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# GRAND STRATEGY OF SMALLER STATES: G3S CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

**Event:** Mini Away Day of the European Union Military Committee (EUMC)

**Form:** Speech

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## OBJECTIVE

1. Stimulate thoughtful, innovative, critical and strategic thinking about strategy formulation in the era of great power competition and even more contested security environment.
2. Introduce G3S Conceptual Framework as a suitable tool for provision of comprehensive defence.

## LEAD QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

1. What are the fundamental driving forces altering our ways for strategy formulation?
2. What are the most critical elements of strategy and how the strategic context influenced them?
3. What strategic assumptions create the point of departure for our strategy formulation?
4. How to translate the Objectives, Ways and Means in the right and achievable strategy – SMART STRATEGY 4.0?
5. How to further improve strategy implementation to enhance our states warfighting potential to deter our enemies collectively and create preconditions for winning future war?



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## SPEAKING POINTS

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great honour for me to participate in your informal debate today here in Brussels.

Thank you, very much general Alan, for the opportunity to share with this distinguished audience some of my thoughts on **role of strategy** and its potential **to mitigate security challenges** both for our nations and the EU.

I think we live in historical time and every one in our community has a role to play whether his mission is to fight on the battlefield, command and control troops at the HQs or educate people at our institutions.

Since February this year, the security landscape in Europe has evolved in the way that strategic defence planners have attributed with **low probability**.

Yes, there is always some level of uncertainty in the security environment – we have usually been spoken about the VUCA environment. Nevertheless, I would argue - **our direct security threat today and in the foreseeable future is rather clear** and provides us with predictable framework for our strategic considerations, planning and resource allocations.

Let's begin with a quotation of Albert Einstein. Once, he pointed out that the world is a dangerous place to live not because of the people who are evil, but because of the people who don't do anything about it.

I very much agree with this wise statement. It was not the case in many of our nations. At least here in Europe we have had the tendency to underestimate some of the driving forces shaping our security environment. We were politically correct. For example, Russia is not mentioned in our latest national security strategy from 2015 and only twice in our defence strategy 2017. This rather optimistic appraisal of security environment has had significant impact on the objectives, ways and means reflected in our past and today rather obsolete strategic documents. Moreover, it has impacted the preparedness of our nations to withstand military attack to our territory.

We have reduced our conceptual thinking and allocated defence task exclusively to the military element. Majority of our ordinary people have believed that defence provision is a duty and business for our professional military force not for them.

Many other elements of comprehensive defence have been avoided in our strategies or have only been touched upon in symbolic manner to avoid costly investments and negative political implications.



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To conclude this introductory part, I would argue, these old-fashioned strategies were driven mainly by inadequate resources rather than solid appraisal of strategic environment. It was believed, at the political level, that it is possible to do more with less.

In this context I would focus my contribution to the **conceptual element of defence**. Usually, we put more emphasis on the physical characteristics which embrace mainly technology and people. I believe - however - that also the **conceptual component plays indispensable role** with regard to the development of credible and in the same time affordable defence of our nations.

**By the conceptual component I mean chiefly the strategy formulation which embraces both process and content.**

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#### IMPORTANCE OF COMPREHENSIVE DEFENCE AND IMPERATIVE OF GREAT STRATEGY

Vis-à-vis the ongoing war at the eastern boarder of the European union, **a right strategy** is - in my very personnel view - an **essential element** or tool - if you wish - to ensure security and defence and sustainable development and prosperity.

Saying that, I would also argue, that taking in consideration the magnitude of contemporary security threats we are facing to - the only strategy that would really contribute to the provision of a **comprehensive defence** should **entail the whole of society model**.

Such a strategy has the potential to positively facilitate development of military and economically strong and resilient nation.

In my view, rigour application of **the whole of society approach** can also generate meaningful synergies within the European Union that is able to protect its citizens, values and interests and contribute to international peace and security - as it is envisaged in our strategic compass.

Just to make sure we understand each other, by the term of strategy I broadly mean a phenomenon that refers to something that is **long-term in scope, concerned with the state's most important priorities**, and inclusive of all spheres of statecraft chiefly **diplomacy, military, economy and information**.

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#### SCEPTICISM ABOUT STRATEGY

Allow me to be little bit controversial. I am convinced that the - in many aspects - rather unsatisfactory level of deterrence and defence of our nations is also an outcome of the underestimation of the importance of strategy and significant **deterioration of our strategic culture** in last almost three decades.





Many of our political masters and military practitioners still believe, that formulation of strategy is usually a **periodic exercise** which is frequently derided as too bureaucratic process.

The outcome than is considered as nothing more than a bureaucratic document that reflects **painful compromises**, the lowest common denominator of consensus among all stakeholders and **wish lists of ambitions** that are rarely implemented.

Another criticism is that in a fast-changing world, the tasks and priorities that feature in our **strategies are soon out of date** and that what is not mentioned tends to quickly become more significant than what is included.<sup>1</sup>

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### BACK ON TRACK, WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT IT?

Despite all this criticism, I personally consider strategy as a useful tool. Furthermore, as Dwight Eisenhower pointed out once and I fully agree with him. **The process of strategy formulation is of much greater importance than the own product.**

The process allows us to **anticipate** the **dynamics** of future strategic environment and **develop** common **understanding** of its implications for our security and defence provision.

Plotting a future strategy makes the participants look beyond the immediate agenda issues or the crisis of the day. Strategy allows **long term thinking**.

Looking beyond the horizon also helps to deduce the implications of our today decisions! It also helps to **assesses** inherent **risks** and **identify opportunities**.

Moreover, strategy formulation supports **alternative thinking**. It helps us to develop and scrutinised via experimentation alternative combinations of ways and means to achieve our objectives.

Finally, strategy leads us to make up **the most balanced decisions** and pick up the most suitable course of actions to **shape the strategic environment in the most convenient manner** to protect our interests and promote our values.

**The imperative today is to rebuild our ability to contemplate once again strategies which will prepare both our military and our nations as a whole for even more contested world.**

To achieve such a required outcome, our strategies must be complex and holistic as much as possible. They must rich boundaries which are much large today than it was required yesterday.

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<sup>1</sup> [NATO's New Strategic Concept: What Should We Expect? | Martens Centre](#)





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Right strategies, for today and tomorrow, must orchestrate both military and non-military elements of state's power in more effective and efficient way.

Moreover, our strategies must be forward looking and pre-emptive rather than reactive. Reactive strategies deliver outcome which may support crisis management but do not facilitate proper strategic stewardship through the rough waters.

When we assess our actions in the wake of the war in Ukraine and its implications than we have to admit that these measures might be hardly considered as part of long-term grand strategy. We are still in the role of fire fighters, today! Already since 2014, we have been mitigating insufficiencies in our defence systems which had been created in the past.

Since February 2022, we have been facing completely different circumstances. Therefore, we **must adapt both our military instruments and civilian administration, as well as the entire defence system. We should do it as fast as possible because time is a critical commodity.**

To do so, the concept of comprehensive defence is to be applied. One of the available instruments to support this effort is a modern strategy – grand strategy even for smaller nations based on the whole of the society model.

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### CONCEPT OF GRAND STRATEGY OF SMALLER STATES (G3S)

What are the main components of this G3S concept?

First of all, it is the military pillar. Military pillar in its peace time establishment must ensure the ability to boost up its war fighting potential fast. It requires prepared both sufficient reserves and material support. To change current system requires hard decisions to be taken at the political level. The model of voluntary force does not support the idea of fast mobilization in time of crisis. If we consider there is no time for preparation and crisis can erupt any time and without any warning.

Moreover, there is an imperative to develop **balance force** which is in the same time modern and demonstrates credible level of robustness. Just a few pieces equipment for each service do not create the **necessary mass**.

Additionally, small nations do not have resources and technological potential to develop strategic enablers. It is a necessity to cooperate and pool resources. I believe that it is the right role for the EU. It can make necessary arrangements to facilitate fair multinational capability development. I strongly believe than the combination of both bottom-up initiatives and top-down guidance for nations is the right way ahead.

In this regard the real cooperation can also mitigate interoperability gaps among allies. The modernisation of our forces should follow the operating concepts rather than balance bilateral



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relations and economic interests. It is obviously another political challenge and very difficult choice.

The non-military elements embrace mainly (1) the overall preparation of young population for defence; (2) investments in the creation of suitable conditions for conducting operations on our own territory; (3) reinforcement of resilience of our nations at all levels including security of supply for our armed forces mainly in time of crisis. Last but not least it is the effective management of the science to allow fast innovation of our society and military.

When the reinforcement of military element requires hard political decisions than the scope of the development of the non-military pillar constitutes much larger challenge. Democratic liberal societies find it very difficult when it comes to the restrictions of freedom and universal human rights. Our states must find ways to advance some of these ideas to the public and businesses through effective strategic communication.

I believe that military leadership should provide required level of advice for further political considerations in this uneasy time. We are at the strategic crossroad and our decisions today will impact the security and prosperity of our nations tomorrow. **Space for painful compromises is shrinking!!**

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## THE EUROPEAN UNION DIMENSION

Let me also address the EU dimension. I consider the EU as a facilitator and enabler of defence cooperation. The development of EU defence should be complementary with the effort of NATO as the collective defence provider and gestor.

I believe, that **effective defence strategy formulation is traditionally top – down endeavour**. Along this line, the establishment of appropriate level of national commitments for capability goals to mitigate capability gaps should be conducted also in the EU framework more in accord with the procedures like those applied within the NDPP e.g. consensus minus one rule for capability targets apportionment.

I see positive development within PESCO - in this regard – where consensus on more binding commitments and application of Indicative Measurable Objectives is sought. It would definitely facilitate the ongoing European efforts to increase the military value of European Allies in more balanced sharing of NATO collective defence obligations.

Mechanisms like EDF, PESCO as well as for example 6 focus areas within CARD process are well suited for bottom-up planning. Without any doubts, these initiatives set up very positive trends for European defence cooperation. Even more, it offers complex and iterative process with significant potential for linking political, military and industrial/economic interests of member states.





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Nevertheless, **to enhance synergies of efforts above current level, more elements of top-down planning should be introduced without decreasing national ownership and sovereignty in defence domain.**

**Effective strategy implementation requires resources and healthy industrial support.** The EU should capitalize on its existing and unique financial arrangements and instruments NATO does not own. NATO common funding is rather limited in its scope. However, the EU has much larger potential to make resources available through existing arrangements. Ideally, there is a mechanism for financing complex projects embracing both defence research and development and collaborative capability implementation and thus maintain more competitive European Defence Technological and Industrial Base.

To achieve required synergies, fair and competitive environment for all member states should be guaranteed. Especially, Member States with limited industrial base capabilities and capacities must also be able to benefit from the investments provided by the EDF. Furthermore, the implementation of the EDF should be based on a demand-driven approach based on the agreed EU Capability Development Priorities. It is of utmost importance the national governments should do more to support the successful participation of their industries in EU financed projects e.g. establish agency to facilitate industry effort.

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#### TO SUM UP:

We are living in more contested world. We have solid level of certainty of our direct security threat. Moreover, our **nations and not only military should** be prepared for the worst-case scenario.

The strategic level objective both for the EU and NATO is to develop **coherent, complementary, and interoperable defence capabilities for high-end military confrontation.** Those capabilities are essential for making the Euro-Atlantic area safe.

Additionally, there is no single nation in Europe able to meet those challenges effectively by its own. It is not about whether we want to cooperate and develop defence capabilities together but this is an imperative to do so.

Nevertheless, the EU member states are accustomed to operating on a rather intergovernmental and largely voluntary basis when pursuing common defence projects. It reflects strategic culture both of the EU and its member states. As you are aware, changing culture of something or someone takes time. It will be soon a decade since the European Council open the way for numerous initiatives to reduce fragmentation of military equipment and enhance cooperation in capability delivery. There is a progress - of course! But there is space for further improvement – I believe, as well!

Finally, we have enough evidence about the contemporary level of preparedness, readiness and operational effectiveness of our defence sector in Europe. If you imagine, the picture is



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even more worrying when European defence capability is measured against the set of requirements to withstand **a high intensity military confrontation of large scale** in the EU neighbourhood.

**In all national and international organizations effective defence strategy formulation requires the whole of society approach to ensure comprehensive defence.**

**I hope that some of my remarks today outline the model of great strategy of small states embracing both military and non-military elements.**

**Moreover, I wanted demonstrate some of the hardships related to the strategic level decisions ahead of us to make our nations safe and prosperous.**

Thank you for your attention and I am open to address your questions



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