



RESEARCH PAPER

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NDC Academic Research
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Elaboration of Selected Senior
Course 104 Study Project
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Senior Course 104: Study Project Analyses

Editorial

The following Research Paper distills and elaborates upon 7 of the 9 group Study Projects conducted by NDC Senior Course 104 members. The Paper clusters around two broad topics and their related sub-topics.

Topic 1: "Looking South" – How might NATO further invigorate the Mediterranean Dialogue (MD), how might it use the MD as a vehicle to promote security and stability in sub-Saharan Africa, and how might NATO and the EU cooperate in promoting African security?

Topic 2: "Transforming NATO to meet Asymmetric Challenges" – Given the asymmetric threats posed by transnational terrorists and others, how might NATO adapt its decision-making processes to deal with these threats, and how might it use its nascent Response Force in cooperation with the EU Rapid Reaction Forces?

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Research Paper

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Looking South: A Three-Tiered Approach to NATO Involvement in the Maghreb and Sub-Sahara Africa

Europe's current security space is largely peaceful and predictable. It does, however, border on arcs of instability, particularly in Africa and what some call the Greater Middle East. Because the instability and uncertainty of these regions could potentially spill over into Old and New Europe at any time, NATO leaders now believe that proactive engagement "at the source" is necessary. In the case of the Maghreb and sub-Sahara Africa, there are three sadly familiar problem areas that NATO members might have to confront.

Specific security-related problems – Which feature large-scale arms trading and smuggling; continued illegal trading in minerals and gems; growing, locally-based transnational terrorism and criminality, and more.

Immediate problems – Which include growing religious extremism; insecure borders; inter- and intra-state tensions; non-existent or weak state structures; mass migration and/or illegal immigration; human trafficking and more.

Root cause problems – Which consist of residual decolonialization; widespread poverty; endemic and indigenous corruption; narrow clan and ethnic ties, and yet a jealous commitment to national sovereignty at the same time; low levels of education; limited human rights, the absence of democratic institutions and more.

In trying to deal with these problems, there are political realities that one has to acknowledge. The UN, for example, currently lacks the political will, institutional self-confidence, and local credibility it needs to operate effectively in Africa. At the same time, many of the NGOs operating there busily compete with each other, and thereby introduce competing *foreign* agendas into the area. And finally, on a bilateral, government-to-government level, the colonial powers of the past still attempt to exert their influence over their former colonies.

Given the above political realities, what might

NATO consider doing to promote greater security and stability on the African continent, especially if Alliance members believe that the instability endemic in sub-Saharan areas inevitably affect the countries of North Africa, which might then affect the stability of Europe itself? One possible option is to adopt a broad three-tiered, successively more comprehensive approach to security and stability in the area.

Tier 1: Incrementally transform the Mediterranean Dialogue (MD) program in seven steps

Step 1: Expand bilateral programs and relations. In other words, as the Alliance did with Partnership for Peace nations, set progressive and individualized security capability objectives with individual Maghreb nations.

Step 2: Develop a transnational MD track within a specific and politically manageable area. The ideal area could be civilian and military security sector reform.

Step 3: Further invigorate and expand the current MD program – i.e., a) make it a true partnership instead of a largely European-driven program; b) widen participation to all states on the shores of the Mediterranean, including Libya and later Syria and Lebanon; and c) further create the "ties that bind" with train and equip programs, and with multinational seminars, exercises, and operations.

Step 4: Promote and practice a form of "Security Subsidiarity." Help create, in other words, sub-regional and/or regional versions of NATO in the Maghreb. By building local structures and functions that duplicate those found in the NATO Alliance proper, the nations of the region could address their security problems in common rather than singly. It is worth noting that although it is challenging, this option does account for the area's heterogeneous demography and politics.



Step 5: Provide some measure of NATO-guaranteed security to the Maghreb nations and whatever “NATO clones” they create. These guarantees, however, should deliberately fall short of formal Article 5 requirements.

Step 6: Push NATO Enlargement (specifically the Enlargement-After-Next?) towards the south. Obviously, this would require multiple changes in the current political environment, but as part of the above sequence of steps, the goal is a logical one.

And finally, Step 7: Formalize and codify the multi-dimensional involvement of NATO MD with the EU, the OSCE, the *Union du Maghreb Arabe* (UMA) and/or the African Union (AU) in order to provide a comprehensive and cooperative security umbrella for greater Africa. (The last two institutions are currently “empty vessels” vis-à-vis security and would obviously need considerable strengthening before they became part of a security system of systems on the continent.)

Tier 2: After both invigorating its relationship with the Maghreb states and pursuing bilateral relations with individual sub-Saharan nations, the NATO Alliance could use the former and/or their “local NATO(s)” as a regional platform to help the latter deal with their security problems

The Maghreb states have a vested interest in their own collective security. Unfortunately, when it comes to sub-Saharan threats and sources of instability, the resources they have to deal with them are disconnected and limited. (Mutual mistrust and inter-state tensions, however minor, are two reasons for these problems.) At the same time, if a distant NATO increasingly involves itself with sub-Saharan security issues, it will have to do so in the spirit of joint ownership – i.e., it will have to make sure that Africans find African solutions for African problems. A possible step in this direction might be to partner with the Maghreb states and the “local NATO(s)” that they might develop. The latter could function as a regional platform for positive involvement in the security affairs of Africa at large. Such a platform would have a dual function – it would not only tie the Maghreb and NATO closer together, but it would also provide a trustworthy political vehicle to 1) tie Northern and sub-Saharan governments closer together, and 2) eventually link up with an invigorated African Union and its Peace and Security Council.

Tier 3: Pursue future NATO-EU cooperation in Africa

If NATO is to prepare properly for a future role in Africa, it should not only “ramp up” the MD program and use the Maghreb as a springboard for greater involvement, it should also cooperate more fully with the EU. In the last case, both institutions can provide mutual support not only for an increasingly capable African Union (through direct bilateral and multilateral means), but also for each other.

The AU’s security needs are myriad, as are Africa’s in general. These needs include 1) adequate *conflict management* resources; 2) sufficient *conflict identification and prevention* capabilities (including robust security sector reforms, the “Africanization” of peacemaking, and enhanced interoperability); 3) improved *conflict management and reaction* resources (including the capacity to co-deploy Western and African forces together); and 4) sufficient resources for *post-conflict reconstruction* (which requires effective counter-proliferation measures against light weapons, the removal of landmines, institution building and much more).

In order to possibly help meet some of the above requirements, NATO and the EU – via a Joint Forum for African Peace and Security – could develop protocols that 1) assign clear roles and responsibilities to each organization, 2) construct a *catalogue of programs*, based at least partially on the Berlin Plus example, that meets African security needs (in consultation with the African Union and other regional or sub-regional organizations), 3) exhort NATO’s Military Committee to support the AU with mutually determined military/security assistance packages (perhaps drawn from adaptable PfP and Mediterranean Dialogue initiatives), and 4) sponsor an African Peace and Security International Research Seminar.

Once the above strategic decisions and others are made, NATO and the EU could then take at least four concrete first-steps in the name of improved African security – 1) share information and intelligence (early warning data in particular), 2) pursue coordinated and enhanced sanctions against leaders of rogue states, 3) “train the trainers” (especially in the security realm), and 4) prioritize, coordinate, and perform post-conflict task management.

Transforming NATO to meet Asymmetric Challenges

NATO's potential role in Africa remains an open question. If the Alliance were to adopt a greater role there, the broad three-tiered strategy briefly described in the previous pages might serve as a useful template for NATO leaders and planners to consider. "Looking south," however, is hardly the only issue on NATO's plate. The continuing threat posed by transnational terror and other asymmetric challenges is also an issue. How the Alliance will transform to deal with these problems, both in terms of its decision-making processes and how it uses the NATO Response Force in cooperation with the EU Rapid Reaction Force, is a work-in-progress too.

Coping with terror and other asymmetric challenges – some possible steps ahead

On 18 December 2001, the *Military Concept for Defence Against Terrorism* was approved by the North Atlantic Council (NAC) and subsequently endorsed by the Heads of State and Government at the Prague Summit on 21 November 2002. The concept stressed the central importance of defensive antiterrorism measures, consequence management (i.e., dealing with and reducing the effects of a terrorist attack once it has occurred), offensive counter-terrorism measures, and broad military cooperation.

The above Concept was a helpful start, but if NATO is to remain a relevant player in the fight against terror, the Alliance and its partners need to move beyond conceptual measures (as stated in the *Military Concept for the Defence Against Terrorism* and the *Partnership Action Plan Against Terrorism*) and towards practical implementation. In the last case, there are at least six steps it could take.

Step 1: As ambitious as it may seem, borrow a page from the EU handbook – i.e., transform NATO – at least as a terror fighting organization – into a supranational body where members agree to sacrifice targeted parts of their sovereignty for the sake of truly collective security.

Step 2: As insurmountable as it seems, try yet again to create a commonly accepted Alliance definition of terrorism.

Step 3: Make needed improvements or modifications to terror-related Alliance intelligence sharing and decision-making mechanisms.

Step 4: Establish a *Centre of Excellence for the Fight Against Terrorism* (CEFAT). This entity could be a useful vehicle for change, particularly if Alliance members treated it as a concept and not just as another redundant (and unnecessary) organization. The Centre could grapple head on with the above problems and more – intelligence sharing, decision-making processes, cooperation with academia, and the creation of doctrine, policy and training scenarios at the strategic, operational and tactical levels.

Step 5: Train and equip the NATO Response Force (NRF) so it has appropriate anti-terror capabilities (by building appropriate capabilities packages that draw upon generic, in-place NRF capabilities). In this case, we must not forget that a "strategy of intimidation" is still relevant in deterring rogue actors and states. The use of force and the Alliance's readiness to use it remain corner stones of NATO credibility. However, to use the NRF as an effective anti- or counter-terror tool will require adaptations to some national constitutions, more deployable capabilities, and a shift in spending patterns.

Step 6: Develop a specifically trained and assigned Stabilization and Reconstruction Force (NSRF) to complement and follow-up the NRF. Terror-related consequence and crisis management, along with humanitarian assistance, could be part of its assigned tasks.

Transforming NATO decision-making – The Consensus Rule

The above steps might be helpful, either totally or in part, but what about the role of NATO decision-making in a terror-driven asymmetric era? In particular, does a new environment and new commitments require a change to the Alliance's traditional Consensus Rule?

In reality, agreeing to deploy the NATO Response Force or a combined joint task force to a non-Article 5 out-of-area operation will be more

difficult in the future than agreeing to defend an Alliance member against an imminent threat. A change to the Consensus Rule is therefore perhaps needed for the out-of-area operations, which otherwise might be prevented by non-participating Alliance members who nevertheless want to stop them. Second, we may need revised rules for these particular types of operations because achieving consensus within the timeframes required will be more and more difficult to accomplish. There are three reasons for this: 1) the sheer number of members introduced by NATO Enlargement, 2) the self-imposed requirement to deploy the NATO Response Force quickly, and 3) divergent national-level factors, including public opinion. Given these challenges and complications, what modifications or adjustments to the Consensus Rule should we consider? There are at least four possible options or models to consider, as largely explained by Leo Michel in his penetrating article, *NATO Decisionmaking: Au Revoir to Consensus?*¹

Option No. 1: *A qualified majority or “consensus minus” in non-Article 5 out of area operations.* In this option, if consensus were not possible for non-Article 5 out-of-area operations, the unanimity requirement could be relaxed – i.e., consensus might be permitted with a 2/3 majority of equally weighted votes, or by pursuing a “Consensus Minus” option where a member could not sit and judge the merits of his or her own case.

Option No. 2: *A qualified majority or “consensus minus” either in low-scale non-Article 5 out-of-area operations, or in NATO contributions to other missions.* This model is a variation/sub-option of the previous one. Here the Consensus Rule would be relaxed but only on a limited basis – i.e. only for specific types of operations. Generally, the Rule would still apply for high intensity operations (for example, peace-enforcement, interventions against states that sponsor, conceal, or protect terrorists, etc.). However, for operations on the lower end of the spectrum (such as peacekeeping and humanitarian aid), a Qualified Majority/Consensus Minus decision-making process could apply. (The latter type of decision-making process might also apply in those cases where NATO is

making a limited contribution to a non-NATO operation, such as in the current Operation Enduring Freedom, for example.)

Option No. 3: *Single-issue sub-alliances within a broader NATO.* As Dr. Michel notes, this model borrows a page from current EU processes. For issues that involve only selected governments, the EU has devised “Committees of Contributors.” In this concept, member governments that wish to participate significantly in a project receive general approval from a principal EU governing body to proceed among themselves, while uninvolved governments take a general interest in the proceedings and possibly assume a level of responsibility that might include their actual oversight. A potentially useful element of the concept involves “constructive abstention,” in which governments with interests not directly affected stand aside and permit action by those with interests that are directly in play. A Committee of Contributors in NATO might follow a similar path, and might appeal especially to governments that are both NATO and EU members. (Basically, this option would preserve the Consensus Rule to approve operations while also taking into account the difficulty of reaching common threat assessments among all Allies where non-Article-5 out-of-area operations are involved.)

Option No. 4: *Consensus with a SACEUR Discretion Rule.* Under this option, Dr. Michel further notes, the North Atlantic Council would formally grant broad discretionary authority to the SACEUR to prepare and update, as necessary, contingency operational plans for a broad range of potential NATO non-Article 5 military missions. The SACEUR would keep the Secretary General and Military Committee informed of such plans, and the NAC would retain its power to decide if and where any of the options would ever be executed. The formal availability of the plans, however, would help shorten the time needed by the NAC to consider its response to a fast-breaking crisis.

Although the above options are available for NATO’s consideration, it is important to remember that the reasons usually given to justify changing

¹ Leo G. Michel, *NATO Decisionmaking: Au Revoir to Consensus?* (Washington, DC: Institute for National Security Studies, Strategic Forum Paper No. 202, August 2003). See <http://www.ndu.edu/inss/strforum/SF202/sf202.htm>. Pavel Necas largely repeats Dr. Michel’s insights in *Beyond Tradition: A New Strategic Concept for NATO?* (Rome, Italy: NATO Defense College Research Paper No. 11, September 2004).

Alliance decision-making processes are not necessarily legitimate. There is no historical evidence that proves, for example, that successive NATO Enlargements have had a negative impact on achieving consensus within the Alliance. Second, rather than enhancing the timely deployment of the NRF, abolishing the Consensus Rule may actually have the opposite effect – i.e., it may delay and potentially negate national NRF commitments. Finally, although differences of opinion are a way of life within NATO, the Consensus Rule has traditionally played a paramount role in harmonizing these varying opinions into workable and cohesive viewpoints.

And yet, if the Consensus Rule has historically reconciled national views rather than aggravated them, that does not mean that the Alliance can (or should) continue functioning without streamlined and enhanced planning processes, particularly for non-Article 5 out-of-area operations. Since the Alliance does need these processes, it should adopt the above Options 3 and 4 in order to enhance Alliance decision-making in *specific* environments.

Multiplying rapid reaction capabilities – NATO-EU cooperation

Tailored changes to NATO decision-making processes are necessary, especially if the Alliance hopes to quarantine or stamp out a range of security problems at their source. But what about the “tip of the spear” – i.e., what about NATO’s actual capacity to apply force? Should the Alliance simply look inward to develop the capabilities it needs, or should it look outwards and pool its resources with other security actors? Obviously, there are synergies to be had by co-operating with others, and a natural, mutually beneficial point of cooperation could be between the NATO Response Force and the European Union Rapid Response Forces.

Yes, NATO and the EU are different organizations. And yet, although their histories, mentalities, and

actual objectives may differ, they share a growing interest in global security and crisis management. They also share a belief that rapid reaction forces are indispensable security tools for the future. Given this shared belief, is cooperation feasible between these forces, even if only in certain areas?

At present, it is impossible to imagine both forces operating simultaneously in the same theater and under the same chain of command – it is probably not technically feasible nor politically realistic. Nevertheless, there are three ways that synergy-creating cooperation might occur.

- First: Operate simultaneously in the same theatre but in distinct regions with different tasks and capabilities (again, like in Afghanistan).
- Second: Operate in succession – i.e., have one force relieve the other at a set point in an operation and then become responsible for it.
- Third: Mutually borrow from each other’s capabilities, regardless of who is responsible for a certain mission.

These first concrete and complementary steps will require a favorable context however. NATO and the EU will obviously have to coordinate the development of their Task Forces to ensure their availability and readiness. They will also have to harmonize and clarify their chains of command in preparation for eventual crises. Finally, they will have to coincide their Transformation activities more closely together (this particularly applies to EU members who are not NATO nations).

And yet, if they take the above steps and match them with comparable changes in non-Article 5 decision-making processes, NATO members will be better prepared to deal with tomorrow’s asymmetric threats, including transnational terrorism. They will also be able to project influence out-of-area, including Africa. In pursuing its interest there, however, the Alliance might want to consider adopting a three-tiered approach to spreading peace and stability in a challenging new security space.



Conclusion

Jean DUFOURCQ¹

NDC Senior Courses “*se suivent mais ne se ressemblent pas, comme dit la chanson*”.² The same holds true for their search activities, which recurrently strive to clarify and address security issues that are of significant interest to NATO.

As part of this effort, the NDC web site (<http://www.ndc.nato.int/research/respaper.html>) currently includes nine first-cut summaries of research done by Senior Course 104 Committees on assorted security topics. These papers show the extent of the Committees’ challenging, collective, and consensual work, but they do not naturally cohere into overarching narratives with their own broader themes and patterns.

That is why in Research Papers 5 and 6 (May 2004) Peter Faber not only distilled the work

done by Senior Course 103 Committees, but also transformed and coalesced them around larger security-related themes. Since we believe the formula worked well then and led to positive responses, we are repeating it here.

As the present analysis immediately makes clear, this Research Paper focuses on two “hot button” topics in NATO – 1) Its potential role in Northern and sub-Saharan Africa, and 2) its on-going transformation to deal with today’s asymmetric threats. We hope you find the exploration of these topics of interest.

And finally, please note that this is the 12th ARB Research Paper published in 2004 and we would now greatly value your feedback and recommendations on all aspects of this series.

Please send us your remarks and suggestions to research@ndc.nato.int.

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² “Come one after other but are never the same.”

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