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ON COLLABORATION OF LOCAL ACTORS WITH SECURITY FORCE ASSISTANCE IN MISSIONS AND NON-ARTICLE 5 CRISIS RESPONSE OPERATIONS

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Abstract: *This paper examines aspects of the coordination and cooperation of local actors in Security Force Assistance (SFA) missions, and in particular in Non-Article 5 Crisis Response Operations (NA5CRO). The process of building relationships with local actors and coordinating efforts with them to achieve mission success is discussed as well. This process is based on the understanding that local actors have critical knowledge of the operational environment and can provide valuable insights that enhance mission effectiveness. The need to understand the operational environment and build effective relationships with local security forces as well as other stakeholders is also addressed. The article explains how coordination and cooperation with local actors are essential to achieving mission success and can improve the effectiveness of the SFA in their participation in crisis response operations. In summary, the paper emphasizes the critical importance of coordination and cooperation with local actors in SFA missions and into Humanitarian Assistance Operations that are part of NA5CRO. This approach can enhance the effectiveness of the mission, increase situational awareness, and reduce the risk of mission failure. It requires a commitment to building effective relationships with local security forces and other stakeholders, joint coordination among all actors involved in the mission, and cultural sensitivity and awareness in the event of a crisis.*

Keywords: Security Force Assistance (SFA), NATO, Collaboration, Non-article 5 Crisis response operations, peer-to-peer relationships, joint coordination

1. Introduction

Military forces may be employed in a variety of Non-Article 5 Crisis Response Operations (NA5CRO) situations. Military involvement in these operations could range from support of humanitarian operations or disaster relief. Humanitarian Assistance (HA) consists of activities and tasks to relief or reduce human suffering. HA may occur in response to earthquake, flood, famine, or manmade disasters such as radioactive, biological chemical contamination or pandemic outbreak. HA is conducted to relieve or reduce the results of natural or man-made disasters or endemic conditions that might present serious threat to life [1].

On the 11th of July 2022, the NATO Security Force Assistance Centre of Excellence had the pleasure to present its new editorial project entitled "Insights on Strategic Advising for Security Force Assistance".

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The editorial project has been the culmination of months of intensive work, during which the Centre entrusted a group of specialists with developing their contributions, frequently based on first-hand experiences, to provide new perspectives on the role of SFA advisors in missions. In order to maximize the outcomes of SFA operations, the project gathers best practices, lessons learned, and new pertinent strategic approaches.

Understanding how to enhance the creation of a new generation of advisers by helping the work of military and non-military professionals from various alliance member countries has been a unique opportunity.

Meeting views that tend to strengthen the importance of collaborations with local actors in SFA missions has been probably the most intellectually stimulating component of the work behind the book. Despite being sometimes overlooked, this element is crucial for preserving a secure environment during SFA advisory operations. The editorial project has, indeed, put the spotlight on the importance the of local counterpart's involvement in the success of the mission.

In line with the never-ending research for improvements made by the NATO SFA Center of Excellence (COE), this latter has decided to further explore the topic of the relationship between Host Nations' (HN) actors and SFA advisors. As a result of its ongoing research of fresh viewpoints and techniques in SFA, the Centre has come into touch with other experts.

This article focuses on the importance of coordination, understood as cooperation and information exchange between the local actors and the advisors. One of the key pillars in SFA missions is the involvement of the host national counterparts that should perceive themselves as an inclusive team to counter their problems in harmony with the advisors. Thus, this article will report the main contribution of the authors in providing their expertise to develop SFA capacity in supporting local forces in crisis zones.

2. Coordination and Collaboration in NATO

The success of a military mission is highly dependent on effective coordination and collaboration among the personnel involved. Military forces must be able to work together seamlessly in order to achieve a common goal and ensure the mission's success. Coordination and collaboration in a military mission is a complex process that involves communication, planning, and execution. **First**, effective communication is essential in order to ensure proper coordination and collaboration. Personnel must be able to communicate effectively with one another in order to coordinate their actions and ensure that everyone involved is on the same page. This includes verbal communication, written orders, and other forms of communication such as radio transmissions. **Second**, careful planning is necessary in order to ensure that the mission is executed smoothly. Personnel must be able to plan and strategize in order to ensure that all tasks are carried out in the most efficient way possible. This includes planning out the best route to take, the most effective tactics to use, and other important details. **Finally**, effective execution is essential in order to ensure the mission's success. Personnel must be able to work together and carry out the tasks that have been planned out in order to achieve the desired outcome. This includes following orders, working together, and responding quickly in order to make sure the mission is completed successfully. In conclusion, coordination and collaboration in a military mission is a complex process that requires effective communication, planning, and execution in order to be successful. Without these elements, a mission is likely to fail. It is essential for personnel to be able to work together in order to ensure the mission's success.

Coordination is the process of bringing together different parts of an organization or system to ensure that they are working

together in harmony, with each member playing a role in a larger plan. Coordination is essential for success in any organization, as it helps to ensure that all resources are being utilized to the best of their ability. The most important part of coordination is communication. Without effective communication, it is impossible to coordinate effectively. It is important to ensure that all team members are aware of their roles and responsibilities, and that they have the information they need to do their job effectively. Effective communication also helps to create a team atmosphere, where everyone is working together towards a common goal. Good coordination also involves setting clear goals and objectives. It is important to have a plan for achieving these goals, as this will help to ensure that everyone is working in the same direction. It is also important to set deadlines and to measure progress toward the goals. This will help to ensure that everyone is working efficiently and that the team is making progress towards its goals. Coordination also involves problem-solving. When issues arise, it is important to be able to quickly identify the problem and come up with solutions. It is also important to provide feedback to team members, so that they know what they are doing right and what needs to be improved. This will help to ensure that everyone is working together to solve the problem. Finally, coordination also involves motivation. It is important to encourage team members to do their best, and to recognize those who have excelled. This helps to create a positive atmosphere and can help to increase productivity and motivation. Coordination is essential for any successful organization, and it is important to ensure that it is done properly.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is an intergovernmental military alliance that was established in 1949 with the purpose of providing collective defence against external threats [2]. Coordination and collaboration within NATO are crucial to achieving the organization's goals and ensuring the security of its member countries. Here are some of the key reasons why coordination and collaboration are so important within NATO [3]:

- Enhancing Military Capability: One of the primary objectives of NATO is to improve the military capabilities of its member states. Coordination and collaboration within the organization can help member states pool their resources and expertise, resulting in more effective military capabilities;
- Increasing Interoperability: NATO member states often work together in joint military operations. Coordination and collaboration are essential to ensure that the various militaries can work together seamlessly and effectively [4];
- Strengthening Partnerships: NATO maintains partnerships with non-member countries and international organizations. Coordination and collaboration within NATO can help strengthen these partnerships, which can be valuable for addressing shared security concerns;
- Improving Crisis Management: In the event of a crisis or conflict, coordination and collaboration within NATO are essential to ensuring a quick and effective response. Effective crisis management requires close coordination between different military forces, as well as with civilian agencies;
- Promoting Political Unity: NATO is a political as well as a military alliance, and coordination and collaboration within the organization can help promote political unity among member states. By working together to address shared security challenges, NATO members can build stronger relationships and foster greater trust and cooperation;
- Providing a Deterrent: One of NATO's key objectives is to deter potential adversaries from attacking its member states. Coordination and collaboration within the organization can help

demonstrate the strength and unity of the alliance, which can serve as a powerful deterrent [5];

- Addressing Non-Traditional Security Challenges: In addition to traditional military threats, NATO also faces non-traditional security challenges such as terrorism, cyberattacks, military operations on urbanized terrain [6], hybrid warfare and others. Coordination and collaboration within the organization can help address these challenges by bringing together different military and civilian agencies to work towards common goals [7];
- Enhancing Efficiency: Coordination and collaboration can also help improve the efficiency of NATO operations. By streamlining processes and reducing duplication of effort, NATO can make more effective use of its resources and achieve better results [8];
- Fostering Innovation: Through collaboration, member states can share new ideas and best practices, which can lead to innovative solutions for shared security challenges. NATO has a history of promoting innovation, and coordination and collaboration are essential to continuing this tradition [9];
- Building Trust: Trust is essential to the success of any alliance, and coordination and collaboration within NATO can help build trust among member states. By working together towards shared goals, NATO members can develop greater confidence in each other's capabilities and intentions [10].

By working together, partner states can enhance military capabilities, increase interoperability, strengthen partnerships, improve crisis management, provide a deterrent, address non-traditional security challenges, enhance efficiency, foster innovation, and build trust.

3. The Importance of Coordination and Collaboration in the Mission in NA5CRO

The role of advisors in providing recommendations in an organisation is essential to achieving the desired outcome. Coordination is mainly associated with information exchange. Collaboration is two or more actors employed together in a coordinated manner. Thus, it must be guided by principles of coordination and collaboration in any operations or missions.

Well-established coordination and collaboration mechanisms play a vital role in the mission and operational success. As an international organization with extensive experience leading missions and operations, NATO identifies coordination and collaboration as essential elements [11].

Advising, particularly at the strategic level, is a delicate task. The task requires comprehensive skill sets, knowledge, a positive working attitude and ability. The essence of advising is based on the relationship that an advisor builds with counterparts. Building trusting and productive working relationships require effort and time. Trust-building measures will increase advisors' ability to solve long-standing issues. The host nation counterparts and staff should see themselves as an inclusive team to counter their problems in harmony with the advisors.

The most crucial advising components are understanding the operating environment and employing the available tools provided by sending organisations or nations: that is, to be well trained and equipped.

One of the most significant factors is understanding the HN's organisational culture. After the understanding phase is accomplished, the next phase is to adjust to that culture by adding the values required for a better functioning HN organisation. These processes will facilitate an understanding of the organisation's strengths, weaknesses and opportunities, which can be exploited for that organisation's benefit. Only in a healthy

environment can productive and efficient work be accomplished.

For many years, NATO has gained extensive experience in the advising field. NATO-led operations and missions have been resourced staffed by advisers whose contributions have had significance. Several partner nations (PN) have improved their defence and security institutions' capacities by employing NATO and allied advisors [12].

4. Understanding the Operating Environment

People and faces are essential and the most valuable elements for the deployment. Establishing initial contacts starts before deployment. In NATO, an advisor should find ways to contact deployed country missions or embassy staff. It is also important to arrange meetings with country NATO desk officers. These introductory meetings can be a foundation for cooperation and will increase awareness and create favourable conditions for the mission's success. Frequent contact and communication with these actors will serve as a tool to keep an advisor on track.

Understanding and mastering NATO's strategic guidance are critical to achieving the desired end state. NATO's partnership policies, programmes, mechanisms and tools offered to PNs play a significant role in implementing reform [13]. An advisor needs to have comprehensive knowledge of these reforms. An advisor should have a deep understanding and expertise in a deployed country portfolio and the mission's goals and objectives. They must be in line with the implementation process.

The key pillars of this process are:

- **Understanding Host Nation (HN) Organisations' culture.**

In his book Political Order and Political Decay, Francis Fukuyama stated that "human beings by nature also are norm-creating and norm-following creatures" [14]. It is necessary to analyse the HN institutional and cultural norms that drive an organisation. It is relatively easy to influence formal norms, but cultural norms are difficult to change. Both require a holistic approach to a broad range of issues.

- **Understanding the actors involved in a mission.**

Understanding actors from various organisations operating in an HN is important. A big picture of social, economic, security and military areas is helpful to get a notion about HN state-building efforts. Based on knowledge and experience obtained from different actors, strategic level advisors may formalise recommendations to the parent organisation and HN institutions.

Constant engagement with advisors from other areas will keep them in the loop. The type and level of engagement could be different. Social and official events create opportunities to exchange ideas, views and opinions and to find solutions. Strategic advisors should collect helpful information and lesson learned to build institutional memory. The gathered information would allow their successors and parent organisations to better prepare for and adjust to reality on the ground.

- **Integration with the advisor network.**

Modern armed conflict and its aftermath are no longer two-sided events. The face of contemporary armed conflict has not just changed in terms of technology but the participation of different actors also makes it more complex. An environment where advisors from other countries, IOs and NGOs operate presents an opportunity to learn and contribute to the HN reforms initiative. Thus, it is necessary to become part of a community of advisors. The level of integration into the community will allow the establishment of essential contacts that could be useful for implementing everyday activities. An advisor should bear in mind that different countries and organisations may have different agendas in the operating environment. Therefore, it is important to understand other actors' roles, responsibilities and capabilities in the field.

5. Importance of Building Peer to Peer Relationships

A code of conduct can be used to create harmonious working relationships with counterparts. Integrity, impartiality, professionalism, accountability and loyalty are the five core values in the NATO Code of Conduct. These values should be upheld at the personal level to achieve the highest standard of work continuity. The ability to imply norms and standards at the workplace is important for human interoperability.

Leadership influences organisational culture, but people within an organisation largely determine it. An advisor should seek opportunities for more interaction with counterparts. It is necessary to be aware of important dates in deployed countries like national, religious holidays and national mourning days. It is important to attend these events. Showing respect and sympathy will allow an advisor to be accepted by a community of co-workers.

Part of the peer-to-peer relation should be focused on demonstrating that given advices are in benefit for HN. Some advisors can find themselves in the middle of turbulence. It is a moment when advisors should form their recommendations and present them. Advisors must exploit these opportunities and demonstrate skills that allow HN counterparts to calibrate and realise goals [15]. It is necessary to acknowledge that advice has to serve the national interests and international obligations of HN.

Local counterparts must acknowledge that it is their responsibility to build their country and it is up to them which direction it will go. A deficit of local ownership usually causes devastation in government and disorder in a country. A vivid example is Afghan state institutions' rapid and total collapse followed by social, economic and political intermigration in 2021. There are two main challenges defined in crisis zones. The first comes from international reformers when time and resources are limited, but it is necessary to restore order and stability quickly [16].

The second is related to human and technical factors in HN organisations. Both cases hinder the understanding of responsibility by HN counterparts.

6. Facilitating Joint Coordination

It is important to understand the mechanism of decision-making among advisors to create an effective and unbreakable chain of coordination at the strategic level. One of the critical starting questions to ask is how the lowest level of advising informs senior advisors. This is the most complex part of establishing and fostering coordination if it is important to have diverse military options that demand coordinated and reciprocal civil-military dialogue at multiple levels. It calls for a high-level focus on national security team-building across and within agencies. To achieve this, advisors making strategic decisions should be able to provide definitions of what coordination among other advisors means in practice, including short- and long-term goalposts for each department and agency, clear lines of accountability, point(s) of authority and an explication of the processes on sharing information [17] and knowledge among other advisors.

Advisors should have a holistic view of the operational environment (OE), that is "the physical areas and factors (of the air, land, maritime and space domains) and the information environment (which includes cyberspace)". They also need to know the nature of the Political, Military, Economic, Social, Infrastructure and Information systems (PMESII) – whether they are adversarial, friendly or neutral. Having a holistic assessment of the OE will help advisors to determine "the conditions required to achieve stated objectives; avoiding the effects that may hinder mission accomplishment (undesired effects); and assessing the impact of the friendly, adversary and other relevant actors, such as the local populace and progress toward attaining the military end

state". This will help advisors maximize joint efforts to achieve targeted and desirable outcomes.

7. Conclusions

In any mission, coordination and collaboration are essential for success. This is especially true for the military, where cooperation with local actors is crucial to achieving the mission's objectives. In this article, we will explore the importance of coordination and collaboration with local actors in SFA missions. Coordination and collaboration are two critical pillars of NATO's operational approach. NATO emphasizes the importance of building relationships with local actors and coordinating efforts with them to achieve mission success. This approach is based on the understanding that local actors have critical knowledge of the operating environment and can provide valuable insights that enhance the effectiveness of the mission. In an SFA mission, coordination and collaboration with local actors are essential. The mission's success depends on building effective relationships with local security forces and other relevant stakeholders. This involves understanding the operating environment, including the culture of the host nation organizations involved in the mission. The operating environment in SFA missions is complex and dynamic. Understanding the host nation organizations' culture and the actors involved in the mission is essential to operate effectively in this environment. Coordination and collaboration with local actors can provide valuable insights into the local context, which can help inform decision-making and enhance the mission's effectiveness. Building relationships with local actors is essential to building trust and facilitating effective communication. This includes establishing peer-to-peer relationships with local security forces, which can help build mutual respect and understanding. These relationships can also help to foster a sense of shared responsibility for the mission's success. Coordination and collaboration with local actors can help facilitate joint coordination, which is essential to achieving mission success. This includes coordinating efforts with local security forces, other government agencies, and international partners to achieve shared objectives. Coordination and collaboration with local actors are essential to achieving mission success in SFA missions. Building relationships with local security forces, understanding the operating environment, and facilitating joint coordination are key elements of this approach. By working closely with local actors, effective coordination and collaboration can help, SFA missions can enhance their effectiveness, improve situational awareness, and reduce the risk of mission failure.

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