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SOME CONSIDERATIONS ON CRISIS MANAGEMENT WITHIN NATO

At the Washington Summit in 1999, the Alliance adopted the new strategic concept which took a more comprehensive view of Euro-Atlantic security and placed greater emphasis on NATO capabilities for conflict prevention and crisis management. All these were related to lessons learned in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo, acquired by exercising, and no doubt to other lessons learned from recent events in the USA. Some lessons even may have to be learned yet.

Crisis management is an old phrase in the NATO. No one used the term then, but the preamble and the first six articles of the Washington Treaty are the basis of NATO. As we use the phrase today, it represents a new approach to security in the Alliance.

The Alliance's crisis management process is founded on Article 4 of the North Atlantic Treaty which emphasises the need for Alliance consultation. The article states the following: “The Parties will consult together whenever, in the opinion of any of them, the territorial integrity, political independence or security of any of the Parties is threatened.”

This article established one of the most important mechanisms, the consultation procedure, which is implemented whenever any ally considers the territorial integrity or political independence of any of the allies to be threatened. The new strategic concept highlights the importance of consultations (2nd of “fundamental security tasks”). The language of Article 4 on consultation is mirrored in the PfP invitation.

In contrast to the predominant threat of the past, the risks for Allied security that remain, are multifaceted in nature and

multidirectional, which makes them hard to predict and assess. Uncertainty about where and how they could develop into crises or military threats will prevail, and NATO must be capable of responding to such risks if stability in Europe and the security of Alliance members are to be preserved.
In this context it would be stimulating to give an idea of the meaning of the term “crisis”. It may surprise you to know that there is no NATO, Allied or internationally agreed definition of the term “crisis”. The strategic concept quite deliberately avoided giving a clear-cut definition of the term, and that allows the North Atlantic Council (NAC) maximum flexibility in deciding when a situation becomes a crisis.
On the other hand, here is what could be considered a definition, a non-approved definition, more of a common understanding of what a situation of crisis is (as used in the NATO environment) that could be useful to start this framework. According to this, a crisis can be understood as “a national or international situation where there is a threat to priority values, interests or goals”, that means that priority values, interest or goals of the Alliance are in danger.

These risks can arise in various ways, and it states “to stand ready, case-by-case and by consensus”. A second point in the Strategic Concept and Summit Communiqué is that this “new alliance” will be larger, more capable, and more flexible and able to undertake new missions, including contributing to effective conflict prevention and engaging actively in crisis management, including CROs.
This text is meant to provide an understanding of crisis management, briefly describing the organisation, procedures and measures, and then highlighting some of the key changes that have been put in place in recent years or that are under way.
It is clear that in order to begin planning for non-Article 5, CROs will require a Council settlement, and such a decision is a political one which must be taken in accordance with the relevant

provisions of the Washington Treaty and the 1999 Strategic Concept.

But for a better understanding of this situation let us now turn to the objectives of NATO crisis management and the organisation:

- The agreement on objectives must be achieved by the Military Committee;
- To contribute to effective conflict prevention, including reducing tensions so as to prevent them from becoming crises, also through CROs, if necessary:
- To manage effectively crises which have arisen to prevent them from becoming conflicts;
- To ensure timely civil and military preparedness adapted to suit different degrees of crises;
- In the very unlikely case that hostilities were to break out, to control the response, prevent further escalation and persuade any aggressor to cease his attack and withdraw from allied territory;
- And, when further escalation or hostilities have been stopped or are under control, to de-escalate in order to re-establish the normal order.

As you see, these objectives in the past were designed for the Cold War period, and it was a response to an enemy preparation to attack, but now there is a different approach.

The new approach was first set out in 1991 in Rome, as part of the Alliance's new strategic concept. It encompassed a new, broader approach to security, and greater opportunities to achieve long-standing objectives by using political means.
Today, the likely conflicts are generated by the crises between the political actors resulting from tensions and antagonisms caused by ethnic conflicts, extreme nationalism, intra-state political strife,

failed or inadequate political change, and severe economic problems. In relation to this, there are some key aspects which include:

1. More active use of political and diplomatic means
2. Close interaction and cooperation with other international organisations
3. Significant changes in our force and command structures, and
4. NATO support for UN- and OSCE-mandated peace-keeping operations, including, of course, NATO and NATO-led peace support operations /CROs.

First of all the specified principles required to rule the crisis management process must be considered:

- The Alliance being composed of nineteen sovereign member countries, consensus is needed to achieve an Alliance decision;
- The highest authority of the Alliance is NAC. In defence policy matters that involve the integrated force structure, the highest authority is the Defence Planning Committee (DPC);
- The Council/DPC, in carrying out their main tasks of collective decision-making in a crisis, act as the forum for consultation, wherein member governments can express and compare their views, leading to the harmonisation of these views in the form of collective decisions on measures to be implemented;
- All decisions taken in the Council/DPC (and all other NATO bodies) are expressions of national sovereignty and are therefore taken by consensus. The nations have delegated to their Ambassadors the responsibility of

representing all elements of their Governments (political, economic, defence, and civil emergency);

- The Council/DPC is supported by the Military Committee, the Political Committee, the Senior Civil Emergency Planning Committee, the Crisis Response Committee, and, when required, other relevant Committees which provide advice and recommendations on aspects and measures within their respective fields of competence;
- Major NATO Commanders are responsible for conducting operations, in conformity with political guidance by the Council/DPC;
- NATO has no sources of intelligence of its own in peacetime. It is therefore imperative that member countries share nationally-gathered intelligence and their assessments with their Allies, and make them speedily and comprehensively available to NATO Headquarters and major NATO commanders;
- Finally, at every step in the Crisis Management there is political control of the military; no decision regarding planning for deployment, or actual employment of military forces, can be taken without political authorisation.

The arrangements and procedures have been developed but they nevertheless raise some key policy questions which were debated fully in the Alliance. These include the issue of mandates and political legitimacy of NATO-led CROs and the legal framework within which such operations would be conducted. Among these, the use of political legitimacy and mandates will be a key question that must be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Council. Some significant factors in this framework are:

- The identification and monitoring of crisis situations, including related analysis procedures;
- The exchange of intelligence and information;

- Production and circulation of assessments to support consultation and collective decision-making;
- Circulation of press and public media.

The forum for consultation and co-ordination of crisis management is the Council Operations and Exercises Committee (COEC) at the level of political military representatives from national delegates, concerned with crisis management and exercises. Its role is to provide arrangements, procedures and facilities, including communications issues, questions relating to the NATO Situation Centre (SITCEN), and the preparation and conduct of crisis management exercises, and its sustainability in the management of crisis for this proposal.

The Crisis Management and Operations Directorate includes the Crisis Management Section, the Council Operations Section, and the Peacekeeping Staff. The Director of Crisis Management and Operations is also responsible on behalf of the Secretary General for the development and control of the NATO Situation Centre (SITCEN).
The Crisis Management Section provides staff support to the Secretary General, the Council and Defence Planning Committee, and relevant subordinate groups on major politico-military crisis management policy issues. It is responsible for implementing, monitoring and reporting on Council decisions associated with crisis management and the preparation and conduct of NATO operations.
It also has a liaison and co-ordination function between NATO and non-NATO nations, and appropriate international organisations such as: the United Nations; the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe; the European Union; the Western European Union; the Office of the High Representative of the UN; the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

The Council Operations Section supports NATO crisis management by the development and improvement of procedures, organisation and facilities to support the needs of the Council and Defence Planning Committee, and to facilitate consultation in periods of tension and crisis.

The Peacekeeping Section supports the crisis management process by providing conceptual and technical strategic planning and advice on peace-support operations. The Peacekeeping Staff also support other aspects of NATO's work in the field of crisis response operations, including the development of Alliance peacekeeping policy, the development of CIMIC (Civil-Military Cooperation) policy, and support for the PJC and PMSC Ad Hoc Groups on Peacekeeping. This section also maintains close relations with other international organisations including the OSCE, UN, UNHCR and the OHR.

The Situation Centre, known as the SITCEN, has three specific roles: to assist the North Atlantic Council, the Defence Planning Committee, and the Military Committee in fulfilling their respective functions in the field of consultation; to serve as a focal point within the Alliance for the receipt, exchange, and dissemination of political, military, and economic intelligence and information; and to act as a link with similar facilities of member nations and of the Major NATO Commands. A Communication Centre or “COMCEN” supports the Situation Centre.

At the earliest opportunity, the Partners and then non-Partner nations are invited and consulted to offer forces. These contributions are often in important areas of Allied shortfall such as medical, engineering and technical specialists.

The intention behind participation by Non-NATO Troops Contributing Nations (NNTCN) is to create a truly multinational framework and to better demonstrate international support and legitimacy.

The NNTCN are also given the opportunity to comment on operations planes, and their views are taken into account. This

allows partner and non-partner nations to contribute to the provision of political guidance and oversight of operations, and contributes to what is termed as ‘Decision Shaping’. In addition, NNTCN’s for SFOR and KFOR take part in a weekly meeting at NATO with diplomats and military representatives to review and discuss matters of mutual interest in the conduct of operations.
Non-NATO Nations close to the conflict area can also offer Host Nation Support in the form of basing, transit and over-flight rights. Support of this kind is crucial.

In response to a potential or developing crisis, for timely action it is essential to have a variety of different measures or possible responses in place, so that they do not have to be developed on an ad-hoc basis for each new situation. In deciding what to do about a given situation, the Council/DPC has a wide range of measures, and Allies have agreed from which to choose. These include:

- Diplomatic, economic and military preventive measures,
- A variety of military response options and
- A complete spectrum of precautionary measures.

The range of crises operations envisioned encompasses “the Alliance’s conduct of, and participation in, the full spectrum of operations, to include those in support of peace, which could range from the most demanding types of peace enforcement to military preventive activities, and others as directed by the North Atlantic Council”.
A further definition is given in relation to the spectrum of such activities which are described as “multifunctional operations, which encompass those political, military and civil activities, initiated and executed in accordance with international law, contributing to conflict prevention and resolution, and crisis management in pursuit of Alliance objectives. The Alliance’s

operations range from support operations primarily associated with civil agencies, through to operations in support of peace."

In defining the new strategic environment in which these operations are conducted, it is clear that the Armed Forces have to deal with a complex and diverse spectrum of actors, risks, situations and demands. The following factors must be taken into account:

- Response can involve international, political, diplomatic, military and civilian humanitarian authorities
- Environment can range from permissive to hostile and be influenced by the perception of the local population and local organisations
- Institutions of law and order could be fragile or non-existent.
- They will be politically sensitive and subject to considerable media and public debate.

In the new strategic environment, the distinction between Article 5 – *collective defence* - and non-Article 5 missions has been increasingly blurred. The key differences include participation by non-NATO Nations and the civil nature of operations.

- May have a specific mission, such as extraction operations or military support to disaster relief, non-combatant evacuation, or search and rescue.
- May be of a humanitarian nature not connected with any potential conflict.
- May be enforcement operations, to contain and prevent conflicts by early engagement or to terminate conflicts before escalation into war.
- May be as demanding as Article 5 missions, involving the complete array of NATO assets and capabilities.

Additionally, NATO CROs may be limited in objectives, means, area and time – or any combination of the four depending on the desired end-state, which:

To summarise, Non-Article Operations have proved to be even more demanding that those that were supposed to be conducted under the application of Article 5, with a new approach to the selection of objectives (no collateral damage, “0” casualties in own forces), and move lasting operations, with the need to think of forces rotation on the ground.

Clearly, with such a broad spectrum of operations, not all principles will be applicable in each case, and therefore judgement is required to temper the weight and application of this guidance. It must also be appreciated that this capstone document is not intended to hold all the answers. The lower level doctrinal publications, which stem from this policy, such as Allied Joint Publications will be of more relevance to those in the field.

However, I would like to highlight some aspects of these principles which are relevant to the troops on the ground. Assumptions for the selection of the principles for CROs could be: objectivity; perseverance; unity of command; unity of effort; use of force; flexibility; security; transparency of operations; legitimacy; impartiality; credibility; mutual respect; freedom of military movement; promotion of co-operation; consent. For a better discernment of the purpose of their application, some of them are outline below.

The use of force is one area where incorrect application can bring mission failure, and which therefore requires careful judgement. In all cases, the use of force must be in accordance with International Law, and politically approved guidance attached to the Rules of Engagement. While the abiding principle is that only the minimum necessary force should be used, any force should be precise, timely, appropriate and proportionate. Force should be used to

resolve a situation, not to escalate it. All these judgements are often left to the local commander on the spot.
Where the nature of the mission allows, operations should be conducted impartially, without favour or prejudice to any party. It is important that impartiality is maintained in all situations. Experience shows that once you have lost your impartial status, it is very difficult to re-establish it. The selection of the nation participating in the CROs must be among those that have no interests in the area.

In synthesis, it will be clear that the conduct of NATO in CROs requires military commanders at all levels to be fully aware of the diverse and numerous factors that can have an impact on these operations. They can be highly demanding and bring to the fore a significant multinational and civil dimension to military operations. There are clear challenges in planning and controlling operations, which involve the participation of non-NATO nations, taking into account the political and legal implications, while co-operating with civil agencies and international organisations.
NATO has learnt a great deal of lessons from recent operations in the Balkans and will continue to define and adapt its policy and procedures to ensure that future NATO-led CROs operations are conducted efficiently and effectively.

Reference

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