

THE AMBITIONS OF THE SLOVAK ARMED FORCES. THEORY AND REALITY

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The contribution made by this article presents some scopes, approaches and results of the transformation of the Slovak Armed Forces within the frame of limited defense resources. On the other hand, it confronts the Slovak Armed Forces transformation with strategic documents of the Slovak Republic and of the Defense Department, namely the Safety Strategy, the Defense Strategy, the Strategic Evaluation of Defense and the Complete Evaluation of Defense. The differences are compared with Government policy statements and indicate difference between theory and reality.

Key words: *defense sources, strategy, transformation, safety environment, competences, evaluation, defense.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Since the Slovak Republic foundation, its basic political and strategic bounds regarding building the defense potential have been defined by the defense policy, including the development of the Armed Forces with the purpose of providing state defense, fulfilling allied and other international obligations. A degree of fulfilling these tasks within individual periods of time has been directly determined mainly by crucial political decisions concerning the way and the dynamics of Slovakia's integration process into the North Atlantic structures as well as by the level of providing resources for the state defense and development of the armed forces.

The defense policy of the Slovak Republic has been consistently

implemented in terms of the Euro-Atlantic orientation of the Slovak Republic since 1999. The main aim of the defense policy of the Slovak Republic is to guarantee state and citizens' security. Until 2004, this aim was fulfilled by means of a limited defense potential of the Slovak Republic. Qualitatively speaking, the new period of implementing the defense policy has begun by the accession of the Slovak Republic into NATO. Ever since then, the main defense aim has been implemented under the terms of collective defense. On the one hand, the transition from individual to collective defense represented a substantial increase in the security of the inhabitants, as well as in the the Slovak Republic defensive posture. On the other

hand, it also meant a qualitative and quantitative increase in the tasks for the Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic, including an increase in their financial needs.

The above-mentioned ambitions of the Slovak Republic are also confirmed by the strategic documents of the Armed Forces presented below.

2. STRATEGIC DOCUMENTS OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC AND THEIR VIEW ON THE ARMED FORCES

“The Security Strategy of the Slovak Republic”, declares that the main objective of the Slovak Republic’s safety policy is to guarantee the safety of inhabitants and the state in a stable and predictable environment. The safety strategy considers a safety system consisting of foreign, economic, defense, internal safety, social, life-saving and ecological tools and their mutual relations to be a fundamental means of the SR safety policy. Foreign service as well as the SR Armed Forces are stated as traditional tools of safety policy [5].

“The Defense Strategy” views the Euro-Atlantic orientation to be the basic target of its defense policy. The NATO and EU membership is regarded as a crucial guarantee of its safety and defensiveness. It defines its basic mission as follows:

- in cooperation with allies to protect the state sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of frontiers and to protect safety of the inhabitants and the state from outside threats;

- to fully fulfill obligations as a NATO member;
- to fulfill obligations as an EU member within the bounds of safety and defense policy.

In compliance with this mission, the defense policy will strengthen the defense system so that by 2015 it will have been able to fully participate in conflict prevention and settlement of crisis situations in the world within the operations of NATO and EU. Within the SR Armed Forces reform, it will create conditions under which the Armed Forces could be fully used in operations of high intensity for the protection of SR, including mobilization and its execution. The defense policy considers the following points to be strategic tasks of the SR Armed Forces:

- to protect sovereignty and territorial integrity of the state, inviolability of its frontiers from an armed attack, to contribute to collective defense of the NATO member states;
- to protect air inviolability and to fulfill tasks in the system of collective protection of the NATO common air space;
- to maintain the functionality of a stationary and mobile communication and information system;
- to defend and protect defense infrastructure while emphasizing objects of special importance and other important objects;
- to plan and execute mobilization.

The capabilities the Armed Forces must acquire are adjusted to fit these tasks – deployment to a wide spectrum of operations, speed of deployment

and mobility, using information nets, efficient intelligence, identifying, assessing and assigning tasks, destructiveness and accuracy of strikes, efficient engineers support, anti-aircraft defense and radiation, chemical and biological defense, readiness to make use of all possibilities of multinational logistics and civil-military cooperation. The listed capabilities will be a stimulus for gradual renovation and increase of fighting potential regarding land and air forces. The personnel of the Armed Forces will be supplemented, trained and equipped in compliance with the rules used in the NATO so that the Armed Forces could be included into all categories of operational readiness.

3. GOVERNMENT POLICY STATEMENT

In its policy statement for the years 1999 – 2002, the strategic documents noted above are a follow-up to government policy statement. The government undertook to reform the AF, to pursue their modernization, to build autonomous deployment units and to take measures so as to increase quality and intensity of military training. The government was also due to take measures by means of which priority in defense industry coordination would be given to the Ministry of Defense of the Slovak Republic.

The Government Statement of Policy for the years 2010 – 2014 [3] similarly states that based on the needs to ensure the safety of citizens and the state defense, taking into account

the NATO and the EU strategic documents, including NATO's new Strategic Concept, the Government of the SR will perform a strategic evaluation of the SR defense in order to define political and strategic scope of long-term development of the SR defense and the Armed Forces potential, including provision of stable resource ambit. Within this process, the SR Government will re-evaluate basic safety policy and defense documents so that they are in line with present international relations and global safety environment as well as with the targets defined in most current EU and NATO strategic documents. In order to execute the process of strategic evaluation of the defense, the Government will create conditions for a wide dialogue with the representatives of expert community, as well as with the public in order to achieve consensus concerning the questions of safety policy and state defense, as well as priorities, aims and needs of the Armed Forces. The conclusions and recommendations of the strategic evaluation of the defense will be submitted for public debate no later than the end of 2012 and they will be implemented into basic strategic and conceptual documents and related legislation.

The Government of SR will ensure continuation of the SR Armed Forces transformation in accord with conclusions of the strategic evaluation of defense and it will also generate long-term, stable and appropriate resources. Development of human potential and the AF modernization are considered to be basic pillars of transformation.

The Government Statement of Policy for the years 2012 – 2016

states: [4] The Government as a guarantor of security for all citizens approaches the state defense as one of the basic and irreplaceable state functions. It will enforce a complex approach to complete the formation of an integrated safety system at the state level and it will also make the defense system more effective. At the same time, it will consistently lay emphasis on economy and transparency when drawing resources. In order to make activities of the defense department more efficient, the Government will perform rationalization of all its organizational structures. Within a process of procurement, it will make use of mutual projects of militarization with other safety sectors, as well as with foreign partners. The Government will use financial resources obtained this way preferentially on the development of the Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic. It will also re-evaluate the level of the Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic, their modernization and further development, so that that they would be able:

- to ensure defense of the territory and the inhabitants of the SR against military, as well as non-military threats;
- to ensure that the Slovak Republic will take part in international operations under NATO, EU and UN command.

Even under complex conditions of public finances consolidation, further deterioration of the level of the AF preparedness and fighting capacity is no longer possible. The

development plan of the defense sector, including the Armed Forces of the SR with the perspective till 2024 was envisaged to be ready by the end of 2012. The goal of this plan is to enable the development of the Armed Forces' capabilities which are necessary for handling possible future threats and fulfilling allied and other international obligations of the SR. The Government will support multiannual stability of defense expenses following development of public finances to get over a long-term deficit in the Armed Forces.

All these are obligations the present, as well as the previous Governments bound themselves to follow and they are confirmed by strategic documents. The evaluation documents "Complex Assessment of Defense" and mainly "Strategic Assessment of Defense" dated 2012 point out the level of these obligations' implementation.

3.1. Safety and the Armed Forces in the SR Assessment Documents

The document "Complex Assessment of Defense for the year 2012" [2] states that, in comparison with 2009, a substantial decrease in the limit of expenditure for the Ministry of Defense of the Slovak Republic for 2011 required the implementation of a crisis regime within the defense. The ratio of operating and development expenditure was 85.1 % to 14.9 % in a modified budget. The modified budget for the Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic was approximately 2.8 % (€15.6 mil.) lower than the 2009 modified budget. Moreover, this

limit was 27%, lower than the amount required by the Armed Forces. This fact negatively influenced the number of personnel within units, the training range, the equipment needed for operational capability, the stockpiles of ammunition, the material and spare parts necessary for carrying out required repairs. The decrease in expenditure for the sector of the Ministry of Defense for 2010 led to a decrease in the number of the priorities established by the Ministry of Defense in comparison with the previous year. Consequently, all the original priorities stated in **the Government Statement of Policy** for the years 2010 – 2015 have not been observed. Owing to the specified expenditure limits of the SR Armed Forces for 2010, the necessities which were ensured above all were the requirements of the AF servicemen, employees and the Ministry of Defense priorities, specifically participation of the SRAF in international crisis management, tasks connected with the protection and defense of the airspace within the Integrated NATO System of Air Defense (NATINADS) and the Air Search and Rescue Service (ASRS). The decreased limits of expenditure for the SR Ministry of Defense was translated in the restriction of financial resources intended to cover fulfillment of tasks within a wide range of other activities including training and the SRAF modernization. It also had a negative impact on the SR AF development priorities which ultimately influenced fulfillment of the SR obligations towards the NATO and the EU in a negative way. The

objectives regarding ammunition, equipment and material development were implemented only partially. In terms of factual assessment, out of 29 projects falling under the subprogram of the Ammunition, Equipment and Material Development (AEM) not a single one was implemented in the range it had been planned. 12 projects met the defined criteria of implementation, 7 projects were partly implemented, 1 was not implemented and 9 projects were not executed at all. The process of the SR AF armament was radically limited by means of allocated financial resources. The amount of €1 056 000 was approved for the defense research and development aimed at the SR defense support implemented within the subprogram named the Research and Development for Defense Support. This amount was 75% lower than in 2009 and it represented only 0.0012% of the approved budget of the SR AF in 2010. This amount of special-purpose support was deeply under the level anticipated by the Concept of Focusing and Supporting Research and Development in the Field of Defense for 2010 (€ 4.6 mil.).

“Strategic Assessment of Defense” [1] comments on current conditions within the SR AF even more critically.

The main objective of the SR AF transformation (i.e. to establish relatively small, well armed, well trained forces disposing of necessary military capabilities and prepared to carry out a wide spectrum of tasks following applicable laws, the SR Defense Strategy, decisions of state constitutional bodies and

international obligations) was not fully implemented mainly in the field of modernization and capabilities development.

Elements concerning defense management and procurement underwent a constant process of organizational changes. However, these changes were not systematic and they were almost never based on conceptual intentions. Consequently, appropriate level of defense structures rationalization and performance efficiency was not achieved. In relation to objective demands of the state defense and the Armed Forces, the process of transformation, rationalization and restructuring has not been finished yet. Taking part in operations of international crisis management is an important tool of the SR safety and foreign policy and it is also of extraordinary benefit to the SR international status and credibility. However, the units deployed to these operations were mostly non-organic, consisting of professional soldiers from several units. This holds true mainly for tasks connected with support, engineers and guarding because of unavailability of required spectrum and quality regarding the SR AF capabilities. These conditions cause that contribution concerning participation of the SRAF units within operations aimed at the development of the AF capabilities was exploitable in a minimal way. Notwithstanding the above and considering the AF requirements, current AF structures of command and control are overlarge, mainly in case of strategic and operational level. The process of the AF rationalization and increasing

its performance efficiency has not been finished. Current command and control system of the Armed Forces (including its structure and costs) is not in balance with the AF performance and tasks fulfillment and it is economically unsustainable. Despite the fact a document named The Defense Resort Development – 2020 Model had an ambition to solve these problems, because of the unpredictability of its planning assumptions it was never completed or approved by defense management. The document was considered unrealistic also from a financial point of view (it presupposed the budget of the SR Ministry of Defense to be at the level of 1.53% of GDP). In case of many states, impacts of the economic crisis on public resources have been also reflected on decreasing defense budgets. Almost all the states have responded to the crisis by searching inner resources and some of them have applied processes of defense strategic evaluation. And yet there is no direct proportion between GDP decrease of individual states and their expenses on defense. This is confirmed by the fact that in years 2009 – 2011, in the time of the biggest impacts of the economic crisis, almost half of the NATO states increased the defense expenditures share of GDP or they left it approximately at the same level (a decrease by 0.1% at most). In the case of the Slovak Republic it is quite the contrary.

These statements can be supplemented by statistical indicators from crucial areas of the AF development (Images 1 – 3, charts 1 - 3).

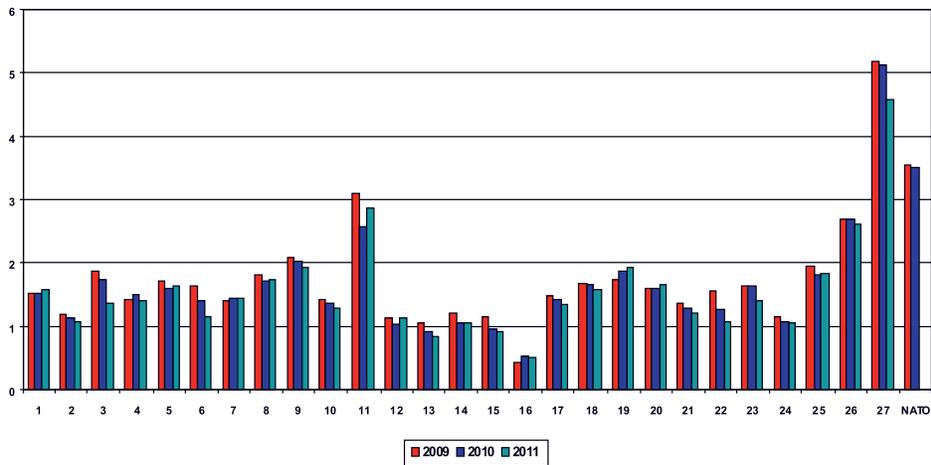


Figure 1. The proportion of defense expenditures of GDP in the NATO member states in years 2009 - 2011 (%)

1 – Albania; 2 – Belgium; 3 – Bulgaria; 4 – Canada; 5 – Croatia; 6 – the Czech Republic; 7 – Denmark; 8 – Estonia; 9 – France; 10 – Germany; 11 – Greece; 12 – Hungary; 13 – Italy; 14 – Latvia; 15 – Lithuania; 16 – Luxembourg; 17 – the Netherlands; 18 – Norway; 19 – Poland, 20 – Portugal; 21 – Romania; 22 – **Slovakia**; 23 – Slovenia; 24 – Spain; 25 – Turkey; 26 – Great Britain; 27 – the USA, 28 – the NATO (data for 2011 is not available).

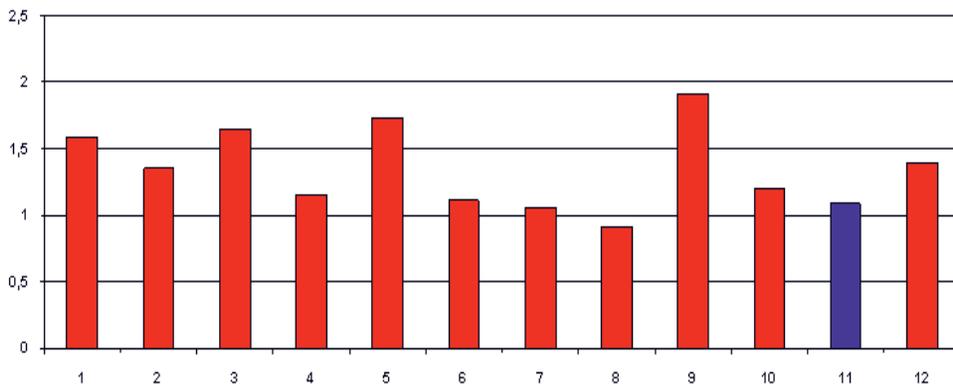


Figure 2. The proportion of defense expenditures of GDP in the new NATO member states in countries (in percentage) 2011 (%)

1 – Albania; 2 – Bulgaria; 3 - Croatia; 4 – The Czech Republic; 5 – Estonia; 6 – Hungary (data from 2011 are not available); 7 – Latvia; 8 – Lithuania; 9 – Poland; 10 – Romania; 11 – **Slovakia**; 12 – Slovenia; 13 – NATO (data from 2011 are not available)

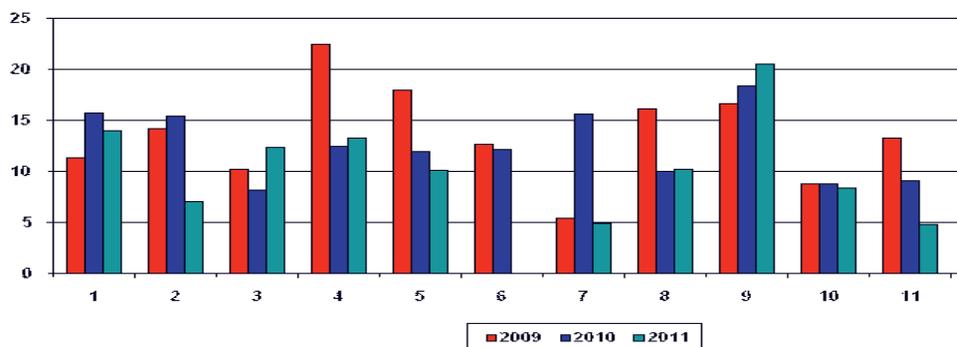


Figure 3. The proportion of defense expenditures intended for modernisation in the new NATO member states in years 2009 – 2010 – 2011 (%)

1 – Albania; 2 – Bulgaria; 3 - Croatia; 4 – The Czech Republic; 5 – Estonia; 6 – Hungary; 7 – Latvia; 8 – Lithuania; 9 – Poland; 10 – Romania; **11 – Slovakia**;
12 – Slovenia

Table no. 1 Total defense expenditures in USD mil. in the V4 countries

Country/Year	2000	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
The Czech Republic	1148	2211	2408	2527	3090	3129	2672
Hungary*	804	1596	1410	1776	1868	1476	1355
Poland	3087	5536	6130	7833	8521	7518	8836
The Slovak Republic	//	823	911	1139	1411	1350	1098

* the data do not include non-deployable elements of other forces

Table no.2 The proportion of expenditures on personnel out of total defense expenditures in the V4

Country/Year	2000–2004	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
The Czech Republic	45.4	47.4	49.2	51.5	46.1	50.7
Hungary*	48.8	51.2	46.4	48.1	50.4	56.4
Poland	63.3	53.8	54.4	63.2	61.8	56.4
The Slovak Republic	//	49.1	51.5	51.7	55.8	64.9

Table no.3 The proportion of expenditures on modernisation out of defense expenditures in the V4 countries

Country/Year	2000–2004	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
The Czech Republic	18.9	14.6	10.1	12.9	22.4	12.4
Hungary*	11.2	9.0	12.1	14.8	12.7	12.1
Poland	10.9	18.2	18.6	13.9	16.7	18.4
The Slovak Republic	//	12.7	16.2	14.6	13.2	9.1

The long-term non-conformity between the given tasks on the one hand and real resources allocated to their realization on the other hand is a crucial problem which has been substantially influencing the range and quality of the Defense Department's main activities. If the problem is not solved, it will deepen. A significant part of the Armed Forces armament and equipment is technologically, as well as physically obsolete (app. 70% of ground equipment is end-of-life, out of which tank equipment, infantry fighting vehicles - 1, some types of armoured personnel carriers, are 100% end-of-life). That has a negative impact not only on the achievement of required capabilities, level of training and quality of fulfilling the tasks, but it also increases the difficulty of its maintenance. Systems and fighting sets of Air Forces, as well as essential air technology are approaching the level of their technical lifetime (besides MiG 29 aircraft). The lifetime of some ground, air and radio equipment will expire within two or five years. The alarming state of some main types of armament and technology requires their immediate replacement. As a result, there have been requirements for sources arising within the next five or ten years. The essential prerequisite for increase in the Armed Forces capabilities and their interoperability with allied armies is modification or remilitarization of the main types of ground, air and radar technology. The assurance of resources to fulfill

this requirement within the budget of the Ministry of Defense of the Slovak Republic is unreal due to very expensive projects which have to be implemented on the basis of government contracts and long-term timetable for repayment significantly exceeding the parliamentary term of one government.

The Slovak Armed Forces have only a limited spectrum of capabilities in limited quality. Therefore, a level of interoperability within the Armed Forces units in comparison with the NATO standards (within a 39 - 68 % range) is very low and it limits potential cooperation of the Armed Forces units with allied armies, particularly in high intensity operations. The level of deployment and sustainability of the ground forces is approximately 33% and 10% against the NATO requirements. In the context of the aforementioned data, the Slovak Armed Forces capabilities will be intended to ensure achievement of key priorities which include:

- participation of the Slovak Armed Forces in the international crisis management operations including capability to provide contributions for NRF and EU BG;
- fulfilling the tasks of the Slovak air space defense within the NATINADS;
- provision of a mechanized brigade for collective defense;
- capability to admit coalition forces in Slovakia within the framework of collective defense operation;

–maintenance of appropriate components in high readiness forces (a mechanized battalion group).

The proposals concerning the future of the Slovak Armed Forces has been based on the assessment of the security environment, level of the acceptable risk compensated by the Slovak Republic membership in NATO and political guidance in order not to change valid political and military ambition.

The development strategy of the Ministry of Defense will be based on the Armed Forces' strategic development enabling to fulfill key priorities due to the limited range of sources. The following risks and limitations will be accepted:

– reduced ability of the Slovak Armed Forces to react and reduction of available forces for the needs of assistance to the Slovak Republic citizens in the event of natural and industrial disasters due to the lack of personnel in some Slovak Armed Forces military units in peace time within the range of 40 – 60% of tabular calculations;

– military and technological limitations in implementation of international obligations (the range of the mechanized brigade prescribed capabilities for peace structure will be limited. Some logistic capabilities will be reduced as well. As a result, the level of achievement of objectives will be decreased).

The Slovak Armed Forces sustainable model – will be built and developed in order to cover the capacities in relation to preparation, creation, deployment, maintenance and recovery of capabilities to provide:

– continuous protection and defense of the Slovak air space within the NATO Integrated Air Defense System (NATINADS);

– provision of the Slovak Republic's contribution to international crisis management operations pursuant to the Slovak Republic Security Strategy and Defense Strategy;

– provision of specific and unique military capabilities to support public authorities in facing non-military crisis situations within the Slovak Republic territory;

– provision of mechanized brigade within collective defense operation;

– admission of coalition forces in the Slovak Republic within collective defense operations.

The Slovak Armed Forces will consist of the following future forces:

– forces for immediate combat use (high readiness forces) – air forces intended to achieve the objectives within the NATO Integrated Air Defense System (NATINADS) and Air Search and Rescue Service, ground forces in emergency regime of NRF;

– forces to secure capabilities

for rapid increase of combat potential (lower readiness forces)

– forces needed for creation and provision of mechanized brigade for a temporary period, command and support structures required for achievement of the Armed Forces objectives (including specific and unique military capabilities to support public authorities in facing non-military crisis situations);

– forces based on soldiers in reserve with a special contract – forces (i.e. military specialists) required to fulfill the tasks within the support of public authorities in facing non-military crisis situations in the Slovak Republic and within the international crisis management;

– forces based on mobilization capabilities – forces required for the Slovak republic defense system to secure defense of objects of unique importance and other important objects in the Slovak Republic and to support admission of coalition forces within collective defense operation in the SR.

In terms of the Slovak Armed Forces' increased efficiency, a proposed model represents the reinforcement of the Slovak Armed Forces' executive elements (tactical units) at the expense of managing and supporting elements. This model will positively influence the following areas:

– overall capacities of the Slovak Armed Forces' efficient

elements for assistance to citizens in the event of natural disasters within the Slovak Armed Forces will be enhanced (app. 20% increase in combat battalion capacities);

– capacities of unique capabilities of the Slovak Armed Forces intended for assistance to citizens in the event of natural disasters will be enhanced (creation of one engineer company);

– missing units in order to fulfill the obligation to provide a ground forces brigade will be added (artillery units, tactical reconnaissance and intelligence);

– missing units in order to fulfill other key obligations of the Slovak Armed Forces will be added (a deployable KIS NATO module).

The following tables show the estimated calculation of finances for modernization of essential types of armament, equipment and material beyond the range of the Ministry of Defense chapter as well as intention of reduction of capacities within the Defense Department.

Table no. 4: Finances required for technology modernization

Commodities	Armament, combat equipment	2014 - 2024 total in Eur mil.	Total/commodity in Eur mil.
Armoured vehicles	Wheeled armoured fighting vehicles, light tactical multifunctional vehicle in various modifications	2 270	2 270
Air Forces *	Training aircrafts	180	796
	Multifunctional helicopters	490	
	Transport aircrafts	126	
Military radar systems	3D radar with close range	18	224
	3D radar with short range	70	
	Surveillance 3D radar with middle range	24	
	3D radar with middle range	112	
Anti-aerial defense components	C-RAM, anti-missiles system	2	10
	SHORAD- MEAD - PVO with short and middle range system	8	
Total		3 300	3 300

Table no.5: Overall intention of reduction in number of Defense Department personnel

Ministry of Defense and its parts

Category	Current state	Proposed state	Reduction
Soldiers	1 060	846	214
Employees	2 833	2 361	472
Total	3 893	3 207	686

Armed Forces

Category	Current state	Proposed state	Reduction
Soldiers	14 745	14 451	294
Employees	4 451	4 049	402
Total	19 196	18 500	696

Defense Department

Category	Current state	Proposed state	Reduction
Soldiers	15 805	15 297	508
Employees	7 284	6 410	874
Total	23 089	21 707	1382*

A set of rationalisation measurements will be implemented in order to gain resources for development of the Slovak Armed Forces sustainable model. These measurements will be focused on reduction of the Slovak Armed Forces expenses and strengthening their efficiency.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The prosperity and growth of living standards have never been so dependent on the citizens and state security level in comparison with the current economically linked and rapidly changing world. This dependence will develop further due to the growth of uncertainty and unpredictability of the security environment (e.g. current turbulent and unpredictable development of situation in North Africa or Middle East).

With respect to a critical state in the Defense Department and Slovak Armed Forces, the level of country defense and achievement of international obligations requires the adoption of timely measurements in relation to further transformation of the Slovak Armed Forces.

When comparing strategic and assessment documents it is obvious that they significantly differ in the commitments they make, on one hand, and the security policy implementation, on the other hand. As a result of the defense strategy, the Armed Forces are obliged to contribute to collective defense.

However, according to the strategic defense assessment the capabilities of the Armed Forces in comparison with the NATO member states reach approximately 50%. The Defense Department budget for the year 2013 totals 50 mil. EUR, which is less than the 2012 budget. Moreover, the strategic defense assessment also includes the obligation to defend critical infrastructure objectives and objects of particular importance. However, the proposal to reduce forces asks for the cancellation of what is considered as the most efficient element PLRK S – 300PMU, capable to defend the aforementioned objects against air terrorism.

The declared increase in capabilities has been reflected in practice: with the modernization of technology, armament and training within the NATO we have reached the bottom. Human development as well as the modernization of the Armed Forces are referred to as the pillars of transformation in the Government Statements of Policy. However, practice contradicts this. The Government, by the statements it made, pledged to strengthen the participation of the Armed Forces in solving crisis situations. However, the amended Regulation of the Ministry of Defense No. 1/2012 establishing the extent of a commander's power scope in the event of decision making on immediate deployment of soldiers and necessary logistic support actually decreases it (in comparison with the Regulation of the Ministry of Defense No. 38/2009). Furthermore,

the proposed calculation of finances to the amount of 3.3 billion EUR may be regarded as utopia.

From this point of view, the aforementioned documents may be regarded unreal and therefore they must be reviewed and revised as soon as possible. After that, a comprehensive material including a model of the way the Armed Forces and other parts of the Defense Department are to be reformed, as well as a proposal concerning the method and time schedule for the reform measures to be implemented can be drawn up and submitted for approval to the Slovak government.

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