

Thinking Creatively in the War on Terrorism – Leveraging NATO and the Partnership for Peace Consortium

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Introduction

“The New Terrorism” is a term commonly heard since September 11. Several terrorism experts have written on this topic, including Walter Laqueur, who wrote a book titled *The New Terrorism*, and Gideon Rose, who authored an article by the same name. *The 9/11 Commission Report* addresses the “foundations of the new terrorism” and Matthew Morgan has an article in *Parameters* titled “The Origins of the New Terrorism.” RAND has a book out on *Countering the New Terrorism* and I have a chapter in one of Reid Sawyer’s and my books titled, “Understanding al Qaeda’s Application of the New Terrorism – The Key to Victory in the Current Campaign.” So much, in fact, has been written about the new terrorism that the term has real meaning and, at least in academic and operational circles, is generally understood.

While the “new terrorism” has become an accepted part of the discussion on terrorism, new and novel methods for defeating it have not. Instead, rehashed Regan-era strategies found in works such as Sean Hannity’s *Deliver Us From Evil: Defeating Terrorism, Despotism, and Liberalism*, do-nothing strategies like those espoused by Alan Kay in “Defeating Terrorism,” or America-is-at-fault strategies as described by Katy Kelly in “Defeating Terrorism: One Step, Look in the Mirror” are more common.

Defeating Terrorism: Shaping the New Security Environment,” the second book I co-authored with Reid Sawyer, breaks some ground on this topic by articulating novel approaches for defeating the new terrorism, but these ideas were developed from a largely American and consequence management perspective.

Over the past two years, it has been my privilege to co-chair, along with Dr. Rohan Gunaratna, the Partnership for Peace Consortium’s Combating Terrorism Working Group (CTWG), a body whose charter calls for seeking new ways to address “the new terrorists” and the threat of “new terrorism.” The following article reflects my experience and shared learning with the CTWG, which encourages out-of-the-box thinking. This article also draws on my preparation for teaching a course in European Politics at the United States Military Academy as well as a new sense of respect for the opportunities for information sharing among both new and old allies in greater Europe and Central Asia.

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This article suggests three approaches for cooperative efforts to address terrorist threats. The first concerns the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), which is an essential tool with which the United States and its key allies should coordinate counterterror operations. As one pundit explains, “September 11 and the ensuing conflict require NATO leaders to think boldly and creatively about how to keep the alliance relevant.”¹ The second suggested approach is for greater use of NATO special operations forces. NATO special operations forces are the primary military forces within the alliance that can, and should, operate multilaterally and cooperatively in the war on terror. Third, greater use should be made of NATO’s Partnership for Peace (PfP) organization. The original strategic rationale for the partnership, enhancing stability and practical cooperation among the countries within the NATO periphery, has become even more compelling in the context of the war on terrorism.²

NATO

Less than 24 hours after the September 11 terrorist attacks on the United States, America’s allies in NATO agreed to invoke the alliance’s Article 5 defense guarantee – that an “attack on one” was an “attack on all.”³ However, NATO has remained on the sidelines throughout much of the U.S.-led Global War on Terrorism (GWOT). In Afghanistan, the “military capability gap” between NATO and U.S. forces prompted the U.S. to request assistance from select NATO allies (mostly those with special operations capabilities) on an individual basis, not from NATO as a multilateral alliance. And, though some NATO members provided important assistance in defeating the Taliban, Afghanistan was pretty much an American show.

Europeans understood the rationale behind going after al Qaeda in Afghanistan after 9/11, however the war in Iraq demonstrated the difficulties inherent in attempts to reach international consensus on exactly what are legitimate targets of a counterterror operation.⁴ NATO member states could not agree on whether Iraq should be categorized as a terrorism problem or whether the U.S. had the right to take action in Iraq without authorization from the UN Security Council.⁵ In fact, the Iraq war has complicated the process of gaining and maintaining broad European and international support for counterterrorism actions.⁶

Lack of capability or political consensus is a plausible reason for the lack of NATO support for the GWOT. However, the primary reason may be more academic. Ac-

¹ Philip H. Gordon, “NATO and the War on Terrorism, a Changing Alliance,” *The Brookings Review* 20, no. 3 (Summer 2002), p. 37.

² Jeffrey Simon, “Partnership for Peace: Charting a Course for a New Era,” *Strategic Forum*, no. 206 (March 2004), p. 2.

³ Philip H. Gordon, p. 1.

⁴ Nora Bensahel, *The Counterterror Coalitions: Cooperation with Europe, NATO, and the European Union* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand, 2003), p. 22.

⁵ Nora Bensahel, p. 17.

⁶ Richard A. Clarke and Barry R. McCaffrey, “NATO’s Role in Confronting International Terrorism,” *Atlantic Council Policy Paper* (June 2004), p. viii.

ording to a recent Rand report, NATO has not yet been able to reorient itself from its Cold-War mindset to meet the challenges of terrorism.⁷ This assessment may be a bit harsh. NATO has undertaken a number of steps to address terrorism, including the establishment of an internal terrorism task force to coordinate the work of many different offices within the NATO staff.⁸

NATO is also pursuing several initiatives that are designed to improve its long-term counterterror capabilities, including adopting a military concept for combating terrorism, launching the new capabilities initiative, considering a NATO Rapid Response Force, addressing WMD threats, improving civil-military emergency planning and consequence management, and enhancing cooperative relationships and training with partners.⁹

The post-conflict reconstruction phase of the Afghanistan campaign has provided both a “useful model and a key test for NATO in meeting the challenges of terrorism and the new international security environment.”¹⁰ In January 2002, NATO forces were invited by the newly established Afghan government to operate under UN mandate as the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). Since its deployment, ISAF has been under the command of NATO members; first the United Kingdom, then Turkey.¹¹ “On 11 August 2003, NATO took over command of ISAF and since then has been responsible for its coordination and planning. This is NATO’s first operation outside the Euro-Atlantic area.”¹²

Other efforts are also underway to better enable NATO to contribute to the long-term counterterrorism effort. At NATO’s Prague Summit on 21-22 November, 2002, heads of state and governmental representatives of NATO member countries adopted many measures that will strengthen NATO’s preparedness against terrorism and the spread of weapons of mass destruction (WMD).¹³ Some of these measures include better cyber-defense efforts, creating a NATO rapid response force of 21,000 elite forces, streamlining command functions to increase responsiveness, focusing on defense against biological and chemical weapons, improving civil-preparedness of member countries for managing the consequences of possible WMD attacks, and enhancing NATO’s relations with other international organizations so that information is shared and appropriate action is taken more effectively in the common fight against terrorism.¹⁴

Despite these efforts many feel that NATO could do more to confront international terrorism. According to a recent Atlantic Council Policy Paper titled “NATO’s Role in

⁷ Nora Bensahel, p. ix.

⁸ Ibid., p. 25.

⁹ Ibid., p. 25.

¹⁰ Richard A. Clarke, p. 26.

¹¹ NATO’s Contribution to the Fight Against Terrorism, *NATO Issues* (28 Oct. 2004), accessed from <http://www.nato.int/terrorism/index.htm>, p. 2.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

Confronting International Terrorism,” NATO has significant comparative advantages that are under-optimized in a counterterror context. According to co-authors General Barry McCaffrey and Richard Clarke, NATO should play a major role in the following counterterrorism functions: generating political will, providing intelligence, managing coordination and integration efforts, interdicting terrorist recruitment, financing, supply and operations, preventing terrorist operations, managing the consequences of terrorist attacks, arranging security assistance, educating the population, particularly potential sources of recruitment, and organizing research and development.¹⁵ Clearly, NATO’s ability to operationalize this comprehensive list of counterterror competencies would be of great benefit to the global effort against terrorism. Unfortunately, my own view is that the list is too comprehensive for three reasons.

First, in Europe terrorism is viewed as a crime that most Europeans believe can best be addressed by crime-fighting procedures and tools rather than overt military methods. One result of this belief has been a disconnect over the potential role of NATO in fighting terrorism.¹⁶ “While some U.S. policy makers see the Alliance as having a role in helping coordinate military training and doctrines relevant for fighting terrorism, many Europeans greet such suggestions with skepticism – not surprisingly given their doubts about the military response to terrorism generally.”¹⁷ Second, the U.S. does not need to draw on NATO for its military competencies and will most likely choose to avoid giving NATO more than a minimal role in future military operations unless those operations are in a NATO country.¹⁸ Instead of working multi-laterally with NATO, the U.S. will work unilaterally with individual NATO member states whose military capabilities are either compatible or complimentary to those of U.S. forces. Furthermore, the ability to reach a consensus about a greater NATO role in counterterrorism efforts has been complicated by U.S. military action against Iraq.

It was easy to reach an international consensus on the need to go after al Qaeda, particularly after the September 11 attacks, because most states perceived al Qaeda as a fundamental threat to their sovereignty. Yet few other potential targets of the counterterror campaign will inspire such a unified international response. Iraq demonstrated the difficulties of trying to reach international consensus on which groups and states are the legitimate targets of counterterror operations.¹⁹

Third, while most members believe NATO needs to expand its counterterrorism authority and capabilities—particularly in consequence management—some do not. For example, France argues that NATO’s role in counterterrorism is sufficient as it is

¹⁵ Richard A. Clarke, p. 14.

¹⁶ David L. Aaron, Ann M. Beauchesne, Frances G. Burwell, C. Richard Nelson, K. Jack Riley, Brian Zimmer, “The Post 9/11 Partnership: Transatlantic Cooperation against Terrorism,” *Atlantic Council Policy Paper* (December 2004), p. 12.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Nora Bensahel, p. 32.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

now and that consequence management operations should be handled by the European Union.²⁰

A lack of consensus and the capabilities gap most likely render the Atlantic Council list of “comparative advantages” unachievable at this time. Therefore, and unfortunately, expectations regarding further commitments from NATO in the fight against international terrorism should be reduced. However, there are two areas where existing cooperation could and should be expanded. First, increased use of NATO special operations forces (SOF) in the campaign against international terrorism should be considered. Second, NATO should take full advantage of the relationships developed through the Partnership for Peace (PfP) in order to work with interested nations on security assistance and other security measures related to the struggle against international terrorism.²¹

Special Operations Forces

Highlighted by President Bush at the NATO Summit in Prague in 2002 as one of NATO’s most important capabilities,²² SOF provide commanders a critical edge by supplying a variety of niche capabilities and the ability to develop new capabilities rapidly.²³ During Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) in Afghanistan, special operations forces from Denmark, France, Germany, Norway, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and Greece played critical roles.²⁴ “Special forces from these countries often operated under U.S. command in a wide variety of missions, which included hunting down fleeing members of al Qaeda and the Taliban, gathering intelligence, and advising the Northern Alliance.”²⁵ In November 2001, the United Kingdom was the first NATO partner to provide (SOF) forces to OEF, but other partners followed soon after and were used extensively in Operation Anaconda (in the mountains of eastern Afghanistan) and in a series of raids that followed.²⁶

These special forces were extraordinarily important to the success of the overall operation, easing some of the burden on U.S. special forces and often offering unique

²⁰ Ibid., p. 52

²¹ Richard A. Clarke, p. viii.

²² “Bush Calls for New NATO Capabilities,” *BBC News* (20 Nov. 2002), accessed from http://64.233.161.104/search?q=cache:f_Eh_-C1dSEJ:news.bbc.co.uk/go/rss/-/1/hi/world/europe/2494557.stm+NATO+Special+Operations+Forces+IRAQ&hl=en.

²³ John Jogerst, “What’s So Special about Special Operations Forces,” *Aerospace Power Journal* (Summer 2002), accessed from www.airpower.au.af.mil/airchronicles/apj/apj02/sum02/jogerst.html. See also, James Graff Brussels, “What’s NATO For,” *Time* (Nov. 17, 2002), accessed from <http://www.time.com/time/europe/magazine/article/0,13005,901021125-391501-1,00.html>.

²⁴ Nora Bensahel, p. 11. See also, “NATO: Contributions to the War on Terrorism,” *U.S. Department of State Fact Sheet* (31 October 2002), accessed from www.state.gov/p/eur/rls/fs/14627.htm.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

capabilities. U.S. military officers particularly praised the capabilities of the Norwegian special forces, for example, because their extensive mountain training proved useful in Afghanistan's rocky terrain.²⁷

Partnership for Peace

NATO's Partnership for Peace program provides a useful framework for initiating and building a range of useful counterterrorism activities.²⁸ The (PfP) was established in 1994 to foster cooperation with the states of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. It was also a "training vehicle" for aspiring NATO members. However, the character and purpose of the PfP has changed significantly in the past few years. For example, ten previous members of the PfP are now full members of the NATO Alliance (Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Romania, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania) and the remaining members are not likely to be candidates for NATO membership in the near future.²⁹ Therefore, the PfP might have to reorient its activities so they focus less on preparing for NATO membership and more on leveraging its institutional framework in other areas. One possible direction for future cooperation would be to address common threats such as terrorism.³⁰

In fact, at the Prague Summit in November 2002, NATO approved the Partnership Action Plan Against Terrorism (PAP-T), which commits partners to the following: intensifying consultation on armaments and civil emergency planning; enhancing preparedness for combating terrorism; increasing the exchange of banking information; improving border controls; and enhancing consequence management and civil emergency planning.³¹ According to Clarke and McCaffrey, the plan has yet to achieve very much, "in part due to the diverse nature of the Partnership countries." The Istanbul Summit in October 2004 provided an opportunity to review and invigorate the implementation of the PAP-T, but it will be some time before the "reinvigoration" can be assessed.

Jeffrey Simon writes, "To keep the Partnership for Peace relevant and effective over the next decade, partners need to focus on developing capabilities to combat terrorism and other transnational threats."³² I agree, and one of the principle vehicles that can be used to develop these objectives is the Partnership for Peace Consortium of Defense Academies and Security Studies Institutes (PfP Consortium). The PfP Consortium is an international organization dedicated to strengthening defense and military education and research through amplified institutional and national cooperation. Cur-

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Richard A. Clarke, p. 36.

²⁹ The remaining PfP members include: Albania, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Croatia, Finland, Georgia, Ireland, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Russia, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan.

³⁰ Nora Bensahel, p. 33.

³¹ For the full text of the Partnership Action Plan Against Terrorism see: <http://www.nato.int/docu/basicxt/b021122e.htm>.

³² Jeffrey Simon, p. 2.

rently, the PfP Consortium consists of more than 350 organizations based in 42 of the countries comprising the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) region. It was originally proposed by former U.S. Secretary of Defense William Cohen and his German counterpart, former Minister of Defense Volker Ruehe, at a 12 June 1998 meeting of the Defense Ministers of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC-D). They envisioned the PfP Consortium as an activity “in the spirit of PfP,” that would, “...strengthen defense and military education through enhanced national and institutional cooperation.” Specific objectives of the initiative included increasing the number of individuals in government and private sectors with defense and security policy expertise, promoting professional military education in participating nations, encouraging collaborative approaches to defense education, and involving non-governmental institutes, universities, and similar bodies, as well as governmental defense academies and security studies institutes in the activities of the consortium. Consortium activities include an annual conference, working groups that meet at the expert level, a Web site and a scholarly journal.

Presently, the PfP Consortium has ten working groups.³³ The Combating Terrorism Working Group (CTWG) is co-chaired by Dr. Rohan Gunaratna and me. As its name implies, CTWG focuses specifically on combating terrorism. It has 23 members from 17 countries. All in the group have terrorism, counterterrorism, or homeland security positions in their respective governments or academic institutions. The CTWG’s mission is to develop an internationally recognized body of terrorism experts to better understand international, regional, and domestic terrorist threats, to educate future leaders who will have counterterrorism responsibilities, and to provide policy analysis and assistance to leaders dealing with current and future terrorist threats. The group publishes (as we have in this issue of *Connections*), it teaches, as it did at the NATO School’s inaugural Terrorism Course in November 2004, and it provides policy guidance as most members help shape policy in daily jobs in their own countries. We could do more.

We could work on common counterterrorism interoperability doctrine for border guards, interior ministries, and police. Along with the PfP Consortium’s Curriculum Development and Advanced Distributive Learning Working Groups, we could develop simulations, act as role players, and play the “red team” for PfP and NATO counterterror exercises. Developing a core course curriculum in counterterrorism studies for undergraduate or graduate military academies is another core competency of the CTWG. Other PfP Consortium working groups, particularly the Security Sector Reform and Regional Stability (Southern Caucasus, Central Asia, and Southeastern Europe) Working Groups, individually, or with other groups, could add substantively to the development of capabilities for combating terrorism and other transnational threats.

The possibilities are endless and PfP Working Groups are cheap. In fiscal year 2004, the total cost of the Combating Terrorism Working Group was \$23,900. As vol-

³³ The working groups are as follows: Advanced Distributed Learning, Curriculum Development, Security Sector Reform, Regional Stability in Southern Caucasus, Regional Stability in Southeast Europe, Regional Stability in Central Asia, Euro Atlantic Security Studies, Impact of Information Technology on National Security, Military History and Combating Terrorism.

unteers in an “organization of the willing,” members of PfP Working Groups do not receive compensation for their work. The consortium pays for modest travel and per-diem costs for members from PfP countries. Members from NATO or other countries are self-payers who rely on their home organizations, or in some cases themselves, to cover the costs of meetings and travel. The incentives for being a member of a working group are varied. Some believe the interactive dialogue is important to continued stability, others like the opportunities for expression through panels, meetings, and publications. Upward mobility seems to be another incentive for CTWG members. Three of the group’s members have been promoted to jobs of significantly more responsibility in the past few months. Leveraging the PfP Consortium and its member groups in the campaign against international terrorism would be a win-win situation for the US, NATO, PfP member states, and members of the working groups.

Conclusion

This paper advocates a more prominent role for NATO in the global effort to confront terrorism. Like General Barry McCaffrey, I believe NATO has and ought to continue to have an important role in the coordination of aspects of Western national responses, particularly—though not exclusively—those in which military forces are going to play a primary or supporting part.³⁴ However, this paper recognizes the capability and political limitations that temper the support NATO can actually give. Two areas of potential support that could be useful but are not controversial or adversarial are the NATO special operations community and the NATO sponsored Partnership for Peace Consortium.

³⁴ Richard Clarke, p. vii. Multiple conversations with General Barry McCaffrey, the Olin National Security Chair in the Department of Social Sciences at the United States Military Academy, where I am the head of the Department of Social Sciences.

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