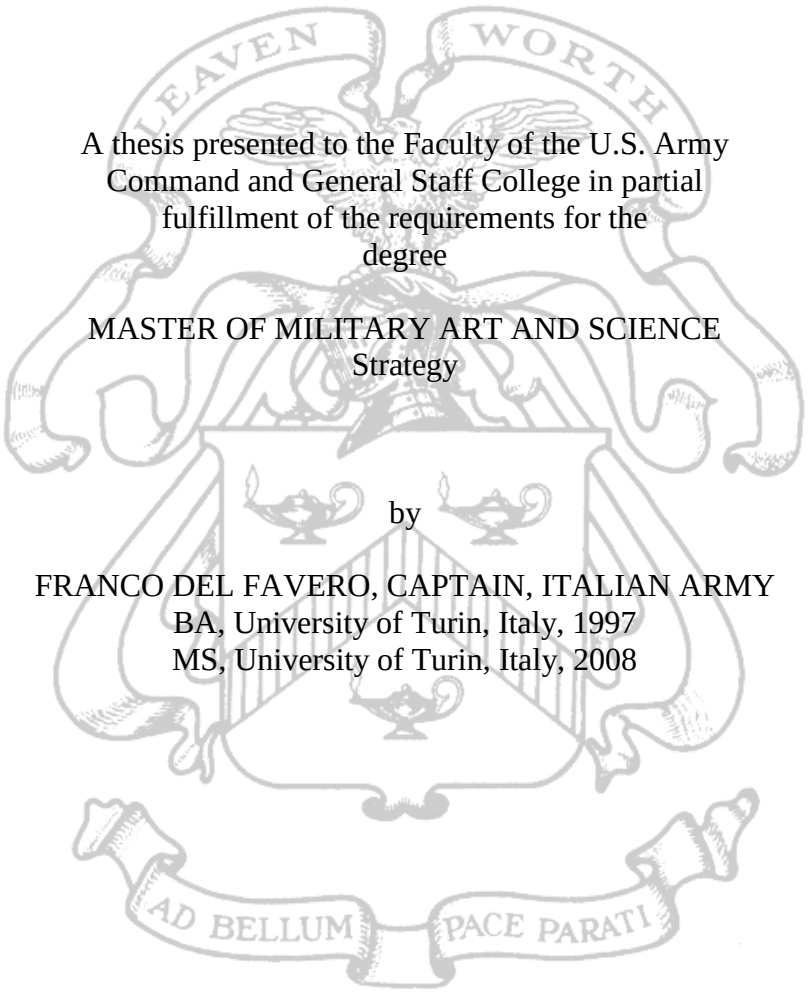
THE EUROPEAN UNION BATTLE GROUPS: OPERATIONAL AND STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS FOR NATO



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MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE
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by

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ABSTRACT

THE EUROPEAN UNION BATTLE GROUPS: OPERATIONAL AND STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS FOR NATO, by CPT Franco Del Favero, 122 pages.

The debate on the development of NATO expeditionary capabilities started in the late Nineties, but only after the 9/11 attacks – following a proposal of the then US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld – was finalized. The NATO Rapid Response Force (NRF), activated in 2005, is the Alliance's expeditionary force, capable of performing a full spectrum of tasks both in semi-permissive and non-permissive environments. On the 1st of January 2007, the European Union (EU) activated its own expeditionary forces, the EU Battle Groups (EU BG), with the same missions the NRF has. Considering that out of twenty-seven members of the EU twenty-one are NATO members, the answers to the questions about the strategic and operational implications of the EU BGs establishment for the Atlantic Alliance are relevant. EU BGs and NRF share the same missions, but they are not mirror images. EU BGs and NRF – in terms of size, capabilities, and core competencies – are unlike forces. Due to these differences, it is possible that NATO and the EU, in future, can effectively cooperate in deciding which expeditionary force is the most suitable for dealing with the crisis at hand. The present agreements between NATO and the EU do not cover the aspect of the coordination, or cooperation, among rapid response forces. For this reason a revision, or better a reformulation, of these agreements is the best solution to maximize the value of the NRF and the EUBGs.

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ACRONYMS

ACC	Air Component Command
ACE	Allied Command Europe
AMF	ACE Mobile Force
AMF/L	ACE Mobile Force/Land
AOI	Area of Interest
AOO	Area of Operation
AOR	Area of Responsibility
AMIS II	African Union Mission in Sudan (II)
AU	African Union
AU CFC	African Union Cease Fire Commission
BiH	Bosnia and Herzegovina
CBRN	Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
COMITAMARFOR	Command Italian Maritime Force
CJTF	Combined Joint Task Force
CJTFLCC	Combined Joint Task Force Land Component Command
CSCE	Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe
C2	Command and Control
DCI	Defense Capability Initiative
DSACEUR	Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe
ECSC	European Carbon and Steel Community
EEC	European Economic Community
EDC	European Defense Community

EFSP	European Foreign and Security Policy
ERRC	European Rapid Reaction Corps
ESDI	European Strategic Defense Initiative
ESS	European Security Strategy
ESDP	European Security and Defense Policy
EU	European Union
EU BG	European Union Battle Group
EU MC	European Union Military Committee
EU MS	European Union Military Staff
EUROMARFOR	European Maritime Force
FOC	Full Operational Capability
FYROM	Former Yugoslavia Republic of Macedonia
GAERC	General Affairs and External Relationship Council
HQ	Headquarters
HTF	Headline Task Force
HRF	High Readiness Forces
IFOR	Implementation Force
IOC	Initial operational capability
ISAF	Interim Assistance Force
KFOR	Kosovo Force
LCC	Land Component Command
MLF	Multinational Land Force
MOOTW	Military Operations Other Than War
NAC	North Atlantic Council
NACC	North Atlantic Cooperation Council

NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCC	Navy Component Command
NEO	Non Combatant Evacuation Operation
NRDC	NATO Rapid Deployable Corps
NRDC-IT	NATO Rapid Deployable Corps – Italy
NRF	NATO Response Force
NSS	National Security Strategy
NTF	NATO Task Force
NTM	Notice to move
OEF	Operation Enduring Freedom
OIF	Operation Iraqi Freedom
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PBO	Peace Building Operation
PEO	Peace Enforcing Operation
PfP	Partnership for Peace
PKO	Peace Keeping Operation
PSO	Peace Support Operation
SACEUR	Supreme Allied Commander Europe
SHAPE	Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe
SIAF	Spanish Italian Amphibious Force
TEU	Treaty of the European Union
TOA	Transfer of Authority
UN	United Nations
UN DPKO	United Nations Department of Peace Keeping Operations
UN SC	United Nations Security Council

UN SG	United Nations Secretary General
WEU	Western European Union

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

> NATO is currently undergoing the most profound adaptation in its 54-year history. It is entering the Third Chapter of its evolution. Chapter One was the Cold War: four decades of a narrow, static, territorial understanding of security. Chapter Two was the post-Cold War period: a period in which NATO became an agent of positive political change, by looking beyond its own Treaty area and into the wider Europe. This was the Chapter that Manfred Wörner helped to open, through his relentless efforts to build bridges across the continent, to open NATO's doors to new members, and to bring the Alliance to bear on the Balkan crisis. NATO is now entering Chapter Three: It is rapidly transforming into an Alliance that is fully geared to the new security environment after September 11.
>
> Rt. Hon. Lord Robertson of Port Ellen,
> Secretary General of NATO

> One of the core elements of the international system is the transatlantic relationship. This is not only in our bilateral interest but strengthens the international community as a whole. NATO is an important expression of this relationship . . . The EU – NATO permanent arrangements, in particular Berlin Plus, enhance the operational capability of the EU and provide the framework for the strategic partnership between the two organizations in crisis management. This reflects our common determination to tackle the challenges of the new century.
>
> Javier Solana,
> European Union High Representative for CFSP

In recent years the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the European Union (EU) have undertaken many reforms of both their structures and their strategies. As Lord Robertson summarized, the Atlantic Alliance has entered the third phase of its evolutionary process and is rapidly transforming itself to cope with the uncertainties of the post 9/11 international scenario. At the same time, the EU, establishing its autonomous military capabilities, is seeking to play a more active role in crisis prevention and management, risking potential frictions with NATO. In fact, despite many official declarations, this should lead to the conclusion that an effective strategic partnership

between the two organizations exists. There are aspects of the NATO – EU relationships that do not consent to be optimistic on the effectiveness of their "common determination to tackle the challenges of the new century." For example, even considering Europe as a whole, the effectiveness of a "European Army" is not comparable with that of the US Army; it means, in other words, that the European countries together are not able to match the United States in terms of capabilities of its Armed Forces (Millen, 2004). Given that, why did the European countries come to the decision to develop two force packages, the NATO Response Force (NRF) and the European Union Battle Group (EU BG), that can be competitive and can drag resources from one another?

Why would the EU decide to develop a quick reaction force when NATO just activated its response force? Is the development of autonomous military capabilities a sign that the EU is eventually going to play an active role in international crisis management? What are the reasons that, in the Winter of 2003, the EU made the decision to adopt a common security strategy, when ten months earlier the US Secretary of Defense Ronald Rumsfeld had underlined the internal divisions among its members, speaking about a "new" and an "old" Europe? Can we consider 2003 the year that signed the end of the dichotomy between the civil and the military superpowers, i.e., between the EU and the United States? Is the United States concerned about a possible military involvement of the EU in international crisis management or are there no reasons to be worried? If the EU becomes a global player, is NATO still necessary? What is the attitude of NATO towards the EU's military capability development?

These are just a few of many questions that the establishment of the EU BG poses. This thesis does not aim to analyze the political meaning of the development of

autonomous military capabilities by the EU. That subject is extremely complex due to its links with other processes the EU has started (e.g., enlargement and integration). As far as the abovementioned processes are concerned, enlargement is the procedure that encompasses all the necessary phases for the admission of a new member state into the EU. Integration is an internal process that should lead to a EU reorganization following a federal model, where decisions that involve the EU as a whole are made by majority vote and not by consensus of all the member states. In other words, the final outcome, according to the federalist enthusiasts' slogan, should be the "United States of Europe" (Spinelli, 1989).

The EU of 2008 is something completely different from the United States of Europe. The EU integration process is based on international treaties among the member states. To be effective, each member, according to its national law, must approve, or ratify, these treaties. There are countries (such as Ireland, for instance) where the ratification requires a national referendum and others (Italy, for example) where only the approval by the national parliament is necessary. The failure of the ratification process of the European Constitution (2004 – 2005) and the difficulties the Lisbon Treaty, the most recent treaty signed in December 2007 by the EU heads of state and government, is facing for acceptance are the most important evidences that the path towards a federal union is still long and extremely difficult. This thesis does not analyze the dynamics of European integration and enlargement, but attempts to understand the reason that some aspects of the European policies are so complex. It is necessary to write a few words about this subject.

In less than ten years, from 1998 to 2007, the EU adopted a common currency, the Euro (since 2002); accepted twelve new member states (ten in one solution, the "big bang enlargement" of the 1st May 2004); prepared and abandoned its own Constitutional Treaty that was not adopted due to the failure of national referendums in Denmark, France and Poland; signed a new treaty (the Lisbon Treaty of December 2007), that is no longer "constitutional," and that despite its new name is facing the same difficulties of the previous one. A possible key to reading can be this: too many changes in an extremely short period of time. In fact, if we consider the successes the EU has achieved, they are almost all in the economic and social fields, where practices and procedures are consolidated on the basis of the consolidated European Economic Community (EEC) experience (Romano, 2004).

The development of autonomous military capabilities is another important subject of debate within the EU. Starting from December 1999, in the aftermath of the Kosovo war, the EU has adopted several decisions concerning the subject. Even though integration and enlargement are very sensitive issues, the political and strategic relevance of the development of EU military capabilities is, probably, one of the most interesting features of the new geostrategic scenario. Given the membership of many European countries both in EU and in NATO, the creation of an autonomous EU military force has, necessarily, consequences for NATO. The aims of this thesis are to point out what are the strategic and operational implications for the Atlantic Alliance of the EUBG's activation and to identify any possible division of roles in crisis prevention and management between the two organizations.

Until 1992, the division of roles between EEC and NATO was easily distinguishable. According to its name, the former was a merely economic partnership between European countries; the latter was the military alliance that, first and foremost, thanks to the consistent US military presence in Europe, gave the members of the economic community the opportunity to concentrate their efforts on trade, welfare, education, and many other peaceful matters, without caring about defense and security (Romano, 2003).

Debates on the EU's autonomous military capability started in 1999, at the eve of the Kosovo war, right at the apex of the NATO reform process. In fact, the Atlantic Alliance, right at that period, was revising its strategic concept. In other words, it was reassessing its role. The end of the Cold War left NATO not only without enemies but also without a mission. NATO had only two alternatives: reform or die (Jean, 2004). As a consequence, the review process that NATO was undertaking gave the EU a freedom of action that only ten years earlier was unimaginable. The term "freedom of action" refers to opportunity given the EU to affirm its role not only in the economic and political fields, but also in the military one (Romano, 2003). This opportunity is the direct effect of two international changes. On one hand, Europe is not the potential battlefield of a new world war anymore; on the other hand, since the attention of the "lonely superpower" is somewhere else, the United States is favorable to the development of European military capabilities that mean, from its perspective, a more active involvement of the EU in crisis prevention and management and in its own security.

The role of NATO in the present geopolitical scenario is one of the most discussed subjects in the international arena. The Alliance is deeply involved in countries

such as Afghanistan and Kosovo where a political function is required, not only a military one. NATO capabilities in terms of stabilization and reconstruction are not comparable with those of the EU. On the other hand, NATO has a high-level force projection capability and the EU, without NATO assets, cannot provide an effective military rapid response.

Considering the West as a whole, including NATO and the United States in this definition, can a credible military capability of the EU offer one more possibility to cope with the challenges of the post 9/11 geopolitical scenarios?

Background

The European Integration Process

The EU has its origin in the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), established on the 9th of May 1950, on the basis of a project presented by Jean Monnet, the French politician who, with the Italian Altiero Spinelli, is considered as the father of the European integration process. Almost a year later, on the18th of April 1951, the first stone of the community construction was laid: the six founding countries signed the Treaty establishing the ECSC, setting up an independent supranational High Authority in Luxembourg with the task of enforcing common rules for the production and trade of coal and steel. Soon afterwards, the first obstacle arose. In 1952, on France's initiative, the Six signed the Treaty for the European Defense Community (EDC) in Paris. The Treaty was never implemented, however, since it failed to be ratified by the French Parliament (Romano, 1995).

The original core of six founding members (France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg) has been joined, at different stages, by another 21,

bringing the current EU membership to 27. Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom joined what was then called the EEC on the 1st of January 1973, Greece in 1981, Spain and Portugal in 1986, and Austria, Finland and Sweden in 1995 (Romano, 1995). After this gradual growth from 6 to 15 members, on the1st of May 2004, the EU saw the biggest expansion in its history (the "big bang enlargement"), in terms of both breadth and diversity. All these countries joined the EU on that date: Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia. They have since been joined by Bulgaria and Romania on the 1st of January 2007 (Prodi, 2008).

In 1992, as a consequence of the new political and strategic situation in Europe determined by the end of the Cold War, the twelve members of the EEC signed the Maastricht Treaty, often defined as the Treaty of the European Union (TEU). What had until then been commonly referred to as the EEC became the EU. The EU did not merely "incorporate" the three previous Communities (EEC, ECSC and EURATOM), but extended their already wide-ranging powers: this happened both in the traditional economic sector (in particular through the planned establishment of the Economic and Monetary Union), and in sectors such as European citizenship, the arts, and education. The Maastricht Treaty also introduced new policies and forms of cooperation in the sector of foreign policy and security and in the sector of justice and domestic affairs. With Maastricht, then, the Union expanded and grew in strength as it waited to welcome other States on the continent. With the following Treaties of Amsterdam and Nice, the community made other important steps forward. The Schengen Agreement, which establishes the free circulation of people, goods, and financial resources between the country members, was incorporated into the legislative framework of the Union. New

emphasis was given to cooperation between police forces in the fields of justice and defense; the possibility of increased cooperation between small groups of EU countries was facilitated; and the figure of High Representative of the EU for Common Foreign and Security Policy was introduced, a position currently held by Javier Solana, Spanish former Minister for Foreign Affairs and former Secretary General of NATO. After the abolition of border control within the EU (1998-99), in accordance with the Schengen Agreement, and the effective introduction on the 10th of January 2002 of the single currency (the Euro), the Union's next step will be to draw up a European Constitutional Treaty and adopt the institutional reforms necessary for ensuring the smooth operation of a Union composed, as of 2008, of 27 countries (Perissich, 2008).

The European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) is part of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), the second pillar of the EU architecture designed by the Maastricht Treaty in 1992. The ESDP consists primarily of the arrangements required for "crisis management" in accordance with the Articles 17.2 and 25 of the Treaty of the European Union (TEU), commonly known as the Maastricht Treaty. The European approach to crisis management does not imply only the military power but also the employment of other assets such as legal and political advisors, police officers, economic and financial experts, humanitarian agencies, et cetera. The ESDP is part of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) that is one of the core elements of the EU's "external action," the term adopted in the TEU as an ambiguous equivalent of foreign policy (Missiroli, Pansa, 2007). The European Council, the highest institution of the EU composed of the heads of state and government of the 27 members, takes the decisions related to the foreign and security policy and, as a consequence, is in charge of the

security and defense policy as well. The European Council makes its decision by consensus: each member state, in other words, has veto power over the council's decisions (Ferrara, Giuliani, 2008).

The Evolution of NATO

On the 4th of April 1949, twelve nations from Western Europe (Belgium, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxemburg, Norway, Portugal, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom) and North America (Canada and the United States) signed the North Atlantic Treaty in Washington DC, creating an alliance for collective defense as defined in Article 51 of the United Nations Charter. A key feature of the treaty is Article 5, in which the signatory members stated: "an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all." The Korean War (June 1950) raised fears that a similar threat could soon face Europe. The nations of the alliance agreed to increase their defense efforts and began working on the establishment of an integrated and permanent military command structure with an overall commander for NATO forces in Europe (Romano, 1995). On the 2nd of April 1951, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, Supreme Commander Allied Powers Europe, signed the activation order for Allied Command Europe and its headquarters at SHAPE. In the early '50s, three new members joined the Alliance - Greece and Turkey in 1952, followed by the Federal Republic of Germany in 1955. In the same years, the alliance started the revision of its strategic posture from the complete reliance on nuclear weapons to defend Europe against aggression, towards a more flexible strategy in which forward-deployed forces would serve as NATO's "shield," while the nuclear retaliatory forces remained NATO's "sword" for use in defending against a major attack. To sum up, the first ten

years of NATO's life were characterized by the total reliance on the nuclear arsenal, assuming the clear Western superiority in that field. The '60s were characterized by a new NATO strategic concept, and the new doctrine became known as "flexible response." The new strategic concept faced the strong opposition of the French president Charles de Gaulle, who considered the passage from "massive retaliation" to "flexible response" as a sign of a weaker US commitment to defend the European soil in the event of a Warsaw Pact attack. In July 1966, France formally abandoned the NATO military structure, remaining a member of the political one (Clementi, 2002). The role of France within NATO should be developed in detail, but in a nutshell, its particular membership can be considered as an attempt to maintain a sort of coordination with the Alliance in case of war. In the Spring of 1968, Soviet forces invaded Czechoslovakia and suppressed any attempt at reform that Prime Minister Alexander Dubcek had started (Romano, 1995). The military implications of the Soviet invasion were extremely serious, considering the increased the numbers of Soviet units now deployed very close to the NATO core. The '70s saw a new NATO strategic concept, based on the three "Rs": readiness, rationalization, and reinforcement (Clementi, 2002). The main contest with the Warsaw Pact was now in the conventional field. NATO aimed to counter-balance, in its favor, a situation that saw a rapid increase, both in numbers and capabilities, of the Eastern Bloc military power (Romano, 1990). The new NATO challenge was the improvement of its command and control (C2) structure and the development of rapid reaction forces able to intervene on short notice wherever was necessary. In the '80s, NATO established its Airborne Early Warning Force, the air-based defense system that gave the alliance the possibility to detect any attempt at mobilization carried out by the

Eastern Bloc (Jean, 1997). The initiative of U.S. President Ronald Reagan and USSR Communist Party Secretary General Mikhail Gorbachev to reduce the number of nuclear warheads in Europe also characterized the ‘80s, but the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Warsaw Pact were the most remarkable events of that decade. For the first time in its history, NATO was without enemies (Romano, 1995).

NATO started its transformation by establishing the Allied Command Europe (ACE) Rapid Reaction Corps (ARRC). The key feature of the post-Cold War NATO was identified in the capability to deploy its military capabilities on short notice, assuming that the most likely scenario would be something similar to the First Gulf War. The Balkan wars that afflicted Europe for almost a decade confirmed the necessity of a more active role of NATO in conflict prevention and crisis management. ARRC was established in October 1992, and in the following year France and Germany created the multinational EUROCORPS, employable with NATO (Colombo, 2001).

In October 1992, following the United Nations decision to create a no-flight zone in the skies of Bosnia and Herzegovina, NATO started Operation Sky Monitor and, in April 1993, Operation Deny Flight. The NATO involvement in the Balkans became progressively stronger. In December 1995, in the light of Dayton Peace Agreement, NATO began the biggest military operation on the European soil since the end of the Second World War. The NATO Implementation Force (IFOR) – 50,000 troops strong – encompassed units provided by NATO and 17 non-NATO countries (Clementi, 2002).

In March 1999, NATO started an air campaign against Serbian military and paramilitary forces that were suspected of carrying out an ethnic cleansing in the Serbian province of Kosovo against the majority ethnic group, the Kosovo Albanians. On June

the 9th, 1999 NATO and Serbian representatives signed the agreement for the withdrawal of any Serbian units from the province and the establishment of the NATO Kosovo Force (KFOR). KFOR crossed the border between Macedonia and Serbia on June the 12th, 1999 (Fatutta, Peruzzi, 2000). On the 17th of February 2008 Kosovo proclaimed its independence while KFOR was still operating in the area.

The terrorist attack on the United States on the 11th of September 2001 was a landmark in NATO history: the NATO countries announced for the first time the application of Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty, which states that an armed attack against one or more of the Allies in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all (Clementi, 2002). Soon after the toppling of the Taliban regime, in December 2001, NATO deployed its forces to Afghanistan and guided the International Security and Assistance Force (ISAF), which aims to establish a safe and secure environment in the country (NATO, 2006). On the 31st of July 2006, ISAF units were involved in the largest ground fighting that NATO forces had ever experienced. By the end of 2006, NATO-led ISAF took the responsibility of the entire Afghan theater of operation. Besides the involvement in Afghanistan, NATO is also carrying on a training mission of the national armed forces in Iraq since 2004. Finally, NATO provided logistic support to the African Union peacekeeping mission in Darfur, Sudan, from 2005 to 2007 (De Leonardis, Pastori, 2008). The humanitarian assistance operation in Pakistan, after the terrible earthquake of October 2005, is the second important milestone in NATO history (NATO, 2006). NATO provided an aerobridge for the delivering of relief items, a field hospital, mobile medical teams and engineer units. The successful operation ended in late January 2006.

The NATO – EU Partnership

Beginning in 1999, the EU and NATO have developed a progressively closer strategic partnership whose necessity has been confirmed by the international security situation after 9/11. The attack against the World Trade Center – followed by the terrorist actions in Madrid and London, respectively in 2004 and 2005 – and the aftermath of the Kosovo and Afghan wars are some of the features of the "age of uncertainty," where the traditional Cold-War-style separation of roles between the economic and political organization, the EU, and the political and military one, NATO, has no more reason to exist (Jean, 2007).

In April 1999, during the NATO summit in Washington, the representatives of NATO members affirmed their decision to be "ready to define and adopt the necessary arrangements for ready access by the European Union to the collective assets and capabilities of the Alliance, for operations in which the Alliance as a whole is not engaged militarily as an Alliance" (NATO, 1999). The Washington declaration, which came out of the summit, echoed the contents of the 1996 Berlin agreement between NATO and the EU. In addition to the 1996 text, the Washington statement went into details covering four possible options of NATO – EU cooperation (NATO, 2006). The first option foresees the access by the EU to NATO planning capabilities. It means that, if required and if available, NATO planning cells will prepare plans and orders on behalf of the EU. The second option, in complex diplomatic language, covers the "presumption of availability to the EU of pre-identified NATO capabilities and common assets;" in other words, the EU can utilize NATO assets, AWACS for instance, if available. The third option foresees the "identification of a range of European command options." It means

that, under certain circumstances, as in Operation *Concordia* in Former Yugoslavia Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), NATO will transfer the authority to the EU. The fourth and last option covers the "further adaptation of NATO's defense planning system to incorporate more comprehensively the availability of forces for EU-led operations" (NATO, 1999). In brief, the Washington declaration opens the door to a progressively stronger cooperation between NATO and the EU, but it is clear that NATO will put its assets at EU disposal only when the Alliance is not involved or interested in managing the crisis. The conclusions of the Washington summit integrated the content of the 1996 Berlin agreement, leading to the final version of the NATO – EU partnership program known as *Berlin Plus* (NATO, 2006).

In the framework of the *Berlin Plus* agreement, the EU started in April 2003 Operation *Concordia* in the FYROM, replacing the NATO Operation *Allied Harbour*. Operation *Concordia* was the first military operation led by the EU and it was followed one year later by Operation *Althea* in Bosnia and Herzegovina, this one also within the *Berlin Plus* framework. Between the first and the second NATO – EU handover in the Balkans, in April 2003, the EU launched its first autonomous military operation in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The Operation *Artemis* – which lasted from August to November 2003 – was the first planned, organized and conducted directly by the EU. It was also the first operation far from the Union's boundaries (Lindstrom, 2007).

From 2005 to 2007, both the EU and NATO provided support to the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS II). The EU sent military advisors to the African Union HQ in Addis Ababa, to AMIS HQ in Khartoum, and to the Force Command in El Fasher (North Darfur), as well as several military observers and EU representatives to the

African Union Cease Fire Commission (AU CFC). In the same period, NATO was providing airlift for the deployment of African Union peacekeepers from their countries to the Darfur region.

The NATO Response Force

While the EU and NATO were reaching a progressive integration of their crisis response capabilities, the Alliance began a program of reforms of its rapid response forces. The new project was inspired by a white paper presented by the US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld during the NATO ministers of defense meeting in Warsaw in September 2002. The document urged the necessity of the constitution of a NATO high readiness force that should be ready in October 2006, the NATO Response Force (NRF) (De Leonardis, Pastori, 2008).

The NRF project is an ambitious one: it foresees a package of forces technically advanced, self sufficient, ready, interoperable, projectable, easily sustainable, and effectively able to accomplish all the missions given by the Alliance. On one hand, the NRF should be the strong arm of the Alliance; on the other hand, it should be the research laboratory for the development of joint and combined capabilities, doctrines, and procedures that could be applied to a stronger force package in the future.

The NRF in one sentence is 25,000 men strong, ready to intervene on call, entirely or mission tailored, everywhere with a five-day notice to move. The NRF C2 architecture is based on a Combined Joint Task Force Headquarters and rapidly deployable component commands that are part of the NATO permanent structure. In general terms, the structure of the NRF encompasses a land component at brigade level that includes special operation forces, a maritime component at NATO Task Force (NTF)

level with amphibious capabilities, and an air component able to conduct two hundred sorties a day. The operational units are taken from a pool of resources provided by all NATO members. The force generation process is organized in three phases: preparation and training, readiness/standby period/deployment, and reconditioning (NATO, 2006).

During the Prague Summit, the chiefs of state and government of NATO countries approved the project of establishing the NRF, giving the military committee the task of developing the comprehensive concept, later called *Prague Capabilities Commitment*. The NRF missions encompass the preemptive deployment as a dissuasion force (demonstrative force), the crises response operation as a stand-alone force, and early-entry operations to create necessary conditions for a stronger follow-on force intervention. In addition to the previous missions, the NRF is able to perform other tasks such as support of national armed forces in counterterrorism operations, assistance and support in case of CBRN attacks, noncombatant evacuation operations (NEO), humanitarian assistance, and sanctions enforcing. Another innovative aspect is represented by the C2 structure. Analogous to forces, the NRF concept foresees the rotation of HQs based on CJTF (Combined Joint Task Force) Headquarters and on component command headquarters, all deployable (NATO, 2006).

The multinational nature of the NRF C2 structure and the force generation process based on a rigid time schedule are factors that inevitably oblige all the contributing nations to seriously consider their involvement in the project. In a word, the NRF concept can be considered as the engine of NATO transformation and modernization. After more than ten years of debates, proposals and doubts, the alliance has probably found the right way to develop effective expeditionary capabilities.

The NRF is facing some critical challenges in terms of strategic lift that, in this phase, despite the purchase of a certain number of C-17 airplanes by some countries (United Kingdom and Germany, among others) are still far from a complete solution. Without any doubt, the strategic lift is the determinant factor that allows the response to be rapid. The identified solution to the problem foresees a common effort of all the contributing nations, with the creation of a pool of capabilities, including civilian resources. However this option represents only a mid-term, not long-term, solution.

Even if it may be true that all the abovementioned aspects are important and worthy of a deeper analysis, the key point is the possible coordination between NATO and the EU that developed its own rapid reaction force, the European Union Battle Group. The European Security Strategy adopted in December 2003, states that the EU, being a global actor, must develop military capabilities in terms of prevention and crisis management not only near its boundaries but also far from them. The key aspect, which requires a coherent approach by all the Union members, is the commitment towards the international community (Solana, 2003). In the same month of December 2003, the General Affairs and External Relationship Council (GAERC) of the EU, in the light of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), proposed a revision of the EU military rapid response concept adopted during the EU summit held in Helsinki in December 1999 and known as *Helsinki Headline Goal* (Missiroli, Pansa, 2007).

The European Union Battle Groups

In February 2004, the United Kingdom, Germany, and France proposed the Battle Group Concept, based on a German project. In accordance with the Battle Group concept, the EU, starting from the 1st of January 2007, would be able to deploy

separately two Battle Groups 1,500 men strong, rapidly deployable, with maritime and air components, logistically autonomous, able to start two operations simultaneously in less than fifteen days (Lindstrom, 2007).

Italy joined the Battle Group "big stockholders" team in 2004 and proposed to revise the concept focusing on the aspects of operational flexibility and "jointness."

Italy also proposed including in the EU BG force catalogue the already existing multinational initiatives, the Spanish Italian Amphibious Force (SIAF) and the Multinational Land Force (MLF), among others. The involvement of the aforementioned multinational units could represent, from the Italian perspective, an important contribution in terms of experience and reliability. Furthermore, this solution offered the opportunity to give those initiatives inspired by the Balkan wars a new reason to exist (Missiroli, Pansa, 2007).

As far as the multinational aspect is concerned, it represents a more sensitive issue than it was for the NATO Response Force. In this case, the challenge is the balance between military and political considerations. From a military perspective, it is clear that at brigade level and below a national solution is preferable. On the political side, a multinational solution down to battalion level guarantees a better visibility, easing a more general consensus.

Underlying Assumptions

I will assume the following information for purposes of the study, until and unless disproved by research or current events as of 1st May 2009:

Security Environment

First, international crises require international responses. This means that the most likely course of action of the International Community (IC) in crisis management will be based on the intervention either of ad-hoc coalitions or, better, of pre-existing coalitions. Second, unconventional warfare and asymmetric threats are the most common challenges that the NRF and the EU BGs will be asked to deal with in the near future. Finally, as far as the possible areas of intervention are concerned, countries located in the "arch of instability" will be the most probable areas of operation of both the NRF and the EU BGs.

Politics and Diplomacy

The current international situation will continue. Aspects pertinent to this thesis include:

- The EU enlargement and the difficulties the Lisbon Treaty will face in its implementation will not affect the EU BG program;
- A reform of the United Nations Security Council will not take place in the near future: this means that the EU will not obtain a permanent seat in the Security Council.

Limitations

The first limitation in this thesis will be that the examination of the topic will be limited to that of the military aspect of the relationships between NATO and the EU, without covering the political and the diplomatic aspects of the subject. Another area of limitation for this thesis will be that it will focus only on most recent developments of the

NATO – EU relationships, starting from January 2004. Other previous agreements and experiences will be considered only if functional and helpful to clarify present aspects.

Another limitation in this research will be the access to classified documents. In order to give every potential reader the opportunity to easily find the documents that are part of the references of this thesis, I decided to limit the research to the open sources available, in terms of official documents, reports, white papers, and newspapers articles. Internet sources have been taken into consideration only in cases where there were no other documents available. In conclusion, while I am eager to survey this topic, I realize that I must keep out my own personal consideration and opinions, mainly based on the direct experience and knowledge of the study subject, when it comes to conducting research and analyzing the results.

Delimitations

Considering the abovementioned limitations, the following delimitations are functional to the thesis development:

- Even though the operations the EU is conducting in the Balkans are within the NATO – EU partnership framework, their analysis is not relevant for this research, because these operations do not involve either the NRF or the EU BGs.
- The thesis will not cover in depth the experience of the European Rapid Reaction Force (ERRF), considering that it is not of actuality anymore.

Primary and Secondary Research Questions

The Italian Armed Forces and all the European armed forces in general are deeply involved in both the NRF and the EU BG projects. Considering the challenges that they are facing – in terms of transformation, budgets and force reduction, modernization and reform of C2 systems – the abovementioned projects are and will be the first priority in the near future. It is clear that there are no more additional resources to develop other force packages with the same characteristics. In brief, there are no "B-plans" in case of failure: the NATO Response Force and the EU BGs have to be successful. To answer the primary research question, this work will investigate the EU BG capabilities to identify both potentials and weaknesses. This is relevant for two main reasons: first of all, a credible, autonomous military instrument would give the EU the possibility to manage crises where the presence of NATO could be not advisable, in political terms; secondly, identifying a possible cooperation between the two rapid response forces could lead to further developments of the existing NATO – EU agreements in military subjects.

Primary Research Question

Given all that, the primary research question this thesis aims to answer is: does the establishment of the EU BGs in 2007 represent a possible alternative to the NATO response force, and what are the implications for the Alliance in strategic and operational terms?

Secondary Research Questions

To further investigate the primary research question, the following secondary questions will need to be addressed:

What are the NRF/EU BG missions?

What are their core competencies?

What is the NRF/EU BG operational concept?

Who decides the force employment and how?

What are their potential challenges?

Are NRF and EU BG alternative, complementary, or duplicative?

Thesis

The research aims to identify the strategic and operational consequences for the Atlantic Alliance after the establishment of an autonomous European rapid reaction force, the EU BG that, under some aspects, mirrors the NATO Response Force.

As far as the strategic considerations are concerned, the first step is to identify what the term *strategic* refers to. According to NATO AAP-6 (2008), *NATO Glossary of Terms and Definitions*, the strategic level is that "at which a nation or a group of nations determines national or multinational security objectives and deploys national, including military, resources to achieve them." Another definition is provided by the US FM 1-02 (2004), *Operational Terms and Graphics*, where the strategic level of war is identified as that "at which a nation, often as member of a group of nations, determines national or multinational (alliance or coalition) strategic security objectives and guidance, and develops and uses national resources to accomplish these objectives. Activities at this level establish national and multinational military objectives; sequence initiatives; define limits and assess risks for the use of military and other instruments of national power; develop global plans or theater war plans to achieve these objectives; and provide military forces and other capabilities in accordance with strategic plans". The US Joint

Publication 3-0 (February 2008) defines strategy as "a prudent idea or a set of ideas for employing the instruments of national power in a synchronized and integrated fashion to achieve theater, national, and/or multinational objectives."

This thesis adopts the AAP-6 (2008) definition of strategic level and therefore will consider the consequences for NATO in terms of objectives and employment of the military power as strategic implications of the EU BG's establishment. In other words, this paper will consider and analyze the potential changes for the NATO strategic concept and the possibility of a future division of roles in crisis prevention and management between NATO and the EU.

As far as a definition of the operational level is concerned, the NATO AAP-6 (2008) defines it as "the level at which campaigns and major operations are planned, conducted and sustained to accomplish strategic objectives within theaters or areas of operation." The US FM 1-06 (2004) states that the operational is "the level of war at which campaigns and major operations are planned, conducted, and sustained to accomplish strategic objectives within theaters or operational areas. Activities at this level link tactics and strategy by establishing operational objectives needed to accomplish the strategic objectives, sequencing events to achieve the operational objectives, initiating actions, and applying resources to bring about and sustain these events." Finally, the US JP 3-0 defines the operational level in the same terms used in the FM 1-06. Given these definitions of operational level, and adopting again the AAP - 6 (2008) definition, this thesis will consider as potential operational implications for the Atlantic Alliance the changes that the establishment of the EU BGs can require in terms of forces, structure, capabilities, and tasks.

The research design will follow three phases: description, comparison, and analysis. The second chapter will cover the first phase – description, reviewing the existing unclassified literature on the subject. This chapter is based on official documents, white papers, and reports of both NATO and the EU. For further information, the research has been based on studies and reports of two of the world's most qualified international think-tanks: the International Crisis Group (ICG) and the Center for International Strategic Studies. The second chapter aims to answer the first three secondary research questions: the NRF and the EU BG's concepts, their missions, and their core competencies. Once this information is collected, the comparison of the two force packages will give some elements to answer, in the fourth chapter, the last secondary research question: Are the EU BG and the NRF alternative, complementary or a duplicative?

The third chapter describes in details the methodology adopted in this thesis. Starting from the identification of the research problem and the definition of what strategic and operational implications mean, this chapter illustrates the development of each phase of the research project and gives a quick overview of the sources employed.

Chapter Four will cover the third phase – analysis. In this phase, the elements collected in the previous phases are the basis of discussion for the analysis of the strategic and operational implications for NATO after the establishment of the EU BGs.

The NRF has been already employed in crisis response operations and during the Olympic Games of Athens in 2004, but the EU BGs have not been employed yet. For this reason, the two reaction forces cannot be compared considering practical examples and possible lessons learned. In order to bypass the problem represented by the lack of

empirical data, I would utilize the example offered by the US expeditionary forces. In fact, there are many analogies between the Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) and the NRF, as well as several similarities between the Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) and the EU BGs. Considering the Marine Corps doctrine of the employment of both the expeditionary assets, I will try to determine if it is possible to hypothesize a division of roles and tasks between the NRF and the EU BGs. Chapter Five will describe in detail the hypothesis of a possible division of roles and tasks between the NRF and EU BGs.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

> It is sometimes necessary, in particular in front of Central European audiences, to disperse concerns about some sort of rivalry between NATO and EU. A few weeks ago, the Head of State of a country which is on the verge of joining both EU and NATO asked me if the possible creation of a NATO rapid reaction force suggested by the US would mean a duplication of the necessary effort in relation to the EU crisis management force. I could give the re-assuring answer that no European country can afford two armies. The bulk of NATO effort will remain collective defense. A majority of present and future EU Member States has conferred their collective defense to NATO as the most effective security organization in European History.
>
> Javier Solana,
> EU High Representative for CFSP

> We must be realistic, furthermore, about the scope for NATO-EU cooperation. I realize that both our institutions are going through a profound transformation, and that we cannot formulate an "end state" of our relationship. But what we can do is to pragmatically broaden our cooperation in areas where our interests clearly coincide, and where we can complement each other. And I believe there are many such areas: managing crises, combating terrorism, preventing proliferation and - above all - improving military capabilities.
>
> Rt. Hon. Lord Robertson of Port Ellen,
> Secretary General of NATO

The path towards the establishment of European autonomous military capabilities starts in 1992, when the then 12 members of the European Economic Community (EEC) signed the Maastricht Treaty that instituted the European Union (EU). The Treaty of the European Union (TEU) states that the Union's members agree to cooperate in foreign, defense, and security policies, leaving the door opened for further development of the subject in federal terms. The Maastricht Treaty is important not only for its content, but also for its significance. In fact, it marked the end of a political crisis within the EEC: in 1991, the then members of the European Economic Community recognized autonomously and without any previous consultation the Yugoslavian breakaway states

of Slovenia and Croatia, creating the premises for a domino effect in the region and showing also the still relevant differences in terms of national interests among the European countries.

The Balkan wars played an important role in NATO history as well. The Kosovo conflict in 1999 was the first war waged and won by the Alliance, but it highlighted also the structural problems of a fifty-year-old organization and its still complete dependency on the US military power. The Kosovo crisis blew up right in the middle of the debate on the role of NATO and on its reason to exist. It is not possible to say what would have been the attitude of NATO towards the Kosovo crisis if the Alliance's reform and transformation processes were already completed, but in this case also the Balkan wars opened the debate, as it did for the EU.

This brief introduction about the historical background of the development of European autonomous military capabilities and the NATO transformation process is necessary to understand the reasons why the most important decisions made on these subjects – which are the basis of the official documents analyzed in this chapter – and the most relevant studies and reports on the topic have their origin in the dynamics of action and reaction generated by international crisis.

The thesis' primary research question aims to find out what the potential strategic and operational implications for NATO are, after the establishment of the European Union Battle Groups (EU BGs), the most recent evolutionary aspect of the European autonomous military capabilities development process. This chapter relates to the research question in this way: describing both the NATO Response Force (NRF) and EU BG concepts, their missions and their core competencies, it aims to identify similarities

and differences between the two force packages that will be analyzed in the fourth chapter. Given that, this chapter will analyze the most relevant prior research efforts, considering the most authoritative and qualified works on this subject.

The cornerstones and the starting point of the review of the existing literature about the NRF and the EU BGs are respectively the NRF Comprehensive Concept and the 2010 Headline Goal. Therefore, the first section, which covers the strategic concepts, will analyze the content of these key documents. The second section will describe the missions of both the forces, starting from the study of NATO and EU official documents, briefings, and official press releases. In addition to them, the research will consider some additional resources such as the reports of the US National Defense University and of the Institute for Strategic Studies (ISS) of the EU. The third section addresses the core competencies and it is based on the most qualified reports on both NATO Response Force and EU BGs; in particular, two reports of the Center for Technology and National Security Policy of the US National Defense University about the NRF and the 2007 study of Gustav Lindstrom for the Institute for Strategic Studies of the European Union on the EU BGs. The fourth section analyzes the complex topic of the relationships between NATO and the EU in crisis prevention and management in the light of the Berlin Plus agreement. This section is based on the text of the NATO Washington summit's final declaration and on the 2003 Berlin Plus Arrangements summarized in the 2006 NATO Handbook. The fifth section summarizes the conclusions of the chapter and also identifies the aspects related to the thesis's primary research question that will be covered in the following chapters.

The NATO Response Force and EU Battle Groups Concepts

This section analyzes both the NRF and the EU BG concepts, aiming to answer the first of the secondary research questions and to identify potential similarities and differences between the two force packages. It is based on the *NRF Comprehensive Concept* for the part related to the NRF and on the *2010 Headline Goal* for the EU BG's part.

The final declaration of the NATO Prague summit in November 2002 inspired the *Comprehensive Concept for the NRF* approved on the 12th of June 2003 by the NATO Ministers of Defense. The EU BG concept has a different background: in February 2004, a French – German – British initiative broke the ice, creating the premises for further developments at EU level.

The NRF strategic concept was defined during the NATO summit held in Prague in November 2002, where the Heads of State and Government of the Alliance decided to "create a NATO Response Force (NRF) consisting of a technologically advanced, flexible, deployable, interoperable and sustainable force including land, sea, and air elements ready to move quickly to wherever needed, as decided by the Council". The NRF would also be "a catalyst for focusing and promoting improvements in the Alliance's military capabilities." Furthermore, the Heads of State and Government "gave directions for the development of a comprehensive concept for such a force, which will have its initial operational capability as soon as possible, but not later than October 2004 and its full operational capability not later than October 2006, and for a report to Defense Ministers in Spring 2003." As far as the relationships between NATO and the EU are concerned, the Prague summit final declaration stated that "the NRF and the related work

of the EU Headline Goal should be mutually reinforcing while respecting the autonomy of both organizations." (NATO, 2002)

The Prague summit final declaration created the basis for the development of the *NRF Concept* that is considered the "catalyst of NATO transformation," in other words the Alliance's new reason to exist. The US Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld proposed the idea of a NATO rapid deployable force in September 2002, in order to overcome the doubts among the members about the effectiveness of the Alliance in the new context of the global war on terror. The NRF original idea foresaw a division-strong unit equipped with high-tech defense systems, able to cope with any potential chemical biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) threat. This force would be deployable within 7 to 30 days not only in NATO's traditional area of responsibility but also in other parts of the world, on decision of the North Atlantic Council (NAC), which is composed by the Heads of State and Government of the Alliance and is NATO's highest decisionmaking body.

The NATO Ministers of Defense approved, on the 12th of June 2003, the *Comprehensive Concept for the NRF* commissioned at the Prague summit. According to the *Comprehensive Concept*, NRF roles include "deployment of a show force and solidarity to deter aggression," deployment as "a stand-alone force for Article 5 and Non-Article 5 operations," and deployment as an "initial entry force for a larger formation." On the occasion of the NATO Ministers of Defense meeting, when the *Comprehensive Concept* was adopted, the NATO Secretary General Lord Robertson defined the NRF as a "sharp-edge tool for a range of missions, equipped for long-range projection and high intensity conflicts." During his speech, Lord Robertson underlined also the existing

differences between the NRF and the EU Rapid Reaction Force (ERRF), which had "lower-end, peacekeeping tasks" (NATO, 2003). The ERRF was a corps-level unit, 60,000 men strong, deployable mainly for peace support operations within 30 to 60 days. The ERRC/ERRF concept, known as the *Helsinki Headline Goal*, was the document to which the Prague summit final declaration referred in one of its last sentences.

As Jeffrey Bialos and Stuart Koehl pointed out in *The NATO Response Force. Facilitating Coalition Warfare Through Technology Transfer and Information Sharing* (2005), the NRF has three main purposes: first, strengthen the military ties between the United States and its natural allies, the NATO partners, as a premise for a stronger political partnership. The second and the third purpose – to give the Alliance a credible force, capable to intervene rapidly and lethally out of its traditional area of responsibility and to be a catalyst for the transformation of NATO countries national armed forces – have been analyzed already.

The *Helsinki Headline Goal* or *2003 Headline Goal* is the most direct ancestor of the *Battle Group Concept.* The European Council adopted it during the summit held in Helsinki on 10th – 11th December 1999. During the Helsinki summit, the representatives of the EU members decided on the establishment of a 60,000-man-strong force, the ERRF, able to provide "smaller rapid response elements available and deployable at very high readiness." (EU, 1999)

On the 4th of February 2003, the British Prime Minister Tony Blair met the French President Jacques Chirac in Le Touquet, France. The two statesmen adopted a common final declaration where they underlined the importance for the EU to develop "capabilities in planning and deploying forces at short notice, including the initial

deployment of land, sea and air forces within 5 – 10 days." (Franco-British Summit, 2003a)

The final declaration that concluded a second Franco – British summit held in London on the 24th of November 2003 gave further energy to the development of a European rapid response force. In that circumstance the British Prime Minister and the French President stated that "EU should be capable and willing to deploy in an autonomous operation within 15 days to respond to a crisis (…) in response to a UN request to stabilize a situation or otherwise meet a short term need until peace keepers from the United Nations, or regional organizations acting under UN mandate, could arrive or be reinforced." (Franco – British Summit, 2003b)

On the 10th of February 2004, at the conclusion of a Franco – British – German summit, the French President, the British Prime Minister, and the German Canceller adopted *The battlegroups concept – UK/France/Germany food for thought paper*, where they foresaw a "catalogue of high utility force packages that can be tailored rapidly to specific missions," stating that these packages should include about 1,500 men, deployable in 15 days, sustainable for "30 days initial operations extendable to at least 120 days." (*The Battlegroup Concept*, 2004)

The *Food for Thought Paper* was the inspiring document for the *Headline Goal 2010* approved by General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) of the European Union, composed by the foreign ministers of the then 25 members, on the 17th of May 2004 and endorsed by the European Council of 17th and 18th of June 2004. The key element of the 2010 Headline Goal is "the ability for the EU to deploy force packages at high readiness as a response to a crisis either as a stand-alone force or as part

of a larger operation enabling follow-on phases (…) these minimum force packages must be military effective, credible and coherent and should be broadly based on the Battlegroups concept." (EU, 2004)

The EU BG, according to the *2010 Headline Goal*, is "a specific form of rapid response, and includes a combined arms battalion sized force package with Combat Support and Combat Service Support." Furthermore, the document adopted by the European Council underlined the importance of developing a rapid decisionmaking process within the Union, considering its ambition "to be able to take the decision to launch an operation within 5 days of the approval of the Crisis Management Concept by the Council." As far as the deployment of forces is concerned, the ambition is "that the forces start implementing their mission on the ground, no later than 10 days after the EU decision to launch the operation."

Despite the different terminology used by NATO and EU decisional bodies, the NRF and the EU BG concepts have substantially the same significance. Both the organizations aim to address international crisis in the same way: sending high readiness forces to the hot spot before the situation deteriorates. However, although the means are similar, the ends are different. On one hand, NATO seeks to keep the pace of the post-9/11 international challenges; on the other hand, the EU finally realized that it could not realize any ambition of being a "global actor" without effective military capabilities.

NRF and EU BG Missions and Tasks

This section aims to answer to the secondary research question related to missions and tasks of both the force packages. As far as the NRF is concerned, the analysis will be based again on the *NRF Comprehensive Concept*, given that all the existing documents

on the subject are inspired by it. On the other hand, *Petersberg Tasks* is the term used in the *2010 Headline Goal* referring to the EU BG missions. For this reason, the part that covers the EU BG missions and tasks will be based on the analysis of the *Headline Goal* text, on the Petersberg declaration established by the Western European Union (WEU) assembly in Petersberg, near Berlin, in June 1992, and on the 2003 *European Security Strategy* (ESS).

The purpose of the NRF is to give the Alliance the capability to deploy quickly a robust combined joint force able to carry out a full spectrum of tasks either in semi-permissive or in hostile environments. In addition, the NRF sets the standards for the further development of the national armed forces of NATO members, in terms of effective expeditionary capabilities.

The NRF set of missions encompasses the deployment of the NRF as a stand-alone force to prevent the risk of further escalation of the existing crisis; its deployment as an early-entry force to create conditions for the arrival of a stronger follow-on force and, finally, its employment as part of a larger NATO force in conventional large-scale conflicts. Given these missions, the NRF primary tasks refer mainly to the possible operations a rapid response force is asked to carry out in the initial phases of a crisis. Assuming that the NRF will be deployed as a stand-alone force, the possible tasks are: the evacuation of noncombatant personnel (noncombatant evacuation operations – NEO), the support to NATO members or third nations in disaster/consequence management, and counterterrorism (CT) operations. All the possible options of crisis response operations, from embargos to peace enforcement, complete the tasks of the NRF employed as a

stand-alone force. Operating as a stand-alone-force, the NRF can operate autonomously up to 30 days with its logistic capabilities; the period is obviously longer if resupplied.

Peace enforcement is the most likely task when the NRF is deployed as early-entry force to set up the conditions for the deployment of a more robust force in a hostile environment. Last but not least, the NRF can be deployed as a demonstrative force, near an area of crisis, to show the NATO members' determination as it happened in 1999, when NATO deployed the Allied Mobile Force/Land (AMF/L) in FYROM during the Kosovo crisis.

The Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) or his delegate Joint Force Commander is the NRF commander. The NRF is a modular force that can be tailored to a specific operation, based on a brigade-size land element that includes also Special Forces assets. In its largest configuration, the NRF force package includes a deployable Joint Task Force (JTF) Headquarters with land, sea, and air component commands. Potentially the NRF is a 25,000-man-strong force based on an Army brigade combat team, a naval task force, and an air force component that provides up to 200 combat sorties per day. The NRF rotation of forces is based on a period of unit training (single service), then 6 months of system and interoperability training (joint and combined), which is followed by 6 months of standby/on-call period.

According to the *Comprehensive Concept* and the *Prague Summit Declaration*, the NRF also should represent the Alliance's state-of-the-art force in the areas of CBRN defense; intelligence, surveillance and target acquisition (ISRT); air-to-ground surveillance; command, control, communication, computer and information (C4I); combat effectiveness, including precision guided munitions and suppression of enemy air

defenses; strategic air and sea lift; air-to air refueling; deployable combat support (CS) and combat service support (CSS) units.

The EU BGs' missions are listed in Article 17 (2) of the TEU, commonly known as "Petersberg Missions" and in the 2003 *European Security Strategy* (ESS). On the 17th of May 2004, the General Affairs and External Relationship Council (GAERC) of the EU approved the *2010 Headline Goal,* which basically echoes these documents. The "Petersberg Missions" were established by the Western European Union Petersberg declaration of June 1992. These missions include humanitarian and rescue tasks, peacekeeping tasks, and tasks of combat forces in crisis management, including peacekeeping. The "Petersberg Missions" were included in the Article 17 of the TEU under the 1999 Amsterdam Treaty and later confirmed by the *2003 European Security Strategy* that also foresees additional missions for the EU forces. According to the *2003 European Security Strategy*, the EU BGs can conduct joint disarmament operations and support to third countries in combating terrorism and in security sector reform. Even though the EU BGs can perform the full spectrum of these tasks, considering their strength and composition, crises of limited duration and intensity are the most likely scenario for the EU BGs. According to the *Battlegroups concept – UK/France/Germany food for thought paper* and to the *2010 Headline Goal*, the EU BGs are supposed to be self-sustainable for 30 days. In case of necessity, and only if adequately resupplied, the EU BG employment can be extended to 120 days, which is the longest term foreseen for a EU BG operation.

In November 2006, the European Council approved *The Development of European Military Capabilities: The Force Catalogue 2006*; this document integrates the

Petersberg and the ESS missions and foresees five possible scenarios with five potential tasks for EU BG operations. In other words, the EU BGs should be able to perform a full spectrum of tasks but, given these scenarios, the most likely ones are those listed. The first scenario foresees the employment of the EU BG with the task of securing key areas in a separation of parties by force operation; clearly this scenario refers to the third Petersberg mission. The second scenario, conflict prevention, hypothesizes the preventive deployment of EU BG as a dissuasion force and can be referred to the third Petersberg mission as well. The third Petersberg mission also inspires the third and fourth scenarios, with their related potential missions: the task of the EU BG deployment as an initial-entry force in case of stabilization, reconstruction, or military advice to a third country operations; and a noncombatant evacuation operation in a non-permissive environment. Humanitarian assistance operations are the last possible scenario where a EU BG can perform its task, delivering humanitarian items. This last case refers directly to the first Petersberg mission.

Analogously to the NRF, the EU BG can operate as a stand-alone force in limited-scale/low-intensity operations, as an early-entry force to create the conditions for the successive deployment of a stronger follow-on force, and as a bridging force in support of troops already on the ground that might be reinforced by other forces not available in a short term (Lindstrom, 2007, 18, 19).

The analysis of all the official documents produced by NATO and by the EU on the subject support the conclusion that, in spite of the different terminology used, the NRF and the EU BG missions are substantially the same. This conclusion does not mean that the EU BG is a duplicate of NRF and vice versa, because the study is only at its

initial stage. Given the clear similarity in terms of missions and tasks between the NRF and the EU BGs, the following section will analyze the structure and the organization of both the force packages to understand how they can perform the same spectrum of missions and tasks, while being numerically different.

NRF and EU BG Core Competencies

This section analyzes the structure and the organization of both the NRF and the EU BGs, aiming to identify their core competences and further possible similarities or new elements of differentiation. This section is based on five documents: the 2006 document of the European Parliament, Policy Department External Policies, *EU and NATO: Co-operation or Competition?*; the 2006 CRS Report for Congress, *NATO and the European Union*, by Kristin Archick and Paul Gallis; the 2006 study of Richard Kugler, US Center for Technology and National Security Policy, *The NATO Response Force 2002 – 2006*; the 2005 study of Jeffrey Bialos and Stuart Koehl, US National Defense University, *The NATO Response Force. Facilitating Coalition Warfare Through Technology Transfer and Information Sharing*, and finally on the 2007 EU ISS Paper *Enter the EU Battlegroups* by Gustav Lindstrom. The first part of this section covers the NRF composition, structure, its core competencies and force generation processes. The second part will follow the same sequence of topics for the EU BGs. The section's conclusion will point out similarities and differences between the two force packages, as a result of a compared analysis of these topics.

In its complete configuration, the NRF is a 25,000-man-strong expeditionary force composed of a reinforced brigade combat team (2,500 – 3,000 men); a rapid deployable composite air group with 40 combat aircraft, support aircraft, and combat and

multipurpose helicopters capable of 200 sorties per day. The naval component of about 12 ships is based on a carrier battle group, an amphibious task group, and a surface action group. Considering composition and structure of the NRF, the analogies with the US Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) are evident. In fact, the establishment of NRF represents the NATO's first decision to transform itself from a regional to a global organization, inspiring also the innovation of members' armed forces in the light of an expeditionary model.

According to the US Joint Publication 3-0, *Joint Operations,* an expeditionary force is "an armed force organized to achieve a specific objective in a foreign country." A NATO definition of an expeditionary unit does not exist, but the NATO AAP 6, *NATO Glossary of Terms and Definitions* (2008) defines an expeditionary operation as "the projection of military power over extended lines of communication into a distant operational area to accomplish a specific objective." Hence, an expeditionary force could be defined as a military force deployable to a distant operational area, over extended lines of communication, to accomplish a specific objective. Both the NATO and the US military definitions of an expeditionary force consider a specific objective as the *sine qua non* of any expeditionary operation; however, analyzing the NATO definition, there are other important points that come into view: the distance of the operational area and the extension of the lines of communication. Assuming that the NRF is, or will be, an effective expeditionary force, its core competence is the capability to conduct operations worldwide to accomplish a specific objective.

A possible, one-sentence definition of NRF could be: a modular force, fully interoperable in both joint and combined environments. Obviously, this definition

requires a further explanation. The term "modular force" refers to the two most important characteristics that 21st-century military forces should have: responsiveness and versatility. The lead principle is that the force is mission-tailored; in other words the commander's vision and concept of operation (CONOPS) "builds" the force to accomplish the specific mission. For this reason, all the force components must be fully interoperable, given that they can be echeloned down to the lowest level of employment. This means, for example, that for a specific mission, combat service support assets, such as medical teams, can be asked to operate attached to a combat support unit, such as an engineer battalion, if required by the situation. The NRF intervention in Pakistan, in the aftermath of the terrible 2005 earthquake, offers a clear example to help understand the principle of modularity. In fact, the force deployed to Pakistan was mission-tailored, to carry out a humanitarian relief operation, based on strong engineer and medical components and on an air component with mainly transportation capabilities.

On the 8th of October 2005, a devastating earthquake hit the Pakistani region of Kashmir; two days later, the government in Islamabad asked NATO to provide support in dealing with the disaster's consequences (NATO, 2007a). The NRF deployed in Pakistan included both land and air components. As far as the land component is concerned, it consisted of the headquarters element in Arja; two light engineer units in the Bagh district (one Spanish and one Polish); an Italian engineer unit with heavy construction equipment; a British engineer unit specialized in high-altitude relief work; a multinational medical team operating the NATO field hospital; four water purification teams (one Spanish, three Lithuanian); and two civil-military cooperation teams from Slovenia and France. The NATO HQ in Pakistan was based on personnel from NATO's Joint Force

Command Lisbon (Portugal), augmented by staff officers from NATO Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE). In total, some 1,000 NATO engineers and supporting staff, as well as 200 medical personnel, worked in Pakistan during the operation that came to an end on the 1st of February 2006. (NATO, 2007b)

According to the *NRF Comprehensive Concept*, "the NRF will operate on a rotational basis to achieve military efficiency, equitable burden sharing, and dissemination of experience and capabilities throughout the Alliance, in order to achieve the transformational effect." The NATO members contribute to the NRF generation process on a voluntary rotational basis and formalize their participation during the Force Generation conference held by the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) the year before the force starts its training. The training process has three phases. The first one, where the assigned forces must satisfy the NATO requirements, is the unit-level tactical training, and it is a national responsibility. The second, six-months-long phase is the component-level training, and it is conducted under NATO's responsibility. The last phase foresees the extensive training aimed to verify the operational capability of both forces and C2 structures. This phase concludes with a field exercise to validate the force's combat readiness. At this point, the NRF enters the standby phase that is six months long. (NATO, 2007c)

As Gustav Lindstrom points out, "the term battlegroup is likely to have varying connotations depending on the context and audience." The EU BG, according to the definition adopted in EU official documents, is "the minimum military effective, credible, rapid deployable, coherent force package capable of stand-alone operations, or for the initial phase of larger operations." (EU, 2006b)

The EU BG, in its largest configuration, is composed of approximately 1,500 – 1,800 troops. The maneuver unit, an infantry battalion, is reinforced by combat support and combat service support assets and by additional operational and strategic enablers, such as Special Forces. Analogously to the NRF, the EU BG package is mission-tailored, but considering the different size of a EU BG, if compared with the NRF, there are not many options to modify the original structure. Like the NRF, the EU BG is self-sustainable for 30 days; if adequately resupplied, its mission can be extended to 120 days. The EU BG can be deployed worldwide: for planning reasons official documents refer often to a deployment radius of 6,000 km from Brussels (Lindstrom, 19), even though during the set up process of the EU BG based on the Italian Julia Alpini Brigade the furthest possible area of operation was hypothesized as 15,000 km from Brussels.

Starting from the 1st of January 2007, the EU has at its disposal two BGs that rotate every six months. To identify the EU BGs, there are a couple of numbers: the first one, the ordinal number, indicates the six-month standby period, starting from the 1st of January 2007; the second one, the cardinal number, distinguishes between the two EU BGs ready in the same period. Doctrinally, the two BGs do not operate together; in other words, the EU has the capabilities to deal with two crises, in two different areas, at the same time. This means that, if only one EU BG is employed, the other cannot be used as an operational reserve to reinforce the previous one if necessary.

On the 1st of July 2007, the Italian Julia Alpine Brigade entered the standby period as EU BG II – 1. It represents a case study for understanding the EU BG composition and strength and its force generating process. The Julia Alpine Brigade is both a national and a multinational unit. When it operates as Multinational Land Force

(MLF) in NATO operations, it includes two battalions (one Slovenian and one Hungarian) besides an Italian Alpini regiment. The MLF task organization is completed by an Italian artillery regiment, an Italian engineer battalion, and by a multinational combat service support battalion. The Julia-MLF-based EU BG mirrored the organization of the Multinational Land Force: it included a multinational headquarters company, one Italian Alpini company, one Slovenian motorized infantry company, one Hungarian motorized infantry company, one Italian combat support company with mortar and antitank capabilities, one Italian artillery battery, and one Italian engineer company. An Italian air defense artillery battery, an Italian attack helicopter squadron, and an Italian ranger detachment completed the land component task organization that, by itself, was larger than 1,500 troops. Considering the assigned strategic and operational enablers (air- and sea-based, logistics and Special Forces), the strength was approximately 2,000 troops.

Italy, Hungary, and Slovenia were responsible for generating the forces they offered the EU: not only the land component, but also the strategic enablers. Analogously to the NRF, a period of six months of joint and combined training precedes the standby period. The dynamics of the certification of the EU BG combat readiness mirrors the NRF process. The operation HQs is not part of the EU BG package and, for this reason, its composition, structure, and training does not follow its schedule.

The comparative analysis of NRF and EU BG core competencies offers a clearer picture of the capabilities of both the force packages. It is evident that they share a common operational concept: both can be considered modular forces as well as expeditionary forces. That said, there are also significant differences in terms of size,

composition, and capabilities. The thesis' fourth chapter will examine in detail the existing differences between the two force packages, assuming that, in the light of the comparative analysis conducted in the present chapter, the EU BG cannot be considered as a mere duplication of the NRF.

The NATO – EU Partnership in Crisis Prevention and Management

The aspect of the relationships between the EU and NATO in crisis prevention and management is one of the most discussed topics both at academic and at political level. This section will not analyze the previous experiences of NATO – EU cooperation in crisis management such as operation *Concordia* in FYROM, operation *Althea* in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and operation *Artemis* in the Democratic Republic of Congo; it will cover the possibility of cooperation between the two organizations when the employment of one of the two force packages – either the NRF, or the EU BG – is required. For this reason, this section will consider only the official documents existing on this subject, in particular the *Berlin Plus* agreement.

The term *Berlin Plus* refers to several official documents signed by the EU and NATO, starting from the 1996 meeting in Berlin, for their cooperation in crisis management. Within the *Berlin Plus* framework, the EU can have access to NATO assets, planning cells, and other pre-identified capabilities to plan, organize, and conduct EU-led operations. The NATO ministers of defense signed the first of these official documents, which refers to NATO-EU cooperation, in Berlin in 1996. This document originally regulated the terms of cooperation between NATO and the Western European Union (WEU) for WEU-led crisis management operations. In April 1999, during the NATO summit in Washington DC, the NATO countries' Heads of State and Government

concurred to extend the Berlin agreement to the EU that was progressively assuming the political role that the WEU used to have (NATO 2006, 247). The Washington summit's final declaration states:

> The Alliance fully supports the development of the European Security and Defense Identity within the Alliance by making available its assets and capabilities for WEU-led operations. To this end, the Alliance and the WEU have developed a close relationship and put into place key elements of the ESDI as agreed in Berlin. In order to enhance peace and stability in Europe and more widely, the European Allies are strengthening their capacity for action, including by increasing their military capabilities. The increase of the responsibilities and capacities of the European Allies with respect to security and defense enhances the security environment of the Alliance. (NATO, 1999b)

At the end of the Washington summit, the NATO Heads of State and Government also recognized that--

> The European Allies have taken decisions to enable them to assume greater responsibilities in the security and defense field in order to enhance the peace and stability of the Euro-Atlantic area and thus the security of all Allies. On the basis of decisions taken by the Alliance, in Berlin in 1996 and subsequently, the European Security and Defense Identity will continue to be developed within NATO. This process will require close cooperation between NATO, the WEU and, if and when appropriate, the European Union. It will enable all European Allies to make a more coherent and effective contribution to the missions and activities of the Alliance as an expression of our shared responsibilities; it will reinforce the transatlantic partnership; and it will assist the European Allies to act by themselves as required through the readiness of the Alliance, on a case-by-case basis and by consensus, to make its assets and capabilities available for operations in which the Alliance is not engaged militarily under the political control and strategic direction either of the WEU or as otherwise agreed, taking into account the full participation of all European Allies if they were so to choose." (NATO, 1999b)

Integrated with the Washington summit's decisions and by the *Arrangements* of March 2003, the text of the 1996 Berlin agreement became what is today the *Berlin Plus*. It foresees the possibility for the EU to have access to NATO planning capabilities and, if available because not engaged, to NATO strategic assets. One of the most innovative aspects of the 1999 and 2003 updates of the Berlin agreement is represented by the

determination of the role of NATO Deputy Supreme Commander Europe (DSACEUR) in EU-led operations. The *Berlin Plus* foresees the "identification of a range of European command options for EU-led operations, further developing the role of NATO's Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe (DSACEUR) in order for him to assume his European responsibilities fully and effectively" (NATO 2006, 249). It means, in other words, that the NATO Deputy SACEUR, a European four-star general, in case of a EU-led operation will be the operational commander. On one hand this decision facilitates the relationships between NATO and the EU, creating an effective collaboration; on the other hand it has obviously side effects. Clearly, the EU operational commander, being first of all DSACEUR and considering that at the end of the operation he will be again in his NATO position, will not make any decision that could be against the Alliance's interests.

This brief description of the content of the *Berlin Plus* agreement will be integrated in chapter four by the analysis of the potential scenarios where the two organizations could be asked to cooperate. The possible cooperation in operations that require the employment of rapid reaction forces – in other words either the NRF or the EU BG – is something completely different from the experiences of NATO - EU cooperation in the Balkans. Thus, it is not possible to conclude that, in the light of the previous positive experiences, the future ones will be successful. In conclusion, there is not enough evidence to allow one to consider the *Berlin Plus* as the instrument that solves any possible friction that might emerge between NATO and the EU in cases where the employment of rapid reaction forces is required.

Conclusion

This chapter aimed to answer the secondary research questions about missions, core competencies, and existing agreements for NATO – EU cooperation in crisis prevention, response, and management. The literature review, based mainly on official documents of both NATO and the EU, did not give the opportunity to answer directly the primary research question.

The next chapter will cover the methodology utilized in this thesis to answer the primary research question, the strategic and operational implications for NATO after the establishment of the EU BGs. The fourth chapter will analyze similarities and differences between the two forces as well as their implications, highlighting the potential challenges of both the NRF and the EU BG. It is evident that the EU BG can be a potential alternative to NRF in some cases only if its real effectiveness is proven.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

> We will continue to work with our external partners and international organisations to promote a comprehensive global approach to the fight against terrorism. We are making the fight against terrorism an integral part of the EU's external relations.
>
> All this may sound quite technical – but all this is important for our capacity to withstand the challenge, and the progress made shows you that the Commission takes this challenge seriously.
>
> José Manuel Barroso,
> President of the European Commission

> Of course, I do not expect NATO and the EU either to always act together or to be systematically involved in each other's missions. There will be times when it is clearly preferable to use one institution rather than the other – for political reasons as well as reasons of comparative advantage. But more intensive political dialogue would help us to take those decisions. And it would, in the fullness of time, produce more strategic convergence in the priorities of our two organizations.
>
> Jaap de HoppSheffer,
> NATO Secretary General

There are two possible approaches for analyzing the complex subject of the relationship between NATO and the European Union (EU) and, consequently, for finding the answer to the question about the strategic and operational implications for the Atlantic Alliance after the establishment of the European Union Battle Groups (EU BGs). The first approach is based on the analysis of previous experiences of NATO – EU cooperation in crisis management, such as Operations *Althea* and *Concordia* in the Balkans and, more recently, the NATO – EU support to the African Union operation AMIS II in Darfur. On the one hand, these experiences have the advantage of offering practical case studies; on the other hand, they did not see the employment of rapid

reaction forces. Thus they are not directly relevant to the thesis subject. In the abovementioned cases, NATO took the initiative and then, with its consent, the EU followed. The second approach, adopted in this thesis, aims to find out the answer to the primary research question on the basis of the comparative analysis of the military tools both the organizations have.

The comparative analysis has two possible results: either the EU BG is a mirror image of the NATO Response Force (NRF), or it is notably different. Assuming that it is possible to reach an unambiguous conclusion, it would still not answer the primary research question by itself. For this reason, this thesis does not limit its conclusion to the differences between the NRF and the EU BGs. In addition, it takes further steps to verify if or when NATO and the EU can be asked to decide which of the two force packages is the most suitable to deal with a particular international crisis. In its conclusions, this thesis will analyze what it could mean, under the strategic and the operational profile, for the Atlantic Alliance.

Research Design

The preliminary question before starting the research was: why is the subject I am going to investigate a problem? The case of the possible implications in strategic and operational terms for the Atlantic Alliance after the establishment of the EU BGs, as it has been demonstrated in the first chapter, is a good research problem for many reasons. First, it is relevant: NATO and the EU are, beside the United Nations, the only two international organizations with force projection capabilities and, consequently, the only ones that can play an active role in crisis prevention and management. The second reason is that the existing agreements between NATO and EU do not specify clearly who does

what; in other words, there are several aspects of these documents that, if not adequately clarified, could lead to potential tensions between the two organizations in the future. A third reason is that the problem is still a problem; in fact, all the existing studies on the subject have yet to cover the strategic and operational consequences for NATO of the EU's decision to develop military capabilities in order to cope with the same kind of international crises the Atlantic Alliance aims to address.

Assuming that the research problem is effectively a problem, the second step is framing it. In this case, the research has been limited to the strategic and operational aspects of NATO – EU relationships, considering the political one excessively complex. Thus, this research has not covered the political role of NATO, the talks with the EU about their respective memberships, and all the possible consequences of a further enlargement of the Alliance with the involvement of countries of former Soviet Union.

The collection of information necessary to generate possible solutions is the second phase of the research method. The selection of the available sources has been based on the following criteria: authoritativeness, objectivity, completeness, and accessibility. In the light of these criteria, this thesis has examined, in its second chapter, all the existing international treaties and agreements, official documents and declarations, and press releases and notes of both NATO and the EU on the subject.

All the data and the information collected have been screened and evaluated in order to answer three of the secondary research questions concerning missions, core competencies, and the existing documents on cooperation between NATO and the EU. Once these data have been collected, the next step is to compare all the information in order to determine similarities and differences between the NRF and the EU BGs. The

first and second chapters have covered the identification of the research problem and the collection of the basic information necessary to answer the primary research question. The fourth chapter (analysis), starts with the comparative examination of NRF and EU BG and, highlighting the differences existing between the two forces, ends by identifying the elements necessary to support the conclusions in the final chapter. A brief description of the research design follows.

Evaluation Criteria

Any problem-solving model foresees the definition of evaluation criteria in order to differentiate among possible solutions. The comparative examination will be based exclusively on objective criteria, considering, when possible, only numerical data. Tables of organization and equipment (TO&Es), strength, composition, capabilities, and, finally, command and control (C2) architecture are the identified criteria that satisfy the condition above.

The first criterion, based on TO&Es, is functional to the identification of the differences existing between NRF and EU BGs in terms of general organization and major equipment. The research examines the two forces in their most complex and largest organization possible.

The second criterion (strength) is exclusively numerical. This criterion is necessary to determine what types of operations are feasible. This thesis adopts the historical minimum-planning ratio normally used by Western Armies. Briefly, for attack of prepared or fortified positions 3:1, for a hasty attack 2.5:1, and for a counterattack 1:1.

The term "composition" refers to the multinational aspect. Clearly, the larger the number of nations asked to make a decision, the more difficult the agreement is. On the

other hand, one could object that the employment of a multinational force is more suitable for political reasons. This is not the case with the NRF and EU BG because both the forces, despite their composition, operate under the flags of multinational organizations. Thus, the political requirements are satisfied anyway.

The fourth criterion (capabilities) is not exclusively numerical, but encompasses also the type of tasks the force is able to perform. For example, the presence of a Special Forces detachment within the task organization does not mean by itself that the force is capable of special operations. Additional ground and air assets are necessary to qualify the force "special operations capable." In the same way, the presence of a naval component does not mean that the force can conduct an embargo operation.

The command and control architecture represents the last, but not less important, criterion. In this case also, the criterion in not exclusively numerical, even thought it is clear that a short and simple chain of command is better than a long and complex one. Considering that the NRF and the EU BG can be employed under international mandate, and can be asked to operate as early-entry forces in anticipation of the deployment of a stronger international contingent, effectiveness and responsiveness of the chain of command are key factors of success.

Analysis

It is possible to proceed in the research of strategic and operational implications for the Atlantic Alliance of the establishment of the EU BGs only after having verified that NATO and EU rapid response forces are effectively comparable. In fact, there will be no reason to investigate any possible consequence for NATO in the eventuality that the two forces are not comparable. In fact, if missions are different or complementary,

the answer of the primary research question will be extremely easy: there are no implications for the Atlantic Alliance. In other words, while NATO manages a type of crisis, the EU addresses another: a sort of rational division of labor between the two organizations that does not imply any friction of the respective strategic concepts and that does not create any strategic and operational consequence for NATO.

Once comparability is established, the next research step is the comparison of the two forces in order to find out either their similarities or their differences. In this case, the comparative examination of the research subjects can lead to only two possible solutions: the NRF and the EU BGs are different or similar. The solution adopted in this thesis considers the two force packages different in terms of competencies and capabilities, even though their missions are similar. Having the same spectrum of missions does not mean that the NRF and the EU BGs are mere duplication of the other; rather, similarities in terms of missions allow for comparison of the two forces and adoption of common criteria.

The result of the comparative examination is the basis for the third phase of the research, which aims to answer directly the primary research question: the analysis of the strategic and operational implications for NATO after the establishment of the EU BGs.

In order to investigate the possibility of cooperation or coordination between the NRF and the EU BGs, this paper analyzes the US Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) and US Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU). Despite the significant differences in terms of missions, core competencies, and C2 structure, there are some elements, such as size, composition, and potential tasks, that allow comparing MEB and NRF, and MEU and EU BG. This analysis also offers the possibility to verify, on the basis of a real-world

example, whether the EU BGs are strong enough to perform at least part of their tasks or not.

Once it has been established that NATO and EU rapid response forces are comparable and it has been verified which kind of tasks the EU BGs can effectively perform, the last phase of the analysis speculates on the most likely scenario where the EU BGs could deploy. The 2006 Israeli-Hezbollah conflict case study supports the conclusion.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS

> I would like to see the North Atlantic Council and the Political Security Committee of the EU meet far more often to share analyses and perspectives on the world's crisis areas. I would also like to see NATO and the EU support each other's operations much more substantially. I would like to see much more pooling of our capabilities, especially in areas such as transport and helicopters, or in research and development, or in harmonizing our force structures and training methods.
>
> Jaap de HoppSheffer,
> NATO Secretary General

> The European Council states its determination to give, by means of the attached declaration, a fresh impetus to the European Security and Defence Policy. Compliant with the principles of the United Nations Charter and the decisions of the United Nations Security Council, this policy will continue to develop in full complementarity with NATO in the agreed framework of the strategic partnership between the EU and NATO and in compliance with the decision-making autonomy and procedures of each.
>
> December 2008 European Council,
> Presidency Conclusions

Before starting any comparative analysis of the NATO Response Force (NRF) and the European Union Battle Groups (EU BGs), it is necessary to establish whether they are effectively comparable or not. The fundamental criterion of comparability has been identified in their homogeneity in terms of missions and in their common nature as expeditionary forces.

The NRF and the EU BGs share, substantially, the same set of missions. As far as the EU BGs are concerned, the *Petersberg Tasks* and the *European Security Strategy 2003* assign the BGs many potential missions, from humanitarian to combat operations. In particular, the *Petersberg Tasks* foresee the deployment of the EU BGs for humanitarian assistance, rescue operations, and all the possible forms of crisis response

operations (CRO) including peacekeeping (PK), peacemaking (PM), and peace enforcing (PE). The *European Security Strategy 2003* assigns more missions: joint disarmament operations, operations in support of third countries in combating terrorism, and, finally, operations of security sector reform (SSR) within the framework of a more complex institution-building process (Lindstrom 2007, 17).

The NRF, according to the *Prague Capabilities Commitment*, is "a tiered readiness joint force; expeditionary in character and design, able to execute the full range of missions (from) peace to a high intensity warfight." Thus, the NRF and the EU BG, despite the different terminology adopted in the official documents, share the same spectrum of missions.

The second condition that allows comparing the NRF and the EU BGs is their common nature-as expeditionary forces. Unfortunately, the NATO and the EU official documents do not have any definition of an expeditionary force. However, the NATO AAP-6 (2008) *Glossary of NATO Terms and Definitions* defines an expeditionary operation as the "projection of military power over extended lines of communication into a distant operational area to accomplish a specific objective." Thus, to be "expeditionary," a military force must be deployable to a distant area of operations and capable of accomplishing a specific mission. Without any doubt, this definition of expeditionary force can be extended to the EU BGs as well.

In conclusion, the NRF and the EU BGs are homogeneous forces and share the same set of potential missions. Thus, the two conditions of comparability have been satisfied. In a nutshell, the NRF and the EU BGs are both expeditionary forces capable

of accomplishing a full spectrum of missions into a far away area of operations. Given that, the next step is the comparative analysis of the force packages.

The NATO Response Force and the EU Battle Groups: a Comparative Analysis

This section aims to analyze the NRF and the EU BGs in the light of the following criteria: tables of organization and equipment (TO&Es), size, composition, capabilities, and command and control (C2) architecture. In its first part, this section covers the NRF. The second part, following the same criteria, analyzes the EU BGs. The next section, in the light of the comparative analysis, focuses on the differences between the two force packages.

The NATO Response Force (NRF)

As the former Supreme Allied Commander Europe General USMC James L. Jones stated, "the NRF stands poised to act on the global stage as a mobile and deployable force." It is also "the primary vehicle for transforming the Alliance's force structures and improving its military capabilities." This means that the NRF has not only external or global goals related to its missions, but also internal ones.

In November 2002, NATO's Prague Summit approved the NATO Response Force Initiative (NRFI). Four years later, at NATO's Riga Summit in November 2006, the NRF was declared to be at full operational capability. With the NRF, NATO has at its disposal a division-size, high-readiness, joint force, able to deploy quickly and to perform a full spectrum of tasks, either within or outside the NATO boundaries. According to the *Prague Capabilities Commitment*, the NRF is also a catalyst for improving the NATO countries' national military capabilities and force structures.

Inspired by the principle of "first force in, first force out," the NRF can deploy as a stand-alone force for humanitarian assistance, counterterrorism operations, embargo operations, evacuation of civilians, demonstration of NATO's resolve in support of diplomacy and international law, and initial entry ahead of larger forces. The NRF can deploy with other NATO forces in all the Alliance's operations as well (NATO 2006, 178).

The NRF is permanently available. It is a multinational joint force that includes land, maritime, air, and special operation forces. The force is self-sustainable for 30 days and is mission-tailored, with the characteristics of a modular force (NATO 2006, 178). The analysis of its TO&E, composition, and size follows.

The NRF at its full size reaches 25,000 troops. It is composed of a reinforced brigade combat team (BCT), a rapidly deployable composite air group, and a naval task force. The force organization can be adjusted and modified to meet the operational requirements. Thus, composition and size can vary as well (NATO 2006, 179). This analysis considers the standard NRF organization.

The NRF land component is a reinforced BCT, which includes three light infantry battalions – either motorized, or airborne – and one, or more, light armored battalions (mechanized infantry). A field artillery group (equipped with 155-mm howitzers, or equivalent), special operation teams, an engineer battalion (with mobility and countermobility capabilities), a CBRN defense battalion, and all the necessary logistic support elements complete the land component's structure. The average strength of the NRF land component is about 3,000 troops (Kugler 2007, 11). According to the *Prague Capabilities Commitment*, the NRF land component has the right structure for the

deployment of an appropriate tailored brigade-size formation, containing a mix of both combat forces and combat and service support such as aviation, artillery, electronic warfare, intelligence, and air defense capabilities. When fully deployed, it can number around 9,500 troops (Faber 2003, 1).

The NRF maritime component is a naval task force. Its exact composition can vary according to the operational requirements ant the time of the operation, but normally includes a carrier battle group, surface and subsurface combatant units, mine hunters, auxiliary support vessels, an amphibious task group at battalion level, and a surface action group at company level. The naval task force includes 10 to 12 ships, or more if required (Kugler 2007, 11). When fully deployed, the NRF maritime component can number around 6,300 troops (Faber 2003, 2).

The NRF air component is a rapidly deployable composite air group. It has the capability to conduct a full range of tasks, both defensive and offensive: for example, air-to-air refueling, air early warning, search and rescue, electronic warfare, air interdiction, target acquisition, area surveillance, and close air support (CAS). The NRF air component commander coordinates the use of all aircraft in the force, regardless of whether they are provided by the air, maritime, or land component. The composite air group includes 40 combat aircraft, support aircraft, and combat and utility helicopters capable of flying 200 sorties per day. The term "sortie" refers to the operational flight of one aircraft, such as an F-16. The support sorties are not included in these numbers. When fully deployed, the NRF air component can number around 5,500 troops (Faber 2003, 2).

The NRF Special Operations Forces (SOF) component can either be integrated within one or more of the three main components, or operate as a separate one. In accordance with NATO official papers, the NRF special operation unit, when fully deployed, can number around 400 troops (Kugler 2007, 12).

The NRF concept inspired a new logistic support concept based on a joint and multinational approach to the solution of logistic problems. The NRF command structure, for this reason, includes a Joint Logistics Support Group HQ, which, when fully deployed, numbers approximately 2,000 troops (Kugler 2007, 14).

The NRF can deploy wherever the North Atlantic Council (NAC) decides its capabilities are required, either within or beyond NATO's boundaries, as demonstrated by the NRF assets employment during the 2004 Olympics in Athens (within NATO boundaries) and in the aftermath of the 2005 earthquake in Pakistan (outside NATO boundaries).

The troop contributing nations (TCN) are responsible for deploying their forces and equipment to the designated NRF assembly areas, even though the forces are already under NATO command. From the assembly areas to the area of operations, NATO is in charge of deploying the NRF.

The NRF alert status can vary from 5 to 30 days because some elements deploy earlier than others. Once deployed, the NRF, on the basis of its own logistic capabilities, can operate as a stand-alone force for a period not longer than 30 days. If adequately resupplied, the NRF can operate for a longer period.

At least twelve months earlier, the NRF starts its training period, the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) holds a cycle of force generation conferences to

assign units to the NRF. The aim of these conferences is to find a convergence point between the member nations' offers and NATO requests.

The Supreme Allied Command Europe provides the NRF permanent strategic command. The three NATO Joint Force HQs based in Brunssum, Naples, and Lisbon provide the operational command of NRF on a rotational basis for twelve months each. The NATO Joint Force HQ that provides NRF operational command is in charge of the whole process: formation, training, and standby period. The NRF components' commands are held, on rotational basis as well, between the NATO Rapid Deployable Corps (NRDC) headquarters.

The European Union Battle Groups (EU BG)

The *Headline Goal 2010* document defines the EU BG as "the minimum militarily effective, credible, rapidly deployable, coherent force package capable of stand-alone operations, or for the initial phase of larger operations. The battlegroup is based on a combined arms, battalion-sized force and reinforced with combat support and combat service support elements. A battlegroup could be formed by a framework nation or by a multinational coalition of member states. In all cases, interoperability and military effectiveness will be key criteria. A battlegroup must be associated with a Force Headquarters and pre-identified operational and strategic enablers, such as strategic lift and logistics."

The EU BG, according to the *Headline Goal 2010* document, is built "on assets and capabilities held at a readiness of 5-10 days." This readiness criterion applies "as a benchmark to Member States as a whole." The EU BG is employable "across the full range of tasks listed in the TEU Art. 17.2 and those identified in the European Security

Strategy, in particular in tasks of combat forces in crisis management, bearing in mind their size." The EU BG must be sustainable "until mission termination or until relief by other forces." According the EU BG concept, the EU BG should be self-sustainable for 30 days' initial operation, "extendable to 120 days, if resupplied appropriately."

These combined arms battle groups (BG 1500s) are designed to cope with the full spectrum of Petersberg Missions and are "capable of taking action within a 6,000-km radius of Brussels" (WEU Assembly 2007a, 5). More recent EU official documents extended the radius to 15,000 km, foreseeing a worldwide EU BG deployment.

The EU BG concept foresaw, in the very beginning, single-nation BGs for reasons of "coherence and operational effectiveness." In fact, among other things, "their members would have a common language, be used to working together and have the same communication systems, and the decision-making process in the event of a crisis would be simplified." (WEU Assembly 2007a, 5)

With the aim of involving EU countries that do not have "the capabilities for setting up a battlegroup on their own," the EU promoted the creation of multinational BGs. As a result, out of fifteen EU BGs activated until the second semester of 2010, "only four – provided by France, Italy, Spain, and the United Kingdom – are of a single nationality." (WEU Assembly 2007a, 6)

The EU BGs have been fully operational since the 1st of January 2007. The EU, starting from that date, has at its disposal two EU BGs, which can deploy simultaneously to two different areas of operations. The EU BGs rotate every six months. At the end of this standby period, the EU BG force package is dismissed and it is not reactivated anymore.

The speed of response is the critical factor of the EU BG effectiveness. The shortage of strategic lift capabilities at EU level "is a limiting factor for the rapid and remote deployment of the battlegroups" (WEU Assembly 2007a, 6). For this reason, the EU must rely upon external strategic transport capabilities, and upon the Strategic Airlift Interim Solution (SALIS) that foresees the chartering of Ukrainian Antonov 124 aircraft.

The generic composition of a EU BG is approximately 1,500 troops. A combined arms battalion-size force is its core; combat support and combat service support assets complete the package. In its largest composition, a EU BG also includes operational and strategic enablers; thus it will easily surpass the 1,500 figure (Lindstrom 2007, 15).

There is no fixed EU BG structure; the troop contributing nations can decide its composition and consequently provide the necessary capabilities. The generic composition of a EU BG package includes the headquarters and headquarters company (HHC), three infantry companies, and corresponding support personnel. "Types of specific units may include mechanized infantry, combat support units (e.g. a fire support unit), and combat service support elements (e.g. a medical facility). The combination of these different categories of personnel permits a EU BG to act independently and to take a variety of tasks." (Lindstrom 2007, 15)

The EU BG package is based on a Force Headquarters, EU BG components, and operational and strategic enablers. The Force HQ includes staff, command and information systems (CIS), and augmentees. The Force HQ numbers approximately 100 men. As far as the EU BG components are concerned, they include the maneuver component, the combat support, and the combat service support elements.

The maneuver component is a battalion-sized infantry unit based on a HQ, a HQ company, and three infantry companies. The infantry battalion can be either motorized or mechanized. It can be hybrid as well, with two motorized and one mechanized company, or vice versa. It numbers approximately 650 troops.

The combat support component includes an engineer company, an air defense artillery battery, and a fire support unit equipped with 155-mm howitzers. The combat support component, when entirely deployed, numbers up to 350 troops. The combat service support element completes the EU BG core. Its composition can vary, but, generally, it includes the logistic support units – such as transportation, medical, and maintenance – necessary to provide logistic support to an expeditionary force. When entirely deployed, the combat service support component numbers 400 troops.

Thus, considering the possible deployment of the entire force package with Force HQ, maneuver, combat support, and combat service support components, without considering the strategic enablers, the EU BG numbers 1,500 troops, accordingly to the *Battlegroup Concept* formula (BG 1,500).

The operational and strategic enablers complete the EU BG package. Their specific types depend on the characteristics of the operation. Thus, there is no standard or pre-defined structure for the strategic enablers' packages. In general terms, the *Battlegroup Concept* foresees that air- and sea-based – as well as logistics and Special Forces units – augment the EU BG package, but there are no prescriptions (Lindstrom 2007, 16).

Twice a year, in May and November, the EU member countries decide the terms of their contributions and consequently the EU BG composition through Battle Group

Coordination Conferences (BGCCs). The troop contributing nations are responsible for the force generation and for providing the operational and strategic enablers (Lindstrom 2007, 16).

The EU chain of command is based on three levels of headquarters – strategic, operational, and tactical: the operational HQ, which is not part of the EU BG package, the force HQ, and the component HQs. The operational HQ "oversees the execution of an ESPD operation at the strategic level," and it is "activated on a case-by-case basis through a Council decision and receives strategic direction from the Political and Security Committee." (Lindstrom 2007, 22)

At the operational level, the Force HQ operates "as a base of operations, providing command and control over troops on the ground"; its size varies "according to the needs of the EU BG" (Lindstrom 2007, 23). Because there is no prescribed option for how to command a EU BG operation, it is possible that only the EU BG HQ at the tactical level is activated. In this case, it is not necessarily a defined component HQ (Lindstrom 2007, 23). Thus, while the strategic HQ (which is called Operation HQ) and the tactical HQ are always activated, the operational HQ is not.

The NRF and the EU BG: Two Different Forces

The first difference between the NRF and the EU BG is in their TO&Es. The NRF is a division-size joint and combined expeditionary force that includes combat, combat support, and combat service support units. Considering only the force's maneuver element, it is at brigade level, based on three battalion-size infantry units, with its organic combat support and combat service support assets, at battalion level as well. Thus, if the

situation requires, the NRF maneuver component can theoretically deploy autonomously without any additional assets.

As far as the EU BG maneuver element is concerned, it is at battalion level. It is based on three rifle companies and on a combat service support company. The EU BG infantry battalion clearly cannot deploy autonomously, if not adequately reinforced with transportation, medical, maintenance, and resupply units. The example of the NATO Over the Horizon Force (OTHF) supports these conclusions.

The OTHF is the NATO strategic reserve for the Kosovo Force (KFOR). It consists of multinational trained units with a wide range of military capabilities – including light and airborne infantry, amphibious, airmobile, armor, artillery, and air attack. These reserves, at battalion level, are designed to be a mobile, versatile force to augment in-theatre forces in order to deal with any military contingency. Units will arrive in theatre fully mission-capable and logistically self-sustaining by air and land routes. After processing through reception areas, they are integrated into the existing KFOR C2 structures, performing duties with the in-theatre troops in a wide variety of missions, for example manning checkpoints and conducting routine patrols.

Keeping in mind that it is designed to deploy from NATO countries to a theater of operations not farther than the Balkans and that it is not an early-entry force; the NATO OTHF is still a good example to understand the reasons why a unit smaller than the OTHF, such as the EU BG maneuver component, cannot deploy autonomously.

The second and probably most evident difference between the NRF and the EU BGs is in terms of numbers. In fact, a 1,500-man-strong force, the EU BG, cannot be

considered as an equivalent of the NRF, a force that can have the maximum size of 25,000 troops.

The EU BG, according to the definition officially adopted by the EU, is "the minimum military effective, credible, rapid deployable, coherent force package capable of stand-alone operations, or for the initial phase of larger operations" (EU, 2006). Starting from this definition, it is clear that to be "credible", "effective," and "capable of stand-alone operations" a BG should be always at its maximum size. Thus, the possibility that the EU BG does not deploy as a whole is extremely remote. The example of the Italian Battle Group, part of the Multinational Division *Salamandre* in Bosnia-Herzegovina, supports this conclusion.

In NATO operation *Joint Forge 2002* in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the size of the Italian Battle Group (IBG) in charge of securing North Sarajevo and the area of Rogatica (Serbian Republic) was about 1,200 men. This was not an expeditionary operation over extended lines of communications, the environment was permissive, and the area of responsibility easily controllable through a fair road network. Thus, had one of these conditions changed, the IBG would have been reinforced with additional troops. An expeditionary operation – where reinforcements, if available, cannot deploy easily and timely – is a completely different situation. Thus, it is almost impossible that the EU Council would decide to deploy the EU BG to a theater with a reduced strength. The IBG example shows how the size of the EU BG cannot be significantly reduced without accepting the risk of compromising, or not accomplishing, the mission.

Another factor that must be considered in calculating the EU BG size are the combat service support (CSS) requirements. In fact, the CSS requirements depend more

often on factors other than the size of the supported unit – such as the four "Ds": the destination, the distance from the motherland, the logistic request (the demand), and the duration of the operation (NATO, 2007d).

Given that the CSS assets cannot be easily downsized, the only possible adjustments in terms of numbers can affect the combat support units. Therefore, the EU BG combat support component – which includes engineer, air defense, and artillery units – is the only one that can be reduced if necessary.

Finally, in the light of the conclusions above and considering also possible limited requirements in terms of operational and strategic enablers – air- and sea-based, logistics and Special Forces – the minimum size of a BG cannot be less than 1,200 – 1,300 troops.

The NRF, at full strength, is a division-size unit of 25,000 troops. The NRF obviously has more deployment options than a EU BG because of its larger size: it can deploy its maneuver component (about 3,000 troops), with or without combat support and combat service support units (that are at battalion/regiment level), or the entire force. As the humanitarian relief operation in Pakistan in 2005-2006 demonstrated, the NRF engineer component, at battalion/regiment level, can carry out its tasks without any additional C2 and logistic assets.

To sum up, considering its size and the level of its units, the NRF is effectively a force that can be tailored to fit the mission. The EU BG, on the contrary, for the same reasons – size and level of units – cannot be easily tailored; in other words it does not have as many deployment options in terms of composition as the NRF has.

A further difference between the NRF and the EU BG is in their capabilities. As far as the NRF is concerned, the land, sea, and air components can be deployed and

operate either autonomously or as a part of a Joint Task Force (JTF). For instance, if the NRF is planned to conduct an embargo enforcement operation, the sea component can carry out the task without being augmented by any other component's assets. Regarding the EU BG, the role of the naval and air components is different. Doctrinally, they are "strategic enablers," not "components"; in other words they are assets that allow the EU BG core to perform its tasks, but cannot operate autonomously. In case of an embargo enforcement operation, it is clear that the EU BG naval component, designed to be a strategic enabler, cannot perform this kind task by itself, due to the lack of adequate C2 assets and warships, and because of its limited size.

The last relevant difference is related to the NRF and EU BG C2 architectures. Even though the principle of modularity inspired both the NRF and EU BG concepts, the NRF task organization is more flexible than that of the EU BG, because of its larger size and the level of its subordinate units. In other words, being a brigade-size unit, the EU BG task organization does not have the number of options the NRF task organization has. For example, if we consider only the maneuver component, the NRF can deploy one or more infantry companies, one or more infantry battalions or, if necessary, an entire BCT. If the operation foresees the deployment of one infantry battalion reinforced by combat support and combat service support units – such as an artillery battery and a field hospital, for instance – the task force commander can be either the brigade commander or the battalion commander. The same could apply to other NRF components, such as the engineer units, with analogous results. In brief, there are more options in terms of task organization for the NRF than for the EU BG. In fact, if the BG is not employed as a whole, the EU BG infantry battalion commanding officer is the only senior officer who

can command the EU BG-based task force, because all the other EU BG components are at the company level or below.

The EU BG: What Can It Effectively Do?

In order to understand the strategic and operational difference between the EU BG and NRF from a NATO perspective, this section aims to identify which tasks the EU BG can effectively perform. Considering their relevant differences in terms of size, composition, and organization, the NRF and the EU BGs cannot have the same spectrum of potential tasks.

In order to simplify the analysis of the EU BG potential tasks three criteria or dimensions are considered: the operational theme, the duration of the operation, and the distance of the area of operations from EU boundaries. The operational theme is "the character of the dominant major operation being conducted at any time within a land force's commander's area of operations" (FM 3-0, 2-3). It includes peacetime military engagements, limited interventions, peace operations, and irregular warfare: in brief, all the possible military interventions from humanitarian relief operations to separation of parties by force in a non-permissive environment. The duration varies from non-enduring to enduring operations. The distance of intervention varies from operations in EU neighbor countries to worldwide operations.

There are many options combining the three dimensions. This analysis considers only the best- and the worst-case scenarios in order to determine whether or not the EU BG is able to perform all the tasks that the NRF theoretically can.

Without a doubt, intervention just outside the EU boundaries to conduct a non-enduring humanitarian relief operation in a permissive environment is the best-case

scenario. An earthquake or a flood in the Balkans could offer an example of this kind of crisis. The case study of the humanitarian relief operation conducted by the Italian Army in the Summer of 1987, keeping in mind that it was conducted within the national boundaries, supports this conclusion.

In July 1987, a flood affected the Valtellina region in the Italian Alps. About ten days of torrential rains cut off a dozen towns and villages in an area of approximately 400 square kilometers, affecting more than 6,000 people. The Italian government deployed an entire alpine brigade, the *Orobica*, reinforced by engineer assets of the IV Alpine Corps general support units, to the affected area. Without considering the involvement of firefighters, police, Carabinieri, and other forces, the military presence was about 2,000 men.

In the light of the Valtellina case, a possible upper limit for the EU BG employment can be identified in the local scale of the emergency. In other words, the EU BG can deal effectively with a natural disaster that does not affect more than 4,500 – 5,000 people in an area smaller than 400 square kilometers.

A separation of parties by force operation far away from the EU boundaries in a non-permissive environment is probably the worst-case scenario. The 1999 NATO intervention in Kosovo, despite the limited distance from EU boundaries, offers a helpful example for this kind of crisis response operation.

Starting on the 12th of June 1999, on the basis of the UN Security Council Resolution 1244, NATO deployed to Kosovo a force composed of 50,000 troops, the Kosovo Force (KFOR). After a 78-day air campaign, KFOR deployed to Kosovo with the immediate goal of halting and reversing the humanitarian emergency in the Serbian

province, and the final objective of creating a safe and secure environment for all the ethnic groups in the civilian populace. The KFOR area of operations (AO) was divided in five areas of responsibility (AORs) – North, East, South, West, and Center – assigned to five Multinational (MN) Brigades. The MN Brigade West AOR, for instance, was about 50 square kilometers. The average size of a KFOR MN Brigade in June 1999 was circa 2,800 – 3,000 troops.

Similarly to the Valtellina case study, the Kosovo crisis offers a practical example that helps to identify the possible upper limit for the employment of the EU BGs. Speaking in very general terms, the EU BG can conduct a separation of parties by force operation in a theater not greater than 40-50 square kilometers, with a fair road network, and where the potential threat – according to the numerical force ratio used by NATO armies – is not stronger than 800-1,000 people, armed essentially with light weapons. These conditions are quite unusual; thus the possibility that the EU BG will deploy to conduct a separation of party by force operation seems to be extremely remote.

The US Marine Corps: a Model for NRF – EU BG Division of Roles?

The Marine Expeditionary Unit and the EU BG

For their nature as expeditionary forces, their characteristics of joint forces, and their size, the Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) and the Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) can be compared to the EU BG and the NRF, respectively.

The Marine Corps doctrine (USMC, 1998) states the importance of air-ground-sea integration, starting from low command levels. The MEU is the smallest integrated combat unit where the land, naval, and air components are combined. Normally, the MEU is circa 2,000-2,200 troops strong, with a core constituted by a reinforced

mechanized infantry battalion. A naval component capable of amphibious operations, a multipurpose aircraft squadron, and a combat service support group complete the force package (USMC 2001). A USMC full colonel is the MEU commanding officer.

The MEU is the key element of the US National Military Strategy (NMS) requirement to provide a quick response to worldwide crises (USMC, 1997b). The MEUs are able to conduct non-enduring amphibious operations, as early-entry forces to create favorable conditions for the intervention of a stronger follow-on Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF) (USMC, 2001). According to the Marine Corps doctrine, the MEU is able to provide rapid response to a full spectrum of crises through its capability of quick deployment via strategic naval/airlift.

The MEU's air and ground combat elements and its combat support and combat service support assets are integrated within one command structure. Analogously to the NRF and the EU BGs, the MEUs are self-sustainable forces, able to intervene in any kind of operational environment all over the world.

The MEUs, unlike the EU BGs, are Special Operations Capable (SOC). Therefore, they are able to plan, organize, and conduct any kind of operation within six hours of notification and perform multiple tasks simultaneously. These tasks include, among others: amphibious raids, limited objective attacks, noncombatant evacuations, show of force, security sector reform operations, training and military assistance operations, tactical recovery of personnel and aircraft (TRAP), clandestine reconnaissance, and hostage rescue (USMC, 2001).

Unlike the EU BGs, which can deploy almost everywhere from Greenland to the African Great Lakes region and beyond, the MEUs have predesignated areas of

intervention. In fact, the Marine Forces Atlantic and Pacific have pre-deployed MEUs (SOC) in the Mediterranean Sea, in the Western Pacific, in the Indian Ocean, and in the Persian Gulf. For this reason, the response of MEUs can be effectively immediate.

The MEU's architecture encompasses a command element (CE), a reinforced mechanized infantry battalion as ground combat element (GCE), a reinforced helicopter squadron as air combat element (ACE) and, finally, a combat service support element (CSSE). The ground, air and combat service support elements – major subordinate elements (MSEs) – are under one commander. The staff, ISTAR and C2 assets, and liaison teams support the MEU commanding officer and compose the command element.

The ground combat element (GCE) is a reinforced mechanized infantry battalion of about 1,200 troops. Three rifle companies and combat support units – artillery, engineer, antitank, and reconnaissance – are the components of the GCE. In this case, too, the difference between the EU BG and the MEU is clear. The former has all the combat support assets under the command of the EU BG commanding officer; the latter, on the contrary, under the specific command of the GCE commander.

The air combat element (ACE) is a reinforced multipurpose helicopter squadron composed by medium and heavy transport helicopters, four attack helicopters, a low altitude air defense artillery (LAAD) section, and a marine air control group (MACG). In this case, there are no relevant differences with the EU BG air component. Similarly, the MEU combat service support element (CSSE), in terms of numbers and composition, mirrors the EU BG combat service support component.

Having shown that, in terms of composition and size, the EU BG and the MEU can be considered nearly similar, the analysis now will be focused on the MEU's C2

relationships with the higher echelons of the Marine Expeditionary Forces (MEF). This analysis, for obvious reasons, cannot be extended to the EU BG.

The MEF Commander has operational control (OPCON) of the MEUs in the United States. The US Navy Fleet Commander, who is responsible for the area of operations where the MEUs are pre-deployed, exercises OPCON over them until their activation. Once deployed, the MEU can operate either as a separate part of a JTF that in this case is under OPCON of the JTF Commander, or autonomously. In both cases, the MEU commanding officer exercises OPCON over all MEU MSEs; in other words, if the MEU is part of a JTF, then the GCE, the ACE, and the CSSE continue to operate under the command of the MEU commander and not within the JTF components.

The Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) and the NRF

Since the 1st of January 2002, the US Marine Corps has activated three MEBs. The MEB can be considered as a third option, a mission-tailored alternative to the MEU and the MEF (USMC, 2001). In fact, while composition and strength of MEUs and MEFs is predetermined, there is not a fixed organization for an MEB. The MEB concept aims to create a flexible force, perfectly modular in size and capabilities, which can be deployed either by sea or by air.

The MEB is based on three main subordinate elements (MSEs) that are obviously larger than those of the MEU. The MEB GCE is normally a mechanized infantry regiment reinforced with combat support units. The MEB ACE, normally a Marine Aircraft Group (MAG), includes attack and transport helicopter squadrons, an air defense artillery group, and a USMC air force squadron with air-to-air and air-to-surface attack capabilities. The MEB combat service support element (CSSE) is a brigade service

support group (BSSG) organized to provide medical, supply, and maintenance support (USMC, 2001).

As far as the MEB composition and size are concerned, they depend on the missions the MEB has to accomplish. To conduct an amphibious assault, for instance, the average strength of the amphibious MEB is about 4-5,000 troops. The strength is greater if the MEB is operating as a maritime prepositioning force (MPF) or as an assault force throughout the European theater of operations. In both cases, the MEB strength can reach 16-18,000 troops (USMC, 2008).

The MEB can operate either as a Maritime Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF), which is a stand-alone force, or as the lead echelon of a Marine Expeditionary Force. In the latter case the MEB is designated as MEF (forward); in the former case, the MEB keeps its ordinary designation.

The analysis of the MEU's characteristics clearly illustrates the relevant similarities it has with the NRF. Not only in terms of numbers, but also from the perspective of composition and operational concepts, the MEB can be considered similar to the NRF.

A Possible Answer

There is a positive answer to the question about the possibility of division of roles between the NRF and the EU BG on the model of the US Marine Corps expeditionary forces. Clearly there are many similarities between the MEU and the EU BG, and between the MEB and the NRF. In both cases, the most evident similarities concern size, task organization, and capabilities but, taking into consideration missions and potential tasks, some differences are evident as well.

The greatest limitation to adapting the USMC model directly to NATO and EU forces is structural. In fact, while the MEU and the MEB belong to the same Corps, are under the same command, and their joint organization mirrors that of the entire USMC, the NRF and the EU BGs simply do not.

Nevertheless, keeping in mind the abovementioned limitation, some elements of the analysis of USMC expeditionary forces can be helpful in answering the initial question. Two of these elements, in particular, help to reach the conclusion and can be summarized in two concepts: differentiation and specialization, which now will be briefly explained.

The MEU and the MEB are not alike forces because they have their own missions and tasks. This is clear and easily understandable for units belonging to the same command structure, which does not waste resources duplicating forces. But is it the same for the NRF and EU BGs? The answer in this case, in the light of the results of the comparative analysis, is yes. First of all, even though they theoretically have the same set of missions, the NRF and EU BG are structurally and numerically different. In particular, while the NRF, thanks to its strength and its composition, can perform a full spectrum of tasks, the EU BGs cannot. This conclusion does not mean that the EU BGs are useless because they are not able to deal with all the missions they might have; it simply indicates that there are situations where the deployment of the EU BGs is possible and others where it is not. The example of the MEU supports this conclusion. In fact, a force with composition and size comparable to those of the EU BG would not have the same wide set of possible missions and potential tasks.

As far as the aspect of specialization is concerned, this concept implies differentiation but it has an additional meaning. To understand the point, the example offered by the USMC expeditionary forces is helpful again. In fact, the MEUs and the MEBs are different not only in terms of missions and tasks but also because the MEU, being Special Operations Capable (SOC), can perform tasks the MEB cannot. Without doubt, the coordination of efforts, or division of roles, between a highly specialized unit and a force that can perform other tasks where specializations are not required is easier than in the case of forces, like the NRF and the EU BG, with theoretically the same set of missions.

In conclusion, for an effective division of roles between the NRF and EU BGs, two conditions are necessary: differentiation and specialization. The first condition, differentiation, is satisfied because the two forces, despite the same set of missions, are unlike in terms of size, composition, and competencies. The second one, specialization, is not. The next section, analyzing the case study of the UN intervention in southern Lebanon in the aftermath of the 2006 Israeli-Hezbollah conflict, aims to identify the cases where a brigade-size, specialized task force can deploy successfully.

The 2006 Israel-Hezbollah Conflict Case Study

On the 12th of July 2006, Israeli armed forces attacked the Hezbollah positions in southern Lebanon. The attack followed the Hezbollah's negative response to the ultimatum issued to obtain the release of two captured Israeli soldiers. After 33 days of war, the conflict ended with 1,191 people killed, several thousand injured, and almost one million displaced. 15,000 houses, 900 factories, markets, farms, and key infrastructures

such as Beirut's international airport, roads, bridges and railroads were damaged or destroyed (ICG 2006, 1).

On the 11th of August 2006, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) adopted Resolution 1701, which, despite its vague content and lack of clarity, had sufficient merit to halt the conflict. Briefly, the resolution strengthened the United Nation Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) by increasing the number of troops from 2,000 (UNIFIL I) to 15,000 (UNIFIL II) and extended the UNIFIL area of responsibility to the "Tyre Pocket." Furthermore, the resolution foresaw the direct support by UNIFIL to the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) in gaining full control of southern Lebanon and the withdrawal of all the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) operating within the Lebanese boundaries once the deployment of UNIFIL II was completed (UN, 2006a).

Despite the involvement of many important European countries – France, Italy, and Spain, among others – and the relatively easy force deployment, in October 2006 the strength of UNIFIL II was still below 8,000 troops (ICG 2006, 2). The first elements of the expanded force were deployed "with record-breaking speed for any peacekeeping operation of such complexity," with troops from France, Italy, and Spain reaching the area of operations by the 15th of September, and joining the UNIFIL I contingents already in place (UN, 2006b).

On the 20th of October 2006, more than two months after the UNSCR 1701 was adopted and more than one month after the deployment "with a record-breaking speed" of almost 6,000 additional troops, the UNIFIL II commander, the French General Alain Pellegrini in one interview with Aljazeera stated that there were still clear violations of the ceasefire (Aljazeera, 2006).

The aim of this section is not to write a brief history of the 2006 Israel-Hezbollah conflict, but to analyze the possibilities a rapid response force comparable to the EU BG has to be deployed in a theater of operations like this and whether it can be effective. Unfortunately, no data is available on the number of people killed or injured in the period between the 11th of August, when the UNSCR 1701 was adopted, and the 15th of September 2006, when the first element of UNIFIL II reached the area of responsibility. That data would have been important to determine how many lives a rapid response force, deployable in 10 days, could have saved; however that is not the main objective of this analysis.

The case study offers several elements that could be worthy of attention, but the analysis will focus on two points that are functional to the research: the time required for their deployment and the characteristics of the UNIFIL II initial-entry forces.

First of all, the analysis focuses on the time the International Community spent before setting up a credible force and its deployment. If we consider the date of adoption of the resolution by the UN Security Council as the start of the decisionmaking process either within NATO or within the EU, the NRF or the EU BG could have been deployed before the end of August 2006, almost three weeks earlier than the UNIFIL II advanced party. On the other hand, the UN SC does not make decisions without adequate discussions; so, theoretically, the decisionmaking process of NATO and EU could start while the debate within the Security Council is still on going. In this way, the operation could be launched immediately after a resolution is adopted, saving time and, sometimes, human lives.

To sum up, the lesson of the Israel-Hezbollah conflict concerning time is that the employment of standby forces, such as the NRF and the EU BG, is normally preferable to the solution offered by ad hoc coalitions. All the possible conclusions about the effectiveness of occasional coalitions, compared to the effectiveness of consolidated alliances or, as in this case, of certified "combat-ready" force packages are easily reachable and are not within the objectives of the present analysis.

The second point is linked to composition and strength of the UNIFIL II initial-entry force deployed in southern Lebanon in September 2006. On the 1st of September, the first Italian troops of the Joint Amphibious Task Force – Lebanon (JATF-L) landed near Tyre. The same day, the Italian Maritime Task Force (ITS *Garibaldi*, ITS *San Marco*, ITS *San Giusto*, ITS *San Giorgio*, ITS *Fenice*), reinforced by French (FS *Carrard*) and Greek (HS *Kanaris*) units, reached the Lebanese territorial waters. The Italian Naval Infantry Battalion San Marco reinforced by a rifle company of the Italian Army Regiment Lagunari *Serenissima* conducted the amphibious operation. A CBRN defense platoon, an explosive ordinance disposal (EOD) team, and one Multinational Specialized Unit (MSU) detachment completed the 800-man-strong JATF-L (Pagine di Difesa, 2006).

For composition and size, the UNIFIL II early-entry force, based on the Italian Maritime Task Force and on the JATF-L, is similar to one EU BG. Considering the Italian Maritime Task Force and the JATF-L together, the strength was approximately 2,400 men, not too far from the 1,800-2,000 of one EU BG.

The UNIFIL II early-entry force operated with the same procedures foreseen for the EU BG, when it performs these kinds of tasks. There was a force already operating

on the ground, UNIFIL I, and the main body of the follow-on forces arrived more than 15 days later. The early-entry forces were self-sustained for more than two weeks and, for this and for some other reasons, can be considered as expeditionary forces.

There are other similarities between what the UNIFIL II early-entry force did and what the EU BG can do; thus the possibility that the EU BG can be asked to conduct the same kind of operations is more than real. This means that there are cases, as the Lebanese crisis demonstrates, where the EU BG can be effectively deployed.

Conclusion

The NRF and the EU BG are homogeneous but not alike. They are both expeditionary forces – thus they are homogeneous in their nature – and share substantially the same set of missions; but considering the tasks they can effectively perform, there are relevant differences. The NRF, at least theoretically, is able to carry out the tasks that come from its missions. The EU BG, on the contrary, is able, due to its limited size and composition, to carry out only a part of the potential tasks that come from its mission set.

The analysis of the US Marine Corps expeditionary forces organization and structure helps to understand how two rapid response forces with the same characteristics as those of the NRF and the EU BG could be coordinated in order to take the best possible advantage of their capabilities. As a result of the study of the USMC expeditionary forces, the analysis suggests not only can EU BG and NRF coexist, but also that they can be theoretically coordinated. This last aspect is, obviously, extremely sensitive. Without doubt, there are relevant political implications behind this option, but nothing excludes the possibility in the future.

The Marine Corps expeditionary forces analysis presents another aspect that is noteworthy: the possibility of developing special capabilities within the EU BG force package in order to differentiate it from the NRF and to optimize the use of the limited available resources. This aspect is extremely sensitive for at least two reasons.

The first one is that the EU should revise its *Headline Goals* and reduce its ambitions. This option would be without precedent. In fact, traditionally, the EU does not take steps backwards: sometimes, as for the adoption of the common currency, it takes a long time before achieving the objective, but the Union does not resign.

The second reason is more complex to explain because it affects the European aspirations and the sphere of NATO – EU relationships. In fact, a revision, or better a reduction, of the EU BG potential missions, which is the logical consequence of specializing the EU BG, implies that the EU is going to accept a secondary strategic role, subordinate to NATO. However, this is simply unacceptable for an actor that aspires to be global.

At this point the questions are: what is the reason for developing and establishing a force that is unable to accomplish its missions? Why is it necessary for the EU's having at its disposal a military force, when NATO – a political and military organization that includes 21 of the 27 members of the Union – with its NRF can do more, and probably better? There are several possible questions, but without considering the political meaning of the EU involvement in crisis prevention and management, it is difficult to identify the best one. In accordance with the *Headline Goal 2010* and the *European Security Strategy*, the EU BG is the instrument the EU has at its disposal to support international order "based on an effective multilateralism within the U.N" (EU

2004). In other words, the EU deploys the BGs only after a UN resolution and not by autonomous decision. There are obviously cases, such as a natural disaster, where a UNSC resolution is not necessary due to the fact that the emergency does not constitute a threat to international peace and security.

The dynamics within the UN Security Council and the use of the veto power by some permanent members, as past and recent history demonstrated, can paralyze the UN decisionmaking process. Therefore, the possibility that an international organization, other than NATO, could provide rapid response forces to an UN-lead operation can clearly facilitate a UN decision. In fact, the recent tensions between NATO and Russia, one of the five UNSC permanent members, on very sensitive subjects, such as the NATO role in the independent Kosovo and the Alliance's enlargement with the possible entrance of the former Soviet countries Ukraine and Georgia, do not facilitate reaching an agreement within the Security Council. If the NATO-Russian tension persists, it will be extremely difficult for the UN Security Council to approve a resolution that authorizes the use of force by NATO in any part of the world.

In summary, the comparative analysis of the NRF and the EU BG indicates that both are modular forces, with similar missions but with different capabilities that can carry out different potential tasks. Given these relevant differences, it is difficult to see any potential competition between NATO and EU in crisis management. Two elements support this conclusion: first, the NRF can conduct operations that the EU BG, given its limited strength, cannot; second, in the light of the *Berlin Plus Arrangements*, the EU can utilize NATO capabilities and instruments only if available and without compromising any NATO potential mission. This means that, if the EU asks for support in terms of

strategic airlift, the Achilles' heel of the EU BGs, this kind of support will be subordinated to the NATO concession. Thus, the EU, before making any decision to deploy its BGs, has to verify with NATO the availability of strategic airlift assets. Therefore, it is obvious that the EU will not make any decision that could irritate its fundamental strategic partner.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

> Let me say a word about EU-NATO relations . . . As you know, we have a framework for cooperation with NATO that we call *Berlin Plus*. This works well but we have not been able to overcome some of the difficulties we have in cooperation in operations with NATO that falls outside the *Berlin Plus* arrangements. We have problems in Kosovo that have still not been resolved and we have problems in Afghanistan. I hope very much that we will be able to resolve these problems at the NATO summit.
>
> Javier Solana,
> EU High Representative for CFSP

> France has always been an important ally within NATO; its current contribution to operations and missions is crucial. Its full participation in all the civil and military decision-making and planning processes cannot but strengthen the Alliance further, in my view. I think it will also open up new prospects for a more solid, confident and complementary relationship between NATO and the EU.
>
> Jaap de Hopp Sheffer,
> NATO Secretary General

The purpose of this chapter is to answer directly the primary research question about the operational and strategic implication of the EU battle groups establishment, from a NATO prospective. It is divided in three sections: the first section covers the operational implications, the second section the strategic, and the third the proverbial "so what".

In the light of the results of the analysis conducted in chapter four, there are obviously operational implications after the EU decided to develop and establish its own expeditionary force, but the strategic implications are more relevant. As far as the strategic implications are concerned, the election of Barack Obama as 44th president of the United States, and the French decision of rejoining the NATO military organization

after 43 years of military separation will probably enhance their significance. The second section of this chapter covers this in relevant detail.

In all their recent statements, the NATO Secretary General, Japp de Hopp Sheffer, and the EU High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), Javier Solana, have underlined the fact that the existing agreements between NATO and the EU must be revised. Unfortunately, nobody is addressing the problems NATO and EU are facing in working together in Kosovo and Afghanistan.

A revision of the existing agreements, a sort of "Berlin Plus Plus Plus" is not the panacea for the NATO-EU problems in operations. These problems come from the vagueness and the lack of realism of their respective strategic concepts. In its last section, this thesis covers these aspects and summarizes its recommendations.

The EU BG Establishment: its Operational Implications

The aim of this section is to identify the operational implications for NATO, after the establishment of the EU battle groups, in the light of the results of the analysis conducted in the fourth chapter. Clearly, the fact itself that an international organization, with almost the same country members as NATO, decides to activate a military force, with characteristics that are comparable with those of the NATO Response Force, inevitably has some consequences. Even though there are consequences, the operational ones do not seem to be particularly relevant for at least two reasons. The first one is related to the lack of autonomous strategic air and sealift capabilities that forces the EU to rely upon NATO assets for deploying the battle groups. The limited composition and size of the battle groups, which reduces significantly the number of potential tasks the battle groups can perform, is the second reason.

From a NATO prospective, the establishment of the EU battle groups does not significantly affect the Atlantic Alliance, at least for those operations where the deployment of expeditionary forces is required. In case of an international crisis where both NATO and the EU decide to deploy their rapid response forces, the former can use its own strategic air and sealift assets; the latter simply cannot. In the light of the *Berlin Plus* arrangements, the EU can have at its disposal NATO assets only if available. This means that, if the Alliance is already employing them, the EU capability of deploying its battle groups is paralyzed.

The current and persistent economic crisis does not allow the European countries to increase military expenses for acquiring aircraft and ships in order to fill the gap of strategic air and sealift capabilities of the Union. This means that, at least for the next ten years, the EU will not be able to deploy its battle groups without NATO support. Thus, the possibility of NATO's having a resolute and effective competitor in managing a crisis where expeditionary forces are required is remote.

There are not enough data to support this conclusion, but, in the light of the previous and present negative experiences in Kosovo and Afghanistan, and of the statements of both EU and NATO leaders, it seems quite improbable that a revision of the *Berlin Plus* arrangements will cover subjects other than the EU-NATO post-conflict partnership. In other terms, the EU and NATO will not solve the problems of cooperation or coordination among their expeditionary forces in the near future.

Given its lack of strategic air and sealift capabilities, the EU has to ask NATO to provide support to the battle groups. According to the present agreements between the two organizations, NATO provides support only if its assets are available. This means

that the EU battle groups deploy only in the eventuality that NATO decides to not intervene. Thus, in operational terms, the establishment of the EU expeditionary forces does not have relevant consequences for the Atlantic Alliance. Furthermore, the fact that there are not significant operational implications for NATO after the establishment of the EU BGs is related to the results of the tasks that the battle groups can effectively perform. In fact, the EU BGs are capable of carrying out only part of the NRF tasks.

Due to their composition and size, the EU BGs are not able to perform combat tasks either in semi/non-permissive environments; but they are not able to conduct a large-scale humanitarian relief operation, as well. In a nutshell, the EU BGs are credible and effective forces for conducting non-enduring and low-intensity operations on a local scale. Their practical limitations should mark the boundaries of what the battle groups can effectively do.

In other terms, if there is a crisis that is neither local nor low-intensity and that requires an immediate response by the international community, and there are not ad-hoc coalitions available, there are not alternatives to a NATO intervention, with the NRF deployment to the area. The problem that could arise is that the EU might not consider the limited capabilities of its expeditionary forces and might decide to deploy the EU BGs anyway. Clearly, this is effectively a problem only in the eventuality that NATO cannot, or simply does not want to, intervene: so its strategic air and sealift assets are available for the EU. The risk is that the EU BG deploys to an area of crisis and once there is not able to accomplish the mission, or worse, it is going to be neutralized.

In this case – considering that there is not a EU BG reserve and that, doctrinally, one battle group cannot support the other – there are no alternatives other than a relief-in-

place operation by NATO, UN, or ad-hoc coalition forces. Keeping in mind that a UN operation takes time to be decided, planned, and conducted, and that ad-hoc coalitions are not easily formed, it is possible that the NRF intervenes for extracting the EU BG out the area of operations, or for reinforcing it.

In conclusion, the single relevant operational implication of the EU BG establishment for the Atlantic Alliance is that the NRF can be asked to intervene in an area of crisis, where initially it decided not to be involved, for supporting the EU battle group. This is not a simple research hypothesis. In fact, because of their generally good relationships and their almost similar composition, NATO and the EU are more than just strategic partners. This means that, if its expeditionary forces are in danger, the EU does not have any alternative other than asking for NATO support.

The EU BG Establishment: its Strategic Implications, and the Way Ahead

There are no particular significant operational implications for the Atlantic Alliance due to the decision to develop EU autonomous expeditionary capabilities, but there are relevant strategic implications. The fact that an international organization, which includes almost the same members as the Atlantic Alliance, develops its own autonomous expeditionary forces, when the NATO Response Force can perform more tasks and more effectively, must mean something.

The adoption of the first *European Security Strategy* in 2003 and, one year later, of the *Headline Goal 2010*, despite the vagueness of their contents, means that the EU is determined to play a more active role in the international arena. In EU terms, the Union wants to be a "producer," not only a "consumer," of security. This legitimate aspiration comes from the founding treaty of the EU. It has been confirmed by the most recent

official documents and by the official statements of all the European leaders, from the German chancellor Merkel, to the French president Sarkozy, and to the British and Italian prime ministers Brown and Berlusconi.

The Atlantic Alliance is going to deal, in the near future, with the stronger and stronger EU's aspiration to respond militarily to international crisis. Without considering the effectiveness of the European military response, the EU intentions mean that the Atlantic Alliance is not going to be anymore the only organization, besides the United Nations, that can answer to the international community's request for a military response.

Starting from this consideration, a future division of roles between NATO and the EU is probably the most logical solution. Being the most logical does not mean that it will be the adopted solution. Anyway, in the light of the analysis conducted in chapter four, this is the conclusion that this thesis adopts. Two elements support this conclusion: the new US administration's decision to encourage international involvement in theaters of crisis such as Afghanistan and Darfur, and the French decision to rejoin the NATO military organization after 43 years.

In one of his first statements as president of the United States, Barack Obama affirmed that he is resolute to work for a stronger involvement of the international community in the solution of the current crises, promoting a multilateral approach. This means that, at least for the next four years, the practice of establishing "coalitions of the willing" will be abandoned.

The EU is the international organization that will benefit more than others from the new US administration's attitude towards multilateralism. As the 2003 political crisis within the EU – summarized by the US Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, with the

famous statement about the "old" and the "new" Europe – demonstrated, when the United States promotes an ad-hoc coalition, the international organization that faces the most difficulties in finding a common position is the EU. There are historical and political reasons behind these difficulties: the British-US special relationships, and the EU's complex decisionmaking process based on consensus, among others.

Therefore, there are good reasons to believe that a situation comparable with that of February-March 2003 – when France and Germany condemned the US intervention in Iraq, while the United Kingdom, Italy, and Spain supported it, paralyzing the EU decisionmaking process – is not going to happen again.

This is not the only consequence for the EU after the election of Barack Obama as the 44th president of the United States. His emphasis on a multilateral approach in crisis prevention and management will probably re-vitalize the role of the United Nations. This means that, in the near future, we can expect an increasing number of Chapter VI and VII UNSC resolutions. Considering that the EU decision to deploy its battle groups theoretically is based on a UNSC resolution, the possibilities that the EU BG effectively deploys increase as well.

In conclusion, there are reasons to believe that the role of the EU as a "global player" is going to be effective. It is not possible to say how many years it will take to achieve the objective, but the process seems to be irreversible. From a NATO prospective, the possibility that the EU plays a more active role in the international arena also has positive implications. In fact, there are areas, such as the Caucasus region, where the deployment of NATO forces is neither possible nor advisable for more than only political reasons. The response of either UN forces or ad-hoc coalitions cannot be as

rapid as the response of the EU. This means that, before the situation deteriorates, there are Western forces, other than NATO, able to intervene. In this way, its most logical, and probably most reliable, strategic partner takes the place of the Atlantic Alliance in a crisis potentially dangerous for NATO, but where the conditions for the Alliance's intervention are not favorable.

The French decision to rejoin the NATO military organization after 43 years can affect significantly the development of NATO-EU relationships in crisis prevention and management. In fact, France is one of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, one of the founding members of both NATO and the EU, and it is the fifth most industrialized country in the world.

Since the end of the Cold War era, France has promoted the development of European autonomous military capabilities outside NATO. The establishment of the French-German Corps, known as EUROCORPS, in 1993 is a practical example of this policy. The EU battle group concept comes from a French initiative as well.

On the one hand, France cannot be actively involved in two processes – the *Headline Goal 2010* and the *Prague Capabilities Commitment* implementations – simultaneously. In fact, it is asked to reform its military in accordance with NATO standards, and to occupy with its personnel a significant number of NATO positions. This means that many resources that France could have put at EU disposal are not available anymore.

On the other hand, the French full membership implies that NATO can now view with fewer concerns the process of developing EU military capabilities. All the key

players of the *Headline Goal 2010* are now in the NATO field, and there are no reasons to believe that they will make any decision that could damage the Alliance.

Being a NATO full member again, France will participate actively in the Alliance's decisionmaking process, and will be asked to put the decision into practice – transforming its military in order to fulfill the NATO requirements, for instance – but will bring into the Alliance's context its European spirit. Therefore, a French full membership, as the NATO Secretary General Japp de Hoop Sheffer underlined recently, can help both NATO and the EU to find a common position, and to solve at least part of the contrasts that emerged between the two organizations in Kosovo and Afghanistan.

The Big "So What?"

Not only must the present NATO-EU agreements be revised, but their strategic concepts also need a re-definition. In particular, as far as the EU strategic posture is concerned, it is still based on the Petersberg Missions that are almost twenty years old and refer to a strategic scenario that is definitely over. In fact, while the Petersberg Missions are designed for a EU military intervention in a Balkans-like crisis just outside the European borders, the European Security Strategy (ESS) 2003 foresees a global role of the Union, employing not only the military but also the economic, diplomatic, and informational instruments of power. This conceptual dichotomy has to be resolved.

The *Berlin Plus Arrangements* do not fit the present strategic situation as well. The evasiveness of the text and the contents that refer only to a situation comparable to that in Bosnia-Herzegovina do not find any other practical application in the present geo-strategic scenario. The fact that, outside the *Berlin Plus* limits, there is not NATO-EU partnership is simply a confirmation of that.

The EU, as we have seen, is not able to play its ambitious role of "global player" without the support that only NATO can provide. On the other hand, the Atlantic Alliance's new strategic concept foresees NATO involvement in stabilization and post-conflict operations, but there are not enough economic resources and technical expertise within the Alliance to accomplish these kinds of missions.

Finally, both the organizations could benefit from a revision of the existing agreements in terms of a clear division of roles. The Atlantic Alliance should actively support the EU project of developing autonomous military capabilities for non-enduring and small/local-scale interventions, and the EU should put at NATO's disposal its resources in post-conflict management for the operations where NATO is in charge.

NATO could take great advantage, first of all in Kosovo and Afghanistan, of the EU capabilities in subjects such as economic sector reforms, social and welfare development, and institution building. The EU – after having reduced its global ambitions, considering only the tasks that its military forces can effectively perform – could conduct autonomous military operations to demonstrate its capability and to prove its resolution to play an active role in the international arena. Therefore, this thesis recommends a revision, or better a redefinition, of the NATO-EU partnership and roles. It could be a marriage of interests, but it is the only realistic solution.

Recommendations for Future Research

Despite the large number of articles and books written on the development of EU autonomous military capabilities, there is much important work yet to be done. This thesis analyzed the NRF and the EUBGs, without considering, due to the limited time available, other NATO forces (such as the NATO Rapid Deployable Corps). In fact, the

possible formalization of an effective NATO-EU partnership in crisis prevention and management involving NATO forces other than the NRF cannot be excluded a priori.

Regarding the NRF itself, it would be worthwhile to investigate future developments of the NRF concept. A study of what NATO intends to do with its expeditionary forces (i.e. downsizing or strengthening them), to cope with the financial and political constraints posed by some NATO members, would be useful.

There are other research questions related to the EU integration and decisionmaking processes than could be addressed. For example, this thesis considered only the present political situation of the EU, without speculating on future developments towards a federal union. Clearly, a quicker decisionmaking process within a "federal" EU, based on majority and not on consensus, could have direct consequences on the effectiveness of the EU military rapid response. In this case, if the EU decisionmaking process is quicker than that of NATO, the situation this thesis considered might change significantly.

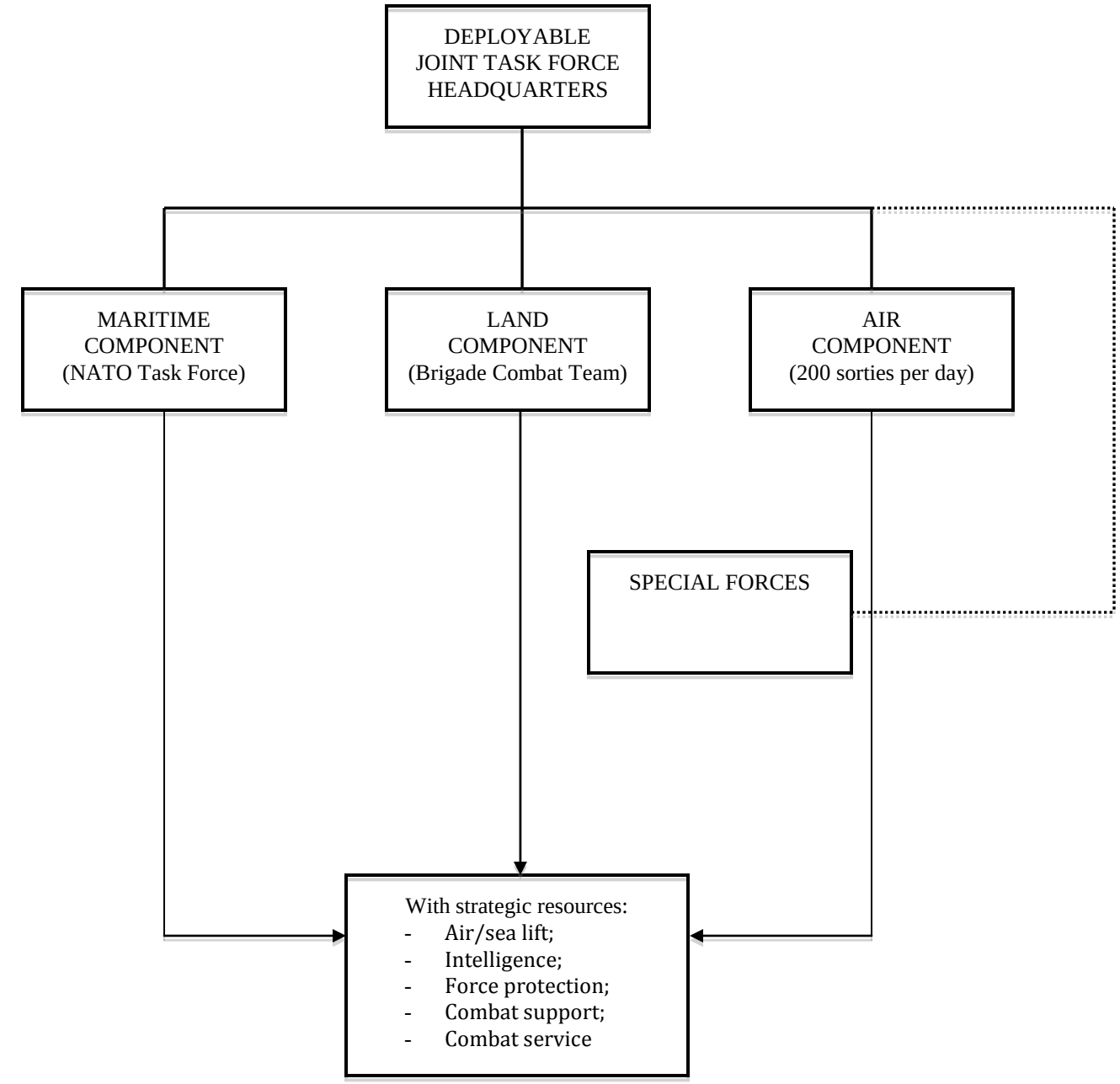
APPENDIX A

MEMBERSHIP IN NATO AND IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

COUNTRY	NATO	EU
Austria		X
Belgium	X	X
Bulgaria	X	X
Canada	X	
Cyprus		X
Czech Republic	X	X
Denmark	X	X
Estonia	X	X
Finland		X
France	X	X
Germany	X	X
Greece	X	X
Hungary	X	X
Iceland	X	
Ireland		X
Italy	X	X
Latvia	X	X
Lithuania	X	X
Luxemburg	X	X
Malta		X
Netherlands	X	X
Norway	X	
Poland	X	X
Portugal	X	X
Romania	X	X
Slovakia	X	X
Slovenia	X	X
Spain	X	X
Sweden		X
Turkey	X	
United Kingdom	X	X
United States	X	

APPENDIX B

NATO RESPONSE FORCE (NRF) STRUCTURE

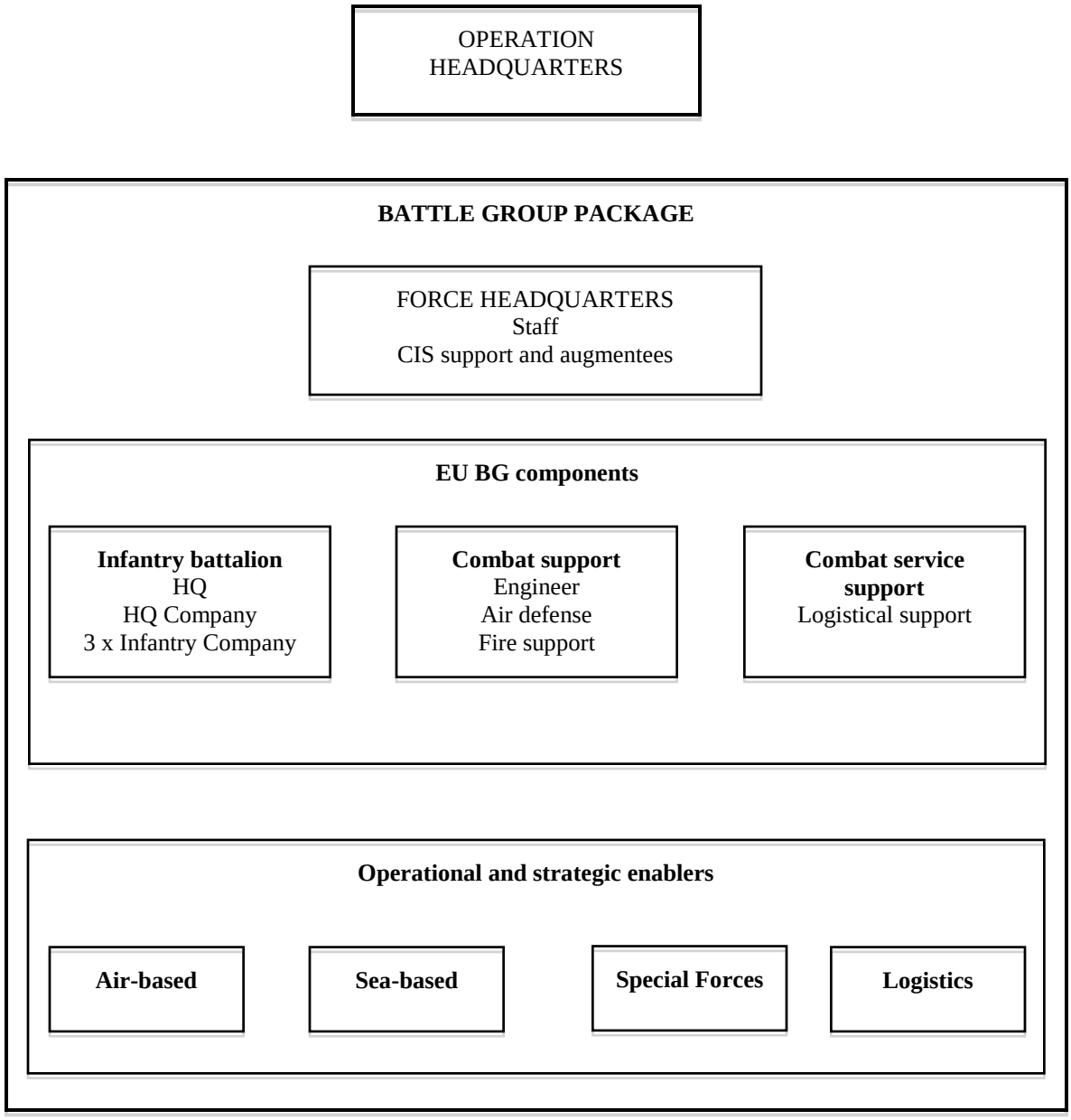


TOTAL FORCE: approx 25,000

Source: www.nato.org

APPENDIX C

EUROPEAN UNION BATTLE GROUP (EUBG) STRUCTURE



Total force: approx 1,500 – 2,000

(Source: Lindstrom 2007, 16)

GLOSSARY

Word	Definition
Architecture	A framework or structure that portrays relationships among all the elements of the subject force, system, or activity. (JP 3-05)
Combined operation	An operation conducted by forces of two or more Allied nations acting together for the accomplishment of a single mission. (JP 3-52)
Command and control	The exercise of authority and direction by a properly designated commander over assigned and attached forces in the accomplishment of the mission. Command and control functions are performed through an arrangement of personnel, equipment, communications, facilities, and procedures employed by a commander in planning, directing, coordinating, and controlling forces and operations in the accomplishment of the mission. Also called C2. (JP 1)
Component	One of the subordinate organizations that constitute a joint force. Normally a joint force is organized with a combination of Service and functional components. (JP 1)
Crisis	An incident or situation involving a threat to a nation, its territories, citizens, military forces, possessions, or vital interests that develops rapidly and creates a condition of such diplomatic, economic, political, or military importance that commitment of military forces and resources is contemplated to achieve national objectives. (JP 3-0)
Flexible response	The capability of military forces for effective reaction to any enemy threat or attack with actions appropriate and adaptable to the circumstances existing. (JP1-02)
Reserve	Portion of a body of troops that is kept to the rear, or withheld from action at the beginning of an engagement, in order to be available for a decisive movement. (JP 1-02)

Responsibility	The obligation to carry forward an assigned task to a successful conclusion. With responsibility goes authority to direct and take the necessary action to ensure success. (JP 1-02)
Rules of engagement	Directives issued by competent military authority that delineate the circumstances and limitations under which military forces will initiate and/or continue combat engagement with other forces encountered. Also called ROE. (JP 1-02)

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