



On the road to the Chicago Summit, ACT's integrated resources manager engages with a US Department of Defense 'Think Tank' on a recurring theme, opening new sights for both parties.

Managing Resources during Fiscal Austerity was the exact theme of the encounter between sixteen representatives from a high-end US academic 'Think Tank' and Major General Ugur Tarcin in late February, an event that was hosted by the National Defense University (NDU) in Washington D.C.

Initial discussions outlined NATO's achievements in the resource reform effort across the five main domains: NATO's Agencies Reform, the End-to-End Rationalisation, NATO Headquarters Reform, the Comprehensive Resource Reform and the NATO Command Structure Review (NCS). Tarcin's presentation focused on the latter two aspects of the reform, which have had the greatest impact on Allied Command Transformation (ACT).

Challenging Reforms

On the NCS, he showcased the many achievements for ACT to propose a cost neutral structure which is both efficient and effective and takes the command a step further in accommodating emergent requirements such as cyber defence through Integrated Project Teams. While the results of several months of NCS Review have been positive and well appreciated by NATO's Member Nations, Major General Tarcin cautioned that sufficient manning levels must be

The Challenge of Balancing Resources with Requirements - ACT

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maintained in new and legacy NATO Command Structures in order to ensure that the Alliance can continue to fulfill all of its tasks.

Other challenges identified by the group of experts included the demobilisation of manpower as NATO withdraws from Afghanistan – and the need for a comprehensive plan on how to maintain this high level of operational expertise, leveraging it for the future.

On the NATO Comprehensive Resource Reform, Tarcin engaged in a dynamic discussion to outline some of the achievements and challenges the Alliance faces in reforming processes across the three main pillars of Budget, NATO Security Investment Program, and Manpower. He stressed the significant progress of the NATO Resource Community's work in improving financial mechanisms to ensure even greater levels of transparency and accountability before the Nations, employing alternative methods for manpower resourcing and introducing better planning mechanisms for the development, approval and implementation of our capability packages.

From Realism to Flexibility

Major General Tarcin shared a word of caution: "Balancing resources with requirements is a challenging task, both for the Alliance and the Resource Community. While the reform effort has tried to introduce a balance in how we manage our resources, the reality is that our required capabilities are more than the resources available and this trend will continue to gain momentum."

This, coupled with skepticism over the current financial situation and job security rising across

Europe and over the Atlantic, will pose an additional challenge to improve the corporate confidence in the public. Therefore, deliberate corporate branding is necessary – both for National institutions and international organisations such as NATO and the UN.

Further, an improvement in the manpower processes to allow more flexibility, while still maintaining control, is something to be further analysed and pursued, Tarcin said.

Specialisation and Collaboration

The group also discussed in length the Smart Defence initiative. While Smart Defence and Smart Resourcing are not new terms, the current fiscal climate will eventually force the Alliance to invigorate those efforts and move them forward. Specialisation by design is essential if NATO wants to demonstrate to the Nations a more focused resourcing of our defence and security needs. Therefore, it is believed that the Smart Defence concept and its common funding to NATO's resource reform will gain more momentum.

Finally, both the academic and the military representatives concluded that in order for those processes to undergo a physical transformation, there is a need to achieve stronger collaboration both across the NATO Committees and among the NATO member states. NATO has a wide committee structure which can certainly be better utilised if all stakeholders work, act and think better together both as an Alliance and as members of the same team.

A Pledging Type of Encounter

The brief and discussions were very well received by the participants from Academia, and they requested more interaction of this kind as a basis of sound collaborative efforts between NATO and academic 'Think Tanks'.

The engagement was part of the larger strategic communications initiative to increase visibility for Allied Command Transformation and NATO among the US pool of academic researchers, and solicit valuable feedback on the road to the Chicago Summit.

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