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## The UN, EU and NATO:

### Common Challenges in Multidimensional Peace Operations

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# The UN, EU and NATO:

## Common Challenges in Multidimensional Peace Operations

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**[Abstract]** Despite major institutional differences regarding mandate, roles and membership, the UN, the EU and NATO all face common security challenges and operate together in several theatres throughout the world. There is now broad consensus that today's security challenges can be most effectively addressed through an integrated approach. This has led to a process where the organisations have acknowledged the necessity and efficiency of cooperation within and with each other

The findings of this Working Paper are primarily based on a Seminar organised by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Brussels 5 October 2007, called *Multidimensional and Integrated Peace Operations: Trends and Challenges – Common challenges, different institutional frameworks: The UN, EU and NATO*. The final findings from this Seminar will be published in a separate report by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

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## Preface<sup>1</sup>

The Norwegian Ministry of Defence organized the sixth in a series of regional seminars on trends and challenges related to UN multidimensional and integrated peace operations in Brussels 5 October 2007<sup>2</sup>. The one-day seminar *Multidimensional and Integrated Peace Operations: Trends and Challenges – Common challenges, different institutional frameworks: The UN, EU and NATO* was held at the Residence Palace in Brussels on 5 October 2007.

The purpose of the Brussels seminar was to discuss the perspectives and approaches to multidimensional and integrated peace operations of the United Nations (UN), the European Union (EU) and North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO).

The seminar was divided into five panels for discussion of various angles on the overarching topic. The first panel focused on strategic and operational trends and challenges to multidimensional and integrated peace operations. The next three panels discussed concepts and challenges to (respectively) the UN, the EU and NATO's approach to multidimensional and integrated peace operations. The fifth panel summarized the discussions and presented suggestions for how to proceed in order to achieve integrated operations.

The seminar gathered a range of stakeholders from the three organisations. Additionally, the African Union (AU), Inter-governmental organizations (IGO), Non Governmental Organisations (NGO) and humanitarian organisations as well as academics and representatives from donor countries participated. In total, around 170 people attended the seminar.

This report reflects the main discussions and findings of the seminar. Because the seminar was conducted under Chatham House Rules<sup>3</sup> in order to encourage openness, sharing of information and frank discussion, this report has been written with those considerations in mind.

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<sup>1</sup> The views expressed in this publication are those of the author. They should not be interpreted as reflecting the views of the Norwegian Government. The text may not be printed in part or in full without the permission of the author.

<sup>2</sup> The author would like to extend a warm thank you to all participants at the seminar in Brussels for their engaging presentations and discussions. The author is also grateful to the Norwegian Ministry of Defence and the Deputy Minister of Defence Mr. Espen Barth Eide for his comments. Last, but certainly not least, many thanks go to Bård Bredrup Knudsen, Anja T. Kaspersen and Kristina L. Revheim for managing an important initiative, of which this seminar was but one component.

<sup>3</sup> The Chatham House Rule reads as follows: 'When a meeting, or part thereof, is held under the Chatham House Rule, participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be revealed.'

## Executive Summary

During the seminar, the following were the main views expressed as to the different organisations' (UN, EU, NATO) view on the integrated approach to peacebuilding operations, followed by some brief reflections on the cooperation between them.

### UN

The UN Integrated Missions concept was acknowledged as the most advanced and best tested approach to the management of multidimensional and integrated peace support operations. Still there remains considerable potential for improvement in bringing this panoply together. This was also reflected in the main topics dealt with in the seminar panel: *planning, better delivery, humanitarian space and financing of operations*.<sup>4</sup>

The organisation faces a dilemma between being able to attend to the broad range of concerns on the one hand, and being able to set priorities on the other. Integration in the field must be based on *joint planning* and an agreement on the *centre of gravity* of the operation.<sup>5</sup> The *form shall follow function* approach was reiterated.

Several panellists held that the possibilities of remaining neutral in peacebuilding operations are disappearing, and referred to the situation in the Middle East and in Afghanistan. On the other hand, the situation in Africa, for instance, presents in many cases a different picture. Thus, it was argued, one might need to differentiate between regions when considering how to protect humanitarian space.

In order to achieve integrated missions it is necessary to give missions more power to adapt budgets to needs. But, since security always comes first, delegating the budget to the mission may result in lower priority to the humanitarian and development sector.

### EU

The EU perceives itself as an actor capable of providing the full panoply to an operation. However, the EU struggles with internal divisions along various lines. In essence this division is more political than practical, and is often overcome in the field.

The Council Secretariat has two new, though yet untested, bodies. The first is a civilian-military cell under the Military Staff to provide for strategic options and integrated planning. The second is the new Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability (CPCC).

The member states of the UN, the EU and NATO often speak with different voices in different institutions. This indicates that integration at home, between different ministries and agencies in each state, is not optimally well-advanced.

### NATO

NATO's focus and willingness to look at new ways of cooperating and coordinating with other actors and multilateral institutions have increased in recent years. It was agreed that NATO as such cannot provide the incentive and legitimacy for broader crisis management operations. The seminar clearly showed that there is broad recognition of the need for a com-

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<sup>4</sup> Not in order of priority

<sup>5</sup> In the *Report on Integrated Missions: Practical Perspectives and Recommendations* (2005) *Center of gravity* is described as a missions specific concept that "refers to the decisive parameters that must be influenced to achieve the strategic goal that makes all the other efforts possible, and without which the mission is likely to fail".



prehensive approach within the alliance as well as closer integration/cooperation with other relevant partners.

At present NATO is focusing on developing the Comprehensive Approach (CA) as an operational concept based on its Effect-based Approach to Operations (EBAO). Nonetheless, not unlike the UN, the organisation is experiencing practical problems concerning its implementation.

Even if the need for cooperation with others was the main focus regarding NATO in the seminar it was also recognised that the alliance needs stronger internal cohesion. The operation in Afghanistan has highlighted NATO's problems with fragmentation and lack of coordination as responsibility for different fields and tasks has been given to different member states.

### **COOPERATION BETWEEN THE ORGANISATIONS**

NATO and especially the EU acknowledge the UN as a leading actor and recognise the legitimacy of UNSC resolutions. It was noted at the seminar, however, that NATO and EU member states are no longer key contributors to UN operations.

The United Nations, the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation have all intensified their work on developing operational concepts for multinational and multidimensional peace support operations. Even if substantial progress has been made by all three organisations, they also have a long way to go in developing internally coherent operational concepts. The three organisations may have an even longer way to go to develop models for cooperation amongst themselves.

## Introduction

Despite major institutional differences regarding mandate, roles and membership, the UN, the EU and NATO all face common security challenges and operate together in several theatres throughout the world. There is now broad consensus that today's security challenges can be most effectively addressed through an integrated approach. This has led to a process where the organisations have acknowledged the necessity and efficiency of cooperation within and with each other. In turn, international and regional organisations such as the UN, NATO, the EU and the AU, all have developed integration approaches. These include models and concepts such as NATO's 'the comprehensive approach' and 'Effects-based Approach to Operations (EBAO)', 'whole-of-government' approaches, and the UN's 'integrated missions' concept.

These organisations are all in the process of developing better platforms in order to improve and better coordinate its engagement in conflict situations. MNE5 is an international programme for concept development and experimentation regarding multinational and multifunctional peace operations, with ambitions to increase the coordination between civil and military participants. The ongoing debates in the major international organisations involved in peace operations are therefore highly relevant for MNE-5. This discussion paper presents current trends and challenges to peace operations within- and between the three major international and multifunctional organisations (UN, EU and NATO).

## The United Nations

The United Nations has been implementing its evolving Integrated Missions concept for several years, in a large number of operations. At present, the UN is a major player in 20 out of 28 conflict situations in the world, with over 100 000 personnel deployed and a current annual peacekeeping budget of USD 5.6 billion. The Brussels seminar acknowledged the UN Integrated Missions concept as the most advanced and best tested approach to the management of multidimensional and integrated peace support operations.

The UN brings the full panoply of tools to address the basic manifestations of conflict in the world today. While other organisations may have, for example, greater military capabilities, they lack the same range of instruments and the same kind of legitimacy available that is unique to the UN. On the other hand, the UN is a highly fragmented organisation, and there remains considerable potential for improvement in bringing this panoply together. Thus the main focus in the UN is integration *within* the organisation, but at the same time serious efforts are also being made to integrate with the World Bank and regional organisations, for example in UNAMID, as well as on how to better align the governing bodies. This was also reflected in the main topics dealt with in the seminar panel: *planning, better delivery, humanitarian space and financing of operations*.<sup>6</sup>

The UN still struggles with integrated planning due to its huge institutional and bureaucratic decision-making system, the applicability of the current planning procedures to the field, and the fluid context on the ground. Additionally the organisation faces a dilemma between being able to attend to the broad range of concerns on the one hand, and being able to set priorities on the other. *Planning* generally works best when everyone is on an equal footing, but with

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<sup>6</sup> Not in order of priority.

integrated missions or peace operations equal footing is exactly the challenge - all concerns are not equally important all the time. Too often, long- and medium-term aims are overshadowed by short-term aims because the recovery and development perspective is left on the periphery of the discussions. The various actors in peacebuilding operations operate on different timelines which needs to be dealt with in the early planning phase of operations. Furthermore, integration in the field must be based on *joint planning* and an agreement on the *centre of gravity* of the operation.<sup>7</sup> Today there are several contributing countries in each peacebuilding operation and a majority of these come with national caveats with regards to its implementation of its own forces. This can create a major problem. In Congo for instance, there are currently 64 contributing countries, all with different *caveats*.

From the humanitarian perspective the importance of highlighting the safeguarding humanitarian principles is often stressed. The way the humanitarian actors are perceived by the local population is crucial for their security and access in the field. But is it really possible to distinguish between actors in peacebuilding operations? The Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue found that *local population* did not make distinctions when it came to humanitarian assistance, but saw all of it as part of a Western project. For example, the building of schools in Afghanistan is not humanitarian activity: it is political, it was argued.

The possibilities of remaining neutral in peacebuilding operations are, as can be seen in the situation in the Middle East and in Afghanistan, disappearing. On the other hand, the situation in Africa, for instance, presents in many cases a completely different picture. Thus, one might need to differentiate between regions when considering how to protect humanitarian space.

However, many seek to highlight that the humanitarian purpose is not to reinstall a new government or create stability, but to save lives without distinction. Furthermore, there is broad recognition to the importance of distinguishing between crisis management and humanitarian management, in order to make a division between those who have a political role (for example, long-term developers) and those who play a more acute role (humanitarian actors such as the ICRC and MSF).

UN has established a *form shall follow function* approach to provide better delivery, better use of resources and improve the efficiency, and to ensure greater political synergies. This approach is based on the recognition that each environment is unique: thus, every operation and mandate must adapt to the context. Guidelines have been developed to simplify this process. Strategic assessment with two functions was mentioned at the seminar: 1) to address root causes of conflict and 2) to identify strategic objectives of missions. Such guidelines can make it easier to decide *what* kind of operation is needed, *if* integrated mission is needed and *how* it should be done.

Another major problem in the UN system concerns the financial mechanisms. Its financial decision-making process is cumbersome and static; budgets are tight, and there are no mechanisms for moving into prioritised sectors. For instance, if there is enough food and no resources for DDR, funds cannot be transferred from the first budget to the latter. Dispersion mechanisms are slow or non-existent. Transfers have to be decided at UN headquarters in

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<sup>7</sup> In the *Report on Integrated Missions: Practical Perspectives and Recommendations* (2005) *Center of gravity* is described as a missions specific concept that “refers to the decisive parameters that must be influenced to achieve the strategic goal that makes all the other efforts possible, and without which the mission is likely to fail”.

New York. In order to achieve integrated missions it is absolutely necessary to give missions more power to adapt budgets to needs, many argue. Others point out that, since security always comes first, delegating the budget to the mission may result in lower priority to the humanitarian and development sector.

The UN is currently working to improve some of these mechanisms, the UN has the experience, but has come only a quarter of the way down the roads towards making that experience pay.

## **The European Union**

Since 2003 the EU has run or completed 15 operations, of which 11 civilian or civilian-military and four military. In these operations the EU has performed a broad range of military and civilian tasks, including comprehensive and long-term security sector reform. As of 2007 there are 10,000 deployed under the ESDP banner, a tenth of the number deployed by the UN. Currently the EU is planning the possible takeover of parts of the UN-operation in Kosovo.

Like the UN, but unlike NATO, the EU perceives itself as an actor capable of providing the full panoply to an operation. The EU has access to a very wide range of instruments, including substantial funding for development assistance.

However, the EU struggles with internal divisions along several lines: First, there are institutional divisions between the Commission on one hand and the Council on the other. The EU's development instrument is controlled by the Commission, while the Council controls the military-dominated stability instrument. In essence this division is more political than practical, and is often overcome in the field. Still, the differences in function and time-scale indicate that improved integration is needed; the development instrument operates with long-term development perspectives and the stability instruments with short-term crisis management perspectives. Moreover, the development instrument depends on time-consuming preparation while the stability instrument has to engage quickly. This is bound to reflect on the efficiency of integrated planning prior to engagement.

The need to harmonise the efforts of the Commission and the Council is increasing. But it is also being claimed that cooperation has been quite smooth during the mission in Aceh. There, the Council was responsible for the monitoring mission while the Commission took charge of long-term reconstruction and the DDR process. Additionally, the European Parliament provided support to the elections in Aceh.

It should also be noted that the Council Secretariat has two new, though yet untested, bodies. The first is a civilian-military cell under the Military Staff to provide for strategic options and integrated planning. The second is a new Headquarters to be used if earmarked multinational HQs are not available; it is led by a civilian commander.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Most multinational headquarters earmarked for the EU are also committed to NATO where they rotate in command of ISAF and as commands or component commands of the NATO Response Force. The new HQ thus provides the EU with a certain autonomy from those dual-hatted structures.

## The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation

At present, NATO has some 50,000 troops involved in operations in Afghanistan, Kosovo and in support of the AU in the Sudan. NATO has also been involved in implementing comprehensive political and security sector reform programmes its Partnership for Peace programme. Still, in the context of crisis management and stability operations NATO has remained primarily a military actor. NATO's focus and willingness to look at new ways of cooperating and coordinating with other actors and multilateral institutions have increased in recent years. NATO, can handle the *what* and the *how* of international crisis management – but not the *why*. In other words, NATO as such cannot provide the incentive and legitimacy for broader crisis management operations. Thus, one can say, the old division between traditional security doctrines, as embodied in NATO Article 5, and peace support operations, which used to be seen as only marginally affecting Western security, has now become blurred. There is a need for a common understanding that NATO engages in peace support operations in order to secure sufficient support and adaptation of contributions in and from its member states.

NATO is currently facing serious challenges in Afghanistan that are both complex and multi-dimensional. There is also a growing recognition that that challenge cannot be met by military means alone. Currently there is broad recognition of the need for a comprehensive approach within the alliance as well as closer integration/cooperation with other relevant partners. This has been a fairly recent development and represents a shift in organizational culture within NATO as an institution as well as within its member states.

The alliance is now a firm believer in the indispensability of the comprehensive approach even though it has not yet agreed on what this should include. At present NATO is focusing on developing the Comprehensive Approach (CA) as an operational concept based on its Effect-based Approach to Operations (EBAO).<sup>9</sup> Nonetheless, not unlike the UN, the organisation is experiencing practical problems concerning its implementation.

NATO is becoming increasingly prepared to embed its efforts in a broader framework. Previously this has been done on a more *ad hoc* basis. However this will require flexibility of will and it may be upset by the constant rotation of personnel in the organisation. Furthermore, NATO wants to contribute to the integrated approach on three levels: *the political and strategic level* with key organisations to establish mutual understanding with all actors; *the operational level*, i.e. planning with other actors and hosts; and at *the tactical level*, where all players must be motivated to work together.

These are some of the challenges currently facing NATO: First, the comprehensive approach is a common commitment. The operations need ownership, ideally under the leadership of the UN together with the local government. Second, NATO needs to coordinate with other players. One problem here is that NATO is often viewed as a 'military machine'. Its efforts on the civilian side, especially the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT) in Afghanistan, have been seen as supporting the military main effort – a view that has provoked humanitarian circles. One result of this is that NATO has had a troubled relationship with humanitarian agencies and with NGOs in particular. Third, NATO recognises the importance of a civilian–military interface especially in an early phase, and thus the need for civilian capabilities. NATO has currently no requirements to develop such capabilities itself.

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<sup>9</sup> Editors' note: The relationship between CA and EBAO is not totally clear as of October 2007, mainly because of NATO's need to integrate with others.

Even if the need for cooperation with others is an important focus regarding NATO, it is also recognised that the alliance needs stronger internal cohesion. As the debate on contributions to the campaigns in Southern Afghanistan has shown, NATO members need to recognize the indivisibility of security, and the important of sharing benefits and burdens equally. The operation in Afghanistan has highlighted NATO's problems with fragmentation and lack of coordination as responsibility for different fields and tasks has been given to different member states.

## **Cooperation among the main actors**

The UN, the EU and NATO have been major actors in the operations in Afghanistan and the Balkans, and they have all supported the AU operation in Darfur. The EU has worked together with the UN in Africa in the MONUC (UN's mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo), but also with political and financial issues in order to increase AU capabilities in peace-support operations. Moreover the EU has also taken over after NATO in the operations in Macedonia and Bosnia.

NATO and especially the EU acknowledge the UN as a leading actor and recognise the legitimacy of UNSC resolutions. However, NATO and EU member states are no longer key contributors to UN operations.

The EU battlegroups have been deployed twice in support of UN operations in the DRC, including the 'prototype battlegroup' deployed in Operation Artemis in 2003. The existence of the battlegroups provides the UN with a strategic reserve of high quality. That arrangement is very much appreciated by the UN. The EU insists, however, that deployments of battlegroups are not automatic: the EU will decide on each separate case.

For the EU, the UN Security Council is the central source of legitimacy for collective action, and resolutions of the UNSC are considered the best basis for EU operations.

Today the UN is operating alongside the EU and NATO in Afghanistan, Kosovo and Bosnia. There seems to be broad agreement that the UN needs to be in the lead of integrated missions due to the UN's comparative advantages. A major challenge in this work is how to bring together all UN concerns, and make sure that also NGO concerns are reflected in the integrated mission planning process. This is an important aspect of the planning process in order to provide security and access for the humanitarian and development organisations in the field as well as a better understanding of when and how to distinguish. It was also noted that one should abandon the idea that peacebuilding is sequential, and think instead in terms of parallel approaches.

The dilemmas of integration versus independence highlights many challenges. Still the DSRSG (Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General) now also being humanitarian coordinator is in general being supported. However, it is claimed that this move puts the humanitarian coordinator too close to the government, especially when the government in question is a party to a conflict. There could be coordination in infrastructure and transport for instance, but humanitarian organisations are different actors and thus pose other kind of challenges.

Some of the remaining obstacles to the commonly agreed need among all organisations to improve their working relation need to be addressed. The main challenge is to develop better

inter-organisational mechanisms to ease and encourage cooperation. NATO is too often seen as a military machine and this has resulted in a cultural gap between the UN and NATO and to some extent with the EU as well.

## **Conclusions**

The United Nations, the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation have all intensified their work on developing operational concepts for multinational and multidimensional peace support operations. Even if substantial progress has been made by all three organisations, they also have a long way to go in developing internally coherent operational concepts.

In this context, some of the MNE-5 concepts (e.g. Comprehensive Approach, MNISP, CIP/CIME and EBAO) are arguably artificially non-political. Some of the “real-world” challenges discussed in this paper have probably been consciously disregarded for practical, and experiment design, reasons. Others however, may have been unconsciously overlooked. Omitting such challenges could possibly reduce the applicability of the MNE concepts and doctrines in future real-world operations. A higher involvement of the UN and EU in the MNE-5 could be one way forward to address this. The organisations are certainly present and play fundamental roles in conflict and crisis solution throughout the world, so the MNE is likely to benefit from their participation.

Lastly, integration should not be considered a goal in itself. It is a means to achieve better results in today’s complex crisis and peace operations. Therefore one should bear in mind that an integrated operational concept is a tool, and a tool that needs to be finely tuned according to the task at hand. Also here, form should follow function.