CIVIL EMERGENCY PLANNING IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE EAPC

In 1992, in support of the United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs, NATO hosted an international workshop on the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets in Disaster Relief. This workshop – in which 20 international organisations and 40 nations participated – provided the foundation for subsequent Civil Emergency Planning (CEP) cooperation activities with Partner countries, primarily in the field of disaster management and response.

In 1994, after the launching of NATO's Partnership for Peace programme (PfP), four CEP disaster-related cooperation activities were conducted, all with a disaster-related theme. Since then, the scope of these activities has broadened to include the entire spectrum of civil emergency planning. Moreover, reflecting the strong interest of Partner countries in this field, CEP activities in the framework of PfP have increased dramatically. With 75 activities in 1999, CEP now constitutes the largest non-military component of PfP.

In 1998, EAPC Foreign Ministers approved a Russian proposal to create a Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Capability (EADRCC). It serves as the focal point for the coordination of international assistance among member countries of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) in the event of a major disaster within the EAPC region. In November 1998 it coordinated assistance to Ukraine following major floods. Since its inauguration, it has also supported the UN High Commission for Refugess (UNHCR) in bringing relief to refugees from Kosovo and has played a key role in coordinating humanitarian aid from NATO and Partner countries in response to the escalating crisis in the region.

Civil emergency planning is a responsibility involving all levels of government, to varying degrees. Therefore, from the outset, CEP cooperation activities have been aimed at involving all levels and branches of government in practical cooperation within each country, among NATO and Partner countries, and with other relevant international organisations. Emphasis has been placed on:

- Transforming the focus from civil defence and wartime mobilisation to an all-hazards approach to CEP and protection of civilian populations;
- Developing effective crisis management and response capabilities;
- Fostering regional cooperation and interoperability;
- Promoting civil-military cooperation.

COOPERATION WITH RUSSIA

Russia has actively participated in most CEP activities under PfP and has also organised and hosted a number of major exercises, seminars, workshops and meetings. In 1996, NATO and Russia signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Cooperation in Civil Emergency Planning and Disaster Preparedness. In 1997, the Senior Civil Emergency Planning Committee met in Moscow - the first (and only) NATO committee to meet in Russia to date. Also in 1997, under the NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council, a joint pilot project was launched on the use of satellite technology in disaster management.

COOPERATION WITH UKRAINE

NATO coordinated international assistance to floods in 1995 (and, as part of the EADRCC, again in 1998). In 1996, 'Trans-Carpathia 96' was conducted in Lviv - a week long programme consisting of a command post and field exercise followed by the annual seminar and meeting of NATO's Civil Protection Committee. In 1997, NATO and Ukraine signed a MOU on Cooperation in CEP and Disaster Preparedness with emphasis on the Chernobyl Disaster. Under the auspices of the NATO-Ukraine Commission, the NATO-Ukraine Joint Group has organised and conducted a number of CEP cooperation activities in the aviation, food and agriculture, and medical fields.

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE EADRCC

On 3 June 1998, NATO Secretary General Solana inaugurated the Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre (EADRCC). The EADRCC is located at NATO HQ and staffed with personnel seconded from EAPC countries, as well as a Liaison Officer from UN-OCHA. On 5 June 1998, it received a request for assistance from UNHCR related to the large influx of refugees from Kosovo to Albania. In response, the EADRCC arranged an emergency airlift to Tirana - with aircraft provided by Belgium and Norway - of 16 flights carrying 161 tons of essential humanitarian aid.

Subsequently, the EADRCC actively monitored the humanitarian situation in and around Kosovo and, in April 1999, stepped up its coordination of humanitarian assistance from NATO and Partner countries to alleviate the plight of the Kosovar refugees.

In November 1998, at the request of Ukraine, the EADRCC contacted EAPC countries for humanitarian assistance in response to extensive floods in western Ukraine. UN-OCHA - fully extended in Central America at the time, coping with the effects of Hurricane Mitch - requested that the EADRCC take the lead in carrying out the necessary international coordination. Prompt assistance was provided by 10 EAPC countries.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

Albania
As provided for in its Individual Partnership Plan, assistance will be given to Albania to develop legislation and implementing arrangements for civil emergency planning and disaster preparedness. Following the recent approval of the new Albanian constitution, and building upon a March 1999 PfP Workshop in Tirana devoted to this subject, a year long implementation effort began which will involve Albanian parliamentarians, appropriate ministries, OSCE and selected NGOs. The most significant aspect of this implementation effort will be the involvement of those Partner countries who have revised their CEP structures and legislation, following previous workshops and seminars devoted to this subject.

Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Capability (EADRCC)
Follow-on work will be to identify and commit the various civil and military elements and capabilities - from individual EAPC countries - that will comprise the Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Unit (EADRU). A field exercise involving activation and deployment of selected elements of the EADRU will take place in 1999, in cooperation with UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN-OCHA).

Future emphasis will be on enhancing and deepening practical cooperation rather than increasing the number of CEP activities. This shift towards improving the qualitative aspects of CEP cooperation with Partner countries will focus on meetings of NATO's nine technical CEP planning boards and committees (PB&Cs). The major challenge will be to transfer the work of these bodies from issues which concern the 19 NATO countries to those which concern the 44 EAPC member countries, while still maintaining the effectiveness of the PB&Cs.

HIGHLIGHTS

- CEP is included in the Individual Partnership Plans of all Partner countries;
- Each year participants from all 44 NATO and Partner countries take part in CEP cooperation activities;
- Partner countries initiate, organise and conduct in their countries the majority of the CEP cooperation activities. The importance to them of civil emergency planning is shown by the steady growth of the number of activities from four in 1994 to 75 in 1999.
- To date, there have been more than 12,000 participants, civil and military, from all governmental ministries, from local, regional and central government, as well as non-governmental organisations;
- Activities include the active participation of, and in some cases, joint organisation and sponsorship with a wide range of other international organisations.