

# Warsaw Summit – NATO in the Middle East.

Newsletter prepared by  
Dawid Niewdana and Jakub Żylicz



## The growing threat

From the 8th to the 9th of July, the NATO Summit took place in Warsaw. This year's summit was run under completely different circumstances than the previous NATO leaders meeting in Wales.

The significant change in the security environment in Europe (caused by Russia's activity in Ukraine, occupying Crimea and fights along the eastern border of this country) led to two main goals during this year's summit: demonstrating the unity among the Allies and bolstering NATO's Eastern Flank, especially Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. More information about NATO's decisions related to Eastern Flank is presented in Strategic Studies Institute's previous newsletter<sup>1</sup>.

Nevertheless, the Summit's agenda also included the Middle East and NATO's activity in this region, which has lasted for almost 15 years.

During the Warsaw Summit, Allies decided to address the issue of Iraq and Afghanistan. NATO supports armed forces of both those countries by providing trainings and advice. The Alliance also stresses a need for the reforms in those countries, which are crucial for both Iraq and Afghanistan to make them responsible for the safety of their states on their own.

Moreover, the growing threat which is posed by the so-called Islamic State (IS) was not omitted in Warsaw. IS is still a risk to countries in the Middle East, as well as to all NATO members in Europe and North America. It is, despite the fact, that this terrorist group is losing more and more territories and switching to defensive actions.

The future of the NATO's sea operation Active Endeavour and the cooperation with the European Union in the fields of countering illegal human trafficking in the Mediterranean was also raised during the Summit.

This newsletter presents the decisions made during the Warsaw Summit related to all aforementioned issues. What is more, NATO's activity in Iraq and Afghanistan and the Alliance's attitude towards Islamic State and the migration crisis will also be presented up to date. The last chapter outlines key conclusions based on the Warsaw Summit decisions and NATO's future actions in the Middle East

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<sup>1</sup> [http://iss.krakow.pl/dokumenty/newsletter\\_en.pdf](http://iss.krakow.pl/dokumenty/newsletter_en.pdf)

## Key decisions made at the Warsaw Summit

Key Warsaw Summit's decisions regarding NATO's actions in the Middle East:

- In response to the growing threat posed by the Islamic State, the Alliance decided to deploy AWACS (Airborne Warning and Control System) aircrafts to the Middle East. This step is considered to be a support to the countries participating in the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL and it will improve the coalition's situational awareness. The details of the implementation of this decision are being worked out by NATO's military authorities. At this point it is known that the AWACS aircrafts will be deployed in the autumn of this year, after fulfilling national authorization procedures.
- It was emphasized in the Warsaw Summit Communiqué that supporting the Global Coalition by sending AWACS forces does not mean the Alliance as a whole becomes a member of the Coalition.
- NATO's Enduring Partnership with Iraq and supporting this country within the Defence and Related Security Capacity Building Initiative (which was established during the Wales Summit in 2014) was confirmed. The Alliance agreed to the Iraqi Prime Minister proposal from 5<sup>th</sup> May 2016 to begin, within the Security Capacity Building Initiative, training Iraqi Armed Forces and Security Forces in the territory of Iraq. The details of this action will have been worked out by October this year and the training itself will have begun by January 2017.
- Resolute Support Mission will be continued beyond 2016. Within the mission, Afghan institutions and Armed Forces will still be supported – training and consultations. Moreover, the Alliance pledged the financial assistance to maintain the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces until the end of 2020. The long-term Enduring Partnership with Afghanistan will also be enhanced and deepened.
- NATO decided to transition Operation Active Endeavour to a non-Article 5 Operation Sea Guardian. The new operation will allow the Alliance to perform the full range of Maritime Security Operation tasks, as needed<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official\\_texts\\_133169.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_133169.htm)

## NATO in Iraq

The North Atlantic Alliance has been cooperating with Iraq since 2004 when the NATO Training Mission-Iraq (NTM-I) began in this country. The mission was addressed to Iraqi Armed Forces and its aim was to improve the Iraqi Forces' level of training and provide them with necessary equipment. NTM-I ended in 2011, however it did not mean the NATO involvement in Iraq is over<sup>3</sup>.

When the NTM-I was shut down, NATO's efforts focused on establishing long-term partnership with Iraq. 2015 was the breakthrough when the Alliance decided to support Iraq, which was facing Islamic State's threat. NATO concentrated its actions in several strands:

- advice on security sector reform;
- countering improvised explosive devices (IED)<sup>4</sup>;
- explosive ordnance disposal and de-mining;
- civil military planning;
- cyber defence;
- military medicine and medical assistance;
- civil emergency planning<sup>5</sup>.

Iraqi Armed Forces Training was scheduled to be conducted in two countries: Jordan and Turkey.

In the first one, the mission has begun in April 2016. 350 Iraqi soldiers will be trained in medical assistance, countering IED and civil military planning within six months<sup>6</sup>.

The training in Turkey eventually did not begin. In December 2015, the Iraqi government on the international front opposed the deployment of Turkish forces in northern Iraq. According to the then Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu, Turkish Armed Forces were deployed in Iraq in order to train Iraqi forces in their own country. Nevertheless, authorities in Baghdad declined such explanations claiming, that they were not informed about it at all<sup>7</sup>. The incursion

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<sup>3</sup> [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_88247.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_88247.htm)

<sup>4</sup> An improvised explosive device (IED) attack is the use of a "homemade" bomb and/or destructive device to destroy, incapacitate, harass, or distract. IEDs are used by criminals, vandals, terrorists, suicide bombers, and insurgents. Because they are improvised, IEDs can come in many forms, ranging from a small pipe bomb to a sophisticated device capable of causing massive damage and loss of life. Source: [https://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/prep\\_ied\\_fact\\_sheet.pdf](https://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/prep_ied_fact_sheet.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news\\_121925.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_121925.htm)

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news\\_129666.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_129666.htm)

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-russia-turkey-davutoglu-idUSKBN0TR14F20151208>

of Turkey forces into the territory of Iraq made it impossible to gain Iraqi's government approval to cooperate with Turkey in military issues.

The Warsaw Summit delivered another changes regarding Iraq, which are favourable from the point of view of this country. The Alliance pledged Iraqi Forces training will be moved to the territory of Iraq. It does not mean the operation in Jordan will be suspended – as highlighted, the mission will be continued. Moreover, military authorities in NATO are currently working on expanding the range of the training in Jordan<sup>8</sup>.

## **NATO in Afghanistan**

NATO's engagement in Afghanistan was one of the milestones in the development of the Alliance.

International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) was established under United Nations' resolution no. 1386 of December 2001. At the beginning, their goal was to assist in country reconstruction and provide security in and around the capital Kabul.

Since the moment of ISAF establishment, countries which were participating in the whole operation were rotating in the leadership. Nevertheless, on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2003 NATO took full control over the ISAF forces and brought to an end six-months rotation periods and relating to this process problems (it was necessary to establish new headquarter every six months which was difficult in a complex environment of the Afghanistan).

As NATO began to lead ISAF forces, the UN agreed to extend ISAF's mandate to cover the whole of Afghanistan. The process began in October 2003 and was divided into four stages. The last stage (ensuring security in the whole country) was finished on 5<sup>th</sup> October 2006<sup>9</sup>. The transition to Afghan lead for security of their own country started in 2011. After three years, the process ended in December 2014 and ISAF operation was concluded<sup>10</sup>.

A few days after ISAF operation ended, in January 2015 Resolute Support Mission was launched. However, this time the operation did not include active participation in military

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<sup>8</sup> [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_88247.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_88247.htm)

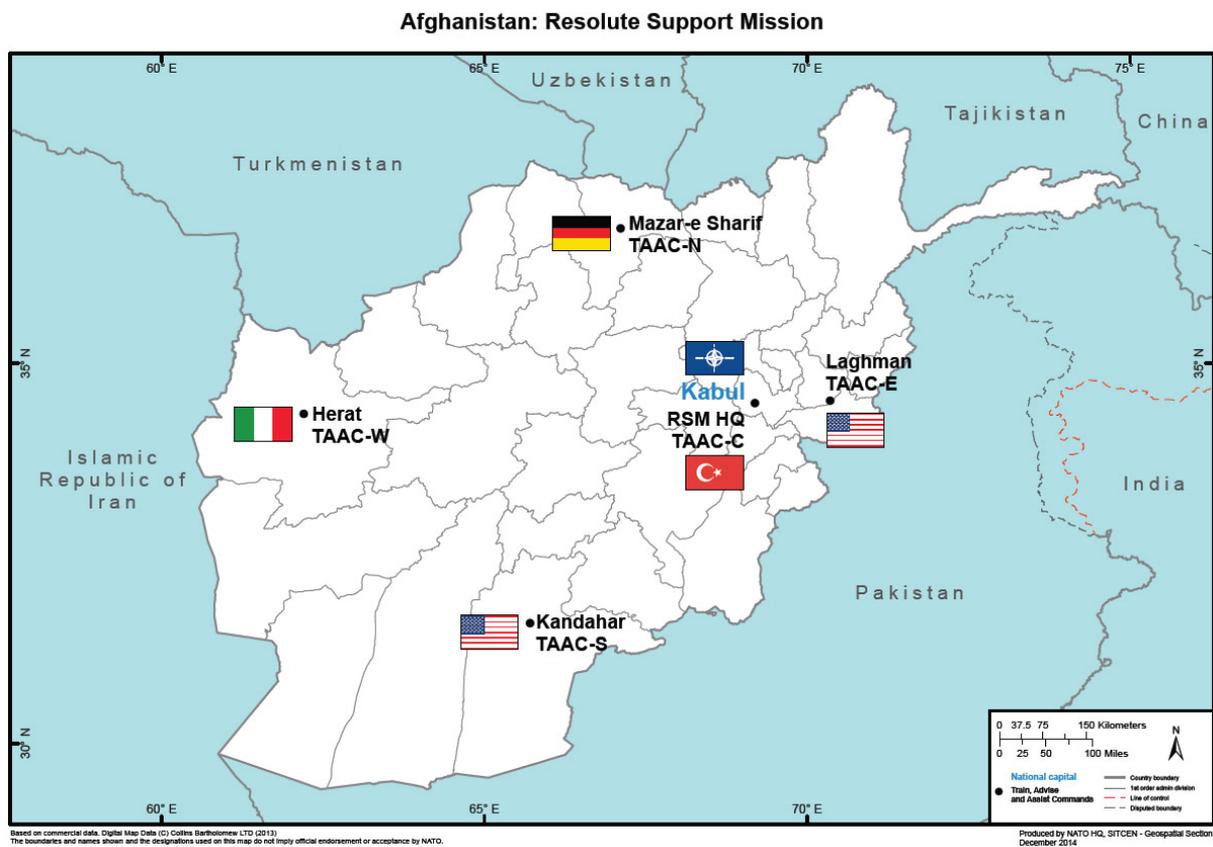
<sup>9</sup> [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_69366.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_69366.htm)

<sup>10</sup> [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_8189.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_8189.htm)

actions (non-military mission), but only to provide advisory and training. The main focus is on several aspects:

- Supporting planning, programming and budgeting;
- Assuring transparency, accountability and oversight;
- Supporting the adherence to the principles of rule of law and good governance;
- Supporting the establishment and sustainment of such processes as force generation, recruiting, training, managing and development of personnel.

Currently, more than 13 thousand personnel from both NATO and partners countries (39 countries in general) are involved in Resolute Support Mission<sup>11</sup>.



The map presents Resolute Support Mission's general headquarter and other headquarters. Source: the official website of NATO, 13th June 2016, [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_113694.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_113694.htm) (13.09.2016).

<sup>11</sup> [http://www.nato.int/nato\\_static\\_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf\\_2016\\_07/20160707\\_2016-07-RSM-Placemat.pdf](http://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2016_07/20160707_2016-07-RSM-Placemat.pdf)

The Warsaw Summit's results are satisfying from Afghanistan's point of view. Among them there is a decision to sustain Resolute Support Mission beyond 2016. However, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg mentioned the details regarding the amount of soldiers participating in the mission will be worked out in this year's autumn<sup>12</sup>.

Another decision from the Warsaw Summit is related to financial assistance in order to maintain the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces until the end of 2020. It is important to know, that during the Chicago Summit in 2012 the Alliance declared his members and partner nations would financially support maintaining Afghan forces until the end of 2017 only. Warsaw's result means the assistance will be kept for a few more years.

## **NATO vs. Islamic State**

Established on 8th April 2013, Islamic State (IS or Da'esh) had been operating under various names for almost 10 years. The current Da'esh leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi led the progenitor organisation of the Islamic State (called Islamic State in Iraq) since 2010. A year before ISIS was established, the group had also set up one of its cell in Syria and named it Al-Nusra Front.

Since April 2013, Da'esh began occupying territories in Iraq and Syria, along with fighting with other terrorist groups which were opposing Baghdadi. The official announcement of establishing the caliphate took place on 29th June 2014<sup>13</sup>.

The first respond to the ISIS establishment was the international opposition, which changed into a coalition of states over time. On 10th September 2014, the US President Barack Obama announced the formation of Global Coalition to Counter ISIL. As the president stated: "Our objective is clear: We will degrade, and ultimately destroy, ISIL through a comprehensive and sustained counterterrorism strategy."

The Coalition consists of more than 60 countries. Among them there are all NATO member states, however, the Alliance as a whole is not a part of it (contrary to the EU, which is the member of the Coalition, despite the fact, that its countries are also participating in the Barack Obama's initiative)<sup>14</sup>.

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<sup>12</sup> <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-nato-summit-afghanistan-idUSKCN0ZP0AC>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.clarionproject.org/sites/default/files/islamic-state-isis-isil-factsheet-1.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.state.gov/s/seci/>

The only announced (but still not implemented) Alliance's pledge is the deployment of AWACS aircrafts. Their role is to carry out airborne surveillance and provide support for air and air defence forces. The AWACS aircraft radar has a range of 320 km and can detect Alliance's enemies' units in the air and at sea. Deployed within the support provided to the Global Coalition, NATO's aircrafts will back up Alliance's units with intelligence and airborne surveillance.<sup>15</sup>



NATO AWACS in Konya, Turkey. Source: the official website of Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE), <https://www.shape.nato.int/2016/nato-awacs-increases-assurance-measures-to-turkey> (14.09.2016).

### **NATO vs. Migration crisis**

The terrorist attack in the United States on 11th September 2001 and nowadays the migration crisis, which began 15 years after and is still a threat to Europe, led the Alliance to focus its efforts on actions in the Mediterranean<sup>16</sup>. Operation Active Endeavour, which was discussed during the Warsaw Summit, could be shown as an example.

Operation Active Endeavour began when the Article no. 5 Washington Treaty was activated as a respond to the terrorist attack from 11<sup>th</sup> September 2001. At the beginning, the

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<sup>15</sup> <http://www.e3a.nato.int/>

<sup>16</sup> [http://frontex.europa.eu/assets/Publications/Risk\\_Analysis/Annula\\_Risk\\_Analysis\\_2016.pdf](http://frontex.europa.eu/assets/Publications/Risk_Analysis/Annula_Risk_Analysis_2016.pdf)

range of the operation covered only the east side of the Mediterranean, but as a result of further actions it was expanded in 2004 to include the whole sea.

The aims of the operation are as follow: keeping seas safe and protecting shipping, tracking and controlling suspect vessels in the Mediterranean Sea and patrolling the sea (not only with the maritime forces, but also with the AWACS aircrafts)<sup>17</sup>.

The Alliance during the Warsaw Summit changed Operation Active Endeavour. They decided to launch Operation Sea Guardian which is based on Active Endeavour in the Mediterranean Sea. As was highlighted during the summit, the new operation will let NATO to perform the full range of Maritime Security Operation tasks and will be a non-Article 5 operation.

Moreover, the NATO decided to support the EU in its operation Sophia which was established in order to fight human trafficking in the Mediterranean Sea. According to Jen Stoltenberg: "We intend to work closely with the European Union's Operation Sophia in the Central Mediterranean, building on our swift and effective cooperation with the EU to cut lines of international human trafficking in the Aegean"<sup>18</sup>.

## **Key conclusions**

**NATO in Iraq** – the announced Iraqi Forces training provided by NATO's experts seems to be a decision of extreme importance for Iraq. The intrusion of ISIS forces into Iraq and the disintegration of Iraqi Armed Forces in the wake of the attacks from Da'esh led to the situation, when the Iraqi Army was no longer existing. Among the reasons of such quick collapse, experts also pointed to the inefficiency of NATO training until 2011. However, it was mainly caused by the corruption, lack of intelligence and deep demoralization of Iraqi Armed Forces which led to this state of the affairs<sup>19</sup>.

Nowadays, Iraqi Forces' actions can be viewed optimistically, but with caution. They are regaining the territories lost in the summer of 2014<sup>20</sup>. Training of the Iraqi Forces in their own countries may have a lot of advantages – on the one hand, it could increase their effectiveness, on the other it could improve the Army's morale

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<sup>17</sup> [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_7932.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_7932.htm)

<sup>18</sup> [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news\\_133804.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_133804.htm)

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2014/06/13/why-the-iraqi-army-collapsed-and-what-can-be-done-about-it/>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.ft.com/content/a90140f6-7697-11e6-b60a-de4532d5ea35>

**NATO in Afghanistan** – some analysts claim completing the ISAF's mission and giving the responsibility for the Afghanistan's security to the Armed Forces of this country happened too soon. The confirmation of this thesis is the current political situation in the country: the division of the political scene, tough economic situation and the activity of the Taliban, Haqqani Network from Pakistan or IS attempts to establish a headquarter in this country<sup>21</sup>. It is significant that in the first six months of 2016 the total number of casualties increased by four percent compared to the same period in 2015. And the amount is still growing<sup>22</sup>. It means the situation in Afghanistan is far from stable.

In the face of the situation in Afghanistan it seems desirable to prolong Resolute Support Mission beyond 2016. The main issue is the leadership with which Afghan Forces cannot handle. Heavy fighting in the winter of 2016 and NATO's officials concerns that left without Alliance's support Afghan Forces will collapse as it happened in Iraq in 2014 make the current situation even more complicated. According to U.S. Army Brig. Gen. Charles Cleveland "Leadership...that has been a concern for everybody"<sup>23</sup>.

**NATO and the migration crisis** – NATO's activity in the Mediterranean Sea does not seem to be very effective, similar to the EU missions related to fighting human trafficking and preventing terrorist from reaching Europe. The amount of refugees from the Middle East and North Africa who try to reach the borders of Europe by the sea is so big it becomes impossible to fight terrorism effectively this way (considering rescuing survivors and checking them one by one). We can assume cautiously that Sea Guardian Operation will not be a priority in NATO's actions against threats from the Middle East<sup>24</sup>.

**NATO against Da'esh** – NATO's engagement as a whole against Islamic State is still limited, even though all NATO's members are participating in the Global Coalition.

The decision to send AWACS aircrafts seems controversial for some analysts. These aircrafts are used to detect other jets and fighters, but Islamic State does not have any such weapon. It can be assumed, that data from the AWACS reconnaissance will be related to Syrian and Russian fighters, which are operating in Iraq and Syria<sup>25</sup>.

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<sup>21</sup> <https://www.brookings.edu/research/blood-and-hope-in-afghanistan-a-june-2015-update/>

<sup>22</sup> <http://unama.unmissions.org/afghanistan-record-level-civilian-casualties-sustained-first-half-2016-un-report>

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.wsj.com/articles/afghan-security-forces-facing-continued-leadership-problems-1472737968>

<sup>24</sup> <http://pulaski.pl/analiza-sojusz-polnocnoatlantycki-wobec-zagrozen-terrorystycznych-podsumowanie-szczytu-nato-w-warszawie/>

<sup>25</sup> <http://pulaski.pl/analiza-sojusz-polnocnoatlantycki-wobec-zagrozen-terrorystycznych-podsumowanie-szczytu-nato-w-warszawie/>

