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THE COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO CRISIS RESPONSE OPERATIONS

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JCSP 40	PCEMI 40
Exercise *Solo Flight*	**Exercice *Solo Flight***
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The United Nations (UN), European Union (EU) and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) have all formally announced goals to achieve greater strategic cohesion among parties involved in crisis response operations. In the UN World Summit Report (2005), the UN pledged to expand consultation and cooperation with regional and sub-regional organizations through formalized agreements between respective Secretariats.[1] Under the General Provisions of the Union's External Action of the Treaty of Lisbon (2009), the EU seeks to develop relations and build partnerships with other International Organizations (IOs).[2] Finally, NATO's Strategic Concept (2010) affirms NATO's intent to engage actively with international actors to maximize coherence and effectiveness.[3] "This effort to pursue greater synergy, harmonization and complementarity in the international peace-building system has become known as the Comprehensive Approach (CA)."[4]

Unfortunately, the UN, EU and NATO will never truly achieve full strategic coherence in response to modern security crises because they are pursuing independent paths towards an idealistic concept of the Comprehensive Approach rather than an integrated path to a pragmatic one.

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[1] UN General Assembly. "2005 World Summit Outcome", UN Doc. A/RES/60/1, 24 October 2005, p.37.

[2] EU. "Treaty of Lisbon amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty establishing the European Community" Brussels, 2007. Ch.1 Art 10A.

[3] NATO. "Active Engagement, Modern Defence" *Strategic Concept for the Defence and Security of the Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization*, Lisbon, 2010, p.19.

[4] Cedric De Coning. "The United Nations and the Comprehensive Approach" from *DIIS Report* 2008:14, p.3.

Experience in recent operations has solidified the shared belief that a systematic or institutionalized approach rather than an ad hoc one is necessary to achieve success.[5] Regardless, no overarching vision or joint strategy has been developed to guide these three IOs towards desired cohesiveness. If unity of effort is required to have more consistent, more effective and more strategic outcomes for operations,[6] a similar approach should be used to build these institutional partnerships. Instead, the UN, EU and NATO are pursuing independent strategies in the hopes that improved cohesiveness within their individual organizations will lead to de facto harmonization in a joint effort.

According to Friis and Jarmyr (2008) there are three dimensions of the CA as applied to operations. The 1st dimension relates to cooperation between international actors (IOs, governments and the Host Nation). The 2nd dimension is cooperation within the actors (intra-agency). The 3rd dimension is goal-oriented (coherent goals within a mission).[7] If the aim is to achieve strategic synergy in the 1st dimension, then it is this dimension that should be the focus of a coherent effort. This is not the case, however, as the UN, EU and NATO are following unilateral transformation agendas resident in the 2nd dimension and thereby mobilizing the CA concept for their own purposes.[8]

The ideal notion of the CA would see the UN, EU and NATO fully integrated in all three dimensions; however, this is not realistically achievable. There are several hindrances that impede both intra-institutional reform and inter-institutional integration.

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[5] Friis Arne Petersen and Hans Binnendijk. "From Comprehensive Approach to Comprehensive Capability" from *NATO Review 2008.*

[6] EU. "The EU's Comprehensive Approach to External Conflict and Crises." *European Commission Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council, Brussels, 11.12.2013 JOIN (2013) 30 final, p.2.*

[7] Teodor Frunzeti. "Comprehensive Approach in Crisis Management" from *Strategic Impact (Impact Strategic)*, issue: 3/2012, p.7.

[8] Dr. Cecile Wendling. "The Comprehensive Approach to Civil-Military Crisis Management – A Critical Analysis and Perspective, IRSEM Report 2010", p.26.

With respect to inter-institutional activity, the differing cultures, doctrine and approaches to violence alone hamper full cooperative activity.[9] The major roadblocks to comprehensiveness include: overlapping institutional mandates and resulting rivalry/competition, unresolved political-strategic disagreements among member nations, the rigidity of institutional architecture, and the level of organizational commitment. Although solutions to some of the cultural aspects can be found, many of the politically based ones cannot. Therefore, it would be prudent to pursue initiatives that are achievable within these constraints.

The UN's model for cohesion is the Integrated Approach (IA) as outlined in the Integrated Missions Concept. The IA is intended for use in complex UN peacekeeping missions and implies the integration of the different elements of the UN family into a single country-level UN system.[10] It requires: "a shared vision of the UN's strategic objectives, closely aligned or integrated planning, a set of agreed results, timelines and responsibilities, and agreed mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation."[11]

Initiatives to enable the IA include establishing MOUs between UN agencies, creating an Integrated Mission Planning Team and developing a concept of Civilian-Military Coordination (CM Coord).

The EU's strategy, "EU Comprehensive Approach to External Conflict and Crisis" consists of eight steps, the last of which is to work in partnership.[12] A commitment to its application serves to build a common understanding of the CA concept and develop the necessary cohesion between EU and member state action.

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[9] Philipp Rotmann. "Built on Shaky Ground: the Comprehensive Approach in Practice" from NATO *Research Paper* No.63 Rome, 2010, p.4.

[10] De Coning. "The United Nations and the Comprehensive Approach", p.7.

[11] Ibid, p.10-11.

[12] EU. "The EU's Comprehensive Approach to External Conflict and Crises." p.5-12.

Key initiatives of the EU CA strategy include strengthening the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and establishing a Crisis Management Planning Directorate (CMPD). The CFSP was ad hoc and decentralized so the new strategic vision serves to align the framework.[13] The CMPD was created as part of EEAS (European External Action Service). It brings together the civilian and military components of the EU under CMCO (civil-military coordination) for the planning and execution of EU-led missions.[14] These internal improvements also include the development of the Crisis Response System (CRS), with Crisis Management Procedures and the Crisis Platform. This extensive foreign policy toolkit enables the orchestration of varied instruments, particularly the Crisis Platform a mechanism enabling a more systematic way to facilitate coordination and share information.[15]

NATO's CA aspires to the promotion of security and development through coordinated activity by multiple types of organizations in cooperation with local authorities as part of the International Community's (IC) effort. The priorities set at the Riga Summit (2006) apply predominantly to Non-Article 5 Crisis Response Operations (NA5CRO) and relate to improvements in the capability, planning, and intelligence realms.[16] The Comprehensive Approach Action Plan (CAAP) outlines pragmatic proposals to improve the coherent application of NATO's own crisis management instruments and practical cooperation with others.[17]

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[13] Michael E. Smith. "Institutionalizing the Comprehensive Approach to EU Security" from *European Foreign Affairs Review* Vol. 18 (2013) Issue 4, p.27.

[14] Wendling. "The Comprehensive Approach to Civil-Miltary Crisis Management", p.28.

[15] Alexander Mattelaer. "The Empty Promise of Comprehensive Planning in EU Crisis Management" from *European Foreign Affairs Review* Vol. 18 (2013) Issue 4, p.127.

[16] David S Yost. *NATO's Balancing Act*, Washington, 2014, p.247.

[17] Thierry Tardy. "NATO and the Comprehensive Approach: Weak Conceptualization, Political Divergences, and Implementation Challenges" in *Understanding NATO in the 21st Century – Alliance*

Initiatives under the CAAP include rationalizing the NATO Command Structure (NCS), optimizing C2, establishing the Comprehensive Crisis and Operations Management Centre (CCOMC) at Supreme Headquarters Allied Power Europe (SHAPE), embedding Civilian Planning Element (CPEs) into HQs, and creating the Comprehensive Approach Specialist Support programme (COMPASS).[18]

Although the NCS remains bureaucratic and top-heavy the effectiveness and timeliness of decision-making processes has improved.[19] The CCOMC at SHAPE and the now permanent embedding of British Stabilization Unit personnel in the Allied Rapid Reaction Corps (ARRC) bring civilian and military expertise together. This fulfils NATO's promise to build a modest civilian capacity and facilitates a broader level of analysis, the coordination of national contributions, and the planning effort.[20] Finally, COMPASS provides a database of national civilian experts to be drawn upon for political, Stabilization and Reconstruction (S & R), and media advice.

The preponderance of initiatives within the CA strategies of the UN, EU and NATO are efforts to bring about internal complementarity. There are also formal and informal joint initiatives that exist or are being pursued to improve inter-institutional comprehensiveness.

Two joint declarations between the EU-UN exist and an EU-UN Steering Committee has been established to enable coordination in the field. A UN-NATO Joint Declaration on Secretariat Cooperation was made in 2008. Memoranda of Understanding

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Strategies, Security and Global Governance edited by Graeme P. Herd and John Kriendler, London, 2013, p.104.

[18] Petersen and Binnendijk. "From Comprehensive Approach to Comprehensive Capability."

[19] Julian Lindley-French, Paul Cornish and Andrew Rathmell. "Clear, Hold, and Build: Operationalizing the Comprehensive Approach" in *The Oxford Handbook of War* edited by Julian Lindley-French and Yves Boyer, Oxford 2012, p.581-2.

[20] Wilton Park. "Operationalizing the Comprehensive Approach, Conference Report WP1092" April 2012, p.6.

(MOUs) have been established between various UN agencies and both NATO and the EU. NATO established a permanent liaison team at UNHQ in 2010. Although these formal arrangements are beneficial, even institutionalization cannot overcome some roadblocks.

In 1999, the NATO-EU Berlin Plus agreement was formalized which allows the EU access to certain pre-identified NATO capabilities and common assets required for EU-led missions in which NATO itself is not involved. Later in 2003, NATO and the EU established a framework for relations related to EU-led operations and in support of Capability Development (Cap-Dev). The intent was to strengthen their partnership by enhancing coordination in planning and Cap-Dev and enable broader political consultations.[21] Although these initiatives would greatly assist cooperation, they are not applicable when these two IOs are working together.

There has been much dialogue internally, between the UN, EU and NATO, and publically regarding the need to establish and formalize inter-institutional arrangements to enable integration, and fora to share information, best practices and lessons learned. Ideas such as establishing communities of interest, building shared knowledge hubs, conducting personnel exchanges, and developing common knowledge and management tools have been suggested. Numerous informal committees and working groups have been established already; however, in order to be truly effective, inter-agency groups need to be owned by all, process-oriented, and to have defined Terms of Reference.[22] Staff talks and education days also take place. The Wales Summit in 2014 was the first

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[21] Yost. *NATO's Balancing Act*, p.254-5.
[22] Wilton Park. "Operationalizing the Comprehensive Approach, Conference Report WP1092", p.6.

time EU Senior Representatives attended a NATO summit.[23] These events are important politically and should continue, but they do not eliminate the requirements for more formal arrangements.

The first major roadblock to achieving integration or full strategic coordination is overlapping institutional mandates. This leads to competition for influence and resources.[24] It is important for the UN, EU and NATO to maintain a core mission or identity with competencies clearly delineated as the greater the asymmetry between IOs the greater the cooperation.[25] With NATO and the EU in particular, they have membership overlap and their missions cover similar ground. This overlap has increased over the years as NATO has moved away from being a purely regional, collective defence organization and the EU away from being a purely regional, economic one.

The EU and NATO may be seen as rivals by some of its member states, with some EU nations wanting to lessen the influence of the US in regional interests. EU policymakers believe the EU alone has the unique capacity for CA and question the role of NATO in certain NA5CRO.[26] Missions in Darfur and Somalia exemplify the overlap. The African Union (AU) requested the assistance of both NATO and the EU in 2005. The EU (Atalante-EUNAVFOR 2008) and NATO (Operation OCEAN SHIELD 2009) both established anti-piracy missions off the Horn of Africa, representing some duplication of effort.

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[23] NATO. "A Comprehensive Approach to Crisis" from *NATO HQ 2014.*
[24] Claudia Major and Christian Mölling. "More than Wishful Thinking? The EU, UN, NATO and the Comprehensive Approach to Military Crisis Management" from *Military Crisis Management: The Challenge of Inter-Organizationalism* (Edited by Joachim A. Koops Vol. LXII, 2009 No 3 of Studia Diplomatica The Brussels Journal of International Relations, p.23.
[25] Wendling. "The Comprehensive Approach to Civil-Miltary Crisis Management", p.34.
[26] Smith. "Institutionalizing the Comprehensive Approach to EU Security", p.27.

This friction between the EU and NATO is likely to continue into the future. Both these organizations should spend less time and effort expanding their roles and better use limited resources to improve their individual capabilities in a manner that contributes to complementarity. In the security realm, the EU is better positioned to provide a policing capability, whereas NATO is better placed to provide a conventional military one. Enabling these capabilities with the knowledge and tools to work in a comprehensive way would be more fruitful than competing for global and political influence.

Regarding the UN, they rely on regional entities such as the EU and AU to provide political knowledge and expertise. In terms of security forces, they prefer to work with the EU over NATO as the EU has a policing capability that NATO does not, and NATO's involvement paints the mission with a military brush. Conversely, the UN recognizes that NATO involvement can bring military power, large-scale support, and long-term commitment.[27] The UN provides political legitimacy in the eyes of the IC to military operations. NATO sees UN leadership as desirable in S & R operations.[28] The UN does not necessarily represent a rival for either the EU or NATO; however, there are significant political-strategic considerations that hamper joint coordination. These relationships need to be managed carefully in order to optimize synergies.

The second key roadblock to strategic coherence for the UN, EU and NATO is the unresolved political-strategic disagreement among the member nations of these IOs.[29] The "participation problem" restricts sharing of classified information between the EU

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[27] Yost. *NATO's Balancing Act*, p.251.
[28] Ibid, p.251.
[29] Rotmann. "Built on Shaky Ground: the Comprehensive Approach in Practice", p.1.

and NATO due to the dispute between Cyprus and Turkey.[30] As Turkey will not agree to

allow Cyprus to become a NATO Partner under the Partnership for Peace (PfP)

programme, it ostensibly blocks formal liaison, and integrated exercises and training

involving the EU and NATO. Political tensions also arise when formalizing partnerships

between the UN and NATO. Both Russia and China, as permanent members of the UN

Security Council, can limit NATO, or more specifically US, ambitions. For example, the

UN-NATO Joint Declaration on Secretariat Cooperation (2008) was opposed by both

Russia and China, significantly delaying its implementation.[31] Unfortunately, these

disagreements are unlikely to be resolved any time soon, if ever.

The third major roadblock to strategic integration is the rigidity of the UN, EU

and NATO's institutional architecture. All three IOs suffer from excessive bureaucracy

and burdensome systems of checks and balances as well as political resistance to

change.[32] The UN and EU architecture is stove-piped to such a degree that MOUs are

required between internal agencies and groups. The EU pillar framework hinders

integration of the Council and Commission staffs and the funding of operations.[33] For

NATO, there is a lack of dedicated architecture for the CA and of shared doctrine and

understanding of best practice. Additionally, the need for consensus requires the

agreement of 28 members.[34] The rigid architectures of the UN, EU and NATO are

unlikely to change significantly as political organizations are hierarchical by nature.

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[30] Yost. *NATO's Balancing Act*, p.255.
[31] Wendling. "The Comprehensive Approach to Civil-Miltary Crisis Management", p.42.
[32] Mattelaer. "The Empty Promise of Comprehensive Planning in EU Crisis Management", p.127.
[33] Major and Mölling. "More than Wishful Thinking?", p.25.
[34] Lindley-French, Cornish and Rathmell. "Clear, Hold, and Build: Operationalizing the Comprehensive Approach", p.570.

The final roadblock to full cooperation between IOs is the level of organizational commitment to a CA. The UN, EU and NATO are a fusion of various sets of national policy objectives.[35] As a result, it is a challenge to overcome national priorities and establish sufficient unity of purpose and action to garner strong commitment. The vague nature of the CA concept leads to broad interpretations and therefore little consensus.[36] Commitment is further challenged due to the cost, political will, and time needed for requisite institutional reform, the efficient generation and use of scarce resources, and the strategic patience required of these types of operations.[37] All of these factors undermine cohesion and therefore the ability to coordinate with other actors.[38]

Recognizing that the ideal notion of the CA is unachievable and that there are some roadblocks that cannot be overcome, the development of an optimal joint CA strategy for the UN, EU and NATO should be considered. A "one size fits all" construct is unrealistic, particularly as the degree of coherence required across the spectrum of conflict and disaster relief missions varies.[39] In permissive environments, the lack of policy coherence is not necessarily an impediment to effectiveness. As the security environment deteriorates, the requirement for coherence increases because common interests are under immediate threat.[40] An optimal strategic CA framework could utilize a parallel spectrum of comprehensiveness ranging from de-conflition to full integration. The framework would need to have the flexibility to adapt to a changing crisis environment at the strategic, operational and tactical levels. As a result, responses would

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[35] Mattelaer. "The Empty Promise of Comprehensive Planning in EU Crisis Management", p.142.

[36] Tardy. "NATO and the Comprehensive Approach", p.103-6.

[37] Lindley-French, Cornish and Rathmell. "Clear, Hold, and Build: Operationalizing the Comprehensive Approach", p.577.

[38] Tardy. "NATO and the Comprehensive Approach", p.108.

[39] Wilton Park. "Operationalizing the Comprehensive Approach, Conference Report WP1092", p.3.

[40] Mattelaer. "The Empty Promise of Comprehensive Planning in EU Crisis Management", p.143.

be "context-specific and driven by the reality and logic of real-life situations,"[41] better

enabling collaboration and sequencing of activities to meet the needs of the affected

population.[42]

As the CA is about saving lives, time and money, achieving ends and strategic

success more efficiently, the systematic implementation of a joint framework between

major IOs is a better strategy than institutions simply achieving their own goals

independently.[43] An institutional solution is required because bottom-up self-generated

coordination hampers team building and therefore effectiveness.[44]

In order to adopt such an approach, the UN, EU and NATO need to develop a

joint CA framework, road map and action plan. A common understanding of the scope,

nature and direction of a CA is key to unity of purpose, as is high-level political fusion

and "buy in", not just rhetoric.[45] This strategy should focus solely on initiatives and

activities that they can truly work on together.

Current intra-institutional reform should continue only if it serves in optimizing

the key functions or roles of the organization. Potential joint initiatives that could

realistically be achieved should be identified and brought under a new joint action plan

for development. The NATO COMPASS programme and the EU's Crisis Platform are

examples of such initiatives.

All three IOs espouse the importance of lessons learned from past operations yet

rarely undertake requisite change, or implement successful actions post-mission. If

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[41] EU. "The EU's Comprehensive Approach to External Conflict and Crises." p.4.
[42] Wilton Park. "Operationalizing the Comprehensive Approach, Conference Report WP1092", p.3.
[43] Ibid, p.1.
[44] Rotmann. "Built on Shaky Ground: the Comprehensive Approach in Practice", p.2.
[45] Petersen and Binnendijk. "From Comprehensive Approach to Comprehensive Capability."

coherence was possible during an operation, it should continue when the mission is over. One positive activity in Afghanistan was the integration of CPEs into HQs enabling trusted collaboration and broader analysis.[46] In Libya, UN-NATO pre-assessments had Secretariats cooperating to an unprecedented extent, allowing for the consideration of humanitarian actor movement early in NATO planning.[47] These activities need to become standing arrangements between all three IOs.

In terms of planning crisis responses, embedded CPEs will enable mutual consideration in plan development. It is not critical for the UN, EU and NATO to adopt a common or joint planning process. Whether it is a NATO plan developed using the NATO Crisis Response Planning process or a UN plan created by the Integrated Mission Planning Process, the three IOs need to become intelligent consumers of the products generated by each other.[48] A better joint initiative would be to create a tool to develop effective transition plans. The critical point in any crisis is when it transitions from conflict prevention to S & R. A smooth transition of roles and responsibilities between the various actors, including the UN, EU and NATO is vital to overall mission success. This should be the focus of joint planning.

Finally, a culture of learning and adaptation must be encouraged within the UN, EU and NATO. Joint initiatives should include tools to enable networked learning. There needs to be jointly planned and executed crisis management exercises rather than the current offerings of NATO and the EU where one IO plans with the others invited to

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[46] Lindley-French, Cornish and Rathmell. "Clear, Hold, and Build: Operationalizing the Comprehensive Approach", p.578.

[47] Yost. *NATO's Balancing Act*, p.268.

[48] Wilton Park. "Operationalizing the Comprehensive Approach, Conference Report WP1092", p.7.

participate. Exercise participants must be real representatives from the IO and ones that would actually deploy or fulfil crisis response roles[49].

The requirement for the UN, EU and NATO to achieve coherence in the joint resolution of global crises is not in doubt. Unfortunately, the current strategies being pursued by all three will not allow them to fully achieve this desired comprehensiveness. Independent action that does not consider the significant roadblocks that exist is wasteful as is pursuing an ideal end state rather than an optimal one. Creating an institutionalized, joint strategy that includes an optimal and adaptive framework, road map, and action plan is a more realistic and effective method for these IOs to actualize a Comprehensive Approach.

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[49] Wilton Park. "Operationalizing the Comprehensive Approach, Conference Report WP1092", p.6.

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