



NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION

Energy security: a major factor in international security

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Energy has several security-related aspects. Supply lines and increasingly interconnected critical infrastructure are frequently targeted by terrorists, computer hackers and pirates. Deployed forces need to become more energy-efficient in order to save money and reduce the environmental impact. And the growing global demand for energy and other scarce resources could lead to disputes. Last week, highlighting the increasing importance of energy security for the Alliance, NATO's Secretary General formally inaugurated the NATO Energy Security Centre of Excellence in Vilnius, Lithuania.





“I strongly believe that most resource issues will be settled by the power of the market, not by the power of guns,”

emphasised NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen, speaking at the inauguration on 6 September 2013. *“Energy security is not a call to arms. But when it comes to understanding the security implications of global resource developments, NATO must be ahead of the curve.”*

The Alliance has a role to play in meeting these challenges. NATO’s counter-piracy mission is helping to protect maritime supply lines. NATO also provides a platform for intelligence-sharing, training and education, and the exchange of best practices on the protection of critical energy infrastructure with partner countries, other institutions, and the private sector.

The Allies are also taking steps to reduce the dependence of their armed forces on fossil fuels by developing alternative fuel sources and “smart energy” projects. Becoming more energy-efficient is a necessity given rising fuel costs and financial austerity. Since the Second World War, the average fuel consumption per soldier has increased more than ten-fold. During recent years more than four million litres of fuel have been used per day by NATO forces in Afghanistan. Most of the fuel is transported over land, through areas of a high risk of deadly insurgent attacks.

“This is not just about saving money,” explained the Secretary General. *“It’s about saving lives, and saving the environment.”* Reducing the number of fuel convoys means fewer soldiers are put at risk by having to protect them. Using energy more efficiently also reduces the environmental impact of military operations.

Fostering excellence

Accredited as a NATO Centre of Excellence in October 2012, the Lithuania-based centre seeks to provide NATO bodies, nations and partner countries with assessments, recommendations and proposals for both effective and cost-efficient energy solutions to support military requirements. In addition to Lithuania, Estonia, France, Italy, Latvia and Turkey are actively sponsoring the centre’s activities, which include the development of education and training as well as the conduct of exercises and scientific, technical and academic analyses related to energy security.

Some innovative approaches to reduce fuel consumption were showcased recently at a demonstration camp set up as part of Exercise Capable Logician 2013 in Slovakia in June. The demonstration helped NATO’s Smart Energy Team (SENT) to formulate recommendations for improving NATO’s standards and best practices on saving energy.

The Smart Energy Team is jointly directed by the NATO Energy Security Centre of Excellence and by the Joint Environment Department of the Swedish Armed Forces, and financed through the NATO Science for Peace and Security Programme. It was established after the 2012 NATO Summit in Chicago, where Allied leaders pledged to *“work towards significantly improving the energy efficiency of our military forces.”*

Making defence greener and smarter is not just good for the public purse – reducing the military footprint is a necessity for the planet, given global concerns about climate change and environmental sustainability.