

Needed—A NATO Stabilization and Reconstruction Force

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Overview

At the Istanbul Summit in June 2004, NATO endorsed the further transformation of military capabilities to make them “more modern, more usable, and more deployable to carry out the full range of Alliance missions.” The Istanbul Communiqué especially called for continuing progress on the NATO Response Force and the Prague Capabilities Commitments.

To accomplish this, NATO needs a new initiative for its defense agenda: creation of better forces and capabilities for stabilization and reconstruction (S&R) operations outside Europe, including the greater Middle East. The real challenge is to reorganize, refocus, and rebalance current assets so that NATO can respond promptly and effectively to future contingencies. This challenge can be met by creating a NATO S&R Force (SRF). This force would be a logical complement to the NATO Response Force, but would be structured differently. Instead of a small standing joint force, the SRF would consist of flexible and modular national forces totaling one or two division-equivalents, mostly ground forces, that could be assembled to generate the necessary mix of capabilities for S&R operations. In this new NATO defense concept, the combination of the NATO Response Force for rapid, forcible-entry missions, the Allied Rapid Reaction Corps or other High Readiness Forces for major combat operations under a combined joint task force, and an SRF would provide a full-spectrum capability for the new strategic environment. NATO adoption of this three-pillar posture will constitute a major step toward preparing for future responsibilities.

Emerging Strategic Requirement

NATO faces a permanent need for improved stabilization and reconstruction (S&R) military assets. To launch S&R operations in Bosnia, Kosovo, and Afghanistan, NATO had to assemble forces on an ad-hoc basis. Improvisation worked in these cases because the operations made only modest demands on existing forces and because mobilization was not urgent. Future contingencies might not be so accommodating. Although many of the necessary S&R capabilities exist within NATO and Partnership for Peace (PfP) forces, they are not organized into deployable assets that can provide cohesive, effective response options. A NATO Stabilization and Reconstruction

Force (SRF) would transform these disparate and distributed capabilities into trained and ready assets for future S&R operations.

The Istanbul defense agenda was a logical continuation of decisions made at the Prague Summit of 2002, which launched the NATO Response Force (NRF), the Prague Capabilities Commitments (PCC), and a new Allied Command Transformation (ACT). At Istanbul, political leaders endorsed further progress on these measures. They adopted new force goals, reformed the NATO defense planning process, and urged an intensified focus by members and the Alliance as a whole on creating usable forces and capabilities. These measures were embedded in a communiqué that called attention to growing security involvements in the zone from the Balkans to Central Asia. The same communiqué also pledged to expand NATO-led Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) in Afghanistan, announced that NATO was prepared to help train Iraqi security forces, and offered the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative to nations of the Greater Middle East. The effect was to make clear that NATO security and defense horizons will continue expanding outside Europe.

The Istanbul Summit set the stage for a focus on the next phase of NATO defense improvements. Requirements for S&R forces and capabilities are growing as NATO becomes more involved in military interventions requiring stabilization and reconstruction beyond Europe, especially in Central Asia and the Greater Middle East. In such contingencies, stabilization refers to the process of halting residual violence, suppressing remaining opposition, and bringing order and security to the occupied country. Reconstruction refers to early measures taken by occupying military forces to repair damage and restore such essentials as electrical power, medicine, and transportation before the arrival of civilian nation-building assets. Creating S&R forces requires focused effort because their capabilities and assets are different from those of standard ground combat formations. Although they incorporate some combat units for security missions, they rely heavily on combat support and combat service support (CS/CSS) units and must be designed with synergistic capabilities and cumulative effects in mind.

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An S&R operation can require as large a force as a major combat operation and involve such disparate capabilities as light infantry, military police, psychological operations, civil affairs, contract administrators, civil engineers, and medical teams. Often, combat and S&R forces will need to operate together. For example, combat medical units may have to care for wounded troops at the same time they are needed to restore hospital services to an occupied country or prevent the spread of infectious diseases. Similarly, combat engineers may be preoccupied with preparing defensive positions, removing mines, and keeping lines of communication open to military traffic at the same time they are needed to restore electrical power, sewage, and communications to occupied cities. S&R forces must be designed to perform such functions and be given the assets and staying power to perform them. Being prepared for S&R operations requires forces and capabilities in being, not a mobilization strategy to assemble S&R forces from scratch for each contingency.

The U.S. invasion of Iraq in early 2003 shows the complications that can arise when major combat operations quickly give way to demanding S&R operations. The U.S. and British ground force of 5 1/3 divisions, which swept over Iraq in six weeks, fielded about 100,000 troops assigned to CS/CSS units. But most of these units were configured to support major combat activities, not S&R operations. Considerable time was lost as these forces tried to shift gears and as new CS/CSS forces were deployed from outside the theater. Had tailored S&R forces been available from the onset, the occupation of Iraq might have gotten off to a better start. NATO would do well to learn from such experiences.

NATO S&R Experience

Recent NATO experience with S&R operations illustrates the difficulty of the mission.

Albania

A successful S&R operation was conducted in 1997 when Italian forces intervened to stabilize a chaotic situation in Albania. Guided by a UN and Organization on Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) charter, the operation was launched with 8,000 troops after only 13 days of preparation. The Italians initially focused on reestablishing law and order through policing operations that restored stability and set the stage for elections. They also distributed foods and goods, provided tent housing and medical aid, and repaired some infrastructure. Within 6 months, the mission was successfully completed and the forces withdrawn.

Bosnia and Kosovo

NATO interventions in Bosnia and Kosovo have been more problematic. The missions broadly achieved the Alliance's security

goals but have been less effective at nation-building. After the Dayton Accord was signed in 1995, a large NATO Implementation Force (IFOR) of 60,000 troops was deployed to Bosnia to enforce the peace and help establish a foundation of security upon which a unified state could be built. Initially, heavy combat forces were needed, but soon lighter forces equipped for a wide spectrum of S&R missions were required. Over time, IFOR became the Stabilization Force (SFOR), which gradually declined to 7,000 troops. Over the past 9 years, SFOR has succeeded in enforcing the peace, but has not been able to heal Bosnia's ethnic wounds.

In 1999, NATO deployed the Kosovo Force (KFOR) after Serbian forces withdrew from the province. KFOR began with 50,000 troops, but has declined to 20,000 or fewer. KFOR was called upon to perform a similar spectrum of missions: deterrence of further ethnic warfare, law enforcement, and reconstruction missions. KFOR has largely kept the peace for 5 years, but Kosovo remains divided by serious ethnic tensions. The long-term prospects for democracy and peace in both countries are unclear.

Afghanistan

Deployment of the all-European International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) into Afghanistan began in 2002, after the U.S. invasion and subsequent fall of the Taliban. NATO took command of ISAF in August 2003. Originally the 6,500 troops were to secure only Kabul, but the mission has expanded to include 5 of the country's 32 provinces. PRTs are being used to help carry out this larger agenda. Recently, NATO decided to reinforce ISAF with 2 rapid-reaction units of about 1,000 troops each for the Afghan elections. These 2 units will be backed-up by another 2,000 troops in Europe that could be deployed rapidly, if necessary. Performing combat operations elsewhere against lingering Taliban and al Qaeda elements in Afghanistan remains the task of U.S. and other forces. While Afghanistan is vastly different from the Balkans, ISAF has been called upon to perform a similar wide spectrum of S&R missions, including security and reconstruction under a UN mandate. Since 2002, Afghanistan has made progress toward establishing a democracy, but the government remains weak, and local warlords and guerilla resistance mark the countryside and eastern provinces. Critics commonly charge that the European troop deployments in Afghanistan are too small to meet S&R requirements. A multiyear NATO deployment in Afghanistan seems likely, but again the prospects for a stable, democratic government are unclear.

Iraq

Whether NATO will become involved in Iraq remains to be seen, but a majority of NATO countries, led by Britain and Poland, are part of the coalition force, which today numbers about 150,000 troops. NATO is providing support to the Polish-led multinational divisions and has agreed to help train Iraqi security forces. Thus far, peace enforcement and security have been more demanding than in Bosnia, Kosovo, or Afghanistan. Coalition forces have been called upon to deal with guerilla warfare and violence while simultaneously performing a wide variety of reconstruction missions, including restoration of economic services, medical support, and infrastructure

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repair. A multiyear presence through 2005 is envisioned, but may need to be extended. Much will depend upon whether an effective democratic government emerges and if the Kurds, Sunnis, and Shiites can live together peacefully in one country.

Preparing for the Future

What lessons do recent S&R experiences hold for NATO? First, the requirement for S&R operations will continue, and the experience of NATO members in these types of operations needs to be institutionalized. Second, NATO may be required to perform several S&R operations simultaneously. Third, S&R operations likely will continue to be problematic and will require close collaboration of military and civilian organizations in the application of force, diplomacy, and economic aid.

To date, NATO S&R operations have been reasonably successful, but only modestly demanding of forces and missions. What will happen if NATO accepts greater responsibility for Iraq or must deal with an even larger contingency? If more demanding situations arise, NATO shortcomings will be exposed. Virtually all European forces now assigned to NATO as readily available formations are configured for major combat operations. The manpower and ready formations to generate a sizable sustained S&R response are lacking, as are a common doctrine and interoperability. Additionally, NATO-assigned forces have capability shortfalls, including integrated logistics, modern C4ISR* networks, long-range strategic mobility, civil affairs, administrators, special operations forces, linguists, construction and civil engineers, medical units, and humanitarian assistance. Reducing these shortcomings and deficiencies is a key reason for creating improved NATO S&R forces and capabilities.

Reorganizing for S&R

The American Model

A framework for appraising European forces for S&R can be established by reviewing American forces and experience. Thus far, the U.S. military has chosen not to create specialized forces for S&R operations but to “re-role” combat forces for these operations. Since the invasion of Iraq, interest has grown in the idea of creating tailored S&R forces that can be deployed promptly as major combat operations subside. Such tailored forces have the potential to perform S&R operations effectively and efficiently, with perhaps half the manpower of a traditional combat force. To capitalize upon these advantages, a recent National Defense University study proposed creation of two S&R joint command organizations, one active and one reserve component.¹

Roughly division-size, each joint formation would consist of a command staff and four subordinate or brigade-level staffs to provide command and control, including mission planning and execution. Each joint formation also would include S&R battalions in such areas as military police, civil affairs, engineers, medical support, and PSYOPs. When the situation merits, this joint formation of about 11,300 troops could be accompanied by a combat brigade and CS/CSS support command, raising the total to about 18,200 troops (table 1).

* command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance

Table 1: Illustrative U.S. S&R Joint Command

Standard Formations	Number	Manpower
Headquarters Staff	(5)	725
Military Police Battalions	(4)	2164
Civil Affairs Battalions	(4)	584
Construction/Civil Engineer Battalions	(4)	2692
Area Medical Battalions	(4)	1442
PSYOP Battalions	(4)	1000
Other Battalions	(6)	2707
Sub-Total		11,314

Combat Reinforcements

CS/CSS Command	(1)	2957
Stryker Combat Brigade	(1)	3937
Total		18,208

These two commands would provide modular capabilities that could be tailored to handle a wide range of situations. For example, two brigades could be dispatched to Central Command and two to Pacific Command. If necessary, the two commands could generate eight brigades that could be allocated to regional combatant commands. The effect would be to increase the U.S. military capacity to handle two medium-sized contingencies similar to Iraq. Alternatively, two such forces could be used on a rotational basis to provide an enduring presence for a single contingency.

A key of the National Defense University study is that NATO can create a viable S&R posture of two division-sized formations by organizing only 36,000 troops. This equates to only 2 to 3 percent of the 1.6 million active-duty troops now fielded by European armies in NATO. There is ample manpower to create such a force without drawing away from the NRF, the High Readiness Forces (HRF), or other priority forces for major combat operations. Such a posture would not meet all plausible S&R requirements, but it would enable NATO to meet most requirements. Multinational integration could be pursued at lower levels than commonly is the case for major combat operations as forces using lower technology can perform many S&R missions. Indeed, S&R operations provide lower-tech militaries a way to perform valuable missions for NATO. Militaries from the southern region and Eastern Europe thus could participate, as could PFP countries. A brief analysis of some of the forces available follows:

Italy

Among the Europeans, Italy has been a leader in preparing for S&R missions. The future, all-professional Italian army will consist of 10 brigades: three heavy, four medium, and three light. These brigades will be designed to provide modularity and task-organization and will have attached CS/CSS units for dual use in combat support and S&R missions. Important units for S&R missions include an ISTAR-Electronic Warfare Brigade, Civil/Military Cooperation Group South, engineer units, a nuclear biological chemical regiment, and a PSYOP regiment. Italy has established a crisis response and S&R training center focused on doctrinal development, conceptual advancement and application, and lessons learned.

Germany and Poland

The German Bundeswehr is undergoing a major transformation to enable power projection. The future German military will consist of about 250,000 uniformed personnel, of which about 30,000 will be tasked to major combat units for assignment to the NRF, other NATO formations, and the European Rapid Reaction Force (ERRF). An additional 70,000 troops will be assigned to stability operations, thus providing a rotational capacity to support deployments of 14,000 troops. Remaining personnel will be assigned to CS/CSS units, some of which could be employed for S&R operations. The Polish military also is well-suited to make contributions to NATO S&R missions. The Polish army has 120,300 personnel in 6 combat divisions and associated units. Poland currently maintains no forces exclusively designated for S&R missions, but it does field CS/CSS, CIMINC, humanitarian, and intelligence units that could be employed for this purpose.

Britain and France

Both countries are NATO leaders in preparing their military forces for the information age and power-projection operations. Britain's relatively small army of eight brigades will remain primarily configured for high-tech combat operations as part of the NRF and Allied Rapid Reaction Corps (ARRC) and in partnership with U.S. forces. Britain takes seriously the need to be prepared for peacekeeping and S&R operations, but it plans to rely on re-roleing and dual training of combat forces, because its small force does not permit specialization in S&R operations. The downsized French army of several maneuver brigades is intended mainly for major combat operations as part of NATO forces or the ERRF. France is transforming its military to achieve a high-tech combat force. It plans to rely primarily on re-roleing of combat formations for S&R missions.

Netherlands and Canada

Both of these countries have long-standing records of participation in NATO peacekeeping missions. The Netherlands military includes 55,000 active personnel, with a marine brigade and an army of 23,000 that fields 3 brigades, plus special operations units. The Netherlands military has relevant S&R capabilities in such areas as military police, intelligence, civil affairs, CIMIC, medical units, and transport. Because the Netherlands military is designed to provide a joint combat force, it has long resisted schemes for it to specialize in any niche area. It probably will make some contributions to NATO S&R forces and capabilities, but not at the expense of altering its basic structure or orientation. The Canadian army suffers from budgetary shortfalls that complicate the task of funding expensive international deployments. As a result, Canada will resist any specialization schemes that strip core military competency from its army of 19,000 troops. Still, Canada could contribute S&R assets in areas such as military police, judicial experts, and election monitors.

Spain and Sweden

Although the recent changeover in Spain's government clouds the situation, the Spanish military has a positive attitude about participating in S&R operations within the limits of its forces and budgets. The Spanish army of 92,000 troops is organized into traditional combat formations that include a rapid reaction division and a mechanized division. These formations have a standard allotment of CS/CSS units, some of which could be made available for S&R missions. Spain will need NATO guidance on how to prepare for S&R operations. While Sweden is not a member of NATO, it is a PfP member with a willingness to participate in some NATO missions. It possesses a small but modern and well-armed military that could take part in NATO or EU/ERRF military operations. Its army of 19,000 active troops includes armored and infantry regiments supported by standard CS/CSS units.

Other European militaries also possess assets and capabilities suited to S&R operations, but only a few have undertaken detailed analysis and planning of how they could best contribute. Some countries can provide a wide spectrum of units; others will be able to make only niche contributions. All will need guidance from NATO on strategic concepts, force-design standards, and programmatic priorities.

Of the nations surveyed above, Italy, Germany, and Poland seem the best candidates for organizing dedicated and specialized S&R forces. All three countries possess relatively large armies with diminished border defense missions. Preparing for S&R missions appears to be a logical next

step for them, while they continue to contribute to the NRF, ARRC, and other NATO combat formations. S&R contributions would enable them to preserve force structures and budgets as well as to contribute to NATO strategic preparedness. Italy already is moving in this direction, Germany is starting to do so, and the Polish military seems willing. Spain may fall into this category, depending on the strategic policies of its new government. The Netherlands, Canada, and Sweden provide examples of countries with small but well-prepared militaries that have a forthcoming attitude toward participation in traditional peacekeeping missions, but also must remain prepared for major combat operations. They likely will be willing and able to make limited contributions to S&R operations, but will resist specialization in this area.

When this group of 9 NATO and PfP members is generalized across the Alliance, some judgments stand out. Beyond question, European countries as a whole possess considerable military manpower and relevant assets for creating S&R forces and capabilities, although constraints and impediments must be overcome. Because of the need to retain combat preparedness, many countries will be able to devote only a small portion of forces to S&R preparedness. Continued reliance by some countries upon conscription, coupled with the need to retain large rotational pools, also will limit the number of troops available for S&R deployments at any single time. Many European militaries judge that they already are being stretched by today's relatively small NATO deployments in the Balkans, Afghani-

fortunately, many of the core European assets already exist scattered throughout European militaries in service of traditional combat forces

stan, and Iraq. Management changes will be needed to enlarge on the pool of usable NATO military forces.

Fortunately, many of the core European assets already exist. They are scattered throughout European militaries in service of traditional combat forces for border defense, many of which are not critical to NATO's preparedness for major combat operations. The task is mainly one of reorganizing, refocusing, and rebalancing these assets so that they can be brought together and harnessed in service of S&R missions. Performing this task may take time, but it does not promise to be highly expensive because S&R is a low-cost enterprise. Some new equipment and training will be needed, but most changes likely can be accommodated within existing budgets if savings from ongoing manpower cuts are applied to investments. With top-down management guidance from NATO, considerable progress seems achievable over the course of a few years.

Launching S&R Force Development

Some observers may judge that NATO can meet its emerging S&R needs merely by planning to re-role traditional combat forces for this mission and provide them extra training. A sense of perspective, however, is needed here. Re-roleing can be part of the solution, but it is not the solution. Traditional combat forces must remain focused on main war-fighting missions. Inevitably, they will be marginal and inefficient performers in large S&R operations, which are demanding and require unique skills of their own. NATO needs designated forces and capabilities for these operations that can be used alone or augmented by traditional combat forces.

If the strategic requirement for NATO S&R forces is clear-cut, what about the concerns posed by some observers? One concern is that an S&R force might interfere with progress on fielding the NRF. A second concern is that the United States might not participate adequately in NATO S&R missions. A third concern is that a NATO S&R force might drag the Europeans into Iraq and other conflicts from which they would prefer to remain aloof. All three concerns fade when stock is taken of the situation. NATO has the manpower and wealth to field an SRF as well as the NRF and should do so. Indeed, if an SRF is not fielded, pressures might arise to employ the NRF for S&R missions, thus detracting from its original purpose. Likewise, the United States will be able to contribute strongly to such missions if it creates S&R forces of its own. Creation of a NATO SRF does not mean that Europeans will be dragged into unwanted endeavors: their membership on the North Atlantic Council (NAC) will continue to provide them veto power over such commitments. The conclusion thus is that, although a NATO S&R Force gives rise to some issues of concern, these issues are resolvable through sensible coalition planning.

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Charting the future can begin by addressing four issues:

- What operational concept should guide NATO planning for S&R operations?
- How will NATO's military command structure be affected by S&R operations?
- What options does NATO have at its disposal to guide force preparations?
- How should NATO act in the aftermath of the Istanbul Summit?

Flexibility, Modularity, and Capability

An initial step toward creating an operational concept can be taken by positing how S&R and major combat operations might work together in a scenario commonly used for NATO defense planning. Suppose a major crisis erupts outside Europe that requires NATO to deploy sizable combat forces rapidly to long distances for war-fighting. NATO likely would respond by first deploying the NRF to conduct initial strike operations. Then, it might deploy the ARRC, a corps-sized HRF that can operate four combat divisions, along with commensurate air and naval forces, under overall command of a Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF). If necessary, more HRF forces could be deployed. This joint force would be

responsible for performing the major combat operations needed to achieve NATO's wartime goals. As the combat operations approach completion, the next phase of the campaign begins: war-termination and occupation of enemy territory that requires S&R operations for several months. At this stage, NATO S&R forces enter the picture. Two division-sized formations might deploy into the occupation zone before combat operations are complete. As the transition from combat to S&R operations occurs, S&R forces might replace two of the original ARRC combat divisions, which would be withdrawn. The resulting force of 2 combat divisions and 2 S&R division-equivalents might remain in the occupation zone for 6 months or more. If a longer deployment is needed, other forces generated by NATO during this period could replace these S&R forces.

The chart below portrays a notional NATO three-tier ground posture for a major operation outside Europe. This deployable posture is a small portion of the total posture endorsed by NATO military authorities for all missions, including in-place forces for border defense.

Table 2: Illustrative NATO Force Capabilities for New Missions Outside Europe

Type of Force	Size of Posture
NRF	1 brigade
HRF for Major Combat Operations (HRF/MCO)	4 to 8 divisions
SRF	2 divisions

This operational concept, one of several different possibilities, helps illuminate strategic priorities for building and employing S&R forces. The key point is that S&R forces should not be viewed as separate from NATO warfighting forces. Rather, the two forces should be viewed in integrated terms, with warfighting operations taking place first and S&R operations following. S&R forces should be operationally capable of working closely with combat forces in situations where a mix of hostilities, war-termination, and peace establishment is taking place. This concept also indicates that readiness levels for S&R forces need not be as high as for the NRF, which is ready to deploy within 7 to 30 days. But S&R forces should be ready within 30 to 90 days, which is the readiness standard of normal HRF, rather than the 90 to 180 days of Forces of Lower Readiness (FLR). As for sustainment, S&R forces should have 6 to 12 months of staying power—long enough to provide a bridge to the NATO process for generating additional forces.

This operational concept, however, need not function as a strait-jacket for designing S&R forces to fit only one contingency. In today's world, S&R forces must be able to operate effectively across a wide range of contingencies. In one case, a brigade- or division-equivalent might be needed; in another, the entire S&R posture of two division-equivalents and eight brigades might deploy to a single crisis location. Indeed, three contingencies might erupt concurrently: one requiring a brigade-size force, another two or three brigades, and yet another four or five brigades. Or a single contingency might require one S&R division-size force for 6 months, followed by a second division-size force for another 6 months.

Ultimately, a NATO SRF must be flexible, adaptable, modular, and versatile: capable of being deployed in a variety of force packages designed to carry out the operations at hand. NATO should be able to draw upon the entire SRF posture to uniquely tailor each brigade. For example, one brigade might require a standard allotment of forces, another a large concentration of infantry forces and military police for security missions, and still another mostly engineers, medical units, and similar CS/CSS assets. Each of these brigades might require expertise in different areas, plus tailored assets.

Command and C4ISR Architecture

If NATO is to be serious about building S&R forces, a NATO SRF will need its own command structure. S&R missions require special leadership skills and many special, civil-oriented staff skills unique to stabilization and reconstruction. In most cases, S&R forces will deploy under command of a NATO CJTF, which will be directed by one of NATO's Joint Force Commands under the overall control of Allied Command Operations (ACO). If this happens, S&R forces will not need to operate on their own. Yet situations could arise in which SRF forces are the only NATO forces deployed, and a CJTF is not available. Then, an SRF force will need a deployable headquarters of its own. Even in situations where SRF forces are commanded by a CJTF, they might be entrusted to operate autonomously, which will require an independent joint command structure. Similar to the NRF, the act of becoming capable for S&R operations requires not

only commanding S&R forces in contingencies, but also developing them in peacetime. An SRF command structure will be needed to perform this critical function as well as be capable of working under the guidance of both ACO and ACT.

A NATO SRF also will need a C4ISR information architecture to conduct demanding operations in distant locations. This architecture must be capable of operating with NATO forces and other international forces, civilian agencies, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Such an architecture—composed of integrated information networks for communications, intelligence, force operations, and logistic support—will provide a central framework upon which to build a NATO SRF for the information age. The SRF C4ISR architecture must allow it to “plug and play” into a CJTF with its combat forces. It also should provide SRF commanders with assets for commanding multinational formations that may be integrated down to the battalion level or lower. Such a C4ISR architecture and its interactive networks will need to be designed with the multifaceted nature of S&R operations in mind, including security and reconstruction. Future systems and their technologies should be designed and upgraded with these performance

parameters in mind.

Three Options for NATO

If S&R forces and capabilities are to be built, key decisions on important choices will have to be made. The issue is more than how much is enough. A determination also must be made as to how responsive and effective S&R forces should be. The decision should be governed by four criteria:

- Military effectiveness: ensuring that S&R forces can perform their missions.
- Feasibility and affordability: respecting what the traffic will bear.
- Cost-effectiveness: pursuing measures with benefits that match or exceed costs.
- Tradeoffs and opportunity costs: not interfering with other priority programs.

With these criteria in mind, NATO has three strategic options:

Option 1: Minimal Preparedness: Identification of potentially available forces; no special command structures would be created or NATO-directed force preparations undertaken. A NATO center of excellence might be created to help orchestrate doctrine and policies, while ACO would conduct general S&R planning and exercise objectives. The forces would be expected to meet NATO readiness and performance standards for FLR, and force development would be entrusted to the participating members.

Option 2: ACO and Regional Command Operational Planning for Mission-Assigned S&R Forces: Identification of NATO commands to conduct planning and exercises for S&R operations and employment of NATO standard planning machinery to provide guidance for a posture of assigned forces whose readiness, training and force development would be the responsibility of individual

members, as with other NATO earmarked forces. These forces would be expected to meet the readiness standards and other performance characteristics of average HRF.

Option 3: NATO-Directed Creation of a Flexible, Modular S&R Force. Creation of a NATO command structure responsible for both operational planning and S&R force development, as in option 2, and an integrated, flexible, modular S&R force similar to the NRF, whose development would be proactively managed by ACO and ACT. These forces would be expected to meet the readiness standards and other performance characteristics of top-line HRF.

Option 1 outlines the minimum steps to enable NATO to assemble forces and capabilities for S&R missions. It would provide an S&R option, but with a capability that falls well short of the best NATO combat forces. Essentially, it aims for a third-tier force that can be activated over 3 to 6 months. As a result, this S&R force option does not rise to the readiness standards of an HRF. Member nations would nominate sufficient forces to meet or surpass S&R needs of one to two division equivalents. NATO would maintain the troop list, which NATO military commands could use in designing operational plans. This option would establish no new command structure to conduct operational planning or S&R force development. Subject to broad NATO strategic guidance, responsibility for force development would reside entirely with the member nations. During a crisis, these forces could be assigned to the NATO command, but NATO would have little to say about their training, equipment, doctrine, and other characteristics.

Option 2 aspires to meet the standards now employed to maintain NATO's average HRF at adequate preparedness levels. Its goal is to create S&R forces that could complement the NRF and ARRC, but would not match them in readiness or other performance characteristics. This second-tier force could be readied in 2 to 3 months. It establishes a special NATO S&R command structure that would work closely with combatant commands to develop operational plans, doctrines, C4ISR architectures, and interoperability standards. It would employ existing NATO planning mechanisms—ministerial guidance, force goals, and country plans—to assist member nations, who would be responsible for force development. A multinational force of sufficient size would be created and the assigned forces would retain this affiliation permanently unless changes were sought by member states. There would be no regular rotation of forces through the S&R force.

Option 3 aims to match the readiness standards of the top-line HRF. The goal would be to create a force that could operate alongside the NRF and ARRC as a comparable performer in readiness and other characteristics. In addition to a special S&R command structure, it would create an integrated but flexible and modular S&R force with high-level performance capabilities. ACO and ACT would work closely with the S&R command in developing schools, readiness, equipping, training, interoperability standards, transformation goals, doctrine, exercises, and sustainment for the SRF. NATO common investment funds would be allocated, and a rotational scheme would be used. National forces assigned to the force would remain on duty for 1 to 2 years, and then be replaced by new forces.

The benefits, limitations, and tradeoffs of these three options are apparent. Option 1 moves NATO into the S&R business with minimal disruption to existing defense arrangements and few costs in budgets and resources. However, the resulting forces would have relatively low readiness, multinational integration, and overall preparedness, unless individual members pursued improvement measures on their own. Option 2 takes significant steps to create a command structure and an S&R force similar to average HRF forces. Clearly it poses higher costs in budgets, resources, and commitments than option 1. Option 3 offers the highest level of preparedness, multinational integration, and capability: the S&R force would not match the NRF in readiness, but it would acquire a status equal to top ARRC units and would benefit from the types of attention now being given by ACO and ACT to the NRF. Of the three options, it poses the highest costs and would have the biggest impact on other NATO defense priorities.

In essence, option 1 makes sense only if nothing better is realistically achievable. While better than nothing, it does not provide a way for NATO to meet its military requirements promptly. Option 2 offers an affordable alternative by providing NATO with an S&R force that might not be top-line, but could be drawn upon in a crisis when 2 to 3 months

of warning and mobilization are available. Option three is a first-rate S&R force that can be drawn upon on relatively short notice. Judged on military merits, option 3 is clearly the most attractive option if political support and budgetary resources can be mobilized.

These options, however, are not mutually exclusive. Option 1 can be pursued as a near-term expedient in the next 1 to 2 years. Option 2 can be pursued in the mid-term, 2 to 4 years—if nothing better is achievable. If option 2 is adopted for the mid-term, option 3 can be pursued over a longer-term of 5 to 6 years. Such a time-phased approach might enable NATO to create viable S&R forces and capabilities steadily while avoiding any interference with the NRF, top-line ARRC forces, and other high-priority defense initiatives. Conversely, if NATO is willing to cut back in some areas, option 3 can be pursued on a faster timeline, yielding a completed effort in 4 to 5 years.

Regardless of which option NATO chooses, leaders should concentrate equal energy on the creation of the civil capabilities essential to the prosecution of S&R operations. Basically, what NATO would create is a deployable operations cell of requisite civil reconstruction expertise to accompany its military headquarters. This civilian operations cell would be appended to the SRF Headquarters to provide the experts necessary to help rebuild civil government institutions and basic services and infrastructure. The long-standing Civil Emergency Planning Directorate of the International Staff is the appropriate agency to steer this undertaking. Skills such as agricultural and industrial planning, transport and civil aviation planning, medical and communications planning, and civil protection are examples of areas in which NATO has cultivated civil-sector expertise for decades. New areas that should be under study are global cultural, ethnic, religious, and legal specialties. The Cold War era Senior Civil Emergency Planning Committee already has revital-

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ized its agenda and is in a strong position to steer this effort for the NAC. A deployable civil cell might come from the International Staff as well as from NATO members, or even in collaboration with the EU, which has longstanding civil expertise in many key areas, especially border and customs control, multinational legal institutions, and civil policing.

Post-Istanbul Agenda

In the coming months, NATO's defense ministers and military leaders can undertake a study aimed at creating an S&R concept plan and implementation agenda for consideration at future ministerial session, perhaps in spring 2005. A 6-month study should perform these functions:

- Assess current S&R forces and capabilities in the inventories of NATO members. Analyze current and future requirements for NATO S&R operations.
- Analyze the capacity of NATO and its European members to strengthen S&R forces and capabilities without undermining the NRF.
- Review alternative options for better organizing NATO S&R forces and capabilities and otherwise meeting future requirements.
- Provide recommendations for how NATO should act in the coming period.

Once this agenda is endorsed, programmatic implementation can get underway. As in the case of the NRF, membership in the SRF should be voluntary. Most likely, some NATO members will see advantages in participating in an SRF, especially those members who cannot provide top-line combat forces for the NRF and ARRC, but have the military assets to play meaningful roles in S&R. Viable S&R forces could have a major impact on NATO's strategic effectiveness in the coming years.

Note

¹Hans Binnendijk and Stuart E. Johnson, eds., *Transforming for Stabilization and Reconstruction Operations* (Washington, DC: Center for Technology and National Security Policy, 2004).

This *Defense Horizons* draws upon a one-day conference recently held at the National Defense University that brought together participants from Canada, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Sweden, and the United States.

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