

STABILITY POLICING IN BRIEF

1. THE BACKGROUND

The need for the NATO to be endowed with a military capability of civil police cleared emerged during the SFOR operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In 1997, the Allied Command Europe identified the so called “security gap” in the field of public order and security. The “security gap” was the grey area between the SFOR military capabilities, on the one hand, and the UN IPTF mission, with no executive powers, as well as the capabilities of the local police forces, often either incapable of or unwilling to enforce the law, on the other hand. In this grey area nobody either could or wanted to take responsibility. The gap was bridged by a military unit capable of performing some of the typical tasks of the civil police: the NATO Multinational Specialized Unit (MSU) made up of gendarmerie-type forces (GTF - also called police force with a military status, PFMS), which are military forces with a full police capability. Since then, this model has been implemented several times and the deployed MSUs have received the contribution of the MP and of infantry forces trained for the specific mission. The concept itself of military forces performing police duties to cover the “security gap” has evolved up to the current concept of Stability Policing (SP).

2. WHAT STABILITY POLICING MEANS

SP is a NATO agreed term: “Police-related activities intended to reinforce or temporarily replace the indigenous police in order to contribute to the restoration and/or upholding of the public order and security, rule of law, and the protection of human rights”.

SP focuses on the needs of the civil populace through supporting and, when necessary, temporary replacing the indigenous police forces, when the latter are either unable or unwilling to perform the function themselves (AJP-3.4.1 (a), AJP-3.4.5 (a) & AJP-3.22).

SP includes a wide set of civil police activities. Yet, it cannot be really compressed within the limits of civil policing since it potentially embraces such a wide variety of activities that connections with other agencies or services are most likely to occur (AJP-3.22).

3. WHERE AND WHEN SP IS CONDUCTED

SP is performed in unstable areas where NATO is engaged, throughout the spectrum of conflict ranging from peace to high intensity conflict (AJP-3.22), but it is conceptually framed within the stabilization and reconstruction post conflict process (AJP-1 (e), AJP-3 (b) & descending AJP-3.4.5 (a)). SP is also one of the three pillars of the Security Sector Reform process envisaged in AJP-1 (e) and in AJP-3 doctrinal series, which involves: reforming security institutions, so that they can play an effective and accountable role in providing internal and external security, and military assistance to civil authorities, that may require involvement in civil security tasks, including maintaining local law and order until appropriate civil authorities can take over their tasks.

4. THE AIM OF STABILITY POLICING

The aim of SP is to establish a safe and secure environment (SASE), restore public order and security and contribute to create the conditions for effective governance. Throughout the spectrum of conflict, the initial goal of SP is to re-establish and maintain sufficient security for the local populace, afterwards, to re-establish law and order and to enforce the law and, eventually, to reinforce the local security institutions (AJP-3.22).

5. THE ACTORS OF STABILITY POLICING

The actors of SP, in the wake of the MSU experience matured over almost two decades, and considering that SP focuses on the civil population, are notably the GTF/PMFS, which have

full civil police capabilities, and the MP forces but other military forces can contribute with their specialized capabilities.

6. IS STABILITY POLICE A FUNCTION OF THE MILITARY POLICE?

SP is not a current function of the MP but the discussion within NATO is ongoing, taking into consideration that SP requires a civil-oriented mindset and a specialist approach to meet the needs and expectations of the civil population in order to be successful. SP independent position and success will be influenced by its placement within the NATO doctrinal framework.

However, SP may be conducted by a wide range of military forces. The best suitable forces are the GTF/PMF and the MP forces. Nevertheless, when the MP are called to perform SP they are not, conceptually, performing MP activities but civil police activities.

7. THE ADDED VALUE OF STABILITY POLICING

The added value resides in contributing to enable the Alliance to have a holistic approach to crisis response. The added value for the NATO Force Commander resides in having the availability of military forces with a special capability of civil policing.