



History and the present of Ukraine-NATO relations: implementation of the "non-bloc status" and its consequences

Oleksandr Sushko

Volodymyr Horbach

Igor Koziy

The Ukraine-NATO relations have developed for a long while in the context of a consistent political will of the Ukrainian party towards the convergence with the Alliance. Ukraine was the first of NATO non-members to join the Partnership for Peace in 1994, in 1997 it signed an exclusive document – the Charter on a Distinctive Partnership – which was indicative of the exclusive and privileged nature of the relationship. In 2002, Ukraine declared the strategy aimed at becoming the NATO member, and in 2005 it began an Intensified Dialogue on Membership. The dramatic year 2008 when Ukraine failed to receive the Membership Action Plan at the Bucharest summit ended up with a compromise decision to offer Ukraine the format of an **Annual National Programme (ANP)** – an instrument that used to be provided to Alliance's official candidates only.

In 2010, this long-term political line was transformed. The doctrinal setting that has shaped the political framework of Ukraine-NATO relations is the concept of "non-bloc status" that originates from the programme theses of the Party of Regions and Victor Yanukovych and was introduced to the national legislation in 2010 and thus replaced the previous target paradigm of Ukraine aimed at becoming the NATO member.

The impact of this change was manifold – from alteration of the ANP official name (changed from "membership" to "cooperation" programme) to numerous corrections of its contents as well as legislative, financial institutional principles of cooperation with NATO, significant reduction and loss of experienced specialists in the involved agencies who in particular took care of the preparation and monitoring of the ANP implementation.

At the same time, despite the refusal of Ukraine from the goal of NATO membership, the substantial core of the ANP remained formally unchanged – targeted at Ukraine's achievement of Euro-Atlantic standards of democratic government, supremacy of law, comprehensive reforms of the military and security sector in accordance with NATO standards. Under the new government, Ukraine confirmed the previously declared priorities of the European strategic course of the country and thus did not reject the fundamental basis of the ANP which consists of the implementation of the European model of government, legal system, civil and military relations, and reform of the security sector. This allowed to preserve the main features of the ANP while getting rid of its "wrapping" (which is however its ultimate goal): today Ukraine is the only

country that entered a commitment in relations with NATO to transform the whole spectrum of political and security relations without applying for NATO membership.

However, the analysis of the practical implementation of the ANP by Ukraine leaves disputable whether it is feasible to fulfil this scope of commitments without a political will for integration. And this is exactly what the first public "concerns" of the Alliance regarding the adherence to the supremacy of law and human rights (particularly in the NATO Chicago Summit Declaration, May 2012) are pointing at. It should be also pointed out that a certain correction to the contents of ANP-2010 has been made (in line with the modified goals and tasks) that applies also to the preservation of respective principles and mechanisms (which were excluded, reduced or attenuated).

Activities in the ANP format allow the state to work out modern approaches towards implementation of the consistent public policy with an inherent combination of long-term (annual) and medium-term (for a few years) planning. Every year the Government develops a detailed Action Plan for implementation of the ANP (hereinafter the ANP AP). At the same time in fact, the connection between the medium-term goals and the tasks for the current year is not always maintained when ANP and ANP AP are planned. A major part of ANP AP measures, even fulfilled, does not bring medium-term goals significantly closer. In addition, the ANP AP is traditionally approved with a considerable delay. For example, the government approved the ANP implementation plan for 2012 only on August 22, 2012.

The annual decrees of the President of Ukraine on the ANP show a chronic isolation and mismatch between the medium-term goals declared in the ANP and similar goals stated in other departmental (functional) programme documents of the government.

Central executive bodies (CEBs) continue with the fallacious practice of fading coverage of specific financing volumes for outlined measures, a trend towards unspecific description of the financial support for ANP AP measures is getting stronger.

A gap between the actual planning of medium-term goals, measures and budgeting is growing. The CEBs continue with the fallacious practice of disagreement between the measures and specific sources and volumes of their financing, retreat from detailed specification of financial support to ANP AP measures.

The problem of a gap between the medium-term goals and the measures planned was observed before as well, however, it became only deeper and systemic in 2011-2012. Quite often are the cases when the goals, priorities and measures are interchanged, the goals are substituted with measures, the definition of goals, tasks and measures is unreasonably repeated. The point is that the measures are inappropriate, shallow and of limited effect to really approach the declared goal.

The issue of qualitative coordination of ANP implementation was not resolved. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which is vested with respective functions, has neither appropriate powers nor resources. At the same time, there is virtually no system of coordination at the level of the Cabinet of Ministers and its Secretariat. Thus, the ANP exists in a vacuum, without any proper concordance with respective public programmes of reforms, which are isolated both from the ANP and from each other.

During 2011-2012, the transparency of planning, implementation and monitoring of ANP implementation deteriorated significantly. The access to respective documentation became more

complicated; the documents which gave an insight into the progress of planned measures and activity of respective CEBs in the context of ANP disappeared from the public domain. A part of documents, which used to be available on websites of public authorities, are not provided now even upon an official request of research institutions (this was revealed very distinctly in the course of the present research).

Respective chapters and information about the state of cooperation, that were available on websites of the executive power in previous years, have been reduced. Independent experts, interested non-governmental organizations and mass-media are practically not engaged into planning and monitoring of the ANP (on a regular basis) by public authorities. In particular, no interest was displayed to this research during its preparation. All this made the qualitative independent non-governmental monitoring more difficult.

Defence and security planning of the ANP and of the respective Action Plan underwent a change related to both the consequences of the declared "non-bloc status" and the aggravating problem of underfunding. During 2011-2012, the ANP gradually transformed from the "national programme" (which it should be in essence) to a "bilateral cooperation programme" with provision of resources mainly by partners from the Alliance. Most of the ANP AP 2011 measures are defined as international cooperation activities where the financial obligations are shifted to international organizations and NATO member states. Hence, Ukraine set a course for self-withdrawal from financing a lot of important obligations concerning the reforms and measures in the defence sector.

Insufficient financing needed for development of the Armed Forces of Ukraine significantly limited the implementation of the State Programme for Development of the AF of Ukraine for 2006-2011 and of the ANP key Section II (defence and military matters). An adequate informational support of this process was not ensured as well. The resources of international partners, foundations and non-governmental organizations (in particular the NATO PA, ATA, etc.) are used insufficiently.

On the one hand, the ANP contributed to establishment of an integral approach to reforms, which is a progressive practice for Ukraine and provided new experience of planning and implementation of a holistic approach towards assumption and realization of commitments in the whole range of state policy directions.

On the other hand, the gained experience does not provide enough grounds to state that this format is effective as a means for mobilization of resources for implementation of reforms under the existing political conditions in Ukraine. The planning, fulfilment and reporting on the ANP are mainly formalistic and demonstrate a large gap between the goals, planned measures and real provision of resources. Many facts revealed by the research show that adherence to this format of cooperation is maintained rather by inertia and the Ukrainian party is not ready now to invest substantial efforts in order to transform its experience within the ANP format into a "success story".

On measures for implementation of the Constructive Partnership with North Atlantic Treaty Organization

For the purpose of practical incorporation of the partnership under the auspices of the Ukraine-NATO Commission, five joint working groups were established that focused on the

military reform, defence technical cooperation, economic security, planning for civil emergencies, as well as science and environment.

It should be noted that the main criteria for choosing one or other direction of activity – except for the traditional for Ukraine security policies and attaining of proper defence standards by the Ukrainian state – a no less important issue of economic expedience of the measures has emerged for the first time.

As for now, Ukraine has focused on projects associated with provision of air-transport services, measures of military cooperation, in particular the military operations under the NATO command, NATO Response Force, as well as measures aimed at development of the military technical cooperation.

Strategic Airlift Interim Solution (SALIS) Program of NATO

Since 2006, Ukraine was involved in providing an opportunity to carry out strategic transportation of military and non-military loads by air using the aircraft leased from the third countries within the SALIS programme.

In addition to NATO nations (Belgium, United Kingdom, Hungary, Germany, Greece, Denmark, Canada, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, France, Czech Republic), the SALIS programme includes also Finland, Sweden and the joint Ukrainian-Russian company Ruslan SALIS GmbH consisting of the Russian group of companies "Volga-Dniepr" and the Ukrainian Company "Antonov Airlines", with headquarters in Leipzig.

"Antonov Airlines" and the Russian "Volga-Dniepr" are the worldwide leading operators of the heavy cargo aircraft An-124-100 "Ruslan" which has the load lifting capacity of 150 tons.

It is envisaged in the contract terms that the Alliance shall keep two airplanes An-124-100 at the military base in Leipzig (Germany), and four more airplanes can be provided upon request from the territory of Ukraine and Russia.

In January 2006, a respective agreement between the NATO Maintenance and Supply Agency (NAMSA), countries participating in the programme (15 states at the time of signing) and Ruslan SALIS GmbH was concluded for the term till the end of 2010 with a possibility of further prolongation. In December 2012, NATO once again prolonged the contract for leasing of Ukrainian and Russian heavy cargo aircraft An-124-100 till December 31, 2014.

Participation of Ukraine's Armed Forces in peace-keeping operations under the auspices of NATO

At present, Ukraine takes part in four on-going operations under the auspices of NATO, namely: within the Multinational KFOR in Kosovo, the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan, NATO anti-terrorism Operation Active Endeavour and the NATO Naval Operation Ocean Shield.

Multinational KFOR in Kosovo

The main objectives of the peace-keeping force consisting of 133 persons are defined as follows: patrolling, putting out observation posts and escort conveying, guarding important KFOR sites and participation in operations and measures of the Multinational Battlegroup East and the KFOR command.

Now, participation and scheduled rotations of the 161 servicemen strong national force taking part in activities of the Multinational Peacekeeping Force in Kosovo (KFOR) is ensured.

International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan

Main objectives of the Ukrainian peacekeeping personnel are defined as follows: set up and support of interaction with Afghanistan authorities and representatives of international organisations deployed in the country; medical aid to representatives of International Forces; support of security and local population; engineer reconnaissance of the terrain and disposal of explosives in the area of responsibility; consultative assistance to servicemen of the Afghanistan National Army on maintenance and operation of helicopter machines, etc.

As for now, the participation and scheduled rotation of the 30 servicemen strong national personnel acting within the ISAF has been extended.

NATO anti-terrorism Operation Active Endeavour

In the course of the operation, Ukraine enabled the use of the Ukrainian set of forces, which was intended for participation in the Ocean Shield operation, for the purposes of the NATO Operation Active Endeavour (*associative support*) during their passage through waters of the Mediterranean Sea to their task area near the Horn of Africa (from NSA Souda Bay to the Suez Canal) and sent the corvette Ternopil for participation at the heavy patrolling (Surge 5,6) as a part of operation with the Standing NATO Maritime Group 2 and the Standing NATO Mine Countermeasures Group 2 according to plan from October 13 to November 13, 2013.

NATO Naval Operation Ocean Shield

During the Operation Ocean Shield, a ship of the Naval Forces of the Armed Forces of Ukraine will patrol sea areas, escort vessels and intercept suspicious vessels.

In the course of the operation, Ukraine used the frigate Hetman Sahaydachniy with a shipboard helicopter Ka-27 and a special task force (inspection team) to carry out practical tasks for the benefit of the operation.

Joint projects contributing to development of the AF of Ukraine and higher defence capacity of Ukraine

Involvement of the AFU in the NATO Response Forces.

In order to raise the combat readiness, the AFU units are involved in activities of the NATO Response Forces. In particular, an airplane IL-76MD was engaged in the NATO Response Forces.

At the same time, the following units are going to be involved in NFR modules: a company of marines of a separate marine battalion of the Naval Forces of the AF of Ukraine in 2014 and an air medical evacuation ambulance An-26 Vita with the group of air medical evacuation 456 br TrA of the Military Medical Clinical Centre of the Central Region in 2015.

Air Situation Data Exchange (ASDE) programme of NATO in the activity framework of the NATO Air Defence Committee.

The Air Situation Data Exchange (ASDE) programme of NATO made it possible to put the 2nd operational (Southern) district into operation, to launch the planned interaction between the AF of Ukraine and respective entities of the Alliance in the Western and Southern districts, as well as to conduct negotiations on the basis of the Strategic Command Operations Headquarters with the delegation of the Air Forces of the AF of Ukraine regarding the possible use of the ASDE programme of NATO in the mode up to 200 nautical miles on the permanent basis.

Establishment of an analysis and lessons learned system in the AF of Ukraine.

Consistent efforts initiating the first-priority steps in the cooperation with the Joint Analysis and Lessons Learned Centre (JALLC) are under way.

Cooperation in the field of standardization.

The AF of Ukraine continued the cooperation with the NATO Standardization Agency (NSA) by introducing an effective control over the realization of the Roadmap provisions, training a representative of the AF of Ukraine at the NSA and participation at the meeting of the NATO Standardization Committee at the level of leaders.

The framework of the military cooperation with NATO ensures the individual and collective training of servicemen and AFU units, the development of infrastructure and capabilities of the International Centre of Peacekeeping and Security (ICPS), continued cooperation under the Global Peace Operations Initiative programme in the framework of the international technical aid (equipping of the ICPS with a Wi-Max network and construction of a training spot Eastern and European Town).

In addition, the implementation of the Annual National Programme (ANP, Section II. Defence and Military Issues), measures from the Work Plan of Cooperation between the NATO MC and the General Staff of the AFU, military and political dialogue, and ongoing participation of representatives of the AF of Ukraine in the following meetings are ensured:

- Working Group (WG) of the NATO MC for military cooperation with Ukraine;
- WG of the NATO MC for military cooperation within EAP;
- NATO MC Operations WG;
- NATO Movement and Transportation WG within the NATO Logistics Committee;
- WG of the NATO Air Defence Committee;
- NATO Consultation, Command and Control Board;
- NATO Logistics Committee;
- NATO Petroleum Committee;
- NATO Committee for Standardization;
- NATO Verification Coordinating Committee;
- NATO Air Defence Committee;

- NATO Committee on Gender Perspectives;
- Committee of the Chiefs of Military Medical Services in NATO;
- Conference on strategic military partnership;
- Conference on modern trends in the development of the defence sphere;
- NATO Financial Working Group;
- Conference and training course at the Joint Analysis and Lessons Learned Centre (JALLC) of NATO;
- Committee of the Chiefs of Military Medical Services in NATO;
- Global Conference on Force Generation for Operations and Response Forces of NATO.

Trust Fund Project of the NATO Programme in Ukraine for disposal of conventional ammunition, small arms and light weapons (SALW)

The Trust Fund Project of the NATO Programme in Ukraine for disposal of conventional ammunition, small arms and light weapons (SALW) is directed at demilitarization of 133 thousand tons of ammunition, 1.5 million SALW and provision of aid in disposal of 3 million mines PFM-1 over the period of 12 years in 4 stages.

During the first project stage (2006-2012), 15 thousand tons of ammunition, 400,000 small arms and light weapons (SALW) and 1,000 of MANPADs were disposed of. In addition, the equipment for incineration of small calibre ammunitions was produced and installed at the Donetsk state-owned plant of chemical products with financial support from the NATO Trust Fund. The contribution of the Trust Fund to this project stage made up 10.8 million euro.

The leading state in the 1st stage of the project were the United States. The executive agent responsible for conclusion of contracts and project management is the NATO Maintenance and Supply Agency (NAMSA, now NSPA).

The donor states, besides the USA, were: Austria, Bulgaria, Canada, Germany, Hungary, Island, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Slovakia, Switzerland, Turkey, the United Kingdom as well as the European Union.

In September 2010, NAMSA submitted a Proposal on the second stage of the project for Ukraine. The donation of the Trust Fund for the second stage will make up about 25 million euro. The USA will act as the leading state at the second stage of the project. It is planned to dispose of 73.5 thousand tons of conventional ammunition, 366 thousand items of small arms and 3 million of antipersonnel mines PFM-1.

The preparation, harmonization and approval of all the necessary documents was finalized with the passed Law of Ukraine and three Decrees of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine.

The United States will act as a leading state at the project stage 2. Other donor countries of this project stage are now: Germany, Switzerland, Turkey, and Ireland. The European Union is sponsoring the disposal of antipersonnel mines.

Capacities of the State Enterprise "Ukroboronleasing" in Kamyanyets-Podilsk for recycling of small arms, "UOS-DM Centre" of the State Enterprise "Ukroboronservice" for disposal of conventional ammunition, the proof house of the State Research Institute of Chemical Products in Shostka, the Donetsk state-owned plant of chemical products, the State Enterprise "Scientific Production Association "Pavlograd Chemical Plant" will be used at stage 2.

On April 18, 2012, trilateral contracts (NSPA (former NAMSA) – the Defence Ministry of Ukraine – main contractors) were signed for disposal of conventional ammunition and small arms in the framework of the project stage 2.

On February 01, 2013, a contract for disposal of antipersonnel mines PFM-1 was signed. The grant makes up 1.8 mln euro. As of February 19, 2013, 6,958 tons of conventional ammunition and 100,100 items of SALW were disposed of.

On cooperation of Ukraine in the framework of the Visegrad Four

The Visegrad Group (V4) was not established as an alternative to all-European integration projects. V4 does not compete with other organizations of the Central Eastern Europe. On the contrary, the activity of the group is targeted at deeper cooperation with other countries, in particular the neighbour countries, and international organizations in order to promote democracy and advance the European standards of politics and social processes.

The cooperation with other international initiatives – with Nordic Council, Western Balkan group of countries, Benelux, Baltic states – as well as development of the "V4+" format is of top priority for V4. This format was introduced for a dialogue with Austria and Slovenia but it was later extended to other states, in particular **Ukraine** and Japan.

Now one of the major priorities of the military cooperation between the Visegrad Group countries is resolving the organizational issues of a joint EU Battlegroup (EUBG) that has to be formed under the Polish command and be fully deployable in the first half of 2016.

On March 6 this year in Warsaw, the defence ministers of V4 countries have signed a Letter of Intent on formation of the joint EUBG that is considered an important contribution of Poland, Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Hungary into development of the European defence politics.

The heads of defence agencies of Poland, Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Hungary have agreed on the main principles of manning and equipping the joint EUBG and have preliminary agreed on the overall input of every V4 country to its contingent.

The total personnel strength of the joint brigade level EUBG is approved at the level of 3 thousand persons, including from:

- the Polish Republic – 1300-1600 servicemen (the final number will be defined by the end of the current year after the V4 countries settle down all the issues of the joint EUBG formation);
- the Czech Republic – 700-800 servicemen;
- the Slovak Republic – up to 400 servicemen;

- Hungary – 300-350 servicemen.

Poland was appointed the leading country in formation of the EUGB and it allocates the core of the combat forces and specialized units.

Other V4 countries in their turn will be responsible for:

- the Czech Republic – medical defence and logistics;
- the Slovak Republic – protection against weapons of mass destruction;
- Hungary – engineering support.

At the same time, the countries of the Visegrad Four have not yet decided on allocation of the following facilities for purposes of the joint EUGB:

- combat helicopter unit;
- tactical MEDEVAC unit (to be agreed between the Czech Republic /airplane Airbus 319/ and Poland /airplane C-130 Hercules/);
- strategic airway transportations.

Special working groups were established with the general staffs as decided by defence ministers of the V4 countries in order to come to the final agreement on the structure of the joint EUGB and the contribution from every V4 country. The experts of the AF of Poland, Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Hungary have worked on the proposals regarding the fulfilment of requirements to each separate facility and provision of a management and communication system.

All the organizational and technical issues of the joint EUGB formation are planned to be finished by the end of 2013. In 2014, it is planned to begin with training of units for the EUGB at the national level. In 2015, a series of joint exercises will be held in the framework of V4 that will end up with a unit cohesion and certification of the EUGB.

The countries of the Visegrad Four will make efforts to form a joint EUGB relying on their own forces and capabilities as this project is considered the first significant input of the Visegrad Group to practical filling of the defence capabilities of the European Union.

If they are not sufficient, the partner countries of the Visegrad Four will receive official invitations for participation in formation of the battlegroup. In particular, the V4 defence ministers unanimously agreed that the potential partners will be Ukraine, Austria, Croatia and Serbia.

Ukraine is considered now by all the countries of the Visegrad Group as the main candidate for ensuring the capability of the joint EUGB for strategic airway transportations.

The deployment readiness of the EUGB is scheduled for January 1, 2016.

In general, after the formation process is finished and stages of the unit cohesion are passed, the EUGB should be ready for duty by the 15th day after the order for deployment was received.

The military and political dialogue of Ukraine and V4 countries is carried on in form of annual meetings of chiefs of the defence agencies.

At their meeting, they define projects that may be interesting both for Ukraine and the Visegrad Four. Thus, the following international agreements have been signed within the defined format in the last years: between the Defence Ministry of Ukraine and the Defence Ministry of the Slovak Republic on cooperation in the military sphere, and between the Defence Ministry of Ukraine and the Defence Ministry of the Czech Republic on cooperation in the field of military geography.

Further actions and development of the multilateral cooperation between Ukraine and V4 countries will depend, first of all, on the consistency of the political course, the presence of the political will, financing, quality of planning and on success of the previous cooperation stages.

The current status of this cooperation can be described as partially successful, though the range of this cooperation, in view of the challenges to the security and defence policy, is obviously insufficient and requires a more consistent and ambitious approach to planning and implementation.

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