

NATO

CONFRONTS

TERRORISM



ANKARA-BASED CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE DEFENCE
AGAINST TERRORISM TRAINS ALLIANCE OFFICERS

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On April 15, 2013, the world stood shocked as it watched the aftermath of two bomb explosions at the finish line of the Boston Marathon. Unfortunately, the Boston bombing was not the only act of terrorism that day. Iraq was riddled by a string of attacks in anticipation of its elections, and there were other incidents around the globe. Terrorism is not going away any time soon.

Individual nations continue to place terrorism at the forefront of national security concerns. Fighting terrorism, though, does not stop at national borders. International organizations play a key role in creating a framework in which nations can operate. Like many other organizations, NATO placed combating terrorism at the top of its priority list since the September 11, 2001, attacks.

In addition to operational missions, such as Operation Active Endeavor, NATO has another tool at its disposal to help understand the threat posed by terrorism: the Centre of Excellence Defence Against Terrorism (COE-DAT). This unique organization, tailored to study all facets of terrorism, is part of a broader network of centres that provides unique expertise for the Alliance. But before elaborating on COE-DAT's efforts, it is necessary to understand just how these centres of excellence are positioned to develop their expertise.

Putting COEs on the Map

In 2002, NATO decided to create and promote a series of centres of excellence (COE). The goal was for the COEs to focus on a specific subject and develop critical expertise within the respective institution for the benefit of the entire Alliance. Using powers vested in the Paris Protocols of 1952, NATO authorized the establishment and accreditation of these centres as International Military Organizations (IMO). A unique aspect of NATO's network of COEs is that they do not formally sit within the NATO Command Structure (NCS). Rather, they constitute a much larger network of affiliations that exchange information while maintaining independence from influence by any one nation or organization.

Since NATO-accredited COEs do not receive funding directly from the Alliance, they are financed by contributions directly from NATO members that voluntarily participate in the particular COE. This detail is important because only the consensus of the nations participating in the COE is necessary for the accomplishment of its mission. The COEs

follow NATO protocol and work for the benefit of the Alliance, but their organizational structure allows them a certain freedom of movement not necessarily present in other NATO groupings. COEs are built around a framework nation that volunteers to host and lead the COE. Other nations that join a COE are called sponsoring nations. In both cases, NATO membership is a prerequisite. There are currently 18 fully accredited NATO COEs, with several others in the process of accreditation.¹

The Mission of COE-DAT

Soon after NATO's decision to create a network of COEs, the Republic of Turkey volunteered to host a centre focused on the study of terrorism. Given its long-standing, multidimensional struggle against terrorism, Turkey declared its intention in 2003 to create the Centre of Excellence Defence Against Terrorism in Ankara. Three years later, NATO accredited COE-DAT and granted it IMO status. Turkey, the framework nation, was joined by the



Visitors to Boston's Copley Square look at a memorial to victims of the April 2013 Boston Marathon bombing.

following sponsoring nations: Bulgaria, Germany, Hungary, the Netherlands, Romania, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Since its founding, COE-DAT's mission has been to provide terrorism-related subject matter expertise, principally at the strategic and operational level. It takes a holistic approach to terrorism and breaks it down into individual facets such as legal, financial and cyber. The centre's chief activities include education and training of NATO and partner personnel,



concept and doctrine development, and contributions to the NATO Lessons Learned process.

A Turkish Army colonel serves as COE-DAT's director, and a U.S. Air Force colonel is the deputy. The COE has four main departments: education and training, transformation, capabilities and support. As of May 2013, the COE-DAT had 56 full-time personnel, 47 from Turkey and the remainder from sponsoring nations. Not only is COE-DAT multinational, it is also joint and comprehensive, with all military services represented. There is a large civilian cadre at COE-DAT, as well as representation from the Turkish gendarmerie and the Royal Netherlands Marechaussee.

Since COE-DAT and all other COEs sit outside the NCS, it maintains a functional relationship with all NATO agencies including Allied Command Transformation, which coordinates activities between the COEs and acts as the agent of the accreditation process. The relationship between COE-DAT and NATO headquarters highlights another unique bond in NATO's counterterrorism efforts. NATO's lead agency for counterterrorism policy is the Counterterrorism Section of the Emerging Security Challenges Division (ESCD) within the International Staff. COE-DAT coordinates with the ESCD to ensure all activities are aligned with NATO objectives. Given the flexible nature of COEs, the centre also maintains strong relationships with other academic institutions, think tanks and government agencies that study or promote policies addressing terrorism and its impact on society.

Since 2005, COE-DAT has conducted more than 135 activities in the education and training domain. Classes typically last one week and are tailored toward major (OF-3) to colonel (OF-5) grade officers, or their civilian equivalents, who work in the DAT domain in their governments.

Course participants come from NATO countries and partner nations through the Partnership for Peace, Mediterranean Dialogue and Istanbul Cooperation Initiative programs. Examples of courses include "Defence Against Suicide Bombing," "Terrorism and the Media" and "Fighting the Financial Dimensions of Terrorism." NATO has fully accredited many courses and considers them valuable training for key Alliance positions.

An Iraqi boy looks at the remains of vehicles destroyed in a terrorist bombing near Baghdad in April 2013.

The second most important activity at COE-DAT is the workshops. They provide the COE flexibility to focus on the needs and trends within the DAT field and serve as one of the principal venues for COE-DAT's contribution to NATO's transformation efforts. COE-DAT workshops typically last two to three days and bring world-renowned experts together in one room to discuss, debate and identify paths forward on the latest trends within a particular theme or subject. In 2012, for example, COE-DAT hosted workshops on "WMD Terrorism" and "Air Oriented Terrorism." In 2013, this trend continues with topics such as "Recruitment and Root Causes of Terrorism" and "Challenges of Interagency Cooperation in the DAT."

Not only does COE-DAT coordinate with NATO Headquarters' ESCD on overall counterterrorism policy, they also partners with the section on specific training and advanced research initiatives. This partnership is administered through an activity known as NATO's Science for Peace and Security (SPS) program.² The agenda of SPS includes priorities set by the Alliance for specific research requirements, with the goal of integrating partner nation contributions into the process from the beginning.

COE-DAT often applies for SPS grants in areas of mutual interest in the counterterrorism domain. These typically take the form of "Advanced Training Courses" (ATC) and "Advanced Research Workshops" (ARW). ATCs are mobile training teams that focus on building specific capacities in NATO partner countries. To date, COE-DAT has conducted 14 ATCs since 2007 in Europe, North Africa, the Middle East and Central Asia. The ARWs are similar to COE-DAT workshops but meet the need of a specific high-priority research area for the Alliance. Unique to NATO ARWs is that they publish books that detail findings and results of the workshops.

In addition to courses, workshops and mobile training, COE-DAT periodically conducts symposia and conferences dealing with terrorism trends. Finally, COE-DAT contributes to NATO's online education and training efforts by hosting three courses specific to the study of terrorism for all eligible users.

The centre is equally engaged in broader efforts within the Alliance. COE-DAT recently partnered in writing a new counterinsurgency doctrine for NATO that takes advantage of the wealth of information acquired during contingency operations of the past several years. In addition, COE-DAT is exploring the possibility of contributing to Allied Command Transformation's recent Education & Training initiatives by

assuming the "department head" role within the counterterrorism Education & Training domain. This potential new role will give COE-DAT the responsibility to translate established NATO Education & Training counterterrorism requirements into a coherent training plan for the entire Alliance.

Several other key activities round out COE-DAT's mission. The centre serves as a coordination and administration agent for the Turkish Army-hosted course "NATO Tactical Operations in a High IED Threat Environment." It is offered at the Turkish Army Engineering School in Izmir, Turkey, and is tailored for unit-level training for nations contributing to the International Security Assistance Force.

COE-DAT runs a small cell devoted to tracking global terrorism. Using open-source data, the team scours available sources to compile daily, monthly and yearly totals of terrorist activity and then distributes the data around the globe. The findings are published in COE-DAT's quarterly newsletter. Finally, COE-DAT publishes its own journal on the study of terrorism called *Defence Against Terrorism Review*. The academic journal is published twice a year and includes articles from academic, military and policy circles. The newsletter and journal copies can be downloaded from the COE-DAT website (www.coedat.nato.int).

The Future of COE-DAT

As terrorism is sure to be part of the security environment in the near future, COE-DAT's workload will continue to grow. The centre is currently shaping and refining its Program of Work for 2014, to be completed by November 2013. Current fiscal realities necessitate that all institutions find unique and efficient ways to allocate and spend their nations' funds. To do its part, COE-DAT will continue to reach out and form relationships worldwide with like-minded institutions. This is done not only to expand networks but to avoid duplication of effort.

Finally, the COE-DAT leadership is keen to re-emphasize workshops offered at the centre. The staff will continue to scour the field to find innovative topics for future workshops. This helps ensure that COE-DAT stays on the cutting edge of the ever-adapting terrorist threat. However the terrorist threat evolves in the future, COE-DAT will be there to help Alliance members defend themselves against this menace. □

1. Go to the Allied Command Transformation website for a more complete discussion of NATO's network of centres of excellence, at <http://www.act.nato.int/general-info/centres-of-excellence>.

2. For a complete description of the Science for Peace and Security program, visit its website at <http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/78209.htm>.