BULGARIA IN NATO: NEW ROLES AND CAPABILITIES OF THE NAVY

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Abstract: In a comprehensive manner this article presents roles and missions of Bulgaria's Navy, and the capabilities it develops to deal with the 21st century security challenges in cooperation with other services, security organizations, and allied navies. In the process of transformation, the Navy has developed ambitious plans to insert advanced technologies, commensurate to its new missions and tasks. This article looks specifically at plans to introduce advanced communications and information technologies in order to achieve required naval capabilities and to facilitate individual, crew, and staff training.

New Roles, Missions, and Responsibilities of the Navies Facing 21st Century Security Challenges

Historically, the term "national security" had various specific definitions and dimensions; however, they all had one common meaning – the reliable protection of the territorial integrity and the independence of a sovereign state. The challenge in this respect was how to approach and in what manner to realize this "national security."

The turmoil of the political and societal changes in Europe in the 1990s and thereafter, the dissolution of a number of multinational states, e.g., the Soviet Union and the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the unification of Germany, the processes of globalization and unification of Europe, as well as the aggravation of demographic, ecological, economic and social problems and, most importantly, the expansion of the international terrorism and organized crime, brought forward a number of issues related to the notion of national security and the ways to realize it.

In the last few years, the notion of national security went beyond the boundaries of a separate state.

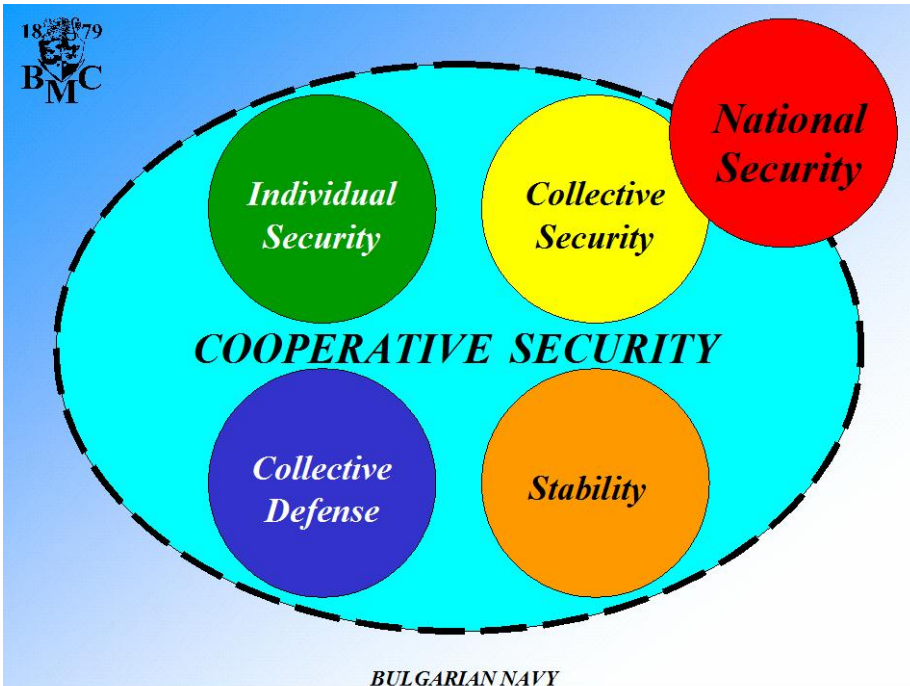Of increasing importance are the notions of *Individual Security*, *Collective Security*,

Figure 1: Constituents of the Cooperative Security System.

Collective Defense, and *Promotion of Stability*, constituting a system for common /cooperative/ security (This interaction of terms and notions is presented graphically in Figure 1).

Security is based not only on military force and government actions, activities of national institutions and non-governmental organizations within a state, but also on international (bilateral and multilateral) treaties and organizations.

In this respect I am proud to state that, since 1991, Bulgaria's naval forces stand firmly behind the Atlantic idea. The Navy incorporated in its plans variety of activities aimed to increase the confidence and to foster collective security in the Black Sea region and to promote stability. Even prior to the "Partnership for Peace" Initiative, in 1993 Varna hosted the international symposium "Black Sea Naval Review"—the first of its kind—on the topic "The Naval Forces in the New Geopolitical Environment." Under excellent organization, more than 100 participants form 13 countries actively discussed 26 reports. As a continuation of this effort, that same year Bulgaria hosted the first national naval exercise with international participation in the "Breeze" series.

Figure 2: International Exercises and Other Activities of the Bulgarian Navy.

Since the launch of the "Partnership for Peace" Initiative in 1994, the Bulgarian Navy actively participates in variety of exercises (Figure 2 provides a sample list). That allowed the Navy to gain international experience and recognition and to make a commensurate contribution to Bulgaria's efforts towards NATO membership.

The changes in the security environment, in the social, political and economic development of the country, the pending membership in NATO and the qualitatively differing approach to national security, and its military aspect in particular, prompted the conduct of the ongoing Strategic Defense Review. Based on our accomplishments and looking into the future, we reassess existing and define new links, parameters, and norms in the field of national security and defense, that constitute the fundament for our Vision how the Navy will evolve, what the new responsibilities are and how to develop the operational capabilities, required to accomplish the new missions and tasks.

The Strategic Defense Review is yet another step in harmonizing the national defense policy with the policy of the member countries of the North Atlantic Treaty, in defin-

ing and realizing Bulgaria's contribution to the Common European Security and Defense Policy.

In the review process, the Navy accounts for the following basic assumptions:

1. *Main purpose of defense* is to guarantee the sovereignty, the security and the independence of the country and to protect its territorial integrity. This goal will be accomplished in the context of the collective security and defense system with full mobilization of the national capabilities and resources.

2. The *collective security system provides the optimal approach to guaranteeing national security*. The membership in the North Atlantic Treaty is a factor with decisive importance for the security of the Republic of Bulgaria. At the same time, the membership in the Alliance requires that the Navy builds-up and maintains adequate military capabilities and contribution to the joint capabilities of the Alliance.

3. The *main risks and threats* to the country's security stem from the international terrorism, the proliferation and the use of weapons of mass destruction, the instability of democratization processes in conflict regions, organized crime, illegal traffic of strategic raw materials, technologies, arms, drugs, and people, as well as from destructive impacts on information systems, economic instability, ecological catastrophes, natural and man-made disasters. In the Black Sea region, Bulgaria's Navy has important responsibilities in respect to all these risks and threats.

4. The complex global and regional environment of dynamically changing opportunities and barely predictable challenges necessitates the *use of non-traditional, preventive and anticipatory approaches* and solutions, complementary and coordinated efforts involving political, economic, technological, and informational—both military and civil—resources.

5. The characteristics of the new risks and threats—*asymmetric, hard to predict, unconstraint by distance impact capability*—pose new and harsh tests to the Navy. These features demand a fundamental change in organizing, equipping and training the Navy and a completely different force planning approach – from one based on threats to one based on required capabilities.

6. The new defense policy commands a *new vision* on the role, the place and the tasks of the armed forces, on their structure, composition, and operational capabilities.

7. The development of the naval forces ought to guarantee the sustainment of *effective, combat capable, multifunctional, modular and mobile units*. These units shall be capable to participate in combined and joint operations, to be deployed abroad, to be relatively independent and fully logistically sustainable, to be able to react in real time to the challenges of the security environment and to be interoperable with allied

forces. The deployable forces—a subset of the force structure—are of highest priority in realizing defense objectives and planning force development.

Accounting for all these assumptions, the naval forces are developing operational capabilities for contribution to the following *missions*:

- Defensive;
- In support of the international peace and security;
- Contribution to the national security in peacetime.

Figure 3: Missions of the Bulgarian Navy.

Figure 3 presents graphically the concept of new missions of the Bulgarian Navy.

The mission *Defense* comprises all activities related to guaranteeing the national sovereignty, security and independence, and the protection of the territorial integrity of the country, as well as those of the NATO member countries in the context of Article V of the North Atlantic Treaty.

The mission in *support of the international peace and security* is carried out in accordance with international and coalition obligations of the country in the fight against terrorism, for the prevention and management of crises and conflicts outside

the country's territory, participation in multinational formations, activities in support to the evolving European Security and Defense Policy, arms control and non-proliferation regimes, in particular against proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the means of their delivery, in support of humanitarian relief, international military cooperation and confidence building measures.

The *contribution to the national security in peacetime* covers the sustainment and utilization of capabilities in support of the control of the national air and sea space; collection and processing of information on potential risks and threats; operations to deter and neutralize terrorist, extremist and crime groups; protection of strategic sites; protection of and support to the population during natural disasters, industrial accidents and ecological catastrophes; humanitarian relief activities; search and rescue operations; support, when necessary, to other governmental organizations.

The analysis of this set of missions provides the following *conclusions* in regard to the Navy:

1. The role of the Navy increases and becomes decisive for the defense of the country in the collective security framework:

- Upon NATO membership, Eastern Bulgaria and the Black Sea coast becomes eastern border of the Alliance (and of the European Union in the near future. See the map in Figure 4);

- Surveillance, reconnaissance, early warning of threats /crisis/ and the timely warning are essential for the favorable operational regime in the sea spaces, this also being of immense importance for NATO and the European Union.

2. Functionally and structurally, the future naval forces shall be built to maximize the contribution to:

- the defense of the country in the framework of the collective defense;

- the international security;

- the national security and sovereignty in time of peace.

3. The asymmetry and the unpredictability of new risks and threats to the national security, as well as the destabilizing influence of regional hotspots demand the creation of a system for complete and comprehensive control of the sea spaces.

4. Priority for the Navy will be the development of operational capabilities for participation in the collective defense system, in support of the international peace and security, and for contribution to national security in peacetime.

5. The management of the human resources (selection, education, training, professionalization, promotion, motivation) is of increasing importance.

6. Financial constraints demand prioritization of spending in order to achieve the
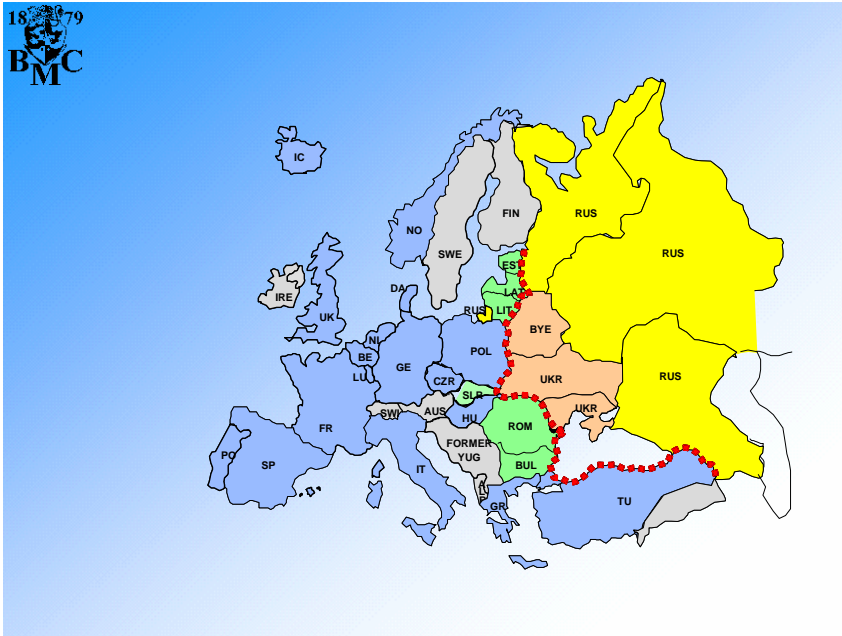
Figure 4: Bulgaria at the Eastern (Sea) Border of NATO.

required operational capabilities for participation in the system for collective defense, in support of the international peace and security, and for contribution to national security in time of peace.

7. It is necessary to review and update the naval doctrine and other conceptual and doctrinal documents, related to the evolution of the Navy and its activity.

New Missions and Tasks of the Bulgarian Navy – New Operational Capabilities

The Navy is one of the services of Bulgaria's Armed Forces (BAF). As a whole, the armed forces maintain readiness for participation in the full spectrum of missions in guaranteeing the sovereignty, security and independence of the Republic of Bulgaria and protection of its territorial integrity and interests in the sea spaces, participate in NATO's collective defense and support the international and national security in peacetime.

Mission I. Defensive

1.1. National defense in the framework of the collective defense system.

1.2. Participation in collective defense operations outside of the country's territory.

Mission II. Support to the international security

1.1. Participation in international crisis response operations outside of the country's territory

1.2. Participation in international operations to guarantee peace and security.

1.3. International military cooperation and participation in multinational or bilateral military formations.

1.4. Participation in arms control measures, activities against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and confidence building measures.

Mission III. Contribution to the national security in peacetime

3.1. Surveillance, control and protection of the national territory, air and sea spaces.

3.2. Protection of and support to the population during natural disasters, industrial accidents and catastrophes.

3.3. Preparation of the population, the national economy, and the country's infrastructure for crisis response.

3.4. Participation in search and rescue operations.

3.5. Participation in the protection of strategic sites.

3.6. Contribution to the activity of other governmental ministries and agencies (information, hydrographic, meteorological support, mapping, ceremonial functions, VIP support, etc.).

3.7. Participation in the fight against terrorism, organized crime, and the illegal trafficking of drugs, people, and arms.

3.8. Participation in guaranteeing the information security and protection against cyber attacks on command and control and information systems.

3.9. Personnel development; preservation, development and further enrichment of BAF's traditions and values.

3.10. Protection of the environment and decontamination.

Requirements to the Navy

The accomplishment of the missions and the tasks requires that the future naval forces are highly effective, combat capable, multifunctional, mobile, deployable, relatively independent and fully logistically sustained, capable to react to security challenges and risks in real time and to be interoperable both with other security sector organizations and with allied navies.

In the development of the Navy, priority is placed on the capability of Bulgaria's naval forces to deploy in and outside Black Sea and the Mediterranean Sea for partici-

pation in the full spectrum of missions in the NATO's collective defense system, as well as in multinational peacekeeping operations and coalitions under the aegis of the United Nations, the European Union, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

The list of development priorities includes:

- Deployable forces performing tasks:
    - o   in the system for collective defense;
    - o   in support of the international peace and security;
    - o   in support of the national security in peacetime.
- Forces that are not planned for deployment outside the country's territory.

To meet these demands, the Navy will develop the relevant required operational capabilities; will adapt its functional and organizational structure with priority on the deployable forces and the participation in the collective defense.

Required Operational Capabilities

In order to be able to accomplish the full spectrum of its missions and tasks, the Navy shall develop the following main operational capabilities:

- Maintain adequate force readiness to accomplish its defense missions and tasks.
- Maintain high level of training, including:
    - o   individual / personnel training;
    - o   training of the naval branches;
    - o   joint training of units from different naval branches;
    - o   training for joint and multinational operations.
- Comprehensive surveillance, early warning and control for the purposes of the timely and effective neutralization of potential risks and threats.
- Timely force deployment.
- Effective naval and joint operations.
- Timely and effective logistics.
- Effective actions in support to national security and sovereignty in peacetime.
- Effective command and control, communications, information systems, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (C4ISR).
- Effective materiel and medical support to forces on the territory and in the aquatory of the country and to deployed forces;

- Force protection and survivability.

Vision for the Development of the Navy

On the basis of the differentiated missions, roles and tasks, the main criteria for the development of the Navy is defined as the achievement of full control of the sea spaces, early warning and timely neutralization of potential risks and asymmetric threats.

To this purpose the Navy, being one of the main operational components of the strategic defense system, will continue its development utilizing the *system approach* and enhancing the following *subsystems*:

- Operational surveillance, reconnaissance, early warning and control of the sea spaces;
- Command, control, and communications;
- Materiel and medical support (logistics);

Figure 5: Subsystem for Operational Surveillance, Reconnaissance, Early Warning and Control of the Sea Spaces.

- Force training;
- Mobilization and mobilization training;
- Education and qualification;
- Social and personnel policies and personnel development.

A brief description of three of these subsystems follows.

Operational Surveillance, Reconnaissance, Early Warning and Control of the Sea Spaces

As part of the Navy's command and control system, the subsystem for operational surveillance, reconnaissance, early warning and control of the sea spaces provides (see Figure 5):

- Continuous collection, processing and discriminate dissemination of information in the interest of the Navy on potential risks and threats to the national security;
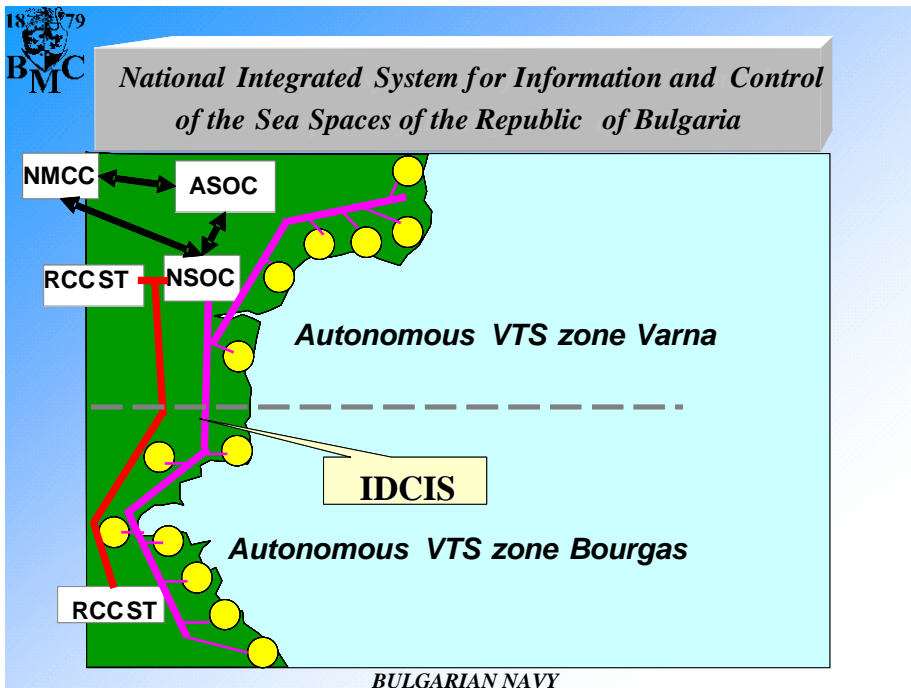- Control of the sea traffic regime.

Figure 6: National Integrated System for Information and Control of the Sea Spaces of the Republic of Bulgaria.
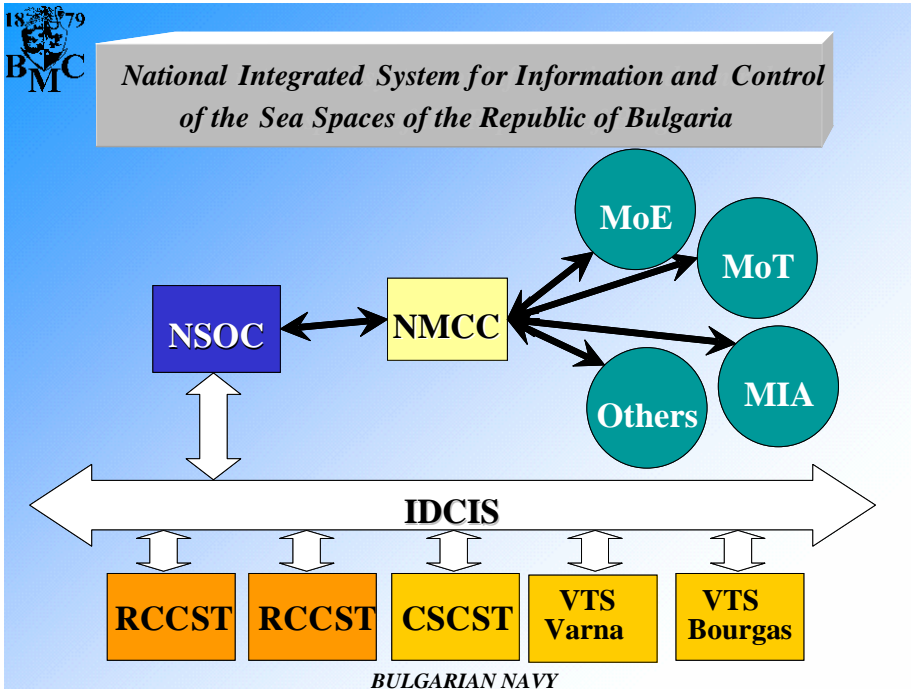
Figure 7: Structure of the National Integrated System for Information and Control of the Sea Spaces.

Abbreviations in Figures 6 and 7:

NSOC – Naval Sovereignty Operations Center
NMCC – National Military Command Center
ASOC – Air Sovereignty Operations Center
MoEW – Ministry of the Environment and Waters
MoTC – Ministry of Transportation and Communications
MoI – Ministry of the Interior
IDCIS – Integrated Digital Communications and Information System
RCCST – Regional Center for Control of the Sea Traffic
CSCST – Coastal System for Control of the Sea Traffic
VTS – Vessel Traffic System

The required operational capabilities of this subsystem may be attained through the establishment of a *National Integrated System for Information and Control of the Sea Spaces of the Republic of Bulgaria*. The concept and the structure are presented in Figures 6 and 7. Organizationally, this system includes:

- Naval Sovereignty Operations Center (NSOC):

- Regional Center for Control of the Sea Traffic (RCCST);
- Coastal System for Control of the Sea Traffic (CSCST);
- Two autonomous Vessel Traffic Systems (VTS) zones, respectively for the areas of Varna and Bourgas;
- Integrated Digital Communications and Information System (IDCIS).

In addition, through the Naval Sovereignty Operations Center, this system is integrated with the National Military Command Center (NMCC), as well as with other military C2 nodes and adequate organizations within the Ministry of the Interior (MoI), the Ministry of Transportation and Communications, the Ministry of the Environment and Waters (MoEW) and other governmental agencies and non-governmental organizations.

Command, Control, and Communications

The Navy's command and control will be part of the new integrated military structure of NATO. This shall allow using command mechanisms in conduct of operations with
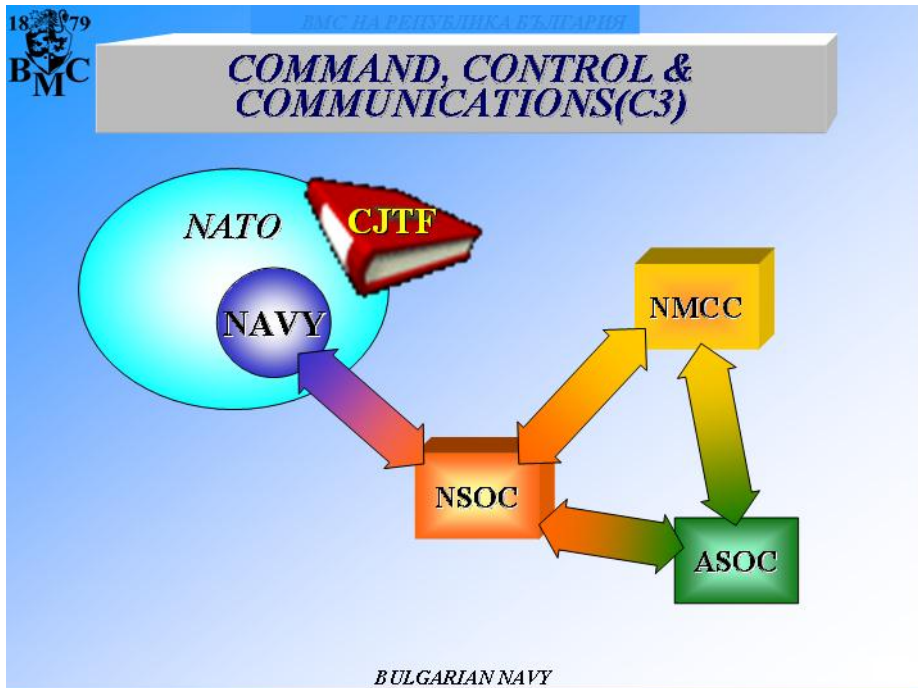

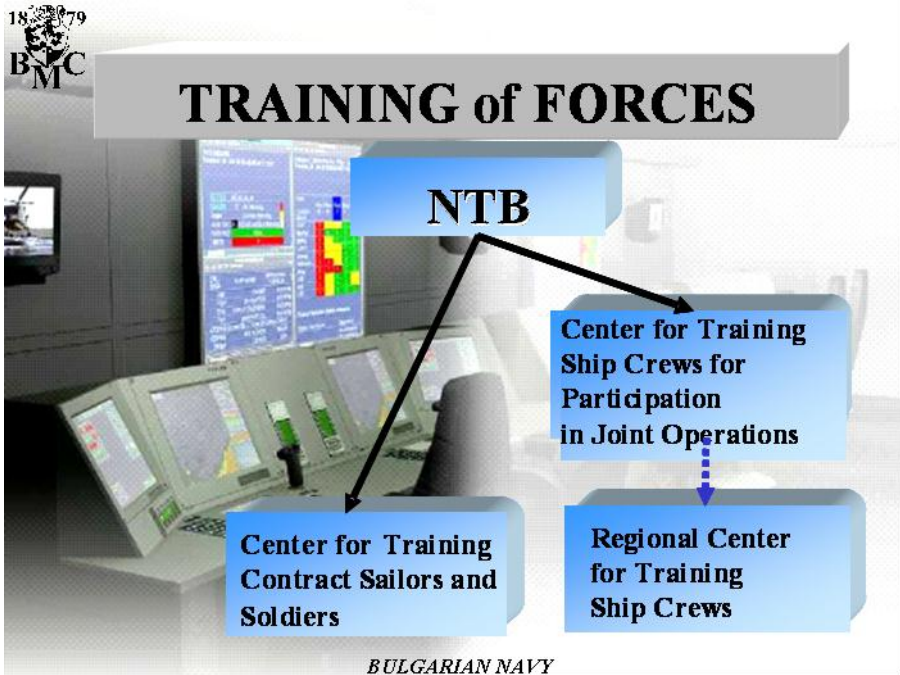Figure 8: Command Hierarchy and Interaction of Command Centers.

Figure 9: Force Training Concept.

participation of ready deployable forces on the basis of the Alliance concept for *Combined Joint Task Forces* (CJTF).

In addition, the accession to the Alliance command structure will require reorganization of naval headquarters structure in functional aspect without leading to decrease of the overall operational effectiveness. Part of this change is the establishment of the Naval Sovereignty Operations Center that will serve as both command and administrative management structure, closely linked and interacting with the National Military Command Center (NMCC) and the Air Sovereignty Operations Center (ASOC).

The establishment of this modernized system for command and control of all naval forces and maritime elements is an issue of considerable importance for the country. It shall be solved in a unified national maritime policy that integrates the efforts of all maritime organizations in the country. Responsible for the control in the national sea spaces, the Navy will play the leadership role and will coordinate all activities within these sea spaces.

Force Training

One of the most important requirements to the Navy is the successful integration in the Alliance collective defense system. To this purpose, the relevant standardization agreements of the Alliance will be fully implemented in the training of the naval forces and headquarters.

Preserving the best traditions and incorporating new training requirements of the Alliance, the Bulgarian Navy will also introduce extensive simulation-based training (The training concept is presented in Figure 9). To this purpose we established a new "Center for Qualification of Contract Sailors" at the Naval Academy in Varna. Furthermore, since October 2003 the Navy uses a new "Center for Training Ship Crews for Participation in Joint Operations." Our ambition is to turn this Center in the future in a NATO-dedicated *Regional Center for Training Ship Crews*. The goal is to guarantee interoperability with crews from other countries, participating in operations, as well as to support Bulgaria's policy towards increased understanding, good neighborly relations, and confidence in the region.

In the promotion of this concept, the crew of the "Smely" Frigate underwent the first training course in the Center. This training facilitated the successful participation of "Smely" in multinational exercises with NATO ships in the Mediterranean Sea.

Conclusion

The deployable forces from the Bulgarian Navy form the naval component of Bulgaria's contribution to Article V collective defense operations, as well as to multinational out-of-area operations. This type of participation, being of high priority in Bulgaria's security and defense policy, requires significant modernization of the fleet. The current article did not look at this particular aspect of naval transformation. However, both operational requirements and technological opportunities are discussed in detail in the remaining articles of this issue of "Information & Security."

The Bulgarian Navy certainly needs new ships, modernized coastal, sea- and airborne command and control, surveillance and weapon systems that fit the country' defense policy and allow for smooth integration of the Navy in the process of transformation of the North Atlantic Alliance. This journal issue provides a number of ideas that, we may be confident, will help us turn the Bulgarian navy into an important contributor to Bulgaria's national security and to the collective security of NATO.

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