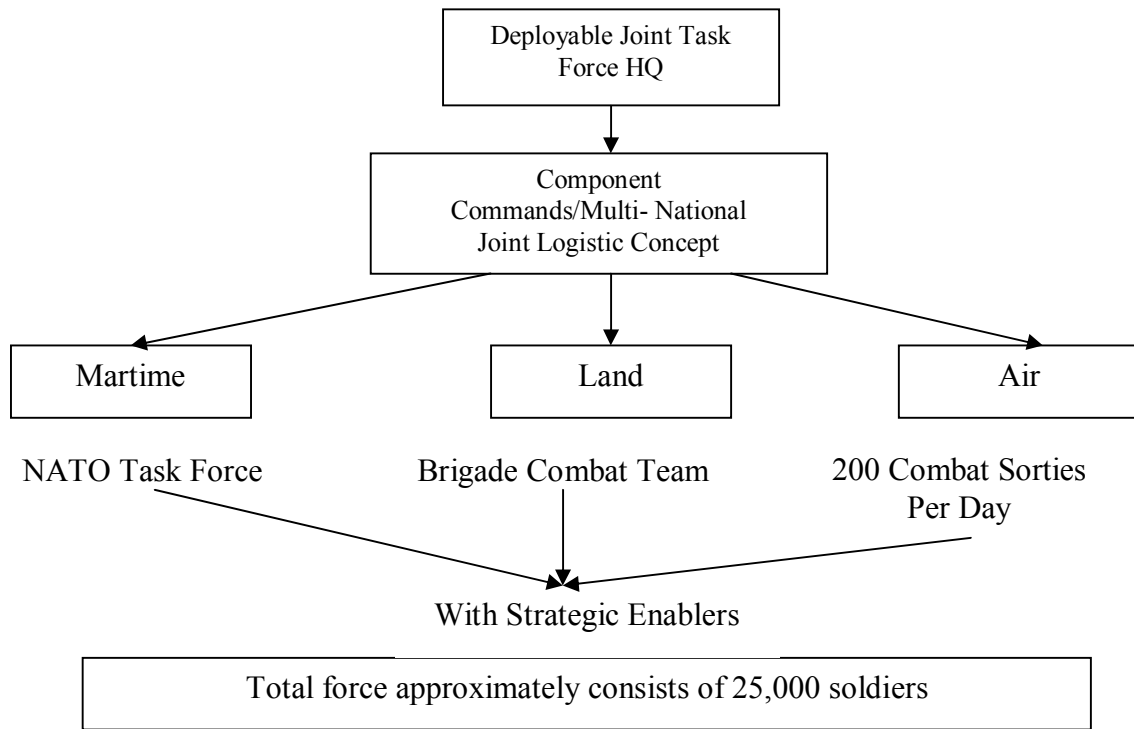
Readiness: The NRF has a standards of readiness and mission that is higher than anything NATO has possessed before. The assigned force will be able to deploy within 5 days it means very high readiness capability.

Tailored force: The NATO Response Force's flexibility gives it its unique character, enabling it to be tailored to a specific operation. It can be smaller than envisaged during the six-month training period and the following "on-call" period, the same size, or even larger. Whatever the case, it remains the NATO Response Force.

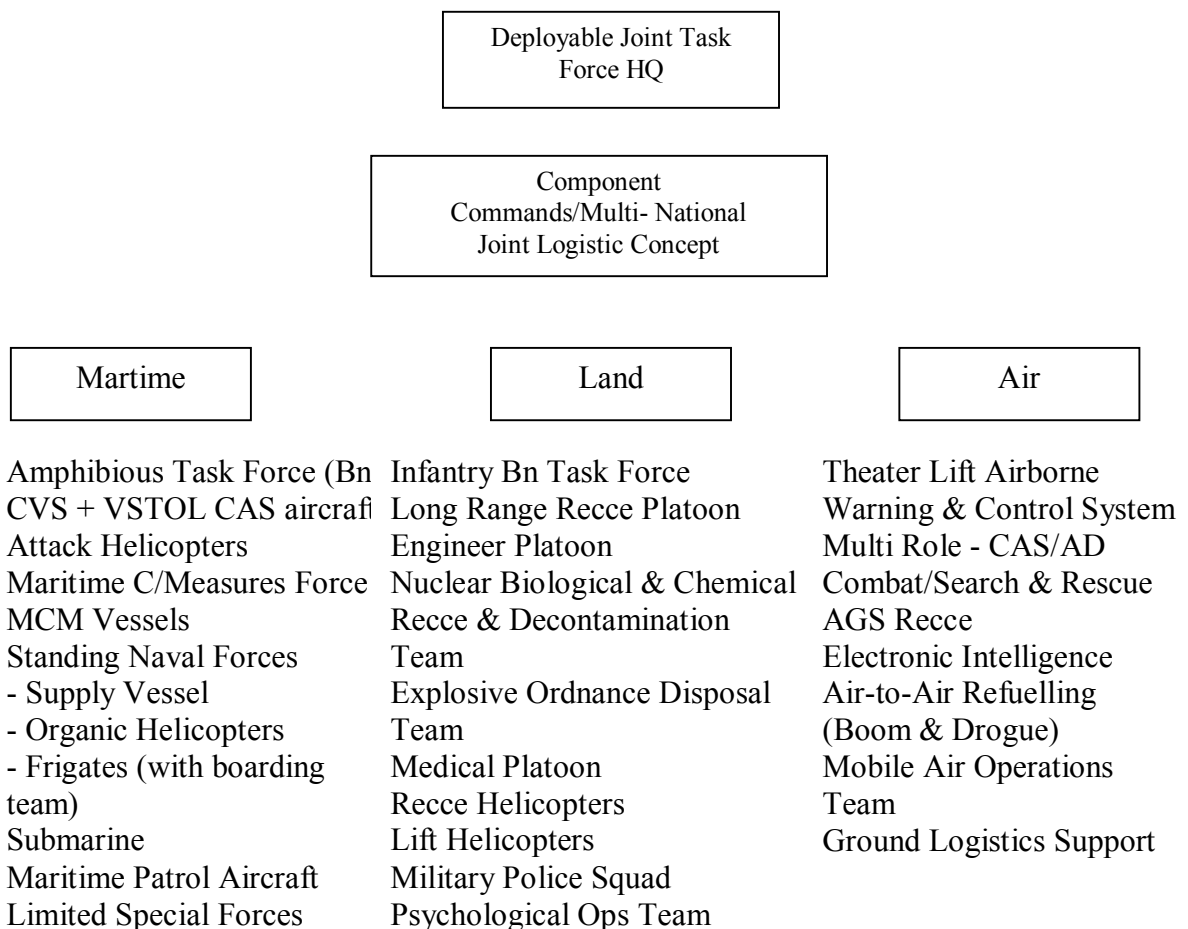
Interoperability: The NRF is intended to be a transformational force that will serve as an agent of change whereby all the member nations of NATO will be able to bring new technology, capabilities, and concepts of operations into their national forces. The NRF is intended to be fully integrated, units will be able to fight within the same battle space without regard to national origins. Significantly, this coalition warfighting construct implies the need to fully share information within the Force, something that can only be done if there is a significant level of technical, tactical, and operational interoperability.

THE STRUCTURE OF NRF ORGANIZATION

The NRF command and control structure consists of a Combined Joint Task Force Headquarters (CJTF HQ) with subordinated Land, Air and Maritime Component Commands (LCC/ACC/ MCC). Operational command of the NRF alternates among NATO's Joint Forces Command Brunssum, Naples, and Joint Headquarters Lisbon.



1. diagram. The command chain in the NRF organization [1]



2. diagram. The force element in the NRF structure [1]

Command & Control: There are many issues to be resolved, participants tend to agree that the Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) is the primary tool to command and control the NRF. The NATO CJTF, modeled on the US JTF concept, has been under discussion and development since 1994 and has evolved toward either a static Joint Force Command HQ generating a deployable CJTF HQ or one using a sea-based CJTF HQ capability. The command element for the NRF will most likely require a standing structure with dedicated staffing to meet the 5 day crisis response timeline.

NATO RESPONSE FORCE IN ACTION

Elements of the NATO Response Force have been used to provide humanitarian relief and protection on special occasions. Units of the NRF were deployed to protect the 2004 Summer Olympics in Athens. The North Atlantic Council agreed to respond positively to the request from the Greek Government for security assistance during the Olympic Games and the Paralympic Games. NATO's support to the Greek authorities took the form of: deployment of AWACS aircraft for the surveillance of airspace; maritime surveillance through NATO's Operation Active Endeavour; deployment of elements of the NATO Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Defence Battalion; enhanced intelligence sharing. NATO also contributed to the coordination of assistance offered by nations relating to civil emergency contingencies. The decision demonstrates Allied solidarity in contributing to security for NATO members. [2]

Aircraft from the NRF delivered relief supplies donated by NATO and Partner countries to the victims of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, the United States, in September-October 2005. Germany served as a strategic air hub for onward transportation of US accepted donations. Donating countries that are closest to Ramstein were requested to move their donations by road to Ramstein with their own resources (Austria, Finland and Slovak Republic). Other countries such as Czech Republic, Denmark, Greece, Norway and Romania used NRF tactical airlift to move relief goods to Ramstein. All cargo consolidation from European donating nations was completed on 19 September 05. The fourth cargo flight (B-707) took place on 19 September with 8 tons of donations from Finland. [3]

Following the devastating earthquake of 8 October 2005, aircraft from the NRF were used in an air bridge that delivered almost 3500 tons of emergency supplies to Pakistan. Engineers and medical personnel from the NRF were deployed to Pakistan to assist in the relief effort.

Units assigned to the NRF supported the Afghan presidential election in September 2004.

NATO RESPONSE FORCE EXERCISES

Destined Glory 2004 NATO Amphibious/Maritime Exercise Assembles Multinational Forces in Mediterranean. The NATO Response Force exercise, Destined Glory 2004 took place between 30 September 2004 -16 October 2004 on the Italian island of Sardinia. It was a live-fire training exercise comprised of elements of the NRF 3 forces along with Maritime and Amphibious forces affiliated with STRIKFORNATO. The exercise also demonstrated the Initial Operational Capability of the NRF and involved almost 9,500 personnel, over 47 ships and 46 aircraft from 11 NATO nations. Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, The Netherlands, Spain, Turkey, United Kingdom and the United States of America provided high-readiness forces to the exercise as a "Joint Capable Force," could conduct peace support, crisis response or defence operations. This exercise served as the venue for demonstrating the Initial Operational Capability of the NATO Response Force. [4]

During the active phase of Exercise Steadfast Jaguar on 28 June, the NATO Response Force passed its last test before it is due to become fully operational in October. It was held in Cape Verde, the exercise involved some 7000 sailors, soldiers and airmen in various simulated operations including a demonstration of force and a relief operation following a humanitarian disaster. The exercise was the first to bring together the land, sea and air components of the NRF. [4]

SUMMARY

On 15 October 2003, the NATO Response Force was formally inaugurated as an active force. The capabilities of the NRF is built up gradually through contributions from the land, sea and air forces of member nations, the aim was reached the full operational capability by October 2006.

The decision to set up the NATO Response Force was taken during the NATO Summit in Prague in November 2002. The NRF is a far more modern and flexible force than NATO's earlier rapid reaction forces such as the Allied Mobile Force/Land – AMF/L. The development of the multinational NRF is, at the same time, a catalyst for the transformation of NATO's capabilities. The NRF is intended as a contribution to NATO's ability to carry out missions across the whole operational spectrum at very short notice. The NRF had up to 24,000 officers and other ranks drawn from all branches of the armed forces. The force is multinational in all branches and at all levels and will consist of specially appointed command elements together with land, sea and air force elements from most of the NATO nations. These multinational forces are committed, on a rotating basis, to a six months' period of joint training and exercising prior to the start of an operational stand-by period. Joint training continues through the stand-by period. This ensures that NATO has a highly flexible, interoperable force which can undertake a range of missions at very short notice.

Missions and rapid response the NRF must be able to participate in all kinds of NATO operations and must be capable of rapid deployment and insertion even in areas where there are hostile forces. At the same time it must be borne in mind that the NRF is a force of limited size. This means that the NRF on its own can only undertake missions of correspondingly limited extent. For more extensive operations, the NRF will serve as an initial entry force that prepares the theatre for follow-on forces. Since every operation is unique, calling for a particular mix of military capabilities, the composition of the NRF will be tailored to match the mission requirements. At the same time, the NRF must be capable of operating alone as an independent force for 30 days without re-supply. In the event of operations of longer duration, the intention is that the NRF will be relieved by larger follow-on forces.

Firstly, the NRF must be capable of performing a wide range of missions on a stand-alone basis. These include: Non-combatant Evacuation Operations involving the evacuation of civil personnel from crisis areas. Support for Consequence Management, for example following an incident involving the use of weapons of mass destruction or in the event of a humanitarian crisis situation. Crisis Response Operations, including peacekeeping. Support for Counter-Terrorism operations. Embargo operations.

Secondly, the NRF must be capable of operations to establish a beachhead, so-called "initial entry" operations, for follow-on forces even in a hostile environment.

Thirdly, the NRF must be capable of deployment and use as a force package to demonstrate the resolve and military capability of member nations in support of diplomacy in the handling of crisis situations.

The NRF will be capable of deployment to carry out such missions both within and outside the NATO area. This means that the NRF will also be available for a rapid response to any crisis situation that might arise in its surrounding areas.

Rapid reaction the NRF is based on the principle of six-monthly rotation periods and fundamental assumption that member nations will periodically commit themselves to make the force contributions required. Many of the tasks envisaged for the NRF demand a rapid response, which in turn necessitates speedy and effective decision making. The ability to take political decisions quickly will be essential to the maintenance of NATO's military and political relevance and to the Alliance's ability to deal effectively with a broad range of crises and conflicts. Each deployment of the NRF requires a consensus among the Alliance's member nations. This means political endorsement by the governments of all the NATO countries. The NATO nations are thus under a strong obligation to be able to reach speedy political decisions so that their national contributions can be made available to NATO at short notice. The NRF's ability to respond rapidly is thus dependent on the political will of the member nations to make this possible. This rapid reaction capability will, at the same time, demonstrate the decisiveness of the Alliance, so helping to pave the way for the timely resolution of what might otherwise be an escalating crisis. Speedy decisions regarding deployment of the NRF may therefore obviate the need to commit larger forces at a later time.

References

(The last download date of the internet references: 02.03.2008)

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- [2] www.regjeringen.no: NATO Response Force – A modern and flexible force
- [3] www.afa.org: The NATO Response Force
- [4] www.army-technology.com: The NATO Response Force - proposed rapid-reaction military force

Diagrams:

1. Multinational CBRN Battalion: concept of operation (CONOPS)