



# RESEARCH PAPER

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## HASTEN SLOWLY\* NATO's Effects Based and Comprehensive Approach to Operations<sup>1</sup> Making sense of the past and future prospects

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**E**ffects Based Approach to Operations (EBAO)<sup>3</sup> and Comprehensive Approach (CA) are fashionable terms in NATO circles these days. Whether one is sitting in the North Atlantic Council (NAC), walking the corridors of the Strategic Commands, or travelling with a Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Afghanistan, they are heard with increasing frequency, sometimes distinctly, sometimes relationally, sometimes interchangeably. Indeed, the multiplicity of interpretations of both terms and their relationship to one another arguably rivals the incidence of their contemporary usage. Some are outright contradictory, others too general or ambiguous to be meaningful, still others so complex if not complicated they verge on the unworkable. To be fair to their originators, on the surface we do know this: the advocacy of EBAO within the Alliance emanated largely from military quarters and predated the introduction of CA that was only first officially introduced by the NAC at the Riga Summit of 2006. Despite their sequenced and respective military and civilian parentage, at their core both EBAO and CA aim to strengthen the effectiveness and efficiency of NATO's planning and conduct of crisis management operations through the greater consonance or "joining up" of military and civilian efforts, both within the Alliance and in its relations with outside actors. Beyond the latter description, however, the varied interpretations of EBAO and CA begin to abound leading any interested observer to justifiably question: are EBAO and CA the same, similar or different? Do they constitute a genuinely new way of undertaking operations or are they simply the latest reincarnation—however improved—of long-standing approaches to warfare and crisis management? And, at the end of the day, whose efforts and what instruments need to be joined up as a matter of priority, to what extent and by whom?

This paper endeavours to provide some answers to such questions to make better sense of the development and meaning of EBAO and CA within the Alliance, and more significantly to assess their future prospects. It aims to lay to rest some of the confusion or myths that currently surround both terms, which at worst risk their misuse to the detriment of NATO's front-line personnel and the populations they seek to help. It will argue that as with much of their recent development, the Alliance would do well to continue to mature EBAO and CA guided by that most telling of strategic precepts: "Hasten slowly."

\* Augustus Caesar

<sup>1</sup> The views expressed in this paper are the responsibility of the author and should not be attributed to the NATO Defense College or the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

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<sup>3</sup> EBAO is the NATO term related to Effects Based Operations (EBO) usually employed in a US context.



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## The Development of Alliance EBAO

*"We were not born to sue, but to command."*  
**William Shakespeare**

### Definition

The most current official definition of EBAO within the Alliance may be found in the Military Committee's (MC) position paper of June 2006,<sup>4</sup> subsequently reaffirmed by the Bi-Strategic Commanders<sup>5</sup> in December 2007.<sup>6</sup>

*The Effects Based Approach to Operations is the coherent and comprehensive application of various instruments of the Alliance combined with the practical cooperation along with involved non-NATO actors, to create effects necessary to achieve planned objectives and ultimately the NATO end-state.*

The texts go on to explain that such coherence and practical cooperation is to occur from the strategic to tactical levels within four broad domains spanning the military (armed forces), politics (diplomacy), economics (sanctions, aid and investments) and civil society (judiciary, constabulary, education, public information, civilian administration and infrastructure support). A notional (and detailed) planning process to enable more systematic cooperation among the various actors at play in a given crisis management operation is then laid down.

### Origins

Before assessing the consequences for NATO's civilian and military authorities of EBAO's emergence as a model for campaign planning and execution, it is useful to consider why it came about and by extension how new it actually is. Three broad influences may be identified. First, NATO EBAO traces its origins in part to the end of the Cold War when linear strategies for the attrition and annihilation of Soviet fielded military forces grew increasingly irrelevant to the kinds of out-of-area crisis prevention and humanitarian operations in which the Alliance has become progressively more engaged, particularly since the adoption of the 1999 *Strategic Concept*.<sup>7</sup> As the Bi-Strategic

Commanders' *Strategic Vision* describes, such operations are more complex and multidimensional as forces must adapt rapidly to changing operational scenarios from high intensity, lethal combat to stabilization and peacekeeping operations often working alongside other government agencies (GAs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Moreover, to be disrupted or neutralized, an often ill-defined enemy employing asymmetric or unconventional means to pursue its cause, routinely demands more than a purely military response. In this environment, the planning and execution of operations requires a multilateral approach, and for military planners, EBAO represents one possible way forward.<sup>8</sup> Second, as J.P. Hunerwadel points out, EBAO also owes a debt to recent technologies and scientific theory. Today's uniformed personnel have technologies that, to an unprecedented degree, facilitate "collaborative information sharing and the imposition of very precise effects across vast distances; they also benefit from theory that enables better anticipation of some complex system behaviours."<sup>9</sup> Or, as Robert Dudley puts it, EBAO is recognition that "modern military systems [have] utility greater than mere attrition." Third, a compelling case may also be made that EBAO's pedigree is to a certain extent time-honoured strategic thought:

*Great commanders have always known the importance of understanding causal relationships in warfare ... When Napoleon said, 'If I always appear prepared, it is because before entering on an undertaking, I have meditated long and have foreseen what may occur,' he was intuitively applying what we are trying to put a systematic [EBAO] framework to today.<sup>10</sup>*

It is perhaps in recognition of this fact that Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) in 2006 declared, "EBAO is *not wholly new*; it merely formalises the ways by which we use means to achieve the desired ends and recognises that the use of non-military power enhances our ability to create the effects we seek to achieve those ends [emphasis added]."<sup>11</sup>

In tracing the origins of NATO EBAO, it should now be more clearly apparent how the military has been at the forefront of its development in blending strategic tenets of the past with the promise of new technologies to address a changed operating environment. Indeed, while the military authorities began experimenting with EBAO as early as 2003,<sup>12</sup> it was not until the

<sup>4</sup> "Military Committee Position on an Effects Based Approach to Operations", MCM 0052-2006, 06 Jun 06.

<sup>5</sup> Bi-Strategic Commanders refers to Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (SACT) responsible for Allied Command Transformation (ACT), Norfolk, USA, and Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) responsible for Allied Command Operations (ACO), Mons, Belgium. Both Commands were established on 19 June 2003 as part of NATO's post-Cold War restructuring.

<sup>6</sup> "Pre-Doctrinal Handbook (Effects Based Approach to Operations)", J5PLANS/7740-065/07-203478 (ACO) and 3000 TI-388/TT-2156/Ser: NU0689 (ACT), 04 Dec 2007.

<sup>7</sup> "The Alliance's Strategic Concept", April 1999 at: [www.nato.int](http://www.nato.int)

<sup>8</sup> "Strategic Vision: The Military Challenge", August 2004, esp. pp. 3 and 7 at: [www.act.nato.int](http://www.act.nato.int)

<sup>9</sup> J.P. Hunerwadel, "The effects-based approach to operations: questions and answers", *Air & Space Power Journal*, Spring 2006.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>11</sup> "ACO Way Ahead – Effects-Based Approach to Operations (EBAO)", IMS Control Nr: I07005315, May 2006. Interestingly, this statement stood in contrast to the earlier Bi-Strategic Commanders' 2004 "Strategic Vision" which presented EBAO as meeting the demand for "new ways of thinking, planning and acting."

<sup>12</sup> "Development of NATO's Effects-Based Approach to Operations – Bi-Strategic Command Discussion Paper", SHJ5PLANS/2920-036/07-202494 (ACO) and 3000 TI-388/Ser: NU 0028 (ACT), 02 Jul 07.



*Comprehensive Political Guidance* (CPG) of November 2006 that the NATO Heads of State and Government formally acknowledged it by name.<sup>13</sup> Although, as will be discussed later, political-diplomatic factors are partly responsible for this turn of events, reasons far more practical have been at work. In post-Cold War crisis management operations from Bosnia through Kosovo to Afghanistan, it is the military, at the NAC's behest, that has initiated the Alliance's presence as a security provider in troubled regions of the world. Courtesy of their capability, for instance, to establish a secure and safe environment for NGO humanitarian aid efforts, or to bridge gaps in essential civil services for local populations, soldiers have come to realize first and first-hand the intricacies of modern peace support and nation building operations with the concomitant imperative of a multilateral approach. For good or ill, Commanders have had neither the luxury of time nor arguably equally enlightened civilian masters to wait to make suppliant requests of others for a plan of action to address the new environment. In NATO's post-Cold War military history, the emergence of EBAO is perhaps the modern epitome of Hannibal's famous saying, "We will either find a way, or make one."

### Implications for the Alliance

The consequences for the Alliance of the military "getting out in front" of the civilian authorities in devising a revised model for campaign planning and execution—however well intentioned—have been twofold. First, a unique jargon peppered with a plethora of new acronyms, as well as a heavily scientific systematic planning methodology has developed, spearheaded by Allied Command Transformation (ACT). Both, somewhat ironically for elements of a model predicated on joining up armed forces with civilian actors, are largely poorly understood outside the military EBAO community. The following are illustrative:

- Engagement Space
- System of Systems Analysis (SoSA)
- Knowledge Development (KD)
- Decision Superiority
- Campaign Synchronization
- Commanders Approved Effects List (CAEL)
- Measures of Performance (MoP)
- Measures of Effectiveness (MoE)

Perhaps it is out of confusion or the fact that such a model in certain respects stands in contrast to the *art* of diplomacy with its preference for maximum flexibility that, as mentioned above, the senior civilian authorities only officially (and cursorily)

acknowledged EBAO two years ago. The second consequence is tied to the first. In the absence of wholesale engagement by civilian actors, military planners often have been faced with what they see as little alternative but to devise principles and procedures governing the non-military aspects of a campaign plan for which they so desperately now need to take into account.<sup>14</sup> This has led to the conceptualization, and in some instances piloting, of elaborate liaison arrangements for military and non-military actors or even control mechanisms on the part of Commanders—for example, experts in non-military functional areas such as the economy and civil administration embedded within the military staff structure. The danger of course, is that as long as EBAO developed in somewhat of a vacuum, the risk of misinterpretation or overstepping authority was ever present. On 20 March 2007, acknowledgement of this risk by SACEUR became starkly apparent. In a blunt letter addressed to Commander Joint Headquarters Lisbon and copied to the Chairman of the Military Committee (CMC) and Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (SACT), General Craddock stated:

*EBAO implementation within ACO [Allied Command Operations] will continue to proceed in a deliberate and coordinated manner... following the necessary authorisations and endorsements from the appropriate authorities... In this regard, we must recognise that the 'comprehensive approach', the umbrella term for the broader political level process that incorporates the effects-based approach, remains a very sensitive issue to some nations. Work is proceeding, led by the NATO Senior Political Committee, and we cannot be seen to be too far in front of the process. I know this may be somewhat frustrating, but it is important that there is no reason for anyone to question our prudent work and thinking in anticipation of further political guidance in due course. Also, it is imperative that our actions remain coherent from top to bottom.*<sup>15</sup>

Thus, in a single gesture an imperatival yet cautionary tone as regards EBAO had been struck—hasten, yes, but slowly, was the essence of the message being delivered.

General Craddock's intervention was in fact not the first time that SACEUR had sounded such a chord, albeit for slightly different yet no less important, reasons. As early as May 2006 his predecessor, General Jones, had spoken of the need for "an effects-based approach, aimed at the coherent and comprehensive application of the various instruments of the Alliance." However, he went on to warn that with some headquarters already applying EBAO, there was the very real risk of "losing interoperability [the ability to work together] with non-

<sup>13</sup> "Comprehensive Political Guidance - Endorsed by the NATO Heads of State and Government", 29 Nov 2006: Part 3, Para 17 at: [www.nato.int](http://www.nato.int)

<sup>14</sup> The author experienced this phenomenon firsthand during several of the Multinational Interoperability Council/US Joint Forces Command series of Multinational and Limited Objective Experiments (MNEs/LOEs) in which NATO has participated since 2003. Officers regularly played the role of civilian officials or the functions were either contracted out to retired officers or at best retired government employees.

<sup>15</sup> "Effects Based Approach to Operations – Update on Developments and Further Guidance on the ACO Way Ahead", SH/J5PLANS/7740-010/07 – 202024 (ACO), 20 Mar 2007.



military entities” by moving away from long established (and by implication mutually understood) NATO practices and procedures.<sup>16</sup>

Recent experience reveals that such calls have not been inconsequential. For instance, in presenting their EBAO *Pre-doctrinal Handbook* in December 2007, the Bi-Strategic Commanders specifically stated that it “was not to be construed as implementation of EBAO or to serve as a trigger to change staff procedures or structures.” Rather, it was designed to “generate constructive discussions ... with respect to the longer-term incorporation of EBAO into Allied joint doctrine ...”<sup>17</sup> Moreover, regarding ACT’s recent development of an on-line portal to facilitate information sharing among NATO and non-military actors—the so-called Civil-Military Overview (CMO)—serving non-NATO representatives have been directly involved and common, user-friendly language employed.<sup>18</sup> As one officer engaged in the initiative recently stated, “You can see that the credibility and acceptance of this project are our main challenges: besides the need for a new approach to information sharing (reciprocity), we also need to give this project a civilian character (i.e. consortium, lead nation, civilian champion) as soon as possible.”<sup>19</sup> The imperative of advancing a model for greater military and non-military interface in crisis management with the full engagement of serving civilians had been recognized. Such military prudence regarding EBAO has been accompanied by the growing civilian maturation of the Comprehensive Approach to which attention now turns.

## The Development of the Comprehensive Approach

*“An idea does not pass from one language to another without change.”*

**Miguel de Unamuno**

### Definition

In April 2008, on the occasion of their Bucharest Summit, the NATO Heads of State and Government affirmed the Alliance’s commitment to the implementation of a Comprehensive Approach to address current and future security challenges:

*Experiences in Afghanistan and the Balkans demonstrate that the international community needs to work more closely together and take a comprehensive approach ... It is essential for all major international actors to act in a coordinated way, and to apply a wide spectrum of civil and military instruments in a concerted effort that takes into account their respective strengths and mandates.*<sup>20</sup>

Specifically, an *Action Plan* of “pragmatic proposals” to better realize a CA in crisis management from the strategic to tactical levels was endorsed. The plan, practically developed by the Senior Political Committee Reinforced (SPC-R), explored measures to improve information sharing, joint training and public messaging among NATO’s civilian and military authorities as well as between the Alliance and Partners, NGOs and international organizations (IOs) such as the United Nations (UN) and European Union (EU). This initiative, of course, followed the aforementioned *Comprehensive Political Guidance* of 2006 that specifically identified as a top priority, “the ability to draw together the various instruments of the Alliance brought to bear in a crisis and its resolution to the best effect, as well as the ability to coordinate with other actors.”<sup>21</sup>

At a glance, the respective official definitions of CA and EBAO may appear very similar. They would indeed seem to lend credence to the earlier observation that at their core, the aim of CA and EBAO is the same—to strengthen the effectiveness and efficiency of NATO’s crisis management operations through the greater joining up of military and civilian efforts both within and externally. Closer reading of the CA definition, coupled with deeper analysis of the still classified *Action Plan*<sup>22</sup> and other related documents, however, soon point to some marked differences in methodology—in translating the general idea into practice. Whereas EBAO is detailed and programmatic, CA discourse is general and malleable with texts numbering just a few pages without a single graph or explanatory figure. This, for instance, stands in stark contrast to the EBAO *Pre-doctrinal Handbook*’s eighty pages of extensive definitions, tables and diagrams. Moreover, if new terms and acronyms are the preserve of EBAO, qualifiers are surely the province of CA. References to actions to be taken on a “case-by-case basis,” “as appropriate,” and only “on request” with “specific approval” are commonplace. Or, perhaps the most oft repeated phrase, “*While NATO has no requirement to develop capabilities strictly for civilian purposes*, it needs to improve practical cooperation, taking into account existing arrangements with partners, relevant international organizations and, as appropriate, non-governmental organizations ... [emphasis added]”<sup>23</sup>.

<sup>16</sup> “ACO Way Ahead – Effects-Based Approach to Operations (EBAO)”, IMS Control Nr: I07005315, May 2006.

<sup>17</sup> “Pre-Doctrinal Handbook (Effects Based Approach to Operations)”, J5PLANS/7740-065/07-203478 (ACO) and 3000 TI-388/TT-2156/Ser: NU0689 (ACT), 04 Dec 2007.

<sup>18</sup> www.cimicweb.org

<sup>19</sup> Email correspondence to the author from the Civil-Military Overview (CMO) project office, Allied Command Transformation (ACT), 09 Jun 2008.

<sup>20</sup> “Bucharest Summit Declaration”, NATO Press Release (2008)049, 03 April 2008.

<sup>21</sup> “Comprehensive Political Guidance - Endorsed by the NATO Heads of State and Government”, 29 Nov 2006: Part 3, Para 18 at: www.nato.int

<sup>22</sup> “Proposal on a Way Ahead on Comprehensive Approach”, C-M(2008)0029-COR1 (NATO Restricted), 02 April 2008.

<sup>23</sup> “Comprehensive Political Guidance - Endorsed by the NATO Heads of State and Government”, 29 Nov 2006: Part 2, Para 7.e at: www.nato.int



## Origins

Prior to considering the consequences of this approach for NATO's civilian and military authorities, first it is worthwhile to reflect on why it materialized. Although recognition of the imperative of more deliberate and enhanced civil-military interface in crisis management arguably came later to civilian authorities compared to their military counterparts, the sense of urgency was no less apparent once it appeared. Indeed, as the diplomatic and development agency footprints of individual nations increased in such places as the Balkans, Afghanistan and elsewhere, calls within NATO for more concerted efforts to join up the civilian and military efforts of the member states emerged with growing frequency. In recounting the Danish initiative throughout 2005 to make as a "political priority" for NATO, "Concerted Planning and Action" of military and non-military undertakings in crisis management operations, Ambassador Friis Arne Petersen remarked:

*In all these missions, spontaneous civil-military cooperation had developed on the ground to meet immediate needs. What was lacking, however, was a framework to ensure the best possible planning, use of our resources as well as coordination ... what was needed was a common approach that created the conditions for sustainable peace, reconstruction and development.<sup>24</sup>*

By the spring of 2006, five more nations—Canada, the Czech Republic, Hungary, the Netherlands, Norway and Slovakia—had joined the growing chorus of Allies pressing for a codified plan of action. The United States followed soon after, and events culminated in the first official articulation of the CA by the 26 member states at the Riga Summit in November. Within two years of the idea first being floated by the Danes, Ambassadors supported by the International Staff had made haste to set a plan in motion. But why the general language? Why the qualifiers? Why the conspicuous absence of detailed EBAO principles and procedures in NATO's CA model, despite calls from the military authorities for their explicit political endorsement?<sup>25</sup>

To be sure, as indicated earlier, if not due to a lack of understanding of EBAO's apparent complexity, the diplomats' preference for maximum flexibility clearly played a role—a predilection for "coordination with a light touch" as the United Kingdom Delegation recently put it.<sup>26</sup> But there have been other, far more compelling reasons at play. For the diplomats, for the politicians, the discussion about EBAO and CA raises some fundamental issues of modern statecraft about which their professions oblige them to be concerned. However necessary and noble the idea of greater military-civilian interface may be,

when placed in a NATO context core elements of the institutional makeup of the contemporary international order have been, and are, inevitably drawn into question. Gone are the clearer Cold War days of the calculable standoff between two opposing military pacts. In the new operating environment facing the Allies, some difficult questions have surfaced on the strategic plane: To what extent is NATO a *political*-military Alliance allowing for the discussion of the full range of security issues? Beyond its traditional military role, how involved should NATO become in civil aspects of security—for instance, is the Civil Emergency Planning (CEP) framework a guide for other operations or would that be a bridge too far? And where should Alliance civil crisis management debate, planning and execution end, and that of other organizations such as the UN and EU begin?

With no definitive consensual answers to these questions becoming readily apparent, the political-diplomatic classes have treaded carefully—in this sense slowly—when plotting NATO's course in what Ambassador Petersen aptly describes as "uncharted territory". Hence, the general language interspersed with qualifiers and the reluctance to accept the relatively thorough (and by extension seemingly too committal) EBAO model presented by the military authorities. For most nations, safeguarding the Alliance's core mission (collective defence) and avoiding unnecessary duplication with the existing responsibilities and tools of other actors have been the guiding principles behind this discretion; for some others like France supported by Belgium and Luxembourg, safeguarding longstanding aspirations and grand designs for the EU, or in the case of Turkey, its place within it, has offered an additional critical motivation.

## Implications for the Alliance

Regardless of the intention, however, within the Alliance, the strategic consequences of the current manifestation of CA have been twofold. First, although the aim of CA and EBAO may be the same, their different methodological approaches have meant that to date they have not been substantively linked up. While the *Comprehensive Political Guidance* began to make a linkage—albeit rudimentary—the *Bucharest Summit Declaration* of 2008 failed to even mention the word "effects," let alone EBAO, leaving any interested observer to wonder where the relationship stands—and not without cause. As one senior ranking ACT officer frankly admitted two weeks after the Summit, "the relationship is not clear."<sup>27</sup> The second consequence is related to the first. With no lucid connection between the two approaches articulated by the higher political authorities, interpretations have been allowed to run rampant.

<sup>24</sup> "Ambassador's Friis Arne Petersen's Presentation at NATO Comprehensive Approach Workshop", Fort McNair, Washington DC, 25 May 2007 at: [www.ambwashington.um.dk](http://www.ambwashington.um.dk)

<sup>25</sup> See Recommendations to Council in "Military Committee Position on an Effects Based Approach to Operations", MCM 0052-2006, 06 Jun 06.

<sup>26</sup> "Comprehensive Approach Workshop", Brussels, 08 March 2007 at: [www.britishembassy.gov.uk](http://www.britishembassy.gov.uk)

<sup>27</sup> Conversation with the author, 21 April 2008.



While, as mentioned previously, SACEUR may choose to view CA as the umbrella term for the broader political level process that incorporates the effects-based approach, others have chosen to neatly position EBAO as a separate, distinctly military process and CA as a political-civilian one. Although this latter tack may be intellectually easy and seem logical from the standpoint of the respective parentage of EBAO and CA within the Alliance, it belies the essence of both models which, ironically, endeavours to break-down such stove-piped views! At worst, this interpretation of CA has at times been opportunely manipulated by some national policy-makers and commentators as a pretext to “talk-up” the need for more non-military resources in places such as Afghanistan, while downplaying the requirement to provide more combat forces for the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) alongside other efforts.<sup>28</sup> Such compartmentalized perspectives not only do disservice to NATO's civilian and military front-line personnel and local populations which require the full range of resources to engender peace and stability, but risks the very success of Alliance missions in troubled parts of the world. As the NATO Secretary General, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, recently warned, places like Afghanistan cannot be divided up into neat spheres of responsibility for peacekeeping, combat operations and reconstruction: “The country would be won or lost in its entirety”<sup>29</sup>. Or, as Karel De Gucht, the Belgian Minister of Foreign Affairs, has put it:

*We will only be able to make a decisive difference when we manage to make progress together on all fronts, in a substantial and simultaneous way: create security and stability, build law and order ... address the people's urgent needs by reconstruction and development programs ... That is our common task, our common challenge [emphasis added].*<sup>30</sup>

Which, for a discussion of Alliance EBAO and CA, prompts the question, “Where do we go from here?” The final section of this paper will endeavour to provide some answers.

## Where We Go from Here

*“A great statesman is he who knows when to depart from traditions, as well as when to adhere to them.”*

**John Stewart Mill**

### Leading from the North Atlantic Council

Given the risk of only further confusion and multiple interpretations of the relationship between EBAO and CA

within the Alliance, it is clear that renewed efforts must be made to define it. As suggested previously, the common essence of both models would disavow any attempt to conveniently divorce them. An honest and reasoned discussion about how to combine elements of the 2008 CA *Action Plan* for example, with principles and procedures contained in the EBAO *Pre-doctrinal Handbook* is urgently needed. The different cultures that created them must redouble efforts to identify points of convergence to demarcate together a deliberate, mutually understood and jointly sanctioned process by which to better meld the military and non-military aspects of Alliance crisis management. The onus to seriously kick-start this dialogue, however, rests with NATO's civilian political leadership. Indeed, the recent prudence demonstrated by the military authorities in progressing EBAO arguably was to provoke their civilian masters to “lead from the top” rather than be pushed by uncontrolled stealth from below.

While the need to initiate dialogue to forthrightly draw together both models is great, with the responsibility resting firmly on the shoulders of the civilian authorities, a degree of caution remains particularly apposite. Again, these are uncharted waters for the North Atlantic Council. Longstanding internal procedures and traditional views of the Alliance and its relationship with other external actors inevitably will be challenged. Hastening the required discussion is perhaps the easy part; implementing a plan that creatively blends the old with the new, the best of diplomatic art profiled in CA, with the technological and scientific promise of EBAO, will be more difficult. Here a measured—slower—hand would be advisable. Not an easy undertaking then, but one for the enlightened statesmen of our time. To assist in this task, the following paragraphs offer some possible points of departure.

As respective champions of CA and EBAO within NATO, the staffs of the SPC-R and the Bi-Strategic Commands EBAO Working Group clearly have a pivotal role to play in supporting the NAC to bridge the two models. Initiatives to increase dialogue and interchange between them should be promoted, particularly with regard to encouraging nations to vest expertise where it best belongs when seeking to join up military and civilian crisis management instruments and actors. For instance, while both CA and EBAO documentation speak of the importance of joint training and exercising among military and non-military contributors to crisis management, during such events the role of diplomats should be assumed by diplomats, and not parsed out, as has often been the case in the past, to well-meaning officers or contractors. The same may be said for economists, development specialists and other critical roles. An Ambassador of the NAC would not expect his or her function to be performed by a member of the Military Committee, and it should be no different at the working level

<sup>28</sup> The author experienced this particular approach firsthand during discussions with a cross-party panel of German politicians in late 2007.

<sup>29</sup> “West Needs Coordinated Afghan Policy, Merkel Says”, Deutsche Welle, 11 March 2008 at: [www.dw-world.de](http://www.dw-world.de)

<sup>30</sup> “Address by Mr. Karel De Gucht, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belgium”, Seminar on Security and Development: the case of Afghanistan, 07 Feb 2007 at: [www.diplomatie.be](http://www.diplomatie.be)



either. To do so, risks drawing the wrong conclusions and the development of ways and means which do not necessarily reflect reality or, as we have seen, are poorly understood by the very community they seek to empower and include. For the same reasons, a similar approach henceforth should be avoided in experimentation in revised NATO Crisis Response System (NCRS) methods as well.

### Delineating the Political-Military Alliance

In determining how far the Alliance should delve into the discussion and management of non-military aspects of security in experimentation, exercises as well as reality, all the while safeguarding its traditional collective defence function, the NAC supported by SPC-R would be well advised to weigh heavily on a particularly perceptive observation found in Chapter 1 of the EBAO *Pre-doctrinal Handbook*:

*When considering 'NATO instruments', NATO has primarily the military instrument at its disposal, alongside the political instrument inherent in NAC activity and Alliance capitals. In the NATO context, the other instruments (civil and economic) are largely held and controlled by nations and non-NATO actors. Nevertheless, through the NAC, NATO could inspire Alliance members to act coherently in the sovereign use of their non-military instruments toward the same purpose, in support of the assumed international aim. Likewise, the NAC could also seek to influence the actions of non-NATO actors in a collaborative effort to resolve a crisis. In broad terms, instruments are the strategic capabilities of NATO, other international entities (such as the UN) and nations to influence the behaviour and capabilities of others.<sup>31</sup>*

As the only standing and pre-eminent forum for transatlantic dialogue, empowering the NAC to discuss and harness the

collective strength of the full range of crisis management instruments possessed nationally by the Allies would indeed appear to make a great deal of sense. Such an approach would be no different in fact than that envisioned for the 27 member states of the EU. As the draft Lisbon Treaty states, "Member States shall consult one another within the European Council and the Council on any matter of foreign and security policy of general interest in order to determine a common approach... Member States shall make civilian and military capabilities available to the Union ..."<sup>32</sup>

In the NATO context, the imperative of such dialogue and the coordination of national resources of sovereign nations would appear all the more significant. This presumably should ring particularly true for the 21 states which hold membership in both NATO and the EU. For them, and with every respect for their Austrian, Cypriot, Finish, Irish, Maltese and Swedish counterparts, the priority surely must rest with coordinating their civilian resources and efforts with those of the United States given its enormous *non-military* capability.<sup>33</sup> Take, for example, Afghanistan where the North American Allies combined account for nearly half of all World Food Program (WFP) post-conflict relief and rehabilitation assistance.<sup>34</sup> Others, of course, may wish to perpetuate the oft heard refrain that "NATO remains a military alliance"<sup>35</sup> or, "In some cases, the European Union has a role to play which NATO cannot fulfill because the EU is the only organization able to combine short term crisis response and long term assistance ..." or still further, "the European Union's toolbox has a much wider range and is better equipped to bring about stability and start reconstruction in former trouble spots ..."<sup>36</sup> But the honest and informed know that the facts often suggest a very different reality. A detailed reading of the draft Lisbon Treaty,<sup>37</sup> for example, or a tabulation of Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)

<sup>31</sup> "Pre-Doctrinal Handbook (Effects Based Approach to Operations)", J5PLANS/7740-065/07-203478 (ACO) and 3000 TI-388/TT-2156/Ser: NU0689 (ACT), pp. 1-2, 04 Dec 2007.

<sup>32</sup> Part II, art. 32 and art 42.3. See: Official Journal of the European Union, C115, Vol. 51, 09 May 2008.

<sup>33</sup> Consider, for example, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Net Official Development Assistance in 2007. The United States accounted for an unparalleled national contribution of \$21.753 billion compared to a combined total of \$8.295 billion from Austria, Finland, Ireland and Sweden (see: [www.oecd.org](http://www.oecd.org)). Not to mention its extensive diplomatic footprint worldwide, the United States is also the largest food aid donor and provides approximately half of all food aid to populations throughout the world ([www.usaid.gov](http://www.usaid.gov)). In addition, the US Emergency Plan for Aids is the largest commitment ever by any nation for an international health initiative dedicated to a single disease (\$18.8 billion over five years [[www.pepfar.gov](http://www.pepfar.gov)]).

<sup>34</sup> "Resourcing Update – Afghanistan", 06 June 2008 at: [www.wfp.org](http://www.wfp.org)

<sup>35</sup> This particular quotation is attributed somewhat ironically to a representative of NATO's Senior Civil Emergency Planning Committee (SCEPC) which sets the objectives of the Planning Boards and Committees already addressing a broad range of civilian related security issues: Planning Board for Inland Surface Transport (PBIST), Planning Board Ocean Shipping (PBOS); Civil Aviation Planning Committee (CAPC), Civil Protection Committee (CPC), Civil Communications Planning Committee (CCPC), Food and Agriculture Planning Committee (FAPC), Joint Medical Committee (JMC), Industrial Planning Committee (IPC). Olivier Landour, "Civil-military cooperation from the viewpoint of civil emergency planning, Perceptions Newsletter", No.2, July 2007.

<sup>36</sup> "Address by Minister Karel De Gucht at the NATO Defence College in Rome: NATO and International Security in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century", 01 February 2008 at: [www.diplomatie.be](http://www.diplomatie.be)

<sup>37</sup> The "Specific Provisions on the Common Foreign and Security Policy", under the EU's second pillar and governing most areas of foreign and defence policy, remain intergovernmental. In most cases the Policy, "shall be defined and implemented ... unanimously" by the member states (Chapter II, art. 24). Even where provision is made for qualified majority voting, individual member states may abstain or "If a member of the Council declares that, for vital and stated reasons of national policy, it intends to oppose the adoption of a decision to be taken by qualified majority, a vote shall not be taken" (Chapter II, art. 31). See: Official Journal of the European Union, C115, Vol. 51, 09 May 2008.



development assistance,<sup>38</sup> soon reveals that despite pretensions and longstanding—however well intentioned—aspirations to the contrary, the EU is not a monolithic unitary actor in most areas of foreign policy, but remains very much the sum of individual nations. As the recent Irish referendum reminds us, in the contemporary international order nation states continue to reign supreme. Nation states decide where and with whom they will consult. Nation states decide where and with whom they will act. And their implementation of EBAO and CA through the NAC, considering the full range of instruments and resources available to them in the spirit of mutual solidarity, need be no different. If this means NATO emerges as the paramount political-military security organization of Western nation states on the world stage, in the interests of those parts of humanity requiring assistance from the democratic Allies in times of crisis, so be it.

### Engaging External Actors

Outside of the Alliance, implementation of EBAO and CA with other international actors such as the EU and UN as well as NGOs should proceed determinedly yet judiciously, particularly in areas beyond national control. For the NAC, the yearly Command Post Crisis Management Exercise (CMX) offers an ideal occasion to build bridges and engender a culture of cooperation shy of integration—anathema to most external players. The last joint NATO-EU CMX, however, was held in 2003 and since then even EU observers have been few and far between. CMX08, for example, benefited from UN representation but none from the EU. The reasons for the lack of progress in this area are well known: Turkey's filibustering as long as Cyprus vetoes its bid to become an associate member of the European Defence Agency (EDA) and provided that Ankara's aspirations for greater consultation on the EU's fledgling European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) remain elusive; France's reluctance to open up to the Alliance discussion of civil security matters in what are

viewed as traditional EU domains, as well as its preoccupation with avoiding any impression of NATO dominance over the EU. Another five years of stagnation though will not realize the avowedly common and commonly desired aim of EBAO and CA. The time is now for national self interests and ambitions to give way to the betterment of the whole and the realization of a shared objective. With respect to the UN, at the time of writing, a declaration on UN-NATO cooperation is close at hand. When signed, the principles contained therein must guide the treatment of the UN in any future EBAO-CA model. Lastly, turning to NGOs, it is widely held that more than with any other external actor with which NATO may become engaged, they will invariably demonstrate the greatest aversion to any semblance of control by the Alliance. Thus, within this domain, when the challenge is joining up the resources of nation states with those of actors outside the purview of national governments, the UK Delegation's discussion of "coordination with a light touch" under CA should ring paramount. In this regard, the aforementioned Civil-Military Overview project under EBAO is perhaps a template for the way forward—collaborative, reciprocal and self-directed versus integrative and prescriptive.

### Conclusions

This paper has traced the origins of EBAO and CA in recent NATO history and has also laid down some markers for their future development. In doing so, it has presented two models for improved military and non-military interface in crisis management operations, which in some respects are new, others old, in some ways similar, others different—but two that cannot be separated. The urgent need to pursue their common aim remains. Blending the best of both to achieve it will take more time, but it is the pivotal task placed before the astute leaders of our day. The success of the Atlantic Alliance hangs in the balance. Hasten slowly.

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<sup>38</sup> Of OECD Net Development Assistance in 2007, nationally administered contributions of EU member states accounted for \$62.096 billion compared to only \$11.771 billion administered by the European Community (i.e. European Commission under the EU's first pillar [see: [www.oecd.org](http://www.oecd.org)]). Moreover, Part V Title III of the draft Lisbon Treaty simply states that, "The Union's development cooperation policy and that of the Member States shall complement and reinforce one another" (art. 210); there is no hiding the fact that for the most part, national aid remains firmly in the control of capitals.