

TRAINING



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Joint training initiatives improve security in the Balkans

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Today, all aspects of life are changing, influenced by globalization, rapid technological advances and increased industrial production that contributes to environmental degradation and natural resource depletion. The nature of conflicts is also changing. These geopolitical changes require better prepared militaries. Therefore, military organizations must improve their effectiveness within the context of highly complex, unpredictable and demanding operating environments.

Maximizing the use of intellectual capital has become of paramount importance. Cooperation and interoperability between the civilian sector and the military, especially regarding crisis management, terrorist threats and protection of strategic infrastructure, is a top priority for the European Union, NATO and each member nation.


South Eastern Europe Exercise and Training Network

The NATO Education and Training Network was established to support multinational and interagency cooperation in regional defense and security. NATO and the EU develop multinational projects and deliver needed military capabilities that can be used not only for military purposes, but also for emergency and crisis management in support of civilian authorities. The network uses simulated environments in computer-assisted exercises as a complex combination of live, virtual and constructive simulations to enhance readiness and joint warfighting capabilities of Southeast European countries.

In the Balkans, the South Eastern Europe Exercise and Training Network (SEEETN) develops interoperability by linking systems, forces and headquarters at regional and national levels. It connects existing simulation centers and simulation training, allowing for common capabilities in a wide range of simulations and software for the purpose of preparing armed forces in the region. Work is underway to improve synergy among nations in the region and with NATO and the EU in areas where both have pilot projects. SEEETN will bring exercises and training to those who need it and will transform the armed forces intellectually, culturally and militarily.

Multinational Solutions

Multinational organizations such as NATO must be more flexible, efficient service providers for member nations. If NATO is to



Bulgarian Marines train on board the Bulgarian Navy frigate Verni during Breeze 2014 military exercises on the Black Sea in July 2014. Seven NATO countries participated in the joint training.

REUTERS

enhance its ability to anticipate emerging security challenges and adapt capabilities accordingly, it must make more effective and efficient use of available resources. Reforming the command structure by making it leaner, more effective and less costly is a priority. But changing our mindset is the biggest challenge. Twenty years after the end of the Cold War, our focus has still not fully shifted from planning to action and implementation.

With growing interdependence and financial limitations, even the strongest NATO allies are no longer able to cope with the full spectrum of challenges. Therefore, maintaining domestic and collective defense requires collaborative solutions. This reflects a new strategic culture.

Over the past decade, European defense budgets have declined steadily. The current financial crisis is exacerbating the situation and causing deeper cuts. European armed forces have increased cooperation in developing defense capabilities. However, a number of capability gaps remain, as illustrated by the recent operation in Libya. Overcapacity is also a continuing problem at the European level. Therefore, joint acquisition, construction and development of defense capabilities, such as NATO's "Smart Defense" initiative and the EU's "Pooling and Sharing" program, should be implemented to the fullest extent and at an early stage in multinational initiatives.

Lessons learned from NATO operations, particularly those in Afghanistan and the Western Balkans, make it clear that a comprehensive political, civilian and military approach is necessary for effective crisis management. The Alliance will engage actively with other international actors before, during and after crises to encourage collaborative analysis, planning and operations to maximize coherence and effectiveness.

Joint Initiatives

Coordination achieved by the South-Eastern Europe Defence Ministerial (SEDM) initiative, launched in 1996 in Tirana, is helping resolve political-military issues in the region. Participating countries are Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Italy, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, Turkey, Ukraine and the United States. Georgia and Moldova are observers. As a mechanism intended to play an important role in making Southeast Europe secure, stable and prosperous, SEDM has considerable potential.

Its objectives are to reform armed forces in accordance with NATO and EU standards and continue the processes of Euro-Atlantic and European integration, as well as develop peace support capabilities and military cooperation while increasing confidence and transparency.

SEDM includes the following regional initiatives:

- Multinational Peace Force Southeastern Europe (also known as South-Eastern Europe Brigade or SEEBRIG)
- Southeastern Europe Simulation Network (SEESIM)
- Satellite Interconnection of Military Hospitals
- Defense/Military Support to Counter-Proliferation of WMD, Border Security and Counter-Terrorism

- Cooperation on Defence Industries, Research and Technology
- South Eastern Europe Military Education Cooperation
- Female Leaders in Security and Defence

In 2007, the militaries of Southeast Europe (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Greece, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia and Turkey) signed the terms of reference for the format of the Balkan Countries' Chiefs of Defence Conference on Military Cooperation, committing to improve and promote military cooperation at all levels and to counter potential asymmetric threats in the region. The presidents of the EU Military Committee, the commander of NATO/U.S. European Command and the commander of the Joint Command of NATO forces in Naples participate in the program.

NATO has a number of Centers of Excellence and training centers, including those under the Partnership for Peace (PfP) initiative. There are 11 PfP centers, located in Austria, Finland, Greece, Romania, Slovakia, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine and the U.S.

Educational institutions such as the NATO Defense College in Rome or the NATO School in Oberammergau, Germany, provide ample opportunities for education and training of representatives from the EU and other international organizations. The exchange of views enhances mutual understanding and builds a strong sense of a shared purpose.

NATO is expanding its exercises to include EU representatives as observers and participants. Building joint capabilities for education and training and creating joint interoperability exercises will significantly improve joint training and fill program gaps. The aim is to establish a joint global network of training capabilities using the full spectrum of live, virtual and constructive simulation. In the context of financial limitations, it has become increasingly important to increase capabilities and interoperability, preserve resources and to reduce the risk through the standardization of tactics, techniques and procedures.

In this regard, NATO seeks to develop distributed and network capabilities for training and education to be integrated with and contribute to the growth of existing national capabilities. A number of new NATO network services initiatives — NATO Education and Training Network, NATO Training Federation, Distributed Training and Education (DTE) and others — interface with national forces and assets that carry out joint operations. New education and training capabilities include training in NATO's established centers, joint distributed education, training and exercises (live), training simulations (virtual), and modeling and simulation (M&S) as part of computer-based training (constructive).

These operational requirements depend on interoperability and integration between NATO and national headquarters and forces. Increased capacities such as unmanned aerial vehicles, tracking devices for forces and assets, cyber security, air command and control systems, and anti-ballistic missile defense require new methods of education and training. Therefore, training should be made available from the

highest offices of NATO command structures to the lowest levels of NATO force structures.

SEE nations are focused on the same goals. Most participate in NATO Science and Technology and Allied Command of Transformation M&S activities. For example, the Joint Conflict and Tactical Simulations (JCATS) and Joint Theater Level Simulation (JTLS) systems are used by NATO and more than 20 countries around the world. Using JCATS and JTLS to connect Southeast Europe simulation centers with others will provide a joint constructive simulation environment. Tools developed by the NATO Communication and Information Agency (NCIA), with its technical and scientific capabilities, may play a large part in building SEEETN.

Over the past four years, focus has turned to building capabilities – training, modernization and participating in missions and operations. Exercises with main battle units have increased, during which operational procedures for crisis management with international organizations and government agencies and nongovernmental organizations have been evaluated and improved.

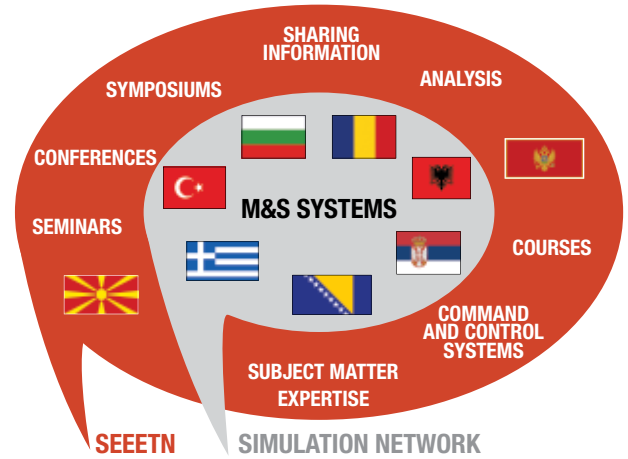
Bulgaria developed a complementary set of experiments to be conducted in conjunction with Exercises Phoenix 2010, Energy Flame 2011 and SEESIM 12 that included several NATO structures such as Supreme Allied Command of Transformation (SACT). The exercises showed SACT that Bulgaria has a serious crisis management program in place and is working hard to improve it. Phoenix 2010 provided an opportunity for NATO leaders to observe how 17 Bulgarian ministries and governmental agencies handle a crisis. SACT also used the exercises to test and validate different programs in an exercise environment, including:

- Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) Crisis Emergency Planning
- CIMIC Joint Planning, Execution and Coordination Tools
- CBRN simulation systems and instruments
- Civil-Military Fusion Center
- Strategic communication, the results of which were used in SEESIM 12
- Civil Military Legal Overview Virtual Information System
- Joint Exercise Management Module
- Exercise Scenario Resource Portal
- Distributed Training and Exercises and testing NATO Training Federation

SEESIM

The SEESIM 2012 and 2014 computer-assisted exercises were the sixth and seventh in a series within the SEDM framework and among the most important for the development of permanent capabilities in the region.

The purpose of the SEESIM exercises is to promote cooperation, coordination and interoperability of civil-military operations and reinforce real world crisis response among SEDM nations and the various SEDM



Source: Crisis Management and Disaster Response Centre of Excellence

initiatives by using M&S. The specific aim is to develop the capabilities and procedures of national and regional coordination, cooperation, and mutual assistance among the SEDM nations in the face of devastating emergencies, such as natural disasters or terrorist attacks.

The main objectives are:

- Standardize and improve national, SEEBRIG HQ and regional processes and procedures in emergency response situations and improve interoperability among the SEDM nations and SEEBRIG HQ.
- Provide a training environment to promote SEDM and NATO objectives of transparency, confidence-building and good neighborliness.
- Serve as a focal point for facilitating the integration of SEDM initiatives.
- Encourage development of national simulation capabilities.

The collaborative effort to support SACT experimentation serves as an example of smart defense. Joint Force Trainer is supported by the Capability Engineering Division of the Capability Development Directorate with representatives from the Joint Warfare Center, Joint Force Training Center and the NCIA also participating. In addition, industry is supporting Joint and Coalition Warfighting in the development of key technology critical to meeting several SACT objectives.

It seeks to show how NATO technology and processes could affect multinational exercises such as SEESIM. The results may also provide insights on how NATO can bolster the use of exercises to sustain interoperability and discover new roles for the NATO Training Centers.

The DTE experiment during SEESIM 12 provided insights on NATO's potential roles in multinational, non-NATO-led exercises. Tools and processes were introduced that otherwise would not have existed in the SEESIM 12 exercise setting. Similar to the SEEETN initiative, DTE sought to “deliver to NATO and partners a persistent, distributed combined joint training capability.”

For the SEESIM 14 exercise, the host nation (Croatia) had to find solutions for:



Ukrainian soldiers take part in exercise Rapid Trident near Yavoriv, Ukraine, in September 2014. The annual U.S.- and Ukrainian-led exercise enhances interoperability among U.S., NATO and Partnership for Peace military forces while promoting regional stability and security and included units from Bulgaria and Romania. AFP/GETTY IMAGES



- Virtual Private Network (VPN)
- Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP)
- JCATS capability
- Digital geo data for JCATS (play boxes)
- Video Teleconference (VTC) capability
- Exchange Server (email) for integration with Joint Exercise Management Module (JEMM).

It succeeded in conducting a cost effective exercise using national assets and open source solutions for the first time in the history of SEESIM.

For the last 14 years SEESIM has proved to be a major confidence-building forum in Europe. Its focus on transparency, international cooperation, and professional training and education of military and civilian personnel has contributed to mutual understanding, trust and respect throughout the region, Europe, NATO and other international organizations.

EXERCISE RESULTS

The change in the geopolitical environment has had serious consequences for militaries. Military organizations confront the ongoing challenge of how to improve effectiveness within the context of highly complex, unpredictable and demanding operational environments. It has become of paramount importance to maximize the use of organizational intellectual capital.

In light of real-life challenges, SEE countries recognize the need to develop a distributed and networked exercise and training capability to integrate and enhance existing national capabilities and prepare forces to conduct different kinds of missions.

Distributed exercises are a key element in the armed forces transformation, enabling the participants to establish a multinational federation using network technologies and sharing a common toolset and approach. At this stage, one of the major tasks of the Bulgarian Armed Forces is to develop specialized centers with a broad spectrum of capabilities for Ministry of Defense interaction with other ministries, civil agencies and organizations within the framework of civil-military cooperation.

In 2012, the Bulgarian Armed Forces created an integrated M&S system, including four centers using JCATS for constructive simulation, distributed integrated training system for live simulation, and Virtual Battlespace 2 (VBS2) for virtual simulation.

First, we try to reduce costs associated with deploying to the field or traveling to an overseas training facility. Second, we “train as we fight.” In real world operations, it is extremely likely that the various components, tactical and strategic level headquarters will be geographically separate while conducting operations, so separation is maintained to test communications, distributed working

practices and operational battle rhythm.

The chiefs of defense initiated the SEEETN project to address this training need. SEEETN will provide services such as email, Web access, VoIP, VTC, exercises, shared scenarios, M&S toolsets, and so forth, distributed via Wide Area Network or a specially designed education and training network.

SEEETN will provide the backbone by hosting the core services and functionality for each component. The core capability should be easily extendable and reconfigurable to reach and provide services to national headquarters, NATO Centers of Excellence, NATO schools, governmental and nongovernmental agencies and appropriate national exercise facilities. SEEETN will institute a common set of standards, protocols, interface middleware and procedures for M&S, exercise and training integration. It is also expected that SEEETN will demonstrate operational capabilities by supporting chiefs of defense initiative events while continuing to support education and training requirements.

CONCLUSION

NATO and the EU share common values and strategic interests and are working side by side in crisis management operations. NATO's Strategic Concept commits the Alliance to prevent crises, manage conflicts and stabilize post-conflict situations, including by working more closely with the EU and United Nations. The opportunity for closer cooperation between NATO and the EU, as well as with other actors, is an important element for the development of an international comprehensive approach to crisis management and disaster relief.

The realities of today's financial limitations require significantly increased cooperation between NATO and the EU to create new capabilities. It will be imperative for NATO to work closely with the EU, not only to avoid duplication of effort, but also to ensure that projects are coordinated and complementary. NATO-EU cooperation will demonstrate Europe's readiness to shoulder its fair share of the security burden, even when budgets are tight.

Creating the common multinational framework and expertise will increase training and educational capabilities. Creating new capabilities will provide opportunities to participate more strongly in the crisis management process and develop potential to operate in any kind of crises, which I see as a primary future mission of armed forces. That will help equalize standard operating procedures, doctrines and concepts, and will erase boundaries and accelerate the transformation of, and close cooperation between, NATO and the EU. □