NATO OTAN

Crisis management

briefing

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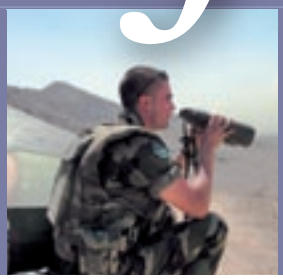
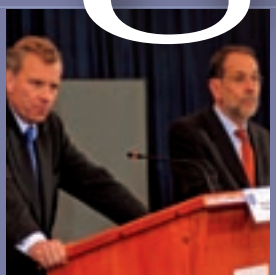


Modern peace-keeping



EU-NATO cooperation

Building peace and stability in crisis regions

The greatest and most visible change in NATO's activities since the end of the Cold War is its involvement in ending conflict, restoring peace and building stability in crisis regions. Indeed, the Alliance is currently involved in a variety of capacities in complex, peace-support operations on three continents: in the former Yugoslavia in Europe; in Afghanistan and Iraq in Asia; and in Darfur, Sudan, in Africa.

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In every instance, NATO has deployed in support of the wider interests of the international community and is working closely together with other organisations to help resolve deep-rooted problems, alleviate suffering and create the conditions in which peace processes can become self-sustaining. In the ►

NATO's unique crisis-management capabilities are of increasing importance to wider international security

words of NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer: "The Alliance today is fully alert to the possible escalation of local conflicts into broader security threats. In a globalised world, geographic distance no longer shields us from trouble."

In the wake of the terrorist attacks against the United States of 11 September 2001, NATO's unique crisis-management capabilities – including the NATO Response Force (NRF), the Alliance's spearhead force – are of increasing importance to wider international security, since failed states have proved to be an ideal breeding ground for instability, terrorism and transnational crime.

The capabilities and expertise to manage such complex operations have been dramatically enhanced during the past decade, primarily in response to the wars of Yugoslavia's dissolution. In effect, the break-up of the former Yugoslavia was the first Euro-Atlantic example of 21st century security challenges, and as such, has been critical to the development of contemporary approaches to peace-support operations. Lessons learned in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia* are extremely relevant elsewhere, and are being put into practice today in Afghanistan.

The wars of Yugoslavia's dissolution, and especially the Bosnian War, caught the international community largely unprepared. The early responses to these crises highlighted the shortcomings of the international security architecture following the end of the Cold War.

Initially, the United Nations was the principal institution attempting to broker an end to hostilities, keep the peace in regions where a cease-fire had been agreed and alleviate the suffering of non-combatants. Over the years, NATO became involved in support of the United Nations through various air- and sea-based support operations – enforcing economic sanctions, an arms embargo and a no-flight zone – and by providing the United Nations with detailed military contingency planning concerning safe areas and the implementation of a peace plan.

Turning point

These measures helped to contain the conflict and save lives, but in the end proved inadequate to bring an end to the war. The turning point in the Bosnian War came when NATO took the lead, launching a two-week air campaign against Bosnian Serb forces in the summer of 1995. This paved the way for the Dayton Agreement, the peace accord ending

the Bosnian War that came into force on 20 December 1995, under which a 60 000-strong NATO-led Implementation Force (IFOR) took military responsibility for the peace process.

The deployment of IFOR, which included soldiers from both NATO and non-NATO countries, was the Alliance's first military engagement on land and has contributed greatly to reshaping its post-Cold War identity. Indeed, in only a few years, NATO transformed itself into an increasingly effective instrument for military and political crisis management. The adaptation and learning process was evident in the way in which peacekeeping in Bosnia and Herzegovina under IFOR and later the successor Stabilisation Force (SFOR) evolved and fed into the approach adopted when the Kosovo Force (KFOR) deployed in June 1999.

In the early days of IFOR, there was strong concern among Allies of the dangers of "mission creep", that is the tendency to begin taking on tasks perceived as better performed by civilian actors. Rapidly, however, it became clear that there could be no military success in isolation. If the overall peace-building effort failed to produce conditions for a stable and lasting peace, this would be perceived as much as NATO's failure as that of the civilian agencies. This helped forge closer links between the peacekeeping force and its civilian counterparts, including, for example, the development of a doctrine for civil-military cooperation. By the time KFOR deployed, these lessons had been learned and were reflected in ►

Modern peacekeeping

Peacekeeping has changed greatly since the end of the Cold War. In the process, it has become a more complex, comprehensive and dangerous activity. Today, the classical task of serving as a "neutral" buffer between consenting parties has evolved into operations geared towards managing political, economic and social change, often under difficult circumstances – a trend fuelled by the fact that most modern peacekeeping operations are responses to intra-state, rather than inter-state, conflicts.

Operational planning and conflict-management strategies need to take into account the changing dynamics of peacekeeping. In many cases, it is neither possible nor desirable to seek to re-establish the situation that existed before the conflict. Instead, the parties need help to build a new society. Often, it is difficult to find clear, coherent and reliable partners with genuine control over their own forces. Frequently, the situation is complicated by the presence of warlords, prepared to exploit myths and instigate violence to help seize or retain power. Moreover, political and financial motives overlap, sometimes blurring the lines between politics and organised crime.

In many current conflicts, the very nature of the state is at issue. As a result, the international community finds itself called upon to reform dysfunctional institutions, including the state administration, the legal system and even the local media. In addition to the military aspect, many other activities have become integral parts of a peace-building operation. Only a careful, well-planned and coordinated combination of civilian and military measures can create the conditions for long-term, self-sustaining stability and peace. ■

Jaap de Hoop Scheffer: "We need forces that can react quickly, that can be deployed over long distances, and then sustained over extended periods of time."

the broad mandate given to the force from the outset, as well as in the good and flexible relationship that rapidly developed between KFOR and the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK).

NATO deployed in Kosovo after a 78-day air campaign launched to halt a humanitarian catastrophe. The decision to intervene – probably the most controversial in the Alliance's history – followed more than a year of fighting within Kosovo, the failure of international efforts to resolve the conflict by diplomatic means, and a strong determination on the part of NATO Allies to prevent the kind of ethnic-cleansing campaigns seen earlier in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia.

In the wake of what Bernard Kouchner, the original UNMIK head, described as "forty years of communism, ten years of apartheid, and a year of ethnic cleansing", peace-building in Kosovo is exceptionally challenging. Military victory was but the first step on a long road to building a durable, multi-ethnic society free from the threat of renewed conflict. In this way, in addition to helping to preserve a secure environment, the NATO-led forces in both Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo became actively involved in helping refugees and displaced persons return to their homes; seeking out and arresting individuals indicted for war crimes; and helping to reform the domestic military structures in such a way as to prevent a return to violence – all tasks that require a long-term commitment.

Evolving approaches

It took close to three-and-a-half years of bloodshed in Bosnia and Herzegovina and a year of fighting in Kosovo before NATO intervened to bring these conflicts to an end. However, in spring 2001, the Alliance became engaged, at the request of the Skopje authorities, in an effort to prevent an escalating conflict in the former Yugoslav Republic

of Macedonia* degenerating into full-scale war *(see accompanying box)*. Together with other international organisations, the Alliance helped to head off a greater conflict and launch a process of reconstruction and reconciliation.

NATO's first three peace-support operations took place in Europe, yet the need for long-term peace-building is global. NATO foreign ministers recognised this at a meeting in Reykjavik, Iceland, in May 2002 agreeing that: "To carry out the full range of its missions, NATO must be able to field forces that can move quickly to wherever they are needed, sustain operations over distance and

time, and achieve their objectives." This decision effectively paved the way for NATO to deploy for the first time outside the Euro-Atlantic area, in Afghanistan. Subsequently, the Alliance has become involved in both Iraq and in Darfur, Sudan.

Since August 2003, NATO has led the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), a UN-mandated force tasked with helping provide security in and around Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan, in support of the Afghan Transitional Authority and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan. ISAF also assists in developing reliable security structures; identifying reconstruction needs; and training and building up future Afghan security forces.

In October 2003, a new UN Security Council Resolution paved the way for ISAF to expand its mission beyond Kabul to help the government of Afghanistan extend its authority to the rest of the country and provide a safe and secure environment conducive to free and fair elections, the spread of the rule of law and the reconstruction of the country. Since then, NATO has been steadily expanding its presence via the creation of so-called Provincial Reconstruction Teams, that is international teams combining both civilian and military personnel. ►

Operation Essential Harvest

In 2001, NATO helped head off civil war in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia* through a timely and intelligent intervention. At the request of the Skopje government, then NATO Secretary General Lord Robertson despatched a crisis-management team to negotiate a cease-fire with the so-called National Liberation Army (NLA), an armed group of ethnic Albanian rebels which had taken control of large swathes of territory in the eastern and northern part of the country. At the time, the very survival of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia* was at stake. Implementing a key lesson learned from the experience of KFOR and SFOR, NATO worked closely with the European Union and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe from the political level down to the field, and the three organisations presented a unified international stance to both sides of the conflict.

The NATO team succeeded in helping to persuade the NLA to agree a cease-fire and to support the ongoing political negotiation process, which culminated in the 13 August Ohrid Agreement. In the wake of this agreement, NATO deployed a force of 4000 troops in Operation Essential Harvest to oversee the NLA's disarmament. Over the next 30 days, close to 4000 weapons were collected at several designated points. By early October, the task was complete and the NLA had ceased to exist as a structured armed organisation. On completion of Essential Harvest, NATO retained, at Skopje's request, a follow-on force of a few hundred military personnel in the country to protect civilian observers tasked with monitoring the re-entry of the state security forces into former crisis areas. In April 2003, NATO handed responsibility for this operation to the European Union. ■

In Iraq, NATO is training Iraqi personnel and supporting the development of security institutions to help the country develop effective armed forces and provide for its own security. The Alliance is helping establish an Iraqi Training, Education and Doctrine Centre near Baghdad focused on leadership training, as well as coordinating equipment donations to Iraq.

NATO is also providing support to Poland in terms of intelligence, logistics expertise, movement coordination, force generation and secure communications. In this way, Poland has, since September 2003, been able to command a sector – Multinational Division Central South – in which troops from both Allied and Partner countries are operating.

Together with the European Union, NATO is assisting the African Union expand its peacekeeping mission in Darfur. The Alliance is airlifting AU peacekeepers into the region and providing training in running a multinational military headquarters and managing intelligence.

In order to be effective when deploying far from Alliance territory, NATO militaries must invest in power-projection capabilities. In the words of NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer: "We need forces that can react quickly, that can be deployed over long distances, and then sustained over extended periods of time. And we need a mix of forces capable of performing high-intensity combat tasks and post-conflict reconstruction work."

To meet this challenge, the Alliance has adopted a series of measures aimed at ensuring that NATO is equipped for the full spectrum of modern military missions. This comprises a new capabilities initiative, the Prague Capabilities Commitment, by which Allies have pledged to make specific improvements in critical areas such as strategic air- and sealift and air-to-air refuelling. It also involves the creation of a NATO Response Force *(see box on back page)*, which will give the Alliance the capacity to move a robust force quickly, to respond swiftly to crises. And it includes the streamlining of NATO's military command structure, to make it more flexible and more useable for 21st century contingencies. ■

EU-NATO cooperation

An effective working relationship between the European Union and NATO is critical to successful crisis management. The two organisations established formal relations in January 2001 but the breakthrough came on 16 December 2002 with the adoption of the *EU-NATO Declaration on ESDP*. Since then, the European Union and NATO have negotiated a series of documents on cooperation in crisis management, known by insiders as the "Berlin-Plus" package, which made it possible for the European Union to take over from NATO responsibility for peacekeeping in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia* on 1 April 2003.

The term “Berlin-Plus” is a reference to the 1996 meeting in Berlin where NATO foreign ministers agreed to make Alliance assets available for European-led operations in cases where NATO was not militarily engaged. The "Berlin-Plus" arrangements seek to avoid unnecessary duplication of resources and comprise four elements. These are: assured EU access to NATO operational planning; the presumption of availability to the European Union of NATO capabilities and common assets; NATO European command options for EU-led operations, including developing the European role of NATO’s Deputy Supreme Allied Commander, Europe (SACEUR); and adaptation of the NATO defence planning system to incorporate the availability of forces for EU operations.

The "Berlin-Plus" arrangements were first put into practice in Operation Concordia, the European Union’s first military deployment in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia* that ran from April to December 2003. They are currently being used in Operation Althea in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where the European Union took responsibility for providing day-to-day security from NATO in December 2004. The Deputy SACEUR is operation commander and EU liaison officers are working alongside their NATO colleagues in the NATO command structure, both at the strategic level in an EU cell at Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe in Mons, Belgium, and at the regional level at Allied Joint Force Command Naples, Italy. In the field, the force commander and his staff are working closely with NATO's commanding officer and residual military headquarters, which retains responsibility for defence reform, as well as work on counter-terrorism, apprehending war-crimes suspects and intelligence-gathering. ■

The NATO Response Force gives NATO the means to respond swiftly to crises wherever and whenever they might occur

NATO Response Force

The NATO Response Force (NRF) is the Alliance's greatest crisis-management tool giving NATO the means to respond swiftly to crises wherever and whenever they might occur. This spearhead, high-readiness force is a permanently available, multinational joint force consisting of land, air and sea components as well as various specialist capabilities. Comprising more than 20 000 troops, it will be able when fully operational to start deploying at five days' notice and to sustain itself for operations for 30 days and more if re-supplied.

The NRF concept was launched at NATO's 2002 Prague Summit and has several missions. It may act as a stand-alone force for both collective-defence and crisis-response missions, such as evacuation, disaster consequence management, humanitarian and counter-terrorism operations. It may be the entry force facilitating the arrival of larger follow-on forces. And it may be used to demonstrate NATO resolve and solidarity to head off crises and support diplomatic initiatives. The NRF's flexibility gives it its unique character, enabling it to be tailored to a specific operation.

The NRF is scheduled to be fully operational in 2006 by which time it will consist of a brigade-size land component with forced entry capability, a naval task force composed of one carrier battle group, an amphibious task group and a surface action group, and an air component that will be capable of 200 combat sorties a day. Special forces constitute an additional component, which may be called upon when necessary. According to NATO Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer: "The primary challenge is no longer in setting up the NRF. The challenge is to figure out how, when and where to use it." ■

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* Turkey recognises the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name.

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