

NATO Crisis Management: Cooperation with PfP Partners and Other International Organizations

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Introduction

Crisis management and conflict prevention, including crisis response operations that do not fall under Article V of the NATO Charter, have been major themes in the continuing adaptation of the Alliance to the post-Cold War security environment. This article focuses on a key aspect of the adaptation of NATO crisis management and conflict prevention mechanisms: cooperation with Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) and Partnership for Peace (PfP) partners and with other key international organizations that contribute to international peace and security and, in particular, recent developments in NATO–EU relations.

The Strategic Concept adopted in Rome in 1991 emphasized the importance of crisis management, and the revised Strategic Concept adopted in Washington on 24 April 1999 identified crisis management and conflict prevention as ‘fundamental security tasks’ of the Alliance. It stated: “... in order to enhance the security and stability of the Euro-Atlantic area: Crisis Management: To stand ready, case-by-case and by consensus, in conformity with Article 7 of the Washington Treaty, to contribute to effective conflict prevention and to engage actively in crisis management, including crisis response operations.”¹ Alliance members noted that NATO’s preparedness to carry out such operations supports the broader objective of reinforcing and extending stability and often involves the participation of NATO’s partners, and that it will make full use of partnership, cooperation and dialogue and NATO’s links to other organizations to contribute to preventing crises and, should they arise, defusing them at an early stage.²

Evolution of NATO Crisis Management

With the radical evolution of the security environment, the kinds of crises that NATO members have agreed the Alliance should manage and the kinds of conflicts that it sought to prevent have changed dramatically, as have the tools that the Alliance is able to bring to bear. The nature and modalities of NATO’s cooperation with other interna-

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¹ NATO, “The Alliance’s Strategic Concept,” Press Release NAC-S (99) 65, 24 April 1999, paragraph 10.

² Ibid.

tional organizations that contribute to international peace and security—in particular the UN, the EU, and the OSCE—have also evolved significantly. During the Cold War, the kinds of crises that the Alliance faced were largely (but not exclusively) military, and the kinds of crisis management and conflict prevention tools were also therefore largely (but again not exclusively) military. What is meant by NATO crisis management has therefore evolved. In the post-Cold War era, the focus is on crises resulting from tensions and antagonisms generated by ethnic conflicts, extreme nationalism, intra-state political strife, failed or inadequate political change, severe economic problems, and, since 11 September 2001, terrorism and the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction.³

The new stance was set out in 1991 in Rome as part of the Alliance's new Strategic Concept, referred to above. This new model encompassed a broader approach to the question of security, and forecast greater opportunities to achieve long-standing objectives through political means. Key aspects of the new approach included: more active use of political and diplomatic means; close interaction and cooperation with other international organizations⁴; and significant changes in NATO's command and force structures.

Further significant changes in the field of crisis management and conflict prevention took place at the Washington Summit in April 1999. In general terms, the Strategic Concept and Washington Summit Declaration delineated a broad approach to security, encompassing complementary political and military means and emphasizing cooperation with other states that share the Alliance's objectives, as well as with other international organizations. Special emphasis was placed on developing the European Security and Defense Identity within NATO. Allies noted that "a coherent approach to crisis management, as in any use of force by the Alliance, will require the Alliance's political authorities to choose and coordinate appropriate responses from a range of both political and military measures and to exercise close political control at all stages."⁵

Partnership Activities

As reflected above, Alliance members have emphasized the importance of NATO cooperation activities in crisis management and conflict prevention, including the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC), Partnership for Peace (PfP), the NATO Russia Council (NRC), the NATO/Ukraine Commission (NUC), and the Mediterranean Dialogue.

These activities—and the countries that participate in them—have contributed to and can contribute to crisis management and conflict prevention in a number of ways.

³ The 1999 Strategic Concept appeared to treat terrorism as something to be dealt with under Article IV, but the North Atlantic Council took a different approach in its 12 September 2001 decision.

⁴ In 1992 NATO agreed to support, on a case-by-case basis, according to its procedures, peacekeeping operations under a UN mandate or the authority of the OSCE.

⁵ NATO, 1999 Strategic Concept, paragraph 32.

One important contribution has been a structural reduction of tension through the adoption of democratic norms and practices, settlement of outstanding disputes, and defense reform by countries that aspire to membership in either NATO or PfP. This can be seen dramatically in the reforms adopted by the seven countries invited to join the Alliance at the Prague Summit in 2002. NATO's cooperation activities also contribute to crisis management and conflict prevention through the active discussions of potential and ongoing crises. These consultations focus attention on sensitive issues and allow for the airing of views in ways that may help to reduce tensions. A third aspect of support for crisis management is the political weight that partnership countries (those that participate in the bodies listed above), as well as other contributing states, lend to NATO-led crisis response operations. This is reflected in statements adopted by these bodies, such as those adopted by the Euro-Atlantic Cooperation Council regarding the September 11 attacks, as well as positions they take in other international forums where these issues are being addressed. Finally, and certainly not least important, partners have also made substantial contributions to NATO-led crisis response operations in the form of armed forces and essential host nation support such as air, land, and maritime transit, basing, and other facilities.⁶

These developments all post-date the Cold War, of course, and continue to evolve. There have been significant changes in all of the areas of partnership, in particular the continued development of an enhanced and more operational partnership structure. Among other things, NATO has been seeking to further develop its partners' potential role in crisis prevention and crisis management, to consider means to transition from non-crisis PfP relations to crisis use of PfP assets, and to look at issues related to releasing additional classified information to partners and other international organizations during times of crisis. One of many areas of significant change is the degree to which partners can participate in decisions related to crisis management operations. Although NATO members make the final decision on the planning and execution of a crisis response operation, there have been significant improvements in the timeliness and quantity of information provided to partner states, the amount of time they have to react, and the degree to which their views are taken into account before decisions are made by NATO.

Reflecting the importance of partner contributions to NATO-led crisis response operations, the Washington Summit agreed on the Political Military Framework for NATO-led PfP Operations (PMF), which provides the essential building blocks for Partner integration into command and political structures, including Partner participation in operational planning, command arrangements, and political consultations and decision making. NATO members and partners alike agreed that the process of information and consultation with contributing partner nations significantly facilitated the deployment of NATO-led operations with significant partner participation. Periodic reviews of the PMF provide opportunities for both NATO and PfP members to refine it. While Partners are unlikely to ever have as much information or as much influence

⁶ As just one example, SFOR is presently composed of contingents from sixteen NATO members, eight PfP Partners, and three other states.

on the decisions made as early as they would like, they are considerably better off in all these areas than was the case with IFOR or SFOR, and have recognized the progress that has been made.

Cooperation with Other International Organizations

Cooperation with other international organizations that contribute to international peace and security is another important facet of NATO's role in crisis management and conflict prevention. Although the Washington Treaty contains explicit references to NATO's commitment to the principles of the UN Charter and the United Nations, there was little contact between NATO and the UN or other international organizations during the Cold War. One of the many important changes in the 1991 Strategic Concept was the recognition of the need to address the broader approach to security through cooperation between NATO and other international organizations. With respect to the Alliance's role in promoting international peace and security, the 1991 Strategic Concept explicitly recognized "the valuable contribution being made by other organizations such as the European Community and the CSCE, and that the roles of these institutions and of the Alliance are complementary...."⁷ In the section dealing with crisis management and conflict prevention, the 1991 Strategic Concept stated that:

The potential of dialogue and cooperation within all of Europe must be fully developed in order to help to defuse crises and to prevent conflicts, since the Allies' security is inseparably linked to that of all other states in Europe. To this end, the Allies will support the role of the CSCE process and its institutions. Other bodies including the European Community, Western European Union and United Nations may also have an important role to play.⁸

This same point was made in the Rome Declaration on Peace and Cooperation adopted at the same time, which noted that "a framework of interlocking institutions" was needed, and that NATO was working "toward a new European security architecture in which NATO, the CSCE, the European Community, the WEU and the Council of Europe complement each other.... This interaction will be of the greatest significance in preventing instability and divisions that could result from various causes, such as economic disparities and violent nationalism."⁹

Efforts to initiate such a cooperative approach got off to a difficult start. The UN responded unenthusiastically to NATO's initial efforts at contact to consider developments in Yugoslavia, as UN officials did not consider contacts between the UN and NATO concerning Yugoslavia to be appropriate. However, despite the well-known difficulties over UNPROFOR, NATO-UN contacts proved essential, and developed substantially to mutual benefit at virtually all levels—the Secretaries General, NATO and UN Headquarters and, once NATO-led forces were deployed in the Balkans, in the field. The utility of continuous liaison was eventually reflected in the assignment of

⁷ NATO, 1991 Strategic Concept, paragraph 27.

⁸ *Ibid.*, paragraph 33.

⁹ NATO, Rome Declaration on Peace and Cooperation, November 8, 1991, paragraph 3.

International Military Staff officers to UN HQ in New York and, for a period, the assignment of a UN liaison team to NATO HQ in Brussels. These liaison arrangements made a major contribution to more effective interaction between the organizations.

Close contacts were also established with the OSCE. This included periodic reciprocal staff visits, led by the Director of Crisis Management and Operations from NATO and the head of the OSCE Conflict Prevention Center, to exchange detailed views on developments of current or potential interest and to consider ways to enhance cooperation between the two organizations and contacts between action officers in both institutions. Close liaison was also established between the UN Organization for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (UN OCHA) and NATO civil emergency planning officials, as well as with other international organizations concerning the Kosovo air campaign and then KFOR.

Although these contacts with the UN and OSCE did not achieve the goal of enhancing more synchronized military and civilian planning for crisis response operations, they did contribute to enhancing the general level of cooperation between the organizations, which facilitated both strategic and tactical responses as the organizations worked together in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, and eventually Macedonia. The North Atlantic Council report on lessons learned from NATO and NATO-led operations in the Balkans noted the importance of liaison with the UN and OSCE, as well as other organizations, and recommended working out arrangements to be able to quickly undertake similar arrangements for future crisis response operations. The continuing importance of cooperation with the OSCE in the fields under discussion is reflected in the Prague Summit Declaration, which states that, "To further promote peace and stability in the Euro-Atlantic Area, NATO will continue to develop its fruitful and close cooperation with the OSCE, namely in the complementary areas of conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation."¹⁰

NATO–EU Relations

Progress has also been made in developing a strategic partnership with the European Union "so that they can bring their combined assets to bear in enhancing peace and security."¹¹ I will consider the background only briefly, but will focus on some of the lessons learned from recent cooperation and some ongoing issues.

In considering NATO–EU relations, it is useful to keep in mind two leitmotifs of such relations, as Jolyon Howorth and John T.S. Keeler have pointed out: first, an effort to "rebalance" or strengthen NATO by developing a "European pillar within NATO," and, second, a number of institutional innovations reflecting the increasing drive for European autonomy.¹² In addition to the envisioned enhancements to NATO's overall effectiveness that the EU's capability improvement would bring,

¹⁰ NATO, Prague Summit Declaration, paragraph 12.

¹¹ NATO, "NATO After Prague: New Members, New Capabilities and News Relations," NATO Office of Press and Information, 14 January 2003.

¹² J. Howorth and J.T.S. Keeler, eds., *Defending Europe: The EU, NATO and the Quest for European Autonomy* (New York: Macmillan, 2003), 4.

NATO support for the EU was also seen as promoting an alternative to NATO action. Another rationale for NATO support was that the EU would require NATO assets—such as deployable headquarters, strategic lift, and satellite intelligence—for larger operations. Finally, such support was seen as reinforcing the transatlantic partnership. Experience in UN, NATO, and NATO-led operations in the Balkans, which had demonstrated European dependence on the U.S., gave increased impetus to European efforts to develop a European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) with the necessary capabilities for both civilian and military crisis management.

Following the 1999 Cologne decisions to give the EU the means to implement a European Security and Defense Policy, including its commitment to its Headline Goal for Petersberg missions,¹³ NATO agreed that it was willing to support operations led by the EU, even when NATO as a whole was not involved, building on the mechanisms which had been developed between NATO and the Western European Union (WEU).¹⁴

After a long delay due to a lack of agreement on participation by non-EU Allies in EU defense matters, on 16 December 2002 a joint declaration was adopted by the European Union and NATO that opened the way by providing a formal basis and framework for cooperation between the two organizations in crisis management and conflict prevention.¹⁵ The agreement outlined the political principles for EU–NATO cooperation and gave the European Union assured access to NATO’s planning and other capabilities for its own military operations. There was also agreement on a substantial agenda of common work, including a definition of the modalities for effective mutual consultation, cooperation, and transparency. NATO reiterated its commitment to achieving a close, transparent, and coherent NATO–EU relationship. Eventual agreement in the spring of 2003 on the detailed modalities for implementing “Berlin-plus”¹⁶ included arrangements and procedures for assured EU access to NATO planning capabilities; the presumption of availability of pre-identified NATO capabilities and common assets; the identification of European command structure options, including further developing the role of Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe (DSACEUR) to assume his European responsibilities; and further adaptation of NATO’s defense planning to address requirements for EU-led operations.¹⁷ In addition, agreement had been reached on provisions for the exchange and protection of

¹³ These include humanitarian and rescue tasks, and the provision of peacekeeping and combat forces in crisis management, including peacemaking.

¹⁴ NATO, “Washington Summit Communiqué: An Alliance for the 21st Century,” 24 April 1999, paragraphs 10 and 11.

¹⁵ NATO, “EU and NATO adopt framework for co-operation,” *NATO Update*, available at <http://www.nato.int/docu/update/2002/12-december/e1216a.htm>; accessed 12 August 2003.

¹⁶ Referring to the decisions made at the Berlin meeting of NATO foreign ministers in 1996.

¹⁷ “Washington Summit Communiqué,” paragraph 11.

classified information and documents between the two organizations, essential for effective cooperation in conflict prevention and crisis management.¹⁸

The Prague Summit gave additional impetus to NATO–EU relations in the area of crisis management. It was agreed that “Events on and since 11 September 2001 have underlined further the importance of greater transparency and cooperation between our two organizations on questions of common interest relating to security, defense, and crisis management, so that crises can be met with the most appropriate military response and effective crisis management ensured.”¹⁹ At the Istanbul Summit, NATO members expressed pleasure at the progress that had been made in developing the NATO–EU strategic partnership—and, since the conclusion of the Berlin-plus arrangements, continuing cooperation in the Western Balkans—and noted that NATO–EU relations cover a wide range of issues “of common interest related to security, defense, and crisis management...”²⁰

Cooperation in Southern Serbia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

In early 2001, in a good example of things working in practice before the detailed arrangements had been fully worked out and agreed upon, NATO and the EU, with OSCE participation, engaged in successful joint efforts to defuse conflict in southern Serbia and to prevent civil war in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM). Although procedures had not yet been agreed upon for NATO–EU consultations and NATO support for the EU, NATO and the EU worked together effectively to establish the necessary conditions for a return to peace and stability in two situations where full-blown conflict would have been very likely without these efforts.²¹ In the case of southern Serbia, these efforts included joint statements and visits by the EU High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy Affairs, Javier Solana, and NATO Secretary-General Lord Robertson. They also involved the dispatch of missions of NATO and EU officials, who engaged in shuttle diplomacy and complex negotiations that resulted in the adoption by Belgrade of confidence-building measures and guarantees for the Albanian population of southern Serbia, including amnesty and a demilitarization agreement for the ethnic Albanian militants and a phased reduction of the Ground Safety Zone.

¹⁸ European Union Council Decision 2002/211/CFSP of 24 February 2003 concerning the conclusion of the Agreement between the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation on the Security of Information.

¹⁹ NATO, “Prague Summit Declaration Issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Prague on 21 November 2002,” paragraph 11.

²⁰ NATO, “Istanbul Summit Communiqué,” 28 June 2004.

²¹ For a succinct description of the NATO role, see Mihai Carp, “Back from the Brink,” *NATO Review* (Summer 2002), available at www.nato.int/docu/review/2002/issue4/english/art2.html.

In the case of the violence in FYROM, the NATO liaison mission in Skopje and the Secretary-General's special representative, Mark Laity, played a key role in orchestrating NATO's contribution to securing an end to the fighting and creating conditions to disengage the FYROM Army and security forces and the so-called National Liberation Army (NLA). Following the adoption of a framework agreement brokered by the EU and U.S. at Ohrid on 13 August, NATO dispatched Operation Essential Harvest to collect NLA weapons. The hallmarks of both these efforts were protracted, close, and mutually supporting cooperation between NATO and the EU. These two cases are successful examples of highly pragmatic cooperation that drew on the respective strengths of the international organizations that contributed and that achieved significant results. These cases, it is hoped, can serve as models for future cooperation.

Operation Concordia

In a concrete test of the agreed arrangements, the EU took over NATO's Task Force Fox mission in Macedonia on 31 March 2003, which it renamed Operation Concordia. Operation Concordia ended on 15 December 2003, and it is still too early to make any definitive judgments, but some preliminary lessons can be drawn. Operation Concordia was seen as a test case for the ESDP. NATO military authorities considered that NATO Task Force Fox objectives had been achieved and that there was no military rationale for continuing the operation, but political imperatives prevailed.²² In considering lessons from Operation Concordia, it should be remembered that it was small, relatively risk-free, with a force structure already in place, NATO advice available from a NATO military liaison office in Skopje, and NATO assets available in the vicinity in the event that assistance was needed. In other words, Operation Concordia was an almost perfect ESDP demonstration project. That being said, the operation went smoothly, demonstrating the efficacy of NATO-EU cooperation and ESDP capabilities in this limited operation. However, some EU officials expressed concern at the insertion of an additional and unexpected level of NATO command, NATO's Regional Headquarters Allied Forces Southern Europe (AFSOUTH), in Naples, Italy, which they felt diluted EU control of the operation. AFSOUTH served as the operational command under DSACEUR acting as EU strategic commander from EU HQ established at SHAPE.

Operation Althea

A much more substantial test of the arrangements for NATO-EU cooperation and of the ESDP will take place late in 2004 when the EU stands up Operation Althea to replace SFOR in Bosnia-Herzegovina. By way of background, on February 24, the U.K. and France called for the EU to take over the NATO mission in Bosnia in early 2004 with a credible force. However, at the Madrid ministerial in June, according to press reports, the U.S. was unenthusiastic about a take-over by mid-2004, saying that it was too early even to start discussions. A senior U.S. official reportedly said that "there was

²² Views expressed by a senior SHAPE officer on 14 October 2003.

still much for the Western defense alliance to do in Bosnia, including rounding up of indicted war crimes suspects, stamping out the threat of terrorism and uniting the country's ethnically divided society."²³ On September 4, German Defense Minister Peter Struck and French Defense Minister Michèle Alliot-Marie pushed for the EU to take over the NATO mission, and at their meeting on 7 October 2003, EU defense ministers said they hoped to take on the mission in the second half of 2004.²⁴ At the informal meeting of NATO in Colorado Springs on October 9, NATO defense ministers expressed broad support for such a take-over.²⁵

At the Istanbul Summit, NATO members "agreed to conclude the Alliance's successful SFOR operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina and welcomed the readiness of the European Union to deploy a new and distinct UN-mandated Chapter VII mission in the country, based on the Berlin-plus arrangements agreed between our two organizations."²⁶ Following Istanbul, NATO and the EU are consulting on the assets and capabilities that NATO will provide to support EU Operation Althea.

Although the security situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina has improved, and NATO has reduced the size of SFOR, from 13,000 in 2003 to between 6,000 and 8,000 in 2004, in the context, *inter alia*, of a more regional approach to its Balkans operations, taking on this task will be much more challenging for the EU. It is a big, complex operation, with a considerably higher risk than Operation Concordia. The High Representative for Bosnia-Herzegovina, Lord Ashdown, recognized this when he emphasized that this would have to be a "serious" operation: "It cannot come in on the cheap. It has to come in as an effective force capable of securing the peace. It has to do it with bayonets fixed and flags flying."²⁷

Finally, it is worth emphasizing that NATO Secretary-General de Hoop Scheffer has been advocating broadening the NATO-EU strategic partnership beyond the Balkans. In a speech in mid-July, he said that current NATO-EU relations are "too limited" and that "the two organizations should work together across the entire spectrum of security management, including cooperation beyond the Balkans."

Conclusions

NATO's partners have made significant contributions to NATO's crisis management and conflict prevention efforts, and can make even more significant contributions in the future. Substantial progress has been made, and mechanisms are in place to further enhance these partnerships. There has also been progress in NATO's relations with other international organizations and with non-governmental organizations that contribute to crisis management efforts. Concerning NATO-EU relations, despite successfully preventing conflict in southern Serbia and Macedonia and agreeing on the com-

²³ *Reuters*, 3 June 2003.

²⁴ Ian Black, "Ashdown backs creation of EU Bosnia force," *The Guardian*, 8 October 2003.

²⁵ Peter Spiegel, "EU closer to taking Bosnia peace role from NATO," *Financial Times*, 10 October 2003.

²⁶ "Istanbul Summit Communiqué."

²⁷ Quoted in "Ashdown backs creation of EU Bosnia force."

plex procedures for consultations in peacetime and crisis, and on the provision of NATO support for EU-led operations, suspicions and political impediments continue to complicate relations. The tensions that arose in the fall of 2003 regarding the establishment of an independent EU operational planning cell and a change in U.K. views on the inclusion of defense in what is known as “structured cooperation” were reflected in U.S. Ambassador Nicholas Burns’s call for a special meeting of the North Atlantic Council to address these matters, and his statement that EU plans represented “one of the greatest dangers to the transatlantic relationship.”²⁸ European reassurances and efforts to dampen the tensions notwithstanding, there remain differences concerning the interpretation of the Berlin-plus arrangements, and Washington’s concerns do not appear to have been fully assuaged. The degree to which these differences will impede cooperation in crisis management and conflict prevention remains to be seen.

²⁸ Judy Dempsey, “US to confront Brussels over defence policy,” *Financial Times*, 17 October 2003.