



DIIS REPORT  
THE CIVIL-MILITARY AGENDA



# DIIS REPORT

## **NATO'S COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO CRISIS RESPONSE OPERATIONS**

A WORK IN SLOW PROGRESS

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## **Executive Summary**

The aims of this report are to analyse the evolution of the Alliance's Comprehensive Approach (CA) to date, to identify the principal obstacles standing in the way of further progress and to suggest how they can be overcome or circumvented. CA is based on the premise that operations aimed at creating a sustainable peace must employ the relevant civilian and military instruments in a coordinated and concerted manner in order to succeed. Ideally, the civilian and military actors involved in such operations should agree on the political end-state and engage in the joint planning, execution and evaluation of their operational activities in order to achieve it. Since the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) does not have the civilian capacities that a fully-fledged CA requires, the Alliance is faced with a dual challenge as it seeks to develop its contribution to CA. It must get its own house in order by creating a common understanding of its role in CA, as well as the mindset, doctrine and procedures that will enable it to employ its own resources in accordance with CA requirements for success. In addition, it must also develop an understanding of and cooperative relationships with the organizations and local actors it is likely to cooperate with in the field. NATO must, in short, conduct its own activities in accordance with CA requirements, and at the same time be both willing and able to plug and play with other actors who can bring to the table the capacities that are required to meet the political objectives of a given operation.

To determine how far NATO has come in meeting this challenge, the report examines (1) how far NATO has come in defining its own role and contribution to a CA involving non-NATO actors, (2) how far the Alliance has come in adopting a CA to the planning, implementation and evaluation of its own operational activities, and finally (3) how far NATO has come in establishing effective CA cooperation with the EU, the UN and the NGO community.

The report concludes that NATO has made considerable progress in all three areas and that the fear of defeat in Afghanistan will keep the process of CA implementation alive. At the same time, it also finds that the Alliance has a long way to go before it is capable of implementing CA in its own operations or has established the kind of cooperation with the European Union (EU), the United Nations (UN) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that effective CA requires. The pace of progress has been slow in the past and will remain so in the future. Within the Alliance the adoption of CA is being hampered by disagreements over NATO's role in world politics, disagreements

over the extent to which NATO should use its military capabilities to fill the gap if civilian actors are incapable of carrying out their CA tasks, an instinctive military reluctance to engage in civilian gap-filling and finally disagreement over what CA means and how it should be implemented in Afghanistan.

As a result of these disagreements, the level of CA institutionalization within the Alliance remains in its infancy. At the strategic level, CA concepts, doctrine and procedures have not yet been formally adopted, and although the process of institutionalization will benefit from the CA principles found in existing Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) and Peace Support Operations (PSO) doctrines, the various CA initiatives undertaken by the Allied Command Transformation and the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) course being conducted at the NATO School, it will still take a long time. NATO has made more CA progress in Afghanistan, but the degree of institutionalization is low here as well. The International Security Assistance Force's (ISAF) Headquarters has little influence over the operations conducted by the 26 PRTs, and neither the use of development advisors in the ISAF Commander's staff nor the practice of involving civilian actors in ISAF force planning has been institutionalized. Finally, the value added by NATO's Senior Civilian Representative (SCR) is unclear.

Progress has also been slow with respect to establishing effective CA cooperation with the EU, UN and NGOs since none of them have been eager to enter into closer relations with the Alliance. Official NATO-EU cooperation has been paralysed by the Turkey-Cyprus dispute and French concerns that closer NATO-EU cooperation would increase US influence over the EU and hamper efforts to build a stronger European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) capable of acting independently of the United States (US). As a consequence, cooperation only takes place at the operational level with an eye to finding pragmatic solutions to practical problems. NATO-UN cooperation has improved steadily in recent years as a result of effective cooperation on the ground in Kosovo and Afghanistan, but political unease in New York and a limited NATO willingness to provide operational support to UN-led operations mean that effective CA cooperation is unlikely in the near future. NATO-NGOs relations are limited at the strategic level and poor in Afghanistan as a result of ISAF's inability to create security and the heavy PRT involvement in humanitarian and development activities.

Since many of the obstacles that have hampered CA progress to date will remain in place in the short term, this report has sought to formulate policy recommendations

that member states may be able to agree on in the short term or that they can implement immediately on a national basis without waiting for a consensus to form at the NATO level. The 24 recommendations made throughout the report are summarised in the conclusion at the end in the hope that they can contribute towards moving the process of CA implementation in NATO forward.

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## Introduction

The eighteenth-century English writer Samuel Johnson is credited with the remark that ‘nothing concentrates the mind like the prospect of a hanging’. One would have thought that the spectre of defeat in Afghanistan would have had a similar effect on NATO’s member states in inducing them to adopt CA quickly, especially as the Alliance has hailed CA as a sine qua non for success in several of its statements on ISAF.<sup>1</sup> This has not been the case, however. Progress has been slow since Denmark put CA on the Alliance’s agenda in late 2004 and tried to kick-start discussions by circulating a non-paper and hosting a NATO seminar in Copenhagen in June 2005.<sup>2</sup> The Danish initiative was followed by difficult negotiations that led to the endorsement of the idea by the Alliance in the Riga Summit Declaration in November 2006.<sup>3</sup> Translating this endorsement into practical policy has not been easy. It took sixteen months to reach agreement on an Action Plan for developing and implementing NATO’s contribution to CA. The Action Plan was finally adopted at the Bucharest summit in April 2008, and responsibility for implementing it has now been given to a Comprehensive Approach Task Force at NATO Headquarters (HQ), which has participation from Allied Command Operations (ACO) and Allied Command Transformation (ACT). Officials and diplomats involved in the implementation process do not expect it to be any easier or quicker than the process that resulted in the adoption of the Action Plan. This is partly because the Allies continue to differ on how NATO should contribute to CA, and partly because the Action Plan is general in nature. Translating it into practical policy will consequently require a lot of hard work.<sup>4</sup>

The aims of this report are to analyse the evolution of the Alliance’s CA to date, to identify the principal obstacles standing in the way of further progress and to suggest how they can be overcome or circumvented. Since many of the obstacles that have hampered CA progress to date will remain in place in the short term, the emphasis

<sup>1</sup> See for instance NATO, *Assisting Afghanistan: the importance of a comprehensive approach*, Keynote address by NATO Deputy Secretary General Ambassador Claudio Bisogniero, at the GLOBSEC Conference 17 January 2008; NATO, *Bucharest Summit Declaration*, Press Release (2008)049, 3 April 2008; NATO, *ISAF’s Strategic Vision*, Press Release (2008)052, 3 April 2008.

<sup>2</sup> Kristian Fischer and Jan Top Christensen, ‘Improving Civil-Military Cooperation the Danish Way’, *NATO Review*, (Summer 2005).

<sup>3</sup> NATO, *Riga Summit Declaration*, Press Release (2006)150, 29 November 2006.

<sup>4</sup> Interviews with sources in NATO HQ, June-July 2008. See also the assessment provided by Friis Arne Petersen and Hans Binnendijk, ‘From Comprehensive Approach to Comprehensive Capability’, *NATO Review*, No. 3 (March 2008).

is placed on policy recommendations that member states may be able to agree on in the short term or that they can implement immediately on a national basis without waiting for a consensus to form at the NATO level.

The report falls in two main parts. The first part defines CA and presents four requirements that NATO's CA must meet to be successful. The second part assesses how far NATO has come in meeting these requirements, identifies the principal obstacles ahead and suggests how they can be overcome or circumvented. A conclusion at the end sums up the principal findings and provides an overview of the recommendations made throughout the report.

## CA – what it is and what it requires

CA is based on the premise that the creation of sustainable peace in societies ravaged by war hinges on providing security, humanitarian assistance, reconstruction and development, governance and the rule of law in a concerted and coordinated manner. It is a way of thinking and a tool that can be applied to all phases of conflict, to all the actors involved and at all operational levels. Importantly, it is assumed to be more than merely bolting civilian instruments on to a military operation or vice versa. It is not enough for each organization involved to carry out its own mission, whether military, humanitarian or development-oriented, successfully. None of these activities can succeed in isolation; instead they must be conducted as a part of an overall plan so that they support and reinforce one another. This means that each actor involved must understand the big picture, buy into a common plan and take the requirements of the other actors into account when conducting its own activities. Military forces conducting their operations in accordance with CA requirements cannot merely focus on defeating or deterring armed opposition; they must do so in a way that supports and reinforces the operations being conducted by the civilian organizations and the host government.

Four requirements are necessary to realize CA in its ideal form:

- 1) Shared understandings of the problems at hand and agreement on the political-strategic aims and objectives that international involvement in a given conflict should seek to achieve.
- 2) Doctrine and institutional procedures facilitating the formulation of common operational objectives and strategies, as well as joint planning, implementation and evaluation with other actors in all phases of an operation (pre-deployment, deployment, post-deployment).
- 3) A culture of cooperation and mutual understanding providing the different actors involved with the mindset required to think and act in a comprehensive manner.
- 4) Economic, civilian and military capacities required to implement CA in the field.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Based on Karsten Friis and Pia Jarmyr (eds.), 'Comprehensive Approach: challenges and opportunities in complex crisis management', *NUPI Report*, Security in Practice No. 11, 2008; OECD, *Whole of Government Approaches to Fragile States* (OECD Publishing, 2006); Stewart Patrick and Kaysie Brown, *Greater than the Sum of Its Parts? Assessing "Whole of Government" Approaches to Fragile States* (New York, NY: International Peace Academy, 2007); The Stabilisation Unit, *Comprehensive Approach Core Script* (London: 10 November 2006).

Adopting CA consequently presents a dual challenge to the actors involved. Each actor will have to get its own house in order by creating a common understanding of its role in CA, as well as the mindset, doctrine and procedures that will enable it to employ its own resources in accordance with CA success requirements. In addition, it must also develop an understanding of and cooperative relationships with the organizations and local actors it is likely to cooperate with in the field. Each organisation must, in short, conduct its own activities in accordance with CA requirements and at the same time be both willing and able to plug and play with other actors who can bring to the table the capacities that are required to meet the political objectives of any given operation.

In order to determine how far NATO has come in meeting these requirements, the analysis will be structured by the following three questions:

- 1) To what extent has the need for CA been accepted by the Alliance, and how far has it come in defining its own role and the capabilities it is willing to bring to the table when participating in operations involving non-NATO actors?
- 2) How far has the Alliance come in adopting doctrine, training, standards and procedures that will allow it to incorporate a CA into the planning, implementation and evaluation of its own operational activities?
- 3) How far has the Alliance come in establishing the understanding of and cooperative relationships with other actors that are required for effective CA?

The fourth requirement on economic, civilian and military capacities will not be analysed separately, as the problems related to this requirement will become clear in the analysis of the first three.

## Embracing CA and defining a role?

While all NATO members agree that it is necessary to employ CA to win the peace in crisis response operations, they do not agree on the Alliance's role in it. It was clear from the start at the Copenhagen seminar on CA in 2005 that France wanted NATO's role to be as limited as possible. In the negotiations that followed, France defined two red lines: first, that NATO should not develop civilian capabilities or attempt to take the lead and coordinate other actors; and secondly, that NATO should place its military capacities 'at the service of the international community' and nothing else.<sup>6</sup> While France has played a more constructive role in the CA negotiations since the election of President Sarkozy, the two red lines still stand. The President has thus made clear that he wants NATO to remain a 'defence organisation of a military nature' centred on Europe's security, and that he is opposed to NATO becoming a global organisation 'on the fringes of military, humanitarian and police activities'; NATO should not compete with the UN and the EU.<sup>7</sup>

The diplomatic efforts aimed at building consensus within the Alliance took the French concerns into account. Both a non-paper circulated by Denmark, Canada, the Czech Republic, the Netherlands, Norway and Slovakia in the spring of 2006 and an eight-nation letter sent by these countries and the US to the NATO Secretary General (SG) in September of that year emphasized that NATO should not develop civilian capabilities and that NATO should improve its coordination with other international actors on an equal basis. NATO coordination of other organizations was explicitly ruled out. These points are also emphasized in various statements by the NATO SG and in the summit declarations from Riga and Bucharest. These statements suggest that NATO members agree on the following:

### *General CA principles*

- Success in operations aimed at building a lasting peace requires a CA across security, governance and development efforts, as well as between all local and international partners, in support of the local government. There can be no lasting security without development and no development without security.

<sup>6</sup> Interviews in NATO HQ, June-July 2008. This position has subsequently been reiterated publicly on several occasions. See, for instance: Michèle Alliot-Marie, 'Don't diminish NATO's effectiveness', *The Washington Times*, 20 October 2006; Jacques Chirac, 'Europe must shoulder its share of the NATO burden', *The Guardian*, 28 November 2006; Senior Civil Emergency Planning Committee Representative, French Delegation to NATO, Olivier Landour, 'Civil-military cooperation from the viewpoint of civil emergency planning', *PerCEptions Newsletter*, No. 2 (2007), p. 7.

<sup>7</sup> Antonio Ortiz, 'Sarkozy's Defence Policy: An Early Look', *ARI*, No. 69/2007, p. 3.

- CA is not something owned or dominated by NATO but should be seen in terms of the Alliance's contribution to a CA by the whole of the international community. A CA is one that fosters cooperation and coordination between international organisations, individual states, agencies and NGOs, the private sector and the host government, and effective implementation requires the cooperation and contribution of all major actors.
- CA requires structured and effective coordination at the local, national and institutional levels, where each organisation's efforts are complemented and mutually reinforced. This should be done with a view to achieving common, or at least similar goals, and it must be done in a way that does not compromise any organisation's independence. Nor must it infringe on the humanitarian space to which NGOs understandably attach great importance.
- CA does not require NATO to establish civilian capabilities.

*Five improvements needed to enhance NATO's contribution to CA*<sup>8</sup>

- Better CA planning and conduct of NATO operations. Broader and more timely Allied political-military assessments and planning of our operations that take full account of all the military and non-military aspects of a NATO engagement through the entire duration of our presence, with clearly identified goals.
- Better application of NATO's lessons-learned process, and greater use of NATO training, education and exercises. Joint training of civilian and military personnel at all levels should be employed in order to enhance mutual trust and confidence between NATO, its partners, and other international and local actors.
- Better practical co-operation at all levels with external actors involved in operations with NATO participation: the UN, the EU, the World Bank and other international organisations, non-member states contributing to NATO operations, NGOs, private companies and relevant local actors.
- Better capability to bring military support to stabilisation operations and reconstruction in all phases of a conflict, including the creation of a safe and secure environment, within the full range of missions. Military support to reconstruction efforts should be provided to the extent to which conditions in the theatre of operations prevent other actors with primary responsibilities in this field from carrying out their tasks. This should embrace the ability to support security-sector reform (SSR), including demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration, and to bring military support, within available means and capabilities, to humanitarian relief operations.

<sup>8</sup> These improvements also appear in NATO's classified CA Action Plan according to my sources in NATO HQ.

- Better public messaging and public diplomacy. CA cannot be effective unless it is complemented by sustained and coherent public messages.<sup>9</sup>

The reason that things will not be plain sailing from here is that profound disagreements in three areas will complicate efforts to realise this vision for effective CA. The first is the disagreement over NATO's role in world politics, in particular, whether NATO should remain a regional actor with a focus on the transatlantic region, or become a player in the management of global security issues in cooperation with like-minded democratic countries in other parts of the world such as Australia, Japan, New Zealand, and South Korea. The US has been the principal advocate of a global role since the late 1990s, whereas France has led the opposition insisting that NATO remain a regional organization with a principal focus on collective national defence.<sup>10</sup> As mentioned above, Sarkozy has also taken this position since he became president. This disagreement is having a negative impact on the development of NATO's CA role because of French concerns that the US may seek to use the general consensus on CA to give NATO a global role. Moreover, the new members who joined the Alliance in order to obtain a security guarantee against Russia also have an interest in ensuring that NATO does not divert too many resources away from collective defence towards out-of-Europe CA activities.<sup>11</sup>

The second area of disagreement hampering CA implementation concerns the extent of the military involvement. Determining how much of a role the military should play in CA and with what capabilities remains a topic of debate both at the national level within member states and at the Alliance level. This is a debate that is unlikely to be settled in the near future as it taps into the fundamental identity question concerning what 'proper soldiering' is all about. During the 1990s Western militaries generally took a minimalist approach to the non-military tasks that soldiers could be asked to carry out in the context of peace operations. Military involvement in civilian tasks that was not good for force protection was resisted and seen as mission creep. This was especially true of the US military, but it also applied to most Western armies. NATO members were

<sup>9</sup> Based on NATO, *Comprehensive Political Guidance*, 29 November 2006; NATO, *Riga Summit Declaration*; Speech by NATO Secretary General, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer at the Munich Conference of Security Policy, 9 February 2007; Speech by NATO Secretary General at the Microsoft-BBC-NATO - Defence Leaders Forum, Noordwijk aan zee, 23 April 2007; NATO, *Assisting Afghanistan*; NATO, *Bucharest Summit Declaration*; NATO, *ISAF's Strategic Vision*.

<sup>10</sup> House of Commons Defence Committee, *The future of NATO and European defence*, Ninth Report of Session 2007–08, (2008), para. 38. For an up-to-date discussion of this debate see Trine Flockhart and Kristian Soby Kristensen, 'NATO and Global Partnerships – To Be Global or to Act Globally?', *DIIS Report*, No 7, 2008.

<sup>11</sup> On this point, see Jan Gaspers, 'France's Rapprochement with NATO: Paving the Way for an EU Caucus?', *European Security Review*, No. 40 (September 2008), p. 4.

thus extremely reluctant to take on law and order tasks in Kosovo to fill the vacuum created by the withdrawal of Serbian security and police forces in 1999, and the coalition forces intervening in Iraq in 2003 also refused to fill the law and order vacuum created by fall of Baghdad and the collapse of the Iraqi police and security forces.<sup>12</sup>

As a result of the problems experienced in Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq, most NATO member states have recognized that armies engaged in stabilization and peacebuilding may have to fill gaps and conduct civilian tasks in a transitional period if no civilian actors are present to do so. This is also reflected in the Comprehensive Political Guidance (CPG) agreed at the Riga summit.<sup>13</sup> The problem remains, however, that most armies are still deeply ambivalent about using their capabilities to fill the various civilian gaps that can result from the collapse of a state's authority, and none of them have taken effective steps to prepare their forces for such 'gap-filling' functions. Any such development is hampered by the fact that NATO's armies are caught in a dilemma. Most if not all of them would prefer the relevant civilian organizations to establish the deployable civilian capacities that are required for effective stabilization, reconstruction and peacebuilding in the aftermath of war. They consequently have little incentive to move ahead and prepare their forces for civilian gap-filling, as this would lessen the pressure on the civilian sector to establish these capabilities. The problem with this approach is that civilian capacity-building remains in its infancy, and that the relevant civilian government agencies and organizations have generally shown little interest in developing the rapid reaction capacities required.<sup>14</sup> Since the civilian rapid-reaction capacities established by the UN and the EU also remain limited, the implication is that the responsibility for performing important civilian tasks in the foreseeable future is likely fall to armies precisely because the civilian actors have a limited capacity for rapid reaction and for operating in hostile environments.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Peter Viggo Jakobsen, 'Military Forces and Public Security Challenges', in Michael Pugh and Waheguru Pal Singh Sidhu (eds.), *The UN and Regional Security: Europe and Beyond* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2003), pp. 137-153.

<sup>13</sup> *NATO, Comprehensive Political Guidance*, para. 6.

<sup>14</sup> The 10,000-strong Canadian civilian roster CANADEM is the exception to the rule. According to CANADEM Executive Director Paul LaRose-Edwards, CANADEM is capable of deploying more civilian experts at short notice than the Canadian government has been willing to fund. CANADEM facilitated the deployment of 150 civilian experts to Afghanistan in the 2001-2007 period and has established a 300-strong roster of Afghanistan experts. See <http://canadem.ca/canadem-in-afghanistan/>

<sup>15</sup> On the problems of civilian capacity-building, see Joseph A. Christoff and Janet A. St. Laurent, 'Stabilization and Reconstruction: Actions Needed to Improve Governmentwide Planning and Capabilities for Future Operations', Testimony before the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, Committee on Armed Services, House of Representatives (United States Government Accountability Office, GAO-08-228T, 30 October 2007), p. 17; Peter Viggo Jakobsen, 'The ESDP and Civilian Rapid Reaction: Adding Value is Harder than Expected', *European Security*, Vol. 15, No. 3 (September 2006), pp. 299-321; Terrence K. Kelly et al., *Stabilization and Reconstruction Staffing Developing U.S. Civilian Personnel Capabilities* (Santa Monica, CA, Rand Corporation, MG-580-RC, 2008).

Striking the right balance that will enable NATO to provide enough gap-filling to hold the ring until other actors are capable of taking over without removing the civilian incentive for capacity-building is difficult. While it is easy to agree with the recommendation made by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs that the approach should be ‘as civilian as possible and as military as necessary’,<sup>16</sup> this recommendation offers no guidance as to exactly what capacities the military should deploy. Agreement has yet to be struck as to what gap-filling capacities NATO should be capable of deploying, in what quantities and by whom. Reluctant gap-fillers consequently have a strong incentive to sit back and wait for other members to move first in the hope that their actions will remove the need for them to act. The uncertainty about what is required and the deep military reluctance to engage in ‘civilian’ gap-filling will prevent the rapid development of relevant CA capabilities.

The third area creating problems for the implementation of the CA Action Plan is the internal disagreement that NATO’s ISAF mission in Afghanistan has given rise to. For the US, ISAF is a counterinsurgency (COIN) operation and in American eyes COIN equals CA and may involve high-intensity combat. As Eric Edelman, US Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, put it in his address to a NATO conference on CA in 2007:

For those who believe a comprehensive approach is necessary, we are in violent agreement. So if I slip during the course of my remarks and say “counterinsurgency,” please just pretend that you heard “comprehensive approach”.<sup>17</sup>

Canada, Denmark, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom (UK), which are conducting combat operations in the southern parts of Afghanistan, agree with this interpretation that CA is part and parcel of COIN in the sense that they view a coordinated approach in which combat (if necessary) and reconstruction go hand in hand as a sine qua non for success.<sup>18</sup> The ‘Clear-Hold-Build’ method advocated in the new US COIN manual illustrates this logic nicely.<sup>19</sup> By contrast, other NATO

<sup>16</sup> The Centre for European Reform and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Recommendations for increased synergy between defence, diplomacy and development* (Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2007).

<sup>17</sup> US Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Eric Edelman, *A Comprehensive Approach to Modern Insurgency: Afghanistan and Beyond*, Keynote Address for the NATO Conference on A Comprehensive Approach for Afghanistan, Freising, Germany, 27 March, 2007, p. 4.

<sup>18</sup> See Jon Elmer and Anthony Fenton, ‘Canada’s Counterinsurgency Strategy’, *Znet*, 27 March 2007; Robbert Gabriëls, ‘A 3D Approach to Security and Development’, *PfP Consortium Quarterly Journal*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (Summer 2007), pp. 67-73; Udenrigsministeriet and Forsvarsministeriet, *Den danske indsats i Afghanistan 2008-2012* (2008), pp. 22-23; UK Ministry of Defence, *Speech by Air Chief Marshal Sir Jock Stirrup, Chief of the Defence Staff*, Royal United Service Institute, 3 December 2007.

<sup>19</sup> FM 3-24 *Counter-insurgency* (2006), para. 5-51ff.

members, including Germany, Italy and Spain, who have refused to deploy forces to the south and allow their troops to engage in combat, interpret the ISAF operation as a peace mission that should focus on winning hearts and minds through reconstruction and development. In their view, the US and the NATO members in the south should re-consider their high-intensity approach and place greater emphasis on civilian means and Afghan capacity-building.<sup>20</sup> This dispute is not easily resolved as it goes far deeper than the short-term electoral considerations that figure prominently in analyses of this problem: it is also a function of different strategic cultures and threat perceptions that cannot be changed overnight. Since the member states will view the development of CA capabilities through the prism of Afghanistan and seek to push it in the direction they prefer (COIN versus peace mission), it is likely to have a negative impact on the process.

### **Key obstacles to the definition of a NATO CA and suggestions to overcome them**

It is difficult to see how the disagreements related to NATO's regional and global roles can be resolved in the short term. The growing tension between Russia and the Alliance hardly helps members to argue in favour of a growing involvement in out-of-Europe operations. To facilitate the process of consensus-building, strict adherence to the red lines drawn by France seems vital, and it would have the additional advantage of contributing to a clear division of labour between NATO and the other key actors that we return to below: the EU, NATO and the NGOs. Similarly, NATO should refrain from developing the specialized stabilization units that particularly American scholars have been calling for, as this would be bound to trigger resistance from France and the new members who want NATO to stay as 'military as possible'.<sup>21</sup> The creation of specialized stabilization and reconstruction units would also be extremely costly, and it is probably only the US that can afford the luxury of having two types of unit within the same force. Instead the challenge will be to train and prepare existing forces so that they can undertake both combat operations and civilian-gap filling.<sup>22</sup> Since the civilian gap-filling requirements are likely to be context-specific and subject to change within the same mission over time, it would not be cost-effective to train

<sup>20</sup> House of Commons Defence Committee, *The future of NATO and European defence*, para. 81-82.

<sup>21</sup> Hans Binnendijk and Richard L. Kugler, 'Needed: A NATO Stabilization and Reconstruction Force', *Defence Horizons*, No. 45, September 2004.

<sup>22</sup> The new FM 3-0, *Operations* (February 2008) also shows that the US Army has rejected the idea of specialized stabilization forces and wants its soldiers to be able to conduct continuous simultaneous combinations of offensive, defensive, and stability or civil support tasks.

military personnel for a range of gap-filling functions. Instead, training in civilian gap-filling should be add-ons tailored to the mission at hand and provided in the mission-oriented training that most contingents receive prior to their deployments. Gap-filling should be considered an add-on to conventional military training, just as PSO training is at present in most NATO armies.

The Allies need to change tack in order to prevent the disagreement over Afghanistan from derailing the CA capacity-building process. To date the COIN-oriented members have sought to address this issue by putting heavy pressure on those members that are refusing to deploy forces to the south. Germany has served as a *Prügelknabe* in bearing the brunt of this criticism. That this has not induced the German government to change course is hardly surprising considering that such a move would amount to electoral suicide.<sup>23</sup> It would therefore seem more sensible to take these differences for granted, strategize around them and ask member states that are incapable of providing combat troops for domestic reasons for greater contributions in other areas.

<sup>23</sup> On German domestic politics, see Timo Noetzel and Benjamin Schreer, 'Counter-what? Germany and Counter-Insurgency in Afghanistan', *The RUSI Journal*, Vol. 153, No. 1 (February 2008), pp. 42-46.

## **Gearing up for CA within the Alliance?**

The analysis, which is aimed at determining how far NATO has come in adopting CA to the planning, implementation and evaluation of its own activities, will be structured by the strategic and the operational levels,<sup>24</sup> since CA must be adopted at all levels to work. The analysis of the strategic level will focus on the CA-relevant activities and capabilities that exist at the institutional level in NATO, whereas the analysis of the operational levels will examine how ISAF has sought to implement CA in Afghanistan.

### **Doctrine and concepts**

Given the problems and disagreements identified in the previous section, it can hardly come as a surprise that NATO has made least progress at the strategic level. After all, agreement on a CA Action Plan was only achieved in the run-up to the Bucharest Summit. New doctrines, training, planning procedures and standards have consequently not yet been formally adopted to reflect CA requirements. This should not be taken to mean that NATO is starting completely from scratch, however. Existing NATO doctrine on CIMIC and PSO contain many of the principles required for the implementation of CA, and work on CA doctrine, training and information-sharing has been going on for some time.

NATO personnel trained in accordance with NATO CIMIC and PSO doctrines will be familiar with the overall logic and principles of CA, as these doctrines emphasize the importance of establishing effective cooperation with civilian actors. They also say that the creation of a self-sustaining peace requires both military security and civilian-led efforts to promote reconciliation, reconstruction and development. The following passage from NATO's PSO doctrine effectively advocates a CA in all but name:

Complex emergencies require a response which co-ordinates the actions of military, diplomatic and humanitarian agencies involved, to include international, governmental, non-governmental, and private voluntary organisations. As a PSO is multidimensional in tasks and participation, co-operation between all

<sup>24</sup> The operational and tactical levels are analysed as one because I have limited information about CA implementation at the tactical level.

participating elements and co-ordination of all agencies is essential to achieve the strategic objectives and political end-state.<sup>25</sup>

Add the CIMIC principles of cultural awareness, common goals, shared responsibility, transparency and effective communications,<sup>26</sup> and it should be clear that existing doctrine does contain important building blocks that will be central to CA doctrine as well. At the same time, doctrinal adjustments are required, as NATO PSOs are defined as operations characterized by consent and impartiality, and the CIMIC doctrine emphasizes the primacy of the military mission. These principles do not apply in the operation in Afghanistan, and there is also a need to emphasize the comprehensive aspect more, adjust planning procedures and so on. An example of how this could be done can be found in the British CIMIC and PSO doctrines, which have been adjusted to the requirements of CA in recent years.<sup>27</sup>

ACT is involved in a number of activities that could make it easier for the Alliance to adopt CA. The first is the efforts to incorporate aspects of an Effects Based Approach to Operations (EBAO) into current NATO doctrine and procedures as part of the broader transformation agenda. EBAO thinking should facilitate the adoption of CA as it encourages military commanders and planners to take a holistic approach to the planning, conduct and evaluation of all types of military operations. The idea is to provide 'a more comprehensive, coherent, and coordinated way of thinking that enables the commanders and planners to see beyond the military means being employed, by introducing the description of effects and enhancing interaction with other actors.'<sup>28</sup>

Second, ACT participation in Multinational Experiment 5 (MNE 5) may also help to pave the way for CA. MNE 5 is an international experiment running from 2006-2009 with the participation of several NATO countries (Canada, France, Germany, Norway, the UK and the US), which, through, a series of workshops, seminars and exercises, aims at developing better methods and processes for employing CA in the planning, conduct and evaluation of complex operations.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>25</sup> AJP-3.4.1, *NATO Peace Support Operations Doctrine* (July 2001), para. 0106.

<sup>26</sup> AJP-9, *NATO Civil-Military Co-operation (CIMIC) Doctrine* (June 2003), pp. 2-2—2-4.

<sup>27</sup> JDP 3-90, *Civil-Military Co-Operation (CIMIC)* (July 2006); JWP 3-50 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, *The Military Contribution to Peace Support Operations* (June 2004).

<sup>28</sup> NATO, *Effects Based Approach to Operations (EBAO) Handbook*, Bi-Sc Pre-Doctrinal Handbook (4 December 2007), para. 1-1.

<sup>29</sup> *USJFCOM Public Affairs, Fact Sheet: Multinational Experiment 5 (MNE 5)*, February 2007.

Third, ACT is facilitating the adoption of CA through its conceptual work on NATO's civil-military relations (the Future Comprehensive Civil-Military Interaction Concept) and its experimental efforts to enhance NATO's ability to share relevant information with civilian actors involved in crisis operations (Civil-Military Fusion Centre and the Civil-Military Overview). The objective is to improve NATO's relations with civilian actors involved in complex crises by creating a website where all actors can share and obtain relevant open-source information covering the areas of Economic Stabilization, Governance & Participation, Humanitarian Assistance, Infrastructure, Justice & Reconciliation, Security, and Social Well-being. A prototype website currently covers the conflicts in Darfur and Afghanistan.<sup>30</sup>

Finally, ACT has promoted the idea of establishing a Civilian Actors Advisor (CIVAD) position on NATO staffs at both the operational and tactical levels. The CIVAD would ideally be a person with practical experience of how the relevant international organisations, NGOs and military forces function and conduct their operations in the field. The principal function of the CIVAD would not be to instruct the military on how to do development and reconstruction but to advise it on how best to engage and support civilian actors. A central CIVAD role would thus be to keep the approach as 'civilian as possible' and caution the military against taking over civilian roles unless it is absolutely necessary to do so. ACT is hopeful that its proposal will be approved in the near future so that the hiring of CIVADs can begin in 2009.<sup>31</sup>

## **Training**

NATO is currently running one CA course, namely the 1-week PRT Pre-Deployment Course that the NATO School has conducted since 2006. Its aim is to provide common knowledge and understanding of the ISAF mission to personnel dealing with PRTs and to harmonize structures within the NATO chain of command. In addition to these courses, NATO and its member states have conducted a number of CA seminars, conferences, simulations and exercises, but the Alliance obviously has a long way to go before CA can be said to have been mainstreamed in its training activities. Finally, the CIMIC and PSO courses offered by the NATO School and the NATO CIMIC Centre of Excellence can be considered CA-relevant, as they will make it easier for NATO personnel to adopt CA in the planning and conduct of operations.

<sup>30</sup> See Tony Icajan, 'Civil-military Fusion Centre and Civil Military Overview (CFC/CMO)', Powerpoint briefing, 15 April 2008.

<sup>31</sup> Paul LaRose-Edwards, 'NATO and Militaries as Trusted Partners in Civil-Military Interaction', *Pearson Papers*, Vol. 11, No. 1 (Spring 2008), pp. 25-27; and email correspondence with Paul LaRose-Edwards, June-July 2008.

## **Civilian capacities**

NATO's civil emergency planning capacities are relevant in a CA context, even if they have not been developed with this purpose in mind. NATO has eight Planning Boards and Committees composed of national representatives across a range of civilian sectors and a network of 350 civil experts located in NATO and Partner countries across the Euro-Atlantic area. NATO also has civilian rapid reaction teams, composed of civil experts taken from the Planning Boards and Committees, which can be deployed within 24 hours to assess civilian requirements across the functional areas of transport, communications, civil protection, industrial planning and supply, medical matters, food and agriculture.<sup>32</sup> In 2006, civil protection experts advised ISAF commanders in Afghanistan on the handling of commercial toxic chemicals. In addition, the military can draw on the staff serving in the civil emergency planning section of the Operations Division at the NATO HQ for advice and support, and this staff can also act as an initial crisis-response capability.

## **NATO in Afghanistan**

Unsurprisingly, it is in Afghanistan that NATO has made the most progress towards adopting CA. Here Samuel Johnson's 'hanging effect' is clearly at work, as the introduction of CA elements in ISAF has been driven by operational necessity in order to avoid defeat.

## **CA initiatives at ISAF HQ level**

Five steps have been taken at the HQ level in Kabul to enable ISAF to implement CA. The first came in 2003 when NATO sent an SCR to Kabul to represent the political leadership of the Alliance. The SCR is tasked to work closely with the ISAF Commander (COMISAF) to ensure that NATO adopts a CA to its own activities and cooperates effectively with the Afghan government, Afghan civil society, international organisations and NGOs engaged in Afghanistan, and neighbouring countries.<sup>33</sup> So far the value added by the SCR has been limited by the problem of defining his role. This has left the SCR competing with COMISAF and the diplomatic representations in Kabul for attention and influence and made it an ongoing challenge to ensure that the SCR and COMISAF speak with one voice on the coordination bodies on which

<sup>32</sup> Based on NATO, 'Civil support for military operations and emergency responses', *NATO Backgrounder*, January 2008.

<sup>33</sup> NATO, *NATO's Senior Civilian Representative in Afghanistan*, 30 July 2008.

both are represented.<sup>34</sup> This suboptimal outcome is perhaps not all that surprising considering that the SCR is supposed to influence a huge military organization from outside the chain of command, with no formal powers and without bringing any tangible resources to the table.

The second CA initiative came in March 2006, when incoming COMISAF General David Richards added two development advisors (DEVADs) to his staff.<sup>35</sup> This practice has not yet been institutionalized, and its continuation thus depends on whether COMISAF regards this position as useful. The current COMISAF, General David D. McKiernan (June 2008-), has one DEVAD, a representative of the United States Agency for International Development, on his staff. The current ad hoc arrangement means that it cannot be taken for granted that the development perspective will be represented in future ISAF HQs.

A third initiative, ISAF's Post-Operations Humanitarian Relief Fund (POHRF) established in December 2006, can also be regarded as a CA instrument in the sense that it enables the ISAF leadership to provide quick humanitarian assistance, such as the supply of food, water and shelter, or the repair of buildings or key infrastructure, immediately following sizable ISAF military operations.<sup>36</sup> Humanitarian relief is to be distributed in accordance with the Oslo Guidelines, and only in situations where no civilian alternative exists. The fund is based on voluntary contributions and as of June 2008 nine of the 40 ISAF contributing nations had given total of 2.5 million Euros to the fund. Of this sum 1.3 million Euros had been disbursed. According to NATO officials, the POHRF has shown success in winning back local Afghan support from initial reactions of anger and resentment, particularly following Operation Silver in Helmand province in 2007.<sup>37</sup>

The most recent NATO CA initiative at HQ level is the establishment of a Comprehensive Approach Team (CAT) in the summer of 2007. The CAT is convened on a regular basis by the planning cell within ISAF and includes ISAF forces, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), other UN agencies,

<sup>34</sup> Aronson, 'An Outsider's View on the Civil-Military Nexus in Afghanistan', p. 12; interview with Lars Jensen, former Political Advisor (POLAD) NATO SCR Kabul, August 2008.

<sup>35</sup> Michelle Parker, 'The Role of the Department of Defense in Provincial Reconstruction Teams', Testimony presented before House Armed Services Committee, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations on September 5, 2007.

<sup>36</sup> NATO, *Fact Sheet: NATO-ISAF Post-Operations Humanitarian Relief Fund*, June 2008.

<sup>37</sup> Marla Bertagnolli, 'NATO States Falter on Afghan Aid, Including to War Victims', *CIVIC Press Release*, 1 April 2008.

and NGOs.<sup>38</sup> The CAT was originally established following a suggestion from an American colonel to provide the UN and NGOs with a forum for direct interaction with ISAF's military planners, both to influence the direction of its military operations and to provide a perspective on its six-month planning process. After a good start, the initiative petered out because subsequent military planners did not perceive the same need to involve civilian actors in the planning process. The CAT is therefore no longer used for military planning purposes but instead functions as a forum for networking and information-sharing. CAT meetings are now used to discuss topical issues of mutual civil-military interest such as CIMIC, refugee return etc.<sup>39</sup>

Finally, ISAF HQ has also taken several initiatives to enhance the coherence of the 26 PRTs that have been established across Afghanistan (see Box 1). They will be discussed in the analysis of the PRTs that we now turn to.

### **The PRTs: CA in the field**

The PRTs are NATO's most important CA tool. They were initially developed by the US to bridge the gap between major combat operations and civilian-led reconstruction and development efforts. The idea was to use small joint civil-military teams to expand the legitimacy of the central government in Kabul to the regions and to enhance security by supporting security sector reform and facilitating the reconstruction process.<sup>40</sup> NATO took command of all the PRTs in Afghanistan in 2006.

Unlike Civil Affairs/CIMIC, units whose primary function is to support the military mission,<sup>41</sup> the PRTs are joint civil-military teams (50-300 strong) tasked to promote more comprehensive objectives. They are made up of military personnel (70-95 per cent of total), political advisors and development experts.<sup>42</sup> Like

<sup>38</sup> Sarjoh Bah and Bruce D. Jones, *Annual Review of Global Peace Operations 2008* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2008), pp. 38-39.

<sup>39</sup> Email correspondence with Lars Jensen, former POLAD NATO SCR Kabul, August 2008, and telephone interview with Afghanistan specialist Peter Dahl Thruelsen, Danish Defence College, August 2008.

<sup>40</sup> Peter Viggo Jakobsen, 'PRTs in Afghanistan: Successful but not Sufficient', *DIIS Report*, No. 6, 2005, p. 11.

<sup>41</sup> AJP-9, *NATO Civil-Military Co-operation (CIMIC) Doctrine*, p. 2-1; Joint Pub 3-57, *Doctrine for Joint Civil Affairs* (Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1995), p. I-1.

<sup>42</sup> For a more detailed analysis of the three distinctive PRT models that can be identified, see Jakobsen, 'PRTs in Afghanistan', and Nima Abbaszadeh et al., *Provincial Reconstruction Teams: Lessons and Recommendations* (Woodrow Wilson School of Public & International Affairs, Princeton University, 2008), p. 5.

traditional peacekeeping forces, they depend on their negotiating skills and the consent of the local parties for success. Although the PRTs can call in military backup in the form of rapid reaction forces and air power in emergencies – a fact which enhances their bargaining power and deterrent capacity vis-à-vis local warlords and the Taliban – they remain more of a diplomatic than a military tool. They are consequently neither equipped nor mandated to stop fighting among the local warlords or to take military action against the Taliban or the drugs trade.<sup>43</sup> Their mission is to ‘assist the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to extend its authority in order to facilitate the development of a stable and secure environment in the identified area of operations, and enable SSR and reconstruction efforts’.<sup>44</sup>

How they go about their business varies from one PRT to the other, depending on local security conditions and the fourteen PRT lead nations. There is no agreed concept of operations or organizational structure,<sup>45</sup> and a host of initiatives (see Box 1) undertaken by ISAF HQ to ensure that the 26 PRTs conduct their operations in a coherent manner has made little difference on the ground. The PRT military component may be constrained by national caveats, and the civilian components are outside the ISAF chain of command reporting directly to their national capitals. Moreover, ISAF has no way of ensuring that the PRTs are adequately resourced or that they spend their funds in a way that promotes the overall mission.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Some US and the UK-led PRTs have become integrated with the military forces fighting the insurgents in the south. They cannot be considered separate units, as they plan, execute and evaluate operations jointly with the military staff. The UK-led PRT in Helmand province is a case in point. See Peter Dahl Thruelsen, ‘Counterinsurgency and a Comprehensive Approach: Helmand Province, Afghanistan’, *www.smallwarsjournal.com*, 2008, pp. 6-8.

<sup>44</sup> NATO, *ISAF PRT Handbook*, Edition 3 (3 Feb 07), p. 2.

<sup>45</sup> NATO, *ISAF PRT Handbook*, p. ii.

<sup>46</sup> See Abbaszadeh et al., *Provincial Reconstruction Teams*; Michael Aronson, ‘An Outsider’s View on the Civil-Military Nexus in Afghanistan’, in Michael J. Williams and Kate Clouston (eds.), *Comparative Perspectives on Civil-Military Relations in Conflict Zones* (London, RUSI Occasional Paper, 2008), p. 12; James L. Jones and Thomas R. Pickering, *Afghanistan Study Group Final Report* (Center for the Study of the Presidency, January 30, 2008); Barbara J. Stapleton, ‘A Means to What End? Why PRTs are Peripheral to the Bigger Political Challenges in Afghanistan’, *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (Fall 2007), pp. 1-49; Peter Dahl Thruelsen, ‘NATO in Afghanistan: what lessons are we learning and are we willing to adjust?’, *DIIS Report*, No. 14, 2007, pp. 31-33.

## Box I. ISAF instruments to ensure PRT coherence

- *The PRT Executive Committee (ESC)*: an ambassadorial/ministerial-level body, co-chaired by the Afghan Minister of the Interior and the ISAF Commander (COMISAF). It provides guidance and oversight for all existing and proposed PRTs. Its membership includes the ambassadors of all the PRT Troop-Contributing Nations and potential contributing nations, the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Reconstruction and Rural Development, the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General, the NATO SCR and the European Union Special Representative. It issues high-level guidance to the PRTs on the kinds of activities they should undertake to support the Government of Afghanistan and to extend its authority. ESC meetings are held every two to three months, based on current issues.
- *The PRT Working Group*: a subordinate body of the ESC co-chaired by the Ministry of Interior, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and ISAF. It resolves PRT operational issues, prepares the ESC agenda, and prepares issues for ESC decision; it includes Afghan ministerial officials, UNAMA, ISAF, EU, Embassies of PRT troop-contributing states and members of NGO representative bodies.
- *The ISAF PRT Handbook*: developed and updated in consultation with UNAMA, UN Agencies and NGOs. It provides guidance on the PRT concept and on how a PRT should be structured and managed.
- *The PRT Helpdesk*: It fields any question or problem that the PRT has not been able to resolve at its level or through its Regional Command.
- *The Afghanistan Country Stability Picture*: a civil military geographical information system offering situational awareness on a variety of information themes. Information held includes development spending, physical infrastructure, geographical features, project plans and status, presence of governance institutions, etc. The information can be used to assist analysis and support operational decision-making. The database is widely available to ISAF members, the government of Afghanistan and IC, and it is updated monthly.
- *Standardized reporting requirements*: each month, NATO PRT personnel fill out a questionnaire with indicators which support the ESC in its work and facilitate overall campaign assessments.
- *NATO/ISAF PRT Weekly*: a joint publication of the ISAF Political Advisor and PRT Offices, which was established in cooperation with the NATO SCR. It gives political advisors and officers serving at ISAF PRTs the opportunity to share their reporting and analysis freely and directly with ISAF Headquarters (HQ) and each other. The *Weekly*, which is published every Monday, is forwarded by the SCR to NATO HQ in Brussels so that the NATO PermReps have the benefit of reading it before the weekly North Atlantic Council meeting on Wednesdays.

- *PRT Engagement Teams*: the CJ9 teams, each of which consists of one or two military officers, a development advisor and a political officer, conducts a continuous round of visits to PRTs to share PRT best practices and to offer assistance in resolving Kabul-based problems. The goal is to visit every PRT at least one every six months, if not more often.
- *ISAF PRT Key Leader Theatre Orientation Course*: this two-day course is designed to ensure that all newly arrived PRT commanders, political officers, development advisors and other key PRT staff are familiar with the PRT Handbook and understand the role of the PRT's fully integrated civil-military units. It also familiarizes participants with ISAF HQ and the current operational and intelligence picture.
- *Quarterly ISAF PRT Conferences*: HQ ISAF calls in PRT key leaders (PRT commander, political officer, development officer, police advisor) at least once a quarter for a two-day conference in Kabul. This gives COMISAF and other key HQ staff an opportunity to speak directly to all the PRT leaders as a group and to provide guidance. In return, the PRT leaders have the opportunity to share best practices and their perspectives from the field.<sup>47</sup>

It follows that the CA effectiveness of the PRTs depends more on interest and priority convergence among the PRT lead nations than on the directives issued by ISAF HQ. Recent field studies of PRT performance identify four conditions for success as key with respect to determining their CA effectiveness:

- 1) *The existence of institutionalized interagency cooperation or organization in the lead nation's capital*. States that have recognized the need for CA in the field and established an effective civil-military support structure at home involving the relevant ministries and agencies appear to be more successful than states that have not. CA implementation at the national level thus appears to be a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for PRT success in the field.<sup>48</sup>
- 2) *Lead-nation capacity to field skilled civilian advisers and provide the PRT with adequate funding to support SSR and reconstruction and development*. The number of civilian advisors and the capacity to sustain civilian deployments vary greatly among lead nations. The larger lead nations, which are capable of deploying qualified political and development advisors, as well as more specialized ones such as

<sup>47</sup> Adapted from NATO, *ISAF PRT Handbook*, pp. 24-25; and Michelle Parker, 'Development and War, Powerpoint presentation, University of Calgary, 15 October 2007, slide 12.

<sup>48</sup> Abbaszadeh et al., *Provincial Reconstruction Teams*, p. 7.

correctional, religious, tribal, and educational advisors, appear more successful than small lead nations with inadequate funds and limited civilian capacity. A comparison of the Dutch and Canadian PRTs with the Lithuanian PRT is instructive in this regard.<sup>49</sup> It is easier to obtain coherence and agreement over strategy and the use of funds, as well as to evaluate PRT effectiveness and apply lessons learned, when the entire PRT leadership comes from the same nation than when it is drawn from different contributing nations, which may have different priorities and constraints.

- 3) *Effective consultation and coordination with the Afghan government, local authorities, the population and the civilian organisations in the PRT area.* The PRTs do not have sufficient resources and civilian skills to accomplish their missions on their own: they depend on effective cooperation with civilian organizations and government representatives to do so. It follows that PRT success hinges in part on the presence of honest government representatives and a security situation that allows civilian international organizations and NGOs to operate without military protection, two conditions for success that the PRTs cannot control.
- 4) *Handover of responsibility for development and reconstruction to civilian actors as soon as possible.* One of the justifications for establishing PRTs in the first place was the need to kick-start the stabilization process in areas where poor security prevented civilian organizations and government representatives from operating. The PRTs were designed as an interim structure that would be phased out when the local authorities and civilian organizations were capable of taking the lead. The creation of PRTs in areas in which NGOs were capable of operating on their own has been a major source of friction with the NGO community, and many studies question whether the current security situation is so bad as to warrant the continued operation of all 26 PRTs.<sup>50</sup> The continued need for a PRT must be kept under constant review at ISAF HQ, and a PRT should be closed down when the security situation no longer demands its presence. Maintaining a PRT primarily to allow a lead nation to show the flag is counterproductive as it slows down the process of building local government capacity and alienates the civilian organizations. It is also a waste of NATO resources.

<sup>49</sup> Abbaszadeh et al., *Provincial Reconstruction Teams*; Péter Marton and Péter Wagner, 'The Netherlands and Hungary's contribution to operations in Afghanistan: contributing to state-building or to crisis management?', *Hungarian Institute of International Affairs Newsletter*, 8 January 2008, p. 3.

<sup>50</sup> Sippi Azarbaijani-Moghaddam et al., *Afghan hearts, Afghan minds exploring Afghan perceptions of civil-military relations* (The European Network of NGOs in Afghanistan and the British and Irish Agencies Afghanistan Group, 2008), p. 77; Hugh Bayley, 'Economic Reconstruction in Afghanistan: Developmental and Security Implications', *NATO Parliamentary Assembly Committee Report*, No. 059 ESC 08 E, Spring Session 2008, para. 44; ICG, 'Afghanistan: The Need for International Resolve', *Asia Report*, No. 145, 6 February 2008, p. 19.

**Key obstacles to CA institutionalization within NATO and suggestions to overcome them**

Since the low level of CA institutionalization at the strategic level is rooted in the broader disagreements concerning NATO's role in CA, major changes are unlikely in the short term. Rather than try to create a political consensus on this issue, it makes more sense to focus on building a consensus for creating CA posts at the Brussels level. Creating civilian CA positions such as CIVADs and DEVADs in the relevant bodies at the NATO HQ in Brussels and at SHAPE/JFC Brunssum would be a cost-effective way of creating a better understanding of CA at the strategic level. Civilian CA advisors should also be standard in HQs at all levels so that it is not up to individual commanders to decide whether they need civilian advice or not. However, it is important that the civilian advisors are an integrated element of the above-mentioned HQs. Advisors sitting outside the chain of command will not be able to make a difference.

Another straightforward way to enhance NATO CA effectiveness at the operational level would be to enhance the value added of the SCR. This could be done by streamlining the command structure and place the SCR inside the chain of command as deputy COMISAF with the responsibility for stabilization and political issues. This would give the SCR a clear operational responsibility and a platform of authority to speak from within the military organization. It would not only remove the coordination problem created by having two different NATO representatives present in the same coordination bodies: it would also have the further advantage of strengthening the voice of the civilian advisors if they had a deputy commander to speak on their behalf. This is more important than the number of civilian advisors in the organization, so this set-up would represent a strengthening of the civilian voice, even if that meant that the number of civilian advisors was reduced as a result of the merger of the civilian advisor's office with the SCR office. The designation of an SCR as deputy commander could be accompanied by the appointment of one or more SCRs with the responsibility for engaging Afghanistan's neighbouring countries, thus performing a role similar to European Union Special Representatives.<sup>51</sup>

The most critical internal CA problem facing ISAF in Afghanistan is COMISAF's inability to ensure PRT coherence. Needless to say, this problem is also the hardest to address, and no quick fixes exist. Reducing the number of PRT lead nations and establishing a set of minimum requirements that lead nations would have to meet would be the simplest and most direct way of addressing this problem. Nations should

<sup>51</sup> I owe this idea to Lars Jensen, former POLAD SCR KABUL.

not be allowed to act as lead nations unless they are capable of deploying a complete joint civil-military leadership team, thus providing the PRT with adequate funding for SSR, reconstruction and development and the ability to identify and apply lessons learned in a systematic manner.

In the longer term, the only way to ensure greater CA coherence among lead nations is to make the existence of a national CA support structure a requirement for lead-nation status. NATO should therefore do more to encourage all its member states to create CA arrangements at the national level and encourage them to enhance their national pools of civilian CA personnel that can be deployed as part of PRTs or similar units at short notice. NATO should consider establishing a NATO CA Centre to serve as a focal point for CA best practice and training and help member states to set up CA structures and CA personnel pools at the national level. This would contribute to CA standardization at the national level, which in turn would enhance CA coherence in the field. If the consensus required for the establishment of such a NATO CA centre cannot be created in the near term, like-minded NATO members should consider creating a NATO CA Centre of Excellence similar to the NATO Group North CIMIC Centre of Excellence in Enschede.

The proposal for the enhancing NATO's civilian CA advisor capacity is not the same as advocating that NATO establish civilian CA capacities. On the contrary, the purpose is to enhance the ability of NATO military personnel to work with civilian CA partners in the field – the question that we now turn to.

## **Understanding of and cooperation with other partners in CA?**

As mentioned in first part of the report, effective CA cooperation with other partners require a culture of cooperation and joint planning, execution and evaluation of operational activities. I now examine how far NATO has come with respect to establishing such cooperation with the three actors that the Alliance has identified as its most important CA partners: the EU and the UN, and the NGOs.<sup>52</sup>

### **NATO-EU cooperation at the strategic level**

On paper, strategic cooperation between the two organizations has grown steadily and become increasingly institutionalized since 2001, when a practice of joint meetings at the level of foreign ministers and ambassadors was established. Since then agreement has been reached on a formal declaration outlining the principles of EU-NATO cooperation (2002), on the Berlin Plus arrangement giving the EU access to collective NATO assets for operations where the Alliance as a whole is not militarily engaged (2003), on joint EU-NATO crisis management exercises (2003), on the creation of an EU-NATO Capability Group to facilitate information-sharing on the development of overlapping military capabilities, and finally on the establishment of a NATO liaison team at the EU Military Staff and an EU cell at NATO's Supreme HQ (2005/2006). In addition, the NATO SG and the EU High Representative (HR) meet on a regular basis, and EU and NATO representatives also meet regularly in the field in Afghanistan and Kosovo to discuss operational matters.<sup>53</sup>

In practice, however, this institutionalization has not led to improved cooperation. The two organizations have not been able to agree on the conduct of joint crisis-management exercises, nor to hold formal joint foreign-minister meetings since 2003. The Berlin Plus arrangement is limited to military issues and is only used in relation to the operation in Bosnia; NATO and EU ambassadors are prevented from discussing anything but the Bosnia mission and military capabilities in their joint meetings, and these meetings generally take the form of formal statements with no follow-up discussion.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>52</sup> See North Atlantic Council, *Comprehensive Political Guidance*, para. 3; and NATO, *Assisting Afghanistan*.

<sup>53</sup> Yost, 'NATO and International Organizations', pp. 74-91.

<sup>54</sup> Yost, 'NATO and International Organizations', pp. 92, 94, 161.

In addition to the distrust and rivalry that can usually be found at bureaucratic levels in different institutions with increasingly overlapping mandates and capabilities, the two principal factors explaining this state of affairs are the so-called 'participation' and 'scope' problems.<sup>55</sup> The participation problem has plagued NATO–EU relations since 2004 when Cyprus became a member of the EU, because Cyprus and Turkey have taken the two organizations hostage in their long-running territorial dispute: Cyprus has used its EU membership to veto Turkey's participation in the European Defence Agency, while Turkey has used its NATO membership to block official NATO-EU meetings on the grounds that Cyprus is not a member of NATO's Partnership-for-Peace (PfP) program and has not signed the security agreement necessary for the release of classified NATO documents. As a result, capability development and the Bosnia operation, which is conducted under the Berlin Plus arrangement, are the only two issues that can be discussed in official EU-NATO meetings. Turkey has consistently vetoed formal meetings on other issues such as Kosovo and Afghanistan, and in March 2008 it prevented an unofficial meeting on Kosovo called by the NATO SG to discuss EU use of NATO assets at the last minute.<sup>56</sup> In June Turkey used its veto again to block a change to NATO Kosovo Force's (KFOR) operational plan which would have allowed KFOR to work officially with the EULEX civilian mission.<sup>57</sup> A number of informal NATO-EU ministerial meetings held since 2004 have done little to solve the problem because they have not been used for decision-making.<sup>58</sup>

The scope problem is related to the disagreement as to whether NATO should remain a regional military organization focused primarily on collective defence or take on a global role. A group of Europeanists led by France has consistently tried to limit EU-NATO cooperation out of fear that it would increase American influence over the EU. This group has been opposed by Atlanticists led by the US and UK in favour of broader pragmatic NATO-EU cooperation in the management of global security issues.<sup>59</sup> The Anglo-French compromises underpinning the development of the ESDP notwithstanding, France and the UK continue to approach the ESDP with two different interests in mind: for France the ESDP remains a tool for enhancing the EU's ability to act independently of the US on the world scene, whereas the UK perceives the ESDP as a burden-sharing tool

<sup>55</sup> Yost, 'NATO and International Organizations', pp. 11-12.

<sup>56</sup> Barçın Yinanç, 'Nixing NATO use in Kosovo', *The Turkish Daily News*, 4 March 2008.

<sup>57</sup> Deutsche Presse-Agentur, 'Turkey row clouds day as NATO backs Kosovo army training', 12 June 2008.

<sup>58</sup> Yost, 'NATO and International Organizations', pp. 96-98.

<sup>59</sup> Yost, 'NATO and International Organizations', pp. 98-103.

that will help preserve the transatlantic relationship. As mentioned above, this dispute has had a negative impact on the Alliance's ability to develop its CA, as France has opposed the development of civilian NATO capacities and has sought to ensure that NATO remains a purely military organization acting in support of the EU and the UN. The French resistance to the CIVAD proposal promoted by ACT demonstrates a continued French insistence on keeping NATO 'as military as possible.'

Some observers and diplomats have expressed cautious optimism that recent US support for a strong military ESDP and the French interest in rejoining NATO's military structures may pave the way for a resolution of this conflict.<sup>60</sup> Whether the rhetorical rapprochement between France and the US will lead to enhanced EU-NATO cooperation remains to be seen, but it is important to bear in mind that it is in the interests of the US to be able to use a militarily stronger ESDP in pursuit of US strategic interests, just as it is in France's interests to use NATO as a means of building a militarily stronger and more autonomous ESDP. The fact that the steady growth of EU military power will result in more, not less, overlap and duplication between the two organizations will not make it any easier for the Europeanists and the Atlanticists to find common ground in the future.

### **Key obstacles to improved strategic NATO-EU cooperation and suggestions to overcome them**

Establishing the culture of cooperation and the joint planning, execution and evaluation of operations that effective CA cooperation require hinges on the resolution of the dispute between Turkey and Cyprus, on improved relations between the EU and Turkey, and upon US-French agreement on the establishment of a division of labour between the EU and NATO. It consequently seems most realistic to take these problems for granted in the near term and continue the efforts to work around them by allowing NATO-EU officials work out pragmatic solutions to practical problems at the operational and tactical levels in the field and to continue the practice of informal meetings at the ministerial and NATO SG-EU High Representative levels. In addition to this, enhanced training cooperation would also be useful with respect to creating the personal networks that can enable pragmatic cooperation at all levels.

<sup>60</sup> U.S. Department of State, *U.S. Ambassador to NATO Victoria Nuland's Speech in Paris*, 22 February 2008; Présidence de la République, *The French White Paper on defence and national security*, June 2008.

## **NATO-UN cooperation at the strategic level**

The NATO-UN relationship is less institutionalized than the NATO-EU one. NATO only has one liaison officer at the UN HQ in New York at the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) (since 2000), and the UN no longer has a representative at NATO HQ.<sup>61</sup> While the non-use of liaison officers accurately reflects the sceptical view that many UN member states take of NATO, it is a poor indicator of actual NATO-UN cooperation and the state of their relationship. It is actually in better shape than the NATO-EU one. Relations have improved steadily since the 1990s, which were marred by the unhappy experience during the UNPROFOR operation in Bosnia, when UN officials repeatedly vetoed the use of NATO airpower, and the NATO air campaign against Serbia in 1999, which was initiated without a UN mandate. Since the turn of the century, relations have improved as a result of effective cooperation on the ground in Kosovo and Afghanistan. Exchanges between senior level officials in the DPKO, Department of Political Affairs and the Office of Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and NATO now take place on a regular basis on issues of mutual interest, i.e. Kosovo, Afghanistan, Sudan and Somalia, and African peacekeeping. Exchanges and the sharing of best practices have also taken place on policy issues, e.g. gender mainstreaming, SSR, development and peacebuilding. On average, officials meet at senior level (Assistant Secretary General) at least twice a year. Talks are held during the UN General Assembly in New York, and UN representatives have made a habit of visiting NATO HQ when they are in Brussels for meetings of the UN-EU Steering Committee. In addition, there are usually separate meetings at senior level and below (mainly on Kosovo and Afghanistan). DPKO officials have visited NATO and addressed the North Atlantic Council (NAC) or their deputies at least annually, and the heads of OCHA and the Peacebuilding Support Office have spoken to the NAC in 2008. Some training cooperation also occurs through DPKO officials attending NATO Crisis Management Exercises and participation in seminars.<sup>62</sup>

NATO-UN cooperation was institutionalized further with the signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on 23 September 2008 in New York, but its impact is unclear. The UN signed the MoU with great reluctance, insisting that it be done in a low-key fashion away from the media.<sup>63</sup> The UN SG remains uneasy about developing closer relations with NATO because many member states regard NATO involvement

<sup>61</sup> The UN's Office of Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs had a liaison officer at NATO HQ from 1999 to 2006.

<sup>62</sup> E-mail correspondence with UN DPKO official, 8 September 2008.

<sup>63</sup> Interview with NATO official, 25 September 2008.

in operations outside its own region as attempts to expand the US and Western zones of influence.<sup>64</sup> UN unease is also motivated by practical considerations, as many in the UN HQ question the value-added of establishing closer relations with NATO. NATO-UN cooperation is already working well on the ground in operations where the two organizations are co-deployed, but NATO is perceived as being constrained politically and operationally from offering more support for UN-led operations in other theatres in the foreseeable future.<sup>65</sup> This scepticism seems warranted, as the scope problem and the difficulties NATO is facing in Afghanistan make it difficult for the Alliance to step up its support to the UN. Finally, it is also unclear to UN officials how much value NATO member states attach to the MoU and what they expect to gain from it. So far the MoU initiative has been driven more by NATO SG Scheffer than NATO member states, as the latter have failed to make the case for the MoU to non-NATO member states at the UN in New York.<sup>66</sup>

### **Key obstacles to NATO-UN strategic cooperation and suggestions to overcome them**

Effective CA cooperation with the UN is clearly some way off, the principal problem standing in the way of enhanced NATO-UN cooperation being the scope problem, i.e. the internal Atlanticist-Europeanist disagreement concerning the extent to which NATO should be allowed to play a global role. This is a greater problem than the UN's mistrust of NATO that several NATO analysts point to.<sup>67</sup> If internal disagreements continue to prevent NATO from providing more support to UN-led operations, then the world organization will have little incentive to develop closer relations with NATO. The key to enhanced NATO-UN relations is therefore a greater willingness on the part of the Alliance to provide the UN with operational support. This would help convince the sceptics among the UN member states and in the UN Secretariat that closer relations with NATO will bring real and tangible benefits. UN officials regard enhanced liaison at HQ level as politically difficult for the UN in the near future and would prefer enhanced practical cooperation and support instead. Increased information-sharing is one area in which UN officials would like the Alliance to be

<sup>64</sup> Peter Viggo Jakobsen, 'Debate: should NATO support UN peacekeeping?', *NATO Review*, No. 2 (Summer 2005); Yost, 'NATO and International Organizations', pp. 11, 17, 46, 58.

<sup>65</sup> E-mail correspondence with DPKO official, 2 September 2008.

<sup>66</sup> E-mail correspondence with UN DPKO official, 8 September 2008.

<sup>67</sup> See, for instance, Raynell Andreychuk, 'Afghanistan and NATO's Ongoing Transformation', *NATO Parliamentary Assembly Committee Report*, No. 172 PC 07 E rev 1, Annual Session 2007, para. 52; Yost, 'NATO and International Organizations', pp. 57-58.

more forthcoming. They also see logistics, civil emergency support, defence-sector reform, peacekeeping training and support for African capacity-building as promising areas for enhanced cooperation with NATO.<sup>68</sup> These are all areas where NATO could do more without taxing its stretched resources too much. In the longer term, post-ISAF, the thing that could really enhance NATO-UN relations would be a greater NATO willingness to act as a strategic reserve for UN-led operations that could assist the personnel serving in UN-led peace operations in crisis situations.

### **NATO-NGO cooperation at the strategic level**

This relationship is the least developed of the three, and it is not realistic to expect NATO to be able to create the culture of cooperation and the joint planning, execution and evaluation of operational activities with NGOs that effective CA cooperation calls for. NATO has actively sought to enhance its cooperation with the NGO community. The Alliance regularly invites NGOs to visit NATO HQ and to attend NATO conferences and seminars on issues of mutual interest. They are also routinely invited to attend CIMIC and PSO courses and exercises.<sup>69</sup> NATO has been particularly eager to expand its cooperation with NGOs in the field of training, but progress has been slow and limited by two factors. The first is the capacity problem, which stems from the fact that NATO has far more resources for such cooperation than the NGOs. It is a problem for NGOs to find the time, money and personnel required to respond positively to NATO requests and invitations for cooperation, especially ones that involve courses lasting a week or longer. The imbalance in resources between NATO and the NGOs has also made training cooperation a rather one-sided affair in which NGO personnel participate in conferences and training arranged by NATO. The traffic moving in the opposite direction remains limited, and this contributes to the perception in the NGO community that NATO-NGO cooperation is driven and dictated by military concerns.

The second factor limiting NATO-NGO cooperation is a strong NGO reluctance to engage in cooperation that can be seen as legitimizing NATO's growing involvement in humanitarian and development activities. NATO's involvement in the delivery of humanitarian assistance and the building of refugee camps during the 1999 Kosovo crisis and its involvement in humanitarian and development activities in Afghani-

<sup>68</sup> E-mail correspondence with UN DPKO official, 2 September 2008.

<sup>69</sup> Laure Borgomano-Loup, 'Improving NATO-NGO Relations in Crisis Response Operations', *Forum Paper No. 2* (Rome: NATO Defense College), p. 49.

stan is seen by many NGOs as a grave threat to their 'humanitarian space', i.e. the independence and neutrality from military and political forces that allow them to provide life-saving aid to civilians in need on all sides of a conflict.<sup>70</sup> NATO's Kosovo operation generated fears of a hegemonic NATO that would dominate civilian-military operations,<sup>71</sup> fears that NATO's involvement in Afghanistan and the invention of PRT concept have done nothing to diminish.<sup>72</sup>

Although the NGO community constitutes 'a fractured, fractious zoo full of weird and wonderful animals,' as Michael Pugh has memorably put it,<sup>73</sup> with diverse views on civil-military cooperation, there is no doubt that most NGOs view the CA agenda with scepticism, since they are extremely wary of being seen or used as force multipliers by NATO. Thus, while increased liaison arrangements, better information and offers of security training are welcomed, most NGOs draw the line at integration into and subordination to military plans and agendas. Although, in its CIMIC and PSO doctrines and in statements on CA and Afghanistan, NATO pledges not to infringe on the humanitarian space and to conduct humanitarian and development activities in accordance with internationally accepted guidelines, the Alliance's failure to keep these promises in Afghanistan means that its cooperation with the NGO community will continue to suffer from mistrust and fear in the foreseeable future.

### **Key obstacles to NATO-NGO strategic cooperation and suggestions to overcome them**

The NATO-NGO relationship is 90% operational and determined by events on the ground in Afghanistan. The ISAF operation has deepened the distrust and fear that have made NGOs reluctant to cooperate too closely with NATO at the strategic level, and nothing that NATO does at this level can change this state of affairs in the foreseeable future. At the same time, NATO should seek to institutionalize

<sup>70</sup> Howard Mollett, 'No Space for Humanitarianism? NGO perspectives on civil-military relations and the Comprehensive Approach', in Williams and Clouston, *Comparative Perspectives on Civil-Military Relations in Conflict Zones*, p. 64; Lara Olson, 'Fighting for humanitarian space: NGOs in Afghanistan', *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (Fall 2006), pp. 1-28.

<sup>71</sup> Michael Pugh, 'Civil-Military Relations in the Kosovo Crisis: an Emerging Hegemony?', *Security Dialogue*, Vol. 31, No. 2 (June 2000), pp. 229-242.

<sup>72</sup> Stephen Cornish, 'No room for humanitarianism in 3D Policies: have forcible humanitarian interventions and integrated approaches lost their way?', *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (Fall 2007), pp. 14-19.

<sup>73</sup> Michael Pugh, 'Reviewing the problems and lessons learned in the nineties: A Civil Perspective', in Peter Viggo Jakobsen (ed.), *CIMIC-Civil-Military Co-operation: Lessons Learned and Models for the Future*, DUPI Report, No. 9, 2000, p. 17.

its strategic relations with the NGO community further by taking steps that could make training cooperation and conference-going more of a two-way street than it is today. NATO offers of security training, greater NATO participation in training and conferences organized by the NGO community by NATO staff at desk level, and the establishment of a unit responsible for NGO dialogue or a CIVAD position at NATO HQ could help to lay the foundations for better NATO-NGO cooperation once the Afghanistan mission is over.<sup>74</sup>

### **NATO CA cooperation with civilian partners in Afghanistan**

NATO has been the most vocal advocate of a joint inter-organisational CA in Afghanistan, and it has worked hard to establish better cooperation with the civilian actors in Afghanistan and the Afghan government. A plea for better coordination and cooperation has been a constant refrain in public statements made by NATO SG Scheffer and NATO commanders, particularly since NATO assumed command of all the PRTs in 2006. The first high-level meeting between the EU, the UN, the World Bank and NATO to enhance coordination of their Afghanistan activities was thus convened at NATO HQ in November 2006 by NATO SG Scheffer,<sup>75</sup> and he has since invited these organisations and the Afghan government to all subsequent foreign minister meetings, as well as the latest NATO summit in Bucharest. In this way Scheffer has mitigated some of the obstacles to strategic cooperation with the EU and the UN mentioned above.<sup>76</sup>

ISAF has also pushed for more cooperation in Afghanistan. It has been involved in the establishment of several coordination bodies, such as the ESC and the PRT Working Group mentioned above, involving the Afghan government, the EU, the UN and NGO representatives; the CAT, involving EU, UN and NGO representatives; and the Policy Action Group, which was set up in June 2006 to bring together Afghan government representatives, NATO troop contributors and aid donors to develop a more comprehensive strategy for dealing with the insurgency in the south.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>74</sup> The establishment of a NGO unit at NATO HQ is proposed by Andreychuk, 'Afghanistan and NATO's Ongoing Transformation', para. 49.

<sup>75</sup> NATO, *Afghanistan reconstruction in focus at NATO meeting*, 2 November 2006.

<sup>76</sup> A French proposal for the establishment of a more formal contact group made up of the lead nations had to be abandoned as a result of Turkish objections to formal meetings between the EU and the Alliance.

<sup>77</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, *United States Plan for Sustaining the Afghanistan National Security Forces* (Washington DC, 2008), p. 28.

ISAF also participates in other coordination bodies such as the Joint Coordination Monitoring Board, made up of the Afghan government and international representatives, established in 2006 to oversee the implementation of the Afghan Compact, a five-year plan setting out development goals for Afghanistan in the fields of security, governance, development and counter-narcotics, and the NGO Civil Military Working Group established by the UN.

While these efforts have helped to improve coordination between ISAF and civilian actors in Afghanistan, they still do not involve the formulation of common plans, joint implementation and evaluation among the EU, the UN, the NGOs and NATO that effective CA cooperation requires.

ISAF's efforts to establish a joint CA with the civilian actors have been undermined by its own inability to provide the level of security required for the civilian actors to operate without military protection. The security problems have made the civilian actors less willing or able to provide the economic funds, the expertise and the overall coordination that effective CA with ISAF would require. This lack of civilian capacity and leadership has forced first the US and subsequently ISAF to play a much greater role in the coordination and provision of humanitarian relief and development than they wanted. The PRTs are a US/NATO invention aimed at filling both civilian and military gaps, and ISAF's unprecedented involvement in civilian gap-filling has worsened its relations with the NGOs.

NGO criticism of the PRTs has been and remains harsh (see Box 2), and as long as NATO remains incapable of providing the level of security that will enable NGOs to operate independently, it is hard to see what the Alliance can do to win the 'hearts and minds' of the NGO community in Afghanistan. In the context of a deteriorating security situation and an increased number of attacks on NGOs, this is an impossible task.<sup>78</sup>

<sup>78</sup> Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief, *Statement on the Protection of Civilians in Afghanistan*, 1 August 2008.

## Box 2. Recent NGO criticisms of the PRTs

1. Concern about a 'blurring' of roles, with consequential damage to perceived impartiality and a knock-on effect on the security of operations and staff.
2. Difficulty of engaging with military personnel who are on shorter rotations and barely have time to understand the country before it is time to move on.
3. 'Cherry-picking' by the military; taking the easy projects and ignoring the rest, accompanied by poor co-ordination in some areas.
4. Frustration at being invited to advise on project proposals, only to see one's advice systematically ignored.
5. Deep concern at the skewing of the allocation of development resources to support political/military objectives (where a nation's troops are engaged in a particular part of the country, there is an expectation that development resources will follow, even if this runs counter to the nation's overall development strategy for the country).
6. Perception that civilianization of the PRTs and NGO contributions has become less of a priority for recent ISAF HQs, fuelled by the removal of the NGO observer position on the ESC.<sup>79</sup>

## Key obstacles to NATO-civilian CA cooperation in Afghanistan and suggestions to overcome them

The principal obstacles to effective CA cooperation have been a lack of civilian and military capacity. ISAF's inability to establish security made the civilian actors and the Afghan government less willing or able to engage in effective CA cooperation with NATO, and this lack of civilian input forced ISAF to engage in considerable civilian gap-filling. The PRT involvement in relief and development activities has served to alienate many of the international NGOs working in Afghanistan to such an extent that it is unlikely that effective CA cooperation can be established between ISAF and the NGOs in Afghanistan unless the security situation is improved drastically. Improving security through the creation of effective Afghan security and police forces is therefore the single most important thing that ISAF can do to enhance its CA cooperation with the civilian actors and the Afghan government. These efforts should be accompanied by enhanced support for UNAMA's efforts to expand its field presence and for the efforts undertaken by Kai Eide, the new Special Representative

<sup>79</sup> Based on Michael Aronson, 'An Outsider's View on the Civil-Military Nexus in Afghanistan', p. 14; and Azarbaijani-Moghaddam et al., *Afghan Hearts, Afghan Minds*, p. 53.

of the UN SG, to enhance overall coordination of civilian activities. Finally, NATO should make the Civil-Military Overview website run by ACT permanent and expand it in order to enhance information-sharing with NGOs and civilian organisations operating in Afghanistan.<sup>80</sup> This would contribute to enhancing NATO's relations with civilian actors by providing the latter with something that they value.

<sup>80</sup> See UN doc. S/2008/434, 3 July 2008.

## **Conclusion and overview of policy recommendations**

This report has understood CA as based on the assumption that all actors engaged in operations aimed at establishing sustainable peace in war-torn societies must conduct their activities in a concerted and coordinated manner. Its purpose has been to examine (1) how far NATO has come in defining its own role and contribution to a CA involving non-NATO actors, (2) how far the Alliance has come in adopting a CA to the planning, implementation and evaluation of its own operational activities, and finally (3) how far NATO has come in establishing effective CA cooperation with the EU, the UN and the NGO community.

This analysis of NATO's CA vision has demonstrated that NATO has taken important steps towards defining its role in CA by embracing the concept in principle, by accepting that a CA is a sine qua non for success in Kosovo and Afghanistan, and by adopting a CA Action Plan. At the same time, it remains unclear how it will be implemented. The process of implementation will be difficult and hampered by disagreements over NATO's role in world politics (regional versus global actor; collective defence versus non-article-five crisis-response missions); disagreement over the extent to which NATO should use its military capabilities to fill the gap if civilian actors are incapable of carrying out their CA tasks; an instinctive military reluctance to engage in civilian gap-filling; and finally disagreement over what CA means and how it should be implemented in Afghanistan.

It is clear that CA institutionalization within the Alliance remains in its infancy. At the strategic level, CA concepts, doctrine and procedures have not yet been formally adopted, and although the process of institutionalization will benefit from the CA principles found in existing CIMIC and PSO doctrines, the various CA initiatives undertaken by ACT and the PRT course conducted at the NATO School, it will still take a long time. NATO has made more CA progress in Afghanistan, but the degree of institutionalization is low here as well. ISAF HQ has little influence over PRT operations, and neither the use of DEVADs in COMISAF's staff nor the practice of involving civilian actors in ISAF force planning has been institutionalized. Finally, the value-added by the SCR is unclear.

Progress has also been slow with respect to establishing effective CA cooperation with the EU, UN and the NGOs, none of whom have been eager to establish closer relations with the Alliance. Official NATO-EU cooperation has been paralysed by

the Turkey-Cyprus dispute and French concerns that closer NATO-EU cooperation would increase US influence over the EU and hamper efforts to build a stronger ESDP. As a consequence, cooperation only takes place at the operational level with an eye to finding pragmatic solutions to practical problems. NATO-UN cooperation has improved steadily in recent years as a result of effective cooperation in Kosovo and Afghanistan, but political unease in New York and the limited NATO willingness to provide operational support to UN-led operations mean that effective CA cooperation is unlikely in the near future. NATO-NGOs relations are limited at the strategic level and poor in Afghanistan as a result of ISAF's inability to establish security and the heavy PRT involvement in humanitarian assistance and development activities.

In view of the obstacles that NATO's efforts to implement CA have encountered, the progress made since 2004 is still quite impressive. Without the spectre of defeat in Afghanistan, the Danish CA initiative would never have flown. While this fear of defeat will continue to push the process of CA implementation forward, it is equally clear that the pace of progress will remain slow. Since several of the obstacles that continue to stand in the way of effective CA must be regarded as constants in the short term, this report has sought to formulate policy recommendations that NATO member states may be able to agree on in the short term or that they can implement on a national basis without waiting for a consensus to form at the NATO level. These recommendations are summarized below in the hope that they can contribute constructively to the process ahead.

#### *Defining a NATO role in CA*

- Stick to the decision not to establish civilian capacities, as this would destroy the NATO consensus on CA and make it harder to establish effective CA cooperation between NATO, the EU, the UN and the NGOs.
- Stick to the decision to leave overall CA coordination to the UN, the EU, the African Union or other regional organizations in order to enhance legitimacy and reduce fears of NATO/US dominance on the global scene.
- Accept that some member states have domestic constraints that prevent them from providing combat troops to ISAF. Asking the impossible will neither facilitate the development of CA capabilities nor elicit greater ISAF contributions. Ask member states that are incapable of providing combat troops for larger contributions in other areas instead.
- Do not establish specialized stabilization and reconstruction units.
- Keep civilian gap-filling by NATO forces to an absolute minimum to maintain the pressure on states and the EU and the UN to engage in civilian capacity-building

and in order to establish a positive relationship with NGOs.

- Training for civilian gap-filling, such as the policing carried out by NATO forces in the first phase of the KFOR operation, should be conducted as part of mission-oriented training programmes only because gap-filling requirements will be context-specific and subject to change within the course of a mission.

#### *Institutionalizing CA within the Alliance*

- Create civilian CA posts such CIVADs and DEVADs in the relevant bodies at the NATO HQ in Brussels and at SHAPE/JFC Brunssum.
- Place the NATO SCR inside the chain of command as deputy COMISAF with the responsibility for stabilization and political issues in order to give the SCR a clear operational responsibility and to strengthen the voice of the civilian advisors in ISAF HQ.
- Appoint one or more SCRs with the responsibility for engaging Afghanistan's neighbouring countries, performing a role similar to European Union Special Representatives.
- Enhance PRT coherence and CA effectiveness by reducing the number of PRT lead nations and by making it obligatory for all lead nations to provide their PRTs with a joint civil-military leadership team, adequate funding for SSR, reconstruction and development, and the capacity to identify and apply lessons learned.
- Urge all member states to establish CA support structures at the national level that can support their personnel in the field.
- Urge all member states to identify and train national pools of civilian CA advisors that can be deployed at short notice.
- Set up a multinational NATO CA Centre to help member states establish CA support structures and civilian CA advisor pools at the national level. CA standardization and capacity-building at the national level is the key to enhancing CA coherence and effectiveness in the field. If it is impossible to reach a consensus on this in the short term, like-minded NATO members could pool their resources and create a NATO CA Centre of Excellence similar to NATO Group North CIMIC Centre of Excellence.

#### *Improving strategic NATO-EU cooperation*

- Continue to work out pragmatic solutions to practical problems in the field.
- Continue the practice of informal meetings at the ministerial and NATO SG-EU HR levels.
- Enhance training cooperation in order to create the personal networks required for pragmatic cooperation at all levels.

*Improving strategic NATO-UN cooperation*

- Enhance information- and intelligence-sharing.
- Expand cooperation on practical issues of mutual interest at desk level, such as logistics, strategic lift, civil emergency support, defence sector reform, peacekeeping training and African capacity-building in order to create the culture of cooperation that effective CA requires.

*Improving strategic NATO-NGO cooperation*

- Establish a unit or a CIVAD responsible for NGO dialogue at NATO HQ.
- Increase NATO security training for NGO personnel.
- Enhance participation of NATO staff in training and conferences organized by the NGO community.

*Improving NATO-civilian CA cooperation in Afghanistan*

- Intensify NATO efforts to improve security through the creation of effective Afghan security and police forces.
- Help the UN to expand its field presence and to enhance overall coordination of civilian activities in Afghanistan.
- Enhance information-sharing with civilian organizations by making the Civil-Military Overview website run by ACT permanent and better.

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**Abbreviations**

ACO	Allied Command Operations
ACT	Allied Command Transformation
CA	Comprehensive Approach
CAT	Comprehensive Approach Team
CIMIC	Civil-Military Cooperation
CIVAD	Civilian Advisor
COIN	Counterinsurgency
COMISAF	Commander ISAF
DEVAD	Development Advisor
DPKO	Department of Peacekeeping Operations
ESC	Executive Committee
ESDP	European Security and Defence Policy
EU	European Union
HQ	Headquarters
HR	High Representative
ICG	International Crisis Group
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
KFOR	Kosovo Force
MNE 5	Multinational Experiment 5
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAC	North Atlantic Council
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PfP	Partnership for Peace
POHRF	Post-Operations Humanitarian Relief Fund
POLAD	Political Advisor
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team
PSO	Peace Support Operations
SCR	Senior Civilian Representative
SG	Secretary General
SSR	Security Sector Reform
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations

UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
UNPROFOR	United Nations Protection Force
US	United States