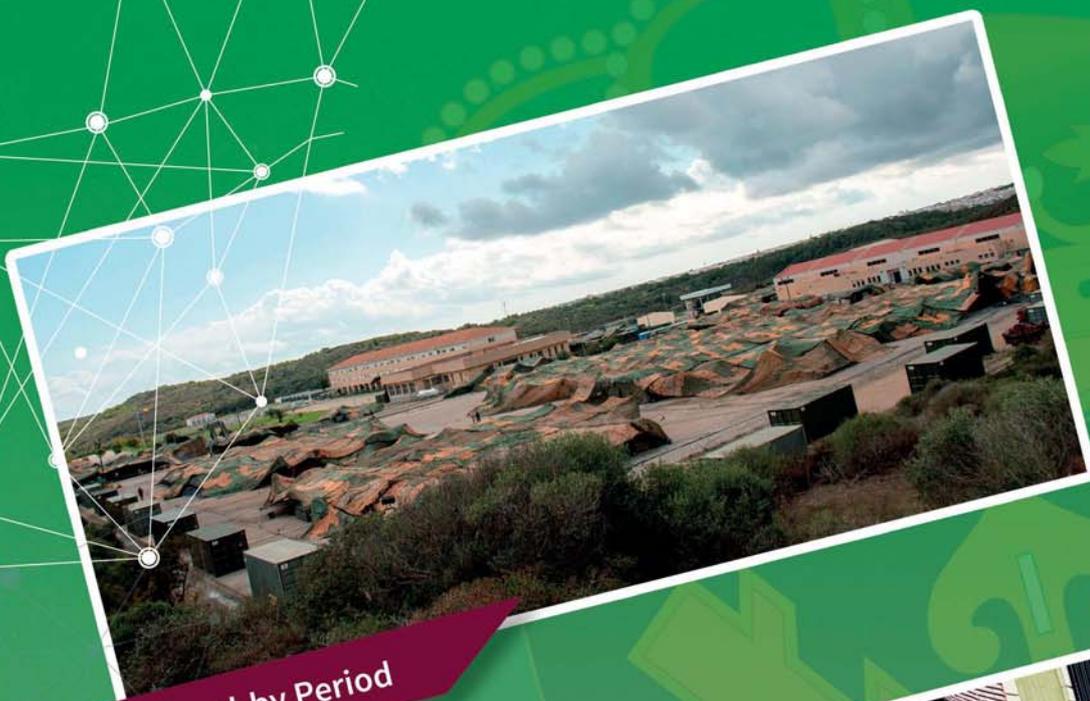
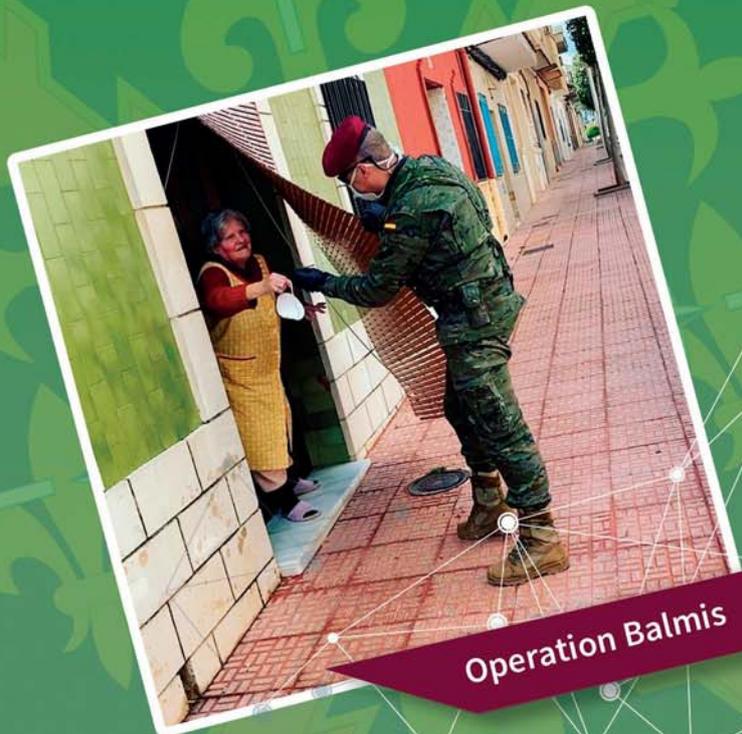


The Magazine of the **NATO Rapid Deployable Corps SPAIN Headquarters**



JHQ Stand-by Period

Journal
2020



Operation Balmis



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Commander's Foreword



*Lieutenant General Fernando Garcia-Vaquero Pradal (ESP-A)
Commander HQ NRDC-ESP*

Inside this magazine you will find a number of articles which all have one thing in common. They all elaborate, from different angles, on the very relevant question: “How do we deal with uncertainties?” Military or not, our answer to this question will have a significant impact on how we get along in life, how we live up to challenges and how we solve personal or professional crises. I am convinced that everybody will find an interesting thought or two within these worthwhile articles and I hope that you enjoy the reading.

Right after we will have handed over our responsibility as stand-by JTF HQ to the 1 German Netherlands Corps, we will fully concentrate on our next task. In fact, the preparation for our role as Warfighting Corps in 2022 has already begun and will be our main focus during 2021. Besides this, we will continue to monitor and adapt to developments, particularly concerning NATO's Strategic Direction – South and to enhance our C2 capabilities.

We generate our strength especially through our resilient cohesion and our strong multinational community. Therefore it gives me great gratification that I am able to welcome Czech as the 12th member to our NRDC-ESP Headquarters community. No one can tell what the next year might have in store for us but I like to assure you one thing! As long as we maintain this cohesion and keep our open and agile mindset we will succeed in whatever the future might bring.

Dear reader.

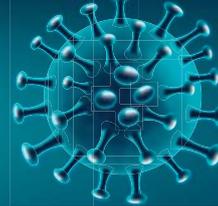
In a couple of weeks the year 2020 will come to an end. This will as well conclude our task as stand-by Joint Task Force HQ. A task which we fulfilled under highly extraordinary and challenging circumstances. The outbreak of COVID-19 and its consequences were as severe as they were unexpected. I am very proud of all my soldiers here at this Headquarters because of the way you all mastered this exceptional situation and continued to ensure our obligations to the alliance.

If anything useful could be drawn from this pandemic, it is that the outbreak of COVID-19 was a perfect example for the uncertainty of our world and a strong reminder that we are always well advised to expect the unexpected. This calls for a certain type of mindset, it calls for agility, flexibility, resilience.

Twelve Nations – one Team!

COVID-19:

contribution of CGTAD/HQ NRDC-ESP to the Operation Balmis



**“Our fight
is your
safety”**

The Spanish Armed Forces launched Op. Balmis in support of civilian Authorities during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Army provided specific support to the operation based upon five pillars: hierarchical organisation that ensures an immediate response; planning capacity with a robust communication and information system (CIS); a wide territorial deployment throughout the country; its logistical capability; and its willingness to serve.

As directed by the Spanish Chief of Defence (CHOD), the mission was divided into four distinct tasks: supporting the Police and Civil Guard in their security roles; supporting the National health system; providing logistic support; and Social assistance.

Just as the Army is trained to accomplish the most difficult mission that is war, so it is also prepared to face other kinds of risks and threats, as established in the National Security Strategy; pandemics are included in the Strategy as a risk for the society, so the Army had to adapt its capabilities for this challenge. Op Balmis ended on 21st June, but the Spanish Army remains in alert status.

The CGTAD/HQ NRDC ESP Crisis Cell; a contribution to the national effort.

1. Introduction

• When and how the crisis started

The ongoing worldwide situation of COVID-19, together with the beginning of the outbreak in Spain, prompted the declaration of contentious measures by the government,

including the declaration of the State of Alarm and national lockdown on 14 March.

The Spanish Armed Forces were included in the response from the very beginning. On 12 March Operation Balmis kicked off with the activation of a Response Cell in the ESP Army General Staff.

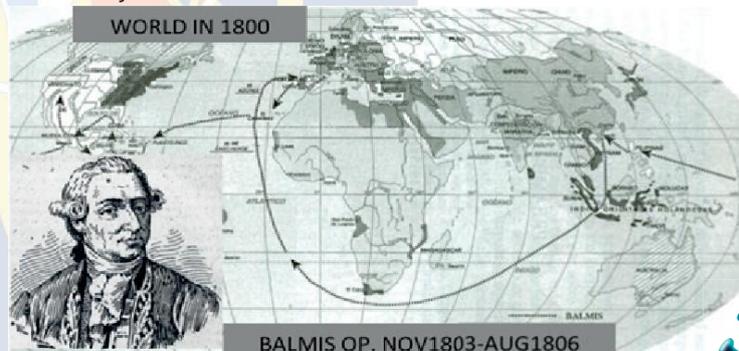
The CGTAD/NRDC-ESP¹ began, in turn, its internal planning process by identifying military capabilities² and by activating its NRDC-ESP Crisis Cell, as a 24/7 operations structure to assess and support the Commander, monitor the operation, and direct the subordinate Units.

• Balmis: short historic review

The name Operation BALMIS (Op. BALMIS) originates from Francisco Javier de Balmis (2nd December 1753 – 12th February 1819), a Spanish physician who led an expedition to vaccinate the overseas Spanish population against smallpox. The Balmis Expedition was sponsored by King Charles IV of Spain, and was officially called the Royal Philanthropic Vaccine Expedition, a three-year mission from 1803 to 1806, which visited the Canary Islands, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Mexico, the Philippines and China. The expedition departed from La Coruña and transported 22 orphan boys (aged 8 to 10) who carried the virus in their blood. It is considered one of the most important events in the history of medicine.



CGTAD/HQ NRDC-ESP Crisis Cell in Santo Domingo barracks, Valencia, Spain



WORLD IN 1800

BALMIS OP. NOV1803-AUG1806

1 The National HQ, where the NRDC ESP Spanish contingent is integrated when acting as High Readiness Corp/LCC in the Spanish National C2 chain.

2 The Operations Command (MOPS in Spanish) is the body for the joint operational structure, subordinate to the Chief of Defence Staff (JEMAD) and in charge of conducting the operational planning and management, together with the monitoring of the assigned operational plans and military operations.





2. CGTAD/NRDC-ESP Commander's goal: Assist in fighting the pandemic while maintaining our JTF HQ commitment

After more than a year of preparation and a successful evaluation in exercise Trident Jackal 2019 (TRJA19) (Menorca-Spain), HQ NRDC-ESP obtained its certification as Joint Task Force headquarters (JTF HQ) to plan and conduct Land-based Small Joint Operations to start from January 2020 with the stand-by period.

When the HQ NRDC-ESP was certified, nobody imagined what 2020 would bring into our lives, both from health-care and from economic and social perspectives.

Despite the disruptive effect of the pandemic, the military training, its ethos and CGTAD/NRDC-ESP high readiness spirit provided an asset to the Army Staff in support of the operation.



TRJA19 Exercise in Menorca, Spain

CGTAD/NRDC-ESP Commander's intent was to activate a Crisis Cell and plug it into the Operation Balmis C2 structure in order to ensure liaison with civilian authorities and facilitate the execution of support, while adopting health and protective measures to preserve force protection. The result was that CGTAD/NRDC-ESP and its subordinate Units were able to maintain their capabilities and a high readiness status to carry on with their commitment as a JTF HQ and fulfil any additional commitment related to the pandemic.

Ordinary activities related to maintaining the JTF role during the pandemic became a challenge as they represent actual demonstration of our commitment to the Alliance. During the pandemic, two ALERTEXs and one COPG (Comprehensive Operational

Planning Group) were conducted to test the OLRT's (Operational Liaison Reconnaissance Team) and ICE's (Initial Command Element) ability to accomplish the warning process in case of activation. Additionally, the COPG achieved the planning objectives despite the COVID-19 situation.

3. Missions and CGTAD/HQ NRDC-ESP contribution

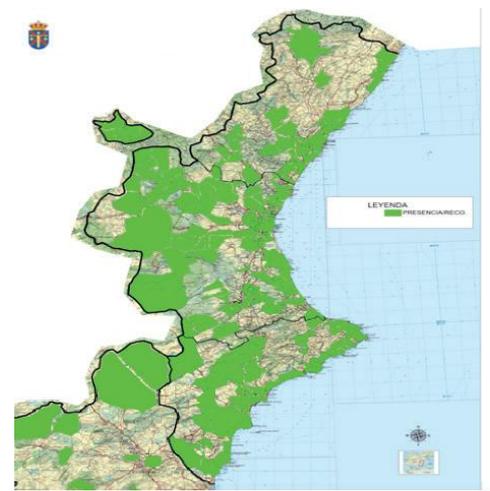
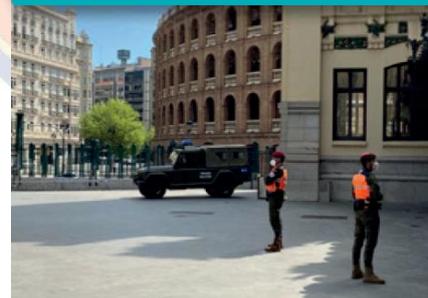
The situation and the variety of support to civil authorities required a new approach from the Armed Forces. The key word was 'adaptation' as the HQ and subordinate Units changed their tasks and routines to be well disposed to support the population. There were four main areas:

1. Support to Police & Security Forces

During the lockdown, CGTAD/NRDC-ESP subordinate Units were operating in support of the Police & Security Forces in our Area Of Operations (AOO) (Alicante, Valencia and Castellon Provinces). The mission type was to provide a number of squad/teams to execute Presence and Recce missions in support of the police forces. The squads were deployed to different towns and villages according to the evolving situation (e.g. places, events, dates, requests...). Better than the actual patrolling would be the population's security perception, thus increasing social calm. Guided by Mission Command, small units deployed region-wide knowing the higher echelon's intent and the impact of their conduct. Ruled by the military values, training and the commitment to service, military have succeeded in facing a variety of challenges.

It's worth mentioning the incident where a member of the Military Police Battalion defended a woman from an attack from a dog.

MP Battalion squads patrolling Valencia, Spain



Valencia Region Presence and Recce Missions

2. Health care

The major focus of military effort has been supporting health care enforcing measures. This has been done through the CBRN capabilities, and by providing assistance and advice to civil authorities and entities. The CBRN fight entails two different types of disinfection: 'preventive' (no COVID-19 positive patients in the facility) and 'reactive' (COVID19 positive patients detected or present).

HQ Support Bn disinfection Mission in an Elderly care home



The HQ Support Battalion started operating with its organic CBRN capability, to perform preventive disinfections. However, increasing tasks, and a need for greater responsiveness had the HQ Support Battalion organic CBRN grow to include additional squads. A strong emphasis was placed on elderly care homes, where our soldiers faced tough situations together with profound satisfaction after providing them relief and support.





The primary focus was with the CBRN tasks, however military assessment has been greatly valued among the civilian entities. Through the assessment team, CGTAD/NRDC-ESP Crisis Cell provided the Regional Government Health Council a complete assessment for a project to build up three field hospitals. Civilian authorities were again grateful for and surprised by the military responsiveness.



Water supply to homeless people



Food transportation to be distributed to civilian entities



La Petxina and Cabañal (both in Valencia) shelters to support homeless people



security measures were adopted following the guidance of Force Protection Working Group (FPWG). Identifying potentially exposed members who had travelled to or from critical areas [Spain and abroad] was one of the initial measures. GMED/FPWG of CGTAD/NRDC-ESP were tasked to manage and control COVID-19 affected personnel, recommend measures and liaise with the civilian health services. A shift-working routine and barrier and social distance enforcement were put in place as well. In addition, as every allied contingent in the HQ NRDC-ESP received instructions from their homeland, they were implemented as complementary measures for force protection.

As for the subordinate Units, protective measures together with the high tempo of operations put them in a very demanding situation that was solved brilliantly.

• CGTAD/HQ NRDC-ESP capability & experience to Crisis Management transferred to COVID-19 situation

CGTAD/NRDC-ESP has recognised experience in operations and exercises. The members of the Crisis Cell contributed by providing their expertise and knowledge, identifying the tools and systems needed to conduct the crisis, in different areas (OPS, INTEL, CIS, PLANNING, CIMIC), using their background and applying.

3. Logistic support

Together with patrolling and disinfection, the HQ Support Battalion has been involved in a number of logistical tasks, namely: transportation of health materiel, food for nursing and elderly care homes, field equipment to build up two temporary shelters for the homeless, emergency water supplies, complementary facilities in hospitals, recce and transportation.

4. Social support

CGTAD/HQ-NRDC ESP has provided support to improve living conditions of vulnerable portions of the society affected by the pandemic.

4. How to operate under COVID-19 conditions

• Mitigating measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19

Continuing training activities to maintain readiness while fighting the COVID has been a major challenge. After an initial analysis and evaluation,

5. Public Relations

The Public Relations support to the operation has been structured in an up-down hierarchical approach. The communication has been coordinated from the higher staff level (CHOD Office Communication Staff).

As a summary, more than 130 media reviews were published. We can highlight two interviews and two reports in regional television media (A Punt and 7 TV), two radio interviews in “ES Radio Valencia” and “Cadena SER Valencia”, one interview in the regional newspaper Las Provincias, and two embedding collaborations of two journalists (from Las Provincias and El Levante respectively).



Personal de Batallón de Cuartel General del @CGTAD_NRDC_ESP, han montado una carpa que permite acceder a cubierto, de la Residencia Geriátrica de Requena al Centro de Salud. Colaborando en el cuidado a nuestros mayores.
#EsteVirusLoParamosUnidos #SomostuEjército #OperacionBalmis

Translate Tweet



5:30 PM · Apr 15, 2020 · Twitter Web Client

9 Retweets 40 Likes

CGTAD/HQ NRDC-ESP on Twitter

El Batallón de Cuartel General del @CGTAD_NRDC_ESP, junto con el Grupo de Caballería Milán, ha realizado la desinfección del Centro Penitenciario de Cuenca, dentro de las actividades de colaboración con las administraciones públicas de la #OperacionBalmis.
#SomostuEjército

Translate Tweet



3:39 PM · Apr 15, 2020 · Twitter Web Client

8 Retweets 26 Likes

Operation Balmis has been tracked in the media continuously, with daily coverage of military operations and its related reports, and, what is relevant for our strategic purposes, with a transparent lasting approach. We should highlight the great interest shown by local media, encouraged by the daily delivery of activities both performed and planned throughout the Valencia Region, alongside photographic material.

6. Main Lessons Identified (LLII)

After almost three months of Op BALMIS, more than 50 LLII were identified under the CGTAD/NRDC-ESP experience. Of these, two are fundamental:

• The human factor, the soldier, key for the success:

Our soldiers, at the lowest C2 echelon took decisions under uncertain and difficult circumstances, under permanent scrutiny of the public and

frequently far from their Platoon or Company Commanders. Soldiers performed knowing that any wrongdoing might affect the operation, and the Armed Services' image. Once more they have shown an attitude beyond the required professionalism, reinforcing the Army's legitimacy and credibility among the population, having been the face of the institution, standing out over the rest of the elements during Operation Balmis.

• Adaptation

As it has been stated, the changing COVID-19 conditions forced the military structure to operate in a different environment, where the planning factors and execution conditions, mainly during the first month and a half, were evolving continuously, adapting working procedures and structures in order to provide the proper response has been key to deal with any requested support.



Providing support and relief to civilian population



The human factor, key for success





Maintaining the HQ NRDC-ESP capabilities during the COVID-19 pandemic

1. Training

“Little minds are tamed and subdued by misfortune; but great minds rise above them” (Washington Irving).

From the training perspective, many lessons have already been identified and we are still learning more. The lessons identified require a certain level of measures to be implemented during this evolving situation.

With the extended requirement of VTCs, telephone conferences, and other social media platforms, such as Skype or similar tools providing the capability to display presentations, especially when real presence is unavoidable, the common meeting preparation has required more time than usual. We have improved the use of “e-learning” in order to remain in line with the NATO School’s intent to strengthen virtual learning. This method’s goal is to improve effectiveness and efficiency as an alternative to in-person, physical presence learning.

HQ NRDC-ESP was recently certified as JTF HQ (L) and we have been in the stand-by period throughout 2020. Without the requirement for major exercises or training, the cancellation of major NATO exercises has not had a negative impact on our training so far in 2020. Additionally, we are on track in the planning process for our next role in the Long Term Commitment Plan (LTCP) as a Warfighting Corps (WFC). Our certification for the WFC will be conducted during the exercise Steadfast Leda 2021 (STLE21).

Our strength is that we are a disciplined and well-organised HQ, and that is always a key asset in times of crisis.

2. Managing our new role: Warfighting Corps

“I know that this situation is far from easy”³

On March 11th the World Health Organisation raised the emergency situation due to COVID-19 to pandemic. On March 14th, the Spanish Government declared the State of Alarm which meant strict measures to reduce the spread of the virus.

As part of its preparation to assume the role of Warfighting Corps (WFC) as a part of a wider exercise preparation for a national exercise to train a Spanish Division HQ, HQ NRDC-ESP planned and conducted exercise Valiant Lynx/Toro 2020, in two phases. The first phase was the Crisis Response Planning (CRP) and was scheduled to be conducted from the 23rd of March until the 24th of April at Betera Military Base, the peacetime location of HQ NRDC-ESP. A full COPG process was conducted

under COVID-19 conditions, forcing the planning team to adopt extra healthcare conditions to avoid contagion among the planners. They reduced the capacity of the meeting rooms to increase the social distance, used two or three shifts for the main briefings, extensive use of VTC activities (internal and external with our subordinate Units in the exercise), meetings one to one with the team leaders,... As a conclusion, the crisis set a new working environment and demanding conditions that will imply modifications in some SOIs/SOPs for the future.

In spite of the difficult situation, HQ NRDC-ESP had to keep its Full Operational Capability as NATO’s stand-by Joint Task Force (HQ), continue its preparation for the WFC role and support Spanish civilian authorities in counter COVID-19 activities with Spanish Staff Officers and its two organic units: Military Police Battalion and Support Battalion. In order to successfully accomplish these three simultaneous efforts, the Headquarters had to adapt and prioritise.



Mission Analysis Briefing (MAB)
Valiant Lynx / Toro 20



³ COM HQ NRDC-ESP on 08th April 2020 in “Message COM HQ -NRDC-ESP to all HQ members”.



As a result of the situation, the Corps Operations Planning Group (COPG) took the following measures following COM's guidance:

- COPG personnel were reduced.
- Subject Matter Experts worked from their offices, ensuring communication through NATO SECRET outlook mail and VTC.
- When necessary to conduct COPG coordination meetings were split into smaller groups to ensure protective and social distancing measures.
- Mission Analysis and Decision Briefings were attended by subordinate units from its locations through VTC.



Wargaming
Valiant Lynx / Toro 2020

Since March 2020 HQ NRDC-ESP's personnel know that "far from easy" does not mean running a CRP is impossible – but the doctrine, foresight and a touch of calm give a Staff the flexibility to adapt to these circumstances. The key to success is to prioritise and sequence the process appropriately.

3. Disinformation during the pandemic

Adapt or die is the moto of evolution.

During the first half of March 2020, the HQ NRDC-ESP Communications Directorate (COMDIR) identified the sanitary emergency as a perfect arena where misinformation and disinformation would sprout online. Bearing in mind the huge challenge to face, a cross-functional workshop of Public Affairs (PA) and InfoOps analysts supported by Intel specialists, focused its activity in terms such as 'COVID', 'coronavirus' and 'pandemic' when related and/or associated with NATO. The first results appeared earlier than expected, and they were simply an outline of what was to come.

Since the last days of February, the Information Environment Assessment

(IEA) workshop found pieces of disinformation and misinformation not only on the net, but also in some traditional media. The majority of these pieces were unintended, amateur or dreamt up, but some of them were clearly scripted, properly funded and clearly aimed at affecting the Information Environment (IE). In this last arena we may include some products clearly focused on strengthening conspiracy theories, including those that suggest that Western Governments are using COVID-19 and NATO armies to achieve their secret goals.

Working during the lockdown was a great challenge for the analysts. Teleworking was the rule, and close coordination is a must to obtain adequate products. In that sense, the COMDIR staff used 'Microsoft Teams' as the main platform, to work, conduct conferences and log their tasks. At the same time, COMDIR leaders used 'Slack.com' to connect NATO and the EU StratCom Community. That decentralised and distributed network was created ad hoc during the first days of the pandemic, and it was demonstrated to have a great efficiency in locally identifying and distributing information in minutes.

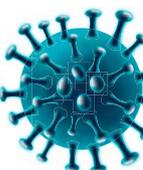
COVID-19 has been a great challenge in IEA and it was able to reveal the

traditional deeply embedded inefficiency of big public organisations. Apart from that, the natural adaptation and resilience of army men and women created better synergies, objective-focused work where individuals had little relevance and community became the force of a team.

Conclusion

The pandemic is a scenario that the Military were not specifically prepared for. Even though the possibility of a global pandemic has always been considered as a threat, its virulence has exceeded predictions. Fighting COVID needs a comprehensive approach that involves multiple actors, and requires adaptation and full coordination between civil and military resources.

COVID-19 is also an important test of "resilience", and only time will tell if we are able to resist and recover easily and quickly from the effects of the pandemic, but it will also tell whether we are able to evolve and adapt to long-lasting changes, or equally, to return to the new normal while, at the same time, being aware that the virus is still there and at any time can visit us again with the same or even greater virulence. Something we should be prepared for right now.



The Human Factor

How to face the complexity-capability delta

If it makes you think, I have achieved my goal.

*By Colonel Klaus D. Mehr (DEU-A)
Former ACOS G7 TRG&EXER.*

This article is a follow-on article related to my article about “Mission Command” in the 2019 edition of the HQ NRDC-ESP magazine. It provides an individual perspective on what I believe is one of the major challenges of leadership today. This challenge is related to the human factor or in other words how we can achieve the best results from our personnel in higher military organisations.



Currently, we can identify that many military organisations are facing something I refer to as the “complexity-capability delta”. This is typical for traditional management systems in a society that is responsible for increasing complexity, but at the same time those systems do not possess the required sensors, management, steering, and control mechanisms to successfully manage that complexity and to transfer decisions into appropriate actions. The operating systems of organisations are generally too slow, and incapable of keeping pace with the growing complexity requirements¹.

In military organizations where this delta has increased, it must be reduced under all circumstances. Otherwise, military organisations may lose credibility or even worse, they might lose the ability to win against an adversary. As Collective Defense (CD) operations are again coming more into the focus of our threat assessments and consequently training and exercises, it goes without saying that we should refocus our efforts towards our “most important reason to be”.

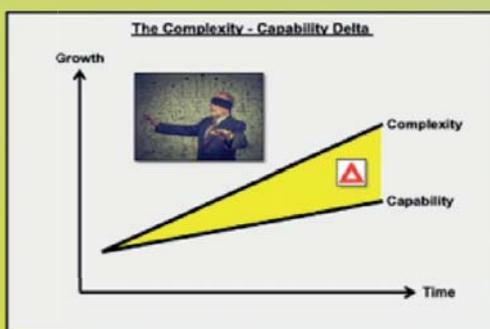
This perspective is based on my observations over the past 40 years of military service. I started as a “Cold War Warrior” and have seen many types of transformation activities throughout the years with national and multinational military organisations, and at all levels of command during routine staff work, exercises and operations. Again, as in 2019, this article neither aims to provide a complete and comprehensive study nor to provide answers to all challenges which military organisations are confronted with today. The intent is to provide “food for thought” and to encourage further individual and collective thinking on “where we are” and “where we should go” focused on two major factors - the human factor and time.

WHERE WE ARE

Military headquarters are first and foremost hierarchically organised and composed of decision-makers and personnel working for them as military staff. This structure is similar to many types of governmental and civilian organisations. Therefore, most of the observations and conclusions stated below can be transferred from to military to the civilian world.

There is no doubt that an “All Volunteer” Army built on professional standards and personnel who voluntarily serve for long periods or even their whole working lifetime, generally have a higher level of motivation to perfect their craft, and a willingness to increase their capabilities. However, in general, we can distinguish (military) personnel in a simplified way: between those who are fully capable of doing their job and those who are less- or incapable of doing their job; and between those who are fully willing to do their job and those who are less- or unwilling to do their job. This can be easily classified into four categories, but in reality, there exists a more graduated spectrum in these categories with further nuances. With the intent of not offending anyone, I will stick to this simple classification for providing the basic conclusions. It is just a fact of life that some teams play better “football” than others. Although we cannot all win the Champions League, we should at least try to make it to the quarter-final.

In an organisation, the first group is formed by individuals who are fully capable and fully willing to do their job. Those are the ones who support the decision-makers effectively and efficiently by successfully analysing problem sets and providing timely, coherent advice to them. These individuals are the critical relevant group for achieving success. Decision-makers usually strive to have as many staff members in this group as possible. Decision-makers themselves are usually at the top of this group.



¹ For more details, see Fredmund Malik: “Strategie – Navigieren in der Komplexität der Neuen Welt“, Campus Verlag (2013).

Those who are less- or incapable but fully willing to do their job usually lack sufficient training and experience required to be successful. This is frequently caused by not having sufficient training opportunities or available time for training, or because they have recently joined a military organisation which requires additional efforts in order to transition smoothly into the new environment. Therefore, they appear less qualified for high-level staff work but there is definitely potential to move them to the first group. This group is usually smaller than the first group, in particular if a headquarters can draw on extensive corporate experience which has existed over a longer time period. In a newer headquarters, this group may be as big as or bigger than the first group. However, within this group, there is a subgroup that is fully willing but will never reach an acceptable level of performance. They tend to produce chaos by working harder and not smarter resulting in low performance while provoking others to “debug” the chaos or to move in the wrong direction and produce useless results.

Those who are less or not willing to do their job, regardless of capability, belong to the category of personnel who usually lack motivation. Why so? A lack of motivation can be caused by a lot of different triggers. Some people do not want to deal with a specific problem because they might be too busy with other issues or they consider it not important enough for them to develop a better understanding of it. Additionally, they may not have sufficient capabilities required to face

certain challenges in order to be successful in a complex military world. They tend to be overwhelmed by all of the challenges they have to face which can lead to some level of resignation. In general, we could say, they lack the required motivation for providing an adequate performance level. People in this group do not perform appropriately on high-level staff sections but at least for some of them, there is potential to move into the first group. This group is usually very much smaller than the other groups and under ideal circumstances and pending the size of the military organisation doesn't even exist.

In summary, we can state that there exists a “motivation and training delta” which leads to a reduced performance level in higher military organisations. The size of the delta can logically vary between different organizations caused by various reasons, e.g. level of corporate experience, available resources (personnel, time, equipment, budget), organizational structure, team spirit, and cultural aspects in particular in multinational organizations (different traits of linear-active, multi-active and reactive cultures²). This is not a zero game; we have to accept parts of this delta. It is impossible to win the hearts and minds of everyone and it is very difficult to mitigate completely all the reasons which can lead to the delta. Decision-makers must try to reduce the delta to the greatest extent possible for the benefit of their organization.

Meanwhile, our (military) world is getting more and more complex. This does not need a detailed explanation. I believe every reader of this article is perfectly aware of it. Unfortunately, instead of trying to simplify things, we frequently add unnecessary complexity to our military world.

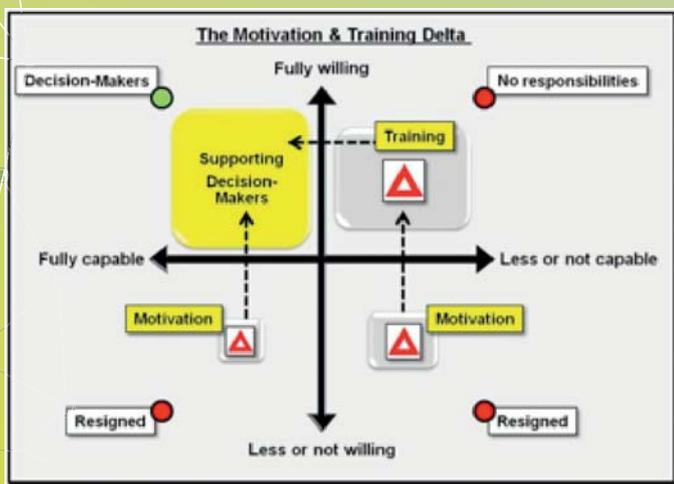
This characterises what I would like to call the “complexity-capability delta”.

We strive for more flexibility with our higher-level headquarters by trying to cover several kinds of roles. This is possible if there are sufficient resources and time to train for the different roles. Both are scarce nowadays, but instead of focusing our efforts, we sometimes tend to distract efforts, thereby reaching the brink of excellence, but never achieving it.

Another example is the use of online media. Without a doubt, Strategic Communication by analysing and using online media for mission success is of utmost importance within military organisations. Without winning the hearts and minds of the population, our own and those of the adversary, we cannot really succeed in the conflicts we currently face. But how does this affect us? How do we use the media? A lot of us believe we are better informed and up to date if we stay connected to as many online products as possible. The opposite may be the truth. It is important to acknowledge that producers of media are also challenged by the “complexity-capability delta”.



Nowadays, media agencies are forced to increase their production rate of articles/news in order to be sufficiently present in the online world. As their resources are also limited, we can observe a lack of analysis and high-quality articles/news which adequately address complexity, together with headlines that try to catch the reader by their emotions. For example, there would be little interest in an article with the headline “NATO continues to maintain the peace in the Euro-Atlantic Region”. In contrast, if the headline read “NATO at a critical junction to get involved in the XYZ conflict” a lot of people would be attracted to read the article. Their intentions would be self-fed, just to find out at the end that there is nothing really important mentioned that will influence their life, and the consequence is that we just wasted our time.



2 For more details, see Richard D. Lewis: “When Cultures Collide – Leading Across Cultures, 4th Edition, Nicholas Bradley International (2018).

We could add a lot of other examples, e.g. in relation to the administrative burdens we have to face every day which absorb time. Other examples are mentioned in the 2019 edition about the challenges of applying Mission Command nowadays, which all reduce the efficient use of our available time. Information overload is one of those. We have lost, to a certain degree, the capability to analyse and coherently present relevant information to decision-makers and/or staff elements. Instead, we present comprehensive information without condensed and relevant conclusions, forcing the audience to have to do the work which the responsible staff element should have done. This distracts efforts and costs time which we desperately need to tackle the information which we are responsible for analysing. Why so? It is much easier to be the “intelligent fool” who can make things more complex than to be a “courageous genius” moving in the opposite direction. It is much easier to present more information as required in order to avoid the chance of missing some relevant information – in other words; avoiding the mistake of not presenting relevant information is a trigger, thereby making the mistake of overwhelming others with irrelevant information.

WHERE WE SHOULD GO

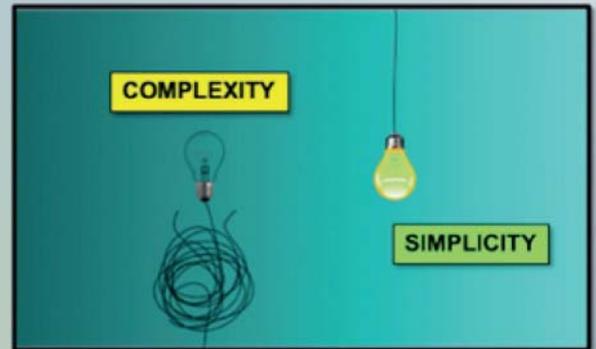
In particular, with CD operations, time is a critical factor, especially if you can't dominate the enemy from the very beginning of an operation. Training and Exercises during the Cold War were focused on gaining time while knowing that the enemy would always have a vote on where and when he would start his attack. This is still true today. As a consequence, our forces and staff

must be able to react very quickly to have a chance to win. Reducing the time to react/act requires clear and simplified perfectly trained procedures so that the individual only has to think about “what he has to do” to accomplish his mission and not about “how he has to do it”. It is not about having time; it is about making time and being efficient instead of only being effective.

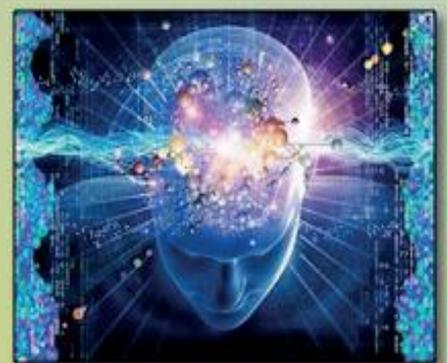
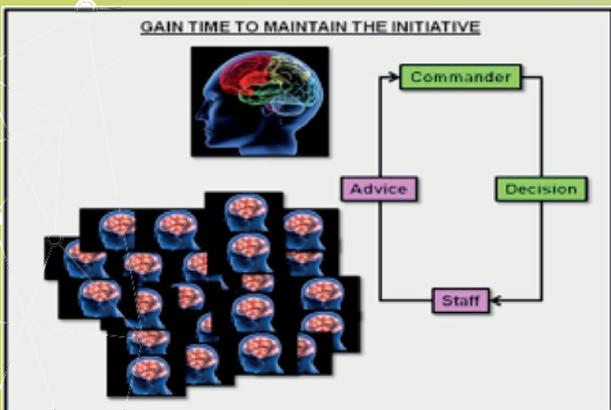
From my point of view this can only be achieved if we apply the lessons learned from the Cold War. We should refocus on our most important, most challenging and most dangerous role as warfighting organisations. We need to enforce the allocation of sufficient resources and time for individual and collective training in order to gain more experience and to reach and then maintain excellence. In other words, we need to identify and decide on what the main effort is, then concentrate the resources on the main effort and follow this path thereafter. You cannot create experience by reading databases of lessons identified by others, you have to undergo it - if you read a book about painting, you are not automatically a painter; it needs a lot of training and experience. “The only source of knowledge is experience” (Albert Einstein).

This does not mean that we cannot assume additional, possibly more likely, roles, but the roles must be within limits and with adequate resources and time for training. We should avoid trying to play in the Champions League for football one year while in the following years trying to play in the basketball, handball and, tennis leagues, or even worse two of them simultaneously. This does not mean that I propose pursuing the absolute specialisation of military organisations. I only propose that we should return to a higher level of corporate professionalism or we may risk mission success or even worse unintentionally risk the life of our men and women when executing CD operations.

We should pause for thought, rather than acting abruptly every time a new requirement surfaces. We tend to meet any new situation by reorganising, which has the potential for creating the illusion of progress while producing confusion, inefficiency, and demoralisation. A well-trained military organisation can cover a lot of different challenges, without wasting time and effort in reorganising itself to the very last detail, by only adjusting those changes which are essential.



We should avoid making simple issues more complex due to the belief that we can reduce the “fog of war” to zero, thereby creating “fog in our brains” and making staff work and coordination efforts unmanageable. Nowadays, we believe that artificial intelligence will solve complexity and the tendency to produce much more information than we can manage. I recommend developing more of a “coup d’oeil” approach for decision-makers and high-level staff workers for making the right “big” decisions and recommendations, without relying completely on decision support tools which are sometimes based on subjective inputs that are supposed to produce objective results.



Critical skills we need in the future – The 4 C's

CRITICAL THINKING

| 6 CRITICAL THINKING STANDARDS | |
|--|---|
| Clarity <i>Can others understand your point?</i> | Accuracy <i>What is the source for each of your claims?</i> |
| Depth <i>Do you address the complexity?</i> | Relevance <i>Do you raise key issues?</i> |
| Breadth <i>Do you cover all viewpoints?</i> | Precision <i>Is your point specific enough?</i> |

CREATIVITY



COLLABORATION



COMMUNICATION



CONCLUSION

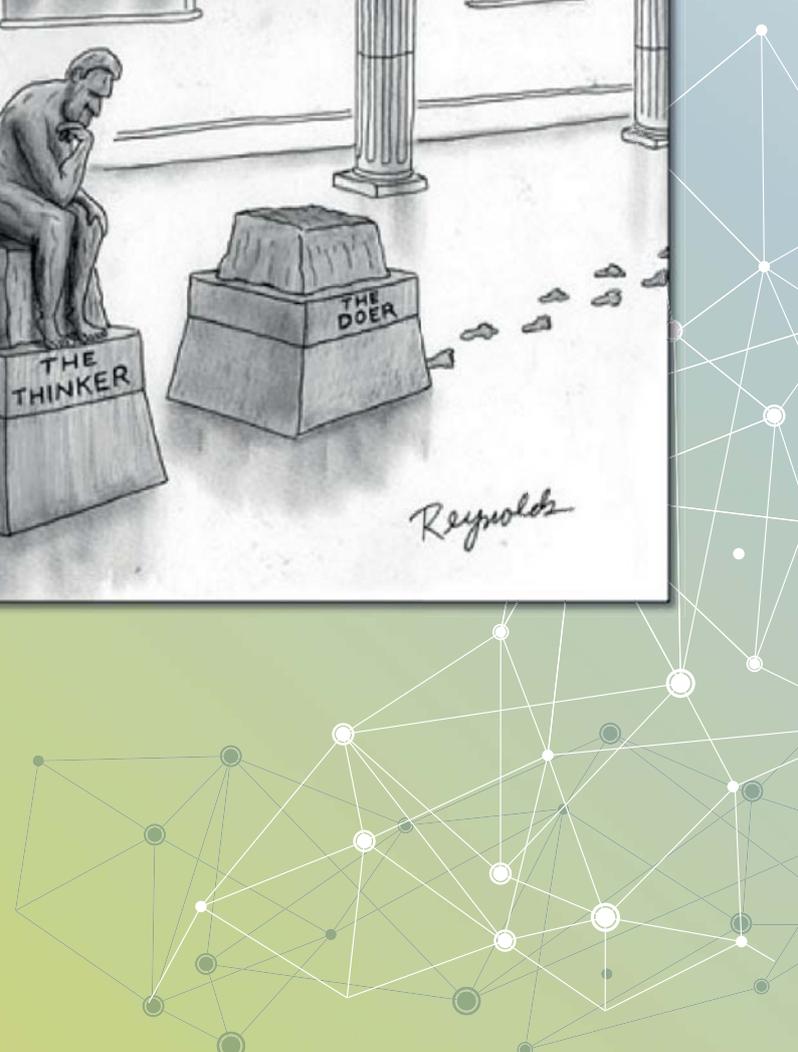
We cannot ignore the current “complexity-capability delta” as this could endanger mission success in particular with CD operations, in which time for planning/conducting the fight and getting into the enemy’s decision cycle is the most critical factor. The human factor plays an essential role in closing this delta, particularly in the relationships between the decision-maker and their staff. Human capital is the most important resource we have, and we should exploit it for the maximum benefit of our military organisations. Therefore it is, from my point of view, essential that we rethink where we should go, without delay.

What does that mean for our military personnel? We should foster four major critical skills for all our personnel – critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity³. These skills will support the ability to deal with complexity, thereby encouraging the move towards more simplicity.

We must avoid the shift of our higher headquarters towards becoming mainly “think tanks”; they are supposed to be the “doers” resources in operations, in particular when gaining time to maintain the initiative is the predominant factor to be considered.

We must improve the qualifications of those who are willing but are less capable or incapable of doing their job. This requires more intensive and focused training to get more qualified personnel with experience which we need in order to succeed. Those who are less willing or unwilling, but in general capable of doing their job need to be better motivated. This requires first and foremost team spirit, pride as a result of success built on a focused effort, avoiding distraction, and not confronting personnel with overwhelming challenges. In particular, the latter seems to be one of the main causes which can lead to a decreased level of motivation.

The same applies to those who are unwilling or less willing and who are incapable or less capable of doing their job. First, they need to be better motivated and then better trained. If you win their hearts, their minds will follow. Maybe we cannot win all the hearts and minds to fully close the delta but at least we need to reduce it as much as possible.



³ For more details see Yuval Noah Harari: „21 Lessons for the 21st Century“, Spiegel&Gruu (2018).



OPERATIONS ASSESSMENT (OPSA) IN EXERCISE TRIDENT JACKAL 2019 (TRJA19)



- It's all about understanding -

By Lieutenant Colonel George-Mihai Moneanu (ROU-A)
G5 PLANS SECTION B CHIEF

I. INTRODUCTION

Any officer who digs a little bit into the history of modern conflicts may find the following two quotes:

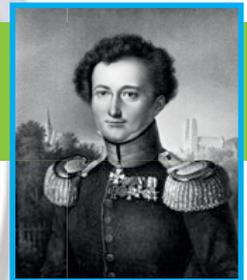


Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

“A goal without a plan is just a wish”

As a complex system, any military organization needs a coherent sequence of activities in which all the sub-systems/ elements have to be synchronised and coordinated in order to contribute to the same desired outcome.

“No plan survives first contact with the enemy”



Carl von Clausewitz

As we are all aware there is no perfect plan and, as long as the enemy has a mind of his own, it will definitely not comply with our pre-determined Course of Action.

At the beginning, these two quotes may look contradictory but, actually, they are complementary and reflect the transition between the two major phases of an operation: Planning and Execution.

Without providing a scientific definition, we might say that a specific process is required to harmonise the necessity of the plan with the ongoing changes/adaptations needed to conduct a successful military operation. This process has existed under different names and forms for a long time but today in NATO it is known as Operations Assessment (OPSA).

We, as military, like to think that the assessment process is something that we own. Actually, it is used by the civilian environment as well, in order to improve performance and effectiveness in various fields of activity and, as we are acting in a comprehensive manner, we have to take them into consideration.

Due to the complexity of the Operating Environment, especially at operational level, it is of tremendous importance to have a tool which can analyse the actions performed and their outcomes at a broader scale (time/space/functional areas) and in a comprehensive manner (involving as many actors as possible). In order to perform such an analysis a thorough understanding of the Operating Environment is needed.

The aim of this article is not to provide a lecture about the Operations Assessment concept but to briefly present how HQ NRDC-ESP managed the process during Ex Trident Jackal 2019 (TRJA19) and to highlight some outcomes and future challenges that were identified along the way.

As TRJA19 was based on a Non-Article 5 scenario, the entire OPSA process was adjusted accordingly. Nevertheless, some outcomes and challenges have overarching viability and applicability.

2. THE JOURNEY

Due to the ever-changing circumstances within NATO, HQ NRDC-ESP started the preparation for Joint HQ capability later than envisaged for a recalibration of this level. The effort invested in the preparation was high and at a fast pace.

The very first step was to develop the “JTF HQ (L) IMPLEMENTATION DIRECTIVE” which defined the path that we had to follow in order to reach the Operational Level capability. As we had the directive, the next step was to develop a plan. So, the “Road to JHQ” was developed consisting of 4 “Lines of Effort” and over 140 elements to be monitored and analysed (Figure 01). Taking into consideration the level that it was intended to reach (operational) it was decided to adopt the Operational Design (OPS DESIGN) concept (consisting of “Progress of Actions, creation of Effects, establishment of Decisive Conditions and achievement of Objectives and, consequently, End State”¹) for the development of the plan and, later on, its assessment.

At the beginning this approach aimed to have dual benefits for the HQ: to provide the Commander with a comprehensive understanding over the progress towards achieving JHQ capability; and to allow the designated personnel to be trained in Operations Assessment (OPSA). Later another two advantages derived from this approach: the adjustment of the products that OPSA has to provide to commander (briefings, recommendations) and a partial change in the mindset of the planners towards Operational Level Planning Process (OLPP).

All the Functional Areas within the HQ are involved in the OPSA process. Everything started with a two-day training event focused mainly on analysing Evaluation Reports from other certified JHQs and on applying the theoretical knowledge to identify gaps in existing Assessment Plans. During this event the importance of the logical flow of information in all aspects of OPSA was emphasised. A tailored Factor Analysis process (Fact/Observation – Deduction/Analysis – Conclusion/Recommendation) was used as an analytical model.

Following the Exercise Planning Process, during JHQ Academics the OPSA team presented the process that was to be followed during both phases of the TRJA19 exercise: Planning and Execution.

Furthermore, during the Battle Staff Training (BST) dedicated to the recalibration as a JHQ, OPSA stakeholders were able to exercise a specific dry Battle Rhythm involving most of the branches of the HQ. Again, this event was used to tailor not

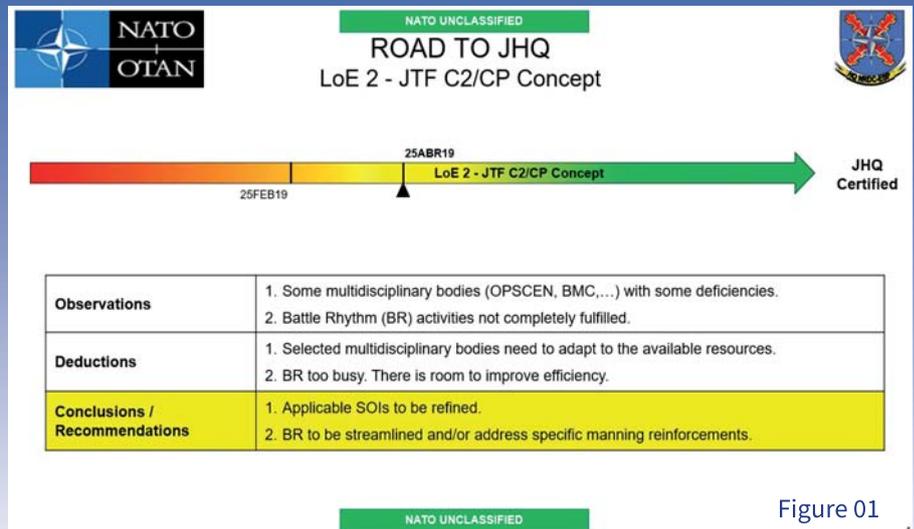


Figure 01

only the required inputs for the Assessment Working Group (AWG) and Assessment Board (AB) but also to adjust the products that these two events were expected to generate during the Execution Phase.

The first main event in the evaluation as JHQ was Crisis Response Planning (CRP). During CRP the OPSA team, reinforced with one Subject Matter Expert (SME) from Joint Force Command Naples (JFCNP), not only developed the specific documents (Data Collection Plan - DCP) but also contributed to the development of the OPS DESIGN (by tailoring Operational Actions, Effects, Decisive Conditions and Objectives IOT be measurable) and, later on, to the OPLAN. One of the challenges in this phase was to shift the mindset of the Joint Operational Planning Group (JOPG) from the Tactical to the Operational Level and to use specific ways of addressing the development of specific products. The OPS DESIGN developed in Tools for Operations Planning Functional Area Services (TOPFAS) Operations Planning Tool (OPT) was successfully updated with the necessary inputs in TOPFAS Campaign Assessment Tool (CAT) and generated the necessary analysis used latter on for the entire OPSA process.

As a milestone in any exercise, the MEL/MIL Workshop was another event in which OPSA had an important contribution by determining the starting point for the Execution phase of the exercise. The entire OPS DESIGN was analysed and the level of achievement of each Effect and Decisive Condition was adjusted taking into consideration the scenario and bearing in mind the desired events and incidents which were subsequently developed. Of utmost importance in this stage was not only the understanding of the Operational Environment (created/developed through exercise scenario) but also the familiarization with the Exercise Planning Process in order to be able to generate a coherent starting package for the most important phase: Execution.

1 Comprehensive Operations Planning Directive (COPD), V 2.0, 03 October 2013, p. 4-113

The final phase of the exercise, Execution, is the biggest challenge for any evaluated HQ. OPISA opened the exercise with a pre-scripted Assessment Board presenting the pre-determined outcomes of the operation “conducted” so far. At this point the OPISA Team was strongly augmented and was able to manage the entire process effectively. The value of this augmentation is one of the main outcomes of this phase. As the HQ NRDC-ESP adopted an Integrated Stretched Model (incorporating Operational and Tactical Levels), the OPISA team had to address both of them. All Component Command representatives and some Theatre Troops Liaison Elements were integrated into an extensive data collection process. A thorough cross-functional analysis was performed at the end of each day and agreed by all OPISA stakeholders in a very effervescent Assessment Working Group (AWG). The AWG provided all members the opportunity to express their opinions addressing the Operational level issues. The outcomes of these analyses were later used to perform the brainstorming which led to the final product that OPISA had to deliver: the second Assessment Board and, most importantly, the recommendations to the Commander. These recommendations took into consideration all actions performed by our own troops (accounted through Measures Of Performance - MOPs) and as many scientific observable changes generated in the Operating Environment (accounted through Measures Of Effectiveness - MOEs). The process used for the entire process has roots in the Knowledge Pyramid (DIKW) adapted to a specific Operational Level OPISA Concept (Figure 02). At this point in addition to the contribution of each OPISA stakeholder the interaction with Knowledge Development (KD) and the integration of their SMEs perspectives was also important.

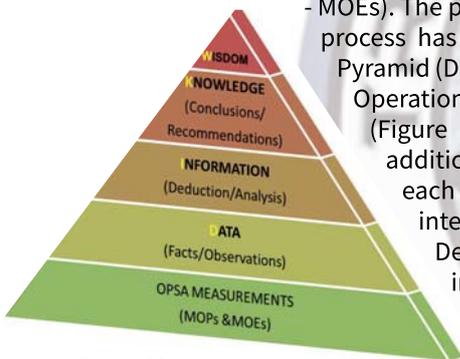


Figure 02

The Commander received the essence of all the OPISA efforts in an already familiar format (Factor Analysis). After applying military judgment (wisdom), guidance for the further conduct of operations and the focus for the next OPISA Cycle were provided. At this point OPISA presentation showed not only the current status of the operation but, looking at the past, depicted the historical trend of each analysed element (red area in Figure 03), analysing and concluding the present (Fact/Observations and Analysis/Deduction) generated sound recommendations to the Commander in order to adjust the PLAN by keeping the focus on the achievements of established Objectives.

The agreed recommendations provided within the AB and approved by the Commander after applying his military judgement/wisdom (captured in Record of Decisions – RODs) were the food that fed the Joint Coordination Board Steering Group (JCSBG) and, together with other on-going activities,

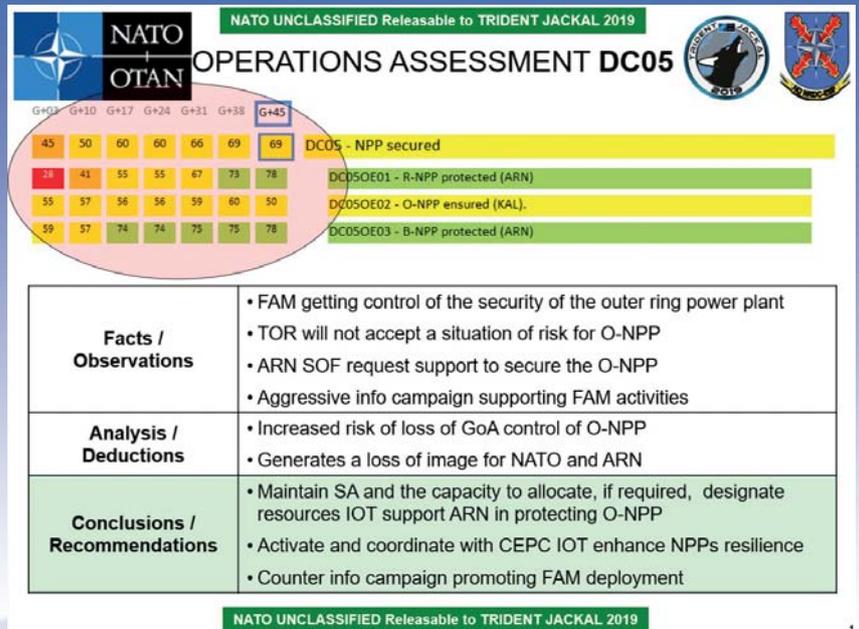


Figure 03

shaped every operational working group and board within the Battle Rhythm (Figure 04).

3. OUTCOMES/FUTURE CHALLENGES

In our journey towards JHQ capability, the Operations Assessment concept was used not only during the exercise but also during the preparation activities. By extending the applicability of OPISA to current activities it was determined that it can provide a valuable tool for assessing progress toward the Commander’s Training Objectives over a determined period of time. An overarching Training Plan (including all HQ activities and resources allocated) based on the OPS DESIGN concept can be periodically assessed and adjusted with OPISA tools. It would require a continuous whole HQ effort which, if well implemented and managed effectively, may drive all the efforts towards the desired end-state.

Due to the lack of OPISA personnel during the Planning Phase of the exercise and due to the overwhelming numbers of activities within the Battle Rhythm it was decided that the focus must be on the Operational Level. There was no Tactical Assessment Working Group or Tactical Assessment Board as would usually exist. The OPISA contribution to the tactical level was provided during the Execution Phase by sending specialised personnel in specific Working Groups and Boards and contributing to their products development with assessment expertise while gathering information for the next OPISA cycle.

During the TRJA19 MEL/MIL Workshop the OPISA representative was granted the authority to adjust the OPS DESIGN as deemed necessary due to his understanding of the Operating Environment as an Assessor. This added more coherence to the STARTEX Package and generated a better understanding of the operational status at the beginning of the Execution Phase.



BATTLE RHYTHM

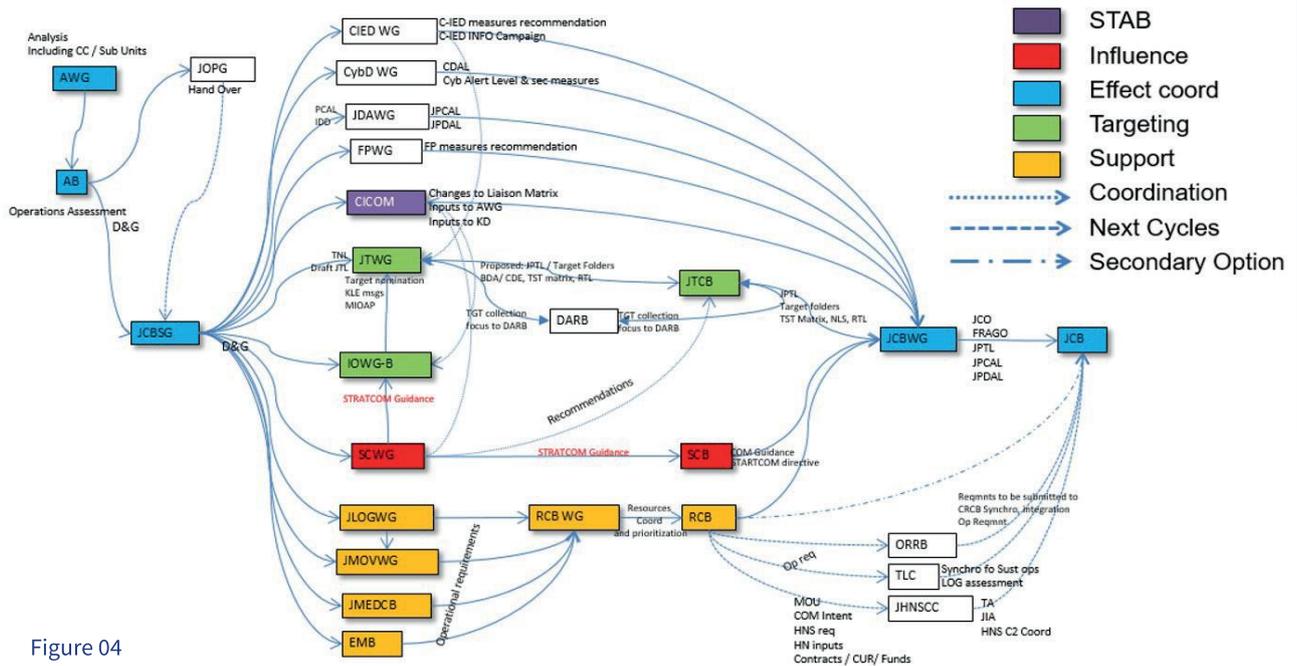


Figure 04

In order to develop a thorough Assessment of the operation, OPSPA stakeholders need to have a comprehensive understanding of the Operating Environment. This understanding may be facilitated by the composition of the OPSPA Team. Including permanent multinational members from all the services and with a background as broad as possible is highly recommended. The OPSPA Team for TRJA19 was composed of 8 members from 5 nations (two NATO Partner Nations) from all services having expertise in various domains, including one dedicated civilian OPSPA SME and the TOPFAS Manager. As previously presented, OPSPA at the Operational level has to incorporate assessments provided by entities outside NATO, mainly International and/or Non-Governmental Organisations (IOs and NGOs). The exchange of information with these entities has to take into consideration the concepts of “need-to-know” and “need-to-share”. On the military side we must assure security operations and on the other side the IOs/NGOs must be sure that they will not lose their credibility which is so hard to get and maintain in a volatile Non-Article 5 operation.

The importance that OPSPA is granted nowadays may result in a misleading interpretation related to the conduct of operations. OPSPA outcomes must not be seen as the drivers of the operations. Operations Assessment, if well implemented, may, at most, generate adjustments to the original plan, fill some gaps in understanding the Operating Environment and help in the achievement of the established Objectives.

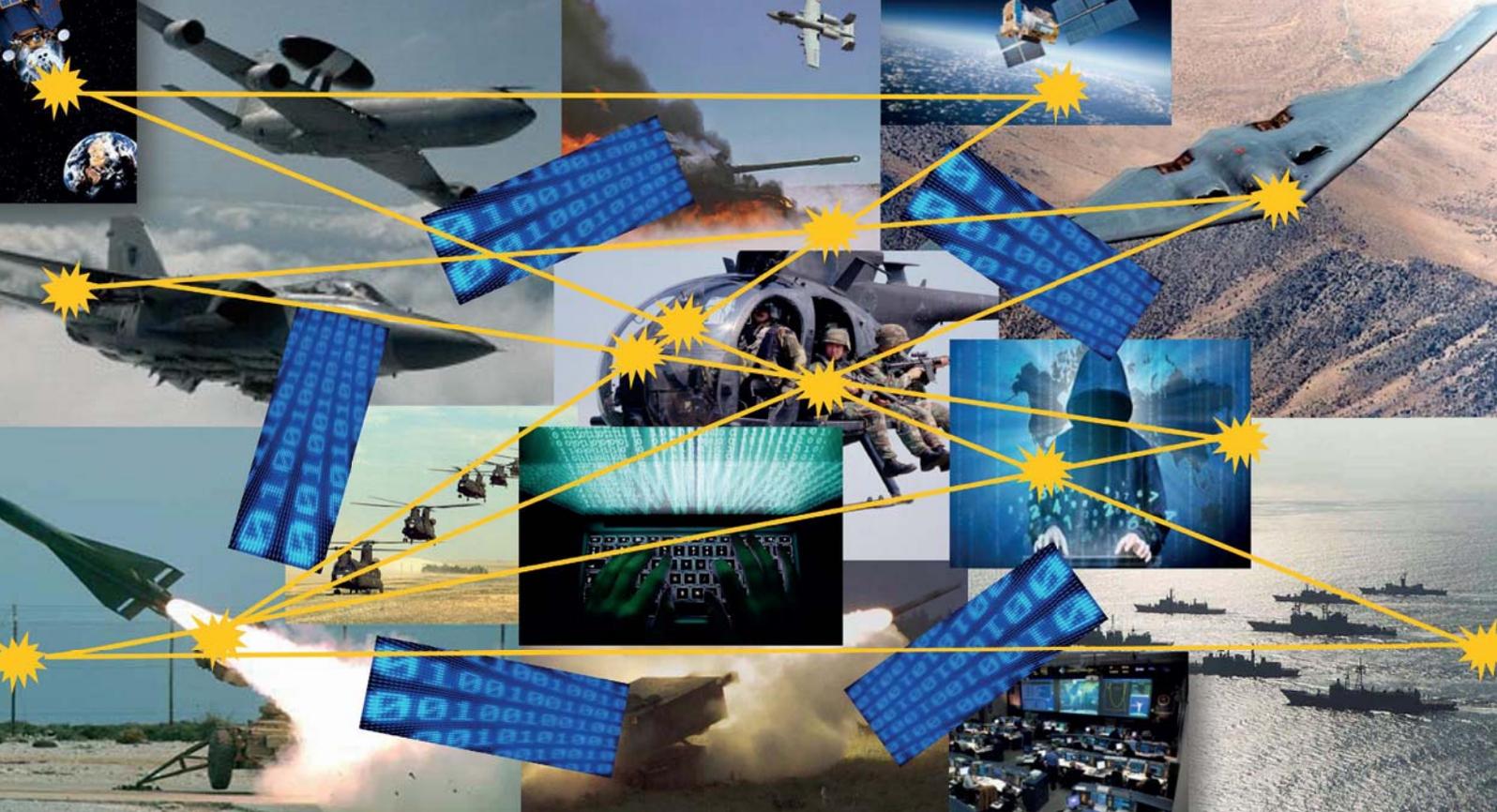
By definition OPSPA is an analytical and brainstorming process that needs the cooperation of different entities which, ultimately, means actual human beings. The COVID19 pandemic generated a new approach towards the planning and conduct operations due to “physical distancing”. The Crisis Response Planning Process conducted during Ex VALIANT LINX / TORO 2020 revealed that we need to use existing technology at its fullest extent in different military processes in order to comply with a new demanding Opera-

ting Environment. From this perspective OPSPA at the operational level is one step ahead due to the fact that has already implemented dedicated collaborative powerful tools (TOPFAS suite) and can also use some other common applications (i.e. Office suite). With only slight adaptations and a little additional effort from OPSPA stakeholders these technologies can be used to overcome COVID19-like situations and generate specific requested products.

The next challenge of HQ NRDC-ESP is to develop the War-Fighting Corps (WF***) HQ capability/function. The shift in the mind-set from operational level to the tactical level generates challenges to the OPSPA personnel as well. The fact that the OPS DESIGN is not going to be developed makes the use of the classical Operations Assessment process almost impossible to implement. The tempo of the operation is much faster and does not allow a thorough analysis of the changes in the Operating Environment. Also, due to the high rate of most likely lethal engagements that characterise the tactical level, one option would be to connect OPSPA even closer with the Targeting Process (maybe even to integrate it in the Targeting Cycle but having a comprehensive and overarching approach towards the evolution of the operation).

To conclude, the Operations Assessment process is complex and sometimes hard to implement nevertheless, if used in a proper manner, it can generate a better understanding of the Operating Environment, provide important adjustments to the original OPLAN during the execution of operations and establish useful guidelines if associated with an HQ comprehensive and overarching Training Plan during a peace time framework. Also, it is important to understand this process as a whole, not just at the HQ level but as a tool in achieving operational continuity and connection of all levels from tactical to strategic.





SHAPING THE HQ NRDC-ESP FOR MULTI-DOMAIN OPERATIONS (MDO)

By Lieutenant Colonel Jesús García-Malo de Molina Martínez (ESP-A)
G3 AIR Chief

The Corps Commander looks across the map, then takes another look at the COP (common operating picture). Assembled around him the staff has updated him on the situation: *“Sir, the JFACC has local air superiority.” “Sir, missile defence units are in place and operational.” “Sir, planes from the air force and navy are ready to jam enemy air defence radars on your request.” “Sir, SOF reconnaissance reports the information campaign begun weeks ago has weakened the resolve of the enemy forces.” “Sir, one of the NATO members has completed reconnaissance of the enemy’s computer systems and will disrupt their command and control nodes at your request.” “Sir, all ground and army aviation forces are ready to cross the line of departure 60 minutes from your decision.”* The Commander stands and issues the order, *“Begin cyber an electromagnetic attacks in 30 minutes; tell the air force to attack the pre-planned targets; launch the aviation deep attack under this cloud of confusion we are creating for the enemy; ground forces cross the LD in one hour; notify JTF HQ that we attack as planned. We are giving this enemy many problems at the same time; that is our advantage.”*

Introduction: What is a Multi-Domain Operation?

Before focusing on the impact in the future of multidomain operations in the HQ NRDC-ESP, we should first look at what “multidomain” means and how NATO is currently working on this issue.

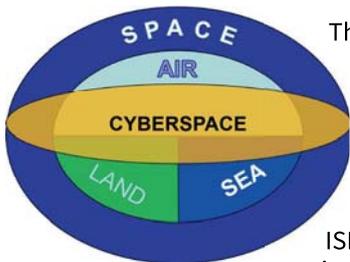
Multidomain can be defined as something “related to, or affecting several domains”. This term is used in many fields: multidomain in proteins, ecosystems, etc. However, when we think of this term in a military context, we are referring to each area of knowledge or activity. For many centuries, or even millennia, the military has mainly worked in three different domains: land, sea, and air (even before aircraft or artillery existed, airspace was used in order to avoid any direct contact with the adversary by throwing anything likely to cause damage, such as arrows or spears). But nowadays, in the armed forces, we actually work in five different domains: the three well-known ones mentioned above, plus space and cyberspace (NATO has recognized Cyberspace and Space as Domains of Operations recently – in 2016 and 2019 respectively). Therefore, we must get used to working with these five domains simultaneously in an integrated and coordinated way in order to take the best advantage of each one. That is, Multi-Domain Operations (MDO).

According to NATO, an MDO is “an operation to conduct activities and generate effects across more than one domain, at the same time in an integrated manner” (although this term has not officially been approved yet). Therefore, since surely most current basic military activities take place in several domains at the same time, we can state that from now on we are going to operate always in a multidomain environment. Near future conflicts are sure to run in the two aforementioned new domains, no matter the forces we use. NATO, and thence this HQ, have a lot of work to do in order to make the best use of them separately. Besides, the effects will be transmitted at the lightspeed, and we must be prepared for a future in which the most important part of the decision-making process is time, and where there will be no option for improvisation.

Two new Domains: Cyber and Space

Before considering multi-domain, we should see very briefly what these two new domains actually are: Cyberspace Operational Domain consists of all interconnected communication, information technology and other electronic systems, networks and their data, including those which are separated or independent, which process, store or transmit data; while the Space Operational Domain is that which, not being encompassed by any other single domain, provides specific capabilities and functions that are unique and delivers unique effects that no other domain can achieve.

Cyber is not just another domain: it is common and crucial to all other domains. Cyberspace exists across the other domains of air, land, sea and space and connects these physical domains with the cognitive processes that use the data that is stored, modified, or exchanged. Cyberspace is therefore distinct from the information that may be resident in or transferred through the domain. It includes four different activities: CIS, Cyber ISR, Cyber Defence and Cyber Offensive. The main difference between the former domains and the current cyberspace is the lack of borders.



The Space Domain, on the other hand, may be considered as a parallel network to the ground (like Internet), which integrates all domains and assets and shares the information. It's an operational domain that includes ISR, weather, communications, navigation, timing and warning and in which all the information passes.

Domains VS Components

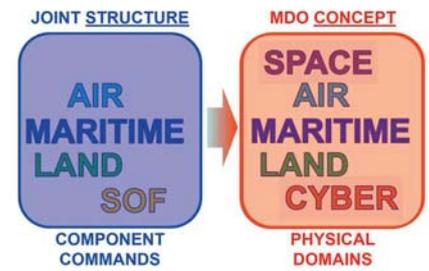
After seeing what these two new concepts imply, we can actually state that we are already working on the Multi-Domain. In fact, the concept of Multi-Domain is not something new in NATO; it is merely an “evolution” of Joint Operations which is something that obviously this HQ is very familiarized with.

According to the AAP-06 (NATO Glossary of Terms and definitions), Joint is used to describe those “activities, operations and organizations in which elements of at least two services participate”. It means two or more services working together,

but not necessarily in an integrated manner. Multi-domain is therefore one step beyond joint operations.

If we have to differentiate between Components and Domains, it could

be that while a component is mainly related to a group of forces, a domain focuses on the environment, regardless of the means we use in it. The question we GRF HQs should ask, then, is whether new Cyber and Space Component Commands should be created and integrated in a normal Joint structure in order to address a Multi-Domain Operation. Moreover, the MDO concept and the creation of a Multi-Domain Task Force (MDTF) are much-needed changes in an emergent operational environment.



Near future for NATO and the HQ NRDC-ESP

Prior to working on the full integration of all domains, we have new challenges to face. Potential challenges include educational, psychological and behavioural adaptations in order to ensure that the individual service member can cope with the increasing speed of operations and decision cycles, and develop a deep enough understanding of joint capabilities to conduct future Multi-Domain Operations. Other potential key issues comprise securing the electromagnetic spectrum and protecting the space and cyber infrastructure to enable the information gathering, sharing and communications essential for MDO. Because of these new domains, we must also be prepared to use new technologies, such as artificial intelligence, hypersonic weaponry and robotics, as well as mining, managing and exploiting Big Data.

To sum up, currently we can talk about Components (Air, Land, Sea, Special Forces) or Domains (Air, Land, Sea, Space, Cyberspace). Obviously, they are very similar concepts, but while the first one is clearly related to forces, the latter refers exclusively to the “place” where the forces work. However, we can expect that a transition to a single concept will take place within a short time, where the traditional command and control becomes a truly joint and unified command relationship.

Multi-Domain Operations require mission commanders to simultaneously conduct parallel actions in multiple domains of the battlespace according to dynamic situations.



MDO is a new concept that is currently being dealt with and studied by NATO, and since it can be considered as an evolution of the joint concept, we HQ NRDC-ESP must be aware and ready to manage certain future NATO adaptation.



Forging New Relationships to Advance Air-Land Integration

By Major John Schade (USAF-A)
AOCC(L) Chief of Operations

Less than 150 kilometers from NRDC-ESP's headquarters, a complex 10-nation training program is instructing over 300 NATO pilots per year to be tactical leaders. Members HQ NRDC-ESP recently leveraged our close proximity to this training program to enhance our Air-Land Integration understanding. In three separate trips to Los Llanos Air Base in Albacete, NRDC-ESP members from G3 and the AOCC(L) established a relationship with the Tactical Leadership Programme (TLP).

The mission at TLP is simple in concept but complex to execute: "increase the effectiveness of Allied Air Forces through development of leadership skills, mission planning, briefing, tactical operations, debriefing skills, and conceptual and doctrinal initiatives." This mission brings 120 different NATO aircraft into Albacete each year and includes such aircraft as the

Mirage 2000, E-3 AWACS, and the new 5th generation F-35 Joint Strike Fighter. Each aircraft comes with a pilot and maintenance crew. The pilot is the student in the program, but the maintainers also gain valuable experience in a high-tempo environment. Each day a pilot commands a package of aircraft for a mission that ranges from a Composite Air Operation (COMAO) to a Joint Personnel Rescue (JPR) event. With the help of 25 highly experienced instructors, graduates of the program progress from leading their single aircraft as an aircraft commander to leading a package of 20 or more aircraft as a package commander. Additionally, NATO gains better standardization of flying procedures with each graduate that learns doctrinally sound Techniques, Tactics, and Procedures (TTPs).

The AOCC(L) and G3 Operations of HQ NRDC-ESP saw a mutually beneficial

opportunity with the TLP. HQ NRDC-ESP staff could learn about current air TTPs with the ultimate goal of better air-land integration. Likewise, TLP cadre could learn about tactical and operational level land operations that spill into the air domain. Discussions with the TLP staff culminated into a day of observations of TLP activities in November 2019. During the planning phase of the 14 hour day, HQ NRDC-ESP attendees learned the complexity of introducing late changes to the ATO cycle such as an unplanned Restricted Operating Zone (ROZ) for artillery fire. The day culminated with the smell of jet fuel as HQ NRDC-ESP members watched 18 aircraft takeoff within minutes of each other. Operations were then monitored via a Recognized Air Picture (RAP) and finally there was a thorough debriefing and lessons learned discussion after all aircraft landed.

HQ NRDC-ESP and TLP continued to foster its relationship a few months later. In January 2020 TLP had their annual academic planning session for TLP instructors, which produced the year's syllabus. HQ NRDC-ESP members visited TLP a second time during this session upon invitation of TLP staff with the goal of increasing an understanding of corps level operations, which could contribute to TLP training scenarios. A briefing led by Major Stefano Zalla (ITA) discussed land operations that affect the air domain such as defense systems and artillery fires. The briefing contributed to considerations for the TLP syllabus, but just as importantly reaffirmed relationships between our staff which lead to a third visit the next month.



better prepared to execute NRDC-ESP's mission. This third TLP event ended with an open invitation for TLP instructors to visit HQ NRDC-ESP. Perhaps in the near future they will visit, and HQ NRDC-ESP can add as much value to their staff as they have for ours.

even if those other units are far outside of the chain of command, as HQ NRDC-ESP did with TLP. This concept is as old as NATO itself, and we were reminded of it at a recent NATO ceremony. March 2020, NATO welcomed the Republic of North Macedonia into the alliance as its 30th member. The Commander of JFC Brunssum emphasized to the audience the idea that "we are stronger together." The new HQ NRDC-ESP-TLP relationship forged this year represents just one more way in which we are breaking out of our "silos" and becoming "stronger together."

Sometimes, we "work in silos" within NATO. This is a common American expression likely derived from the nature of silos that dot American farmlands. It means to work in close proximity but not share information. NATO units across the alliance can leverage the knowledge held by other units that reside in close proximity,

In February 2020, HQ NRDC-ESP Joint Personnel Rescue (JPR) leaders were able to capitalize on a unique training opportunity. Due to the recently established relationship between TLP and HQ NRDC-ESP, Major Chad Monroe (USA) and Lieutenant Colonel Jesus Garcia Malo (ESP) were able to travel to TLP for a rare opportunity to observe a combat search and rescue (CSAR) exercise that was incorporated into the TLP syllabus. The experience was best summed up by Major Monroe, "observing this TLP training event demonstrated the complexity of a single JPR event and certainly increased our working knowledge of planning and executing CSAR activities." Normally, NRDC JPR leaders only have training in one short NATO course. This observation complemented their academic knowledge from that course with a real-world exercise that made them





MARITIME LIAISON STRUCTURE CONSIDERATIONS

By Lieutenant Colonel Manuel Domínguez Autran (ESP-N)
Liaison Officer SPMARFOR - MOCC

The need of liaison from the Joint Force Maritime Component Command (JFMCC) is based on LNO,s, who *“act as the principal method of coordination by ensuring that critical information is rapidly assessed and disseminated up and down the chain of command. The component LNO has an essential role to play in the host component’s plans and execution, particularly regarding the synchronization of component activity”*¹.

Establishing this liaison in the early stages of an operation is paramount,

especially when the time for planning is limited and the process requires collaborative or parallel planning. *“The use of liaison officers at all levels is particularly useful and will pay dividends by avoiding potential misunderstandings and confusion at an early stage, whether during a planning phase or once operations are under way”*¹.

But any liaison structure should be adapted to the sending and receiving CC,s or JFC HQ,s relative to their structures, operations, capabilities/means

deployed, its physical battlespace and interactions between them. In this sense, there could be a unique characteristic of a CC that determines the way of liaison and the need of a specific structure to deal with this matter. A strong liaison from the JFAC with LCC and MCC seems obvious insofar as JFAC battlespace includes the volume of airspace above the land and maritime ones.

1 AJP 3.1 Allied Joint Doctrine for Maritime Operations

In this battlespace the JFAC air assets in addition to may also act in support of these CC's operations, they have to fly over to carry out their own commitments and tasks, and as a result JFAC needs a strong structure in other CC's HQ's, not only for supporting those CC's operations, but mainly to guarantee its own (all JTF air assets) security and exercise the overall air coordination and control in the JOA. This structure is the AOCC (L/M), whose roles are mainly oriented to carry out the JFACC tactical policy above the battlespace of the hosted CC, and for liaison, coordination and synchronization of Air Operations with CC's is more an Air Liaison Element role as soon it is deployed².



On the other hand if we consider LCC and MCC AOO's, they are exclusive, never overlapped and they could only have a common boundary if they are continuous, although obviously LCC and MCC assets could directly influence on the other CC's AOO's, but these actions must be coordinated/authorized by the owner of this AOO or by the JFC, in the same basis that at tactical level fires or any action/influence in the AOO of the adjacent unit must be coordinated, authorized or directed by this unit. Additionally, in this interaction between CC's there are normally no maritime or land assets moving inside other CC's AOO to carry out their own tasks, as JFAC assets do over MCC and LCC AOO.

Even Naval Aviation flying above the LCC AOO or supporting Land Operations is normally under the TACOM/TACON of the JFAC, *“Excess maritime air sorties are offered to the ACC for tasking. The MCC retains OPCON of maritime air assets and*

*delegates TACOM/tactical control (TACON) as appropriate”*³. In any case, the main coordination is between MAOC/AOCC(M) and the AOCC(L) as JFAC rear briefing agency in/over the LCC/Corps AOO, acting in the same way that it would do with own JFAC assets and the control of Army Aviation flying into/over MCC AOO, their control has to be passed to MAOC (or TACC in Amphibious Operations), but not from any Land Air Agency, this control should be passed by JFAC via assigned AOCC (L) to these Land Forces. Even in the event that JFMCC were also designed as ACC in the JOA⁴, AIRCOM AOCC (L) deployed with Land Formations will become dependent on designated ACC/JFMCC (CAOC/MAOC) and no specific maritime entities should be needed as air rear briefing agencies⁵.

Amphibious Operations (AOs) are also seen as a kind of operation highly demanded in their needs for liaison and coordination between LCC and MCC/ATF/LF, when the termination of

the AO is a relief in place or a passage of lines from the LCC formations to the Landing Force (LF), and really it is, but more at the tactical level and it is especially demanding for the force that has to relieve in place or carry out a passage of lines. *“Generally, liaison goes from the moving forces to the in-place forces”*⁶, so it seems that in most of the cases, the liaison structures that have to be especially enhanced are those from LCC and Land Tactical Formations executing these operations and not the MCC/ATF liaison structure, that in any case should be adapted to this kind of operations.

2 AJP 3 Allied Doctrine for the Conduct of Operations and AJP 3.3 Allied Joint Doctrine for Air and Space Operations

3 AJP 3.1 Allied Joint Doctrine for Maritime Operations

4 AJP 3.1. about MCC roles “may also be assigned as the ACC”

5 AFS Vol IV:STANDAR FOR MARITIME FORCES, ANNEX B

6 ATP 3.2.1. Allied Land Tactics

MCC liaison structure is mainly developed in:

1. For liaison with JFAC in AJP 3.3.3. Allied Joint Doctrine for Air-Maritime Coordination, the liaison is based in the following entities sent to ACC HQ, for support planning of air operations MLE (Maritime Liaison Element) and MALE (Maritime Air Liaison Element), for coordination MCE (Maritime Coordination Element) and MACE (Maritime Air Coordination Element).

2. For liaison with JTF HQ and LCC HQ the structure is in AD 80-106 Allied Maritime Governance, AD 80-96 NATO Response Force and MARCOM SOP 360 Maritime Liaison Element and these structures are:

MCCE: Maritime Command Coordination Element represents JFMCC at the 3/4* JHQ level, facilitates communication and coordination between JHQ boards, working groups and the MCC, its director is empowered through a Letter of Authority of JFMCC.

MLE: Maritime Liaison Element represents JFMCC at the Land 3* level for providing effective coordination and synchronization between the components and SMA of the main activities conducted by the MCC, its director is empowered through a Letter of Authority of JFMCC.

Both MCCE and MLE are Maritime Liaison entities, fully integrated in Maritime C2 structure, mission tailored by JFMCC in accordance to the skillsets required and adapted to address the main effort of the MCC.

But what about something called MOCC (Maritime Operations Coordination Centre) in some GRF(L) currently MOCC is only quoted in an unique Maritime document, MARCOM SOP 360 (2016) which says only that it is a proposal pending SHAPE decision and MOCC functions are not to be performed by the MLE. So it seems that MARCOM does not consider MOCC as a maritime entity, and nothing to do with current C2 maritime structure and also that MLE and MOCC functions should be clearly different. This means that MLE and MCCE directors are the only authorized representatives from JFMCC in LCC and JTF HQ,s,, they are also the only authorized maritime advisors (Maritime SME) in these HQ,s as representatives of the JFMCC (main adviser of JFC for maritime issues) , so any MOCC role related to any kind of representation for coordination, planning or synchronization on behalf of JFMCC or even acting as main maritime advisor in these HQ,s, seems impossible at the moment, without a favourable SHAPE decision.

Doctrinal References about AOCC vs MOCC

AOCC

DOCTRINAL REFERENCES

- AJP 3.1 Allied Joint Doctrine for Maritime Ops.
- AJP 3.2. Allied Joint Doctrine for Land Ops.
- AJP 3.3. Allied Joint Doctrine for Air and Space Ops.
- AJP 3.3.1. Allied Joint Doctrine for Counter-air Ops.
- AJP 3.3.2. Allied Joint Doctrine for CAS and AI.
 - ATP 3.3.2.1. TTP,s for CAS and AI.
- AJP 3.3.3. Allied Joint Doctrine for Air-Maritime Coord.
- ATP 3.2.2. Command and Control of Allied Land Forces.
- ATP 3.3.5.1. Joint Air Space TTP,s.
- ATP 47 Handbook for Air Reconnaissance and Reporting.
- Aarty-P5 NATO Fire Support Doctrine.
- AEP 82.1 Guidelines for integration of weapons and UAV,s.

MOCC

DOCTRINAL REFERENCES

NONE

But SHAPE production of a directive about MOCC could be a complex issue, mainly because a directive is *“for conveying policy or guidance of permanent or continuing applicability to all, or a large part, of ACO”*. That means that a directive normally rules something pre-existing, but for the directive proposal about MOCC, the unique inspiration was the directive about AOCC, AD 80-65, whose references are not applicable to Maritime Forces, except for their relations with JFAC.

At this point, the real problem is that there is not any alternative maritime/joint publication for SHAPE issuing any kind of guidance or policy about something called MOCC.

Without doctrine or an AD, some GRF(L) SOIs go on developing MOCC roles, most of them trying to adapt AD 80-65 to Maritime Forces, but a SOI is *“for laying down internal procedures for subordinate elements of a major organization”*⁸, and neither MARCOM, nor any MCC are subordinate elements of any GRF(L) HQ, so it seems that these SOI,s are not the proper document to settle any kind of dependence, relation or roles of MOCC with JFMCC or MARCOM, mainly because in no way those SOI,s engage Allied Maritime Structure, so just now the situation could be that the acknowledgement about MOCC from Maritime Forces could be different from Land Forces aspirations about MOCCs, and for any cell whose aim is to improve liaison between MCC and LCC, to generate misunderstanding from the beginning is the worst of the scenarios.

MOCC functions should be dramatically different to those carried out by AOCC (L) related to Air Operations, mainly because:

1. MCC doesn't have any permanent control/command above, in or under the LCC AOO, as JFACC has.
2. There isn't anything similar to the ATO cycle between LCC and MCC, for its routine and daily basis.
3. If MOCC functions were similar to AOCC functions, MOCC main roles must be reflected in several doctrinal publications as they are in AOCC ones.

MOCC is a Maritime structure, it would have to be developed in Maritime and Joint Doctrine to be granted its integration in Maritime C2 structure, and not in Land SOIs as it is currently, but also we should consider the need of a LOCC (Land Operations Coordination Centre) in all the HRF (M) HQ,s, that probably they should be equally needed and, its name sounds also very similar to AOCC.

REFLECTION PROCESS NATO CROSSROADS:

ADAPTATION OR EVOLUTION



*By Mr. Ignacio Cortiñas Dorado (CIV)
NRDC-ESP Political Advisor*

International Staff (IS) and International Military Staff (IMS), in NATO HQ Brussels were given the task and worked as one team to draft and prepare, for NAC approval, a very good Strategic Concept, which was approved by the NAC in Washington on the occasion of the 50th Anniversary Summit.

That particular Strategic Concept was the seed for changing everything in NATO. The Military Structures were changed, in accordance with the 1999 SC, and NATO was able to overcome the new 21st Century challenges successfully.

BACKGROUND

Once the Berlin Wall fell, the world was in the need of a New Order. That was the signal for NATO Nation Members to react and experience a need for a New Strategic Concept (SC). That happened in 1998. The NAC discussed and approved a New Strategic Concept, taking advantage of the Summit on the 50th Anniversary of NATO (Washington Summit, 1999). It helped it to successfully face the new threats that the 21st Century would bring to the Alliance. At that point in time, it was relatively easy to get the approval of 18+1(FRA) Nation Members.



Based on this SC, the Military Committee approved the New Military Structures in 2001 (starting with NATO Force Structure, MC 317). In this way, the nations were able to have a “Political and Legal” basis for their evolution and offers to NATO: the HRFs were born and NRDC HQs were a fact. However, at that time, officials working for NATO in the IS, considered the document (MC 317) to be a paper that could jeopardise certain status. Overcoming this bureaucratic setback took the IMS team a year. It was solved out using the best tool in NATO: *Lobbying*. Ultimately, in June 2002 the NAC in Permanent Session, chaired by SECGEN (Lord George Robertson), approved MC 317- NATO Force Structure, bypassing the staffing process within the IS. The nations obtained the legal/international status provided by the Paris Protocol (Aug 1952), to go further in their projects for a New Force Structure. A year later, a new NATO Command Structure, MC 324/1 was also approved by the MC and subsequently noted by the NAC, in 2003. The most significant effects of the “New Strategic Concept” were on the way.

WHAT WE HAVE TODAY

With the 1999 SC, NATO overcame threats and challenges that the new geopolitical and global order brought to us: Deployment to far away theatres; Facing disturbing and undefined enemies; dealing with alienated regimes; effectively fighting terrorism; dealing with own population diverging opinion; keeping the transatlantic link strong; allocating a new bi-polarism, which was no longer a reference to follow; intercultural approaches... etc. Those NATO parameters established by the 1999 SC were fully valid for about 15-18 years...some still are.

Today, NATO has to face a “dramatic” change, based on the evolution of the current geopolitical situation and the evolution of our threats and concerns (as identified in the NMS), together with the different interests of NATO’s competitors. However, it seems NATO either cannot or does not want to do it. Those “elements” identified as “NATO threats/enemies/concerns” have evolved more quickly than NATO is moving. NATO is falling behind events, right in the middle of a “Strategic Competition”, which is not a good way to proceed. Bilateral agreements, parallel clubs, lack of leadership, new energy cycle, decline of international organizations ...etc... All these new geopolitical/strategic factors are overloading the current NATO strategic management ability. Looking at NATO in a rational way, what NATO is really doing nowadays is a “permanent adaptation” without effectively tackling the existent new environment. Adapting concepts independently ... NATO is adapting everything... but without really changing. The “Adapted” NATO Strategic Concept, 2010, seems to be nothing but a comforting document to help us “sleep well”.

WHAT NATO NEEDS

NATO, as a Security Organization, is facing limits for new decisions and “evolution” as a result of various national situations. The crisis the IOs (UN, NATO, EU...) are facing is even pushing the “Nation Members” to look forward to new Alliances or Allies, when fighting for their national interests. Current NATO, EU ... may risk being not the best assemblages to “use” as influential/geopolitical clubs. Here is where NATO, in order to evolve pragmatically, needs to concentrate its efforts, to face the second half of the 21st Century with a realistic strategic thinking. In NATO real “Strategic Thinking”, as presented by former SACEUR, General Scaparrotti, to SECGEN recently, is urgently and dramatically needed. In other words, a serious Political Footprint supported by heavy Strategic Thinking.



June the 5th, 2018, NATO China Military Dialogue resumes





Technology and Strategic Thinking have to complement and integrate a real “change/evolution” of NATO political projection and procedures. The current decision-making process does not seem to be the most accurate way of managing crisis. In addition, the bureaucratic burden, deeply established in the NATO network, jeopardises the implementation of proper reactions and decisions. However, as many times recalled: This is the way NATO works and has survived for decades (??). In my view, this is the philosophy to change, in order to face the future, successfully.

Another issue is the way that political/NAC decisions are to be implemented. Operationally speaking NATO is anchored

to the 20th Century. That is the main damage within the evolutionary process, which was successfully overcome in 2000s with the 1999 Strategic Concept. Thus, NATO has an urgent need of a 22nd-Century-focused Strategic Concept. NATO’s backbone - Defence and Deterrence in the Euro-Atlantic Area (DDA) Concept - is to be the basis of a “widely” understood Strategic Thinking, in order to identify the required resources and its Strategic development/employment. Not only referring to nuclear capabilities but also to information campaigns, cyber offensive operations, economic sanctions, international fora and Human Rights groups pressure...etc. All its capabilities closely coordinated under the “DDA umbrella”.



1967
NAC in Brussels



It is well known by NATO Members that the current “internal national situations” do not make such a deep and final evolution easy: USA strategic un-definition, EU lack of leadership, the troubling GER internal political situation, UK with Brexit, EU under Populism, COVID-19 Chaos-Priorities ... a number of factors make for NATO members stepping forward much harder than desired. However, the needs should overcome hindrance. The million-dollar question is “how to solve out the struggle” of NATO key players in tackling such a New Strategic Concept...and how to lobby the “other players”. Here is where the SEC GEN initiative might fit very well.

Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg announced the appointment of a group of experts on Tuesday, 31 March 2020, to support his work in a **Reflection Process** to further strengthen NATO’s Political Dimension. The group of five men and five women will be co-chaired by Thomas de Maizière (GER) and Wess Mitchell (USA), and will report to the Secretary General. It will offer recommendations to reinforce Alliance unity, increase political consultation and coordination between Allies, and strengthen NATO’s political role. The following people have been appointed to the group: Greta Bossenmaier (**Canada**), Anja Dalgaard-Nielsen (**Denmark**), Hubert Védrine (**France**), Thomas de Maizière (**Germany**), Marta Dassù (**Italy**), Herna Verhagen (**The Netherlands**), Anna Fotyga (**Poland**), Tacan Ildem (**Turkey**), John Bew (**United Kingdom**) and Wess Mitchell (**United States**). The group comprises Diplomats, Politicians and University Professors. It is hope that the selection of these men and women has been accurate and that they will readdress the “Strategic Thinking” in NATO, or more precisely, “NATO’s Political Role”, as defined by the SEC GEN. It is in the later field where the Advisory Group, in my view, should take into account the shared part of “Military Strategic Portion” within. Although NATO has been sliding towards a more political than military ground (during recent decades), nobody can deny that NATO without its “Military Appendage” cannot achieve a third of what the Alliance does. “NATO is not Military... but, without Military there is no NATO”. In my view, there is no doubt that the NATO Military Tool needs a “New Strategic Orientation”. I hope Mr. de Maizière and Mr. Aaron Wess Mitchell, as co-chairs, are going to pull forward and take NATO Military Strategy and the required Strategic Thinking to definitely seek a New Strategic

Concept.

Every deep change finds reefs and riverbanks to save... the deeper the change, the wider the gap to jump is. However, NATO is facing a game that, properly played, can protect the Alliance from living through the worst situation in its history. NATO rulers must decide correctly, putting Alliance requirements first, adapting “hard powers’ interests” to NATO’s ones, which seems to be quite difficult to attain... and firmly open the Alliance to a new way of thinking to project a strong Political role...with a robust Military tool.

In summary, let us go for a “Strategic Concept”, 22nd-Century- focused, and stop adapting what cannot be adapted any more. Too many novel concepts demand a big change rather than a series of adaptations. Otherwise, following such a path of adaptations, NATO risks ending up “un-adapted” by itself. In this critical moment, I see SACEUR and Chairman of the Military Committee leadership roles a key factor to play to attain a serious **Political Footprint supported by heavy Strategic Thinking**.



INFORMATION IS NEVER MORE POWERFUL THAN WHEN IT IS SHARED



By Lieutenant Colonel Tomás Quecedo Estebanez (ESP-A)
ACOS Information Activities

One day the great philosopher came upon an acquaintance, who ran up to him excitedly and said,

- *“Socrates, do you know what I just heard about one of your students?”*

- *“Wait a moment,” Socrates replied.*

- *“Before you tell me, I’d like you to pass a little test. It’s called the Test of Three.”*

- *“Test of Three?”*

- *“That’s correct,” Socrates continued. “Before you talk to me about my student let’s take a moment to test what you’re going to say. The first test is Truth. Have you made absolutely sure that what you are about to tell me is true?”*

- *“No,” the man replied, “actually I just heard about it.”*

- *“All right,” said Socrates. “So you don’t really know if it’s true or not. Now let’s try the second test, the test of Goodness. Is what you are about to tell me about my student something good?”*

- *“No”*

- *“So,” Socrates continued, “you want to tell me something bad about him even though you’re not certain it’s true?”*

- *The man shrugged, a little embarrassed.*

- *Socrates continued, “You may still pass though because there is a third test – the filter of Usefulness. Is what you want to tell me about my student going to be useful to me?”*

- *“No, not really...”*

- *“Well,” concluded Socrates, “if what you want to tell me is neither true nor good nor even useful, why tell it to me at all?”*

The man was defeated and ashamed and said no more.

Nowadays we are witnessing an upsurge in misinformation, half-truths and unrealistic ideas. COVID-19 is not the only virus that threatens citizens around the world. The pandemic has come accompanied by a "wave" of false or misleading information on the internet, conspiracy theories, and fraud - with the sale of "miracle" products and operations by Russia or China to influence, create confusion and undermine the response of western countries health authorities. This situation is getting worse, with Heads of State and Governments of significant countries striving to convey messages to gain the sympathies of their potential constituents, and to win the game against their antagonists. It is not necessary to recount here the lies that Joseph Goebbels transformed to "truths" by forcing their constant repetition, and which served to transform many Germans in good faith into Nazis, in Hitler's time.

As a consequence, NATO Secretary General and later the European

Commission alerted their member states in a communication in which they directly accused Moscow and Beijing of orchestrating this type of activity and in which the EU asked digital platforms for monthly reports on the promotion of reliable content on the network. It is well known that a hidden disinformation campaign by Russian operatives is flooding the Internet with false stories in different languages and across multiple social media platforms, virtually undetected, but misinformation and disinformation relating to issues surrounding the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic across the globe has also been used by foreign state and non-state actors trying to exploit the uncertainty in societies as well as people's fears and insecurities to advance their own agenda.

The so-called Russian operation "Infektion", has breathed new life into pro-Russian propaganda around the globe by sharing fake news and conspiracy theories about the coronavirus.

On 22nd January the first Coronavirus dis-info record in the EU-vsDISINFO database was registered: *“A NEW CHINESE CORONAVIRUS WAS LIKELY ELABORATED IN NATO BIOLABS”*¹



¹ <https://euvsdisinfo.eu/report/a-new-chinese-coronavirus-was-likely-elaborated-in-nato-biolabs/>



On 4th February, Pro-Russian outlet NewsFront published in Spanish: “NATO's 'Defender Europe' 2020 military exercise is the war against Russia, no matter what they tell you”² and the HQ NRDC-ESP Information Environment assesment Cell started to monitor potential cases of misinformation without coordinating externally with anyone.

On 26th March, HQ NRDC-ESP reported a video, in Spanish, to SHAPE which presented Exercise Europe Defender 20 as a USA-NATO subterfuge to flee Europe and threaten Russia while European countries were focusing on countering the pandemic due to COVID 19.

Just one day later, on 27th March, Russian outlet SPUTNIK³ published “THE CORONAVIRUS DESTROYED THE MYTH OF THE NATO’S SUPER ARMY, NATO IS FLEEING EUROPE”. It was the 260th disinfo case related to Coronavirus and it was targeting NATO countries again.

On that day, SHAPE StratCom decided to open an unclassified platform for workspace-wide communication and announcements which provided an extremely useful tool for NCS and NFS when most of the NATO Communicators Community were working from home.

The NATO StratCom Slack workspace was intended to enable NATO and Allies StratCom efforts to showcase the contribution made by Alliance military forces in the national and international battle against COVID-19. It was set up to facilitate the exchange of UNCLASSIFIED information between the various NATO HQ’s and Allied MoDs. OPSEC considerations were applied before posting any data, information or messages even if they did not carry a classification marking.

The platform facilitated and coordinated focused efforts to promote the Allies’ armed forces contribution to defence and security; and to support a collective and federated monitoring and assessment of the information environment.

Common and specialist communities/channels were established, and specific roles and rules assigned to all participants.

All participants got access to:

- #General: routine all-informed communications
- #Core Documents: overarching NATO guidance on messaging and effects

#IEA earned content: Sharing of

- published communication material on NATO and Allies military support to the COVID-19 response. Links to material were shared and available to Digital and Media Engagement teams to share and use.

Specialist closed communities were where the work really took place. They were deliberately closed to enable a focused approach to each function and only members of the community could invite others in. They were not set in stone, and they were the starting point not the end. The specialist communities were ultimately:

- #Leadership. One senior StratCom decision maker from each NATO organization or Nation.

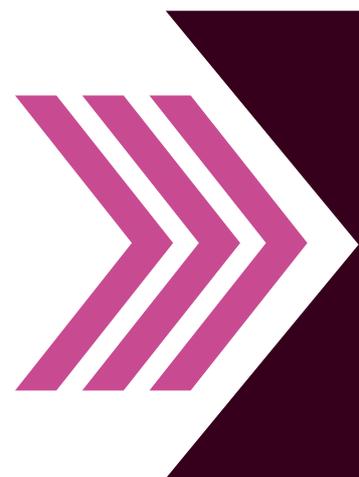
- #factsheetsandinfographics: basic facts & figures which helped inform the creation of products.

- #IEA: Focused on gathering and assessing reporting of third party and adversary communications. It was intended to provide advice on refining our outputs to better support the objectives set out in the NATO StratCom Frameworks.

- #outputs_aco: ACO entities to share outputs they wanted amplifying.

- #outputs_nations: Nations publicised outputs they wanted to amplify.

- #outputs_nato_channel: NATO Channel Products

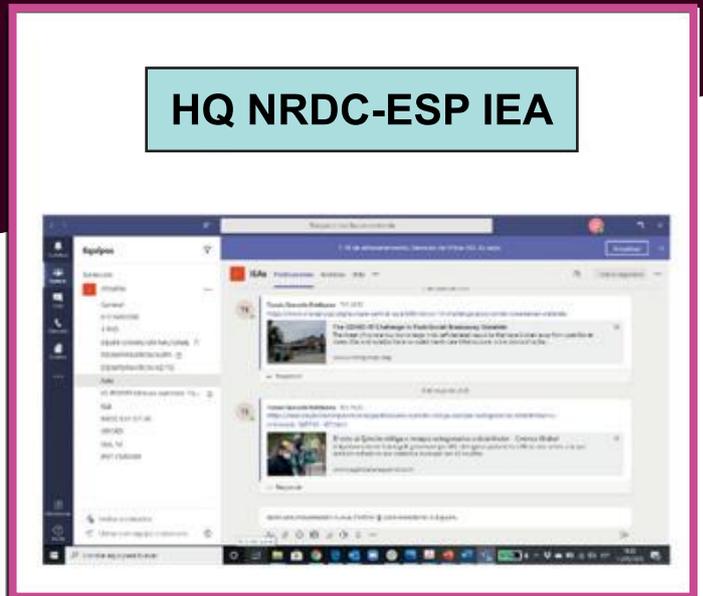


2 <https://es.news-front.info/2020/02/04/los-ejercicios-militares-defender-europe2020-de-la-otan-es-la-guerra-contra-rusia-no-importa-lo-que-te-digan/>

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NATO IEA



HQ NRDC-ESP IEA

In parallel, HQ NRDC-ESP activated its own communication mechanism mirroring the NATO StratCom Slack workspace. HQ NRDC-ESP activated a Microsoft Teams account in support of the Communication Directorate where NATO and Spanish Unclassified information from open sources was compiled, analysed and distributed properly to deal with disinformation and to inform its staff and subordinate units about the risk posed by disinformation campaigns and techniques to counter them. This mechanism not only echoed and amplified NATO official communication but reported on dis-information cases targeting NATO observed in Spain.

Spanish fact checking companies were exploited to highlight “fake news”

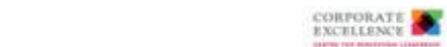
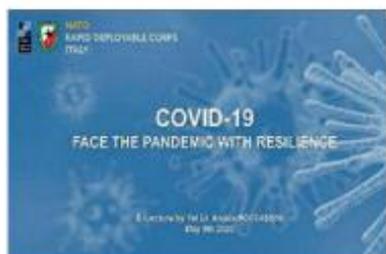
targeting NATO because of their “power” and speed to reach broader audiences. Highlighting false claims seen as absurd and particularly offensive and objectionable by target audiences reported by NATO and EU was used to target mainstream public opinion and to counter some disinformation cases in advance. National and International agencies’ polls and surveys were scrutinised to get a deeper insight into our audiences and the impact of how misinformation and disinformation in the health and security space were thriving because of COVID-19.

Participation in StratCom COE Webinars as well as in other NATO and Spanish similar events has been a great opportunity to share knowledge

and concerns as well as to standardise and improve procedures in the field of strategic communication.

NATO Information Environment Assessments (IEA), released firstly on a weekly basis, and later on a monthly basis, were not only very useful to update HQ NRDC-ESP staff, but to train the Communications Directorate on preparing IEA reports as NATO is currently doing.

The impact of the lack of access to GEC-IQ to HQ NRDC-ESP information environment analysts was minimised by having access to the NATO StratCom Slack workspace which proved that “Information is never more powerful than when it is shared”



WEBINAR ONLINE
La gestión de la reputación en tiempos del COVID-19
 MARTES 31 DE MARZO | 11:30 HORAS (CET) | ONLINE





PROFESSIONAL CAREER OF THE NCO IN THE SPANISH ARMY

*By Command Sergeant Major Angel J. Brosel Alegre (ESP-A)
CSM HQ NRDC-ESP*

In the 2019 NRDC-ESP Magazine article, I wrote about the history of the Spanish Non Commissioned Officers on the occasion of the celebration of the 500th Anniversary of the creation of the Sergeant in the Spanish Army. This year, I will try to explain NCOs in current times, especially their selection and professional career, as a key part of the success of the NCO Corps since its creation in 1974.

It all begins with the selection of future members of the NCO Corps. Every year the offer of places for the following course is published. This year will be XLVIII Course. The number of places is about five hundred students: approximately 80% by internal promotion from enlisted personnel and 20% by direct access from civilians. A Baccalaureate degree is required for certain positions of a medium or high technician degree, as well as success in the selection exams for admission to military training educational centres, for incorporation as a professional military into the NCO Corps.

The training of future non-commissioned officers lasts three years. It begins at the NCO's School (the Academia General Básica de Suboficiales), where common basic training is provided to all the non-commissioned officers of the Army for four months, as a basis for the subsequent specialization that they will acquire in the different academies depending on their specialties: Infantry in Toledo; Cavalry in Valladolid; Artillery in Segovia; Signals and Sappers in Hoyo de Manzanares; Army Aviation in Colmenar Viejo (these last two in Madrid); and Technicians in Calatayud, Zaragoza.

In the different academies, they combine military subjects with those of high technician, so that at the end of the three years they receive the titles of Sergeant from His Majesty the King, and the High Technician Degree of the different specialties depending on the Branch. For example, Assistance to the Directorate for Infantry and Cavalry sergeants; Computer Network Systems and industrial mechatronics, for those of Field and Antiaircraft Artillery.

PROFESSIONAL CAREER:

The NCO's professional career model is divided into two tranches: the first includes the ranks of sergeant (OR-6) and sergeant first class (OR-7), while the second encompasses the ranks of master sergeant (OR-8), sergeant major (OR-9) and command sergeant major. The transit between both tranches is determined by passing a refresher course for the promotion to the rank of master sergeant.

FIRST TRANCHE:

• SERGEANT.

The sergeants will preferably be assigned to command squads of the Army Force characteristic of their Branches. In the first year, they will be able to acquire the specialties of their position: Special Forces, Mountain, Paratrooper, and Amphibious Sapper, for example.

In the last part, or at the beginning of the sergeant first class rank, they will be able to specialise in other skills such as NBC, Military Police, Intelligence, etc.

They will be promoted to Sergeant first class after eight years in the rank.

• SERGEANT FIRST CLASS.

The Sergeants first class will also preferably be assigned to command squads of the Army Force in those positions that require greater speciality and experience, and may also occupy positions in the Army Staff HQ and Force Support. In the last period, they will be able to carry out instructor functions in the different training centres and military schools. In the last year of rank, the refresher course necessary to ascend to the rank of master sergeant will be held. They will be promoted to rank of master sergeant after a minimum time of seven years in the rank.

SECOND TRANCHE:

The transit of the non-commissioned officer towards the second tranche of his career will, in general terms, entail a reorientation of the functions to be carried out, acquiring logistics and administrative relevance with respect to operations, in addition to training functions.

For this reorientation they need an adequate refresher course, in this course they all acquire the specialisation of "General Administration". Likewise, they can reorient their military career with a second speciality among those of: Technical Specialist in Operations and Preparation; Intelligence; Logistics Support; Human Resources; Computer Systems and Telecommunications; Economic Administration; and Installations and Infrastructures.

Throughout this tranche they will be able to occupy positions in all units of the Army and other units outside of the Army structure.

• MASTER SERGEANT.

The Master Sergeants will carry out operational and logistical functions commanding platoon-type units and performing administrative functions. They will be promoted to rank of Sergeant Major after a minimum of eight years in the rank of Master Sergeant.

• SERGEANT MAJOR.

As a general rule, they will occupy positions in the Force Support, in the Army Staff HQ and in the different Headquarters of the Land Forces. They will also perform administrative functions in the staff of others organisations and command certain specialised platoon-type units.

Promotion to Command Sergeant Major will be limited to a reduced number of Sergeant Majors, and will be by election after passing a refresher course for promotion and a minimum of four years in the rank of Sergeant Major.

This exhaustive and detailed selection and training of NCOs of the Spanish Army means that from the first day, they are able to carry out their missions in all types of units, being fantastic collaborators and the intermediate step between enlisted and officers, as well as excellent leaders prepared to evolve and adapt to all missions throughout his military career. Likewise, they fulfil the objectives that the creation of the new Non-Commissioned Officer Corps seeks: to have NCOs that are up to the new generations, using sophisticated weapons and equipment, and as a consequence, to be the fighters of the 21st century. In this way, they are worthy heirs of the former sergeants that we have known for 501 years.



Contribution of “Sections Administratives Spécialisées » (Algeria, 1955-1962) experience to CIMIC

By Major Jean-Pierre Conjeaud (FRA-A)
G9 CIMIC Operations Chief

Counter insurgency operations in Iraq, Afghanistan and Sahel led western armies to adapt themselves in order to face the opponent's unconventional methods. Particularly, the need to interact efficiently with the Force's humanitarian field strongly changed CIMIC doctrine and assets. Several similarities gave an opportunity to consider some aspects of the decolonisation conflicts as the one of Algeria.

Looking back, it is interesting to review the creation of “Sections Administratives Spécialisées” (SAS, Special Administrative Platoons) following the November 1954 insurrection. Aiming to realise the goals of the re-conquest and pacification, today this tool appears surprisingly contemporary.

1/ Historical context

On November 1st, 1954, taking advantage of the atmosphere generated by the end of Indochina war and the political instability of the 4th Republic, the “Front de Libération National” (FLN, National Liberation Front) launched an insurrection across the whole Algerian territory, composed at that time of French departments. Stunned, the civilian and military authorities had to react very quickly. Sharing convergent assessments, the situation on the ground underlined in particular:

- ★ the weak administrative network in the Algerian departments, worsened by the insurrection that made the basic services flee,
- ★ the failure of large-scale search operations that put unnecessary pressure on the population without reaching their goals,
- ★ the weakness of the intelligence capabilities due to the absence of a relationship with the population, directly connected to the closure of the “bureaux arabes” (Arab bureaus”) in 1953.

Being a target, a challenge and a battleground the population became the focus of activity, for both the French Army and its opponents.

The task was huge and the starting statement pessimistic. Building a dedicated tool appeared unavoidable. Then, the order of 26th September 1955 officially created the 700 SAS, covering all the Algerian departments. They were the successors of the Algerian “Arab bureaus” and Moroccan “indigenous affairs bureaus” created immediately after the conquest period. They represented the link with the native population and administered the tribes.



Milestones:

- 1830 : French Army takes the city of Algiers, beginning of the conquest of Algeria
- October 1954 : National Liberation Front creation
- November 1st 1954 : insurrection in Algeria
- March 1956 : nomination of a minister-resident having special powers,
- October 1956 : French secret service captured FLN leaders
- January 7th 1957: battle of Algiers, FLN networks in the city are disbanded
- 1958 : FLN carry out first terrorist attacks in mainland of France
- May 13th 1958: protests in Algiers against the government. The 4th Republic collapse, General DeGaulle takes the lead
- Summer 1959: success of General Challe's plan. FLN lost 75% of its combat power
- January 1961 : referendum approved self-determination of Algeria
- April 25th 1961 : General Jouhaud, Zeller, Salan and Challe carried out the “Algiers Putsch”
- March 18th 1962 : Evian agreements and independence of Algeria

2/Mission: Foundation of the re-conquest and the pacification policy

As stipulated in the order of the 26th September 1955, article 4, the mission of the SAS officer was “to carry out all the necessary tasks in order to take the leadership or reinforce the staff of administrative entities and local services. In particular, they can perform similar duties to the ones normally given to the civil service administrators”.

Designed as composite units, involving a civilian and a military component, SAS were to allow the following political objectives pursued by the government to be reached:

- ★ to efficiently re-administrate the Algerian departments. SAS played a decentralised administration hub role, able to provide the basic services expected by a population that had been left on its own (i.e. under the enemy’s influence) during a too long period.
- ★ to contribute to the economic, social and cultural upgrading of the “French Muslims of Algeria”. The task was to turn them into ordinary French people, similar to those of France mainland.

This side of the mission, at times considered utopian, due to the cultural differences and the importance of the local traditions, was surely the most difficult one, but



also brought the most important results. The population, hoping for better living conditions and a recognised status as citizens, proved to be sensitive to this. Initially, stripped of a credible political project, the opponent sought to spread terror by the use of atrocities. In comparison, the promise of a better future, materialising through tangible achievements allowed the support of the population to be gradually gained.

3/Organisation and means

As a military unit, the SAS was under the area military command orders that provided the general facilities and the reinforcements. Through this channel, the SAS also fed the intelligence chain.

The civilian component was under the prefecture¹ chain of command that provided the objectives and the funds needed to achieve them, in areas such as agriculture, education and public health.

Acting in security, development and governance domains in an insurrection context made it necessary to carefully balance each side. The mission success relied on the quality of the functional relations of the SAS with the two chains of command. Ultimately, the leader’s personal skills made the difference. The recruitment process was demanding and paid particular attention to criteria such as military background, diplomas and language competence. For instance, officers had to know the basis of dialectal Arabic and no less than 1300 common words. In order to be able to respond to any situation, the main structure of the SAS

was flexible. The base was the command team and the protection platoon (“Moghaznis”, locally recruited).



The area military command provided the high value capabilities like the female auxiliaries and specialised reinforcement. As the contingent was mainly composed of conscripts (400,000 soldiers), a huge pool of experts was available. Specialists like teachers or agronomists were not difficult to find and to co-locate in a SAS. The female staff came from the local PFAT² recruited in the territorial units.

4/ SAS courses of action

From a military perspective, the action of the SAS encompassed the whole stabilisation strategy. While kinetic operations were seeking to disrupt the opponent’s capability and to push him out of his sanctuaries, the return of basic services took the population out of his influence. Therefore, this was restraining his sources of regeneration and logistic support.



1 A prefecture is the administrative echelon of a department in charge of the State’s services.

2 PFAT : personnel féminin de l’armée de terre – Female personnel of the Army.



Administration was the most important task, and the capstone of the stabilisation process.

The SAS was entirely responsible for it in the

cases where the civilian administration was absent.

When it was present, the SAS played a liaison role. For example, it could be in charge of the census, processing the application for identity documents and delivering them to those unable to go to the prefecture, often in distant cities. In addition, when a community asked for a project, the SAS took charge of the paperwork and vouched for it. Thus, the SAS needed to cover all the areas within the competence of the State wherever its services were not available for any reason.

Acting as a public policy implementation operator (agriculture development, infrastructure, health, education), its principle of action was to provide first level basic services to the population and to support the services of the State in order to fulfil the national directives. For instance, in the education or health domains, the SAS provided children with classes in areas without schools, and healthcare through free medical assistance. Meanwhile, the SAS contributed to the professional school recruitment process and carried out vaccination campaigns. The chosen courses of action always sought to improve the control of the population. For example, in the infrastructure domain, what we nowadays call “high intensity labour” and “cash for work” were systematically used.



Lastly, the biggest aspect was related to the improvement of women’s conditions. Within each SAS, the “social and health female deputy” and the “female auxiliaries” contributed to this global project through the management of the “women’s centre”. There, women received an education program (health, hygiene, children care but also

civic education) and could develop their own activities like handicrafts or manage a social assistance cell.

Beyond those actions in the civilian area, SAS directly contributed to kinetic operations with the provision of actionable intelligence and the dissemination of psychological operation master messages.



5/Feedback and contribution to CIMIC

SAS results exceeded expectations and widely contributed to the military success that led to the near destruction of the opponent in 1960. Examining several elements, it can be considered as an expected CIMIC unit in a counter-insurgency context or a Provincial Reconstruction Team:

- ★ the synchronisation of kinetic and non-kinetic effects to reach mutual civil and military objectives foresaw the ideas of “comprehensive approach”, “security-development nexus” or “3D approach”,
- ★ human environment management foresaw the use of Subject Matter Experts, Cross Cutting Topics and gender issues,
- ★ the use of tactical courses of action appearing as the pioneer of today’s Quick Impact Project, high intensity labour, cash for work or medical/engineering/veterinary civic action program.

On the other hand, their deployment context limits this comparison.

Firstly, French Army intervention in its homeland gave a strong political readability and expelled the unavoi-



dable negative effects linked to a coalition campaign in a third country: problems with international influence, financing issues, potential host nation double-dealing...

Then, from a military point of view, the initial finding made after the 1954 insurrection added to the special powers granted to the Army in March 1956 which guaranteed the single command principle and the much-desired synchronisation of military and civilian objectives.

Finally, the Force’s environment did not have as many civilian actors. Media organisations were scarce and under the State control. Humanitarian actors, NGOs and social networks did not exist.



In conclusion, many similarities made the SAS an inspiring example in the framework of counter insurgency operations. Nevertheless, the reality of today’s engagements mostly realised under coalition conditions, featuring hybrid warfare threats and the increasing role of information force us to step back and consider this experience as a page of history.

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FIRST TO COME, FIRST TO SERVE.

XV ANNIVERSARY OF NATO DISASTER RELIEF OPERATION IN PAKISTAN

*By Lieutenant Colonel Tomás Quecedo Estebanez (ESP-A)
ACOS Information Activities / Deployed at NRF5 operation*

INTRODUCTION

On October 8, 2005, 15 years ago, the earth was rocked by a 7.8-point earthquake on the Richter scale with the epicentre in Pakistani Kashmir. The earthquake caused dire consequences and devastated much of the region. About 80% of the 3,000,000 people living in that area were affected to varying degrees. The total death toll was close to 85,000, since the arrival of winter, coupled with the fact that so many people lost their homes, caused the initial figure to increase significantly.

Upon the request from the Pakistan Government, and to help alleviate this gigantic catastrophe, NATO decided to activate its NRF-5, whose Land Component was commanded by Spain. It was one of seven missions assigned under the NRF Framework and had not been prepared for even in exercises before then. It was also the first time that the NRF was deployed out of NATO AOR, even when the NRF concept had not reached the Full Operational Capability certification. Nevertheless, the HQ NRDC-ESP was deployed, within the backdrop of support following crisis or natural disasters.

The Forward Command Element

NATO selected the Joint Command Lisbon Headquarters to exercise operational control, which deployed a NATO Disaster Relief Team (NDRT) to Islamabad for earthquake assistance eventually headed by Air Commodore (GBR AF) Walton. The Command Post deployed on the ground by the HQ NRDC-ESP (the FCE LCC) was the Command and Control platform from which Brigadier General (ESP A) Bautis exercised the Tactical Command of the Land Component of this operation. Both positions acted as “loudspeakers” for their respective Commands.

The troops had to be tailored to the needs of the mission, and in the case of the LCC it was necessary to define which capabilities were most appropriate from those planned in the NRF-5 package and those ultimately offered by the Troop Contributing Nations.

The overloading of Islamabad airport because of the need for the arrival of urgent humanitarian aid forced the Spanish LCC contingent to arrive in Lahore Airport, a town in the centre of the country, about 600 km from the earthquake zone, instead of the entrance through the Chaklala Air Base that had been agreed during planning.

The first team to prepare and coordinate the process of reception, staging and onward movement (RSOM) of the rest of the Spanish contingent, as well as other nations which would have had to arrive in the following weeks, arrived at Lahore airport at the end of October with the initial entry forces. This team consisted of three Spanish commanders stationed in the RSC Division of the HQ NRDC -ESP plus a small RSOM unit, composed of 1 sergeant and 13 soldiers from the Canary Islands Command, focused on reception tasks and providing real logistical support to the various contingents during their RSOM process.

Unforeseen initial administrative and legal procedures; the distance between the APOD, Lahore, and the earthquake zone; the slowness of Pakistani means of transport, which mostly did not exceed 40 km per hour; and the poor condition of some roads overstretched the transfers between Lahore and the Final Staging Area in Arja, forcing a second area of support to the RSOM process in Golra, a town near Islamabad. The convoys made the journey in two days, one from Lahore to Golra and one to Arja.

To address this situation, as well as to coordinate the support to other Component Commanders and with the Host Nation (HN), including the security and escort of movements while assuming the RSOM process of the Polish, Lithuanian, British and Italian contingents assigned to the LCC, a second RSOM team consisting of 2 majors and 4 troops were organised. This was reinforced, at the end of the task in Lahore, by a lieutenant colonel, a commander and two more NCOs, who had to join the mission later because of LCC assuming all RSOM process.

Land forces were eventually deployed in Arja to work in the Bagh District, where the LCC faced not only the problems of the earthquake but the aftermath and implications of it, the main objective being to alleviate the consequences that the arrival of winter, which was already covering with snow all the peaks around the troops, could cause.

To address these problems, it was necessary to organise the Land forces focused on the work of Engineers, CIMIC and Healthcare, not to mention the logistical component needed to support the rest of the contingent.

Once on the ground, after establishing the necessary contacts, the FCE LCC worked in coordination with the 19 Pakistani Engineer DIV. Their efforts focused on supporting the affected population in three key areas:

- Preparation for winter.
- Facilitate access to the most affected areas.
- Provide the necessary conditions for starting the follow-on reconstruction.

The deployment

Once our participation in the operation was decided, an arduous planning task began, aimed at determining not only the composition of the Command Post to be deployed, but also the composition of the Units that would depend on it.

The contingent deployed as a land component of the operation consisted of about 1,000 soldiers organised as follows:

- Multinational Engineers Battalion, under Spanish command, composed of 4 companies:
 - Polish Light Engineers Company.
 - Spanish Light Engineers Company.
 - Italian Heavy Engineers Company.
 - British Mountain Engineers Company.
 - Lithuanian, Polish and Spanish water treatment equipment.
- Multinational Field Hospital under Dutch leadership and with Czech, French, Portuguese and British representatives.
- Slovenian and French CIMIC teams.

The Spanish National Support Element set up the FCE LCC Base near to Arja. Thanks to the professionalism of the Deployment Support Unit, we were able to take advantage of every square meter of the area offered by the Government of Pakistan and therefore enjoy an excellent camp and good living conditions from the start of operations.

The deployment, especially in its initial phase, brought us a multitude of Lessons Learned; listing them all would be extremely ambitious, but it is worth highlighting some of the most important ones:

- The legal framework for the action of troops in an operation must be defined in advance. The diplomatic exchange of letters between NATO and the Government of Pakistan did not take place until 4 November, when all the machinery of the deployment and even advanced elements were already in the country. This fact, together with the celebration of the late Festivities of Ramadan, meant a delay of 10 days at the beginning of the work.
- Regarding Command and Control relationships, they should be clearly delimited between all different actors to avoid conflicts of interest that could have a major impact on the development of the operation.
- The continuous review of the plans, especially in such an operation, is an inevitable duty at all levels of Command. HQ NRDC-ESP was forced to adapt planning and training to a spectrum of missions quite different from the one for which we had been instructed during the certification process. A better coordination of the deployment would have saved us efforts and prevented setbacks.
- The integration with the host country's organisations, especially the Armed Forces, as well as the different international agencies, is crucial to the success of these kinds of operations. Because of that, NATO made the decision to use a NATO UNCLASSIFIED network that did not correspond to the profile normally used in military operations. This forced the redesign of the entire communications system, leaving NATO SECRET and MISSION SECRET networks relegated mainly to provide alternative channels in the event of system failure.



Planning and execution, coordinated with the Air Component Command, was necessary through the Air Operations cell of the FCE LCC.

The prestige acquired by the Engineers soldiers and its truly contagious enthusiasm and professionalism was publicly acknowledged by the various authorities and organisations that visited the various works, such as the representative of the United Nations and the head of the Euro-Atlantic Centre for the coordination of disaster support.

ENGINEERS WORKED ON THE REPAIR OF ROADS, SCHOOLS AND HOSPITALS.

Many different works were assumed by the Multinational Battalion formed based on the NRF-5 Engineers Battalion, whose Command and Staff were Spanish. This NRF Unit, with the exception of a British Company, was located in the same location as the FCE LCC, in Arja, 20 kilometres from Bagh where most of the works were done. The Multinational Battalion encompassed Spanish headquarters and Light Companies from Spain, Poland, United Kingdom, an Italian Heavy Company deployed in the vicinity of Arja, and a Lithuanian Water Purification Section (WPT).

One of the most important tasks assigned was the repair of roads and infrastructures that connected the most important populations of the Bagh District. Most were severely damaged and in some cases the conditions of the track required extreme caution and care in driving to the work areas.

The Engineers, in close coordination with the Pakistani army, built 60 temporary shelters for use in schools and medical facilities, as well as 9 semi-permanent ones, financed by Estonia, for the same purposes.

HEALTHCARE ASSISTANCE

Health care was seriously affected in this region by the earthquake. Almost all medical facilities were destroyed or severely damaged, and NATO Hospital in Bagh provided a critical service to fill these gaps. Meanwhile, the Pakistani government and other organisations were working to restore engineers working on the construction of shelters for health infrastructure in the area. The Dutch-led Multinational Hospital, operated by Czechoslovakia, France, Portugal and the United Kingdom, was in Bagh and about 150 people worked there and assisted more than 6,000 patients.



In addition to hospital consultations, NATO medical services sent mobile medical teams out from the hospital six times a week. These teams travelled by vehicle, on foot, and even by mule to take healthcare where it was needed. Planned and coordinated through FCE LCC "Air Operations cell" and the Dutch-led Multinational Hospital, from 3 December they also travelled in NATO helicopters to be transported to the most difficult-to-reach mountain villages to get medical care, which optimised the performance of their work.

Special mention should be made of the commendable work done by the Spanish ROLE 2 that provided health care not only to NATO troops but also to the population of Arja and its vicinity. It was also activated as an alternative hospital in case of earthquake replica or a MASCAL



The so-called "Operation Malot" deserves special mention. A Unit of Spanish-Polish Engineers was helicoptered to the isolated place of Malot to clean up road landslides and build various shelters to provide schools and medical dispensaries. To reach those mountains, where road access for the engineering machinery was especially complicated.

CIMIC effort

CIMIC played a critical and leading role, orienting its work to the following activities:

- Liaison with civil organisations. Mainly with those with humanitarian aid coordination responsibilities (UNOCHA) and local authorities with decision-making capacity in civil protection matters (District Commissioner's Office). Also, with agencies that had some responsibility for humanitarian aid distribution or which led the different ordered Clusters. (Camps for civilians, health, education, child protection, water and sanitation, etc...).
- Situation assessment. This allowed the commander to advise on gaps in the area of responsibility and provided the necessary data for the development of projects with immediate impact.
- Coordination with other actors. This was carried out among all participants in aid tasks, in order to avoid both the repetition of effort and the lack of these due to the absence of information. The spectrum of non-governmental organisations was certainly broad and varied; this was the fundamental reason for this coordination being carried out with careful and common sense.
- Quick impact projects. In order to quickly alleviate a gap or allow the greatest number of people to benefit from the presence of force in the area of responsibility. After all, this operation was of limited duration, so NATO had to monetise its time and resources in this mission to provide its assistance in the most effective way.

The Re-deployment

The withdrawal was a phase of the Operation in which the detailed and coordinated planning of all the Contingents that composed the LCC became vitally important. This phase combined the dismantling actions of the camps, operational movements, the parking of personnel and material at the

Golra Depot Parking Base near the APOE of Chaklala, and another that was allocated in the vicinity of the SPOE of Karachi and the Strategic Movements.

The LCC, by delegation of the Joint Command (JCL), planned and coordinated the implementation of the movements, as well as the parking, prior to strategic movements, of all the contingents integrated therein. To this end, the LCC established a C2 structure based primarily on G4 Movements located at the Command Post in Arja, whose specific organ was the Movement Operations Centre (MOC), and the RSC located in Golra Depot that established the Movement Coordination Centre (MCC) and detached an RSOM cell to the Karachi SPOE.



CONCLUSION

NATO Disaster Relief Operation in Pakistan was NATO's first mission in which part of its NRF was employed, regardless of the fact that NRF was not declared FOC, sending an expeditionary force to carry out humanitarian aid in a sovereign country 7,000 km away from the unit home stations, with limited host nation support, in a very difficult Area of Operations.

The HQ NRDC-ESP deployed the FCE LCC to lead the Land Component. Both the Headquarters and the different NRF Units involved had a unique opportunity to demonstrate their level of instruction and their effectiveness in this mission.

Some lessons were identified and eighteen years later some of them are still under discussion and the lessons learned process goes on, but the enthusiasm, abnegation and spirit of sacrifice of LCC soldiers was commendable. Morale was extremely high, and increased day after day with the satisfaction of helping those most in need. It is difficult to imagine a better reward for such a vocation of service than the anonymous displays of friendship, reflecting the appreciation and recognition of the grateful people of Pakistan.

As COM FCE LCC said: PAKISTAN RELIEF was our first mission: Standards not known, not rehearsed, but done to standard, and done well. PROFESSIONAL - READY - EFFECTIVE!

FIELD ARMIES FACING EPIDEMICS. 1

SPANISH REGIMENT OF LUSITANIA IN THE SIEGE OF MILAZZO

By Colonel Tomas Jacinto Ruiz Ibañez
ACOS GMED

2020 will be remembered as the year of COVID-19 outbreak, and how it was spreading to become a pandemic. Since January, NATO authorities were warning about possible impact in the Alliance activities, deployments, and missions. According with this line, SHAPE disseminated the COS SHAPE ORDER NO 072, which provided instructions and guidance to develop activities in a new challenger environment. Also, it established aims: maintain the efficiency in the mission's objectives, continuity of Business and ensure full capacity of response. To ensure these directives, the adopted actions had to guarantee the preventive measures for an efficient force health protection to avoid infection by SARS-CoV-2 among NATO personnel.

From early history of massive armies, they have been threatened by infective diseases. Many times, military field corps have maneuvered and fought in an epidemic environment. Soldiers should learn to live taking care of pathogens before marching on their enemies.

How could former combatant armies to carry away their duties when there were not curative treatments against bacterial infections? The answer is obvious, making compatible efficient strict, preventive measures to be followed with their warfighting capabilities. During thousands of years, these humble and seemingly easy to follow actions were paramount for any Army to maintain its stamina and fighting power. The epitome of this way was Imperial Roman Legions. Unfortunately, those actions were neglected most times since then. Very unhappily because they are remaining as the most effective measures against threat by virus still today.

There are a lot of examples in Military History of those no conscientious Armies that went advancing directly to be decimated by invisible foes long before they saw any human enemy. From 19th Century it became more dramatic, with more and more massive groups living under tents in a crowding mass. Napoleon's "Grande Armée" marching towards Moscow was a very tragic example. Infections killed thousands before they saw Smolensk. Reinforcements were killed by typhus, while crossing the allied Lithuania.

Fortunately, other following disgraces produced so big moral impact in people and in military reformist that to improve medical services and to observe preventive measures became paramount. Perhaps one of the most famous of these responses was originated by the Cholera (helped for a disastrous Commissariat Service) epidemic in the Crimea War, which killing so many men before that conditioned the Allied Command to change objectives. Although the Crimea experience was an important bell sound to wake up sleeping consciences, it was not so attended as it should. Other different wars were fought later, but the same epidemic problems appeared.

Paradoxically a military success could browse the memory of the darkest side of a victorious ended campaign: the unglamorous smell of great amounts of painful and distressing human meat dying in full, dirty, and forgotten "hospital" rooms. A sad example was the Spanish - Moroccan War in 1859. Spain sent an Army to Ceuta. When the full Expeditionary Army was translated in vessels with infected sailors, a Cholera outbreak exploded. Total casualties were heavy, 20% of the

force, among them 9% dead, but only 2'3% were killed in action, what means that 7'4% in the Expeditionary Army passed away by Cholera. This tragedy was mostly due to privates bad living conditions. It was an identified lesson, but not a learned one, and soon forgot. Soldiers came back and nobody wanted remember the memory of the sick's and corpses. But reality is usually unpleasant, eight years later started war in Cuba. Spanish Army had not prepared a reliable Medical System to avoid tropical diseases impact. Currently only around 30% of all Spanish troops were enough healthy to fight.

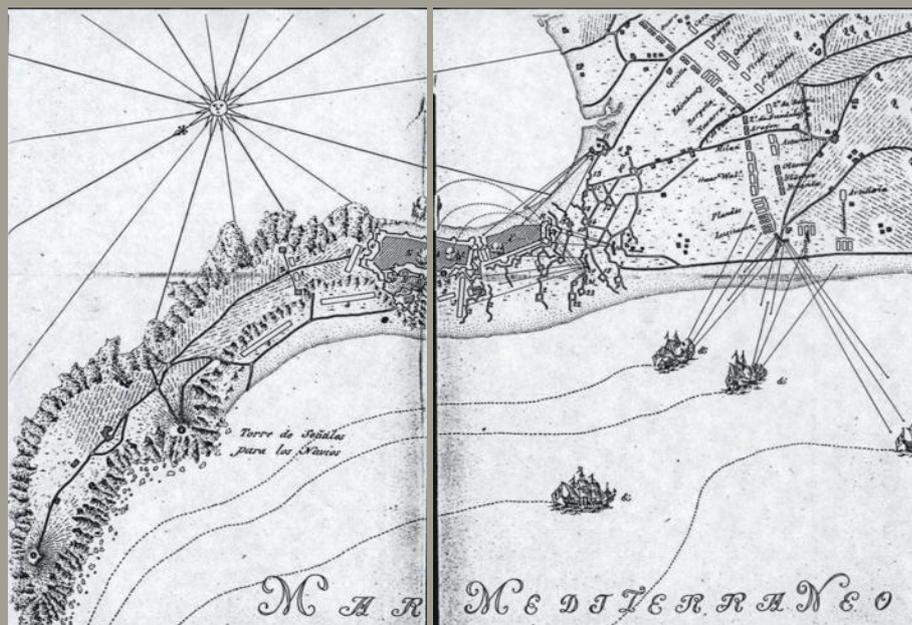


Spanish Cavalry encampment, under upper side, the Regiment hospital tents were deployed in a separated location, behind the command post. "Cartilla de Caballeria Militar" by Noriega y Alvarado. Madrid 1708. National Library.

People in charge of army's welfare have to be responsible and conscious persons, their projects and actions correctly aimed and well done. It is when the Army Commander decides to pay maximum attention to the protection of troops, when the Force Health Protection is understood as a powerful military tool. Then mitigation measures would be rightly chosen and continued while necessary, to know which the pathogenic agent is, which its infective and damaging capabilities, the way to avoid them and how to eradicate infective threats. Sometimes the searching actions could show that the pathogenic warning was neither particularly important nor dangerous, although preventive measures would have to be observed till it was clear that the Force was not under a true danger. It is an empiric solution, of course, but it was the only possible before Cellular biology and molecular knowledge. Today, it is remaining yet as effective first answer and main early defensive line against microbiological threat.

We can see as correct preventive measures to protect a field force facing an aggressive biological threat could become successful also in the age when neither bacteria nor virus were known.

During the Sicily campaign (1718-20), Spanish Army developed a successful although officially uncoordinated Medical Support that minimized the effects of the same epidemic which had decimated Imperial Army. It was based on practical mitigation measures aiming to cut any spreading way by pathogenic agents (then unknown). Healthcare of contaminated (or apparently contaminated) patients in isolated sites was observed. Infected soldiers were placed in adequate clinics, separated among them. They were enjoying hygienic conditions and cleaning bed clothes, with the best food available. These measures were working well, when implemented, seriously observed and accomplished. That means higher military efficiency, more troops returning to duty in a shorter time, maintaining a larger manpower anytime. The achieved objective was minimized biological aggression damage in the military capabilities and capacities of the Army as a reliable fighting Corps.



Battle of Milazzo, October 15th, 1718. Marquis La Mina "Military Memories of the Campaigns of Sardinia and Sicily" (Vol. 2). Edition of 1880.

The key mitigation measure against epidemic was that Spanish Army let to rely direct medical support and casualty's healthcare in the hands of own Regimental Medical facilities, what was successfully performed by each Unit own MTF, which were capable to provide a Role 1 and minimal 2B/F level attendance. Lethality was especially low in dispensaries of Mounted troops. The best one was deployed by Regiment of Lusitania, where nobody expired by the epidemic¹, owing to its Colonel zeal², who always ensured the best medical service in his troops. Bulked and massive Army Hospital system was partially substituted by small primary medicine nearer clinics under full military control. It could be considered as one of precursory events driving to true Military Medical Corps and Services.

We can look back to ancient wars, when deadly epidemics could be managed and controlled with strictly observed preventive measures, empiric ones (neither microbes nor antibiotics were known yet) but successful at last. It was done by a field Army isolated from its logistic bases and deprived of their supplies, while it was facing enemies and

fighting them. Would it be possible to combat in an ensured epidemic environment nowadays?

That war was fought by brave and courageous soldiers from many western nations, then sadly enemies. Now, thanks to NATO, where armies from those countries were fighting among them, they are joint for a common effort to care and defend together the valuable Alliance ideals, Human Rights, Peace, Democracy, and Freedom.



Miguel de Guzmán, Marquis of "La Mina", Colonel chief of Regiment of Dragoons of Lusitania in 1718-19, as Captain General in 1757. By Manuel Tramullas

1 Alós i Rius, 1767.

2 Miguel de Guzmán, 1690 – 1767.

DCOM's farewell



*Major General Nelson Martins Viegas PIRES (PRT-A)
Deputy Commander HQ NRDC-ESP*

Our mission is clear. The Alliance is changing rapidly and we have to keep the pace to set the conditions to achieve the objectives and criteria defined for us.

While the work has been stimulating and engaging, as always, it is the people who define one's existence. In addition to the high professionalism of the Staff, I would like to convey my affection, deepest gratitude and sincerest thanks to our families for their indispensable moral support to our daily work, their understanding and their silent but always vibrant participation. They wear the uniform as much as we do.

I would also like to take this opportunity to wish you, military and civilians of NRDC-ESP, all the best on your future endeavors.

MG Portuguese Army Nelson Pires

As I write, my 3-year period as Deputy Commander of NRDC-ESP is drawing inexorably to a close. It has been a rewarding, fulfilling and enjoyable tour of duty, and a privilege to work alongside the servicemen and women from the many NATO nations who constitute the Staff of this excellent Headquarters. My wife and I, together with our 2 daughters, will look back on this extraordinary period of our lives with great fondness, and leave enriched by the many experiences – military and otherwise – that we have been lucky enough to enjoy here in Spain.

The Headquarters has been quite a “journey” since my arrival in the winter 2017. Over this period, we have gone through a long series of activities and events, including the one-year responsibility as stand-by Joint Task Force HQ, and culminating with the challenges posed by the recent outbreak of COVID-19.

We must be proud of what we have achieved so far. Thanks to everyone's professionalism, dedication and commitment, and to the leadership and wisdom of our Commanders, we are a united team of 12 nations. However, we must stand ready to cope with an ever-changing and demanding future. As we close down our stand-by JTF HQ period, in fact, we are already focusing on our future role as warfighting corps in 2022. All of this, while we will still be confronted with the many uncertainties posed by the COVID-19 developments.



CSM FAREWELL

CSM Ángel Javier Brosel Alegre (ESP-A)



These last few months have been time to clean and tidy up and, inevitably, take stock. I came to the HQ when it was not yet located in Betera, before it formally existed. I started working with an enthusiastic group that took a blank page and began to write their history; and after twenty years, I dare say they have written some beautiful pages of the history of the Spanish Army and NATO.

I was initially posted in G1 and worked there for ten years as a master sergeant and sergeant major before having the honor of being promoted to command sergeant major and thus reaching the highest rank in the Non Commissioned Corps. After three years as CSM in the Spanish Intelligence Regiment, the Commander call me up to be the CSM of the CGTAD and the HQ NRDC-ESP. This assignment has allowed me to finish my military career in the unit in which I have possibly best developed myself, personally and professionally wise.

They have been six intense years where I have been able to get to know the HQ and all its members in depth. My responsibilities have confirmed to me what I already knew: the most important asset in an organization is its staff; everyone officers, NCOs and enlisted working together as

a whole. Coordination between them makes a headquarters a well-oiled machine, capable of accomplishing every mission.

Believe me, I have done everything possible to fulfill my missions as HQ Command Sergeant Major, which I sum up in two, firstly advising the Commander in every issues related to the NCOs and enlisted personnel and, secondly, to representing them.

I thank everyone in the HQ and subordinate units for the confidence and support they have provided me, especially the four lieutenant generals I have served under their command. The way Commanders allowed me to work has been the most genuine application "mission command".

To conclude, I encourage all non-commissioned officers to continue working as they have done so far, because they are "the backbone of the Army", so world-renowned Rudyard Kipling wrote as part of a poem that speaks about discipline, leadership, how sergeants care for their men, and the bravery of all soldiers.

Thank you very much.

TWELVE NATIONS, ONE TEAM.

CSM WELCOME

CSM José Juan Ríos López (ESP-A)

First of all, I would like to thank all those who have placed their confidence in me to fill this position as the Command Sergeant Major of the NATO Rapid Deployable Corps (Spain). I consider that it is a very demanding challenge and it is an honor and a privilege to be able to represent HQ NCOs and Enlisted, trying to support them personally and professionally as well as to encourage them to achieve new goals for the benefit of our HQ.

I would like to thank my predecessor in office, Command Sergeant Major Ángel Brosel for the great job done and for his support from the very beginning.



This has been a long ride for me and my family so I would also like to highlight that none of this would have been possible without the unconditional support of them.

Finally, I will try to face this new and exciting step in my military career with commitment, dedication and responsibility.

Thank you very much.



LIEUTENANT GENERAL GARCÍA-VAQUERO TAKES COMMAND OF HQ NRDC-ESP



Lieutenant General Fernando García-Vaquero took command of the Headquarters NATO Rapid Deployable Corps Spain (NRDC-ESP) during a ceremony presided over by the Chief of the Spanish Army, General Francisco Javier Varela Salas. The ceremony was held at Jaime I Military Base in Bétera (Valencia) on Wednesday, Jan 8, 2020. Several military as well as local civil authorities were in attendance.

General García-Vaquero, former Chief of Staff of the NRDC-ESP Headquarters, was promoted to lieutenant general on December 20.

During his speech Lieutenant General García-Vaquero highlighted the outstanding performance of his predecessor, General Gan Pampols who joined the reserve on December 18. He also emphasized the quality of the men and women serving at the NRDC-ESP Headquarters. The new Commander concluded his speech by saying that “the NRDC-ESP Headquarters is one team, one great multinational family consisting of some of the finest women and men I have ever met”.

The Honours Company, Sapper Squad and Military Band marching past put an end to the ceremony.



THE NRDC-ESP JOINT LOGISTIC SUPPORT GROUP CONDUCTS A BATTLE STAFF TRAINING DURING ITS JTF STAND-BY PERIOD

The NRDC-ESP Joint Logistic Support Group (JLSG) has conducted a Battle Staff Training (BST) at the Bétera military premises during February 25th and 26th. This activity is part of the continuous training to keep the JLSG capabilities and readiness during the Joint Task Force stand-by period.

Not only the JLSG members posted at the NRDC-ESP, but also personnel from the Spanish Logistic Brigade (BRILOG) have participated in the training.

During the two-day training, lessons identified and experiences gained during the certification process were implemented in order to refine both the working procedures and the internal coordination. It was an excellent opportunity to put into practice and revise internal documents as well as the information flow within the JLSG headquarters.

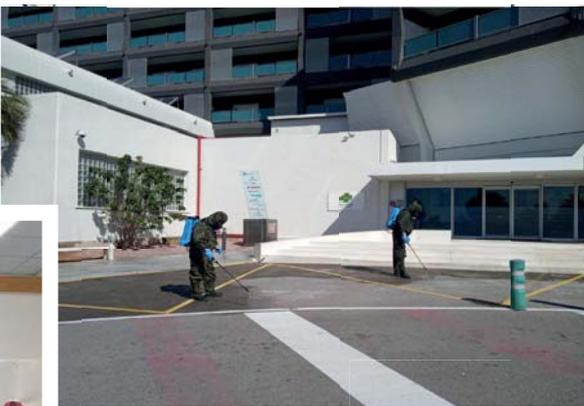
Furthermore, it allowed all the participants to be updated in the logistic topics coming from the different NATO entities and gain overall logistic situational awareness. In addition, SJLSG (Standing JLSG) and JSEC (Joint Support and Enabling Command) updates about the current situation and their way ahead were analyzed.

To sum up, the main objectives of the BST have been satisfactorily achieved and therefore it can be considered as a great and worthy activity where all participants have gained a very valuable knowledge and experience.

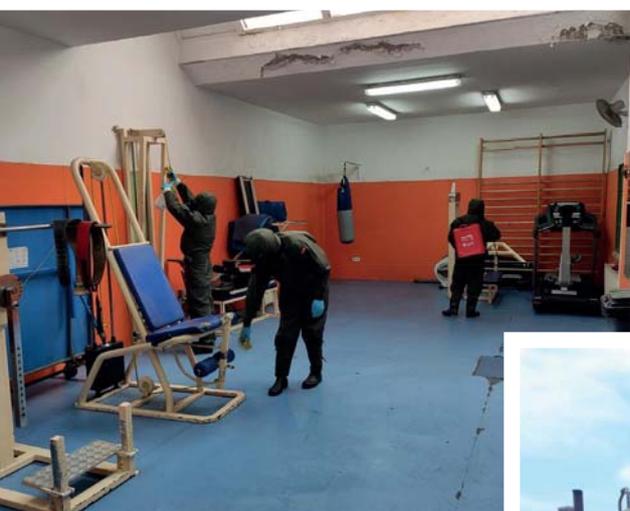


2020 | MARCH · APRIL · MAY

ACTIVITIES



MARCH · APRIL · MAY | 2020



ACTIVITIES





STUDENTS FROM THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF VALENCIA ARE TRAINED IN CRISIS MANAGEMENT AT THE NATO RAPID DEPLOYABLE CORPS – SPAIN HEADQUARTERS

Around 70 students from the Catholic University of Valencia have taken part at the ninth “Strategic Communication & Wargaming” course organized by the Catholic University of Valencia, with the collaboration of the NATO Rapid Deployable Corps – Spain (NRDC-ESP) Headquarters of Bétera and the Defense Delegation in Valencia during March 3th and 4th.

Students from diverse specialties such as nursing, psychologist, criminology, economic, information science or law, among others, were in attendance. The main aim of this course is to promote the relationship and improve the mutual knowledge between the students and the NATO community in the area.

The course was divided into two stages. The first one consisted on several lectures given by some experts in communication, security and defense at the Catholic University of Valencia premises. They analyzed both the threats and challenges to national security and the disinformation in the media environment.

On the following day, the students moved to the Bétera military base, home of the NATO Rapid Deployable Corps – Spain Headquarters, where they were integrated in a planning group as Subject Matter Experts for a fictitious crisis management scenario.

Students were asked to provide their view from their own specialty’s perspective for an article V operation launched by NATO in an artificial scenario. For this activity, the students were assisted by military mentors provided by the Headquarters. This activity was conducted at the Command Post which was set up by NRDC-ESP support Battalion.

An exhibition on material and capabilities by the Military Police Battalion put an end to this two-day course.



It was carried out before the national alarm state declaration by COVID19



NRDC-ESP HEADQUARTERS STARTS ITS TRANSITION TO WARFIGHTING CORPS ROLE

During the week of 15-22 June 2020, the HQ NRDC-ESP hosted a one-week-seminar in Bétera premises. This seminar is the kick-off for the transition from the current commitment as Joint Headquarters Land heavy to Warfighting Corps (WFC) role, the next commitment for the Headquarters in accordance with the NATO Long Term Commitment Plan.

This seminar is organized in two different stages: this one-week-seminar is the first part, and the second one will be carried out during this year's second semester. This first stage lays the foundations for the second one and it consisted of different syndicates and workshops with the focus on analyzing this new role.

This commitment as WFC will show that the HQ NRDC-ESP is always ready and constantly adapting to the very dynamic security environment, in order to accomplish the different missions and tasks as directed by NATO, thus playing a relevant role for the alliance.



ACTIVITIES



THE HQ NRDC-ESP HOSTS ITS FIRST WORKSHOP ABOUT CROSS CUTTING TOPICS, A NEW CONCEPT AT NATO

On June 25 and 26, NATO Rapid Deployment Corps Headquarters (NRDC-ESP HQ) G9 Stability Branch has organized a Workshop (WS) in Bétera Military Base (BMB) (Valencia) with the objective of disseminating the NATO's Cross Cutting Topics (CCTs) concept among all Functional Areas (FAs) of the HQs, given the importance that CCTs have in the framework of military operations.

Cross-cutting topics (CCTs) are a range of different areas which could affect the mission in a number of ways and according to the NATO doctrine to date the following CCTs have been identified:

- Protection of Civilians (POC)
- Children and Armed Conflict (CAAC)
- Women, Peace and Security (WPS)
- Cultural Property Protection (CPP)
- Building Integrity (BI)

It is worthy to mention that this WS has been the first one of this typology held at BMB and has been fully successful in achieving its objectives: next milestone will be the release of the HQ NRDC-ESP CCTs SOI (standard operating instructions).





THE NATO RAPID DEPLOYABLE CORPS-SPAIN HEADQUARTERS CONDUCTS THE EXERCISE DEPLOYEX II/20 AND CONTINUES ITS TRANSITION TO THE WARFIGHTING CORPS ROLE

The NATO Rapid Deployable Corps-Spain Headquarters (Bétera-Valencia) (HQ NRDC-ESP its acronym) conducts the exercise DEPLOYEX II/20 from the beginning of September. The exercise, which is being conducted at the tactical esplanade of the Bétera Military Base, started with the deployment of the Initial Command Element (ICE) and the activation of the Situation Centre (SITCEN).

The exercise DEPLOYEX II/20 is to test the transition from the Initial Command Element to the Main Command Post (MCP) by providing the required capabilities to conduct any allied operation. The exercise is a training opportunity not only for the Headquarters but also for their subordinate units, the Support Battalion and the Military Police Battalion, as well as for the Spanish Signals Brigade.



For the HQ NRDC-ESP, this exercise is the culminating event in a series of activities in its JTF HQ (Joint Task Force Headquarters) role, prior to starting the preparation for its next commitment as Warfighting Corps, scheduled for 2022. Another important challenge for this exercise is to carry out a deployment that guarantees security conditions against COVID 19, maintaining the social distance and implementing a strict sanitary hygiene protocol.

Around 200 soldiers from the eleven allied nations that make up the HQ, participate in the exercise, and more than 100 collective tents are set up, most of them correspond to the new tents with collective protection against NBC (nuclear, bacteriological and chemical) attacks, recently acquired by the Spanish Army.



With these training activities, NRDC-ESP Headquarters maintains its operational effectiveness and remains vigilant to the full range of security threats, as conventional warfare or hybrid warfare, while simultaneously supporting national efforts to overcome the crisis posed by the COVID 19 pandemic.



A NEW CREST CGTAD / HQ NRDC-ESP

Dated October 1, the crests of the Spanish High Readiness Land Headquarters and the crest of the NATO Rapid Deployable Corps-Spain Headquarters are unified in a single new crest, show of the cohesion and team spirit existing among the 12 allied nations.

Stronger Together!

Its graphic representation is: azure field; Borgoña cross, in gules, filleted in gold; cross-sword of Santiago, in gold; on each flank, a fleur de lis, in gold; above, the pole star of NATO, in silver and azure.



#TwelveNationsOneTeam

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THE NATO RAPID DEPLOYABLE CORPS-SPAIN HEADQUARTERS CONDUCTS A SEMINAR TO ANALYZE THE NATO SOUTHERN FLANK IN VALENCIA

The NATO Rapid Deployable Corps-Spain Headquarters (HQ NRDC-ESP its acronym) organizes the seminar “View to the South” on October 6th to analyze present and future of the NATO southern flank. The Ancient Royal Monastery of Santo Domingo in Valencia, site for the Spanish High Readiness Land Headquarters and for the Commander of HQ NRDC-ESP was the venue to host this important event.

Lieutenant General Fernando García-Vaquero, Commander of the HQ NRDC-ESP, welcomed all the participants and highlighted the commitment of the Headquarters to anticipate any possible crises that threaten the south flank of the Atlantic Alliance.

Security and protection measures against COVID-19 have been applied at all times, limiting the physical presence of attendees and allowing a high number of people to have participated through webinars.

Around 200 participants, both military and civilian personnel have attended the seminar. The seminar has brought together around 80 participants in person, among which it is worth mentioning a large group of students from the European University of Valencia. Further it must be added more than 120 people have participated on-line, which has allowed this seminar to be followed from numerous NATO Headquarters located throughout Europe.

Twelve geopolitical experts coming from national and international organizations, have analyzed the geopolitical situation in Africa, especially in the Sahel countries. Mainly, they have discussed the risks that threaten the security of the southern flank of NATO and some future opportunities in the area have been exposed. The participation of the NATO Strategic Direction South Hub from Naples, USAFRICOM (United States African Command), African Union, the European Union External Action Service, the Spanish Ministry of Defense and the CEU Cardinal Herrera University is appreciated.

During the closing remarks, the Commander of the NATO Rapid Deployable Corps-Spain Headquarters pointed out the high quality of the speakers and the interest aroused during the discussions held in the different panels.



ACTIVITIES

