

# **POLITICAL MILITARY FRAMEWORK FOR PARTNER INVOLVEMENT IN NATO-LED OPERATIONS**

## **PURPOSE**

1. At the 2010 Lisbon Summit, NATO Heads of State and Government stressed that they greatly value the contributions made by partner countries to NATO-led operations and missions. These contributions demonstrate partners' commitment, alongside NATO, to promote international security and stability in accordance with the principles of international law and the obligations of the United Nations Charter. Heads of State and Government agreed to review and update the 1999 Political Military Framework for NATO-led Operations.

2. In line with NATO's 2010 Strategic Concept and the Lisbon Summit Declaration, this document establishes a structural role for NATO's operational partners<sup>1</sup> that formalises the modalities of their participation in shaping strategy and decisions from the planning through to the execution phase of current and future NATO-led operations to which they contribute. It supersedes the version endorsed by EAPC Heads of State and Government at the Washington Summit in 1999<sup>2</sup>.

## **SCOPE**

3. This PMF sets out governing principles, procedures, modalities, and other guidance for partner involvement in political consultations and the decision process in both operations planning and command arrangements. It covers the participation of operational partners in NATO-led operations. It has been developed in close consultation with NATO's present operational partners in order to reflect significant developments, lessons learned, and progress made over recent years in terms of their involvement in NATO-led operations.

## **POTENTIAL OPERATIONAL PARTNERS AND OPERATIONAL PARTNERS**

### Definition

4. NATO-led operations are defined as operations utilising NATO's military structures and incorporating contributions from operational partners, carried out under authority of the North Atlantic Council. An operational partner is a country that contributes forces/capabilities to a NATO-led operation, or supports it in other ways that the NAC formally accepts, on the basis of political-military advice, as a contribution. This recognition can take place at any of the stages in an operation described in paragraph 7 below. Prior to being recognised as an operational partner, countries that are prepared to contribute to a NATO-led operation can be recognised by the NAC as potential operational partners. This recognition is without prejudice to later acceptance as an operational partner. It does not exclude the possibility that countries other than those previously recognised as potential operational partners could be accepted as operational partners.

### Conditions for formal recognition

5. The ability of partners to operate together with Allied forces, and the ability of the NATO Military Authorities to assess such a capability to contribute, will be of key

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<sup>1</sup> See 'operational partner' definition in paragraph 4

<sup>2</sup> This PMF forms part of a wider framework of conceptual and practical documents and arrangements.

importance in determining their interoperability and the scope of their potential contribution. Practical cooperation between NATO and partners in training activities and exercises is of particular value in preparing for NATO-led operations and partners are encouraged to take advantage of any opportunity to increase their interoperability with NATO forces making use, where appropriate, of NATO partnership tools.

6. The NAC will decide on the recognition of a non-NATO country as an operational partner for a particular operation, on the basis of Military Committee advice, after the successful completion of the following measures as required:

- a formal statement of intent by the country that it is prepared to offer a contribution in support of a NATO-led operation;
- provisional recognition by the NAC of the country as a potential operational partner;
- completion of proper security arrangements with the potential operational partner to allow the sharing of operational classified information;
- completion of participation and detailed financial arrangements<sup>3</sup> with the potential operational partner;
- signature, if required, of a technical memorandum of understanding between the relevant military authorities of NATO and of the potential operational partner; and
- certification by SHAPE of the potential operational partner's contribution.

#### Forms and stages of involvement

7. With regard to operational partner and, as appropriate, potential operational partner, involvement in a specific operation, three broad stages can be distinguished: indications and warnings of a potential or actual crisis; assessment of the crisis situation and development of response options; and planning, execution and transition. During different stages it will be necessary to distinguish between operational partners and potential operational partners. Details of the process for involvement of partners in each of these stages are outlined in appendix 1 which reflects NATO's six phase approach to crisis management.

### **THE DECISION PROCESS**

#### Consultation and decision-shaping

8. Full consultation, cooperation and transparency with operational partners and as appropriate potential operational partners, on all relevant aspects of the operation throughout its life-cycle, are a fundamental part of their involvement in operations. Consultations will take the form of regular meetings, in the appropriate military and political bodies, including the Military Committee, and at Council level.

9. Operational partners will be consulted and offered the opportunity to put forward views on all relevant issues and be fully involved in the discussion of documents, in particular Concepts of Operations, Operations plans, Rules of Engagement, and their revisions, and Periodic Mission Reviews, prior to the start of decision-making as defined in paragraph 12 below in the Military Committee or NAC as appropriate. In addition,

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<sup>3</sup> The financial arrangements with operational partners will be based upon the principle 'costs lie where they fall'. Further financial contributions by operational partners may be considered where feasible and appropriate.

operational partners will have also access and be invited to contribute to the relevant Lessons Learned. At all levels, the NATO political and military staff will maintain appropriate and active regular informal contacts with all operational partners.

10. Meetings to discuss an ongoing operation involving operational partners will, as a matter of course, be convened in the appropriate operations-format (e.g. KFOR, ISAF). Allies may deliberate on any issue in Allies-only format. In such cases operational partners will be debriefed as soon as possible, in an appropriate manner.

11. Information sharing and distribution of documents will be done as promptly as possible to allow operational partners adequate time to provide their comments and proposals throughout this process. As a rule, documents on operational issues will be released to Allies and operational partners at the same time.

### Decision making

12. While operational partners are fully involved in the decision-shaping process outlined in paragraphs 8-11, the NAC retains the ultimate responsibility for decision-making. The procedural steps to be followed in terms of coming to a decision reflects the process that was developed for ISAF and KFOR contributors. It is based on the three consecutive steps, that is:

- (i) provisional Allied approval of a decision,
- (ii) formal association by operational partners with the decision,
- (iii) final Allied approval.

13. Such a decision-making process can be conducted in the appropriate military and political bodies, including the Military Committee, and at Council level. The timing of the last two steps in this process can be streamlined, as long as operational partners have been fully involved in the elaboration of the documents in which the decisions are drafted. For example in the course of NAC ministerial or summit meetings, agreement by operational partners to associate themselves with a decision and final Allied approval could occur simultaneously.

### **PRE-CRISIS AND POST-CRISIS**

14. In an effort to broaden and intensify, as appropriate, political consultations among Allies and partners, and other countries<sup>4</sup> as decided by the NAC, during a pre- or emerging crisis phase and in a post-crisis phase, it will be necessary to undertake information sharing and exchange of intelligence as appropriate with a view to assess where and when crises might occur and how they can best be prevented as well as to consult on lessons learned during previous crises.

15. To this end, and building on the strong habits of consultations and cooperation established in KFOR and ISAF formats, meetings of the NAC, Military Committee and other relevant committees involved in crisis management and operations could be held in 28 + n format, as appropriate.

### **REVIEW**

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<sup>4</sup> See paragraph 10 of 'Active Engagement in Cooperative Security: A more Efficient and Flexible Partnership Policy' which sets out in more detail how NATO interacts with countries that do not have a formal partnership status

16. The Political Military Framework for partner involvement in NATO-led operations will be reviewed and updated in close collaboration with partners, especially those involved in operations, if and when required by new developments.

**Mechanisms for Implementation of the 2011 Political-Military Framework  
prior to and during all phases in a crisis**

1. Operational partners, and as appropriate potential operational partners, will be invited to play a structural role in shaping strategy and decisions in NATO-led operations to which they contribute, or have expressed their readiness to contribute. Below are the sequential phases of the crisis management process and the modalities to associate partners throughout.

**A. Indications and Warnings of a potential or actual crisis**

2. During this phase, the NAC will consider consulting relevant partners and if necessary other countries. The emphasis will be on information exchange and sharing of assessments.

**B. Assessment of Crisis Situation and Development of Response Options**

3. During these two phases, which constitute what is known as the 'Political-Military Estimate' (PME) process, NATO will continue general information exchange and the sharing of assessments with all relevant partners, and other countries as decided by the NAC. Should the NAC decide, in principle, that any military option could involve partner or other countries' contributions, it may invite them to associate with the Alliance position and to formally confirm their willingness to become operational partners. This will constitute the first step towards being recognised as a potential operational partner.

4. Potential operational partners will be given appropriate opportunities to be informed and involved in all relevant aspects of developing assessments, response options and other preparatory activities. In so doing, NATO will also take into account the likely scope of contributions by potential operational partners. To this end, consultations with respect to the possible NATO-led operation will also take place in a "28 +n" format in relevant fora, including at Military Committee and NAC level. The PME process ends with the NAC decision to initiate military planning for a possible operation.

**C. Planning, Execution and Transition**

5. '28+n' format meetings will take place to ensure that all operations-related planning documents are developed in consultation with operational partners. In case of non-consent, partners retain the option of not associating themselves with a decision and not proceeding with or withdrawing their planned contribution if they deem it necessary. In parallel, potential operational partners will continue to be involved in exchange of information and assessments. In accordance with the Policy for a More Efficient and Flexible Partnership, other partners will be kept informed during these phases.

6. During these three phases, operational partners are consulted and associated with NATO decisions in accordance with the governing principles, procedures and mechanisms described in the Political-Military Framework document above. When Allied nations are involved in planning, operational partner participation will occur through the use of national liaison officers in military headquarters, and/or through appropriate involvement of operational partner representatives in working groups and committees. Preparations for the command of the operation should include preparations for appropriate involvement of officers or headquarter modules from operational partners. The objective should be to

begin the operation with operational partner forces already integrated into the multinational NATO-led operation. The most direct involvement of operational partners during the actual conduct of an operation will be through force contributions and participation in command arrangements. Operational partner officers serving in military headquarters should be fully involved throughout these phases.

7. In principle, operational partners would only fill posts in headquarters which are in the direct chain of command up to and including an operational HQ. In military headquarters superior to these HQs, particularly in HQs at the strategic level, operational partners will normally be represented by liaison officers or military representatives as appropriate.