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BEYOND AFGHANISTAN: MAINTAINING AND IMPROVING THE ABILITY TO GENERATE SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES FOR FUTURE NATO OPERATIONS

Lieutenant-Colonel R.J. Bérubé

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF ACRONYMS

BICES – Battlefield Intelligence Collaborative Exploitation System

C2 – Command and Control

CE – Crisis Establishment

CJSOR – Combined Joint Statement of Requirements

CJSOTF – Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force

COM ISAF – Commander ISAF

DA – Direct Action

DSACEUR – Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe

FG – Force Generation

ISAF – International Security Assistance Force

IS – International Staff

JFC – Joint Force Command

JOA – Joint Area of Operations

LoA – Level of Ambition

MA – Military Assistance

NAC – North Atlantic Council

NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NDPP – NATO Defence Planning Process

NID – NAC Initiating Directive

NMR – National Military Representative

NRF – NATO Response Force

NSCC – NATO Special Operations Coordination Centre

NSHQ – NATO Special Operations Headquarters

SACEUR – Supreme Allied Commander Europe

SD – Smart Defence

SHAPE – Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe

SOCC – Special Operations Component Command

SOCC (-) – Special Operations Component Command Minus

SOTF – Special Operations Task Force

SOTG – Special Operations Task Group

SFOR – Stabilization Force

SO – Special Operations

SOF – Special Operations Forces

SR – Special Reconnaissance

TSOC – Theatre Special Operations Command

TTP – Tactic, Techniques and Procedures

USSOCOM – United States Special Operations Command

ABSTRACT

Prior to and during the initial stages of operations in Afghanistan, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO) ability to generate and use Special Operations Forces (SOF) was disjointed and largely ineffective due to a lack of understanding of the employment of SOF. More recently, NATO SOF has been used to great effect in support of its operations in Afghanistan. NATO must now tackle the complex challenge of continuing to generate these strategic SOF capabilities for future NATO missions, a task that in the past has proven difficult and fraught with obstacles.

NATO successfully resolved many issues relating to the employment of SOF through the SOF Transformation Initiative (NSTI) of 2006 and the creation of the NATO Special Operations Headquarters (NSHQ). Although a step in the right direction, these measures do not provide the full complement of solutions necessary to achieve an effective force generation capacity for NATO SOF beyond Afghanistan. In order to do so, NATO must meet 3 essential conditions: NATO SOF must remain fully networked based on the common policy and doctrine, and the trust based network enabled by the creation of the NSHQ. It must create sustainable multinational SOF C2 structures, synchronized by the NSHQ, to meet its capability requirements. It should implement a SOF specific Force Generation model, led by the NSHQ, in order to provide SOF with the flexibility required to meet rapidly changing mission requirements.

By implementing these recommendations, NATO will assure itself of the ability to rapidly generate the necessary SOF capabilities for future operations.

BEYOND AFGHANISTAN: MAINTAINING AND IMPROVING THE ABILITY TO GENERATE SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES FOR FUTURE NATO OPERATIONS

> *Prior to the September 2001 terrorist attacks, the concept of establishing a common special operations capability within NATO largely resided in works of fiction.*
>
> - Michael Gates[1]

INTRODUCTION

2013 marks ten years of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) operations in Afghanistan. The past decade placed a large strain on the resources of the members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Alliance exposing strengths and weaknesses regarding its ability to undertake large combined joint operations far from its European base.

During this period, Special Operations Forces (SOF) came to the fore in terms of their capacity to operate in a Counter-Insurgency environment and their ability to adapt to often-ambiguous situations. This conflict also marked the coming of age for NATO SOF with the creation of the NATO Special Operations Coordination Centre (NSCC) and the stand-up of the ISAF SOF Headquarters in Afghanistan where, for the first time, after five years of effort, NATO SOF finally operated in a cohesive and unified fashion.

As the 2014 end to the ISAF mission approaches, NATO has embarked on a campaign to retain the capabilities developed after ten years of hard fighting and

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[1] Michael E. Gates, "Creating SOF Networks: The Role of NATO Special Operations as a testing ground of SOF integration," (Thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey California, June 2011), 4.

lessons learned. The need to maintain these capabilities is equally important for NATO SOF.

The impacts of a long protracted campaign in Afghanistan, coupled with a global economic crisis, have highlighted the fact that nations are no longer able or willing to undertake unilateral action. The comprehensive assistance of allies and coalition actions has become the normative standard with regard to conflicts in the contemporary operational environment. This inability to commit to costly and potentially protracted conflicts alone has had an immediate impact on all military forces, SOF included. Arthur D. Davis, a former National Defence Fellow for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict Analysis at the Naval Postgraduate School, wrote in the *Joint Force Quarterly* that, "[t]he current reality within NATO is that no one nation possesses the capability to conduct the full scale of SOF missions unilaterally in an environment of uncertainty and unconventional threats."[2] The fact that recent, current and future operations have been and will continue to be conducted in a multinational environment raises a fundamental shift in the paradigm for SOF employment.

These forces, long held as a strategic tool by governments to undertake missions that directly support national interests, have most often operated under strict national command and control structures. Nations have been reticent to place these assets under the command of another nation, even a close ally, let alone a

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[2] Arthur D. Davis, "The Regional Special Operations Headquarters: Franchising the NATO Model as a Hedge in Lean Times," *Joint Force Quarterly*, Issue 67, (4th quarter 2012): 71.

multinational alliance. Until the recent operations in Afghanistan, historical examples of multinational SOF employment were few and far between, other than *ad hoc* structures developed due to punctual necessities. For example, operations such as those in Bosnia, Kosovo, the 2004 Athens Olympics and the initial days of Afghanistan, all led to the same conclusion: SOF effects were not being optimized due to a lack of understanding of SOF capabilities by senior decision makers within NATO, which was at least partially due to the non-existence of a centralized SOF voice within the NATO Alliance and the absence of a comprehensive SOF Command and Control (C2) or force generation structure.[3] All of these factors conspired to reduce the likelihood that nations were willing to voluntarily commit their SOF to a NATO led entity.

With the reality that future operations will require multinational participation and capabilities, the Alliance launched several initiatives such as the NATO Defence Planning Process (NDPP) in 2009[4] and the Smart Defence (SD) initiative in 2010.[5] The success or failure of these initiatives has yet to be demonstrated. Nonetheless, the question that remains is: how does NATO maintain and improve the ability to generate SOF for future NATO operations?

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[3] Scott Morrison, "NATO Special Operations Headquarters: 'Closing the Gap'," *Carré*, no. 3, (2012): 12. http://www.nederlandseofficierenvereniging.nl/Carre/Carre%202012/mei/Maand html.

[4] For more details see, Laszlo Sticz, "The Defense Planning Systems and their Implications," *Journal of Defense Resources Management*, No. 1(1), (2010): 41.

[5] NATO, "Smart Defence," Last updated 26 April 2012, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/SID-2F6B7F9D-15C493C3/natolive/topics_84268.htm?.

This paper will argue that in the post Afghanistan paradigm, if NATO SOF remain fully networked and if limitations regarding command and control and force generation for SOF within NATO are amended, then NATO has the potential to continue to generate and sustain the deployment of SOF in support of NATO operations. To meet this goal, it will be demonstrated that as a result of creating the NATO SOF Headquarters (NSHQ), NATO SOF has codified the necessary doctrinal foundation, established a resilient and trust based network connecting NATO SOF, and developed the habitual relationships required to sustain this network beyond Afghanistan. Indeed, the development of this network served as a cornerstone in enabling the full potential of ISAF SOF and provided NATO SOF with the ability to rapidly adapt to emerging challenges, ensuring a viable future.

Additionally, this research paper will propose a new and innovative model to ensure that the requisite SOF C2 capabilities are met thereby further enabling future NATO SOF operations. This new SOF C2 model aims to tackle the core problem for sustained NATO SOF operations namely the lack of a functional and coherent C2 capability. The proposed model will provide a practical, multinational and cost effective solution to guarantee the ability to generate the necessary SOF C2 capabilities needed to meet NATO's Level of Ambition (LoA).[6]

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[6] The NATO Defence Planning Process identified the Level of Ambition for NATO to be able to simultaneously conduct two Major Joint Operations and six Small Joint Operations, which at worst case would require the availability of eight Special Operations Component Commands in order to C2 SOF operations.

Finally, a new SOF specific streamlined force generation model will be proposed to better enable and meet the needs of SOF improving its adaptability to punctual requirements in current and future operations. This new model will assign greater responsibilities to the NSHQ in terms of force generation oversight, in order to better represent the needs of SOF. Similarly, it will provide greater flexibility to the deployed SOF Commander in adapting the force size and composition based on the rapid evolution of SOF requirements. This adaptation of the current force generation model will further provide greater flexibility to nations and strengthen their confidence in assigning national SOF to NATO operations.

Supporting evidence will be taken from the study of multiple NATO documents, various academic papers and the personal observations of the author, on staff at the NSHQ. The combined effects of these three lines of study will result in a comprehensive proposal setting the necessary conditions for the continued provision of SOF operations under the NATO umbrella.

CHAPTER 1 – NATO SOF – THE PATH TO A COHESIVE SOF VOICE

> *The NATO Special Operations Forces Transformation Initiative has helped develop the Alliance's capabilities to deal with asymmetric threats by enhancing coordination, interoperability, and capabilities, particularly in support of the operational commanders.*
>
> - Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, NATO Secretary General

This chapter will serve to set the historical foundation of how NATO SOF has evolved from a marginalized capability within NATO to one that has surpassed all expectations. It will be argued that with the creation of the NSCC and the subsequent transformation into the NSHQ, NATO SOF has been able to create a unified voice leading to a dramatic enhancement of SOF effects during operations, and codify the necessary policy, doctrine and training foundations, thereby establishing its relevance and position as a strategic tool for NATO.

Defining SOF and their importance

In order to fully appreciate the inherent difficulties of generating SOF and understanding their needs in terms of C2, a review of how NATO currently defines Special Operations (SO) is required. As will be illustrated below, the specificity of their skills, coupled with the high value nature of their tasks speaks to the requirement for a SOF specific C2 structure. Within the NATO context, the strategic nature of their tasks eventually translated into the policy that SOF are to be assigned to a

Special Operations Component Command (SOCC), reporting directly to the highest level of command within the designed Joint Operations Area (JOA).[7]

It is interesting to note however that the NATO definition for NATO SO has not always been clear in terms of the full breadth of their capabilities. In 1997 NATO SOF and SO were defined as,

> … [forces that provide] a flexible, versatile and unique capability, whether employed alone or complementing other forces or agencies, to attain military-strategic or operational objectives. Specials operations, in contrast to conventional operations, are generally small, precise, adaptable and innovative, the may be conducted in a clandestine, covert or discreet manner.[8]

This definition was vague and lacked clarity on how SOF were trained, equipped and employed. Specifically it made no reference to the potential political objectives that SOF operations may be assigned. Renowned author on many SOF topics, Colonel Bernd Horn criticized definitions such as the one above, stating that organizations such as NATO built consensual and politically acceptable definitions to satisfy their members leaving either too broad or lacking in substance.[9] In effect, this since discarded definition did not make evident the need for a SOF specific C2 capability.

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[7] *Ibid*., 3-1.

[8] Lieutenant-Colonel Bernd Horn, "Special Men, Special Missions," in *Force of Choice: Perspectives on Special Operation,* ed. Bernd Horn, J. Paul de B. Taillon, and David Last, (Kingston: Queen's University Press, 2004), 8.

[9] *Ibid*., 7.

In 2009, NATO updated its definition for SO, which provided greater clarity and emphasized the strategic political risk often associated with their missions. The inclusion of the specific roles, acceptance of risk, training and equipping of personnel highlighted the differences between SOF and conventional forces. These differentiations, combined with the strategic importance of their missions alluded to the need to place SOF under the C2 of the highest level authorities to maximize the effects of their operations. In accordance with the 2009 version of *Allied Joint Doctrine for Special Operations - Allied Joint Publication 3.5*, Special Operations are now defined as,

> … [m]ilitary activities conducted by specially designated, organized, trained and equipped forces using operational techniques and modes of employment not standard to conventional forces. These activities are conducted across the full range of military operations independently or in coordination with operations of conventional forces to achieve political, military, psychological, and economic objectives. Politico-military considerations may require clandestine, covert, or discreet techniques and the acceptance of a degree of physical and political risk not associated with conventional operations.[10]

NATO further expanded on this definition, identifying the key characteristics of SOF, specifying that they are: joint in nature; strategic assets to be controlled at the highest level; assigned objectives that have military, diplomatic, informational and economic effects; often operating independently from friendly support; reliant on dedicated intelligence support, and not a substitute nor a competitor with conventional

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[10] North Atlantic Treaty Organization, AJP 3.5, *Allied Joint Doctrine for Special Operations – Allied Joint Publication 3.5*, (Brussels: NATO, January 2009), LEX-5.

forces.[11] The theme is that SOF are not designed, equipped or available in sufficient numbers to replace conventional forces, rather they need to be carefully managed and employed appropriately.

To ensure they are not misemployed, nations have ascribed to a set of guiding principles for their employment. These principles are designed to ensure that SOF are assigned to meet high level objectives, supported with detailed intelligence, given clear C2 and robust secure communications to ensure timely decision making, protected by a high level of operational security and provided authorities that allow freedom of action.[12]

In contrast, conventional forces are normally deployed in much greater numbers, with integrated C2 structures, comprehensive sustainment capabilities and extensive firepower.[13] The capabilities delivered by conventional forces are more easily understood than those of SOF in a multinational environment given the inherent similarities between nations, vice the wide variances of capabilities that SOF provides. By way of example, regardless of how an Infantry Battalion is equipped or organized, it can be argued that most military staffs understand the roles and functions of this type of organization. Based on this premise, a multinational headquarters responsible for conventional forces is more readily able to provide the necessary direction for their

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[11] North Atlantic Treaty Organization, AJP 3.5, *Allied Joint Doctrine for Special Operations – Allied Joint Publication 3.5*, 1-1 – 1-2.

[12] *Ibid*., 1-4 – 1-5.

[13] *Ibid.*, 4.1.

tasks and missions than the ability to C2 SOF given their specialized and often misunderstood capabilities and roles.

With the complexity and level of risk associated with the tasks assigned to SOF, these forces require their own C2 to ensure that the full potential of SOF can be exploited. Unfortunately NATO SOF have not always benefited from its own SOF C2 within the NATO context. John Krott et al, in their MBA Professional Report for the Naval Post Graduate School, highlighted the fact that, "[o]perations in the Balkans, security during the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens, and the initial offensive in Afghanistan are all examples of [disjointed] NATO SOF employment."[14] The employment of SOF in the Balkans highlighted several issues in terms of SOF C2 and the misemployment of SOF. The misunderstanding of SOF capabilities by conventional commanders, the complex C2 structures with varying levels of authorities and the lack of a common doctrinal foundation amongst NATO SOF, all conspired to reduce their effectiveness and in some case led to their misuse.[15]

The Balkans provided a multitude of lessons learned for SOF, key among these were the need for a more comprehensive SOF C2 structure and a common

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[14] John Krott, Frank Morales and William Livingston, "Development of a Rapidly Deployable Special Operations Component Command (SOCC) Core Concept for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Special Operations Headquarters (NSHQ)," (MBA Professional report, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey California, December 2011), 2.

[15] LTC Michael L. Findlay, "Special Forces Integration with Multinational Division-North in Bosnia Herzegovina," (Thesis, School of Advanced Military Studies, Fort Leavenworth, 21 May 1998), 37-40. Studying the integration of SOF with conventional forces during operations in Bosnia, the author concluded that SOF were not properly employed due to a lack of understanding of SOF capabilities and disjointed C2 structures between the Joint Force Commander and the Multinational Divisional Headquarters. Further exacerbating the issue were the retention of control of SOF by national commanders, thereby creating effects that were not synchronized centrally.

doctrine.[16] Afghanistan would provide the next real opportunity to rectify the issues encountered in the Balkans.

Afghanistan - The rise of NATO SOF

The lessons learned from the Balkans did not immediately bring about the required doctrinal and C2 changes. Indeed, the previously identified problematic issues continued well into the NATO ISAF mission in Afghanistan, taking more than five years to resolve.[17] Despite the initial disjointed use of SOF in Afghanistan would eventually pave the way for increased synchronization within a multinational environment.

The initial deployment of Western SOF to Afghanistan consisted mostly of U.S. SOF under the auspices of Operation Enduring Freedom. Other nations soon joined in, as Michael Gates, in his thesis on the creation of SOF networks, explained, "during the initial phases of Operation Enduring Freedom, U.S. forces requested support from trusted special operations allies including Australia, Canada, Germany, New Zealand, Norway, Turkey, and the United Kingdom."[18] Within months of the initial U.S. deployment, many of these nations deployed SOF to join the U.S. led Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force (CJSOTF).

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[16] Scott Morrison, "NATO Special Operations Headquarters: 'Closing the Gap'," 12.
[17] NATO Special Operations Headquarters, "Biennial Review," (SHAPE, Belgium: 2010), 42.
[18] Michael E. Gates, "Creating SOF Networks: The Role of NATO Special Operations as a testing ground of SOF integration," 64.

In 2003, after decisions made at the NATO Bonn Conference of 2001 and the establishment of the ISAF, NATO entered the Afghan theatre.[19] The deployment of SOF in support of ISAF did not occur immediately however. Without a proper NATO SOCC, SOF largely continued to operate throughout the country supporting national missions or as part of the US frame-worked CJSOTF.[20] Former Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), General James L. Jones observed that, "the majority of SOF contributions in Afghanistan have come through non-NATO contribution effort."[21] The operating conditions were similar to those in the Balkans.

The coordination of SOF missions with ISAF and various battle space owners fell upon an *ad hoc* network of liaison elements and the small Special Operations Command and Control Element (SOCCE) assigned to Commander ISAF (COM ISAF). In his postgraduate thesis exploring the evolution of US Special Forces since Bosnia, Armando Ramirez found that the, "constraints placed upon Special Forces in Afghanistan and the complex approval system mandated by conventional commanders for mission approval seemingly fail[ed] to maximize the use of Special Forces to their fullest potential."[22] The then SACEUR, General James L. Jones, expanded on this issue indicating that, "[a]lthough NATO [Special Operations Task Groups (SOTGs)] in ISAF are highly capable, and the joint commands do have their own small Special

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[19] International Security Assistance Force, "History", Last accessed 15 May 2013, http://www.isaf.nato.int/history.html.

[20] Observations based upon the authors participation on the second NATO SOF Combined Joint Special Operations Component Command staff course and personal experiences while deployed to Afghanistan in 2008.

[21] James L. Jones, "A blueprint for Change: Transforming NATO Special Operations," *Joint Force Quarterly*, Issue 45, (2nd Quarter, 2007): 37.

[22] Armando J. Ramirez, "From Bosnia to Baghdad: The evolution of US Army Special Forces from 1995-2004," (Thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, California, September 2004), 72.

Operations planning staff, … NATO SOF needs a standing entity dedicated to addressing the integration of SOF solutions."[23]

Up until late 2006, NATO writ large remained without a true and permanent SOF architecture able to articulate the needs, roles and capabilities of SOF throughout the Alliance, from NATO HQ to SACEUR and into Afghanistan.[24] SOF advice continued to be enabled by a small cadre of advisors within the NATO Command Structure, resident within disjointed offices that were not systematically linked nor empowered to ensure a unity of effort.[25] These conditions were not conducive for any substantive growth in NATO's SOF contribution to ISAF. To rectify this situation, a new model was needed.

NATO SOF Transformation Initiative

To be effective NATO SOF needed to work together in a habitual manner, develop a common doctrine, be fully networked, and speak with a unified voice, thereby laying the foundation for success. As David C. Gompert, a then Senior Fellow at the RAND Corporation, and Raymond C. Smith, a retired Rear-Admiral with 31 years service with the U.S. Navy Seals, explained in their proposal to create a NATO Special Operations Force, "to act decisively with SOF, NATO would need forces that are ready and able to work well together. … [in order] … to achieve both unity and effectiveness, … its members' SOF must prepare together and be organized

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[23] James L. Jones, "A blueprint for Change: Transforming NATO Special Operations," 37.
[24] *Ibid.*, 38.
[25] *Ibid.*, 38.

to act together. Occasional contacts will not suffice."[26] Others, such as Fulbright Fellow Major Joseph Mouer, in his thesis on the future of NATO SOF in 2007, argued for the creation of a true NATO SOCC, stating that, "without such a [SOCC], the robust and highly-trained SOF possessed by NATO members will continue to be controlled on an *ad hoc* basis."[27] Dr. J. Paul de Taillon, an accomplished SOF academic, added when referring to Coalition SOF (CSOF), that, "… the earlier CSOF integration takes place, the better. This [integration] can be addressed through enhancing coalition SOF training and exercise, to educate, train and sensitize participating commanders and staff to tactical, operational and strategic issues."[28]

Their conclusions all underscored the need for SOF integration in terms of doctrine, training and C2. Effectively SOF needed to work collaboratively and in a unified way. Having studied the lessons learned from operations in Bosnia, Kosovo and the 2004 Athens Olympics[29], four nations, comprised of the Netherlands, Poland, Norway and the United States, drafted a proposal recommending the transformation of NATO SOF. This proposal was eventually endorsed by the NATO heads of state at

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[26] David C. Gompert and Raymond C. Smith, "Creating a NATO Special Operations Force," *Defense Horizons*, Number 52, (March 2006): 5.

[27] Major Joseph Mouer, "NATO, SOF and the Future of the Alliance", (A Monograph, School of Advanced Military Studies, United States Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 2007), 48.

[28] J. Paul de B. Taillon, "Coalition Special Operation Forces: Building Partner Capacity," *Canadian Military Journal*, (Autumn 2007): 47.

[29] Arthur D. Davis, "The Regional Special Operations Headquarters – Franchising the NATO model in a Hedge in Lean Times," 73.

the 2006 at the RIGA Summit, leading to the NATO SOF Transformation Initiative (NSTI). [30] In the four nation submission they highlighted that,

> …there is a great deal of commonality among Allies on SOF-appropriate missions, and various Allies have on-going bilateral and multilateral SOF relationships; however, SOF assets are usually retained under national control. The Alliance and Allies could benefit by devising means to better harmonize these low-density, high-value assets.[31]

These four nations requested that, "NATO Military Authorities should be tasked to examine ways in which the Alliance could further enhance the integration, interoperability, training and employment of national SOF capabilities."[32] This foundational document provided the recommendations to standardize doctrine, evaluations and training for NATO SOF, to create a coordination centre to enhance SOF cooperation and to act as the central authority for NATO SOF with wide-sweeping responsibilities.[33]

As a result of the NSTI, the NATO Alliance took concrete steps to rectify the identified issues which led to the creation of the NATO SOF Coordination Centre (NSCC).[34] NATO SOF had found its voice which provided SOF Subject Matter Expertise (SME), supported SOF Force Generation, developed SOF policy and

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[30] Herman Schaper et al, *Transformation of NATO Special Operations Forces*, (NATO Headquarters Brussels, Letter to the Secretary General, May 15 2006), 1.
[31] *Ibid.*, 2.
[32] *Ibid.*, 2.
[33] *Ibid.*, 2-3.
[34] NATO Special Operations Headquarters, "Biennial Review," 11.

doctrine, supported SOF training and exercises and established a NATO SOF Network.[35]

The path to the NSCC, which began in the Balkans through to the early years in Afghanistan, had taken the better part of a decade. Following its creation however, the speed of development of NATO SOF accelerated dramatically.[36] The Figure 1.1 illustrates the long path that led to the Riga Summit and the eventual decisions that resulted in the NSTI.

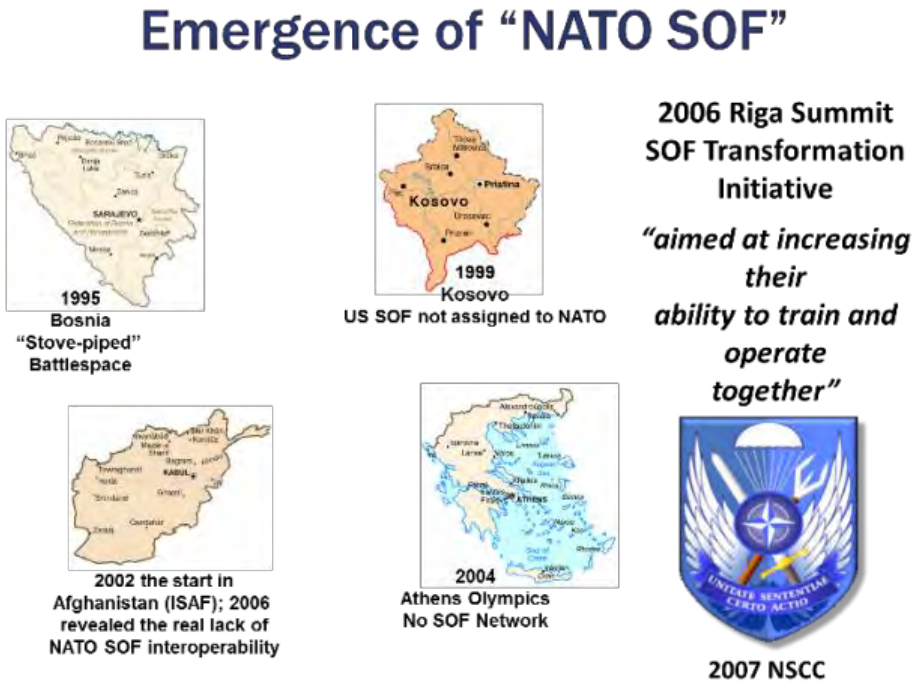

Figure 1.1: The emergence of NATO SOF – from Bosnia to the Riga Summit[37]

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[35] Herman Schaper et al, *Transformation of NATO Special Operations Forces*, 1-3.
[36] NATO Special Operations Headquarters, "Biennial Review," 6-7.
[37] NATO Special Operations Headquarters, Unpublished presentation, 2012.

As a U.S. frame-worked organization, the NSCC was mandated to, "[e]nable and support NATO SOF across the Alliance and provide the focal point for SOF expertise to SACEUR and Allied Command for Ops (ACO)."[38] One of the first tasks undertaken by this new organisation focused on rectifying the issues encountered in Afghanistan.[39] Through persistent engagements, advocacy and the ability to speak with a unified voice, the NSCC led the way for the creation, in 2008, of a proper SOF C2 element for ISAF, better known as the ISAF SOF Headquarters (ISAF SOF HQ).[40] The establishment of the ISAF SOF HQ aimed to bring synergy and cohesion to NATO SOF operations. All that remained was for nations to deploy the necessary forces under command of this new entity.

Despite the creation of ISAF SOF HQ, many nations with deployed Special Operations Task Forces (SOTFs) decided for various reasons to retain their forces under the C2 arrangement provided by the U.S. CJSOTF. These reasons included the ability to access to greater intelligence support and products, more robust rules of engagement, fears of violation of operational security and the ability to access critical U.S. enablers assigned specifically to the U.S. CJSOTF, vice ISAF.[41]

In order to increase the number of SOTGs for ISAF SOF, nations needed to see value in subjugating their SOF elements to NATO's mission. The tipping point for the growth of ISAF SOF was reached in a key decision made by then Commander

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[38] NATO SOF Coordination Centre, Unpublished presentation, 2007.
[39] NATO Special Operations Headquarters, "Biennial Review," 40.
[40] NATO Special Operations Headquarters, "Biennial Review," 40-41.
[41] Based on author's experience as Deputy Commander of a deployed SOTF from April 2008 to November 2008.

SOCEUR, Rear-Admiral William McRaven, who "performed a significant demonstration of trust in coalition special operations capabilities by placing his American special forces under foreign leadership for the first time in the conflict."[42]

After years of de-synchronized operations and no centralized authority to advocate SOF issues, NATO SOF within ISAF was finally given a voice at the highest level of command within Afghanistan.[43] Admiral McRaven's decision, combined with the efforts of the newly established NSCC at SHAPE and ISAF SOF HQ in Afghanistan, accelerated the expansion of the number of SOTGs due to the inevitable corollary of a more robust and credible C2 architecture. So while ISAF SOF accounted for approximately 345 SOF personnel in 2007, by the end of 2008 it stood at over 1300 and eventually increased to well over 2000 by 2013.[44] ISAF SOF HQ, today representing over 14 nations, was the first of its kind for NATO.[45] As Michael Gates summarized the transformation,

> … [f]rom 2001 to 2007, NATO SOF forces continued to support U.S. SOF forces in Afghanistan in a subordinate role. Since 2007, the NATO SOF linked command in Afghanistan, ISAF SOF, has served as an example of effective, efficient, and rapid multinational command and control during conflict.[46]

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[42] Michael Gates, "Creating SOF Networks: The Role of NATO Special Operations as a testing ground of SOF integration," 65. This would be the first time that U.S. Special Forces would be fully detached under Operational Command of a NATO Headquarters, thereby providing a much needed level of legitimacy to ISAF SOF and set the conditions for additional nations to follow suit.

[43] NATO Special Operations Headquarters, "Biennial Review," 41-42.

[44] *Ibid.*, 10. Data for 2013 provided in an unpublished briefing from ISAF SOF HQ.

[45] NATO Special Operations Headquarters, Unpublished Brief, 2013.

[46] Michael Gates, "Creating SOF Networks: The Role of NATO Special Operations as a testing ground of SOF integration," 56.

Coherent policy, doctrine and training

The approval of the NSTI enabled the rapid resolution of historical SOF C2 challenges from the past. This key event provided the impetus and consolidated arguments required for a true NATO SOF capability to be pursued. Fuelled by the initiative of SOF itself, the NSTI provided the framework enabling collaboration between SOF across the Alliance.[47] The founding charter contained in the NSTI provided the necessary authorities for the NSCC to develop SOF policy and doctrine, increase SOF interoperability, SOF training courses and exercises, a NATO SOF Network and support Force Generation. [48]

The NSCC initially co-located and under the command of U.S. SOCEUR, was eventually collocated in 2008 to the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) near Mons, Belgium under the separate command of a U.S. three star. From this new structure and location, the NSCC was able to ensure that senior decision makers within NATO became intimately aware of NATO SOF's potential.[49] Within a year of moving, following the Strasbourg Summit in September of 2009, the NSCC was given additional tasks, (which will be discussed further in Chapter 3), which changed its designation from the NSCC to the NSHQ.[50]

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[47] NATO Special Operations Headquarters, "Biennial Review," 9.

[48] Herman Schaper et al, *Paper on the Transformation of NATO Special Operations Forces*, 1-3.

[49] NATO Special Operations Headquarters, "Biennial Review," 29-30.

[50] Claudio Bisogniero, *Reorganization of the NATO Special Operations Coordination Centre (NSCC) as the NATO Special Operations Headquarters (NSHQ)*, (NATO Headquarters, Brussels, NAC

The NSHQ provided all the benefits of having a singular point of reference to NATO SOF issues, offering a comprehensive forum where NATO SOF nations discussed and moulded their own future. The 26 of the 28 NATO nations that have SOF responded enthusiastically, sending SOF representatives to the NSHQ.[51] The NSHQ quickly grew from a nucleus of 23 personnel in 2006, to over 200 in 2013.[52] Figure 1.2 illustrates the current countries that have opted to send personnel to the NSHQ, including three partner nations, who physically work on behalf of NATO SOF and the growing network.[53]

PO (2009) 0135-AS1, 25 September 2009). While some of the events described hereunder predates the official name change from the NSCC to the NSHQ, for clarity the term NSHQ will be used for the remainder of this paper.

[51] NATO Special Operations Headquarters, "Biennial Review," 3.

[52] NATO Special Operations Headquarters, Unpublished Briefing, 2013.

[53] 26 of the 28 NATO nations have Special Operations Forces, with Luxembourg and Iceland not possessing these capabilities. Adding to this network are the seven Non-NATO Nations, including Australia, Austria, Finland, Ireland, New Zealand, Sweden and Switzerland, of which only Austria, Finland and Sweden have representatives working at the NSHQ.

Figure 1.2: The NATO Allied and Partner SOF Collaborative Network[54]

The NSHQ very quickly brought coherence to NATO SOF policy, doctrinal manuals and advocated on the best practices and capability development of NATO SOF. From policy and doctrinal perspectives, the NSHQ spearheaded the review of multiple publications relating to SOF employment, bridging critical shortcomings in terms of disseminating SOF expertise, thus increasing relevance and ensuring that policy and doctrine were realistic and within reach of allies and partners.[55]

With a common doctrinal base from which to work from, nations leveraged this pooled expertise and increased the capabilities of their own organisations as well

[54] NATO Special Operations Headquarters, Unpublished Briefing, 2013.
[55] NATO Special Operations Headquarters, "Biennial Review," 11.

as ensured interoperability between other nations. As expressed by Dr. Paul J. Taillon, "[t]he 'commonality' of doctrine and formats for developing concepts of operations, staff work, and brief backs facilitated interoperability."[56] Critical to this endeavour was the full ownership of the doctrinal foundation, allowing for not only rapid development, but also doing so in a fully harmonized fashion on all SOF related publications as depicted in Figure 1.3.

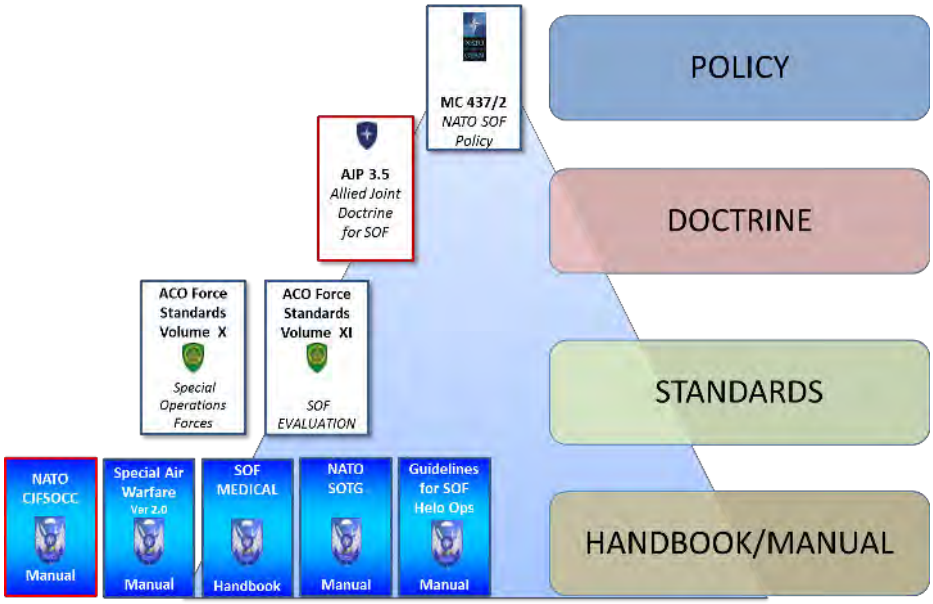

Figure 1.3: Key Document Hierarchy synchronized by NSHQ[57]

Beyond the revision of SOF policy and doctrine, programs such as the NATO SOF Education and Training Program (NSTEP) were put into place and provided SOF specific training not readily available within many of the Allied nations.[58] Doing so

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[56] J. Paul de B. Taillon, "Coalition Special Operation Forces: Building Partner Capacity," 51.
[57] NATO Special Operations Headquarters, Unpublished Briefing, 2013.
[58] NATO Special Operations Headquarters, "Biennial Review," 20-23.

enhanced SOF across the Alliance and synchronized the level of capabilities.[59] Courses such as the Special Operations Component Command Staff course, which served to prepare staff members in preparation for employment within a NATO SOCC, ensured that staff deploying to ISAF SOF received common training and allowed for greater integration into ISAF SOF HQ.[60] Other training courses included intelligence analysts' courses, technical exploitation training and SOF Medical courses.[61] The NSHQ provided a venue, through the NATO SOF Campus, which created and expanded the capabilities of nations to meet current and future operational needs, growing to upwards of 20 SOF Specific courses as illustrated at Figure 1.4.

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[59] *Ibid.*, 2010.

[60] The author attended one of the inaugural NSCC CJFSOCC courses in early 2008.

[61] R. Rhett Wallace, "NATO SOF Transformation and the Development of NATO SOF Medical Doctrine and Policy," *Journal of Special Operations Medicine*, Volume 9, Edition 3 (Summer 2009): 7.

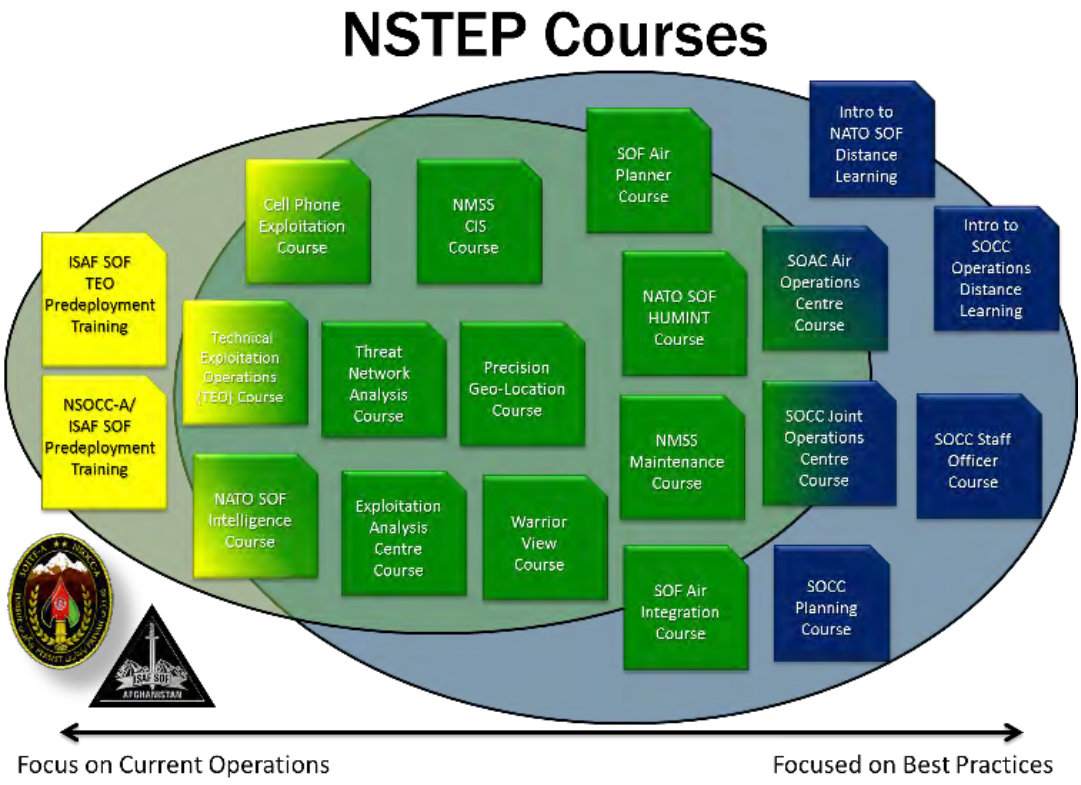

Figure 1.4: Courses delivered by the NATO SOF Training and Education Program[62]

Conclusion

This chapter illustrates the dramatic evolution of NATO SOF as a result of the NSTI and the profound effects that have been achieved. The application of the lessons learned from past NATO operations, leading to the creation of the NSHQ, provided NATO SOF with a unified voice to effect change on how SOF is viewed and employed. Using the NSHQ as the vehicle for transforming NATO SOF, the former has been instrumental in creating a robust SOF C2 structure in Afghanistan

[62] NATO Special Operations Headquarters, Unpublished Briefing, 2013.

dramatically increasing NATO SOF effects. Finally, through the establishment of coherent policy and doctrine for NATO SOF, the NSHQ has provided the Alliance with a comprehensive understanding of the capabilities and strategic use of NATO SOF.

As authors such as Dr. de Taillon expressed, the foundation built upon a common doctrine, training and exercises is the critical first step towards creating an integrated coalition. This integration and common understanding on what is expected of SOF within NATO can be viewed as the cornerstone to building a resilient SOF Network. To ensure that this foundation remains stable and retain the confidence of nations to providing SOF to NATO operations, the development of a trust based relationship and proper enabling of this network will be studied next.

CHAPTER 2 – BUILDING THE NATO ALLIED AND PARTNER SOF COLLABORATIVE NETWORK

You've got to build that trust. You can't surge trust.

- Admiral William H. McRaven[63]

A critical component for the continued participation in future NATO SOF operations, it is argued, necessitates the building a trust based collaborative network and enabling this network with the necessary tools to maintain it. The creation of the NSHQ allowed for a more coordinated effort in Afghanistan, the development of common doctrine and provided critical training to fill capability gaps. The challenge that remains is how to develop the institutional relationships and trust to ensure that NATO SOF is ready to respond in a coherent and collaborative fashion in the future.

Building a Trust Network

The ability to create trust within an organization is one of the key factors to retaining the successes beyond those that have been demonstrated by ISAF SOF in Afghanistan. While not speaking specifically about SOF, Major Brent Beardsley, a military leader described his experiences in Rwanda, arguing that, "[t]rust is the glue that holds a military team together through the situational, moral and physical effects of fear, fatigue, injury, death, adversity and sacrifice."[64] With trust acting as the 'glue'

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[63] David Trulio, "You Can't Surge Trust – Insights from the opening of th Aspen Security Forum," *Security Debrief*, Last accessed 9 August 2013. http://securitydebrief.com/2012/07/27/you-cant-surge-trust-insights-from-the-opening-of-the-aspen-security-forum/.

to retain a cohesive team, regardless of the situational stressor placed on the team, then NATO SOF must do all in its power to solidify the trust it has established to date. Major Beardsley continues his argument that trust, "is a firm belief in the reliability of a person, persons or organization."[65] Based on this assertion, the strength of a network will come from the trust between individuals, then groups and finally between nations.

In order to build this trust, habitual personal relationships are critical. The Commander of the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) has been at the forefront of explaining the need for trust. In his testimony to the U.S. Congress on the need to work with partner SOF, he argued that, "we have much to learn from each other, working with partner SOF will build mutual trust, foster enduring relationships, and provide new opportunities to affect shared challenges."[66] Still others, such as Scott Morrison, Director of the Commander's Action Group at the NSHQ explains that, "[t]he purpose of this network is to create an enduring Allied and Partner SOF community of interest anchored by the personal relationships which assure loyalty and trust."[67] It is the persistent personal interaction at all levels that will

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[64] Major Brent Beardsley, "Building Trust in a Multi-National Team during Combat or near-Combat," in *In Harm's Way: Leveraging Trust: a Force Multiplier for Today*, ed by Lieutenant-Colonel Jeff Stouffer and Craig Leslie Mantle, 44 (Kingston: Canadian Defence Academy Press by 17 Wing Winnipeg Publishing Office, 2008).

[65] Major Brent Beardsley, "Building Trust in a Multi-National Team during Combat or near-Combat," 43.

[66] House Armed Services Committee, *Posture Statement of Admiral William H. McRaven, USN Commander, United States Special Operations Command Before the 13th Congress House Armed Services Committee*, March 6, 2013, 8. http://docs house.gov/meetings/AS/AS00/20130306/100394/HHRG-113-AS00-Wstate-McRavenUSNA-20130306.pdf

[67] Scott Morrison, "NATO Special Operations Headquarters: 'Closing the Gap'," 12.

establish the necessary trust to ensure that the gains generated by the NSHQ and ISAF SOF continue to thrive beyond Afghanistan.

Determining how to build this trust becomes ever more important to retain the trust relationships developed through the conflict in Afghanistan. A 2008 NATO SOF study highlighted that, "… the success of NATO SOF hinges upon the personal relationships among the community [and that] … *Ad hoc* random partnerships cannot build the level of mutual trust and confidence needed for better interoperability on the battlefield."[68] The eventual creation of ISAF SOF HQ and the SOTGs assigned to NATO provided the catalysts to accelerate these trust relationships and expanded the SOF network.[69] Military leaders, such as Lieutenant-Colonel Ian Hope, though not speaking specifically about SOF, said after a tour of duty in Afghanistan, that, "trust and cohesion required an equitable sharing of risk."[70] ISAF SOF shared many risks since their creation and developed a better understanding of the capabilities, shed biases where they existed and having lived the same experiences, all of which lead to the creation of a bonding effect.[71] NATO SOF operations in Afghanistan have provided the impetus, through shared risk, for these trust relationships to mature.

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[68] NATO SOF Coordination Centre. "The North Atlantic Treaty Organization – Special Operations Forces Study," (SHAPE, Belgium: 4 December 2008), 34.

[69] Karen Parrish, "Special Operators Depend on Good Partners, Commander Says," *U.S. Department of Defense*, American Forces Press Service, Washington, Jan 29, 2013. Accessed 9 August 2013, http://www.defense.gov/News/NewsArticle.aspx?ID=119137

[70] Lieutenant-Colonel Ian Hope, "Trust: A Critical Element of Task Force Orion," in *In Harm's Way: Leveraging Trust: a Force Multiplier for Today*, ed by Lieutenant-Colonel Jeff Stouffer and Craig Leslie Mantle, 35. (Kingston: Canadian Defence Academy Press by 17 Wing Winnipeg Publishing Office, 2008).

Building upon the evolution of trust within ISAF, NSHQ staff also experienced this bonding from the face to face daily interaction and working towards a common purpose.[72] Trust was built upon the development of common procedures, confidence in working as a team, and built upon years of working together towards a common purpose, all criteria for the formation of trust and cooperation.[73] Members of the NSHQ depend on each other to advocate on behalf of NATO SOF, and through the shared burden and experiences they continue to build trust not only between themselves but gain a better appreciation and understanding of the SOF capabilities from each member's country. [74]

With a view of maintaining this trust network, one of the key achievements of the NSHQ, was the creation and implementation of the NATO Allied and Partner Collaborative Network. The purpose of this Network was to form the personal bonds amongst all NATO SOF, inclusive of operators, staff and commanders.[75] Trust was created amongst operators and ISAF SOF HQ staff, not only in Afghanistan during

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[71] Claudette Roulo, "McRaven: Success in Human Domain Fundamental to Special Ops," U.S. Department of Defense, American Forces Press Service, Washington, June 5 2013, Last accessed 9 Aug 2013, http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=120219. See also Colonel Bernd Horn, "Trust: The Crucible of Success in Command," in *In Harm's Way: Leveraging Trust: a Force Multiplier for Today*, ed by Lieutenant-Colonel Jeff Stouffer and Craig Leslie Mantle, 87. (Kingston: Canadian Defence Academy Press by 17 Wing Winnipeg Publishing Office, 2008).

[72] Martin J. Ara, Thomas Brand and Brage A. Larssen, "Help a Brother out: A Case Study in Multinational Intelligence Sharing, NATO SOF," Thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, California, December 2011: 28.

[73] Lieutenant-Colonel Michael R. Eastman, "TSC Engagement in Europe – Building Coalitions," in *Multinational Operations Newsletter*, no 10-12, (Dec 2009): 38. The author recounts that the close relationships built with partnered nations prior to deployment were critical for success during operations in Afghanistan.

[74] Karen Cook, Russell Hardin, and Margaret Levi, *Cooperation Without Trust?* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2005), quoted in Michael E. Gates, "Creating SOF Networks: The Role of NATO Special Operations as a testing ground of SOF integration," 10.

[75] Scott Morrison, "NATO Special Operations Headquarters: 'Closing the Gap'," 12

multiple operations, but also through the shared experiences through the NSTEP program.[76] Through a variety of training courses, SOF personnel from all nations gain insights through personal interactions of the capabilities of each other's organisations. John Arquilla and David Ronfelt, pillars in the study of networks and how to use these to defeat networks such as Al Qaeda, offer perhaps one the best description of the potential of the NSHQ Allied and Partner SOF Network. While not specifically referring to SOF, their reflections support the path that NSHQ followed since its inception, writing,

> … [t]he full functioning of a network also depends on how well, and in what ways, the members are personally known and connected to each other... strong personal ties, often ones that rest on friendship and bonding experiences, ensure high degrees of trust and loyalty.[77]

Admiral McRaven is often heard saying that, "you can't surge trust,"[78] but to maximize its potential it must be fully enabled to thrive and grow over time. The NSHQ, through a multitude of venues has made great strides in setting the conditions for the established trust that grew out of Afghanistan and serves as the foundation of the NATO Allied and Partner SOF Collaborative Network. Ensuring that this trust continue to expand will be explored next.

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[76] Martin J. Ara, Thomas Brand and Brage A. Larssen, "Help a Brother out: A Case Study in Multinational Intelligence Sharing, NATO SOF," 38.

[77] John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt, *Networks and Netwars: The Future of Terror, Crime, and Militancy,* (Santa Monica, California: Rand Cooperation, 2001), 341. http://www.rand.org/pubs/monograph_reports/MR1382/index.html.

[78] David Trulio, "You Can't Surge Trust – Insights from the opening of the Aspen Security Forum." *Security Debrief*, last accessed 9 August 2013. http://securitydebrief.com/2012/07/27/you-cant-surge-trust-insights-from-the-opening-of-the-aspen-security-forum/.

Enabling the Network

As has been argued, the necessity of trust within a network is a key ingredient for the resilience of the NATO Allied and Partner SOF Collaborative Network. This section will illustrate the measures taken by the NSHQ to assure its survival beyond Afghanistan and thus set the conditions for not only the expansion of the network, but further leverage this network to assure the provision of NATO SOF for future operations. Principle among the measures taken was the provision of secure communications to allow for open sharing of information. John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt argued that,

> … [t]he strongest networks will be those in which the organizational design is sustained by a winning story and a well-defined doctrine, and in which all this is layered atop advanced communications systems and rests on strong personal and social ties at the base.[79]

For the NATO SOF the winning story consists of the creation of the NSHQ, the championing of a common doctrine, the coalescence of ISAF SOF into a credible SOF C2 structure and generating trust amongst NATO SOF. Therefore the next key ingredient to firmly entrench this network is the communications needed to enable its growth.

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[79] John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt, *Networks and Netwars: The Future of Terror, Crime, and Militancy,* 324.

As previously illustrated, operational security is a key principle of SOF employment.[80] The need to protect information is not new for SOF organizations, however, if a SOF trust network is to be established, then confidence that operational security measures will be maintained can be viewed as a key element in creating it.[81] While information sharing was well established within various smaller SOF communities such as the Four of Five eyes community, it had not been fully enabled within the wider NATO SOF community. NSHQ needed to break down some of these barriers and if done correctly the NSHQ established network will ensure the expansion of information sharing.[82]

The lack of a dedicated and secured means of communications prevented true collaboration and reduced the likelihood of creating a trust relationship.[83] If NATO SOF is expected to operate in a collaborative manner, then the free flow of information is required to ensure its continued success. For SOF, there comes an additional problem in how to share data not only effectively, but also securely. To remain relevant, SOF must ensure that Tactics, Techniques and Procedures (TTPs), lessons learned, Intelligence, capabilities, organisational structures and future developments are shared. Prior to the creation of the NSHQ, previous interactions between SOF were often sporadic, compartmentalized and conducted over non-

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[80] NATO, AJP-3.5, 1-5.

[81] Claudette Roulo, "McRaven: Success in Human Domain Fundamental to Special Ops," U.S. Department of Defense, American Forces Press Service, Washington, June 5 2013, Last accessed 9 Aug 2013, http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=120219.

[82] *Ibid.*

[83] NATO Special Operations Headquarters, "Biennial Review," 35.

compatible communication systems thereby hindering the ability to share classified data.[84]

The NSHQ quickly ascertained that there was a very large gap in terms of secure communications capability, and that if it could not connect nations adequately and securely, there was little hope of ever exchanging sensitive information and even less that such an enterprise could succeed.[85] While some nations had, through bi-lateral mechanisms, developed tools and established methods of secure information exchange, most still occurred only during face-to-face interactions.[86]

To remedy this problem, the NSHQ chose to leverage an existing system that already linked most if not all NATO nations, along with other partners, allowing the transmission of information up to NATO Secret. The Battlefield Intelligence Collaboration and Exploitation System (BICES), built upon the backbone of the U.S. BICES network, seemed tailor made to meet this need.[87] Able to provide the necessary platform to transmit data securely, connected to most targeted nations, it served as the ideal platform and enabled SOF secure communications. With SOF's heavy reliance on Intelligence, the ability to receive and transmit secure data between nations was a critical step in maximizing the potential of the NATO SOF collaborative network. Not only did it allow for the sharing of sensitive data, it continued to play a

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[84] NATO Special Operations Headquarters, "Biennial Review," 35.
[85] *Ibid.*, 35.
[86] Based on the author's personal experience since 2005 in dealing with Allied SOF.
[87] NATO Special Operations Headquarters, "Biennial Review," 35-36.

key role in keeping ISAF SOF connected in Afghanistan.[88] Without the ability to share data securely, the success encountered by ISAF SOF would not have taken place so quickly.[89]

The SOF network, through BICES, was further expanded and enabled by linking nations with SOF capabilities together through regular Video Teleconferences (VTC), which provided efficient and cost effective means to discuss various topics of importance to the community.[90] All of these steps resulted in an interlinked network of SOF Commanders, operators and relevant stakeholders. Through repetitive NSHQ sponsored training events and conferences, the NATO SOF leadership were finally engaged simultaneously in hopes to better circumscribe their needs and provided the nations with the needed support to grow their own national SOF capabilities.[91]

Through personal engagements, unification of the SOF enterprise and ownership of the SOF problem, the creation of the NSHQ, created a network where trust, understanding and sharing amongst the NATO SOF Allied and Partner nations can flourish and be harnessed for greater effect. This network of Allied and Partner SOF set the conditions for mutual understanding and the confidence that when nations participated in a NATO led operation, their SOF will be properly employed within a collective doctrinal framework that all participated in establishing.

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[88] *Ibid.*, 35.
[89] *Ibid.*, 35.
[90] Based on author's participation in multiple Global SOF VTC and the monthly NATO Partner SOF Forum VTC hosted by the NSHQ.
[91] NATO Special Operations Headquarters, "Biennial Review," 27-33. These conferences engage various SOF staffs of nations, including all SOF Commanders who meet bi-annually to discuss topics of interest for NATO SOF.

Preparing for the next steps

From the disjointed, disconnected and un-synchronized operations by SOF in the Balkans, to the networked, unified C2 of NATO SOF within ISAF SOF and the creation of a constantly expanding network of SOF within NATO, much has been achieved since the Riga Summit. The creation of the NSHQ brought unity to the NATO SOF community, opening lines of communications where none existed. Additionally, it broke down barriers in terms of information sharing and created tangible relationships amongst various SOF nations.

With regular interaction between SOF Commanders, staffs and operators, the various conferences and courses provided, NSHQ enabled the creation of a vast SOF network built upon trust and common understanding.[92] More importantly perhaps it elevated the SOF profile within the NATO Alliance and provided a unified voice to better inform non-SOF commanders and decision makers on the benefits, roles, purposes and capabilities of SOF. All of these efforts provided the necessary platform to raise the confidence of nations that their SOF will not be misemployed. Collectively, NATO SOF is now more prepared than ever to work effectively with a unified vision and purpose.

Through the efforts of the NSHQ, Allied and Partner SOF, and experiential learning and trust developed through the shared risk during operations in Afghanistan,

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[92] *Ibid.*, 27-29.

NATO SOF has proven its mettle and worth.[93] Combined by the policy and doctrinal cornerstone built by NATO SOF, one could argue with confidence that a trust based NATO SOF network, one that is fully networked and enabled is set for the next challenge.

Challenges to securing the provision of SOF to future NATO Operations however will necessitate the need to replicate the SOF C2 capabilities delivered by ISAF SOF HQ. The following chapters will propose a methodology to assure the ability to generate the necessary SOF C2, as well as improving the force generation model for SOF.

[93] Karen Parrish, "Special Operators Depend on Good Partners, Commander Says."

CHAPTER 3 – SOF C2 – SEEKING A SUSTAINABLE MODEL

After over 10 years of operations in Afghanistan, SOF demonstrated their worth when properly employed and given the necessary resources to carry out their tasks.[94] With the creation of ISAF SOF HQ in 2008, the full effects of a unified SOF command for NATO in Afghanistan were realized. SOTGs across the country had greater access than before the creation of ISAF SOF HQ, to critical enablers, intelligence and communications and their efforts were finally being synchronized to achieve unity effort in support of a true SOF campaign plan. This unity of effort also provided better support, than previously possible, to COM ISAF and their conventional counterparts. The benefits of this central SOF C2 structure continue to pay dividends.[95] Nations demonstrated their confidence by providing SOTGs to ISAF SOF vice to OEF or retaining them under purely national command and control.

This chapter will propose a new innovative model that seeks to resolve the crucial issue of assuring the availability of SOF C2 in a timely manner, vice the long five year process required to achieve the effects provided by ISAF SOF HQ. By analysing the anticipated requirements for future operations and the current NATO initiatives to source SOF C2, this model will provide a framework which will ensure that the requisite SOF C2 is prepared and available to meet future challenges. It will

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[94] Based on author's experience as a NSHQ planner working with ISAF SOF HQ since 2011.
[95] *Ibid.*

be argued that the implementation of this proposal would neutralize the most critical hurdle to successful generation of SOF in support of NATO operations.

The availability of readily available SOF C2 is in effect the crux of the issue to generate NATO SOF beyond Afghanistan. As Defence department author and officer, Joseph Mouer articulated in his monograph, "NATO, SOF and the Future of the Alliance," that, "the largest issue facing … [the incorporation of NATO SOF] is not the internal capacity to field tactical SOF units within NATO but rather the capacity to field trained headquarter elements required to command and control those tactical units."[96] He argued that what NATO truly needed was a standing Special Operations Component Command (SOCC), ready to deploy and undertake the C2 responsibilities for SOF in any future NATO Operation.[97] While Joseph Mouer argued for a standing SOCC capability, others, such as Gianluca Cazzaniga, writing on the NATO SOF Transformation Initiative, countered that, "[s]ince SOF is a scarce asset the NATO political bureaucratic process makes it infeasible and unacceptable in terms of lost capabilities and likelihood of timely employment to maintain a standing SOF force under NATO aegis."[98]

Regardless of whether either of these authors is correct in his assessmentss, further analysis of what NATO has expressed as the necessary capabilities in terms of SOF C2 illustrates that the problem is larger than a single SOCC. In this respect it

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[96] Major Joseph Mouer, "NATO, SOF and the Future of the Alliance," 30.
[97] *Ibid.*, 28.
[98] Cazzaniga, Gianluca, "NATO SOF Transformation Initiative: a shift towards unconventional military capabilities," *Military Technology*, Special Issue, Vol. 33, (January 2009): 37.

will be argued that the creation of a standing SOCC, while possibly filling an immediate gap for a singular operation would not resolve the larger issue of meeting NATO's Level of Ambition (LoA). To understand future requirements in terms of SOF C2, a review NATO's LoA is in order. Additionally, an examination of the NATO Defence Planning Process (NDPP) and the Smart Defence (SD) initiatives will be presented to illustrate the current actions being taken by NATO in an attempt and meet NATO's LoA.

Understanding the NATO Level of Ambition

NATO as an alliance aims to ensure its collective security by responding to crises and assuring its collective defence. Within NATO and speaking on behalf of their respective governments, the North Atlantic Council (NAC) is responsible to provide the necessary political guidance to the Alliance in order to meet what it has agreed to as NATO's LoA. As a result of considerable negotiation, taking into account the perspectives of all 28-member states, the NAC articulates what it expects these military forces to achieve in order to ensure its collective defence.[99] Included in this guidance are how many operations NATO should be able to conduct simultaneously.[100] In order to analyse and plan for the required SOF C2 capabilities, one must understand the number of concurrent operations the Alliance wishes to conduct. The latest Strategic Concept, ratified by member nations at the Lisbon

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[99] Based on data from a classified NATO document that outlines the Minimum Capability Requirements (MCR).

[100] *Ibid.*

Summit in 2010, stated that NATO must, "maintain the ability to sustain concurrent major joint operations and several smaller operations for collective defence and crisis response, including at strategic distance."[101] This statement translated into a LoA of two Major Joint Operations (MJO) and six Small Joint Operations (SJO) conducted at the same time.

In terms of SOF C2, the LoA translates into a necessity to develop and have at NATO's disposal at least eight scalable SOCC constructs concurrently. Thus, though a single standing SOCC would allow for a rapid response to an emergent threat, it would not fulfil the desired LoA prescribed by the NAC.

At first glance this LoA may appear overly ambitious, yet reality is that while NATO continued to be heavily engaged in an MJO in Afghanistan, the Alliance has not shied away from other operations, concurrently conducting operations in Kosovo, Bosnia, Operation Ocean Shield off the coast of Somalia, Operation Active Endeavour and Operation Unified Protector over Libya. Although SOF involvement was not required in all of these operations, the potential for future participation remains.

Prudent planning suggests that the requisite SOF C2 capabilities to support the full LoA must be developed and placed at the disposal of NATO if required. This conclusion could lead to a simple solution to generate eight standing SOCC and assign this task to specific nations with larger SOF capabilities and numbers. This solution

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[101] North Atlantic Treaty Organization, *Active Engagement, Modern Defence: Strategic Concept for the Defence and Security of the Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization*, (Brussels: NATO, 2010), 15.

however does not take into account the likelihood that one or more of these nations, while being politically supportive, may not wish to or be able to assign forces to a certain NATO Operation. Fulbright Fellow and NATO specialist Stanley Sloan, in "Enlarging Engagement – Crisis response" purported that, not all allies have the same philosophy on deployability, where, "France and United Kingdom have force projection philosophies and global strategic perspectives. But Germany's concepts and perspectives will continue to inhibit the Federal Republic's military role beyond its borders."[102] These varying philosophies have created the very real possibility that when the time comes, the nation tasked to provide a SOCC could refuse to participate as demonstrated during Operation UNIFIED PROTECTOR (OUP) over Libya.[103] With insufficient depth or a sustainable model to generate SOF C2, NATO could be left without the necessary capabilities to execute certain portions of assigned missions.

NATO Defence Planning Process (NDPP)

In an attempt to identify and if necessary rectify the lack of capabilities across the Alliance, NATO instituted the NATO Defence Planning Process (NDPP). The NDPP's primary function is to produce an inventory of available and developing capabilities for future missions that when required the Alliance can draw upon to meet its LoA.[104] The fact that non-Article 5 missions are discretionary necessitated the

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[102] Sloan, Stanley R., "Examining Enlargement – Crisis Response," *NATO Review*, 1 March 2002, http://www.nato.int/docu/review/2002/Examining-Enlargment/Crisis-response/EN/index.htm.

[103] Based on author's participation in OUP planning for SOF in 2011. While NATO reached consensus to approve Operation Unified Protector, nations such as Germany decided to not actively participate.

establishment of the NDPP to ensure that there would be sufficient forces available in the NATO inventory should one or more nations decide not to participate. [105]

One of the governing premises in the NDPP revolves around the principle of burden sharing; meaning that no single nation should carry an unjustified or too large a burden in the type and quantity of forces it must keep available to support NATO operations.[106] To achieve the principle of burden sharing requires a comprehensive study of existing and developing capabilities within each nation's inventory. This study serves to identify what is holistically available across the member states and divide the burden amongst these. In principle the NDPP should, as Romanian defence specialist Florian Ciocan expressed, "facilitate the timely identification, development and delivery of required forces and capabilities that are interoperable and adequately prepared, equipped, trained and supported to undertake the Alliance's full spectrum of missions."[107]

While Florian Ciocan expressed hope that the NDPP would provide "timely identification"[108] of the requisite capabilities, the reality is that the NDPP is neither simple, nor is it rapid. This five step, four year, process, as depicted in Figure 3.1,

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[104] North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "The NATO Defence Planning Process," Last accessed 18 May 2012, http://www nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_49202.htm.

[105] Florian Ciocan, "Perspectives on Interoperability Integration with NATO Defense Planning Process," *Journal of Defense Resources Management*, No. 2 (2) (2011): 57.

[106] North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "The NATO Defence Planning Process."

[107] Florian Ciocan, "Perspectives on Interoperability integration with NATO Defense Planning Process," 54.

[108] Ibid., 54.

requires the detailed analysis of the development and availability of the capabilities of every nation within NATO. The responsibility for the NDPP resides within NATO's International Staff (IS), supported by Allied Command Transformation (ACT).

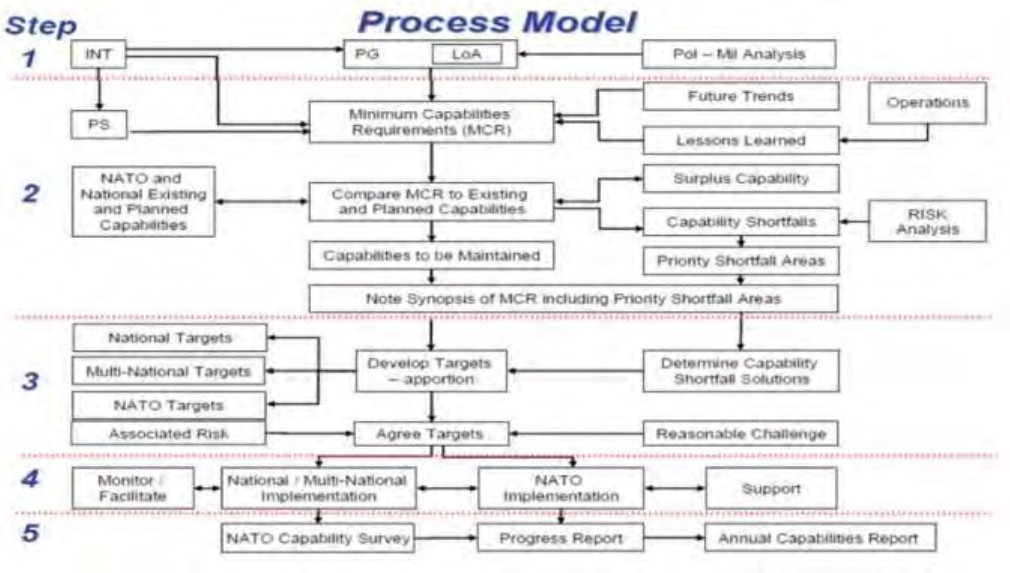

Figure 3.1. The NATO Defence Planning Process.[109]

The five steps of the NDPP include:

- Step 1 – Establish Political Guidance
- Step 2 – Determine Requirements
- Step 3 – Apportion requirements and set targets
- Step 4 – Facilitate implementation
- Step 5 – Review Results[110]

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[109] Lieutenant-Colonel Gerry Conrad, "ACT and NATO Defence Planning Process: A Driver for Transformation," Last accessed 13 June 2013, http://www.act nato.int/transformer-2012-01/article-25.

Step 1 articulates the Political Guidance and defines NATO's LoA of two MJOs and 6 SJOs. This Political Guidance, reviewed at least every four years, stems from the most current Strategic Concept agreed upon by the Alliance. This guidance forms the foundation for the remainder of the process.

In Step 2 a thorough analysis is conducted to determine the actual requirements, and produce the Minimum Capability Requirements (MCR), to fulfil this LoA. The actions in Step 2 are therefore a critical aspect of this process.[111] The ability to meet the MCR is subsequently determined through the analysis of the current and planned inventories that nations provided which outline their current and developing capabilities inclusive of SOF. The results are then compared to the MCR, to determine whether sufficient capabilities are available to meet the LoA, identify gaps and provide an analysis of the risk were gaps exist.[112]

During Step 3 force planners from the IS, through statistical analysis of the capabilities reported in country inventories, apportion the requirements and set country specific targets to seek the desired level of burden sharing. These targets, once assigned, are assessed by nations who either agree or disagree with the assigned targets. Where there are disagreements with the assigned targets, and the IS will either

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[110] Florian Ciocan, "Perspectives on Interoperability integration with NATO Defense Planning Process," 60.

[111] NATO Special Operations Headquarters J5 NDPP, discussion with author.

[112] The MCR is a NATO classified document from which this info has been extracted by the author.

drop the assigned target or maintain them based upon the reasoning provided by the concerned nation. In the case of the former, the IS will be required to assess the risk associated with the inability of a nation to meet its assigned targets and develop mitigating strategies to fill the ensuing gap. [113]

Step 4 seeks to assist with the implementation of meeting targets and capability development if a nation is still in the process of developing a specific capability. This support will include the access to NATO Common Funding to those targets that are NATO developed capabilities, an example of which is the AWACs.

Finally, in Step 5, the review of the capabilities required versus the capabilities available, is conducted and the results presented to the NAC, with the associated risks where deficiencies in capabilities have been identified. Nations are requested to complete a Capability Survey, which serves to confirm whether targets are being met and form the basis for the next iteration of the NDPP as the four year cycle begins anew.

This entire process leads to the end state goal of the NDPP, that sets out to, "facilitate the timely identification, development an delivery of the necessary range of forces, as well as associated military and non-military capabilities, to undertake the

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[113] Based on author's participation in NATO HQ committee meetings relating to the NDPP.

Alliance's full spectrum of mission."[114] It is based upon this process that NATO identifies the requisite capabilities for SOF C2 to meet the LoA, the results of which will be described hereunder.

SOCC Framework Minus

NATO developed two differing capabilities in terms of SOF C2 to meet the different requirements of scale and capabilities between a MJO and a SJO. Within the construct of a MJO, the need is for what is known as a SOCC Framework headquarters.[115] While specific details are classified, these can be describe these as capabilities provided by a single framework nation that include the full Headquarter staff along with the necessary Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) assets, the Special Operations Air mobility capabilities, Intelligence Cell, Logistics and the necessary Communication Information Systems (CIS) capabilities.[116] Simply put, the expectation is that a single nation will provide the entire C2 capability, as well as the critical enablers to support numerous SOTGs in the conduct of their operations and thus support the Joint Force Command accordingly.

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[114] Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe, "NATO Defence Planning Process (NDPP) – Overview," (SHAPE: CPP-CAM-FCR, Version 2, February 2011).

[115] It should be noted however, that the current SOCC in Afghanistan is actually a multi-national entity with rotating leadership of ISAF SOF between the UK and Australia. With no nation volunteering to fully deploy a SOCC to provide this capability, ISAF SOF was slow in standing up.

[116] John Krott, Frank Morales and William Livingston, "Development of a Rapidly Deployable Special Operations Component Command (SOCC) Core Concept for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Special Operations Headquarters (NSHQ)," 6.

The creation of a SOCC Framework requires a significant investment in terms of equipment, staff, training and resources. Amongst the 26 NATO Allied SOF capable nations, only six nations can currently muster all of these requirements, namely the U.S., UK, Italy, France, Spain, and Turkey, with Poland set to be certified as a SOCC Framework nation in 2014.[117] Should Poland succeed in validating its status as a SOCC Framework nation, then it could be argued that the baseline requirements for NATO's LoA have been met, with sufficient countries able to provide the requisite SOF C2. This conclusion, however, would not fully take into consideration the principles of burden sharing or guarantee that the required assets would be available were one of these nations to decide not to participate in a given mission due to national political decisions.

Therefore in order to meet NATO's LoA, and with the understanding that SJOs would likely not require the full complement of capabilities provided by a SOCC Framework, a new SOCC model was created, known as the SOCC Framework Minus (SOCC (-)).[118] This new capability, created to allow smaller nations who do not aspire or have the resources to develop a full SOCC Framework capability, would theoretically provide for greater availability of SOF C2 to meet the LoA.

This scaled down version of a SOCC, requires the targeted nation to generate the full range, or portions thereof, of staff and ability to C2 up to six SOTGs.[119] While

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[117] Polish SOF Senior National Representative, discussion with author June 2013.
[118] Based on author's review of classified documents relating to the topic.

the central HQ must be capable of controlling the necessary enablers, the nation is not required to generate them. Rather they can rely on other nations to provide the requisite ISR, SOF aviation, etc.[120] This scaled-down model meant that smaller nations were more likely able to generate a SOF C2 node, share the burden across the Alliance and provide the necessary capabilities to meet the LoA.

As previously mentioned, nations are required to identify the full inventory of their military forces and account for any developing capabilities with projected dates when these will come into service.[121] This exercise is simple enough when discussing capabilities such as naval frigates, troop lift aircraft, and infantry battalions. Significantly more complex however is identifying true C2 capabilities for SOF. Most nations have not developed SOF C2 capabilities able to C2 multiple SOTGs in multinational operations.[122] The requirements in terms of staff, equipment and especially CIS capabilities make the development of such assets cost and resource prohibitive.

Without divulging specific classified data, the targets set for nations vary from as low as 10% of a SOCC (-) to a full SOCC Framework and one or more SOCC (-).

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[119] An SOTG, or Special Operations Task Group, is comprised of two or more Special Operations Task Units, normally comprised of SOF elements from a single nation and able to conduct SOF tasks such as Military Assistance, Direct Action or Special Reconnaissance.

[120] This model reflects in large part the current structure of ISAF SOF with multiple nations providing the staff and critical enablers vice a single nation.

[121] Lieutenant-Colonel Gerry Conrad, "ACT and NATO Defence Planning Process: A Driver for Transformation," Last accessed 13 June 2013, http://www.act nato.int/transformer-2012-01/article-25.

[122] NATO Special Operations Headquarters, based on author's discussions.

This wide target variance creates minor burdens on some, while others shoulder a much larger share. With many fractions of a SOCC (-) set as targets, what is missing is how to merge these into a cohesive SOF C2 element. These multiple fractions of a SOCC (-) did not seem like an insurmountable obstacle to NDPP planners, largely based on purely mathematical calculations. The conclusion reached was that a nation with a target of 50% of SOCC (-) could 'lead' a multi-national SOCC (-) with five other nations with targets set at 10%.[123] It does however pose some important challenges, including the designation of a lead nation, the determination of the CIS requirements, the costs associated with training, maintenance and the selection of how nations are grouped, to name but a few. The NDPP is not sufficiently robust to resolve these issues given that all initial steps within the NDPP are conducted separately with individual nations.

Problems with the NDPP

The development of SOF C2 within the confines of the NDPP process has highlighted significant hurdles in bridging the gap from the conceptual through to delivery of the requisite SOF C2 to meet he LoA. Beyond the simple mathematical accounting of available capabilities, there is a requirement for a dialogue to not only validate the need, but also create a structure that will lessen the burden of meeting them. Few nations are able or willing to generate a capability for use solely in a

[123] NATO Special Operations Headquarters J5 NDPP, discussion with author.

NATO context.[124] Nations are more likely to expend resources and develop new capabilities if these assets can be used in support of national interests and not strictly bound by NATO centric employment guidelines.

Taking into consideration current financial constraints, the burden imposed by the NDPP and likelihood that collectively nations will not be able to generate the SOCCs assessed as necessary, a more sustainable model is required. In order to meet the LoA, the NATO International Staff responsible for the NDPP assessed that the ability to generate six SOCC Framework and 16 SOCC Minus SOF C2 elements was required to ensure availability.[125] This placed the burden on the 26 NATO SOF nations to develop 22 SOCCs. The targets set by the NDPP called for the creation of three times the number of SOCC Framework HQs and nearly three times the number of SOCC (-). While the building of a larger pool of available SOCC (-) to compensate when nations chose not to participate in a given operation may seem prudent, the model places a very large, and likely unachievable, burden on some nations.

In an attempt to reduce the burden, NATO launched another initiative which seeks to combine efforts of two or more nations to collaborate together in developing certain capabilities. This project, known as Smart Defence (SD), "is a new way of thinking about generating the modern defence capabilities the Alliance needs for the

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[124] Mark Joyce, "Reforming NATO Force Generation: Progress, Problems and Outstanding Challenges," *A RUSI Report*, (London: Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies, February 2010), 8.

[125] NATO Special Operations Headquarters J5 NDPP, discussion with author.

coming decade and beyond."[126] Recognizing that with shrinking budgets, nations have constantly sought ways to save and reduce funding in areas of lesser priority.[127] If nations shed investment in capabilities, the ability to meet the LoA prescribed within NDPP will likely be reduced, including the development of SOF C2. To counter this potential reduction in capability development, Smart Defence was implemented with a focus on, "those capabilities which NATO needs most, … and look for multinational solutions to shared problems. NATO can act as intermediary, helping the nations to establish what they can do together at lower cost, more efficiently and with less risk."[128] It sought to develop capabilities within smaller clusters of nations. [129] These joint ventures could serve many functions, such as providing a capability to be used by the participating nations, including outside of a NATO led operation or activity. The potential output would allow nations to, "access to capabilities which they could not afford individually, and achieve economies of scale."[130]

SD was designed to focus on critical capabilities and, while SOF C2 was not specifically identified by NATO as a critical capability within this framework, the SOF C2 shortfalls could arguably be rectified by utilising the principles of SD.[131] While SD attempts to find true multi-lateral solutions, the NDPP continues to be

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[126] North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "Smart Defence," Last updated 26 April 2012, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/78125.htm.

[127] *Ibid*.

[128] *Ibid.*

[129] Camille Grand, "Smart Defense," in *Smart Defense and the Future of NATO – Can the Alliance Meet the Challenges for the Twenty-First Century: Conference Report and Expert Papers*, co-authored by Dr. Lisa Aronsson and Dr. Molly O'Donnell, (Chicago: March 28-30 2012), 4.

[130] North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "Smart Defence."

[131] *Ibid.*

mostly stove-piped in the designation of capability targets without any real synchronization between countries and arguably overly ambitious in terms of the number of SOCCs required.[132] While nations have had capability targets assigned, these two initiatives have yet to provide concrete and sustainable solutions for the availability of SOF C2. The question remains as to how NATO can meet the needs of SOF C2 ensuring continued support from nations in deploying their SOF to NATO operations.

The NSHQ SOCC Core

In attempting to find innovative solutions to the aforementioned capability gaps, a partial solution might be found in the NSHQ as a potential SOCC Minus provider. The initial work of the NSHQ aimed to establish an overarching framework for a collaborative approach enabling NATO SOF to operate closer together and supported the development of key capabilities in terms of a secure data network as well as the fusion and access to intelligence in Afghanistan.[133] It also conceptualized and put in place a myriad of training options to better enable deployed Task Groups.

Having demonstrated its immediate value, the NSHQ was given a supplemental task in terms of fielding a deployable C2 capability.[134] In September of 2009, following the Strasbourg Summit, the NSCC was given the mandate to

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[132] Based on the author's observations and discussions with NATO HQ staff.
[133] NATO Special Operations Headquarters, "Biennial Review," 47.
[134] Claudio Bisogniero, "Reorganization of the NATO Special Operations Coordination Centre (NSCC) as the NATO Special Operations Headquarters (NSHQ)."

transform itself into the NATO SOF Headquarters.[135] Not reflecting simply a name change, the NSHQ was charged with developing the nucleus of a deployable SOCC known as a SOCC Core. The SOCC Core was mandated to procure the necessary equipment and train the requisite staff in order to provide a deployable C2 capability ready to deploy on short notice should SACEUR call upon it. [136] Figure 3.2 illustrates the functional requirements and components of this SOCC Core.

To meet this new task the NSHQ increased its manning levels to establish a core staff, including the Commander. The NSHQ was given until June 2013 to achieve an Initial Operational Capability (IOC) and reach Full Operational Capability by the summer of 2014.[137] The SOCC Core provided SACEUR with another option in terms of SOF C2 should the need arise, but was not designed to replace or reduce the need for nations to develop SOCC capabilities to support the NATO Response Force (NRF). [138]

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[135] *Ibid.*
[136] NATO Special Operations Headquarters, "Biennial Review," 46.
[137] *Ibid.*, 46.
[138] *Ibid.*, 46.

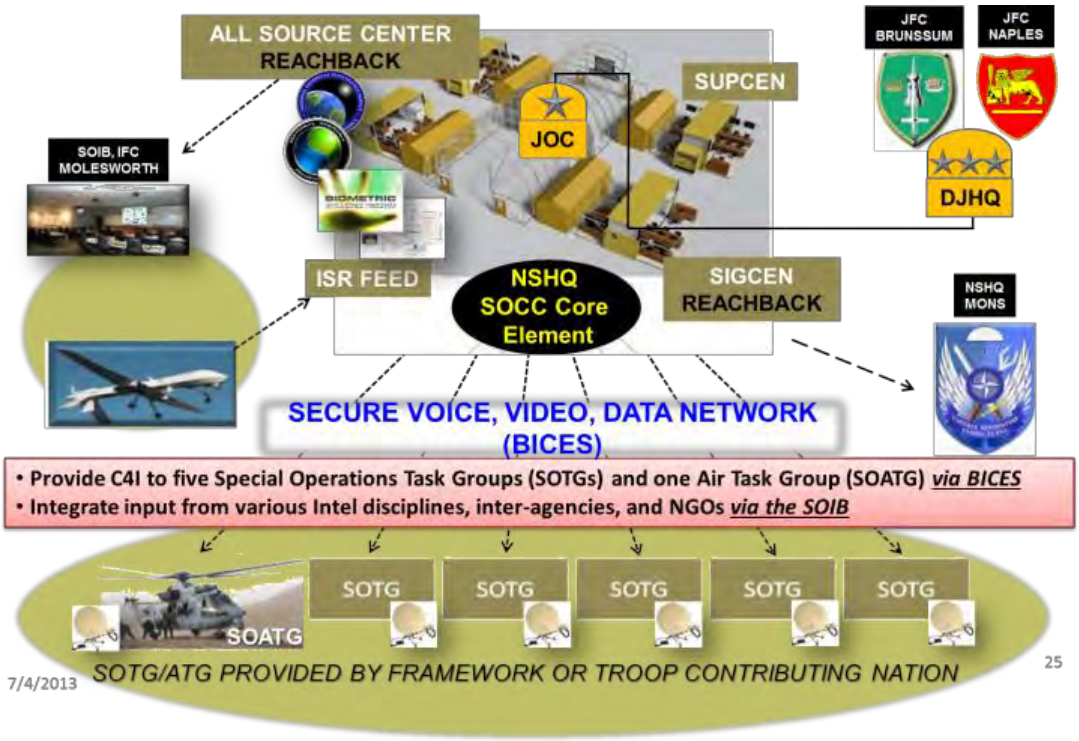

Figure 3.2. SOCC Core Diagram[139]

With the rapid development of the SOCC Core, the NSHQ mapped out the training requirements across the functional areas, expanded its role in NATO exercises as gateways towards FOC, developed deployment mechanisms and sourced the requisite equipment and CIS.[140] This evolving model remains poised to provide a model for nations to follow in developing their own SOCC or SOCC (-). With in-house expertise, coupled with practical experience and validation of the equipment that NSHQ has provided to ISAF SOF, the NSHQ is well positioned to take on a leadership role in enabling nations working towards their targets as set by the NDPP.

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[139] NATO Special Operations Headquarters, Unpublished Briefing, 2013.
[140] *Ibid.*, 46.

Multi-national SOF C2 – a proposed solution

The following section will present a comprehensive model, built upon the foundations and strengths of the established NATO Allied and Partner SOF Collaborative Network, to develop the necessary SOF C2 capabilities required to meet the LoA. This model will further seek to reduce the number of SOCCs required by the NDPP to a more realistic and sustainable level. In doing so, this proposal will provide sustainable options for the generation SOF C2 for future NATO operations and consequently ensure that nations continue to assign their SOF under the NATO flag.

The following proposal, which should be led and synchronized by the NSHQ, seeks to leverage the resilient and trust based network, make full use of the lessons learned in standing up the SOCC Core and use the principles of SD in order to create a cohesive action plan to generate SOF C2. As discussed in Chapter 2, a key component to success of SOF in a multinational environment is the confidence and relationships built within the network. Meanwhile, the NDPP provides a purely mathematical and statistical analysis of capabilities required without factoring the human dimension required to create lasting and sustainable SOF C2 capabilities. With few nations having the ambition or the requisite resources to create a SOCC or SOCC (-) unilaterally, any attempt to force or assign a target of this magnitude to a nation is likely to face strong political resistance. Utilizing the principles of SD, this proposal

seeks to create multinational SOCC (-) capabilities that are cost effective, sustainable and available.

Changing the paradigm and combining the principles of SD has the potential to provide a tangible solution to this issue. This model is based upon the shared burden that can be achieved by forming groupings of three or four likeminded nations, regionally focused and with pre-existing relationships. Through their combined efforts to develop portions of the SOCC (-) capability the conditions will be set to provide NATO with the capabilities it needs all the while offering nations a much reduced, yet achievable target. This reduction will be achieved by grouped nations sharing the lead through a well-defined rotation plan, equal investment in terms of personnel, equipment, life-cycle management, and funding,

One of the key aspects of this proposal is to create appropriate groupings of nations. Given the importance of trust, similar national interests and habitual relationships, the groupings should seek to combine pre-existing natural relationships. By soliciting nations with similar national interests or regionally focused this would further increase the likelihood of cooperation, countries such as Canada, Denmark, Belgium and the Netherlands, being one example. In doing so, nations would be more likely to participate in developing these capabilities not only for NATO, but also for use in non-NATO multinational operations in support of these common interests. Table 1 illustrates potential groupings of nations that could be responsible to develop multi-national SOCC (-).

Table 1: Possible groupings of nations to form multinational SOCC (-).[141]

SOCC (-) A	SOCC (-) B	SOCC (-) C	SOCC (-) D	SOCC (-) E	SOCC (-) F
Estonia	Canada	Czech Republic	Bulgaria	Hungary	Finland
Latvia	Denmark	Slovakia	Romania	Slovenia	Sweden
Lithuania	Netherlands	Portugal	Greece	Croatia	Austria
Norway	Belgium	Poland	Albania	Germany	Switzerland

The key advantage of this model is not only the coordinated shared burden amongst all the participating nations, but more importantly the reduced number of SOCCs called for by the NDPP, all the while maintaining a higher level of flexibility. This concept primarily calls for the non-SOCC Framework nations working collaboratively to create a full complement of five SOCC (-). The sixth SOCC (-) could potentially be sourced with the additional participation of all or some of the seven non-NATO Nations (NNN) partners: Sweden, Finland, Austria, Australia, Ireland, Switzerland and New Zealand, the participation of some of the SOCC Framework nations or the use of the NSHQ SOCC Core. The proposal calls for a net reduction of ten SOCC (-), while producing the requisite capabilities to realistically meet the LoA of six simultaneous SJOs.

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[141] Table created by author. The groupings of nations, while regionally focused are illustrative only as there may be national interests that would preclude certain nations from joining together in these groupings.

If properly synchronized the benefits this model would lead to greater interoperability, commonality of equipment, training and reduced resource requirements. This framework may suggest that a multinational approach could be more cumbersome, slow and fraught with political negotiations, vice the unity of effort that could be achieved if a single nation developed its own SOCC (-) capability. Certainly, any joint venture would need to be carefully crafted to ensure that the needs of individual nations are taken into account through the elaboration of detailed Memorandum of Understanding and Technical Agreements.

As opposed to the NDPP, the lead for a multinational SOCC (-) would rotate using an annual rotation cycle, as depicted at Figure 3.3, thereby reducing the continual burden on a single nation to constantly be responsible to train, equip and lead the SOCC (-). The lead nation, during its tenure, would be assigned responsibility for providing the key command staff, deployment, planning and synchronization of efforts should it be called upon to deploy on operations or participate in a multinational or NATO exercise. In order to best prepare the next lead nation, the rotation cycle would seek opportunities to certify the incoming lead staff, while also placing staff in key areas to prepare them for the subsequent year. The third nation in line would focus on training future staff, while the final one could be in a supporting role, focused on providing the lower level functions.

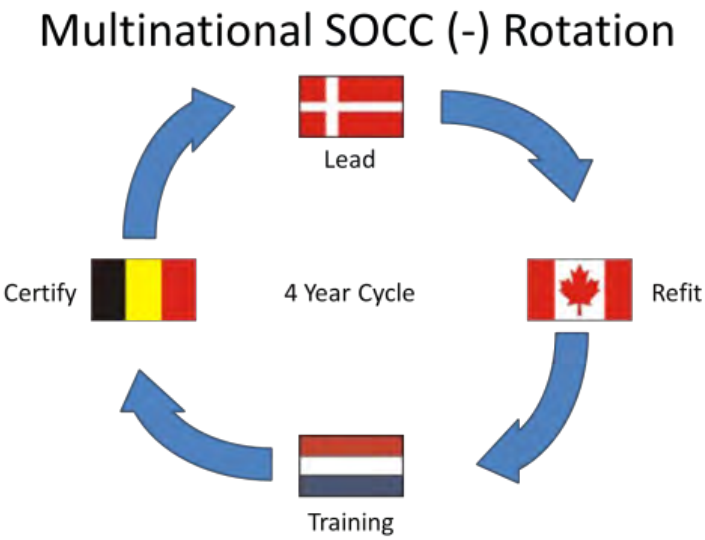

Figure 3.3: Multinational SOCC (-) Rotation Model[142]

Using this model, Figure 3.4, illustrates an example of a possible staff construct with Denmark being the lead nation for the given cycle. Rotations of staff from each nation would relieve pressures during subsequent years with regards to senior staff officers once they move from the lead nation to the support or refit stage of the cycle. For example, in the following year Belgium would provide the Commander, the Deputy J3 or J5 could become the J3, etc.

[142] Created by author.

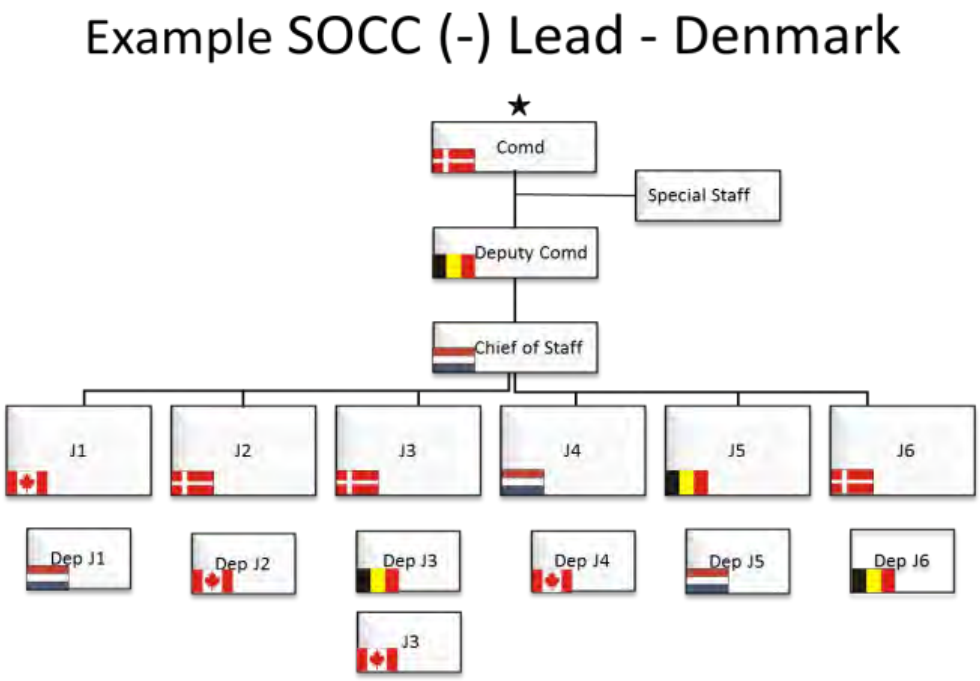

Figure 3.4 – Multinational SOCC Minus – Denmark Lead[143]

Figure 3.5 below demonstrate the shift between one lead nation and another other, while Figure 3.6 shows the full four year rotation. The consistency of the rotation of staff functions allows for greater burden sharing, depth and use of experience from all nations. The shifting of responsibility of staff positions will further expose a greater number of personnel from other nations, thereby expanding the SOF network exponentially and creating greater levels trust amongst participating nations.

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[143] This construct, created by the author, serves to illustrate the key positions filled by the lead nation during the rotation cycle. Note that in this model, the nation providing the Commander is responsible for providing the branch heads for the J2, J3 and J6 directorates. The purpose being to better synchronize operations, intelligence and communications functions.

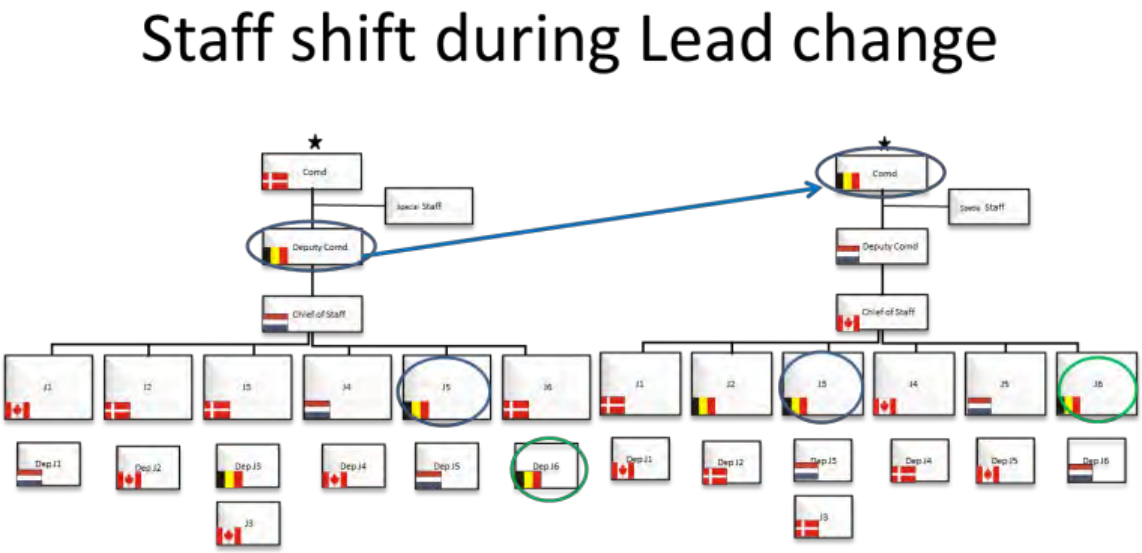

Figure 3.5: Command and key position rotation model.[144]

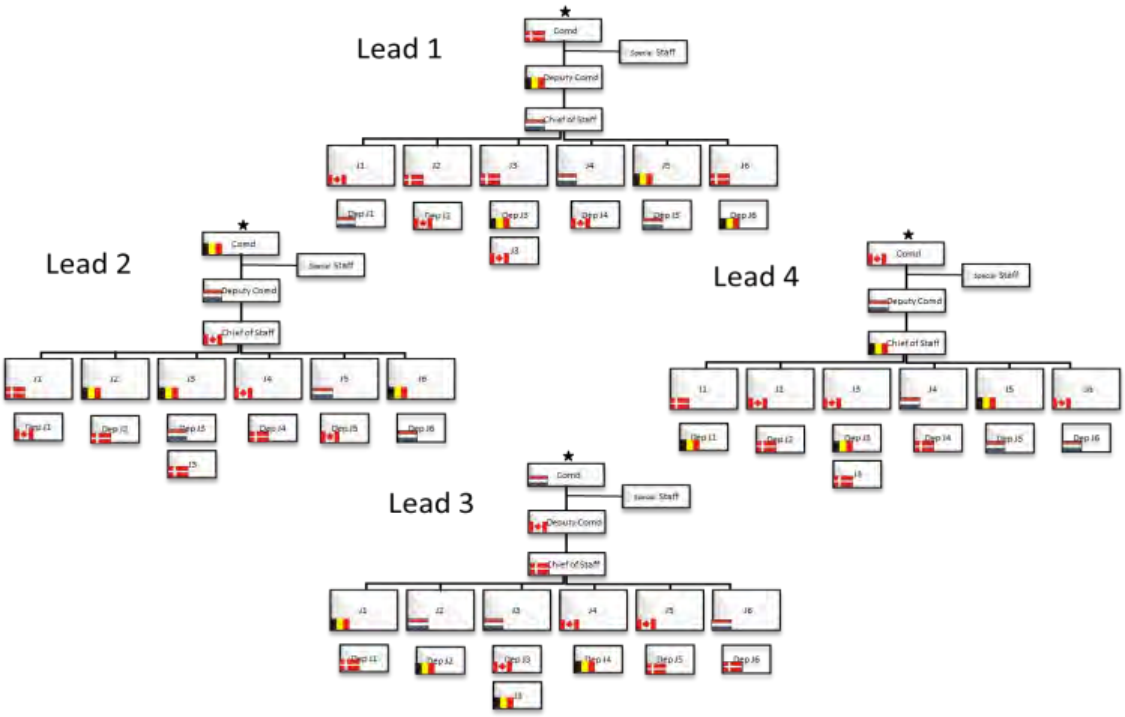

Figure 3.6: Rotation of positions within multinational SOCC (-)[145]

[144] Created by author.
[145] Created by author.

Additional benefits include the ability to utilize this capability, upon agreement of the contributing partners, for missions other than NATO operations. Should a nation seek to conduct operations in a non-NATO environment as part of another multinational force or coalition, then this SOCC (-) could be dispatched to provide the requisite C2 for multiple and multinational SOTGs.

One need only look at recent examples in the Sahel, Libya and Lebanon, to see how multiple nations employed their SOF under national control, all operating in close proximity but with no central C2 node to synchronize, share intelligence, coordinate and provide critical and sparse assets such as ISR. This reality led to multiple nodes of liaison elements being established and delays in the synchronization of operations.[146]

To succeed, it is proposed that the NSHQ provide the oversight and become the hub for synchronizing the development of these multinational SOCC (-). The NSHQ has developed the expertise in staff training, material acquisition and network management required to successfully spearhead this concept. With representation of every Allied SOF nation resident within the NSHQ, coupled with its proven ability to manage complex multinational projects, the NSHQ is ideally suited for this task.

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[146] Based upon the observations and involvement of the author in assisting with these efforts.

In order to secure support for this concept, nations must also view it as value added, not only in terms of personnel, but also in terms of cost savings. To this effect, the procurement of the necessary identical communications equipment, Mobile Equipment Containerized Configuration (MECC) shelters, and other required assets, could be secured through existing contracts. The NSHQ could seek to leverage existing contracts, used by the NSHQ to purchase this equipment in support to ISAF SOF and the development of the SOCC Core to rapidly acquire the necessary equipment.[147] Based on this methodology, nations would benefit from natural savings through scales of purchasing, commonality and resident expertise on how to operationalize this equipment within the NSHQ.

To reduce the necessity for every nation to develop and increase their support structure, the aforementioned equipment would be centralized and maintained by the NSHQ, resulting in deployable C2 nodes at reduced costs. New capabilities require the receipt, maintenance and continual upgrading of equipment. This necessitates increased support staff, such as communications specialists, maintenance, logisticians, etc. Rather than each nation increasing their own internal support staff and duplicating effort, participating nations would cost share the provision of support provided by the NSHQ to store and maintain this equipment. By pooling equipment in a central location, the net amount of increased support staff required by the NSHQ would be much reduced and provides a net savings for nations.

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[147] NATO Special Operations Headquarters, "Biennial Review," 36-37.

Additional benefits of centrally housing the SOCC (-) equipment include the access to the resident expertise within the NSHQ in terms of training and education, exercise and validation activities. The NSHQ would in effect, create a battle lab where all nations would train their SOCC (-) staffs, reap the benefits from various multinational SOCC (-) training iterations and apply these lessons to NSHQ NSTEP courses. The need for multinational SOCC (-) to plan and conduct exercises would be much reduced with the NSHQ providing the requisite training environment.

With the use of a common doctrinal foundation, common equipment and structure for all SOCC (-), this proposal has the potential to produce a multitude of trained, certified and competent staffs that are truly interoperable. This commonality of training would not only prepare each individual SOCC (-), but also provide a greater level of flexibility and depth of capability should one or more of the contributing nations in a SOCC (-) decide not to participate in a given NATO operation.

The model proposed addresses many, if not all, of the impediments to the availability of SOF C2 for future operations. The shared burden of creating the necessary SOF C2 reduces the overall required resources, reduces the net number of SOCC (-) required within the NDPP model and makes full use of the SOF network enabled by the NSHQ. If all SOCC (-) are developed following a proven framework, nations will be provided with the appropriate level of confidence that any of these

SOCC (-) can perform the necessary C2 functions, and in turn elevate the likelihood that they are willing to provide forces to these SOCC (-).

This chapter presented the various processes that NATO has developed to source the requisite capabilities for future operations. Yet, the NDPP and other initiatives have not yet proven their ability to deliver the necessary resources to meet the LoA. In proposing a new concept that is built on the strengths of the NATO Allied and Partner SOF Network, the shared trust from years of operating together under ISAF SOF, and taking into considerations current fiscal realities, it is argued that this initiative has the very real potential to develop and secure the necessary capabilities that are not only available but also sustainable.

CHAPTER 4 – NATO FORCE GENERATION – LOOKING FOR SUSTAINABILITY

NATO Force Generation

This chapter will argue that the NSHQ's role should be expanded to provide greater stewardship of the SOF Force Generation (FG) process in order to provide more responsive and adapted FG mechanisms to support operations, whereby the likelihood that nations provide SOF to NATO operations is increased. This chapter will focus on the process by which NATO generates forces for new or on-going operations, its shortcomings as they relate to SOF and propose amendments to better enable the FG of SOF.

To better understand how the FG process could be adapted for SOF, an overview of the current FG process utilized for operations and the NRF will be examined. As in many NATO processes, the model utilized by SHAPE planners to generate forces for operations is not simple, nor is it rapid. The need to coordinate and source from 28 nations requires constant effort, negotiation and detailed analysis.[148] Leading this process comes under the responsibility of Deputy SACEUR (DSACEUR) on behalf of SACEUR for all operations.[149]

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[148] As previously identified, NATO is comprised of 28 member states; however, only 26 of these nations have SOF.

[149] Mark Joyce, "Reforming NATO Force Generation: Progress, Problems and Outstanding Challenges," 23.

The start point for any FG emanates from the development of an Operational Plan (OPLAN). This OPLAN provides the size, structure and composition of capabilities required to fulfil the assigned mission. The development of the OPLAN is a result of analysis from the political guidance received from the North Atlantic Council (NAC) in the form of a NAC Initiating Directive (NID). The NID serves to guide military planners at SHAPE to develop a Concept of Operations (CONOPS), which translates the political guidance into professional military advice on how to achieve the political goals provided. This CONOPS, once approved by the NAC, provides SHAPE with the necessary authorities to refine their planning and develop an OPLAN. Finally, the NAC will review the proposed OPLAN and approve it, allowing for the actual sourcing of forces to execute the OPLAN.

In order to support the OPLAN, planners produce a Combined Joint Statement of Requirements (CJSOR) and a Crisis Establishment (CE). The CJSOR identifies the necessary capabilities to support the OPLAN, such as a mechanized infantry battle group, strategic airlift or a SOTG.[150] The CE serves to source individuals to staff and sustain the various HQs in theatre, such as ISAF SOF HQ. In the CE, nations target specific positions and submit bids, thereby committing to fill those where their bid was successful.

To assist force planners in sourcing the forces necessary to fill the CJSOR, data is drawn from the force management database. This database draws information

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[150] Unknown, "Report on the Progress and Toward Security and Stability in Afghanistan," *Report to Congress*, (Washington: November 2010), 20.

from the results of national capability surveys as part of NDPP where nations provided their inventory of forces and those that could be made available to NATO operations. SHAPE planners rely on this data to seek out the capabilities required based on the CJSOR and determine which nations have been apportioned these capabilities. This analysis serves to aid in targeting nations and solicit commitment for these capabilities.

At first glance, this process seems quite straightforward, however several challenges present themselves. These challenges include the ability of the force planners to fully understand what the requirements are, what forces are available and how to maintain burden sharing. Reviewing the capabilities available across 28 nations is not a simple task. Marc Joyce, the Americas Fellow with the Royal United Services Institute, wrote that, "[f]orce generation became mired in a series of force balancing discussions and unfilled [CJSORs], in which the force generators at SHAPE lacked a clear understanding of what forces and capabilities were, even in theory, available to them."[151] The reliance on a database of forces does not provide the fidelity required for force planners to ascertain what capabilities are realistically available.

Additionally, even if force planners were able ascertain and understand the capabilities required and available in principle, there is no guarantee that nations will

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[151] Mark Joyce, "Reforming NATO Force Generation: Progress, Problems and Outstanding Challenges," 18.

provide these.[152] In a time of increased economic pressures and nations weary of long protracted conflicts such as Afghanistan, it very likely that the FG for NATO will remain the Achilles heel.[153] Conversely one could argue that with the continued expansion of the NATO Alliance the sourcing of required capabilities and forces should have become less onerous with more nations sharing the burden. The growth of NATO also comes with a greater risk of not achieving consensus.[154] Further exacerbating the problem is that nations may simply not deploy forces they may have 'committed' or these same forces may already be committed elsewhere as nations tend to keep multi-task units on high readiness for coalitions operations.[155]

The Global Force Generation Conference

The aforementioned issue of understanding availability based on the review of database information, led to a more hands on approach. The development of an annual conference serves to confirm directly with nations their ability to provide capabilities for on-going operations and the NRF roster. [156] The Global Force Generation Conference (GFGC) was created in 2004 to resolve a pressing issue of generating forces for ISAF, which at this point was lacking in terms of key

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[152] Holger Pfeiffer, "Defence and Force Planning in Historical Perspective: NATO as a Case Study," *Baltic Security & Defence Review*, Volume 10, (2008): 120.

[153] Lieutenant Colonel Steve Beckman, "From Assumption to Expansion: Planning and Executing NATO's First Year in Afghanistan at the Strategic Level," (USAWC Strategy Research Paper, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, 18 Mar 2005), 10

[154] Mark Joyce, "Reforming NATO Force Generation: Progress, Problems and Outstanding Challenges," 19.

[155] *Ibid.*, 21.

[156] Robert Bell, "NATO's continuing transformation – Sisyphus and the NRF," *NATO Review*, Last accessed 9 March 2013, www nato.int/docu/review/2006/NATO-Transformation/Sisyphus_NRF/EN/index.htm.

capabilities such as helicopters.[157] The GFGC became the forum in which SHAPE presents force requirements and nations provide visibility on what is actually available or otherwise committed elsewhere.[158] While a single GFGC is held annually, the FG for the CJSOR for on-going operations is held bi-annually with a second FG conference held at SHAPE. Prior to this model, FG for missions was conducted operation specific conferences.[159]

As the GFGC seeks commitments for both on-going operations and to fill the NRF roster, prior consultations with the nations are required to prepare them appropriately. DSACEUR as the lead for FG within SHAPE, issues all the necessary CJSORs, CEs and NRF requirements via the resident National Military Representatives (NMR).[160] NMRs in turn submit these requirements to their capitals for analysis and provide the necessary guidance in terms of future commitments. The preparatory work for the GFGC requires forces planners, and often times DSACEUR himself, to engage with nations in an almost 'charity' type of methodology, nearly begging or coerce nations to provide the needed capabilities.[161]

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[157] Lieutenant Colonel Steve Beckman, "From Assumption to Expansion: Planning and Executing NATO's First Year in Afghanistan at the Strategic Level," 7 and 13.

[158] Ian Garnett, "NATO Response Force," *RUSI Journal*, Vol 148, No. 6, (Dec 2003): 23.

[159] *Ibid.*, 13.

[160] A NMR is the senior officer from each country within NATO, as well as partner nations that contribute personnel or capabilities to the designated operation. The NMRs are responsible for informing their nations on the positions sought and bid for those selected by the nation during the actual Force Generation Conference.

[161] Lieutenant Colonel Steve Beckman, "From Assumption to Expansion: Planning and Executing NATO's First Year in Afghanistan at the Strategic Level," 14.

Once the GFGC finally convenes, bids from nations are compiled and subsequently analysed, deconflicted with other bids and then approved. The complexity of the entire process is hard to grasp. When dealing with the sheer volume of capabilities, missions, individual posts and force planners who may not fully grasp what capabilities are available or what they mean, it should come as no surprise that SOF faces challenges in this arena.

The CJSOR – A long Process for SOF

The development of the CJSOR of an established operation begins with an in theatre assessment to determine what capabilities will be required in order to complete the assigned tasks as part of the most current OPLAN. Force planners in ISAF, for example, determine the needs in terms of capabilities and personnel for the following year. Recommendations are made for organizational changes to HQs and identify new capabilities needed or shed those no longer required. The need to plan a year in advance requires planners to anticipate with as much clarity as possible so as to not request capabilities or personnel that will no longer be required by the time these forces deploy.

The CJSOR is published in the form of detailed tables, articulating the requirements, size, tasks, etc. Each HQ within ISAF submits these for consolidation to ISAF HQ, where they are reviewed, amended, approved or denied. Upon receipt of COM ISAF's approval, the full CJSOR is sent to Joint Force Command (JFC) Brunssum for additional review and analysis and finally sent to SHAPE for their

action. This initial work requires six months to complete prior to the beginning of one of the two bi-annual FG Conferences held at SHAPE. Within SHAPE, FG planners conduct their own analysis. Finally, DSACEUR will approve the documents and issue them officially to the nations via their NMRs. This step is followed by national bidding and upon completion, posts and capabilities are assigned to nations, who are required to prepare and deploy their committed forces six month later.

After a year of planning an anticipated need, to the arrival of personnel or capabilities, a better part of a year has passed. Given the cyclical nature and the need to plan a year ahead of time, this means that while the FG conference is occurring at SHAPE, planners in ISAF have already begun their work for the next cycle.[162] This long process allows for the time required for conventional forces to prepare for their future mission, leaving ample time for a nation to train and deploy their forces. However, the process highlights certain issues for SOF, adaptability being chief among them.

If SOF is to remain truly agile and responsive to emergent threats and requirements, then this long drawn out process must be revisited. The NSHQ, within its NAC endorsed mandate is tasked to support the FG process on behalf of SOF. This support however is largely a coordination function with no decision-making authorities. NSHQ staff attends the aforementioned conferences to monitor national bids and provide clarity on requirements as needed, but are not fully immersed with

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[162] NATO Special Operations Headquarters J5 FG, discussion with author.

SHAPE force planners, nor have access to their databases upon which they rely for availability of forces.[163]

The effectiveness of SOF resides in part in its ability to respond rapidly to changing operational environments through adaptive TTPs and the moulding of its force composition to better respond to the mission set. Commanders on the ground need to be able to adapt their force structure to meet emerging threats. While in a mature theatre such as Afghanistan, it may be possible to predict what SOF capabilities will be required the following year, in many cases it is not. In comparison to conventional forces, SOF are normally held at a much higher level of readiness than conventional forces, and thus are able to deploy rapidly. This responsiveness enables them to carry out the strategic tasks that they are assigned, which may be fleeting and therefore critical SOF capabilities may be needed well before the end of a normal FG cycle.

In chapter 2, it was identified that one of the tasks assigned to the NSHQ, was to support Force Generation for SOF. This support is largely restricted to a coordination function with no decision-making authorities and remains limited in its effectiveness given the confines of the process itself. NSHQ staff attends the aforementioned conferences to monitor national bids and provide clarity on requirements as needed.[164] SHAPE FG planners have no resident SOF expertise to understand the SOF capabilities that may be articulated in a CJSOR and therefore rely

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[163] *Ibid*.
[164] *Ibid.*

on the NSHQ for this expertise.[165] Despite the regular consultations that may occur between SHAPE FG planners and the NSHQ, the support provided remains sub-optimal. Without the ability to fully participate within the analytical phase, or access to the raw data of what capabilities have been agreed upon by nations as part of the NDPP, the NSHQ's ability to assist will remain marginalized.

The reality is that planning for SOF requirements nearly a year prior to the generation of SOF capabilities will likely hinder the ability of the SOF Commander to react quickly to a rapidly evolving mission. SOF activity and focus tends to evolve rapidly requiring a system geared to supporting rapid and unexpected changes. Whereas during certain periods of the year, SOF may be focused on Direct Action (DA), there may be a greater requirement for Special Reconnaissance (SR) during others.[166] This variance in missions requires the punctual availability of different skills sets which may not be readily available in certain SOTGs given that the way which nations organize their SOF varies widely. Based on conditions in the mission area, new capabilities may be required quickly and for only short durations. The above speaks to the need for greater flexibility in generating forces to meet the needs of the in theatre SOF Commander, and by extension the theatre Commander, leading to the conclusion that a bi-annual FG conference will not produce the desired flexibility.

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[165] *Ibid.*

[166] Based on author's experience as part of Special Operations Task Force in Afghanistan and through planning assistance provided to ISAF SOF HQ.

Streamlining the Process for SOF

To resolve this issue and to streamline the force generation process for SOF, a parallel SOF FG cycle should be introduced. Rather than being based on a set timeline to propose, validate, present and secure bids for capabilities and personnel amongst all the other requirements, SOF should be enabled to request changes in force composition on a continual basis. This new FG model would allow for the Commander of the deployed SOCC to submit his requirements via the normal chain of command to DSACEUR as required rather than on a firm schedule. The NSHQ should be given greater oversight authorities and access to FG databases, in order to consolidate requests and organise smaller and more agile FG meetings with NMRs to present SOF requirements. Concurrently, the NSHQ would utilize the already established NATO SOF Allied and Partner SOF Network to inform national SOF commands of emerging requirements. Not only will this system accelerate the process for SOF while making it more responsive to immediate needs, it will allow NSHQ, on behalf of the in-theatre SOF commander, to articulate the needs directly to NMRs and nations. The added responsibilities for the NSHQ will thereby ensure that SOF capabilities required do not get lost amongst the myriad of other requests coming up the pipeline from theatre.

By implementing a SOF specific FG model for NATO operations, national SOF commanders will be able to retain more fidelity in terms of the size, composition and capabilities of their deploying forces to what is actually required. SOF as a high value and scarce resource, tend to be held closely by nations, with many nations only

able to generate sufficient SOF for their own needs with little additional capabilities. To this end, some nations may only be able to provide small numbers of SOF for a single rotation or punctual participation, before having them return home in support of national tasks. Through the creation of a new FG model, nations would be able to deploy their SOF for short durations and cycle or replace them as required.

For SOF, the restructuring of this process should occur as soon as possible in order to make full use of the strengths that SOF's agility, readiness and flexibility can bring to meet the immediate and changing needs of the commander.[167] While the bi-annual FG cycle within NATO has matured during the conduct of operations in Afghanistan, the current FG process has been recognized as being long and cumbersome. NATO's continued attempts to hold on to it and improve it have led some critics such as Ian Garnett to purport that, "by 'oiling' the existing, top-down approach to force generation through streamlined bureaucratic processes, NATO is in danger of entrenching a failed system when it should in fact be concentrating on more radical, 'transformational' solutions."[168] Possible solutions should include structuring the process more in line with commanders, the force structure and force employers, who have a better grasp of the actual requirements.[169] This proposal seeks to provide this 'transformational' solution for NATO SOF and its ability to meet the needs of the in theatre Commander.

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[167] Mark Joyce, Mark Joyce, "Reforming NATO Force Generation: Progress, Problems and Outstanding Challenges," 26.

[168] Ian Garnett, "NATO Response Force," 25.

[169] *Ibid.*, p.25.

The NATO Response Force – Filling a hollow shell

Creating a streamlined process to allow greater flexibility for SOF to fill the CJSOR may resolve some to the systemic issues for ongoing operations, but what of contingency operations and the provision of SOTGs and SOCCs for the NRF? Sourcing forces for the NRF comes with its own difficulties and much coordination is required to avoid placing too high a burden on a single or the same nations, all the while balancing with the need for bids to be provided when the time comes. One could say that the NRF is but a hollow shell, filled with IOU notes.[170] When it comes time to collect, will nations have the resources they promised available or will they even be willing to participate?

Robert Bell, in his critique of the NRF identified the force generation process as a major impediment to effectiveness stating that, "for each six-month NRF rotation, the CJSOR again threatens to come up short unless the NATO leadership makes heroic efforts to cajole last-minute commitments … constantly having to go around with a 'begging bowl' is no way to run … an alliance."[171] DSACEUR and his staff are left with the difficult task of attempting to fill the NRF roster on a continual basis, with no guarantee of succeeded. Therefore despite the agreed upon political guidance, the LoA established by nations and the efforts by NATO via the NDPP to determine available capabilities to meet these, commitments by nations to fill the NRF and other missions still come up short.

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[170] *Ibid.*, 26.
[171] Robert Bell, "NATO's continuing transformation – Sisyphus and the NRF."

Sourcing capabilities for the NRF highlights the difficulty in transitioning from the theory of the LoA and NDPP to the reality of sourcing actual capabilities. As Robert Bell ascertains, "[a]ccording to then SACEUR, Gen Jones 'the open question within the Alliance is whether the political will exists to sustain the NRF each year in the future.'"[172] The NRF needs actual forces with a significant burden placed on nations in terms of equipment, personnel, training and other assets necessary to fulfil their commitment to the NRF. The premise that nations who sign up to provide forces to the NRF in support of contingency operations will fulfil this promise is fraught with obvious dangers, especially given that the NRF consistently fails to fill its roster.[173]

Getting nations to bid and commit to the NRF is problematic in general terms, with the added complications for nations who aspire to providing a SOCC. In fact, a review of the current NRF roster highlights multiple gaps where no nation has committed to providing a SOCC framework to the NRF, putting into jeopardy the ability to rapidly deploy and employ SOF for future contingencies.[174] The lack of commitment to providing a SOCC is even more problematic given that according to David Gompert and Raymond Martin, "[SOF] are always needed and needed early. … Unlike the NRF and NATO high-readiness forces, SOF may well be needed in far less time than the time it takes to cobble together earmarked national forces."[175]

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[172] *Ibid.*

[173] Unknown author, "NATO and its future – Have combat experience, will travel," *The Economist*, Mar 26th 2009, Last accessed 9 March 2013, http://www.economist.com/node/13376058

[174] Based on authors involvement in NRF roster review.

[175] David G. Gompert and Raymond C. Smith. "Creating a NATO Special Operations Force." 7.

Without a sustainable SOF C2 model to ensure the availability of this critical component, there is little chance that nations will provide SOTG to the Alliance in support of the NRF.

Additionally, even if fully committed to by nations, the NRF roster would only provide one SOCC and the fact that a nation has signed up to provide a SOCC during a given year for the NRF does not take into account the viability of that nation actually deciding to partake in a new operation. There is in effect no built-in depth or flexibility that would guarantee the provision of the necessary SOF C2. With only six nations able to generate this capability and serious gaps currently populating the NRF roster, this current year included, NATO is unable to ensure that such a capability will be available. Relying on a single SOCC construct within the NRF, when there is no standing SOCC or a viable alternative within the NATO Command or Force structure is therefore extremely problematic.

In this respect the model proposed in Chapter 3 can be expanded upon and lend some assistance. The generation of multiple multinational SOCC (-) will create a greater level of flexibility and depth. If twenty nations are sharing the burden to create their part of near identical capabilities, then any of these could be deployed in support of the NRF on a rotational basis. The creation of multiple SOCC (-) will also alleviate the issue that could arise should one or more of the nations partnered for that particular SOCC (-) chose not to participate. Having trained a multitude of staffs from other nations on the same equipment, CIS, TTPs and using the same doctrine, these personnel would be easily interchangeable into any of the SOCC (-). In essence, a

pool of C2 capabilities will have been be created, at lesser expense per nation and provide NATO with not only flexibility but, more importantly, the certainty that SOF C2 would be available in time of crisis.

The End Result

The current FG model adopted by NATO in 2004 through the creation of the GFGC provides a more personal approach to FG. Yet, its complexity and the sheer volume of data that must be assessed, analysed and deconflicted are not conducive to creating flexibility and agility. Compounding this level of complexity is the lack of detailed knowledge on the best use of the strategic effects of SOF resident within FG cell at SHAPE. Given the strategic value, the need to be able to deploy these quickly and maintain flexibility in re-tasking these, the same could be said for SOF.

It has been argued that NSHQ, as the centralized NATO SOF authority, should be given greater coordinating functions in terms of the FG process. While the NSHQ is already supporting this process, this task should be expanded to streamline it and reduce the burden on FG planners within SHAPE. In doing so, NATO SOF will be better enabled to react quickly, providing the in theatre commander with greater visibility and access to the capabilities required. Finally, by expanding the NRF to include a multinational SOCC (-) in the roster, the NSHQ and NATO SOF writ large will benefit from a higher probability that SOF C2 will be available, quickly and effectively when the call to action arrives.

CONCLUSION

This paper has tackled the complex issue of maintaining and improving SOF FG in support of NATO operations beyond Afghanistan. It proposed solutions for the provision of SOF C2 as well as proposing amendments to the FG model for SOF. To enable these solutions, it was further proposed that the NSHQ and well-established NATO Allied and Partner SOF Collaborative Network be fully leveraged.

Most nations consider their SOF as one of their most agile, responsive and adaptable capabilities. The value and importance of these resources means that the decision to commit SOF to operations, especially for other than national missions, remains at the highest level of control. These forces, extensively trained and rapidly deployable, are able to conduct tactical operations with immediate strategic effect. Reliance on their capabilities has only increased over the past decade given their success in Afghanistan, Iraq and more recently, Mali. This reality significantly reduces the likelihood that nations will be willing to relinquish control over their SOF to another nation, let alone to a NATO operation.

As has been argued, certain pre-conditions needed to be in place to provide the necessary assurances that SOF will be employed properly and to the greatest effect. First among these is the development of a network of trust, with common doctrine, mutual understanding and solid personal relationships within the SOF community. With the creation of the NSCC and its expansion into the NSHQ, this criterion has in large part been fulfilled even as it continues to expand the SOF network and advocates

the use of SOF within NATO. Trust has been built after years of operations and exposure to the risks of Afghanistan. The personal relationships built amongst SOF commanders, SOF Operators alike, through regular engagements, via conferences and working collaboratively at the NSHQ, have created a resilient SOF network that is certain to expand. Finally, the development and implementation of the SOF Campus and NSTEP has significantly increased the confidence and trust amongst the SOF network, resulting in improved collaboration between partner nations and paving the way towards integrated SOF operations.

A more challenging issue is the need to generate the requisite SOF C2 architecture to take on the role of C2 for multiple SOTGs in a multi-national environment. As explained in chapter 3, without the existence of a credible and rapidly deployable C2 structure that can match the speed of deploying SOTGs, nations are not likely to commit their SOF capabilities to NATO. To resolve this matter, NATO has elaborated a series of initiatives that have thus far failed to provide the necessary tools towards achieving a sustainable SOF C2 model. In this respect, it is proposed that the NSHQ's planning horsepower and its resident expertise of SOF C2, should lead the transformation and synchronization effort to assist likeminded nations in forming multinational SOCC (-) much in line with the principles of Smart Defence. In doing so, the NATO Allied and Partner SOF collaborative network would truly find tangible solutions to not only meet the needs of NATO's LoA, gain the confidence required nationally, but also create credible and NATO SOF designed and controlled SOF C2 nodes.

Finally, it was argued that NATO's reliance on processes that are designed to meet the needs of the collective, in a one size fits all methodology, does not serve the NATO SOF community well in terms of its ability to react quickly in a rapidly changing environment. Deployed SOF commanders must quickly have access to resources in order to respond to new threats or evolving situations. The creation and implementation of a SOF specific FG model would allow deployed SOF commanders to seek and acquire the necessary punctual capabilities when and where they are needed.

The fundamental question as to whether NATO has the ability to generate SOF in sufficient quantities, in a timely fashion and under the control of a credible and responsive SOF C2 structure post-Afghanistan can be answered in the affirmative. Clearly the experiences gleaned from Afghanistan combined with innovative approaches offer solutions to these seemingly intractable problems. Achieving assured SOF force generation will require the relinquishing of a certain level of control to the NATO SOF network. Without changes NATO will very likely continue to miss opportunities to leverage SOF effects, when they can perhaps better shape operations early, rather than develop them over extensive periods of time.

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