

Seminar Four

Working Papers

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The National Defense University asked a group of distinguished authors to prepare this set of working papers for Seminar Four. The papers cover a range of issues from the need to reassure Allies that the NATO Article 5 commitment remains valid to suggestions with regard to political and command structure reform. The papers are intended to inform the Seminar Four debate and the work of the Group of Experts.

These working papers were written for the National Defense University's Center for Technology and National Security Policy to support the NATO Strategic Concept process. The views expressed in these papers are those of the authors and do not reflect the official policy or position of NATO member governments, the NATO Group of Experts, the National Defense University, the Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government.

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1. NATO's Strategic Concept and the Role of Reassurance

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Reassurance is likely to play a major role in NATO's new Strategic Concept for three reasons. First, it lies at the core of what the Alliance is all about. While Europe today is more peaceful than at any time in recent memory and an overwhelming threat of the kind we knew in the Cold War is absent, uncertainty and risks lie beyond Alliance borders, trends that could escalate into instability and conflict. History, nationalism, and geopolitical competition have not disappeared from Europe's periphery or world politics.

Reassuring Allies that NATO is willing and able to respond to incipient trends of instability to nip potential conflicts in the bud has become a de facto core mission today. Modern militaries do so through a mix of capability and threat-based planning. This allows them to develop a level of capability and readiness that can be quickly and flexibly tailored to meet rapidly emerging threats. While that is the norm in member states, NATO is not very good at it. Basic, prudent planning of the kind that is done routinely in many defense ministries becomes a highly political exercise that takes years to adjudicate in a NATO context. We now need to routinize contingency planning, capability generation, and military activity to provide the flexibility needed in an unpredictable security environment.

Second, there is a link between reassurance and the Alliance's ability to conduct expeditionary missions beyond Europe. Allies need to feel safe at home if we expect them to deploy their best forces to fight abroad. There also is a political and conceptual link between home and away missions. Demonstrating our ability to meet potential threats against our own populations and territories is a precondition for engaging in high-intensity operations beyond our borders. When NATO went out of area in the mid-1990s in the Balkans, it could tap into a preexisting degree of credibility and political solidarity rooted in decades of working together to meet Article 5 threats. NATO's ability to perform its mission at home contributed to the bedrock of public support for missions abroad.

Today, however, we run the risk of the reverse dynamic setting in. As doubts about stability on the continent start to creep back in, NATO's lack of attention to the home mission is fueling questions about the away mission. Public doubts over NATO's ability to carry out Article 5 commitments in some Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries threaten to drain support for the Afghan mission in those countries. Done right, strategic reassurance at home can be an enabler for away missions and can accelerate defense transformation in new Allies. Absent it, we will slowly but surely lose support for expeditionary missions and for transformation.

¹ The group would also like to recognize the contribution that Espen Barth Eide made to our deliberations and previous drafts of this paper.

Third, it is hardly a secret that new members want strategic reassurance from Russia. After NATO and the EU enlarged to Central and Eastern Europe, many assumed that Russia would accept that the region was gone from its sphere of influence once and for all and would stop trying to interfere in the politics of this region. Several CEE states argue, however, that Moscow has simply switched tracks to a policy of pressuring and marginalizing these countries in new ways, and that it still seeks to make this region a zone of special Russian interest and influence.

Countries in the region have different views on how best to address this challenge. And there are old NATO members, such as Norway, that point out the importance of NATO remaining relevant at home. But it is the concerns of Poland and the Baltic States that are central in this debate. Their worry is less one of outright aggression than coercion. They are concerned less about a direct attack against NATO as a whole than artificially induced local conflicts and limited military moves against them that exploit Alliance fault lines—or of conflicts in neighboring countries like Ukraine that escalate and spill over to their immediate borders.

For all of these reasons, reassurance is a precondition for resetting relations with Russia. Done right, it will not prevent but rather enable better engagement with Moscow. The Alliance will never be able to engage Russia effectively if Allies feel insecure. In the 1960s, NATO members were divided over whether defense or détente should be a top priority. In reality, they had to do both and do them together. NATO combined what appeared to be contradictory elements into a new grand strategy that served the Alliance well and helped set the stage for the collapse of the Iron Curtain two decades later. Today, the Alliance is divided over whether reassurance or reset should take priority. Again, we need to have a dual track strategy that accomplishes both. It is only when all Allies feel secure that they will be more willing to be bold in reaching out to Moscow as well.

It would be a mistake, however, to think that the debate about reassurance is only being driven by concerns about Russia. It is not. It is also being driven by growing doubts about NATO's internal weaknesses and ability and effectiveness to address potential instabilities close to home. Although leaders in the region talk about this guardedly, some no longer believe that NATO will be able to come to their defense in a crisis. They believe that the Alliance is unprepared in terms of crisis identification and planning, and that the Alliance would be paralyzed by political divisions and unable to act in time. This fear ranks with concern about Russia in fueling insecurity in the region.

In the case of Central and Eastern Europe, new members were uneasy from the beginning about NATO's decision to carry out new Article 5 commitments through reinforcement and infrastructure instead of forward-deployed forces. During the first round of NATO enlargement, American and NATO officials sought to ease those worries by making specific pledges on what kinds of Alliance reinforcement would be made available. At the time, the United States pledged—with SACEUR at the table—a corps-sized reinforcement package and commensurate infrastructure for deployment. While Allies would not be on the ground in large numbers, they would be willing and able to deploy in a crisis. Alliance failure to follow through on those pledges sowed the seeds of doubt that have grown into the open questioning of NATO's credibility we sometimes see today.

Those doubts intensified as Alliance cohesion broke down over the Iraq war. The proliferation of national caveats and the lack of burden-sharing in Afghanistan made things worse; both undermined confidence that NATO would be unified in facing a threat closer to home. NATO is supposed to be the key crisis manager in Europe, but its track record has hardly been stellar. For some governments, the Russo-Georgian war was the straw that broke the camel's back. The Alliance failed to see the crisis coming or to play a political crisis management role in the run up to the crisis—and then could barely do more than issue a statement after war broke out.

One can assert—and many do—that everything would be different if it ever came to an Article 5 scenario involving the Baltic States or Poland. But do we really think that the fault lines currently dividing and hampering NATO would suddenly disappear? Or that the creaky crisis management structure would suddenly spring to life and work effectively? It is not clear. Reducing doubts on these issues needs to be a priority in any strategy of reassurance.

What Needs to be Done?

What should a NATO reassurance strategy look like? First, it needs to be comprehensive, because the sources of insecurity it must address are diverse. Because the risks or threats include coercion and political subversion and energy blackmail, as well as possible military moves, our response must address that spectrum. Thus, NATO is only part of the answer. The European Union clearly has a role to play. The same is true for national governments; there are many things Allies can and should be doing themselves to assume responsibility and reduce vulnerabilities that they are not doing today.

Second, a reassurance strategy must focus on both aspects of the problem addressed above. We need to correct NATO's past negligence and its own weaknesses. Above all, we need to improve NATO crisis management capabilities so that members again believe in them. This should be the point of departure. It is an improvement that NATO needs to make, not just for Central and Eastern Europe but across the board. NATO must become a more modern, agile, and effective alliance in an unpredictable world. Members in the north and south will benefit as much from improved crisis management as will new members in Central and Eastern Europe.

Second, NATO needs tailored military packages to reassure new CEE members. These countries do not constitute a monolith, but they do have common concerns. The military packages need to take account of the commitments NATO undertook in the NATO-Russia Founding Act. But the reality is that the document consciously created the space for NATO to do quite a lot in terms of reassurance that the Alliance has not creatively used.

Much of the debate in this regard has focused on contingency planning. It clearly needs to be done. But we should recognize that a classified contingency plan in a safe at SHAPE will not in and of itself solve problems. The goal is a state of affairs where the strategy underpinning Alliance cohesion and solidarity ensures that all members have the confidence that they are secure in an alliance of indivisible security. Achieving that goal requires a strategy that strengthens political solidarity and meets the minimum military requirements needed to ensure deterrence and strategic stability in the current security environment.

Reassurance should consist of a set of political, economic, and military measures that preserve Alliance political cohesion and enable the Alliance to express its will in multiple ways. It needs to be stabilizing rather than destabilizing, and must leave the Alliance with more rather than fewer options to protect members in a crisis. It should not be strategically provocative nor catalyze destabilizing countermoves by neighbors, in particular Russia. It needs to be carried out in a way that is consistent with the political pledges the Alliance made in the NATO-Russia Founding Act and with the Alliance's aspirations for building closer ties to Russia in general.

Crisis Management

One of the first steps in a strategy of reassurance should be an overhaul of NATO's current crisis management system. NATO is supposed to be the key crisis manager in Europe. But today it is an open question whether NATO can play that role. It played such a role in the Balkans in the 1990s. It did not with Georgia some 15 years later. We need a system that allows us to not only identify potential crises, but move quickly with a spectrum of possible policy steps or military actions that would allow us to secure our interests and at the same time not be seen as a source of escalation.

As mentioned above, NATO needs to do this anyway. The Alliance must be capable of identifying potential crises beyond NATO's borders, assessing the potential consequences, and preparing credible responses that can stabilize the situation on terms favorable to the Alliance. Exactly where this capability should be placed and whether it should link more to SACEUR or the Secretary General are issues that need to be thought through and debated. But the system should be devised in a tout azimuth way that emphasizes NATO's awareness in all directions to underscore that it is not directed against any specific theater. We need to routinize and depoliticize the tasks of crisis identification, assessment, and preparation as a normal part of what a military alliance like NATO does. SACEUR needs to have the flexibility to engage in prudent military planning and perhaps take initial steps in the early phases of a crisis.

In particular, weaknesses in intelligence gathering and distribution, including real-time intelligence and early warning, need to be addressed. Even the question of what to gather and how to interpret have become objects of political wrangling; the political leadership rarely receives unfiltered advice that could provide the basis for effective, prudent planning. The intelligence system of the Alliance needs a thorough overhaul, since it is a crucial precondition for successful crisis management.

A Comprehensive Approach

Reassurance is not only a job for NATO. It should also involve the EU and become a key issue for U.S.-EU and future NATO-EU cooperation. CEE concerns are rooted not only in potential limited military moves or induced crises, but also in political intimidation, energy blackmail, influence from foreign intelligence services, and corruption. As more than one CEE government has observed, we could have the perfect defense plan, or even a military base, and it would not stop outside powers from de facto penetrating governments, parliaments, or the media to gain influence. To some degree, CEE states turn to NATO to address these concerns because it is a military alliance. But they also turn to NATO because it is the only structured forum where they can work with the United States. Some of these issues could and should also be discussed in a U.S.-EU

forum, if that relationship becomes more strategic. The recent initiative by the Polish government on European defense is an example of how the region wants to try to reinforce political solidarity on these issues in the EU.

Ideally, the EU and NATO should assess threats jointly. They would also share a planning and command capacity able to integrate civilian and military forces into one comprehensive package. And the EU would be firmly embedded in the crisis management system discussed above. Berlin Plus agreements need to be updated to meet these new needs. The EU's new Eastern Partnership could be expanded to include a military dimension to parallel PfP. This close form of cooperation may need to wait until solutions on other major political issues are achieved (though the EU's new Lisbon treaty eschews attempts to break the deadlock in NATO-EU relations). In the intervening time, it should be possible to make incremental progress that would go some way toward reassuring the new EU and NATO countries that both institutions take their security concerns seriously.

For example, they could organize informal away days for those parts of the NATO and EU military staffs tasked with monitoring and analyzing strategic risks, including Russia. It should also be possible to establish a working relationship between the NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence and the EU's military staff, allowing for regular exchange of lessons learned. To bypass difficulties stemming from the absence of a security agreement between the EU and NATO, the EU should consider engaging NATO using the Lisbon Treaty's provisions for "structured cooperation" (which allows groups of EU member states to cooperate on specific issues, setting aside others).

Energy security is an example of an area where the EU will have primary policy responsibility in Europe, but where liaison with NATO could also be important. The credibility of an effective strategy of reassurance requires us to bundle and integrate capabilities. We need to be able to assess potential threats across a spectrum. Presumably an attempt to intimidate a country or a region would entail several different moves, one of which could be in the energy field.

NATO and the EU could consider creating a joint center of excellence on energy security that would be able to identify and assess such threats during a crisis. There are also steps the EU could take that would strengthen Alliance cohesion, e.g., drafting a better strategy for regulating Russian investments in Europe. While NATO is not and should not become involved in such issues as stability of supply (or demand) or price regulation, there are some aspects of energy security that fall within the remit of NATO, e.g., the protection of critical infrastructure and transport routes at sea.

Crisis management inside the NATO-EU area could give the cooperation of both organizations a thorough political jolt. While international operations continue to be hostages to political disagreements over membership and Cyprus, the protection of Allies, based on the political solidarity principles of the Washington and Lisbon Treaties, could prove an important political bridge to overcome disagreements and wrangling, at least in this area, while laying the groundwork for deeper cooperation in out-of-area operations.

Last but not least, we should not forget the national dimension of reassurance. Member states can do a lot at the national level to reduce their vulnerabilities. If they are

worried about the corrosive impact of foreign money on politics, they can institute better campaign financing laws and oversight. If they are worried about energy blackmail, they can use their own and EU funds to integrate themselves more effectively into Western gas markets so they are not vulnerable to cutoffs in a crisis. We saw during the last gas crisis that some CEE states fared much better than others precisely because they had taken the initiative and made such investments as part of their national responsibilities. NATO members who are asking Allies to do more to provide reassurance would be in better negotiating positions if their reform efforts at home were solid and if they were not massively cutting their national defense budgets.

The Defense Dimension

NATO needs to return to the core idea from the mid-1990s: that there is a certain basic level of military activity—including planning, reinforcement exercises, and infrastructure investment—that is needed for reassurance and stability and is a normal part of the Alliance’s work irrespective of threat perceptions. The Article 5 commitment rings hollow if it does not have a defense-related substance. It ceases to be the tool of deterrence against outsiders and reassurance for insiders. Russia today conducts annual military exercises on NATO’s borders and justifies them on the grounds that this is what militaries do to stay modern and prepared. There is a level of non-threat based military activity that NATO should be engaged in as part of the normal operations of a healthy alliance and for reasons of political and military cohesion.

Contingency planning remains a key issue for the reassurance of the whole Alliance periphery. It is the basis for any defense-related reassurance. Planning is not only the key component for any military preparation. It also provides the platform for military-related analysis of the defense needs of the particular contingency. It is the test case of solidarity of the Allies against an Article 5 contingency. The process of planning is as important as the planning itself. While contingency plans are not a silver bullet, they must be part of any reassurance package.

At the same time, we also need to think through how our actions will be seen by other actors—including Russia—and how they might respond. Have we discerned what our own inherent strategic advantages are (and are not) and developed a strategy that plays to them? What if Moscow responds to what we believe is a show of strength with its own show of strength? What is our next move? How do we incorporate a proper understanding of our (and our counterparts’) asymmetries in strength and advantage into our strategy?

In addition to a contingency plan, we should consider a number of other measures to provide reassurance. Those measures are meant, above all, to underscore solidarity with exposed Allies while also guaranteeing the readiness of Allies to provide reinforcements, should they be needed. Consequently, exercising C3, readiness of forces, and logistics, including strategic transport and host nation support, are vital. The credibility and visibility of those components will be key to any reassurance package. Such measures could include: better strategic communication strategy to reinforce political solidarity; better common situational awareness/surveillance (none of the CEE countries fully know what is happening on the other side of the border, and NATO as an alliance has no common or shared view); the rebalancing of NATO infrastructure programs to create the

foundation for reinforcement capabilities; and the establishment of routine Article 5 defense planning consistent with the NATO Response Force (NRF) based on reinforcements. The NRF was designed in part to be an instrument of reinforcement and reassurance.

Those plans then need to be exercised with regional commands. We might also consider returning to JFC Brunssum and JFC Naples some of their regional command tasks, as the expertise for Article 5 planning is at risk of vanishing. Similarly, we could use national headquarters subordinated directly to SHAPE to provide regional expertise, etc. Finally, we need to develop a NATO air defense system—including against missile threats—that covers all of CEE and also create an Alliance presence.

Conclusion

Many allies have crossed the Rubicon in their thinking on reassurance in recent months. The question of reassurance is no longer one of whether but when and how. Now we must step up our work on defining a clear bottom line in terms of what new Allies really need—how we can construct the kind of new crisis identification, assessment, and response mechanisms required, and how to imbed and integrate such steps into both a broader military strategy and force posture and the required political outreach.

2. NATO Military Requirements for Territorial Defense and Expeditionary Operations—Similarities And Differences

Richard L. Kugler

In the coming years, NATO will face the need to become better prepared to carry out both Article 5 territorial defense missions inside Europe and expeditionary operations outside Europe. At the Strasbourg-Kehl Summit in April 2009, NATO leaders emphasized the need for adequate forces and capabilities in both arenas. In addressing these two imperatives, an important question arises: Are defense preparedness requirements for them similar or different? To the extent requirements are similar, this would simplify the force preparedness agenda facing NATO. To the extent requirements are different, this would render NATO's agenda more complex. NATO will need to know both the similarities and differences so that it can develop appropriate force goals and improvement priorities in planning, programming, and budgeting.

Purpose of Study

In addressing this key issue, this study presents a technical analysis. It offers an initial appraisal of a new and complex subject, not the final word on the topic. It endeavors to craft an analytical framework that can be used by U.S. and NATO defense planners to help form their own judgments. As such, it is not an exercise in advocating NATO policy and strategy or forecasting future conflicts. This study pursues its task by examining NATO force requirements that could arise in two specific missions, the first a new-era Article 5 mission at NATO's eastern periphery, the second an expeditionary mission in the Greater Middle East:

Mission 1: Reassuring the Baltic States of their security and territorial integrity against a potential Russian military and strategic menace to them.

Mission 2: Carrying out a potential expeditionary intervention in the Middle East for the purpose of combating al Qaeda-sponsored terrorism and bringing stability to a failed state.

Other contingencies and missions could be imagined, but these two are plausible, and both would stress NATO capabilities in ways that could reflect a wider spectrum of contingencies. Both are sufficiently concrete to permit analysis of the full set of NATO force requirements that could arise in each case, including not only aggregate combat forces and support assets, but also such important details as warfighting principles and doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership, personnel, and facilities (DOTMLPF) priorities. Analyzing and comparing these two missions will yield insights on how the wide-ranging requirements posed by future territorial defense missions and expeditionary missions are likely to be similar and how they may differ. After briefly discussing the strategic context, this paper analyzes force requirements for these missions individually, then compares their similarities and differences, offers observations about the implications for NATO defense planning, and concludes with observations on affordability.

The Strategic Context

Why is the issue of territorial defense vs. expeditionary operations rising to the fore? One reason is that, as NATO shapes its defense plans and improvement priorities for the coming years, it will need to ensure that it provides its military forces and other assets the coherent guidance that is needed for them to be prepared for both types of missions. Many analysts and critics argue that today NATO is not adequately prepared for these two missions, especially if they arise simultaneously. NATO, of course, has been preparing for expeditionary missions outside Europe for a decade. While important progress has been made, it has been slow, and as official NATO communiqués acknowledge, additional improvements are needed. Recently, some Central and East European (CEE) countries have been expressing an added worry that NATO preoccupation with distant expeditionary missions has reached the point that insufficient attention is now being paid to new Article 5 territorial defense missions for protecting CEE borders. Their central contention is that the Article 5 mission can no longer be taken for granted and now merits greater attention in NATO defense planning.

To some observers, the idea that NATO—a longstanding Article 5 alliance dedicated to territorial defense—may not be able to defend its exposed borders may seem counterintuitive. But NATO enlargement has changed the Alliance’s strategic calculus in this arena and created a new set of requirements that were not foreseen a decade ago. In particular, admission of the three Baltic States has created new members well eastward of NATO’s traditional military bases and in Russia’s backyard. While nobody wants a confrontation with Russia or a rebirth of threat-based NATO defense planning in Europe, the emerging situation is creating a need for a new form of reassurance-based planning that convinces the nervous Baltic States that their security is assured. What applies to the Baltic States also could apply to such potential new members as Georgia and Ukraine; if they gain admission, they too will become front-line states with exposed borders. Defending well-armed Poland with NATO forces stationed in Western Europe is a relatively straightforward proposition. Defending the distant and poorly armed Baltic States, with NATO forces that today are not tailored for rapid power projection eastward, is a different, more-demanding proposition, one that could be difficult to handle unless NATO develops improved forces and capabilities for this mission.

NATO difficulties in being prepared for expeditionary missions in distant areas outside Europe are nothing new. In 1999, NATO launched the process of becoming better prepared for expeditionary missions by adopting a new Strategic Concept as well as the Defense Capability Initiative (DCI). In 2002, NATO adopted the Prague Capability Commitment (PCC) to help shape future improvement priorities and created the NATO Response Force (NRF) and the Allied Command Transformation (ACT). In 2006, NATO’s Riga Summit called for improved capabilities for expeditionary missions and issued the Comprehensive Political Guidance (CPG), which provided detailed instructions about how NATO forces and capabilities need to improve. In response to such guidance, NATO forces have improved considerably over the past decade. For example, British and French forces have been reconfigured for expeditionary missions, and the German military is pursuing an ambitious restructuring of its force to perform not only crisis response missions in distant areas, but also stabilization and reconstruction

(S&R) missions. Even so, the pace of NATO's improvements has been evolutionary. As the Strasbourg-Kehl summit acknowledged, significant distance remains to be covered.

The recent ISAF experience in Afghanistan, involving deployment of about 30,000 European military personnel, shows that NATO forces are physically capable of deploying outside Europe. But the Afghanistan deployment is relatively small, has been accomplished in slow motion, and has stretched NATO capabilities to their limits. Moreover, American forces are performing most of the demanding combat missions there. Critics judge that, if U.S. forces were not available in large numbers, NATO would be hard-pressed to perform an expeditionary mission that requires swift deployment of large European forces to a distant area followed by a set of demanding hybrid warfare missions that include irregular warfare, counterterrorism, counterinsurgency, S&R missions, and comprehensive operations requiring civilian assets. A related judgment is that while NATO should possess sufficient forces and capabilities to handle two major missions, e.g., Afghanistan, and six small missions, e.g., Balkan and African peacekeeping, its current assets can perform only one major mission and three small missions. This judgment translates into the conclusion that today NATO's expeditionary forces and capabilities can meet only one-half of plausible requirements. Moreover, NATO assets for S&R missions and comprehensive approaches are even more deficient.

Nobody knows where future contingency operations might take place, but a sizable Middle East operation involving suppression of al Qaeda and stabilization of a failed state provides a hypothetical event for gauging NATO requirements in a setting resembling Afghanistan and Iraq. If NATO is to become capable of meeting demanding requirements for distant expeditionary missions, it will need to continue strengthening its forces and capabilities in the coming years. As it does so, it will need to address new requirements for emerging Article 5 territorial defense missions in Europe.

To what extent are the requirements of a Baltic reassurance mission similar to, or different from, an expeditionary mission in the Greater Middle East? This study argues that in several important areas, the requirements for these two missions are similar, or at least overlap considerably. For example, both missions would require deployable NATO forces, total manpower requirements could be large in each case, and for both missions, requirements could include sizable ground forces, capable weapon systems, high readiness and training, modern C4ISR networks, and significant logistic support. Even so, important differences arise when the details of requirements are examined closely. The core reason is that being prepared for a high-tech major combat operation (MCO) in Europe is different from being prepared for an expeditionary operation in the Middle East that is anchored in irregular warfare, S&R missions, and comprehensive approaches. Whereas the former could require a balanced joint posture of modernized ground, air, and naval forces, the latter could mainly require mobility forces, naval forces, and ground forces that typically perform distributed irregular operations, not complex, integrated battlefield maneuvers. Of special importance, the doctrines, training, and exercise regimes required to perform an MCO in Europe could differ significantly from those of an expeditionary mission in the Middle East, as discussed below.

The bottom line is that similarities between these missions mean that NATO does not need two separate military postures for performing them. Indeed, some NATO formations may be assigned to both types of missions: the NRF and the Allied Rapid

Reaction Corps (ARRC) are examples. Nonetheless, the differences are significant enough to dictate that NATO cannot safely treat either of these missions as a subset of the other. As a consequence, NATO cannot optimize its force posture for one mission on the premise that adequate forces and capabilities for the other mission will automatically emerge from the preparedness pipeline. NATO will need one, integrated military posture that is designed with these two interrelated but separate missions in mind. The challenge will be to meet this demanding two-hat requirement with the forces, capabilities, and budgets that are realistically available.

In important ways, the challenge facing NATO resembles that facing the U.S. military, which also must strike a balance between being prepared for modern MCOs and hybrid warfare. Recently, the U.S. military has been compelled to pare back procurement of new weapons for MCOs in order to purchase better capacities for irregular warfare. In both arenas, most European militaries significantly trail the U.S. military in their preparedness to deploy their forces at long distances and employ them in demanding settings. This means that NATO has a longer way to go than the U.S. military, and with defense budgets that are well smaller than the DOD budget. For example, total European investment budgets are only one-third the size of DOD's investment budget (\$60 billion for European budgets in 2009 as compared to \$180 billion for DOD). The task ahead is not impossible, but NATO will need not only to set appropriate defense preparedness goals in both arenas, but also to invest scarce resources soundly and set priorities. Two key questions arise: How much is enough, and how much is possible? NATO will need to answer these questions wisely so that it acts with effectiveness and efficiency in mind.

Mission 1: Reassuring the Baltic States

In important ways, reassuring the three Baltic States of their security from a dangerous Russia could become the most difficult Article 5 territorial defense mission facing NATO in the coming years—short of admitting Georgia or even Ukraine into the Alliance or defending Europe against an Iranian nuclear missile threat. Establishing constructive relations with Russia will remain an important priority, but in keeping with its more assertive foreign policy, Russia already has shown a willingness to use such threats as cutoffs of oil and natural gas as well as (allegedly) cyber attacks to menace bordering countries on the former Soviet landmass. Russia's invasion of Georgia in 2008 showed that, when it judges its interests sufficiently provoked, it also is willing to use military power, including wartime military operations, as an additional arrow in its strategic quiver. Concern about Russia's military intentions rose recently when it conducted military exercises and war games—*Ladoga* and *Zapad 09*—that simulated major combat between Russian and Baltic forces. As a result, fear of a renewed Russian military menace—in peace, crisis, and war—has spread among CEE countries, and has especially taken hold in the vulnerable Baltic States of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. In today's setting, all three countries are trying to strengthen their security ties to Sweden and Finland and are showing a growing desire for enhanced, concrete NATO reassurances, as well as nervousness that NATO will let them down.

Russia's military today is not capable of posing a theater-wide threat to NATO. But Russia does possess the military power to menace the nearby, exposed Baltic States. Overall, Russia's military has about one million active personnel. Its army totals 20 heavily armed active divisions, plus 13 cadre reserve divisions. Its air force fields about

1,800 tactical fighters and bombers. Only about ten divisions are stationed in military districts near the Baltic States (one division is located in Kaliningrad), and their readiness is low. But in a mounting crisis, their readiness could be increased over a period of weeks or months. A mobilizable posture of ten divisions and 500 combat aircraft, plus the small Baltic Sea Fleet—two submarines, five surface combatants, and 22 patrol combatants—provides ample military power to squeeze the Baltic States. Compared to Russia, the Baltic States are poorly armed. Collectively they have only about 20,000 active personnel, three army brigades, virtually no tanks, no tactical combat aircraft, and only two frigates and a few patrol combatants. Of the three countries, Lithuania is the strongest. The military forces of any single Baltic country, or indeed all three of them, could be readily overpowered by a Russian military attack.

A variety of Russian actions against the Baltic States can be imagined. In a political test of wills, Russia could combine oil and gas cutoffs, cyber attacks, and military exercises on the borders of Estonia and Latvia and, if Belarus territory is available, on the border of Lithuania as well. Such Russian pressure could be combined with Special Forces incursions into Baltic territory and aircraft flyovers. In a manner that resembles the Georgia experience, a limited Russian invasion of one Baltic country could be carried out by one or two divisions. A force of five divisions could conduct a larger invasion short of fully occupying the victimized country. A Russian force of ten divisions, along with tactical combat aircraft, could enable full conquest and occupation of one or two Baltic countries. A fully mobilized Russian invasion force of 15–20 divisions likely would be chosen to subjugate and occupy all three Baltic countries at the same time. Even short of this extreme step, the large Russian forces arrayed against small Baltic forces gives Russia a wide spectrum of military options in various crisis settings and leaves the Baltic States highly vulnerable.

How could NATO reassure the Baltic States of their security while also sending a credible deterrence message to Russia? NATO declaratory policy to honor Article 5 obligations, other political-diplomatic measures, and protecting the Baltic States from oil and natural gas cutoffs and cyber attacks would all need to be employed. If a purely political approach is adopted, only small and symbolic NATO military deployments might be needed. But if the goal is to back declaratory policy with a plausible defense posture, military requirements could be larger; their size would depend on NATO's defense strategy.

One option would be an *air and naval strategy*, whereby NATO would use tactical air forces and naval combatants to pursue its goals. In this strategy, naval forces would be deployed to bottle up the Russian Baltic Sea fleet and secure the maritime LOCs to the Baltic States. Tactical air forces would be deployed to provide a protective umbrella over the Baltic States and defend against hostile Russian military action. NATO ground forces would not be used. Such a strategy would require limited manpower (e.g., 50,000 personnel), even though it would require investments in prepared military airbases and associated infrastructure. Its principal drawback is that it would leave Baltic security hostage to the capacity of NATO air and naval power to function as an all-purpose reassurance, deterrence, and defense mechanism. Both the Baltic States and Russia might not view this strategy as fully credible because in an actual armed conflict, Russian ground forces might sweep over the targeted countries before NATO air forces could stop them.

The drawbacks of relying solely on an air and naval strategy argue for adopting a more ambitious *joint defense strategy*, in which NATO would be prepared to send sizable ground forces to defend the Baltic States. Rather than stationing large forces on Baltic soil in peacetime, this strategy would rely mainly on swift NATO power projection from current bases in Western Europe. Such a joint strategy would necessitate more manpower (e.g., 150,000 personnel or more), and would require overcoming difficult logistic and infrastructure hurdles to deploying ground forces to the Baltic States. But it would send a stronger strategic signal in peacetime and provide a more viable crisis response and defense capability in the event of a confrontation with Russia.

What type of NATO military posture would be required to carry out a joint defense strategy? Because military needs would vary as a function of the situation encountered, this question cannot be answered with a single blueprint. NATO would be best off creating a flexible pool of forces and capabilities to provide multiple options for dealing with a wide spectrum of Baltic situations. With this framework in mind, table 1 illustrates the total requirements that could arise in multiple categories.

As the chart suggests, NATO would need to employ a Joint Headquarters and a sophisticated C4ISR system with modern information networks in order to perform the various types of planning that would be needed and to operate NATO forces in peace, crisis, and war. The joint posture of combat forces envisioned here would provide flexible options for reassuring the Baltic States, deterring Russian aggression, escalating deliberately, and winning decisively if war occurs. During peacetime, NATO would establish a small rotating presence of joint forces on Baltic soil—more than the few fighters now deployed there on a rotational basis. During an emergency, NATO could send an initial crisis response force composed of the NRF backed, if necessary, by an airborne brigade and an attack helicopter brigade, as well as limited air and naval forces. If additional forces are required, NATO could deploy 1–2 multinational corps (e.g., MNCNE and ARRC) backed by sizable air, air defense, and naval forces. Coupled with the initial crisis response forces, a single MNC should be adequate to defend one Baltic state from aggression by a limited Russian force. A second MNC, plus additional air assets, could be needed to deter/defeat a larger Russian attack and defend more Baltic territory. Because NATO forces likely would be outnumbered by Russian forces, they would rely on higher readiness, dominant battlespace knowledge, and superior weapons to prevail. Their combination of well-armed ground forces and lethal air forces, supported by modern C4ISR systems and information networks, would be intended to provide the information superiority, integrated precision fires, and dominant maneuvers needed to protect Baltic borders. In particular, maneuver-capable ground forces could establish a strong shield of Baltic borders, thereby giving air forces the time and opportunity to deliver precision fires to operational effect.

NATO already has the necessary joint combat forces, but they would need to be trained and exercised for territorial defense/MCO in the Baltic region, and they would need to be deployable on a time-urgent basis. A difficult challenge could arise in creating the support, infrastructure, and facility assets needed. NATO would need to create a multinational logistic support posture capable of providing resupply across Poland and

Table 1: NATO Preparedness Requirements for Territorial Defense of Baltic States:

Categories	Required Assets and Measures
1. Type of Operational Preparedness	Peacetime Readiness, Crisis Response, Border Defense, and Major Combat Operations (MCO) in Baltic Region
2. Total Military Manpower	Variable: Up to 150,000–250,000 for Joint Defense Strategy
3. Type of Planning	Contingency Plans, OPLANS, Campaign Plans, Investment Plans
4. Peacetime Forward Presence	Small, Rotating Presence of Ground, Air, and Naval Forces in Baltic States, Including Exercises with Baltic Forces
5. War Fighting & Other Operational Principles	Battlefield Synthesis of Joint Precision Fires and Dominant Maneuvers for Decisively Defeating a Well-Armed Adversary
6. Command Structure & C4ISR system	Joint Command Structure for MCO and Modern C4ISR System with High-Tech Information Networks & UAV/UCAVs
7. Initial Crisis Response Force	NATO Response Force (NRF) Backed by an Airborne Brigade and a Attack Helicopter Brigade, plus Air, Air Defense, and Naval Forces
8. Ground Combat Forces	1–2 Multinational Corps of Armored, Mechanized, and Air Assault Forces (e.g.: MNCNE and ARRC): 3-6 divisions
9. Air Combat Forces	4–7 Tactical Fighter Wings and Some Bombers, with Air Refueling Assets and Capabilities for Air Intercept and Air-Ground Strikes
10. Air Defense Forces	3–6 Patriot Air Defense Batteries and Radar Networks
11. Naval Combat Forces	Combatant Group with Littoral Combat Ships, Mine Warfare, AAW/ASW, and Counter-ship Capabilities
12. Mobility Forces	Medium Number of Air and Sea Transports for Lifting NRF and Supplies
13. Logistic Support Forces	Multinational Logistic Support for Sizable Joint Combat Forces
14. S&R Assets	Post-War Reconstruction Assets Possibly Required
15. LOC Infrastructure	Strengthening of Road and Rail Networks to Baltic States
16. Facilities	Strengthen Baltic Airfields and Ports & Create Ground Force Reception and Storage Facilities
17. Prepositioning	Preposition Equipment and Supplies for Initial Crisis Response Air and Ground Forces
18. War Reserve Stocks	WRM/WRS Stocks for 60-Day MCO
19. Training and Exercises	Focus on Multinational MCO and Border Defense Missions
20. Rotational Base	Not Applicable: Deployments Likely Would Last Months, Not Years
21. Security Assistance	Enhance Self-Defense Capabilities of Baltic States
22. Force Structure Innovations	Create Multinational Division of Baltic and CEE Countries; Transform MNCNE into a Joint Headquarters for CEE Missions
23. Civilian Manpower	Not Applicable; Comprehensive Operations Not Required
24. Procurement Priorities: Major Weapon Systems	Steady-State Acquisition of Modernized Weapon Systems, Network-Enabled Systems, Precision Munitions, and Critical Enablers
25. Other DOTMLPF Priorities	Educate and Train NATO Military Personnel for CEE Territorial Defense and MCO Missions

combat service/combat service support to forward-deployed combat forces; assets especially would be needed in such areas as truck transport, refueling, WRM/WRS handling, maintenance, engineers, military police, and medical support. An integrated, multinational logistics posture would be capable of meeting these requirements more efficiently than purely national postures.

Peacetime preparation of Baltic air bases, ports, and reception facilities would be needed. The Baltic States have multiple airfields, but only three are military bases, and they are not configured to bed-down large numbers of modern fighters, which ideally require prepared runways, maintenance sheds, hangars, military fuels, ordnance storage, and hardened shelters. While light ground forces could be deployed by airlift, heavy ground forces would need to deploy by sealift or ground transport if their equipment is not prepositioned on Baltic soil. Ground transport is possible because Poland has a 70-mile border with Lithuania. Along this corridor runs an LOC infrastructure, including a major highway that stretches to the three Baltic capitals, plus rail lines. The rail lines, however, are narrow gauge, thus necessitating offloading and reloading in eastern Poland. Advance earmarking of rolling stock for narrow-gauge rail travel would ease the transport process.

A Baltic territorial defense mission thus would require NATO to decide whether it is making a purely political gesture, or instead trying to create a military posture capable of deterrence and defense. Article 5 imperatives argue for the latter approach. If so, NATO would need to choose between an air and naval strategy vs. a joint strategy that includes sizable ground forces. Much depends on NATO's strategic goals, the confidence levels it seeks, and its willingness to take necessary military measures. If a joint strategy is chosen and properly implemented, the NATO posture envisioned here could provide a solid capability for territorial defense of the Baltic States.

Budgetary constraints and political impediments could prevent full creation of this posture any time soon. In particular, financial and political difficulties could arise in trying to create military airbases, reception facilities, and an improved road-rail LOC infrastructure. But NATO does not need all of these assets to contemplate deployment of significant joint forces in a crisis, and the more steps taken, the better. If NATO decides to make such military commitments to the Baltic States, initial preparations should begin soon.

Mission 2: An Expeditionary Mission in the Greater Middle East

An expeditionary mission can be defined as a temporary deployment to a distant area for a specific strategic purpose. Prior to September 11, 2001, a NATO expeditionary mission was commonly thought to be synonymous with an MCO. Typical scenarios contemplated by NATO officials included a territorial defense of Turkey (an Article 5 mission) or a replay of Operation *Desert Storm* in the Persian Gulf, both of which would have required MCO-capable NATO forces. When the war on terrorism began in late 2001, the U.S.-led invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq initially took the form of MCOs. But in the months after the MCO phases ended, the two conflicts mutated into a form of hybrid warfare: irregular warfare that included counterterrorism, counterinsurgency, S&R missions, and comprehensive operations requiring civilian assets as well as military forces. It is this new type of warfare that NATO forces, under ISAF direction, are performing in Afghanistan today. A worrisome prospect is that future NATO

expeditionary missions could involve similar demanding operations. The Middle East contingency envisioned here is intended to provide insights into the types of NATO force requirements that could arise in a setting of a failed, terrorist-ridden state and significant irregular warfare.

Prior to the operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, NATO planners likely would have doubted that manpower requirements for irregular warfare could be sizable and even exceed those of an MCO. But in Iraq, eruption of an insurgency prevented prompt drawdown of forces after MCO operations were completed. At the height of the 2006–2008 surge in Iraq, the United States and its coalition partners had over 160,000 troops there, a number that is only now coming down, plus large numbers of civilian contractors. In Afghanistan, post-MCO requirements have steadily swollen over the past 8 years owing to reappearance of the Taliban. Today, the United States, its NATO/ISAF partners, and other participants have nearly 100,000 troops there, and the number will rise in the coming months. Carrying out demanding missions for irregular warfare and related S&R operations in sizable failed states is now commonly seen as posing larger military requirements than once thought.

How would a Middle Eastern expeditionary mission compare to the Iraq and Afghanistan missions? A variety of limited situations could compel NATO to send small military forces to a Middle East country for brief missions, e.g., hostage rescue or strikes against al Qaeda bases. A major, enduring NATO expeditionary mission could be required if the country collapses into a failed state and NATO decides that a stabilization effort must be launched. Such a mission could be demanding. Candidate countries in the region typically are large (as big as California or Thailand) and have populations in the range of 10–25 million people. The social and economic attributes of a failed state typically include ethnic tensions, a young and uneducated workforce, widespread poverty, teeming cities, a weak infrastructure, and a history of instability and violence. The political ingredients typically include weak leaders and governance, a lack of effective governmental institutions and law enforcement, absence of democratic practices, an angry, polarized polity, and Islamic extremism. These factors create a setting that plausibly could result in a country collapsing into a failed state marked by widespread political instability, ethnic violence, social and economic chaos, and a growing foothold for al Qaeda. If the country possesses a large army that unravels, this could free large weapons inventories that could be used by insurgents and terrorists—in a country of strategic importance to Europe and the United States.

Requirements for a major NATO expeditionary mission in the Middle East must be seen through the lens of the political-military strategy that the Alliance might pursue there. If NATO's strategy is limited to suppressing al Qaeda and other terrorist groups, NATO military requirements could be modest and temporary. But if NATO's strategy is to quell widespread violence and to pacify the country, including chaotic urban areas, NATO requirements could increase significantly. If NATO's strategy goes beyond pacification to include rebuilding political and economic institutions, provincial reconstruction teams (PRTs) would be needed, requirements would increase further, and they would not be limited to military forces. A significant civilian presence for pursuing comprehensive

Table 2: NATO Preparedness Requirements for Expeditionary Mission Categories

Categories	Required Assets and Measures
1. Type of Operational Preparedness	Preparedness for Irregular Warfare, Counter-Terrorism, Counterinsurgency, Urban Operations, S&R Missions, and Comprehensive Approaches
2. Total Military Manpower	Ground Forces of 80,000–110,000; Total Manpower of 130,000–175,000
3. Type of Planning	Expeditionary OPLANS, Campaign Plans, and Investment Budgets
4. Peacetime Forward Presence	Not applicable
5. War Fighting & Other Operational Principles	Distributed Network-Enabled Operations Led by Ground Forces, and Supported by Naval and Air Forces
6. Command Structure & C4ISR system	Joint Command Structure for Distributed Operations and Modern C4ISR with High-Tech Information Systems and UAV/UCAVs
7. Initial Crisis Response Force	SOF, NRF, Marine Amphibious Brigade, and Naval Expeditionary Flotilla
8. Ground Combat Forces	MNC with 1–2 Light Mechanized Divisions, plus Air Assault Brigade and Attack Helicopter Brigade
9. Air Combat Forces	1 Tactical Fighter Wing Focused on Precision Strike Missions
10. Air Defense Forces	1 Air Defense Brigade with SHORAD and Patriot Missiles
11. Naval Combat Forces	LCS and other patrol ships, 1 Carrier, a Marine Expeditionary Group
12. Mobility Forces	Large Number of Wide-Body Air Transports and Cargo Ships
13. Logistic Support Forces	Multinational Logistic Support for Austere Setting: High Requirements for Maintenance, Refueling, and Engineers
14. Stabilization and Reconstruction Assets	One Division-Equivalent for S&R Missions, Including Sizable Assets for Multiple Reconstruction Missions
15. LOC Infrastructure	Naval and Air Resupply from Europe
16. Facilities	Temporary Facilities for Enduring Presence
17. Prepositioning	Not Applicable
18. War Reserve Stocks	Limited WRM; Large Stocks for Fuels and Replacement Vehicles
19. Training and Exercises	Focus on Irregular Operations and Related S&R Missions
20. Rotational Base	Sizable Rotational Base for Presence of 2–3 Years
21. Security Assistance	Significant Assistance for Local Military
22. Force Structure Innovations	Creation of NATO S&R posture; permanent Joint Force HQ for expeditionary missions & NATO Deployment Agency
23. Civilian Manpower	1,000-3,000 for Comprehensive Approaches and PRTs. Close cooperation with EU, UN, and other institutions needed
24. Procurement Priorities: Major Weapon Systems	Light Mechanized Weapons (e.g., Wheeled Stryker Vehicles, Armored Humvees and MRAP, Counter-IED and RPG Defensive Systems); New UAV/UCAVs; Critical Enablers
25. Other DOTMLPF Priorities	Educate and Train NATO Military Personnel for Irregular Warfare and Related S&R Missions

approaches would be needed, and close cooperation with the EU, the UN, and other institutions would be mandatory. Overall, the strategic challenge would be to fuse political, military, and economic instruments so that they work closely together in ways that steadily bring greater stability and progress. Such a demanding mission could take a few years, not weeks or months.

The core purpose of NATO's military presence presumably would be to establish security and peace so that political and economic goals can be pursued. Overall, military requirements could rival those of Iraq and Afghanistan, but if the country is near the sea, NATO naval forces could play a larger supporting role than in those countries. While specific requirements would necessitate detailed study, table 2 illustrates the overall pool of NATO military forces and related capabilities that likely would need to be available, some or all of which might be deployed.

As table 2 indicates, NATO would need to employ an ISAF-like Joint Force Headquarters, with modern information networks, to perform the advanced types of planning needed and to operate deployed forces. As envisioned here, NATO would not need to conduct an MCO in order to overthrow the government, but it would need to send sizable forces to assert control over an unstable, violent situation in the failed state. A full-scale NATO deployment could begin by deploying naval forces offshore to establish sea control and a maritime posture for projecting and supporting forces ashore. Such a deployment could require a carrier strike group, an amphibious strike group, littoral combat ships, other patrol ships, port security ships, and support ships. Once this naval presence is established, NATO could begin flowing ground and tactical air forces to the country, using wide-bodied air transports and cargo ships. Initial deployments could include SOF, the NRF, and a Marine expeditionary brigade. Once these initial forces are established, follow-on forces could include 1–2 light mechanized divisions, an air assault brigade, an attack helicopter brigade, a tactical fighter wing, an air defense brigade, a division-equivalent of specialized S&R assets, multinational logistic support assets, and reception areas and temporary facilities. Once fully deployed, the NATO presence would be ground-heavy, but with enough combat aircraft, helicopters, and UAV/UCAV to meet essential needs for persistent surveillance and air support. Ground combat operations likely would be distributed to critical areas across the country, with emphasis on counterterrorism, counterinsurgency, and pacification of urban areas. Once stability is attained, S&R operations could begin focusing on reconstruction missions, PRTs could be established, security assistance could be launched to rebuild the country's police and army, civilian manpower could be deployed, and the EU, UN, and other bodies could begin operations. The bulk of critical missions could be accomplished over a period of 1–3 years, thereby allowing NATO forces to withdraw.

Such an expeditionary mission could be relatively easy to carry out if U.S. forces lead the way and European forces play only a supporting role. But it could be far more difficult if European forces play the leadership role and only modest U.S. forces are committed in a supporting capacity (e.g., by providing a carrier strike group). Today NATO Joint Force Commands are assigned deployable CJTFs, but they are not typically employed to perform the full set of peacetime planning actions needed to mount swift, large-scale expeditionary missions outside Europe. NATO military forces have plenty of ground combat divisions and brigades and tactical air wings to meet expeditionary requirements, but they mostly are trained and equipped for MCOs, not hybrid operations

and irregular warfare. Ground forces mostly are heavily armored, with many tanks and artillery tubes, and lack the light mechanized weapons and mobile infantry needed for irregular warfare. Their rotational base is not configured to support large distant deployments for an enduring period. Tactical air wings typically are trained and equipped for MCO air intercept and ground attack rather than persistent ISR and precision air strikes in support of distributed ground forces in small-unit combat. Apart from Britain and France, most European navies are not equipped for major expeditionary missions at long distances including strike operations and port security. Several European militaries are now organizing and training for S&R missions (e.g., Germany), but NATO has no organized S&R force for conducting large deployments. NATO has not created multinational logistic support forces for meeting the unique demands of an expeditionary mission in a distant, austere location. Nor do NATO and the EU have ready access to the necessary civilian manpower that could be needed. In addition, European militaries lack ready access to the large numbers of wide-bodied air transports and cargo ships that would be needed for a large, swift deployment. As a result, NATO deployments for such an expeditionary mission likely would proceed in slow motion.

While all of these factors are significant constraints, the good news is that in recent years, NATO Summit communiqués have trumpeted the need for the Alliance to become better prepared for expeditionary missions, and the ISAF experience in Afghanistan has highlighted such critical shortages as insufficient helicopters, UAVs, and tactical information networks. NATO is promoting a network-enabled capability to provide an information hub into which European forces can plug and play, and is calling for increased access to air transports and cargo ships to improve strategic mobility. As noted earlier, British and French forces already are becoming well endowed for expeditionary missions (e.g., Britain plans to build two large carriers), and Germany has reoriented its army for these missions. Many other European militaries are trying to reorganize and reequip for expeditionary missions, but they are often inhibited by traditional priorities and a lack of investment funds. Progress is slow. Present plans and programs suggest that major improvements will take years to implement. A central challenge facing NATO is determining how to marshal the energy and resources needed to make faster progress.

Similarities and Differences: Implications for NATO Defense Planning

Until recently, NATO public debates focused on expeditionary missions, and Article 5 territorial defense missions were taken for granted. The emerging need to reassure the Baltic States means that both missions must now be taken seriously. As this analysis of Baltic and Middle East missions shows, these two missions create requirements for forces and capabilities that are neither entirely identical nor wholly different. The core similarity is that both missions require well-prepared, modern forces and support assets. The core difference is that an MCO in Europe against a serious adversary is inherently different from expeditionary irregular warfare in a distant failed Middle East state. From this core difference flow numerous dissimilarities in determining how best to prepare NATO forces. The similarities between territorial defense and such expeditionary missions stand out when aggregate requirements are surveyed; the differences become apparent when details are investigated (see tables 3 and 4). The differences narrow appreciably when expeditionary operations are defined in terms of MCOs, but they widen significantly when hybrid irregular warfare, S&R, and comprehensive approaches are the standard for measuring expeditionary requirements.

Table 3: Key Similarities

- Both require coherent strategies that are effects-based and can attain key goals
- Both require deployable joint forces and operations, including NRF and HRF
- Both require careful planning and programming
- Total manpower requirements could be similar and fairly large
- Both require a joint command structure with modern C4ISR systems & information networks
- Both require high readiness, advanced training, and sophisticated doctrines
- Both require sizable ground forces in order to create an adequate pool of forces
- Both require air and naval forces in contributing roles
- Both require modern weapon systems
- Both require multinational logistic support assets
- For both missions, deployment requirements are a variable, not a constant
- Preparedness for both requires a sizable pool of NATO forces that provide flexible options
- Improvements are required for both missions because current forces are not adequate

Table 4: Key Differences

- An MCO demands different warfighting principles than irregular warfare and S&R missions
- An MCO requires massed fires and maneuvers; irregular warfare requires distributed operations
- Two different joint HQs could be needed for the two missions
- Their exercise and training regimes are different
- For Baltic defense, armored ground forces are needed; for expeditionary missions, light mechanized forces are needed
- For Baltic defense, large air combat forces are needed; for expeditionary missions, larger naval forces are needed
- Baltic defense requires larger air defense forces than an expeditionary mission
- Required logistic support assets are different: a product of MCO vs. irregular warfare
- Baltic defense permits prepared bases and facilities; not possible in Middle East
- For Baltic defense, mobility can be provided by road and rail LOCs
- Expeditionary missions require commitment of many air transports and cargo ships for swift deployment
- Expeditionary missions require sizable S&R assets and security assistance
- Expeditionary missions require a sustained rotational base, civilian manpower, and cooperation with EU & UN
- DOTMLPF priorities for the two missions are somewhat different

The differences between the two missions mean that if NATO forces and capabilities are shaped solely for Baltic defense, they will lack many of the assets needed for a Middle East expeditionary mission. Likewise, a NATO posture solely configured for expeditionary missions outside Europe will lack many of the assets needed for a Baltic

territorial defense mission. For example, a Baltic mission would require not only ground combat forces, but also sizable air combat forces. By contrast, a Middle East mission would not require large air forces, but would require sizable naval expeditionary forces, at least for initial entry and for port security afterward. The challenge facing NATO is to improve its forces and capabilities for both missions so that both arenas are adequately resourced. Ideally, NATO should become capable of mounting both missions simultaneously, but a sequential capacity for both could become essential.

Preparing for both missions begins with shaping NATO's military command structures and the operations that they perform in peacetime. The need to be prepared for both missions means that NATO's Joint Forces Command North should have two separate deployable C4ISR structures. Accordingly, its existing CJTF could become an expeditionary HQ. It could be supplemented by transforming the MNCNE into a new joint command with all the necessary C4ISR assets and information networks for Baltic and CEE defense missions. Creation of a new CEE MND could help add to MNCNE assets while giving member countries a stronger voice in shaping regional defense affairs. At a minimum, NATO commands responsible for Baltic and CEE security should engage in routine contingency planning for their region, but enhanced planning—preparation of OPLANs, campaign plans, and mobility plans—would provide a better capacity for gauging force requirements and investment priorities. The same applies to administering enhanced security assistance to the Baltic States, which is needed to enhance their self-defense capabilities and capacity to absorb NATO reinforcements in a crisis. NATO commands responsible for Middle East missions would not be able to engage in comparable planning because of the uncertainty over future contingencies, but generic, capability-based planning can be used to broadly gauge force requirements and investment priorities for their missions.

To be prepared for both missions, an adequate pool of ready, deployable combat forces is critical. This requirement adds strength to NATO's current guidance, which calls for 50 percent of NATO ground posture to be deployable and 10 percent sustainable. A new force-sizing construct would call for deployable forces to have the capacity to carry out a major, new-era Article 5 territorial defense in Europe, a major expeditionary mission in the Middle East, and several minor contingencies. Such a construct would call for three or four swiftly deployable MNCs, plus associated air and naval forces. This requirement elevates the importance of keeping sizable U.S. military forces in Europe or assigned to NATO missions, including ground, air, and naval forces. NATO already possesses most of the European combat forces needed for both missions. As a practical matter, these two missions will mainly be performed by Northern European forces under the purview of JFC North. Today, as shown in table 5, this pool totals fully 1.2 million active military personnel, 62 ground brigades, 1,616 fighter aircraft, and 179 naval combatants. Six of these nine countries already meet the 50-percent/10-percent deployability standard, but questions can be asked whether this standard is appropriately ambitious for these countries. For example, 20 percent of total ground forces may need to be swiftly deployable in order to perform both missions at the same time, and a total pool of 50 percent deployability might be hard-pressed to meet demanding sustainment standards if a Baltic mission and Middle East mission were to occur at the same time and persist for lengthy periods. Ideally, 75–100 percent of these forces should be deployable,

and for nearly all of these nations there is no compelling border defense requirement to limit them to their homelands.

Regardless of the deployment standards chosen, it is imperative that these countries combine their forces under NATO auspices in preparing for both missions; the forces of any single nation are too small to meet requirements. Both the Baltic territorial defense mission and the Middle East expeditionary mission should be handled by sub-coalitions of the able and willing, i.e., by a cluster of countries that take the mission seriously enough to be constantly ready to perform it. NATO performed successfully during the Cold War partly because it was able to forge such coalitions for every major defense mission; Central Europe was defended by nine countries, not by the entire Alliance. For understandable reasons, recent years have seen a shift toward spreading responsibility for new missions across the entire Alliance in order to share burdens fairly and avoid free riding. While the universality principle must remain inviolate in today's world, the practicalities of defense planning create reasons for relying mainly on sub-coalitions to meet the bulk of defense requirements for big, demanding missions. Moreover it is important, for political and military reasons, that the four best-armed countries—the United States, Britain, France, and Germany—be heavily committed to being prepared for both the Baltic defense mission and the Middle East expeditionary mission. Without major contributions by all four countries, NATO preparations for both missions likely will fall short of meeting requirements, regardless of how the universality principle is invoked.

Table 5: Principal NATO Deployment Forces

Countries	Active Military Manpower (000s)	Combat Brigades	Combat Aircraft	Major Naval Combatants
Britain	160	8	343	40
France	352	10	351	41
Germany	244	12	298	30
Belgium & Netherlands	79	5	147	12
Denmark & Norway	49	3	100	12
Italy	243	9	249	31
Poland	122	15	128	13
Total	1.2 million	62	1616	179

High readiness is also a key requirement for both missions, but in ways that reflect their differing dictates. Some European ground and air forces will have the readiness to perform both missions, but other, less-endowed forces may be better off specializing in one or the other mission. Regardless, the differences in training and exercise regimes for both missions are especially noteworthy. For ground forces, preparing for an MCO against a well-armed opponent requires advanced training and exercises in the blending of infantry, armor, and artillery operations at all levels so that firepower and maneuver can be integrated on the battlefield. It also requires close air-ground integration so that

precision air strikes can be blended into the ground scheme of maneuver to exert maximum leverage on the enemy. MCOs typically are marked by a few brief, large, and decisive battles with the enemy. By contrast, irregular operations require close political-military fusion so that guerilla forces are regularly defeated in a lengthy succession of small battles and cleared out of contested territory and urban areas, and liberated territory is permanently held so that the local populations are secure. Once success is achieved, military forces must work closely with civilian institutions on reconstruction missions that have major political and economic components. Such operations often take months or years to succeed. Specific, well-developed military skills for irregular and counterinsurgency operations are needed at tactical levels by small units and throughout the force posture. Indeed, many observers judge that, compared to MCOs, irregular operations demand not only different doctrines, but also a different military culture and mentality. To the extent this is the case, it mandates separate types of training and exercise regimes for NATO forces.

In addition to preparing combat forces, NATO will need to pay special attention to improving its multinational logistic support assets, LOC infrastructures, and mobility forces for both missions. In this arena, the differences between the Baltic mission and the Middle East expeditionary mission invite separate attention. For both missions, multinational logistic support structures are needed, but the logistic support demands for MCOs and expeditionary irregular warfare are often different. For example, whereas the former requires high ammo resupply, the latter requires high maintenance and refueling. Likewise, a Baltic mission would require preparation of the LOC infrastructure across Northern Europe, whereas a Middle East mission would require pooling of large numbers of air transports and cargo ships for swift mobility. For these reasons, creating a new NATO Deployment Agency for transportation planning makes sense. Force deployment in Europe can be eased by creating bases and facilities in the Baltic States; this is not possible for a Middle East contingency, and NATO forces would need to bring assets for quickly preparing temporary facilities and bases along with them. For such reasons, two different planning constructs for logistic support and mobility are needed, one focused on the Baltic mission and the other on the Middle East mission. Improvements in these areas could have a critical impact on determining whether NATO will be prepared to perform future territorial defense and expeditionary missions in the years ahead.

Another big difference between the two missions is clear. Whereas a Baltic mission could be performed by joint combat forces, a Middle East mission would require not only joint combat forces but also large S&R assets, civilian manpower, and security assistance resources. In these areas, current NATO capabilities are seriously deficient. Ongoing national efforts can be supplemented by creating a large pool of national S&R forces and subjecting them to common readiness, equipment, and deployment standards. NATO efforts to work with governments and the EU to create a large pool of deployable civilians also make sense. The same applies to the step of creating common policies and assets for security assistance to Middle East nations.

Finally, other differences between DOTMLPF priorities are noteworthy. For procurement policies, a Baltic defense mission creates a premium on steady-state modernization of NATO forces with new ground, air, and naval weapon systems designed for MCOs. Across Europe, many countries are responding to this requirement by ordering new tanks, artillery tubes, tactical fighters, and naval combatants. While a

Middle East deployment could benefit from such efforts, its ground forces likely would require a different suite of weapons, including such light mechanized vehicles as armored Humvees and MRAPs, and systems that protect against IEDs and RPGs. Accelerated procurement of such equipment makes sense even at the sacrifice of delayed modernization of non-deployable forces.

Conclusion: Affordability in a Setting of Resource Constraints

How can NATO best proceed in meeting the need to be prepared for both missions? If both missions gain greater ascendancy in the future, NATO will need to spend its scarce budgetary resources prudently and efficiently so both missions are accorded proper funding in ways that bear fruit. Priorities will have to be set, but sacrificing critical preparations for one mission in order to fully pursue the other could be a luxury that NATO cannot afford if it is to become better capable of achieving its security goals in Europe and the Middle East. Both missions should receive appropriate, balanced attention in NATO's new Strategic Concept as well as subsidiary guidance that specifies operational planning requirements, force goals and commitments, country plans, and improvement priorities.

To what extent is preparedness for both missions affordable in today's climate of shrinking European defense spending, small investment budgets, and competing priorities elsewhere? This question can best be answered by noting that, although preparing for both missions would not be cost-free, many of the necessary measures are not highly expensive. For example, relatively modest investments in C4ISR interoperability, common doctrine, training, and manning can enhance the readiness of many NATO combat forces. Preparations for Baltic defense can be advanced by such low-cost measures as enhanced NATO planning and improvements to the local military infrastructure. Preparations for Middle East expeditionary missions can be strengthened by reorganizing national logistic forces into multinational formations, by encouraging niche-area specialization by some countries, and by pooling national military assets and commercial assets in order to assemble more air transports and cargo ships for mobility missions. All of these measures qualify as low-cost and high-leverage options for an alliance in which affordability and efficiency are increasingly important. If offsetting cost savings are found elsewhere, e.g., by trimming unnecessary manpower, legacy modernization, and legacy infrastructure projects, many of these measures could be resource-neutral.

NATO should adopt a new force improvement plan that replaces the PCC/CPG with a dual focus on both missions in ways that help contribute to a new paradigm for NATO defense planning and resource allocation. Even if appropriate funds can be found for the preparedness measures contemplated here, progress in both mission arenas is not likely to come quickly. But if NATO can place itself on a path to tangible gains in 1–3 years, followed by significant additional progress over 5–10 years, this would be an important achievement, one that could help enhance European security and strengthen the Alliance's ability to deal with a troubled Middle East in ways that counter al Qaeda and lessen the dangers posed by failed states.

3. Closer NATO-EU Ties—Ideas for the Strategic Concept

Tomas Valasek and Daniel Korski

NATO's new Strategic Concept is unlikely to dwell extensively on the subject of NATO-EU cooperation; that is too narrow a subject for the kind of “grand strategy” the document is meant to be. But the issue looms in the background. Poor cooperation between the two institutions makes it difficult for NATO and the EU to adopt a truly comprehensive approach to warfare that integrates civilian and military capabilities. Limited NATO-EU relations may also undermine attempts to reassure Central European governments that NATO takes seriously their worries of a resurgent Russia, and that it is able to address any challenges from their large neighbor with a range of tools.

With civil-military cooperation and reassurance likely to be front and center in the new Strategic Concept, the EU and NATO governments should relaunch their efforts to boost cross-institutional cooperation. The EU's newly adopted Lisbon Treaty also opens up new possibilities for resolving the institutional blockage.

This paper recommends practical ways to move forward. Some of the recommendations can be implemented in the near term; others may only be relevant when a lasting thaw in Greek-Turkish-Cypriot relations occurs, and after the dust from the Lisbon Treaty has settled. But it is important that EU and NATO governments keep trying. As defense budgets come under pressure across the alliance, greater NATO-EU cooperation is not a luxury but a necessity for both organizations.

Comprehensive Approach

The place where NATO-EU cooperation is needed most urgently is on the battlefield. The key lesson from NATO's recent operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, and Afghanistan is that military operations must be fully integrated with civilian-led reconstruction activities: building governance and courts, training police, restarting agricultural production, providing water, electricity, and healthcare services, removing sewage, etc.

Though NATO is now undertaking a number of non-military tasks, such as police assistance, the alliance has moved into this field in an ad hoc manner while individual NATO members have grappled with the tasks of building their own civilian capabilities in isolation from each other. NATO has no mechanism for generating, let alone commanding or coordinating, civilian capabilities, even when no other actors fill the gap, e.g., in southern Afghanistan. To date, efforts to build even modest capabilities inside NATO have been stymied by competition with the EU. Each time the idea is raised, one or more European allies dismiss it as unnecessary duplication of EU capabilities.

The EU has civilian assets and an embryonic civilian operational HQ and has undertaken far more civilian missions than NATO, though its efforts leave a lot to be desired, in terms of both capability and strategy.² But because of a bureaucratic-political

² Daniel Korski and Richard Gowan, “Can the EU rebuild failing states? A review of Europe’s civilian

desire to build EU assets in isolation from NATO, as well as the Turkish-Greek impasse between the two blocs, NATO has no recourse to EU resources. By the same token, though the EU has a military dimension and recourse to NATO assets through the Berlin Plus arrangements, few expect EU deployments to engage in high-intensity combat in the near-term.

In short, both the EU and NATO lack a proper, integrated, civilian-military capacity capable of planning and commanding the full spectrum of operations. In an ideal world NATO and the EU would have a single such capacity, shared between the two.³ But until EU-NATO relations improve—allowing NATO to draw on the EU's civilian resources in operations (and benefit from those of other international organizations as well)—developing some kind of rudimentary NATO civilian planning and command capacity is the second best option. Yet it, too, remains beyond grasp because of poor cooperation between the EU and NATO.

Reassurance

The second major NATO-EU issue is how to deal with Russia. Many expect the new Strategic Concept to propose new measures to reassure allies in Northern and Central Europe, who worry about a possible confrontation with Russia. But military measures of the sorts discussed to date—contingency planning or military exercises—will do little to allay the concerns of those member states like Slovakia or Bulgaria that worry primarily about non-military threats from their large neighbor: cyber-attacks, oil and gas-cutoffs, or the takeover of key energy infrastructure.

While they look to NATO for protection, this is not necessarily because the alliance has the tools to address non-military threats, but because NATO involves the United States, which Central Europeans think more likely to act than the EU. The reality is that NATO alone can do little to defend against cyber attacks or disruptions of vital energy supplies. Many countermeasures (e.g., improved safety standards for critical Internet nodes and better interconnections among gas grids) fall under the EU's purview rather than NATO's.

To better reassure Central European allies, the EU needs to start thinking about these new threats more strategically—to clearly articulate their impact on the safety and security of member states, and to draft joint defensive strategies. Naturally, this is a task largely for EU member states and institutions. But NATO could help by, for example, sharing intelligence on Russia with the EU or by imparting lessons learned in its cyberterrorism centers of excellence. None of this will be possible, however, unless the EU and NATO start cooperating more closely.

Recommendations

Some of the following initiatives could be considered:

Strategic Concept

- Insert specific language about NATO-EU relations into the Strategic Concept that lauds ESDP accomplishments and the EU's unique role (in part to assuage

capacities," ECFR, October 2009.

³ See Tomas Valasek, "France, NATO and European defence," CER, May 2008.

fears among some European allies) and lays out a strategic rationale for closer ties on civilian and military development and in the planning, conduct, and assessment of missions.

- Insert language in the Strategic Concept about confronting “common challenges jointly,” using the range of instruments that both organizations control.

Comprehensive Approach

- Order a joint study on the provincial reconstruction team (PRT) concept with a view to making recommendations for better integrating EU and NATO civilian and military capabilities in some future local-level organization.
- Agree a joined-up program of predeployment training with a view to developing a broader EU-NATO Defense Education Concept and, in time, a NATO-EU School for Post-Conflict Stabilization to provide training. Bosnia-Herzegovina, where both organizations cooperate and the EU (uniquely) has the main military role, could be an ideal venue.
- Appoint an EU/NATO State-Building Policy Council modeled on the Defense Policy Board, to provide input on how to improve NATO-EU cooperation in this area and enhance links with other organizations, e.g., the UN, AU, and OSCE.

Reassurance

- Institute a high-level, tabletop, joint EU-NATO exercise that involves the NATO Secretary General, the EU high representative, and the Head of Governments of the EU Presidency Troika. Some of these exercises should focus on scenarios of concern to the Central and Northern Europeans, e.g., staged unrest involving Russian minorities in countries neighboring Russia.
- Improve links between the EU SitCen and NATO SitCen, appointing liaison officers and organizing informal away-days with a view to eventually drafting a joint product, e.g., on Bosnia or Russia.
- Establish a working relationship between the NATO-accredited Comprehensive Cyber Defense Center of Excellence and the EU military staff, allowing for regular exchange of lessons learned.
- Create a joint NATO-EU center of excellence on energy security tasked with studying implications and possible responses in case of gas and oil cutoffs.
- Jointly fund the drafting by a group of think tanks of a Euro-Atlantic Intelligence Assessment, modeled on the U.S. National Intelligence Estimate, to be discussed in the NAC and the EU Political and Security Committee.

General

The NATO Secretary-General and the new EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy should jointly visit theaters where both EU and NATO assets are deployed, starting with a visit to Kosovo, then to ships off the Horn of Africa, and finally to Afghanistan. They should also do joint op-eds on issues of common concerns, e.g., energy security or Ukraine.

- Examine the possibility of merging the NATO and EU maritime operations off the Horn of Africa or, at the least, developing a joint project by the two missions to support regional coastguards.
- Three defense ministers could form an informal group to host discussions on improving NATO-EU cooperation, on the model of the “RC South meetings” held by the countries deployed as part of ISAF’s southern command. The three ministers can either be chosen specifically—e.g., the Polish, Canadian and Spanish ministers—or picked from the EU Presidency Troika
- The EU and NATO should host a joint conference on Berlin Plus to assess the workings and recommend updates/new agreements for the NAC and Defense Ministers.
- The NATO Secretary General and the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy should jointly chair a study of how NATO and the EU can collaborate on security sector reform in a potential theater of joint operations, based on past experience, e.g., of the concomitant deployment of ISAF and EUPOL in Afghanistan.
- The EU and NATO should jointly commission a think tank, with assistance from Allied Command Transformation and the EU Military Staff, to draft the first set of joint NATO/EU concurrency assumptions, investigating how many (and at what operational tempo) both organizations can manage. The aim would be for ACT and EUMS to eventually collaborate on a joint document rather than the two separate (and therefore unrealistic) processes that exist today.
- Jointly commission a study of how NATO’s capability process and EDA can cooperate more in generating alliance-wide capabilities without jeopardizing each organization’s process. A joint op-ed, for example, by the NATO SecGen and the EU SG/HR on common ideas to improve military capabilities would also be noticed
- Encourage more EU officials to attend the NATO School in Oberammergau—perhaps setting aside a number of places—while asking the European Security and Defense College to invite NATO officials to give occasional lectures on EU-NATO cooperation on the ground.
- Institute a NATO-EU Fellowship consisting of 20 mid-level officials (Head of Section or below) from NATO IS, EU institutions, and member states who over a 2-year period will undertake short-term secondments in each other’s offices, work on joint projects, and meet quarterly for dinner with the NATO Secretary General and the EU SG/HR to present conclusions. Specific projects could include looking at UAV requirements and coming up with a list of recommendations for both organizations.
- Formally appoint a military-only advisory body to provide advice on how to improve NATO/EU military cooperation and future force planning.
- Encourage all EU NATO members to “double-hat” their military representatives, giving them both EU and NATO roles, such as the UK has already done, to enforce greater policy integration in the capitals.

- Create a new NATO-EU partnership on disaster management that creates links between each and the WHO global health security network. Commission a study of how to integrate the EU Monitoring and Information Centre (MIC) with NATO Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response and Coordination Centre (EADRCC), perhaps with a view to creating a joint NATO-EU Disaster Management Centre.
- In a speech, float the idea of a joint EU-NATO Conflict Prevention Task Force with a permanent secretariat housed in the EU institutions to coordinate intelligence about developing conflicts, produce joint analyses, and propose conflict-mitigating strategies for discussion.
- Propose that the NATO-supported network of Atlantic Association be expanded and renamed to Euro-Atlantic Associations, covering both NATO and EU issues and reporting to a NATO-EU management.
- Organize joint NATO/EU delegation to visit the 28 legislatures of the NATO and EU member states to discuss Euro-Atlantic security issues.

4. Streamlining NATO Decisionmaking

Kurt Volker

Obstacles to efficient decisionmaking at NATO have less to do with structures than with the underlying political consensus and political will of the member states. When Allies are in fundamental agreement and committed to an outcome, decisions move easily. When that basic consensus is lacking, no amount of streamlined decisionmaking procedures can compensate. Renewing a political consensus on NATO's purpose in the 21st Century is the most important task of producing a new Strategic Concept.

That said, even when political conditions are right, the process for making decisions and implementing them as an Alliance is cumbersome and should be improved. This paper examines seven areas for such improvement: use of the consensus rule; preparing needed decisions; use of ministerials and summits; the role of the Secretary General; the role of the International Staff; the role of the Military Committee and military command structure; and crisis response and management.

Underlying Political Agreement—Indispensable

Proposals to reform NATO decisionmaking are usually born of frustration. NATO is often faulted for being unable to come to closure in a timely fashion on basic decisions and—even after such decisions are made—NATO is equally faulted for failing to produce the troops, civilian personnel, and financial resources necessary for implementation. At such times, NATO is seen as slow, lumbering, and under-performing.

Without a strong, underlying political consensus, NATO risks being ineffective in crisis response, crisis management, conducting complex multinational operations, and building usable security capabilities—and less effective as a deterrent. In other words, the lack of a genuine political consensus and solidarity, when played out over time, puts NATO's ability to perform its core functions at risk.

To improve NATO effectiveness, calls are often made to “streamline decisionmaking,” and “remove unnecessary bureaucracy.” While worthy goals in their own right, these fixes do not address the underlying political problems.

There are no easy fixes. Democratic nations are political entities. Each government is responsible to its own media and public. Generating national political will and public conviction that faraway, violent conflicts are of vital interest, that greater defense expenditure is necessary, and that national contributions to and solidarity within NATO are essential, is no easy task. But absent national agreement and resolve, our common, international effort will not be successful, and NATO itself will be at risk.

Procedures at NATO can certainly be improved for efficiency (and recommendations follow later in this paper). But overcoming this basic political challenge is the role of leadership within each of the NATO member states, and the *most important task* of the effort to draft a new Strategic Concept. *A transatlantic political compact, where the United States and Canada remain engaged as European powers, while European Allies join with the United States and Canada in tackling global security challenges, is required.*

Consensus Rule—Distinguishing Between Decisions and Implementation

Much ink has been spilled arguing that the requirement for decisionmaking by consensus should be dropped or modified—and just as much spilled arguing the opposite.

The argument in favor of modifying the consensus rule rests on what I believe are fallacies: that, over time, an increasing number of decisions are being taken by consensus; that NATO enlargement has made it harder to reach consensus; that it is appropriate to make “political” decisions by consensus, but not military ones; and, most fundamentally, that NATO could in fact be an actor in its own right, even without the full agreement and participation of member states.

Each of these assumptions is flawed. NATO has always made decisions by consensus, at all levels. Disagreements that block consensus are most often among the “old” members of NATO; it is difficult to think of an example of a single (or even a handful) of new Allies blocking a decision otherwise ready to be taken by the other Allies. “Political” decisions turn out to be the most difficult—e.g., the interruption or resumption of the NATO-Russia Council, or the decision to grant access to the Membership Action Plan—and “military” decisions of any consequence are themselves political. There is, in fact, no real distinction between political and military decisions. And, finally, it is inconceivable that NATO could survive an occasion on which a country was “out-voted” and “required” to send its troops to an operation it opposed. Indeed, it is unlikely that such a country would long remain a part of an organization taking military action with which it disagreed.

So what is the real problem? It is not with process, but with substance. It is indeed harder in practice to achieve consensus now than 20 years ago. But this is due to underlying policy differences that have grown among NATO allies, and to degradation in the value attached to solidarity—i.e., to the view that it is essential that NATO have a common position. Rebuilding an underlying policy agreement and commitment to solidarity is the key challenge the Strategic Concept process must tackle.

Where we *can* make an improvement, however, is ensuring that decisions are in fact brought to the North Atlantic Council rather than buried, and that the distinction between decisionmaking and implementation is sharpened.

Over the past decade at NATO, we have seen examples of issues not reaching the NAC either because they are bottled up in other committees, or because a few nations have worked behind the scenes to slow-roll the process. For example, in October 2008, in addition to deciding to escort vessels of the World Food Program off the coast of Somalia, Ministers of Defense sought military advice on a longer-term NATO counter-piracy role. The NAC requested this advice formally in November 2008. The work was prepared quickly by SHAPE, but was not brought before the Military Committee until early 2009, and it was March 2009 before the advice reached the NAC.

Likewise, we have seen a tendency for issues already decided at the NAC to be hollowed out in the course of implementation, because nations reopen them in subordinate committees, deny resources, or deny their personnel the necessary national authority to execute decisions within the military structure. Experience with “caveats” on

military forces, and the difficulty last year in executing NAC decisions on counter-narcotics operations in Afghanistan come to mind.

These are fundamentally different issues from the consensus rule itself being a problem. The solution lies in ensuring that issues are surfaced for decision and, once decided by consensus, executed efficiently. If subsequently concerns arise with the execution of a decision already made, the decision must be brought back to the NAC for consideration, rather than modified by default in the course of implementation. Specific recommendations to address these issues are made below.

Preparing Needed Decisions

If we take decisionmaking by consensus as a given, the next step is to improve the efficiency by which issues are brought to the NAC for decision. The danger is that NAC meetings become lengthy recitations of national views, without ever reaching firm conclusions. This is the natural tendency within NATO, absent concerted pressure by a nation or the Secretary General to reach a decision, and it is compounded when differences in national views are left unaddressed, either in Brussels or in capitals.

Several steps can be taken to improve the framing of decisions within NATO—some of which have already begun to be implemented under Secretary General Rasmussen.

Routine briefings should be circulated to nations in writing in advance of meetings to avoid using precious time during the meetings for briefings. The International Staff (IS) and International Military Staff (IMS), therefore, have a responsibility to ensure that high-quality briefing materials are prepared and circulated to national delegations with regularity, and that questions raised by nations through committees or directly with the IS and IMS are addressed promptly. Nations have a responsibility to ensure that these materials are briefed up to Permanent Representatives and outward to capitals, so Allies are working with a common informational picture.

Draft decision sheets should be prepared and circulated in advance by the Secretary General in time for Permanent Representatives to get national guidance with a view toward using NAC meetings to debate and agree a final decision. This will allow the nature of NAC discussion to become more focused on what is required to meet the needs of Allies for a final decision, quickly getting beyond the usual restatement of national views. As a matter of practice, it should also reinforce the sense of solidarity within NATO by emphasizing that it is essential that NATO in fact reach a conclusion, rather than spin things out.

The Secretary General should focus NAC discussion on strategic consultations and decisionmaking, not tactical level issues or open-ended discussion. Routine oversight and implementation of decisions should be delegated to subcommittees, the IS, and military authorities. Because of intense domestic political interest in the conduct of NATO operations, NAC discussions tend to descend quickly from the strategic to the tactical level. On the one hand, some degree of detailed operational oversight is essential, as tactical decisions—e.g., the means by which commanders instruct forces to avoid civilian casualties—can have significant political consequences. Yet micro-level engagement risks developing a dynamic of its own, crowding out strategic focus and adding layers of complexity to military commanders in accomplishing their mission. At its worst, tactical

second-guessing seems to serve as a substitute for nations providing the resources commanders say are necessary to accomplish the NATO-agreed mission.

The NAC agenda should be planned on a one-year calendar basis to ensure the NAC covers the full NATO strategic agenda without getting mired in repetitive operational oversight. Because of the NAC's intensive focus on the details of operations, issues of extraordinary long-term importance for NATO—such as Alliance and national budget levels and allocations, the performance of NATO agencies, review of capability development, and intelligence issues—are often given little attention and strategic direction. The time devoted to NAC meetings should be allocated more strategically to cover these critical long-term issues.

Nations must be channeled into using the right forums and vehicles within NATO. A critical source of “bottling up” NATO is the actions of nations themselves. For example, by raising political issues in the Military Committee, or seeking to delay action within the IS or military authorities, nations themselves contribute to ensuring that the salient issues of difference among Allies remain stuck in the system rather than discussed and agreed in the NAC. Changing behavior requires self-discipline by Allies, but also staff discipline by committee chairmen and the Secretary General.

Use of Ministerials and Summits

The problems with inefficient use of time in the NAC are magnified at ministerials and summits. Few gatherings in the world rival the collection of “high-priced talent” assembled at NATO Ministerial and Summit meetings. But there is hardly a single such meeting that goes by without a minister objecting to the poor use of his or her time. The recent meeting of defense ministers in Istanbul was no exception.

In a relatively static Cold War, with 15 or 16 Allies at the table, it was possible for ministers to have a more intimate personal interaction, and for NATO to take a relatively leisurely approach to discussion and decisionmaking. With 28 allies around the table, in a rapidly changing, globalized world, and with NATO running several military operations simultaneously, the old procedures for running a NATO meeting do not work. Heads of state and government, as well as foreign and defense ministers, are often deeply frustrated by the practice of sitting for hours listening to prepared remarks rather than engaging in meaningful, interactive discussion or nailing down concrete decisions. The procedures are no better among permanent representatives, though tolerance for them may be higher.

Many of the recommendations noted above for better preparing NAC decisionmaking would also help with ministerials and summits. *For example, in preparing summit and ministerial meetings, the Secretary General should circulate proposed topics for discussion and decisions to be taken in advance.*

A few additional steps could specifically help in managing the time of the Alliance's most senior leaders. *In particular, the Secretary General should abandon speaking lists and lead discussion interactively, with a view toward debating, modifying, and ultimately agreeing the needed (and already proposed) decisions. Formal intervention texts by Ministers should be published (ideally in advance) and not read at the meeting. All-encompassing communiqués should be replaced on nearly all occasions with narrowly focused decision sheets.*

Role of the Secretary General

On the assumption that decisionmaking continues to be on the basis of consensus, that decisions are better prepared, and that Ministers and Ambassadors are able to use their time better for genuine strategic discussion, guidance, and decisionmaking, the next challenge lies with the execution of decisions. Here, an accumulation of embedded habits, national restrictions, and inadequate resources conspire to make NATO slow and inflexible, and inhibit NATO from being able to prioritize action in line with NAC decisions.

In particular, though constrained by finite resources, the Secretary General is often prevented by nations from reassigning personnel and financial resources to higher-priority activities. This “Catch-22” situation gives the Secretary General a nearly impossible task: he must deliver on NAC decisions but cannot access all the resources nominally at his disposal to do so. He therefore requires more resources—but nations will not provide more resources until national authorities are satisfied that existing resources are used most efficiently. Nations thereby escape being confronted with the resource consequences of their national wishes; they authorize action in NATO’s highest-priority areas without accepting the need for resource trade-offs with lower priorities issues for the Alliance as a whole.

The Secretary General cannot resolve this dilemma on his own. It can only be turned around by heads of state and government explicitly deciding that the Secretary General exercise his “CEO authorities.” *Within an overall budget level approved by nations, at the end of the day—after consultations with nations—the Secretary General needs to have the authority to assign NATO’s limited resources as he deems best to carry out the Alliance’s agreed policy agenda. He needs to be able to structure the international staff, and assign and reassign personnel within it, to align with the political priorities of the Alliance as a whole. Principles of balance and fairness could be agreed, but within those boundaries, nations must let go of national “holds” on positions or budget pots and allow the Secretary General to manage the organization on behalf of the common good.*

Nations may object that their specific national interests will be trampled as resources are allocated. This is not sufficient objection. Nations need to make a case to the other Allies—not impede action by the Secretary General—that particular projects or interests are more important to the Alliance as a whole than the other priorities to which resources are being assigned. *Rather than requiring consensus to implement a reassignment of resources by the Secretary General in support of higher priorities, consensus should be required to block such a reassignment.*

Role of the International Staff

If the Secretary General is indeed empowered to act as NATO’s CEO, then questions of the structure and functioning of the IS are his to resolve. *Nations—even big nations—need to abandon the notion that they can lay claim to specific, often high-level jobs within the NATO structure, or insist on the preservation of parochial functions within the structure that are not in synch with the overall priorities of the Alliance.* This empowerment of the position would allow the Secretary General the latitude to structure the staff as necessary, and then hire the best-qualified candidates for that structure.

In considering the current structure of the IS, a few observations come to mind, many of which have been suggested before, and in some cases even been implemented.

First, there should be greater emphasis on information and intelligence packaging and sharing. This applies both to operational level information shared with implementers and analytic intelligence shared with Alliance political leadership. Large Allies have independent sources of information, but many smaller Allies depend critically on information NATO as a whole could provide. This function could be performed on a task force basis, or as a separate intelligence division under an Assistant Secretary General for Intelligence, reporting through both the IS and IMS sides of the house.

Second, the Executive Secretariat function should be strengthened. The IS needs a senior process manager, under the Secretary General yet separate from the Director of the Private Office, who functions as the counterpart of the Director of the International Military Staff. A key role for this process manager is to ensure timeliness in preparation and follow-through of NAC decisionmaking.

Thirdly, NATO's strategic communications and public diplomacy role should be reinforced. Until recently, many Allies considered it inappropriate for NATO to play a role in influencing public opinion in member states. Given the critical nature of public support for Allied missions, however, this objection can no longer be sustained. While NATO has in the past few years begun to focus on addressing domestic public opinion, these efforts are still in their infancy and need greater attention and resources.

Fourth, NATO needs to develop greater expertise in key civilian areas of crisis management in order to better interface with other actors in complex missions in the field. Priorities should go to policing, NGO liaison, development aid, humanitarian relief, and training of civilian government officials (especially in security services oversight and the judiciary). NATO should consider greater use of an integrated "civil-military cell" at Headquarters to integrate the thinking necessary to ensure integrated civil-military coordination in the field.

Finally, NATO should place greater priority on engagement with partners across the board. Whether they be Euro-Atlantic states inching their way toward membership, PfP, Mediterranean Dialogue, or Istanbul Initiative partners, other key regional players or partners contributing to NATO operations, or International organizations (from the UN to the EU to the OIC), NATO's future success will be increasingly determined by its ability to work with a variety of other actors, across civil and military spheres. NATO should invest now in the personnel and resources to conduct active partnership relations across a wide range of players.

Role of the Military Committee and Military Command Structure

Discussing the role of the civilian International Staff raises the question of the roles of the International Military Staff and the role of the Military Committee.

Frustration has grown in recent years that political issues increasingly impede the provision of purely military advice through the MC. This has even led to suggestions that the Committee be taken out of the process altogether.

Such suggestions are unrealistic, as nations have a right to insist on having their own senior military representatives maintain full access to military information and execution

going up and down the NATO chain of command, and on having the opportunity to provide their own military advice, based on this information, to their own capitals and representatives in the NAC.

As with suggestions to abolish decisionmaking by consensus, the frustration with the Military Committee in reality traces back to substantive *policy* differences among the Allies, rather than the process itself. When there is fundamental discomfort in capitals with ongoing NATO operations, nations use every tool at their disposal, at every stage of the process, to influence NATO's operations. *Here, it is the role of the nations, and most especially the Chairman of the Military Committee, to police a more rigorous enforcement of the existing division of labor between the NAC and the MC. Specifically, it is important to separate military oversight and advice from policy considerations, and equally to ensure that policy issues are briefed to and discussed in the NAC.* Otherwise, political issues that deserve debate among Allied political authorities risk remaining buried in military-channel discussions.

Combining the International Staff and International Military Staff *could* help to facilitate the proper division of labor between the NAC and MC. In addition to providing greater insight to staff members in both directions, a combined staff could help provide assurance that issues not deemed within the MC's remit will in fact be aired on the political side of the Alliance. That said, strong arguments can also be made for retaining the current separation of the two staffs. More important than staff reorganization is clean separation of the roles of the MC and the NAC.

A number of changes should also be made with respect to the NATO force-planning process and command structure. Without going into extensive detail here, a few observations should be made:

The NATO Command Structure is far larger than the willingness of Allies to fill it, and larger than it needs to be to manage NATO's current and future operations. A radically re-ordered and streamlined command structure would likely have a higher percentage of posts actually filled, emphasize greater multinationality, and shorten the chain between political authority and military execution. A new Command Structure should reflect the operational requirements of leading NATO training, capacity development, contingency planning, exercises, and operations. To agree such a reformed structure, a special, high-level body representing senior defense officials from capitals should be formed.

The traditional force-planning process at NATO no longer works, as countries do not follow through with the resources needed to make it credible. The process should therefore be revamped to focus on producing known, ready capabilities that can be exercised and deployed quickly in response to a variety of contingencies—in other words, based on the NRF concept. Common funding of the NRF for operational deployments (including the principle of reimbursement) remains a key goal to spread the cost of deployments equitably while different nations provide the bulk of the forces at different times. The creation of a multinational “tip of the spear” Allied Solidarity Force remains desirable if/if it is fully embedded in the NRF concept.

Consistent with this innovation, the role of ACT should be re-looked to focus on developing the forces required in this capability-based approach. In essence, SHAPE serves as the operational strategic command, and ACT serves as the force developer and

trainer, much as in the United States the services develop the forces for use in operations led by the Combatant Commanders.

Crisis Response and Crisis Management

Finally, all of the above notwithstanding, NATO needs to take a fresh look at its crisis response and crisis management capacities. At the moment, it can be argued that NATO is incapable of crisis response, given the time it takes to get information to capitals, then get instructions back, and then negotiate an agreed NATO position. A telling example was NATO's utter lack of even a simple political statement for nearly 2 weeks after Russia's 2008 invasion of Georgia. (This, while other actors such as the EU, were issuing statements repeatedly, and the EU Presidency led negotiations with Russia to establish a ceasefire).

Under normal circumstances NATO can react in about 24 hours. But it is severely challenged to produce anything in less time than that. NATO can be said to have a 2-hour problem—unable to respond in an unfolding crisis situation—and a 24-hour problem—unable to take a common position on an issue or event before the crisis itself has continued for a day.

NATO is currently better suited to crisis management, where it has more time to oversee and adjust ongoing operations. But even here, sudden changes on the ground can result in silence from Brussels until nations have a few days to process the information and negotiate a position.

Given the time-lines involved in a range of potential scenarios, NATO should review two steps. *First, it should examine the delegation of emergency powers to the Secretary General and the Supreme Allied Commander, Operations.* Some emergency powers already reside in the SACEUR. Yet this arrangement risks skewing any potential NATO crisis response in a military, rather than civilian or political direction. In the first minutes and hours of a crisis, some action by the Secretary General and SACEUR should be appropriate, until nations have the opportunity to gather themselves and establish a consensus NATO position.

Second, NATO should require Allies to establish special communications procedures in each of the member states so that—in response to the Secretary General invoking emergency procedures—nations must provide guidance aimed at reaching a NATO decision after 2 hours, but well before the 24 hours that is now the norm. Other crisis arrangements should also be considered. The entire issue merits further examination based on precedent and conceivable crisis scenarios.

5. The NATO Command Structure: Considerations for the Future

W. Bruce Weinrod and Charles Barry⁴

This paper explores potential future reforms of the NATO command structure. The intent is to stimulate thought on the current structure's fit to oversee the forces and operations of a growing array of NATO missions. From capacity building with partners to peace operations, humanitarian assistance, and combat operations, Alliance forces are continuously engaged in multiple theaters. These challenges demand a command structure with organizational flexibility, an agile and competent international staff, highly integrated information systems, and deployable elements to accompany mobile forces for some sustained period of time. The command structure and the interoperable communications and information systems that support it are the sinew that ties together the national and multinational forces of NATO. It also serves to link those forces to the political purposes of the decisions taken by the North Atlantic Council (NAC).

The most fundamental question that might be asked is, Why does NATO need a command structure when it faces no proximate menacing military threat? A reflection on this question begins by understanding what the political leaders of NATO members have asked NATO's military to do in peacetime, in time of crisis, and, if necessary, in a conflict or post-conflict situation, including hostile strikes anywhere on NATO territory.

The Enduring Rationale for a NATO Command Structure “Fit for Purpose”

The catch phrase “fit for purpose” is shorthand for a command structure fitted for all the missions NATO leaders intend it to do in terms of organization, personnel, capabilities, and resources. Military missions are defined by political agreements, in particular the operational Level of Ambition⁵ and the many NATO agreements to engage with partners, a main focus of such engagement being military. There are also critical additions to these requirements, such as sustained operations in Kosovo and Afghanistan. The command structure oversees joint, multinational operations and directs the actions of lower headquarters. It also directs the Alliance business of building multinational interoperability. Political leaders seek military advice from time to time on what essential structure is needed (fit) for command over all common agreed missions (purposes). Once

⁴ The authors gratefully acknowledge the contributions of General (Ret) Bantz Craddock USA, former Supreme Allied Commander Europe, and Vice Admiral (Ret) William Sullivan USN, former U.S Military Representative to the NATO Military Committee, in reviewing and commenting on drafts of this paper. We are also grateful to Admiral Mark Fitzgerald, Commander Joint Force Command Naples and U.S. Sixth Fleet, for his perspectives on the NATO Command Structure. Thanks also are due to Samuel Greene, who assisted with research and writing.

⁵ Level of Ambition refers to the types and numbers of missions that NATO military forces should be prepared to carry out—simultaneously, if necessary—as mandated by NATO political leaders, and defined most recently in 2006.

a new structure receives political approval, it can only be fully effective in carrying out assigned missions if it receives the necessary funds, personnel, capabilities, and sustained public support.

The *raison d'être* for a permanent command structure was evident throughout the Cold War (see History of the Command Structure that follows), but some later questioned its purpose. After due consideration, NATO political leaders chose to give new missions and purpose to a much smaller command structure. The first of these missions was to assist a growing list of members in maintaining integrated military forces to serve common interests. Related to this goal was the extension of military relations to interested partners through an array of mechanisms, from the Partnership for Peace (PfP) initiative to tailored arrangements with individual countries. This “building partnership capacity” mission is enduring. While the mission involves significant investment by the command structure, the rewards are even more substantial: the spread of confidence and security across an increasing area within which military tensions are all but nonexistent, and a growing ability of members and partners to work together effectively in military operations, thereby also over time lessening requirements for NATO resources in such operations.

Indeed, nurturing common planning processes and organizational ties as well as interoperable forces yields benefits beyond NATO. For example, when a NATO Strategic Airlift Capability C-17 flew to earthquake-stricken Haiti from Sweden on a non-NATO mission to transport relief supplies from five NATO member and partner countries, the military aircrew, airfield support personnel, and cargo-handling ground crews worked together effectively on both ends of the mission in large part due to their common knowledge of standard procedures painstakingly developed and disseminated via regular NATO military planning, training, and exercises. These same processes are now being used by the emergent EU military capacity. Whether for NATO operations, EU operations, or coalitions of forces outside NATO, the militaries of its members and partners are able to come together far more effectively because of a standing command structure. Thus, through its command and force structures, NATO continues to hone common best practices, set standards, and afford opportunities for allies to collaborate on a daily basis.

Additional important roles of the command structure include creating and sustaining these capabilities, which in turn requires a military organization able to conduct multinational planning, collaboration, experimentation, doctrine development, training, exercises, and educating, and interacting with the national militaries of almost four dozen countries on six continents. The value of this enduring peacetime mission, agreed by NATO but assigned mainly to its military commands, is immeasurable. For these purposes, the command structure must be designed and resourced as a permanent peacetime undertaking. In part that means appropriate hierarchical oversight of operational activities, from strategic to tactical levels. It also means a substantial capacity to incubate development of doctrine, concepts, and force design, and to identify and utilize lessons learned. Further, the command structure needs capacity to bring together like forces (land, air, maritime) to build their interoperability.

The most visible and central mission of the command structure is to oversee joint military operations when the NAC commits NATO forces. Since 1995, NATO missions

have principally been deployments to crisis areas beyond NATO territory, first in the Balkans and now as far away as Afghanistan. The command structure has to be fit for this purpose and to serve as the political-strategic interface to NATO as well as to national leaders of NATO members and partners and, sometimes, host nation leaders. The command structure must also serve as the strategic-operational link to deployed headquarters and forces in the field and fleets.

Finally, the NATO command structure must be fit for its longstanding, central mission, defending NATO territory from armed attack. Modern risk of attack has changed remarkably since the end of the Cold War. Thus, NATO needs to maintain long-term mobilization planning and periodic exercises, both military and political. As it happens, with the expansion of NATO territory in recent years, accompanied by a substantial reduction in active forces and bases, moving forces to NATO borders will require essentially similar deployment, sustainment, and command and control capabilities as are needed for expeditionary operations.

Another contemporary aspect of Article 5 defense the command structure must be fit to address is the nature of armed attacks and security threats. Modern risks are increasingly likely from Special Operations attacks including acts of sabotage or terrorism against military or civilian targets deep within NATO territory. An additional prominent risk is that of missile attacks, both from space (ballistic) and terrestrial or sea (cruise) sources. Consideration must also be given to the military command structure's purpose in defense against cyber attacks with regard not only to defense of vital NATO communications and information systems, but also supporting national efforts. Critical cyber infrastructure is now an integral component of NATO territory as much as airspace and seas. Other recently assumed NATO missions, including anti-piracy efforts and addressing energy security challenges, must also be taken into account by the command structure.

These are the essential purposes for which NATO must maintain a suitably fit military command structure. What should that structure look like? First, a brief look at how it has evolved.

History of NATO Command Structure

The NATO command structure evolved throughout the Cold War and its aftermath. At the peak of the Cold War, 16 member nations maintained an approximate strength of 5,252,800⁶ active military, including as many as 435,000 forward deployed U.S. forces,⁷ under a command structure that reached a peak of 78 headquarters, organized into four echelons. Today, 28 NATO members maintain a strength of 3,793,778⁸ active military, including 137,836 forward deployed U.S. troops of all Services.⁹ After the end of the

⁶ IISS, *The Military Balance* (London: IISS, 1988).

⁷ Department of Defense, "Military Personnel Historical Reports," available at <http://siadapp.dmdc.osd.mil/personnel/MILITARY/history/309hist.htm>.

⁸ IISS, *The Military Balance* (London: IISS, 2008).

⁹ Department of Defense, "Active Duty Military Strengths by Regional Area and Country," available at www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/report/2009/hst0906.pdf. This includes 78,836 troops in NATO Europe and 59,000 troops in Afghanistan.

Cold War, as NATO added new missions, identified potential new security threats, and extended its geographical scope of interests, the command structure was reduced to 11 headquarters (from 66) organized in three echelons (reduced from four).

An integrated military structure for NATO was first established in 1950 as it became clear that NATO would need to enhance its defenses for the longer-term against a potential Soviet attack. In April 1951, Allied Command Europe and its headquarters at SHAPE were established; later, four subordinate headquarters were added in Northern and Central Europe, the Southern Region, and the Mediterranean.

After the Cold War ended, NATO began to use its military to address a broader set of collective political interests, including regional stability, which became a concern as governments changed, new countries emerged, and crises erupted along NATO boundaries and beyond. NATO developed partnerships with a growing number of non-NATO nations and sought to engage an emerging separate European capacity for security missions.¹⁰ Perhaps the most significant new NATO mission was participation in peace operations beyond NATO territory, meaning forces had to learn to deploy and operate at increasing distances from familiar fixed bases, logistics, and command posts. Uncertainty about threats to stability required the military to provide Alliance political leaders with the means to react quickly and effectively in time of crisis and be flexible with regard to missions.

With changes in NATO missions and substantially fewer active military forces, NATO reached agreement in 1997 on a significant downsizing of its command structure from 65 headquarters to just 20. NATO retained most of the Cold War geographic divisions of responsibility in the reduced command structure. The two Strategic Commands were still Allied Command Europe (ACE) and Allied Command Atlantic (usually rendered as SACLANT for Supreme Allied Commander Atlantic). ACE now had two regional commands, two component commands and a number of joint sub-regional commands (JSRCs) reporting to each of them. SACLANT consisted of three regional commands and two combatant commands.

Subordinate to the two strategic commands were seven second-level-of-command headquarters. ACE also had a third level of command with a total of eleven headquarters, each with geographic affiliations divided into two regions, AFNORTH and AFSOUTH, each of which contained a subordinate air component command and naval component command, plus a number of JSRCs (three in the Northern Region and four in the Southern Region). SACLANT was divided into three regions and had two Combatant Commands, STRIKFLTLANT and SUBACLANT.

An important new feature introduced into the command structure at the operational or regional command level was the deployable combined joint task force (CJTF) concept.¹¹ CJTF headquarters were primarily designed for use with peace support operations but

¹⁰ Renewed European interest in creating its own capacity for military operations was evident as early as 1984 (see WEU Rome Declaration) and grew persistently, first as the European Security and Defense Identity (ESDI) in 1988 (brought into NATO in 1996) and later as the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP), which continues under the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy.

¹¹ CJTF was an initiative introduced in 1994 along with the Partnership for Peace. It quickly proved contentious and languished, while PfP grew popular. See NATO Brussels summit declaration, 1994.

also could be deployed for any Alliance role or mission. CJTFs utilize mission-specific task organization with sufficient capabilities to quickly provide the basis of a capable headquarters from the very onset of an operation.

The 2003 NATO Command Structure

By the time of NATO's 2002 Prague Summit, it was clear that further major reforms were needed. External factors driving reform included the growing realization that there was at that time no longer a proximate threat to Alliance territory and that NATO's involvement with crisis management and peacekeeping outside the NATO Treaty area was increasing. A third factor was the continuing freefall in defense spending across most of NATO Europe, ongoing since 1990. By 2002¹² the drop in resources was rapidly eroding military capabilities and putting pressure on nations as well as NATO to cut operating costs of forces and headquarters. In addition, the new spheres of interests and operations made the old regional focus of some commands out of step with new mission areas. The military also made urgent calls for transforming the command structure for Information Age operations and new missions and to address the evolving role of the European Union. All these motives were dramatically reinforced by the paradigm shift in strategic outlook caused by the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, NATO's unprecedented engagement in Afghanistan, and growing concern over the threat posed by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD).

All these realities brought increased scrutiny of the utility of an almost completely fixed command structure. Many called for a structure with enhanced deployability, flexibility, and responsiveness. Yet, commands cannot operate only in a deployed mode, and many essential activities are better conducted at fixed bases, including the majority of administrative and logistics functions. At the same time, growing budgetary and manpower pressures increased calls to improve efficiency through institutional reform.

In response, the NATO command structure that developed as a result of the Prague Summit mandate introduced significant changes. The two strategic geographic commands that in 1997 had replaced three commands were now merged into one strategic command to oversee all NATO operations. An entirely new strategic command was created to oversee NATO military transformation, enhanced deployability, and interoperability, and to further multinational doctrine. The new strategic command for operations was consolidated at the operational level into three commands that would provide direct oversight of all NATO forces in the field. A third level was dedicated to strengthening the multinational capabilities of the three primary component forces of NATO members—land, maritime, and air forces. Prague also created the NATO Response Force (NRF), a rapid response joint and multinational force to give the Alliance an early crisis response capability. The NRF also serves to aid the transformation process of national forces from mainly territorial defense forces to highly mobile, crisis response forces.

The main features of the Prague command structure were in place by 2003 as summarized below.

¹² Alarm over the dearth of European defense investment was reflected in the 2002 Prague Summit Declaration and the very detailed Prague Capabilities Commitment (PCC) that accompanied the Declaration, wherein nations pledged to achieve specific goals.

Allied Command Operations (ACO) is the strategic command with responsibility for all NATO operations throughout the Alliance area of responsibility, or beyond as approved by the NAC. ACO is headquartered at Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers, Europe (SHAPE) in Mons, Belgium. It is commanded by the Supreme Allied Commander, Europe (SACEUR).

Below ACO there were still two operational levels of commands. The first was designed to oversee ongoing joint operations and consisted of two joint force commands (JFCs) headquartered at Brunssum, Netherlands, and Naples, Italy. Each JFC was expected to be capable of undertaking the complete range of Alliance operations. A third headquarters, Joint Headquarters Lisbon (Portugal) was designated to command mainly maritime crisis response operations.

At the third or component command level, the 2003 command structure organized six component command headquarters, two each for air, land and maritime forces. The land headquarters are located at Madrid, Spain, and Heidelberg, Germany, the two maritime headquarters at Naples, Italy, and Northwood, United Kingdom, and the two air force headquarters at Izmir, Turkey, and Ramstein, Germany. These component command headquarters provide a flexible pool of command assets expert in their respective environments, and any one of them could be employed under a JFC headquarters.

Under the new arrangements, SHAPE, as the top headquarters, provides strategic advice "upwards" to NATO political and military authorities at NATO Headquarters, and also provides strategic direction "downwards" to the three second-level-of-command headquarters.

The other command, Allied Command Transformation (ACT), headquartered in Norfolk, Virginia, has the lead for military efforts towards transforming the Alliance. ACT, an entirely new organizational structure, is tasked to ensure that the Alliance remains at the military cutting edge. The intention was that NATO transformation would be ongoing rather than a one-time event.

Finally, the current command structure retains the overall chain of command, which leads from ACO and ACT to the NAC, with the NATO Military Committee (MC) providing advice to the NAC and strategic guidance to the SACEUR and SACT. Composed of senior military representatives from the member nations, the MC is the highest military organization of NATO, rendering analysis, advice, and recommendations on defense and military issues to NATO political authorities, transmitting political decisions into guidance for the strategic commands, and acting as the multinational political-military interface for pursuing military operations.

As mentioned earlier, a separate decision of the Prague summit was the establishment, not part of the NATO command structure but an important new military capability within the NATO Force Structure, of the NATO Response Force (NRF). The role of the NRF is twofold. First, it is to provide the Alliance with a rapidly deployable force for crisis response requiring combat operation, including Article 5 missions, and also for non-combat crises. Second, the NRF regimen of preparation, readiness and certification and exercise testing serves as a tool to assist members as well as partners in their efforts toward force transformation. Given the emphasis during repeated military reforms on improving deployability and responsiveness, the NRF drew much attention as the embodiment of the capabilities NATO's new military had to acquire.

In total, the Prague-initiated command structure reforms reduced the structure by approximately 40 percent, from 20 headquarters to 11, this on top of the 70 percent reduction already achieved since the end of the Cold War.

Command Structure Review 2004–2008

Although the command structure changes resulting from the 2002 Prague Summit decision were significant, NATO initiated in June 2004 a further command structure review and subsequently instructed the NATO Military Committee to focus on command structure modifications that would make NATO's military even more deployable, usable, and flexible, as well as less costly and less manpower intensive.

NATO provided several guidelines for the review, including: 1) NATO forces must be capable of conducting the simultaneous military operations identified as NATO's current Level of Ambition; 2) there should be no more than 13,000 positions included in a revised command structure; and 3) the current geographical distribution of the command structure should be taken as a given. Also, at least implicitly, the command structure should be shaped to enhance deployable and expeditionary capabilities. The focus of this review was to find economies in the 10 headquarters structure of ACO and in ACT by looking for reductions in the size of each staff while requiring essentially the same level of capability.

After extensive consideration, the NATO Military Committee provided its report in 2009. Key recommendations met the mandate of 13,000 billets of a new "Peacetime Establishment," a reduction from the 15,500 requirement previously recommended by military commanders. Another important decision was to raise the status of Joint Force Headquarters Lisbon to the level of a JFC able to provide operational command over any NATO mission, just as with JFC Brunssum and JFC Naples. Redesigned land component headquarters are now titled force commands (FORCOMs) and will feature improved deployable joint staff elements (DJSEs) that include more air force and naval staff participation. There will be six DJSEs, four within the NATO command structure and two available from the NATO force structure. All DJSEs can be attached to any of the three JFCs to deploy as that command's forward operational level command and control (C2). The DJSEs are not separate commands but forward C2 elements of the JFC commander. The DJSE concept is now being developed and tested. The concept keeps forward operational C2 small initially by relying on reachback capabilities from the parent JFC. If an operation later moves into a sustained, longer-term deployment, the DJSE can be augmented or even replaced by the JFC headquarters.

In late 2009, the NAC approved the Military Committee recommendations stemming from the 2004–2008 Review. Disagreements on implementation specifics have delayed the expected transition to the new manning, but it appears that implementation will take place sometime in 2010.

Future Command Structure Reforms—Beyond a New Strategic Concept

Some at NATO have expressed concerns that even the just-agreed changes are insufficient and propose that additional changes be considered at an appropriate time. Major concerns have focused on costs of the command structure and also making it more

efficient by avoiding unnecessary duplication etc. In fact, the cost of the recently revised command structure is forecast to be actually higher than the existing structure for three reasons: 1) the cost of increasing the deployability of operational headquarters; 2) the decision to keep the NATO Level of Ambition unchanged from 2006, which drives the number of operations the command structure must be able to conduct simultaneously; and 3) the current political requirement to leave the existing geographical distribution of the command structure unchanged. It is in fact more costly to make a headquarters strategically deployable than for a headquarters to rely on civilian infrastructure for facilities, communications, power generation, and similar requirements; and training and exercises to gain and maintain deployment skills add to the costs.¹³

The following is an overview of suggestions and proposals raised informally that could both further improve the NATO command structure and make it more efficient. Some but not all measures could reduce its cost, with caveats as noted.

Reassess The Level of Ambition. NATO's Level of Ambition is a primary driver of the command structure. Reducing the number of contingencies that NATO must be capable of addressing simultaneously would in principle permit changes in the command structure. As context, most military command and force-sizing models call for the capacity to address two major threats simultaneously in order to deter potential adversaries from seeing opportunity should friendly forces already be engaged. The wisdom of applying this criterion to NATO's most critical requirement, Article 5 defense operations, is clear. However, NATO requirements to respond to lesser contingencies might be reviewed. The EU has demonstrated growing capabilities to take on such missions and could share the burden of readiness to respond. For example, the EU and NATO could agree to geographic areas where each takes the lead and the other assumes a posture of support.

Modify Joint Force Commands (JFCs). Suggestions have been offered concerning the best configuration and capabilities of the JFCs. One configuration is the three equal JFCs with access to DJSEs, as has been most recently agreed and implemented under the 2009 changes.

Another proposal is for two of the headquarters, JFC Brunssum and JFC Naples, to reorganize as fully deployable HQs, including an initial deployable C2 element, such as the current DJSE concept. The primary subordinate force headquarters, taken from the High Readiness Force (HRF) menu of forces, would be one of the rapid reaction corps. As an example of a JFC mission deployment, one of these two JFCs would be the ISAF headquarters and the other would rotate to that mission for relief.

Under this proposal, the third JFC, JFC Lisbon, would be recast as a command permanently overseeing the rotational readiness of a reorganized NRF. The only mission for the new NRF would be humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) and

¹³ As at least a shorter-term effort to address cost concerns, the NAC has agreed to examine the cost of each headquarters with a goal of identifying best practices and sources of waste, recognizing that even similar organizations can have different costs when missions and operational environmental factors are not the same. It appears, for example, that JFC Naples costs are twice those of JFC Brunson, and CC Izmir twice those of CC Heidelberg. To the extent that such disparities can be addressed in the shorter term, limited savings of up to €30m a year might be realized.

noncombatant evacuation operations (NEO). This would require NATO agreement to fundamentally revise the NRF mission and organization.

All three JFCs would have an Alliance-wide focus for non-operational missions such as building partnership capacity, rather than their present regional relationships. All three would be capable of assuming smaller-scale contingencies and other mission support across the Alliance territory, assuming these missions for whichever JFCs are deployed.

Enhance Deployable HQs. A persistent criticism is that the entire three-level ACO is still completely fixed and nondeployable, while NATO is obliged to develop and resource ad hoc operational headquarters in Bosnia (IFOR/SFOR), Kosovo (KFOR), and Afghanistan (ISAF). At present, only lower, corps-level headquarters within the NATO Force Structure—provided by members—are deployable. When NATO finds its forces committed to sustained, larger operations and the Alliance opts to create headquarters such as ISAF or KFOR, it puts pressure on limited resources and stretches manpower between the fixed peacetime establishment and its forward crisis establishment.

Thus, it has been contended that all JFCs should become fully deployable and capable of conducting a major Article 5 or non-Article 5 operation for a sustained period of time (one year or more). When not on extended deployment for major operations, JFCs should be capable of deploying smaller C2 elements to oversee two or three small-scale operations simultaneously.

An alternative is to stay with the current plan, i.e., rely on existing lower-level headquarters within the NATO Force Structure for tactical C2 and on the DJSEs for operational C2 initially. Should operations become extended (the trend for recent operations), a full in-theater operational headquarters would develop, using the DJSE as a nucleus. In this scenario, NATO would benefit from an agreed headquarters model based on experience. Eventually, the in-theater C2 would come to resemble KFOR or ISAF. These commands would be fixed and thus less costly than a deployable command and would ultimately draw down and be eliminated as the operation was concluded.

What is often overlooked is that providing each JFC with a deployable capability will significantly increase the cost of the command structure at a time when nations are looking to cut cost even more. One option is to conclude that the present, non-deployable operational commands are the right posture. This is unlikely. Another is to equip JFCs with a deployable light C2 capability composed mainly of internal staff. Later, as an operation grows in size or enters a sustained in theater profile, the main JFC headquarters could deploy for 6–12 months or more.

However, a less visible reality is that forward deployed JFCs (any force, really) must maintain substantial home station operations and infrastructure. Add the concept of full JFC rotations over a very long operation, such as those noted above, and it might prove best for operational continuity as well as less costly to build up a fixed, in-theater C2 headquarters¹⁴ following a proven standardized design.

Restructure the Current Component Commands (CC). A related issue concerns the current layers of the command structure. It has been suggested that the current three-layer command structure could be compressed to two layers, or that the overall number of

¹⁴ IFOR/SFOR, KFOR, and ISAF are all fixed, not deployable in-theater headquarters.

headquarters (JFCs, CCs, etc.) is too many. For example, while the functions performed by CCs are vital, it has been argued that they can be met successfully by one of each type, rather than the current two of each type. Similarly, it has been contended that four combined air and space operations centers (CAOCs) are too many. It has also been suggested that NATO continues to operate at obsolete installations and HQs for political reasons.

These observations could be addressed by consolidating existing components as well as adding one new command to the third NCS layer. For example:

1. Keep only one CC (Air) and one CC (Maritime) under ACO, and reduce the FORCOM (formerly CC (Land)) headquarters from two to one at such time as NATO's land intensive operations in Afghanistan draw down;
2. Eliminate one of the four static CAOCs; three should be sufficient for NATO territory;
3. Realign the remaining three CCs (land, air, maritime) directly under ACO, freeing JFCs to focus on operations; and
4. Relocate DJSEs and their host FORCOMs to JFCs. DJSEs should be co-located and integrated into JFCs as their forwarding deploying C2 elements. JFCs can better manage DJSE personnel, organization, and training, and decide on the package of people and equipment to send forward for a particular operation.

Reduce command structure Personnel. Further reduction of NATO command structure personnel is one way to reduce expenses and free more resources for other NATO requirements. Some critics contend that the manning level for the command structure could have been 12,500 rather than the agreed 13,000. There are at present about 500 unfilled positions in the existing structure, and it has been suggested that manning should be lowered by eliminating most vacant jobs. However, experience shows command structure staffs are only filled to 85 percent or so of their strength, suggesting that agreeing to a lower level will only lead to a yet further reduction in available personnel as more billets are left vacant.

At the same time, making an informed personnel needs assessment means that a high-quality, objective analysis of manning requirements is essential. NATO must first determine whether the command structure is underperforming because of missing staff and which billets are truly excess requirements. Undermanned headquarters give a false sense of what is required for effective C2 because gaps can be covered by available personnel in the short term. However, risks of degraded C2 increase over time, especially with increased mission complexity or tempo. In any event, whatever structure is agreed and approved would need to be filled as planned and funded as required to ensure capability to perform missions as designated in NATO's Level of Ambition.

Finally, reducing command structure personnel demands can be accomplished more completely if NATO negotiates better with host nations for basic support services, such as contractor base security and routine logistics services. The United States provides an example in this area by providing substantial support for ACT.

Enhance Partnership/Capacity Building Capability. Another concern raised is that the new command structure does not include any staff below the Strategic/AACO level to plan and implement essential partnership programs for Security Sector Reform (SSR) and

Theater Security Cooperation (TSC). Reportedly, one outcome is frequent exercise cancellations. NATO may be in danger of losing the capability and capacity for a very important mission—shaping partner armed forces.

NATO works with many nations either directly with individual nations or through Alliance structures such as the PfP and Mediterranean Dialogue and Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (MDIC). Goals include increasing capacity and capability of partners, creating stability, and building cooperation in regional areas (Black Sea, Arabian Gulf, Maghreb, etc.) and functional areas (energy security, illegal migration, WMD, counter drug, etc.). The forces and resources needed to build partner capacity are substantial, yet they are far less costly than actual military operations.

NATO's objective is to deliver more capable, interoperable forces and build partner and member force capacity for participating in NATO missions. In reality, some non-operational missions, such as supporting PfP training, exercises, and other activities with partners are essential to maintaining preparedness and capacity to perform NATO's operational missions. They also require substantial investment in staff planning and coordination as well as the engagement of subordinate national headquarters and forces. Component commands have played a central role in building capacity and interoperability across the land, air, and maritime forces of all members and partners. Thus, any future command structure must be robust enough to perform both operational and non-operational tasks.

Strengthen ACT. NATO must underwrite ACT far more strongly, such that it carries real influence over how NATO transforms organizationally and operationally, as well as in oversight of defense planning and in a proactive advisory capacity to national transformation initiatives. ACT has to be the engine of multinational education, training, exercises, and doctrine development. Transformation is not only or even mainly about equipment procurement. It is about cultural changes and ways of thinking, the emergence of new concepts through experimentation, applied lessons learned, and the synthesis of best practices. NATO needs a catalytic functional command imparting transformative ideas to the Alliance, its members, and partners. ACT must be fully engaged in these tasks with operational forces even as they are committed to ongoing missions.

Realign NATO HQ and SHAPE. For the Comprehensive Approach and a genuine civilian-military partnership to be realized at the operational and tactical levels—in the field—there will have to be a radical realignment of NATO HQ and SHAPE such that they become truly able to deliver civilian interagency capabilities to NATO military operations. Fundamental thinking is needed to do this effectively so that the political/strategic side of NATO is integrated, active, and a value-added component of operations.

Increase Budget Flexibility. It has been suggested that ACO and ACT could benefit from greater budget flexibility, and that ACO and ACT need a budget to spend, to be held to account in lieu of the present method of requiring a specific request for every item, which allows no essential freedom of action, is unresponsive/cumbersome, and inhibits essential optempo.

Add a Special Operations Forces Component Command. SOF has become a critically important dimension of NATO military capabilities. Today, NATO SOF cooperation, information sharing, and equipment standards are still very much ad hoc. A new CC

(SOF) would be the engine for multinational training, exercising, and education of NATO Special Operations Forces (SOF).

Ensure Quality Personnel. The quality of personnel that NATO nations post to the command structure is another area of concern that should be addressed. As it stands now, in the United States NATO competes with CENTCOM for top talent, and the press of operations beyond Europe means that U.S. officers can reach flag rank never having been assigned to NATO or in Europe. In Europe, the EU now competes with NATO for top talent among officers of long-term NATO allies. For personnel from some nations, English language skills are often weak, as is their knowledge of NATO staff procedures. In short, they come as much to learn as to contribute. At some headquarters, the pool of actual functioning staff officers is far below 50 percent of those assigned, simply because nations are not sending already fully qualified personnel.

Command Structure Geographical Footprint

Many of the suggested future modifications to the NATO command structure would involve adjustments to so-called geographical footprint. Removing a requirement that command structure changes retain the current footprint would undoubtedly provide an opportunity for significant changes. At the same time, throughout the consideration of command structure reforms, this has proven one of the most challenging and contentious issues in terms of command structure change.

For example, the NATO Military Committee has always argued that every potential NATO operation requires a dedicated headquarters. Some nations with command structure presence have contended that a visible physical NATO presence on their soil 1) can serve as a real and also a symbolic deterrent to nations that might contemplate military action against a NATO member adjacent to that nation; and 2) reinforces and enhances public understanding of, and support for, NATO in these nations;

Interrelationship of NATO Command Structure and the Strategic Concept

The new NATO Strategic Concept should make clear the agreed missions of the Alliance. These should be missions that not only will heads of State and Government agree to undertake, but that their respective governments and publics will support and sustain with adequate investment in capabilities. In this critical respect, the new Strategic Concept and the command structure to be charged with its fulfillment are clearly interrelated. Ultimately, any further consideration of command structure reforms will inevitably be undertaken within the context of how well the new Strategic Concept addresses and clarifies key policy issues including:

- *Agreeing on NATO's geographic focus.* NATO's geographic areas of responsibility, engagement, and interest, and its priorities within those areas for military activities, including partner's engagement, crisis response, and especially Article 5 preparedness.

- *Defining NATO Missions.* In recent years, NATO has adopted several important new missions. In addition to the expansive missions of partnership activities and crisis response (including humanitarian assistance/disaster response), NATO has added requirements for cyber defense, energy security, and combating piracy. The capabilities

NATO expects to maintain in each of these mission areas should be agreed at the policy level, which in turn will provide the overall framework for determining the appropriate NATO Level of Ambition.

- *NATO Russia Policy.* Should NATO enhance deterrence and other capabilities in response to increasing Russian assertiveness in Europe and adjacent areas, including an increased permanent and rotational presence in NATO's northern and eastern areas? Meanwhile, as NATO-Russia military-to-military activities pick up, the question of adequate command structure manning and resources will be raised again.

- *Importance of NATO Outreach/Capacity Building.* As noted elsewhere in this paper, NATO currently works with a number of nations, either individually or through NATO-established structures such as the PfP, MD and ICI, to increase capacity and capability of partners to create stability and build cooperation in various regions of interest to NATO, such as the Black Sea, Arabian Gulf, Maghreb, etc.) and functional areas (energy security, illegal migration, WMD, counter drug, etc.) so that NATO does not need to commit operational forces. However, the pace and scope of partner activities create substantial (and often unseen) demands on the command structure as well as the force structure. If this mission is to be accomplished effectively, its command structure requirements need to be provided.

- *Role of ACT.* The Strategic Concept should seek strong consensus on ACT's role as the active catalyst to enhance the multinational character of military transformation among members and partners, as well as NATO's own capabilities. Transformation is not only new equipment but also the training, exercising, education, and concept development that create capabilities, such as Comprehensive Approach, that did not exist before. ACT needs a clearer mandate and greater influence in NATO.

- *Relationship with the EU on security/defense matters.* NATO engagement with the growing EU military structure is an important means of strengthening both organizations. This is particularly critical for building capacity for employing the Comprehensive Approach concept of civilian-military operational response. Defining the broad scope of NATO-EU interaction will clarify the investment NATO expects to make in staff and resources for a viable NATO-EU relationship to unfold. In turn, there should be some economies of force as each organization is able to rely more on the other.

Next Steps

A variety of procedural suggestions have been offered for how NATO can assess the possible need for further command structure changes. For example, it has been suggested that ACT be directed to provide a purely military assessment of how the command structure could look as a base for further deliberations on command structure reform.

Another suggestion is that NATO undertake a U.S.-style base realignment and closure (BRAC) study. Under the BRAC process, an outside expert committee assessed and made recommendations regarding excess or non-cost effective U.S. military bases and advised on the closure or consolidations of facilities. After receiving the report, the U.S. Congress had to conduct a simple up or down vote on the entire package of recommendations—the Congress could not pick and choose. The neutrality and transparency of the process has resulted in successful reductions in base holdings.

The Alliance may turn to consideration of another round of command structure reform in 2011, after the new Strategic Concept is agreed. Past command structure reforms have taken years to resolve and have involved significant political contentiousness. For any future command structure reform that NATO undertakes, it is essential that NATO not only define missions for the command structure, but also provide the necessary resources for the command structure to carry out effectively and efficiently the missions that it has been assigned.

6. Operationalizing the Comprehensive Approach¹⁵

Julian Lindley-French

The effective operationalization of the Comprehensive Approach is central to the future utility of NATO, and the Alliance is vital to the effective, legitimate conduct of the Comprehensive Approach if mission success is to be achieved in future hybrid operations. However, the experience of the Allied Rapid Reaction Corps (ARRC) suggests that a much more systematic approach at NATO command level is needed to generate and sustain all vital elements and partnerships, with the focus very clearly on the delivery of security, governance, and development in-theater.

If the Comprehensive Approach is to work as it should, the concepts and doctrine underpinning such a cross-Alliance effort must also be matched by efficient generation and use of required resources, political will, and strategic patience. This is a tipping point for the Alliance, and if the Strategic Concept is not written with at least the understanding of the fundamentals of operational effectiveness in hybrid conflict, then the Alliance might persist as a political organization, but the effective and credible fighting power upon which it is and must be based could well decline to the point where no operational or deterrent role is credible.

The center of gravity of the Comprehensive Approach must be the four-star theater command with standardized High Readiness Forces (Land) (HRF (L)) fighting the tactical battle.¹⁶ Ideally, a bespoke Comprehensive Approach Command under SACEUR would ensure that civil-military integration takes place from top to bottom and from the strategic to the tactical level, with the role of strategic headquarters first to ensure that campaign planning is sound, but above all the assured organization and delivery to theater of forces and resources.

Operations within the compass of the Comprehensive Approach must from their inception be based on a holistic view of the strategic objectives. This particularly concerns the impact of actions on overall mission success and that assessments of such actions are shared by all partners. Influence is the medium through which the Comprehensive Approach is most clearly manifested and the central organizing concept for hybrid operations, with all other elements (campaign planning, targeting policy and strategic communications) part of a holistic approach to mission management.

¹⁵ This paper is adapted from the report “Operationalising the Comprehensive Approach” [ChG7/1513/LL/AF09] February 17, 2010, an ARRC Submission to the NATO Strategic Concept Expert Group. The report is the responsibility of the main author, Professor Julian Lindley-French, Head of the ARRC Commander’s Initiative Group (CIG), with the support of other CIG members, Professor Paul Cornish of Chatham House, Dr. Andrew Rathmell of the Libra Advisory Group, and Ms Leslie Simm. Julian Lindley-French is Eisenhower Professor of Defence Strategy at the Netherlands Defence Academy.

¹⁶ The seven HRF (L) HQs of NATO’s Force Structure include, in addition to the ARRC, the Eurocorps, the 1st German-Netherlands Corps, the NATO Rapid Deployment Corps-Italy, the NATO Rapid Deployment Corps-Spain, the NATO Rapid Deployment Corps-Turkey, and the Rapid Reaction Corps-France.

In hybrid operations, NATO strategic commands must be rigorous in their application of a standard model of effective and flexible command and control, able to embrace and reach out to key civilian partners (member and partner nations, international organizations (IOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), supported by HRFs that are able to operate at tactical level as a rotatable planning and command nexus for sustained operations in such domains.

The Comprehensive Approach¹⁷ must be seen from the outset as a whole-of-government issue with structures built accordingly at Alliance-level with the sustained backing of nations to support the theater-level effort. Equally, the Alliance must avoid over-bureaucratizing the process.

Project TARDIS

HQ ARRC has over the past 18 months attempted to improve the utility of the HRF (L) headquarters by experimenting with better working practices so as to operate more effectively in the contemporary environment. To that end, HQ ARRC has developed Project TARDIS to overcome some of the perceived shortcomings of the land components of NATO High-Readiness Forces (Land) (HRF (L)) in the delivery and the operationalization of the Comprehensive Approach. The goal is to achieve unity of purpose in hybrid operations. The lessons learned thus far from Project TARDIS have been infused with experience from operations in Afghanistan and other theaters, driven by the need to establish effective Allied mechanisms to promote better cross-theater cooperation.

Thus far, experience of the international civil-military effort in Afghanistan has emphasized three weaknesses in the Allied effort: 1) the creation of national stovepipes that undermine the transnational effort and thus weaken cross-theater cooperation; 2) an inability to measure progress (or otherwise) in the key areas of governance, such as rule of law and development; and 3) an inability to speak with one voice to actors in-region. However, if the goals established by General McChrystal for the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) are to be achieved, unity of effort must comprise far more than the merger of the military counterterrorism and counterinsurgency efforts. The challenge will be to reach out effectively to include key civilian partners at an early stage in the campaign planning. High-level political fusion is also critical to unity of purpose and effort and ideally would be achieved through the driving influence of a senior political figure able to act as a consistent interface between the political level and all partners to an operation.

¹⁷ The Comprehensive Approach is the generation and application of security, governance and development services, expertise, structures, and resources over time and distance in partnership with host nations, host regions, allied and partner governments, and partner institutions, both governmental and non-governmental.

Key Lessons from Project TARDIS and Exercise ARRCADE FUSION 2009¹⁸ (Ex AF09).

Ensure that the Center of Gravity is Effective Delivery. For the Comprehensive Approach to be effective it is critical that campaign planning and command decisions take place at the right level. To that end, the ISAF Joint Command (IJC) is vital to help marry strategic and theater level efforts with HRF (L)s fighting the tactical battle. Key is civil-military integration from top to bottom and strategic to tactical, with a Policy Steering or Action Group (PAG) that could properly reach out to host nations and other key partners in the mission, the culture of which tends to de-centralize command authority to the field. The role of strategic headquarters once the campaign plan is agreed is thus to support and enable the theater commands as part of a partnership between the NATO Command Structure and the High Readiness Force structure.

Operationalize the Comprehensive Approach. An integrated civilian planning element (CPE) working within the headquarters provided trusted collaboration and the exploration and implementation of ideas previously beyond the mandate of a purely military HQ and demonstrated the utility of embedded civilians. Equally, the need for those civilians to be fully prepared and worked up prior to the exercise was also evident. Ideally, such an exercise (possibly Exercise ARRCADE FUSION 13) would be civilian-led with a strong NATO civilian-led interagency approach supported by member nations. Such an exercise format would help to inform the effective operationalization of the Comprehensive Approach, with headquarters fostering new relationships between NATO in Brussels, SHAPE in Mons, and member and partner/participating states.

Develop Effective Cross-Function Partnerships. Partnering and collaboration across functional areas and domains is essential and should, where appropriate, be replicated across all levels of the NATO structure, particularly the high-readiness forces (HRFs). Such partnership was simulated (and achieved) at the corps level on Ex AF09 through the incorporation of the civilian planning element, which included individuals provided by the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), the UK's inter-departmental Stabilisation Unit (SU) and the Department for International Development (DfID), the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the U.S. Department of State. Importantly, collaborative planning began 7 months prior to the exercise.

Provide Time to Work up Partnerships. Ex AF09 demonstrated the critical need for the early working up of such partnerships and the extent to which success was dependent on trust. For example, the willingness of British departments of state to deploy a civilian planning element to current operations in Afghanistan is compromised by the inherent institutional difficulties getting different institutions to work together and the dangers and risks inherent in a complex contemporary operation, even within the framework of a single nation. The challenges posed by the Comprehensive Approach are magnified by the construct of NATO's institutions; the lack of any bespoke, dedicated architecture, particularly at higher levels of the command chain; the need for consensus; and the lack

¹⁸ Exercise ARRCADE FUSION 09 (Ex AF09) took place in November 2009. It produced a number of lessons and observations pertinent to the ongoing work of the NATO Strategic Concept Expert Group, with a specific focus on operationalizing the Comprehensive Approach.

of any dedicated shared doctrine (ways of doing business) and understanding of best practice across the Alliance. Such partnerships take time to construct and cement.

Unity of Purpose. The Comprehensive Approach operationalizes unity of purpose through unity of effort implicit in campaign planning by translating medium- to long-term stabilization objectives via a range of critical partnerships between civilian and military actors into a shared roadmap. Unfortunately, examples abound of NATO military headquarters attempting to coordinate unity of effort in an environment where unity of purpose is not much in evidence. In the first instance, coordinating the efforts of NATO, the United Nations (UN), and regional organizations such as the African Union (AU), European Union (EU), and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in the preliminary stages of a deployment are vital if unity of purpose is to be meaningful. Particularly important for unity of purpose is early agreement over a UN Security Council Resolution to provide the political legitimacy upon which any such security, stability, and development operation must rest. On Ex AF09 the focus was on the politico-security (of which the politico-military was a part), where unity of purpose and effort was promoted through the early establishment of an in-country policy steering group (PSG) co-chaired by the UN International Coordinator and the president of the host nation, with membership of the group extended to key actors and institutions in-country.

Effective Strategic Communications. Strategic Communication connects all activities and actors across all theaters with host nations and home nations. If unity of purpose is to be achieved, NATO must have a unified message, ideally one that is aligned to that of the international community and communicable to ally and adversary alike and offers a cogent story to publics at home and in-theater. A coherent strategy to deliver such a narrative and to maintain consistency is also vital. In certain respects, a compelling narrative is the foundation upon which the Comprehensive Approach is established and a fundamental element in effective campaign planning. Clear political leadership and buy-in from the civilian stakeholders early in the planning is essential to avoid a gap between political and military activity. This is particularly important for maintaining campaign momentum, because inevitably different military and civilian actors, IOs, and NGOs require different narratives and have different decisionmaking cycles. Effective strategic communication thus creates an information domain within which all actors can operate in partnership. To that end, HQ ARRC put influence at the heart of its activity physically and conceptually in Ex AF09, attempting to match narratives with actions with the specific objective of adopting an approach that was the least kinetic possible consistent with problem resolution and the need for the headquarters to assure the fighting power of the force.

Capacity vs. Time. Mechanisms must be in place early to systematically provide resources for collaboration between the major actors engaged in-theater and to influence and exploit it. That is not the case today. The military are usually possessed of the planning capacity, whilst the civilian actors who constitute the international community (e.g., member nations, UN, and EU) tend to operate more effectively over time and have more mechanisms in place for the systematic application of funding of all-important political reconciliation, reconstruction, and development.

Civil Support. ARRC has long recognized its own shortcomings in facilitating civil support and fully recognizes its limited role as an enabler. Nevertheless, ARRC seems to

be well ahead of other NATO HRFs with regard to these aspects of operations. To that end, the Mid-Term Exercise Program could be developed further both to achieve a standard approach across HRFs and to integrate a wider pool of civilian expertise through NRF command post exercises. Rarely, and normally only if the security situation prevents civil involvement, will ARRC (or military forces in general) involve themselves in reconstruction and development projects and humanitarian assistance. To better inform the military activities of the headquarters, ARRC established a civil support branch with military (reservists), SMEs, and contracted civilian SMEs to advise on the appropriate level and nature of military involvement. The branch covered several areas critical to gaining the rapid support of host publics, such as essential services (water, power, sewage, etc.), governance and rule of law, and economic development. This external expertise also allowed a better understanding of the funding dynamics within theater and where to best influence donors and project leaders.

The Comprehensive Approach—Getting the Basics Right.

The 2006 failed review of the NATO Command Structure (NCS) resulted in a political compromise that spawned the dysfunctional deployable joint staff element (DJSE), which undermined the Comprehensive Approach. Moreover, it was decided not to resource the NRF, most critically the land force elements. HQ ARRC prepared for and stood up as NRF 13 from January to June 2009 (preparation period) and June to December 2009 (standby period). As such, the ARRC gained insights into the NRF structure and process, as well as operating with the DJSE.

Deployable Joint Staff Element. ARRC exercised on three occasions with the DJSE from Allied Land Command Heidelberg. The first exercise saw the DJSE “integrated” into HQ ARRC to augment the ARRC role as Headquarters Combined Joint Force Land Component Command (CJFLCC HQ). The two other exercises saw the DJSE deployed “in-country” along with the Joint Force Commander as a separate entity to the land component command, with the DJSE acting as a discrete command node separated from the static joint headquarters. It is ARRC’s belief (and it is a view widely accepted within the HRF (L) Command cadre) that the DJSE concept in its primary role (i.e., as a separate headquarters) is flawed, although this is contested by both Allied Command Operations (ACO) and Allied Command Transformation (ACT). DJSE complicates and adds an unnecessary layer to the command structures and confuses responsibilities within theater. DJSE also relies heavily on a commander supported by a staff, members of which are unfamiliar with each other and, by definition, neither joint in construct nor well trained, whilst physically splitting the commander from his worked-up planning staff by some thousands of miles. In other words, such an approach is the very antithesis of sound campaign planning upon which the Comprehensive Approach must be built, because it creates a core military planning and command hub that is at best ad hoc.

Weak Communications and Support. These failings are exacerbated by bandwidth limitations that prevent the two halves of what is a separated headquarters from adequate and effective communication. In addition to the lack of bandwidth, NATO does not, in any case, have the basic deployable infrastructure (tents, computer, cooks, etc.) to support the concept. An HRF (L) land component command (LCC HQ) deployed in-theater is far better resourced to undertake tasks currently assigned to the DJSE, especially in the area

of key leader engagement (KLE). Indeed, there is no reason why the LCC HQ could not host the joint commander when he chooses to visit the theater.

The NATO Response Force. The NATO Response Force has undergone a review over the past 12 months with the resulting decision to extend the standby period from 6 to 12 months. This is a sensible initiative, given the time and resources required to train for the commitment. However, for ARRC's NRF 13 commitment, the land component command combined joint statement of requirement (CJSOR) was only filled to 27 percent, which would have resulted in a period of integration being required before the force was viable. This additional time would have prevented the land component NRF from achieving its mandated 5-day notice to move by some considerable period—perhaps a delay of up to 14 days. In brief, there was/is no force at readiness.

HRF (L) Employment on ISAF. DSACEUR's early aspirations envisaged HRF (L)s providing a trained and cohesive nucleus to the newly formed ISAF Joint Command Headquarters (IJC HQ) in Afghanistan, as well as a number of functional area leaders, which would have capitalized on their collective training and understanding, and in turn would have provided for gainful employment of high-readiness staffs conducting annual integrated training. The reality is somewhat different, with the Flags to Posts (F2P) process ensuring that HRF (L) staff will only ever be used in a piecemeal fashion as individual augmenters, again undermining any hope of a systematic approach to building NATO headquarters able to act as hubs for the Comprehensive Approach in a sustained and systematic manner. This method of employment is likely to threaten the continued support and resourcing of three-star corps headquarters by their framework nations, if SHAPE will not/cannot employ them in a coherent manner. Certainly, NATO must in future ensure not only that employment of HRF (L)s is in keeping with their design and levels of training, but that effective command and control is reinforced systematically by the civilian knowledge and expertise communities vital to mission success.

The Way Forward?

If the operational experimentation undertaken by the ARRC is to be capitalized upon, then far more work needs to be done to promote truly credible and effective combined, joint, and comprehensive (CJC) (civil-military) command and control. Exercise ARRCAD FUSION 13 will take place some 3 years hence. Thus, both the opportunity and time exist to use this vehicle for further operational experimentation. Specifically, the experimentation should take place within the framework of the NRF (or rather a new NRF concept) to identify what is really needed in command and control terms.

Several adjustments to modus operandi would need to be made. The DJSE is not designed to work with a LCC, but rather with a joint force command (JFC), such as Brunssum or Naples. At present, DJSEs are predominantly manned by army staff, although the objective is to render them progressively more joint. Thus, what would be needed as a minimum (and ad interim) is a LCC with a credible level of joint expertise to effectively manage maritime and air assets. Even if key actions take place on the ground, maritime and air components are key enablers.

In any case, DJSEs were always to an extent a "fix." Ideally, integrated "fly-forward" packages would be drawn from the staffs of Brunssum and Naples. The implication, therefore, is that either Heidelberg or Madrid would be surplus to requirement. However,

if the nations continue to block structural solutions for political reasons, the need for some form of hybrid solution will persist, and with it the very tendency to resort to quick fixes that makes NATO on occasion appear far weaker and more inefficient than is actually the case.

As Omar Bradley once famously said, “Amateurs study tactics, professionals study logistics.” This is critical for the kind of operations envisaged. The ARRC offers a joint logistics support group (JLSG) that could act as a model for the reform of other HRF(L)s so that rear support commands are standard, thus enhancing the ability of the Alliance to rotate headquarters without losing either institutional knowledge or operational momentum. However, whilst the ARRC itself can provide a number of services to meet LCC requirement for entry and sustainment into theater, neither the ARRC nor any other HRF (L) offers the joint expertise to effectively manage theater-level maritime and air theater logistic requirements and resources. Indeed, given the constraints on Brunssum, Naples, and LCCs, this seems to be a structural failing that is becoming steadily more pronounced the more that one nation (the United States) fills in the gaps. Hopefully, the IJC will offer the way forward but it must a) be genuinely multinational in ethos, structure, and practice; and b) not seek to command all elements, as it will simultaneously need to look up, out, and down.

Equally, the ARRC’s experimentation raises another set of questions. For example, is it right that one member nation (other than the United States) finances a commitment to provide a theater-level headquarters, with all that entails over a period of time? Can a headquarters that rotates every 9–12 months be effective at managing a €1bn fuel management program for ISAF, or the €200m infrastructure program that is spent annually in Afghanistan, if there is in effect very little chance for a seamless handover of function from headquarters to headquarters? The inference is that to be truly effective in the stabilization and reconstruction game, the Alliance needs to examine where best campaigns, tasks, and personnel should be generated, organized, and commanded. In other words to achieve maximum effect in a large, complex space over time and distance with limited resources would likely take truly radical reform of the NATO command structure, not to mention a new set of relationships with key partners vital to mission success. To that end, SHAPE should take the lead in determining how HRF (L) headquarter practices and standard operating procedures (SOPs) should be harmonized on the basis of the experience, experiments, and lessons of the ARRC.

Given that context, it is a particular concern that very few of the other HRFs can emulate the ARRC. For this reason alone the work the ARRC is doing should be used to help (not exclusively) further develop and transform the other HRFs. In the end, what the Alliance needs is a smaller but nevertheless effective cluster of headquarters that can rotate seamlessly without any loss of institutional memory or operational momentum built on a set of C2 standards enabling a plug-and-play structure easily augmentable as and when required. Surely, that is not beyond the ability of the Alliance?

To that end, the NATO Peacetime Establishment (PE) Review must be urgently concluded to make NATO fit for purpose (even given the relatively limited scope of operations undertaken by the Alliance particularly with regard to crisis response operations). Specifically, a more agile C2 construct is needed with clearly defined roles for Naples and Brunssum (and Lisbon) so they demonstrably add value and are seen to do

so. Ideally, Brunssum would be the supporting command for HQ ISAF, with responsibility for pre-deployment training, deployment of forces, long-term resource planning, etc., with HQ ISAF reporting directly to SHAPE. Without such reform, the tendency of nations to retreat back into national stovepipes during deployments will persist, and all the effort invested in both a transnational Comprehensive Approach (worthy of the name) and multinational formations designed to generate cost-effective, strategic, theater, and tactical effect will wither.

Conclusion

The Strategic Concept must make the operationalization of the Comprehensive Approach central to the future development of the Alliance and its modernization. Whilst the ARRC is to be commended for its attempts to create a multinational, multidisciplinary hub, such transformation will need to go significantly further if a truly cross-NATO multinational culture is to be created. The simple fact is that Europeans (and Canadians) need to close the gap between a world that increasingly buffets them, the implicit and explicit security task-list that emerges from such events and the limited forces and resources available to European (and Canadian) leaders. Here, an opportunity could exist through closer NATO-EU relations because the method implicit in the Comprehensive Approach is central to the emerging European strategic culture for all its many failings. If the basic geometry of the challenge is not addressed sooner or later the armed forces of a NATO member or a NATO intervention will fail and possibly catastrophically. Therefore, these issues move beyond the merely military-technical.

NATO is, of course, the sum of nations' ambitions. At present there is a growing gap between aspirations/agreed concepts and the willingness of nations to meet commitments given the pressing need for nations to rediscover the strategic patience that hybrid operations invariably require. Given that the public finances of most of the nations are under severe pressure, investment in quality personnel would offer a cost-effective opportunity to enhance Alliance effect. If the Alliance could embrace such a level of ambition, then the transformational would become the credibly operational, and the Comprehensive Approach would be realized in full.

This is a tipping point for the Alliance. If the Strategic Concept is not written with at least an understanding of the fundamentals examined in this report, then the Alliance might persist as a political organization but the effective and credible fighting power upon which it is and must be based could well decline to the point where no operational or deterrent role is credible.

Recommendations

The Allied Rapid Reaction Corps (ARRC) established Project TARDIS to help pave the way for NATO to think more effectively about how best to build credible and functioning Comprehensive Approach capabilities via its theater-level staff with a specific focus on flexible command and control structures and civilian-military co-operation in hybrid conflict. Of particular importance is the opportunity such free-thinking operational experimentation affords genuine multinationality within the Comprehensive Approach and thus underpins the legitimacy and influence upon which such operations rest and, critically, the unity of purpose and effort that is the *sine qua non* of the Comprehensive Approach.

Given the drafting of the new Strategic Concept and the critical phase into which operations in Afghanistan have entered, ARRC and other headquarters should be encouraged to further experiment and to share their experiences to enhance the understanding of the Comprehensive Approach. The following set of recommendations, in addition to those mentioned above, is derived from ARRC experience.

Harmonize Headquarter Practices and Standard Operating Procedures. SHAPE should take the lead in determining how HRF (L) headquarters' practices and SOPs should be harmonized on the basis of the experience, experiments, and lessons of the ARRC.

Building Systematic Relationships. The establishment of more systematic relations between partner institutions and states engaged on and in hybrid conflict would promote a better understanding of realizable aspirations and thus enhance campaign planning.

Regular Meetings and Exercises. Regular meetings and exercises would enhance a better understanding of the opportunities for cooperation (and constraints) and lead to a firmer grip of achievable goals within likely agreed timeframes. Therefore, building on the Mid-Term Exercise Program, a more systematic set of exercises is needed with a detailed audit process with the results shared with all partner institutions and partner states.

A Broad Understanding of Civilian Capacity and Capability Development. NATO lacks a capability beyond short-term infrastructure development that is itself limited to the direct support of deployable forces. NATO, therefore, requires a broader understanding of capacity and capability development together with assured access to resources (together with a determination to become involved in these sectors) that are, usually, on a direct path to the strategic objectives of a mission.

Subject Matter Experts. NATO Subject Matter Experts are needed both at the center and within operational headquarters. Certainly, NATO needs to build civilian capability within structures with seconded civilian experts at SHAPE, JF, and HRF levels. This is different to merely looking after people it has applied to a mission, but rather involves the creation of specific command and control structures to support such efforts together with systematic access at short notice to relevant expertise prior to other actors taking the lead.

Deployable Civilian Expertise. Civilian expertise will need to be deployed forward to support headquarters such as the ARRC. A more systematic approach to training and education is needed, with a particular focus on how to operate in a multinational military organization; understand the contemporary operating environment; build networks with civilian organizations; and understand different planning methodologies.

Civilian Planning Element. HRF HQs must be able to effectively "plug and play" with a cadre of expert civilians built around a dedicated civilian planning element itself embedded in civil-military planning and the civil support elements of a headquarters. The CPE must be able to pass on knowledge and know-how to successors to ensure and assure campaign momentum.

Ensuring Continuity at the Politico-Military Level. Continuity at the pol-mil level is vital. NATO is best placed to develop mechanisms such as policy steering groups and civilian planning elements, but they must be developed for all HRF headquarters and fully integrated into the best practices of SHAPE and Brunssum so that all partners

critical to mission success are brought into the process (physically as well as figuratively) and thus embrace both concept and design early in the operational cycle.

The Role of Strategic Communications. Strategic communications explain why actions are necessary and effective targeting policy must always be able to justify such actions in terms of both mission and public opinion. Broad consultation over policy with key civilian partners, a wider understanding of what comprises a strategic communications target (both friends and foes), and a strategic communications strategy that places all actions within a broad context would promote enhanced synchronization and deconfliction of efforts by partners.

Civilian Advisory Cluster. An effective Command Group would ideally include a strategic communications advisor, who would be a civilian from outside the formal structure in support of the public affairs officer. The advisor would also work in conjunction with the political advisor and cultural advisor and with a commander's initiative group as part of a civilian cluster designed to test all planning assumptions, as well as reach out and back to external expertise and influence.