

NATO'S TRIDENT JUNCTURE 2018 EXERCISES

NATO-led military exercise Trident Juncture held from October 25 are, as it was already underlined, **NATO's biggest military drills since the end of the Cold War** and despite the fact that much emphasis is being put on its defensive and planned character, the message seems to be clear: **the Alliance remains strong and united. Around 50.000 soldiers and civilians from 31 member** (all NATO's member states are participating in it) and **partner states** (Finland's and Sweden's participation is mostly highlighted as a example of political solidarity within the Nordic region) will participate. Around **250 aircrafts, 65 ships and 10.000 vehicles** are brought together for the exercises. Moreover, Trident Juncture also shows that the issue of combating asymmetric threats **is no longer being perceived as the dominant paradigm within the Alliance**. Due to the scale, character of the means which are involved, goals, location (land: Norway; air: Norway, Sweden and Finland, seas: Atlantic, Baltic and the Norwegian Sea) Trident Juncture exercises are **similar to the military drills which were being held during the Cold War**.

The exercises, which are based on the Article 5 collective defense scenario, also take into consideration the specific natural weather conditions of the Scandinavian Peninsula. Norway also plans to evaluate its "total defense" concept, which aims to engage civilian and military resources at different operative levels (from crisis to a conflict at high intensity). **The aim of the exercises is also to train NATO's ability to move and supply its combat forces in one of the states located at the first front line in the event of potential conflict with the Russian Federation.** Furthermore, NATO also plans to test the effectiveness of a wide spectrum of commands and NATO's institutions including Allied Joint Force Command Naples (which conducts the exercises), NATO Allied Air Command, Standing NATO Maritime Group 1 and 2 (SNMG1 and SNMG2) and Standing NATO Mine Countermeasures Group One (SNMCMG1). It is worth mentioning that Trident Juncture, together with **NATO's Northern Coasts 2018 and Polish Anakonda 2018 exercises, are a part of a wider cycle of training operations in the region. It also shows that the region of NATO's North and Eastern Flank becomes more significant in the eyes of NATO's planners due to Russia's rising potential in the region - in terms of its naval forces and costal capabilities.**

POLISH POINT OF VIEW:

From a Polish point of view, the crucial issue is the **location of exercises** (NATO's Northern sphere) **and the engagement of the American aircraft carrier (for the first time in the Norwegian waters since 1987)** with its battle group (instead of the U.S. Sixth Fleet's amphibious assault ships). This, combined with the analysis of the Baltops exercises, which were also held this year, shows that less emphasis is being put on low intensity actions (combating asymmetrical threats, humanitarian help) and it has shifted towards **high intensity conflict at the Northern and Eastern NATO's Flanks**.

What is also important from Polish point of view is the fact that **Home Guard**, a Norwegian territorial formation, participates in the exercises (however, it should not be treated as a equivalent of Polish Territorial Defense Forces, yet it shares several futures with the TDF). It is also valuable to share their **experiences from such exercises involving also High Readiness Forces from different states** (land forces mainly from Canada, United States, Sweden, Italy, Germany and Great Britain).

Based on:

- *Ponad 40 okrętów na Bałtyku. Ruszyły ćwiczenia Baltops-18*, Defence24.pl, <https://www.defence24.pl/prawie-40-okretow-na-baltyku-ruszyly-cwiczenia-baltops-18>;
- *Trident Juncture 18*, NATO website, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_158620.htm;
- *Press conference by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg and Supreme Allied Commander Europe, General Curtis Scaparrotti on board the USS Harry S. Truman*, NATO website, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_159355.htm;
- *Facts and information Exercise Trident Juncture 2018 (TRJE18)*, Norwegian Armed Forces website, <https://forsvaret.no/en/ForsvaretDocuments/Facts-English.pdf>.