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NATO's Warfighting Capstone Concept: How Able to Anticipate the Changing Character of War?

Abstract

While the fundamental nature of warfare does not change, new models and tactics will continuously be developed as it always involves a conflict of will and interests, violence, resistance, political manoeuvring or deception. The character of war will continue to evolve and become more common than ever as rival parties engage in activities outside the usual peace-crisis-conflict dynamic. Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which started with the annexation of Crimea and support for the separatist movements in the two eastern regions of Donetsk and Luhansk, turned into a direct full-scale military attack on the entire country as of 24 II 2022. Due to these developments, how the new operation concept, which the NATO alliance has begun to design for the coming years, will be affected, has gained importance. NATO's military supremacy is under threat as Russia actively readapts its more aggressive military stances, as seen in the example of its invasion of Ukraine. Alliance Members are subject to constant attacks today, even under traditional warfare thresholds. Conflicts that spread to NATO Partner countries and even regions close to the alliance borders also risk a significant spread to Allied territory. The NATO alliance must be ready for this. This research presents critical takeaways from work guiding future capability development. It offers recommendations from a new perspective so that NATO can continue to defend and protect the interests and values of its members.

Keywords: NATO, Capstone Concept, international security, deterrence

Without a doubt, a new era for NATO has begun. In the past few months, NATO has shown that it is capable of swiftly and effectively changing its posture. We have implemented the largest reinforcement of collective defence in a generation

Adm. Rob Bauer,
the Chairman of the NATO Military Committee

Introduction

NATO is accepted as the most successful political-military Alliance in history. Its success is rooted in its design, which has stood the test of time. Its greatest strengths are its Treaty Articles, shared values and consensus-based cohesion; a permanent Council; a permanent Military Committee; a standing integrated Command Structure; and a Defence Planning Process that harmonises and informs the development of Allies' formidable military power. These strengths have enabled the Alliance to defend peace and security for over seven decades. In this context, the NATO Warfighting Capstone Concept (NWCC) provides a new required vision for warfare development. Alliance's ambition to succeed in transitioning more proactively to the future operating environment and the activities of potential adversaries drive this vision. It is expected that the NWCC and its future renewals will aim to set a realistic and agile path towards this vision and allow for continual improvement and advancement of crucial warfare development efforts. Over time, the Alliance's vision will support building military advantage, proactively shaping the operational environment to Allied strengths, and creating an enabling environment for political authorities to make the right decisions by developing viable military options. When this significant advantage is gained, it will also create strategic, operational and tactical dilemmas for the enemies.

Although the further development of the new concept is based on the current restrictions, it is also a matter of sensitive intellectual debate about the future security challenges beyond a rigid paradigm. It is assumed that both further follow-up discussions on new hybrid threats and sophisticated decision-making, in which areas and short and medium horizon the Alliance will need to transform.

This paper aims to summarise and discuss key findings in the literature about the global security environment from the perspective of NATO. The research method is based on a critical and comparative literature review. Hence, by narrowing down the scope of studies papers using a publicised document selection process, this paper discusses current research and findings on the topic of NATO's new security concept. In addition, analysis of the latest security concept in research covers the thoughts and methods of the Alliance chosen first to avoid being insecure environment and second to deter adversaries by necessary

instruments. To achieve this aim, the research method describes the data collection and analysis process and justifies why the particular research method was chosen. The case study research method is combined with the grounded theory research method for document analysis of archival data accessed via the Internet. Descriptive methods were used to explore the opportunities and challenges of NWCC developed by NATO.

NATO's Warfighting Concept Development Process

Agreed by the North Atlantic Council and Military Committee, endorsed by Allies' Defence Ministers, and affirmed by Allied Heads of State and Government at the 2021 Brussels Summit, the NATO Warfighting Capstone Concept and its imperatives represent the clear future vision or North Star for NATO's warfare development. As a historic step, implementing the new concept is a realistic requirement for NATO that has been needed for at least two decades. From a time of peace, gaining an advantage over rivals and adversary requires balancing ambitions with the realities of war development¹. It is worth examining each in more detail, highlighting some key areas of ongoing development. In this sense, The NWCC provides a long-term perspective as part of the NATO Military Authorities' coherent military planning by implementing the 2019 NATO Military Strategy, along with the Euro-Atlantic Area Deterrence and Defence Concept renewed in 2020². In the new concept to be developed in this context, it is essential to emphasise the ability to present and execute military options in operational areas rapidly. This will likely accelerate the development of existing military forces to specialise in cross-domain understanding with the support of other power tools or by supporting other power tools. The concept also defines what will be understood as a war in 2040, emphasising what situations might arise between the enemy military forces and the Alliance, which is increasingly engaged in free, simultaneous and persistent activities beyond the traditional understanding of armed and kinetic warfare³.

A design for the Alliance's military strength that is functional in nature, for which this power could aspire. This design challenges traditional thinking and is adversaries-centric but proactively driven by NATO's requirements for success. With this new concept, it will be possible to design and use military power most efficiently, thus leaving behind potential enemies and threats. In this context, the

¹ J.J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, New York 2001, p. 18.

² LSE IDEAS Global Strategies Strategic Update 2023, *NATO's 2022 Strategic Concept: One Year On*, September 2023.

³ D. Ellison, *Mastering the Fundamentals Developing the Alliance Future Battlefield: NATO Warfighting Capstone Concept*, „NATO JWC The Three Swords Magazine“ 2021, no. 37, p. 14.

concept will consider specific key or essential areas where NATO Military Authorities can synchronise their efforts to assess current risks and improve military strength. Thus, aiming to provide maximum choice for decision-makers, the concept offers a framework for coherently developing military advice, doctrine, plans and operational concepts, including military inputs into NATO's defence planning process.

The NWCC claims, „The Alliance cannot succeed in tomorrow's fight with yesterday's approach”⁴. The widening of the battlespace, the fusion of physical and non-physical dimensions and the rise of borderless warfare will characterise tomorrow's conflicts. They will include a plethora of actors acting through and across multiple domains. „Competitors will seek to build advantage using diverse, non-kinetic and kinetic means, across operational domains and civil society”, and competition „will be persistent and increasingly non-linear”. Adversaries will target the Alliance's armed forces and exploit vulnerabilities associated with „open societies”.

NATO has already done much of the theoretical work around the future character of warfare that forms part of its new Strategic Concept in 2022, the long overdue replacement for the 2010 Strategic Concept, an immediate casualty of Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014. Furthermore, NATO is also updating its policies for deterrence, elaborating new priorities for warfighting. It is working out how, in principle, the relatively new concept of multi-domain warfare should be integrated into NATO forces and operations⁵.

The latest official document in which we can understand what geography NATO is targeting as a Warfighting Capstone Concept application area and what it sees as a threat is the 2022 Strategic Concept document⁶.

In the Strategic Concept document, which emphasises that the Euro-Atlantic region is not at peace, it is stated that the Russian Federation is also shown as a state that violates the security order of Europe and that the possibility of an attack on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the sovereign countries is not excluded⁷.

The Strategic Concept underlines that NATO guarantees the freedom and security of member states and that it is the alliance's primary responsibility to ensure collective defence to respond to all threats from all directions.

⁴ S. Zilincik, M. Vorm, I. Wiltenburg, *The NATO Warfighting Capstone Concept: Key Insights from the Global Expert Symposium Summer 2020*, The Hague Centre for Strategic Studies, The Hague 2020, p. 3, https://hcsc.nl/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/NATO_Symposium_Final_Version_For_Publication.pdf (21 VIII 2024).

⁵ J. Hall, H. Sandeman, *NATO and the Future Character of Warfare*, Strategic Update, September 2021, p.1.

⁶ *NATO's 2022 Strategic Concept...*, p. 8.

⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 3.

When we look at the NATO Warfighting Capstone Concept (NWCC) in this context, it becomes clear that the security promised to be provided for the countries of alliance members is readapted according to the changing threat environment and technological developments and started to be provided immediately with a concept study. Regarding how the strategic environment is changing, the 2022 Strategic Concept document draws attention to the democratic way of life accepted by all alliance member countries, especially the threat context posed by authoritarian actors. Today, in addition to their investment in conventional and nuclear capabilities, adversary states are intensely incorporating hybrid methods in their tactics. The systematic disinformation practices of these states, hostile activities in cyberspace and space, and their use of the possession of power and energy resources as a tool thus create economic pressure on other states and their aim to protect their interests in the conflict environment by using proxies rather than directly using their armed forces, is a threat environment.

One might argue that NATO's complex defence and operational planning processes are not amenable to responding immediately and prominently to threats. Still, work is underway to take measures to prevent alliance member countries from delaying NATO's decision-making processes, mainly due to political problems among themselves. However, NATO's political stance in crises varies depending on the countries' positions concerning the changing international security order, the NWCC implementation determination and efforts, which it considers the military „North Star”, are continuously sustained within the alliance.

Also, in the NATO 2022 Strategic Concept Document, terrorism, in all its forms and manifestations, is expressed as the most direct asymmetric threat to the security of the citizens of the legitimate country and international peace and prosperity⁸. In this context, the NATO alliance considers that terrorist organisations are striving to attack allies or encourage attacks against allies. It is also considered in the document that terrorists are expanding their networks, developing their capabilities and investing in new technologies to increase their reach and lethality, which aims to prevent all kinds of abuses and attacks by non-state armed groups, including these transnational terrorist networks and state-sponsored actors, through the practices of the NWCC purpose. It is declared at various platforms by NATO authorities that NATO aims to continue to enhance the collective readiness, responsiveness, deployability, integration and interoperability of its forces. In support of these aims, NWCC will individually and collectively deliver the full range of forces, capabilities, plans, resources, assets and infrastructure needed for deterrence and defence, including high-intensity, multi-domain warfighting against nuclear-armed peer competitors. To ensure a robust, resilient and integrated command structure, increase the alignment of national and NATO

⁸ Ibidem, p. 5.

defence plans, and strengthen and modernise the NATO force structure, NWCC and other planned studies and tools of the Alliance also will strengthen training and exercising, adapt and streamline decision-making processes, enhance planning and improve the effectiveness of crisis response system.

Noting that continuing to develop the collective readiness, responsiveness and interoperability of NATO troops, their deployment capabilities and integration and interoperability are at the top of NATO's core missions, the Strategic Concept document and the NWCC understand that the level of deterrence and defence aimed to achieve is compatible as it was stated in NATO's Military Instrument of Power, 2022.

The Changing Character of Conflicts

Conflict is found in many places, and almost everyone has experienced it; however, it is surprisingly difficult to define. Popular definitions list synonyms for conflict: argument, battle, clash, combat, contest, disagreement, struggle and war. While such definitions describe various features of conflict, the fundamental denomination of elements constituting a conflict, such as an attitude, behaviour and contradiction, also known as the „conflict triangle”, is now widely accepted⁹.

Understanding the conflict triangle allows the identification of the underlying factors of the conflict and how to de-escalate it. A dispute over territory is a resource contradiction. Still, an analysis of the attitudes and behaviour may reveal that the domain itself is unimportant, but the actors wish to keep it out of the hands of the other. They indicate that the conflict's source lies in their attitudes toward each other and drives their behaviour.

To answer the needs of the new contemporary conflict understanding, NATO has made progress in recent years in executing its strengthened deterrence and defence posture and has worked to shape the security environment positively. However, the Alliance cannot succeed in tomorrow's fight with yesterday's approach, so it has to prepare for tomorrow's war today. The widening operating environment of the future has been imagined in light of a set of assumptions made at the outset of the development of the NWCC, which remain broadly significant but will need to be constantly revised. These assumptions have pointed, inter alia, to a more time-compacted and complex operating environment in which multi-domain rival or near-rival states, terrorist groups and organisations will continue to stand the most substantial challenge. Their actions, and those of other

⁹ J. Galtung, *Introduction. Peace by Peaceful Conflict Transformation – The TRANSEND Approach*, [in:] *Handbook of Peace and Conflict Studies*, eds. C. Webel, J. Galtung, Abingdon 2007, p. 20.

non-traditional actors, posing broader challenges will progressively focus on the reasoning and virtual dimensions. They will lessen the effectiveness of the Allies' traditional focus on geography and longstanding technological advantage. Political strength and military capacity will be at risk of overstretching as potential adversaries and, as well as natural and artificial disasters, will continue to test Allies' resilience. It is paramount to understand how NATO will need to conduct future warfighting in the multi-region, multidimensional and multi-domain operating environment to ensure that effective deterrence is delivered, integrity is defended, security beyond NATO territory is enhanced and decisive military advantage is maintained. The fundamental nature of warfare, such as the clash of wills, the violence of action, friction, the mist of war, and centres of gravity, have remained valid for eras. However, the character of war continues to change, and so must the Alliance's approach to warfighting. Understanding future warfighting is necessary to derive what is required for the design of the future of NATO so that some characteristics will define the operating environment of the future.

The NATO Warfighting Capstone Concept (NWCC) provides a „North Star” vision for warfare development. The activities inform this ambitious vision of potential adversaries. Still, it is proactively driven by the military power's ambition to successfully transition towards the following few decades' operating environments. This NWCC and its future iterations will aim to set a realistic and agile path towards that vision, which allows continuous refining and „pulling” forward the most critical warfare development work. Over time, the „North Star” vision and an agile path of delivery will help with the coherence of effort and support the building military advantage, proactively shaping the operating environment to the Allies' strengths and creating decision space for political authorities through the development of executable military options including to create strategic, operational and tactical dilemmas for adversaries.

The NWCC provides the long view as part of the coherent package of NATO Military Authorities' best military thinking. Along with the 2020 Concept for Deterrence and Defence of the Euro-Atlantic Area (DOA), the NWCC implements the 2019 NATO Military Strategy as well as the 2022 NATO Strategic Concept¹⁰.

The NWCC also emphasises the development of existing military strengths to master cross-domain understanding and the ability to rapidly offer and execute military options across operational domains, with the support of or supporting other instruments of power¹¹. Thus, it describes what constitutes „warfighting” in the next two decades. It goes beyond but does not exclude the traditional understanding of armed, kinetic fighting between hostile military forces. It highlights

¹⁰ S. Zilincik, M. Vorm, I. Wiltenburg, *op.cit.*, p. 9.

¹¹ J. Diaz de Leon, *Understanding Multi-Domain Operations in NATO*, „NATO JWC The Three Swords Magazine” 2021, no. 37, p. 93.

the increasingly boundless, simultaneous and persistent activities that the Alliance's Military Instruments of Power (MloP) could face.

Since it is the primary instrument for the Alliance, the MloP contributes to the achievement of the Alliance's political objectives in coordination with the Alliance's other instruments, across the entire network of partners and international organisations, through a whole-of-government approach that recognises the relevance and often the precedence of different tools in advancing Alliance interests. This approach combines diplomatic, information, economic, and military instruments based on principles such as civilian-military interaction, coherence of actions, and cooperation with external actors as appropriate. The MloP is only as strong and united as the collective and individual nations' political will develop and employ it¹². Thus, NWCC also describes a design for the MloP that is functional in nature, for which the MloP could aspire. This design challenges traditional thinking and is adversaries-centric but proactively driven by NATO's requirements for success. This design aspires the MIDP to out-think, out-excel, out-fight, out-pace, out-partner and out-last potential adversaries and threats in shaping, contesting and fighting operational contexts. In this context, five Warfare Development Imperatives (WDIs) supported by essential operational enablers suggest where the NATO Military Authorities might focus and synchronise their efforts and advice to address risks and take advantage of opportunities most important to the Alliance to Develop the MloP. A path to deliver the MloP that supports the Alliance's adaptation trajectory, including the relevant 2020 Concept for Deterrence and Defence of the Euro-Atlantic Area (DOA) implications for warfare development, consistent with the NATO Military Committee guidance. This path organises proposed delivery lines and sets the scene for military strategic conversations on balances necessary to steer the MloP towards aspirational design.

Describe, design and develop elements established previously in various studies of NATO bodies; The WOLs has been further refined and provides a framework that, if Allies agree, will inform coherence and synergy across the breadth of warfare development efforts. They offer a forward-thinking and progressive multi-domain approach to military thinking and organising, and subsequently, the WDI make the NWCC immediately functioning. Furthermore, the NWCC emphasizes the importance of multi-domain defence and argues that the Alliance's current defensive posture is mainly based on specific events that are activated or deactivated through a series of political and military decisions according to pre-existing plans. The NWCC also highlights that this approach is inadequate in an era of persistent competition where „Day Zero” is every day¹³.

¹² R. Ti, *How Does NATO Apply Instruments of Power as it Prepares for the Possibility of Conventional Warfare Against a Peer Adversary? Applying a 'DIMEFIL' analysis*, „The Journal of Military History and Defence Studies” 2021, vol. 2, issue 1, p. 145.

¹³ *Ibidem*, p. 9.

Implementable lines of delivery, developed with the support of Allies, NATO commanders and NATO HQ staffs, and benefitting from engagement with Allies' academic communities are the basis for the Supreme Allied Commander Transformation's (SACT) best military judgement and recommendations for an agile warfare development path to the future along with realistic first steps. They provide Allies with an NWCC that can become a living document and will be usable NATO military authorities will implement in the future.

It is highly expected that the NWCC guides to Alliance's future military power that can respond faster and operate across all domains and with all tools, thereby facilitating the optimum choice for decision-makers. It provides a framework for the coherent development of military advice, plans and operating concepts, all of which comprise military inputs to NATO's Defence Planning Process (NDPP).

Implementing NATO Military Strategy (NMS) has direct relevance for the NMAs and its Allies¹⁴. Specifically, how the NMS and how Allies could use NMS by recognising its value to inform national military strategy, policy, and planning; likewise, the military power instruments will establish implementation through a twofold approach: concerning both the development of the MloP and its employment. Therefore, the NWCC also reproduces the NMS by designing, developing, and delivering construct. Recognising the design characteristics outlined in the NMS, it builds upon these by providing an organising principle for warfare development, around which current work can coalesce and towards which new lines of delivery can be directed. Through incremental progress in pursuing these three elements, the Alliance military power can progressively build and maintain a decisive military advantage and be better positioned to deliver the NATO strategic objectives in the future operating environment¹⁵.

Functional design for the next two decades

The Alliance's ability to shape the widening environment to its favour would enhance its abilities to demonstrably contest adversary activities and build strategic and conventional readiness to deter and, if necessary, defend against adversaries. The following two decades' military force structure must be designed to build on its strengths, exploit emerging opportunities, and understand and guard its

¹⁴ H. Binnendijk, R.L. Kugle, *Dual-Track Transformation for NATO (2003)*, *Transforming NATO an NDU Anthology*, eds. H. Binnendijk, G. Cordero, The Center for Technology and National Security Policy at the National Defense University Washington, December 2008, p. 161.

¹⁵ J. Spišák, *Hybrid Threats: A Challenge For The New NATOs Capstone Concept*, [in:] *17th International Conference On The Knowledge-Based Organization, Sibiu, Romania*, 2011, p. 3, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/305993362_HYBRID_THREATS_A_CHALLENGE_FOR_THE_NEW_NATOS_CAPSTONE_CONCEPT (15 VII 2024).

vulnerabilities. The Alliance should pursue a warfare development approach that considers the adversary but pursues its aspirational military power that can out-think, out-excel, out-fight, out-pace, out-partner and out-last¹⁶. By way of out-thinking, it will be possible to anticipate threats and understand the strategic environment, out-excelling to strive for excellence based on NATO's unique military ethos and the will to win, out-fighting, to operate decisively within and across all domains and simultaneously across shaping, contesting and fighting contexts, out-pacing to recognise risks, seize opportunities, decide and act faster than any potential adversary, out-partnering to foster continuously and exploit mutually supportive relationships and partnerships finally by way of out-lasting to endure as long as it takes through competition and any conflict situation. These adversaries-centric functions should frame and guide future military force structure and power design. This design should help identify required new operational concepts and capabilities, especially those with game-changing potential. It should enable NATO to get ahead of the threat curve rather than just react to it.

Picture 1. Warfare Development Imperatives¹⁷



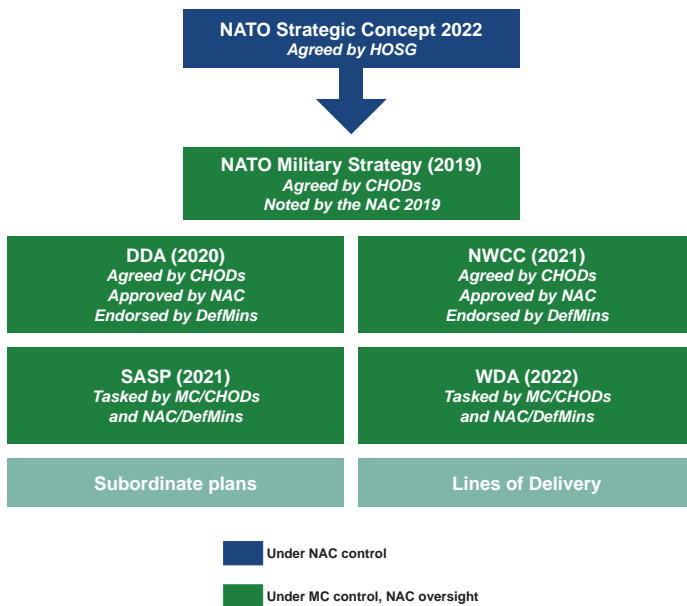
Based on this functional design, the WDIs provide a clear and robust organising principle for the Alliance's Warfare Development efforts: Cognitive Superiority, Layered Resilience, Influence and Power Projection, and Integrated Multi-Domain Defence and Cross-domain Command. All these warfare development imperatives are necessary to understand the operating environment, the

¹⁶ L. Coffey, D. Kochis, *NATO in the 21st Century: Preparing the Alliance for the Challenges of Today and Tomorrow*, „The Heritage Foundation Special Report” 2020, no. 235, p. 7.

¹⁷ The NATO Warfighting Capstone Concept proposes five Warfare Development Imperatives; these are the „musts” the Alliance needs to pursue a Military Instrument of Power fit for the next two decades.

adversary and the Alliance's own goals, to absorb shocks and fight on across all layers, military, civil-military and military-civilian, to shape positively the environment to the Alliance's strengths, including generating options and imposing dilemmas on adversaries, to protect the Alliance's integrity against all threats in any domain, regardless of their origin or nature and finally to revitalise the Commanders' ability to apprehend the developments in the operating environment instantly and take practical actions.

Picture 2. NATO's Security Architecture Design



In light of the dynamic strategic environment, NATO's Military Strategy in May 2019 was agreed upon by NATO and respective national authorities¹⁸. It is a renewed approach setting out Alliance military-strategic objectives and the ways and means to implement them. Allied nations directed strategy implementation through two high-level concepts: one concept framing the employment of the Alliance's military instrument of power to deter and defend against identified threats and another concept setting a two-decade vision to develop the military apparatus. Together, the NATO Military Strategy and its two executing concepts have the potential to set the direction for NATO's ongoing revision, as seen in the below chart. The NATO Warfighting Capstone Concept provides a comprehensive

¹⁸ NATO's 2022 Strategic Concept..., p. 9.

view as part of the understandable package of NATO Military Authorities' best military thinking¹⁹. The 2019 NATO Military Strategy, the 2020 Concept for Deterrence and Defence of the Euro-Atlantic Area and the 2021 NATO Warfighting Capstone Concept together provide NATO Military Authorities with a new starting point to guide the development of the NATO military instrument of power and provide military advice²⁰.

Conclusion

Over the past seven decades, NATO has brought extraordinary peace and prosperity to the Euro-Atlantic area. Today, the world faces the most complex and unpredictable security environment since the end of the Cold War. Growing geo-political competition, more sophisticated and disruptive cyber and hybrid threats, and constant technological change rapidly transform how wars are fought and won. These new security challenges and the shifting global balance of power mean that more than ever, Allied Nations must cooperate to protect Alliance's shared security and values, reaffirm solidarity, and collectively prepare for the future. With the newly developed NWCC, it is assessed that the alliance's armed forces will have the necessary resilience and superiority in today's multidimensional combat environment²¹.

The post-Ukrainian-Russian war geo-strategic environment is not expected to change Russia's opportunistic soft and hard power use significantly. Russia will likely continue to challenge Euro-Atlantic security and stability by assertive actions close to NATO borders, and violating Allied airspace protection of Russia's near abroad will remain paramount²². These challenges will continue to be accompanied by grey zones or hybrid activities such as attempts to interfere in election processes using widespread disinformation campaigns, legal operations, and malicious cyber activities. Russia is expected to continue focusing on the differences between the members of the Alliance to challenge NATO cohesion, notably the space between civil-military institutions. NATO should expect Russia to employ

¹⁹ S. Keil, *NATO Burden Sharing in a New Geopolitical Era*, [in:] *NATO 2030 Towards a New Strategic Concept and Beyond*, eds. J. Blessing, K. Kjellström Elgin, N.M. Ewers-Peters, Foreign Policy Institute/Henry A. Kissinger Center for Global Affairs, Johns Hopkins University SAIS, Washington 2021, p. 218.

²⁰ R.S. Bicer, *An Assessment on NATO's Defence and Deterrence Studies*, „The Journal of Security Strategies” 2022, vol. 18, no. 42, p. 330.

²¹ *NATO Warfighting Capstone Concept* [18 V 2022], <https://www.act.nato.int/our-work/nato-warfighting-capstone-concept/> (12 I 2023).

²² G. Azzarone, V. Da Silva Bezerra, *Ukraine 'In Between': The Road To War And Kyiv's Reaction to the Russian and European Initiatives in the Post-Soviet Space*, „Eurasian Research Journal” 2023, vol. 5, no. 2, p. 38.

a range of actions across all domains to exploit Alliance vulnerabilities and challenge unity. Potential areas of exploitation might include economic and energy interdependency, arms sales, missile defence, and the perception of risks and threats under the Article V threshold in the grey zone²³. To provide a classified, threat-informed future assessment of Russia from NATO's perspective, a baseline future and two deviations such as positive and negative, are proposed predicated on feedback and contributions from the Nations and NATO organisations. While not exhaustive, the intent is to demonstrate, within the cone of plausible future possibilities, tipping points or deviations that may affect Russia's future trend trajectories. Associated indicators and warnings that may lead to future strategic shocks and surprises should be considered as mechanisms to enable the ability to both out-think and compete in areas susceptible to Russian influence. Globally, Russia's sphere of influence is likely to diminish due to a rising China, notably if promises from Moscow are hollow. Russia will therefore be constrained to operating in the near abroad, acting on regional issues, and continuing exploitation of NATO cohesion. Should Russia attempt an intervention, it would probably try to seize the initiative, including using irregular and non-uniformed forces, to rapidly secure its military and political objectives, establish a *fait accompli*, and close off the area of operations. It would employ hybrid tools, particularly legal and disinformation, to confuse the western public and confound Alliance decision-making. To out-last Russia, NATO must continue to deter, ensure an Assertive Forward posture, and consider how persistent campaigning and operating against Russia outside of traditional joint operating areas will effectively compete. This context includes the continued need for robust counter-hybrid capabilities and joint intelligence sharing.

These existing conditions make it necessary and imperative for NATO to ensure the security of member states and the Euro-Atlantic region through new and significant arrangements. It is assessed that the NWCC will provide the essential concept for creating the force structure that will give NATO superiority towards hostile countries over the next two decades.

In conclusion, Allies must consider building their recruitment, selection, training, promotion and retaining systems that can deliver the right people with the right skills to operate effectively in a multi-domain setting. In this, NATO should take advantage of diversity as force multipliers. Furthermore, in particular, NATO had better continuously invest in human capital development programs that allow leaders and personnel to ensure permanency and remain reactive. Innovative and technology-supported war-gaming, exercising and experimentations against

²³ NATO Supreme Allied Command Transformation (ACT), *Strategic Foresight Analysis: Regional perspectives report on Russia*, 2022, p. 21, <https://www.act.nato.int/application/files/9816/1350/4281/regional-perspectives-2021-01.pdf> (11 VI 2024).

developing and challenging scenarios should be increasingly used throughout career development to incentivise initiative and audacity as a means to improve. NATO's continuing efforts to maintain a technological advantage should have the apparent goal of supporting warfighting. The Alliance must focus on enhancing its horizon scanning abilities, providing specific support to warfighting needs, streamlining more agile acquisition processes, managing technology gaps, and encouraging and pulling forward Allies' multinational capability development programs. Improving these efforts and refreshing the Alliance's technology-focused structures into an architecture-driven, the system-of-systems approach will allow for the agile development of critical warfighting capabilities that will directly support the military tools' ability to fight. To facilitate technological advantage, Allies must deliver capabilities and adapt them at the speed of mission significance. As the rate of commercial-led technological innovation accelerates, Alliance and Allies' acquisition structures and processes must become more agile to keep pace. This means putting agility at the centre of our warfare development approach. Furthermore, the Alliance must cultivate open innovation approaches to explore the potential of new solutions and technologies and transform capability development processes to allow agile development that supports the timely delivery and adaptation of military capabilities. The NWCC, which sets the future warfighting context and the priorities for NATO warfare development, suggests that all NATO strategies and activities must be aimed at conducting future warfighting in the multi-domain operating environment to ensure effective deterrence.

In summary, the NWCC provides a framework to turn a vision into reality and a guiding rationale to align Alliance warfare development efforts. It helps to shape the security environment proactively, enable the Alliance to respond to threats, and maintain and enhance readiness to fight if necessary.

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Abstrakt

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Koncepcja walki NATO.

Jak można przewidzieć zmieniający się charakter wojny?

Podczas gdy podstawowa natura wojny się nie zmienia, nowe modele i taktyki będą stale opracowywane, ponieważ wojna zawsze wiąże się z konfliktem woli i interesów, przemocą, oporem, manewrami politycznymi lub oszustwem. Charakter wojny będzie nadal ewoluował i stanie się bardziej powszechny niż kiedykolwiek, ponieważ rywalizujące strony angażują się w działania wykraczające poza zwykłą dynamikę pokoju-kryzysu-konfliktu. Inwazja Rosji na Ukrainę, która rozpoczęła się od aneksji Krymu i wsparcia dla ruchów separatystycznych w dwóch wschodnich regionach Doniecka i Ługańska, przekształciła się w bezpośredni, pełnoskalowy atak wojskowy na cały kraj od 24 II 2022 r. Ze względu na te wydarzenia, to, w jaki sposób nowa koncepcja operacji, którą sojusz NATO zaczął projektować na nadchodzące lata, zostanie zmieniona, zyskało na znaczeniu. Przewaga militarna NATO jest zagrożona, ponieważ Rosja aktywnie dostosowuje swoje bardziej agresywne stanowiska wojskowe, jak widać na przykładzie jej inwazji na Ukrainę. Członkowie Sojuszu są obecnie poddawani ciągłym atakom, nawet pod tradycyjnymi progami wojny. Konflikty, które rozprzestrzeniają się na kraje partnerskie NATO, a nawet regiony blisko granic sojuszu, również grożą znacznym rozprzestrzenieniem się na terytorium sojusznicze. Sojusz NATO musi być na to gotowy. W niniejszych badaniach przedstawiono kluczowe wnioski z pracy nad kierowaniem przyszłym rozwojem zdolności obronnych. Proponują wprowadzenie zaleceń z nowej perspektywy, aby NATO mogło nadal bronić i chronić interesy oraz wartości swoich członków.

Słowa kluczowe: NATO, koncepcja walki, bezpieczeństwo międzynarodowe, odstraszanie

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