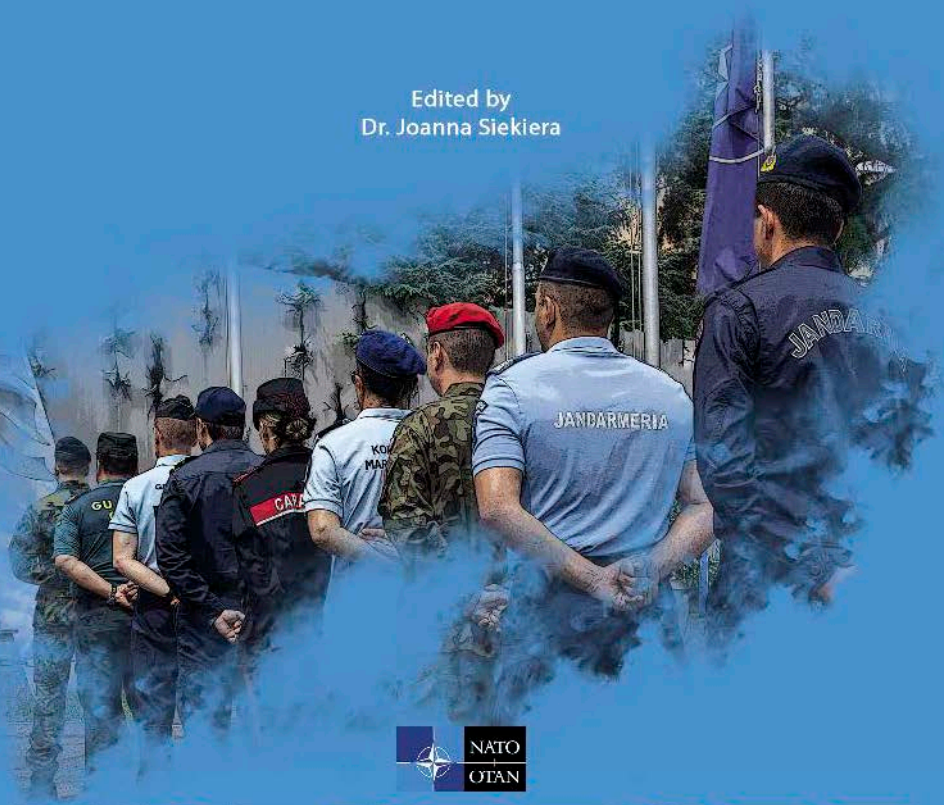# NATO STABILITY POLICING CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE

STABILITY POLICING

Edited by
Dr. Joanna Siekiera

NATO
OTAN

PAST **PRESENT** FUTURE

Multinational Specialized Unit

Grey Areas

Cultural Awareness

KFOR

Lessons Learned

Grey Zones

Counterterrorism

Trafficking Humans Beings

STABILITY POLICING

ACROSS THE WORLD

Protection of Civilians

Multi Domain Operation

Law Enforcement

Cyber

Police Primacy

Migration

Rule of Law

Cultural Property Protection

NATO Stability Policing

Beneficial tool in filling the security gap
and establishing the rule of law, and a safe and secure environment

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Mrs. Irene Fellin
NATO Secretary General's Special Representative for Women, Peace
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1. Preamble

NATO has long recognized that women play an important role as agents for change within their communities. Their experiences and perspectives are crucial in crises management, conflict resolution and peace-building processes. This is well reflected in NATO 2022 Strategic Concept which states that "we will integrate the Women, Peace and Security agenda across all our tasks. We will continue to advance gender equality as a reflection of our values".

In April 2024 Allied Ministers of Foreign Affairs have endorsed the new NATO Policy on Women, Peace and Security (WPS), which is relevant for the three core tasks of deterrence and defence, crisis prevention and management and cooperative security. The new policy takes into consideration the current security environment in which NATO operates and the emerging security challenges, such as climate change, cyber and hybrid threats, among others.

The role of non-military means for achieving political and strategic goals has exponentially grown within NATO's experience in out of area operations. In Afghanistan and Kosovo, traditional military forces, which were not best suited for post-conflict reconstruction, were placed side by side with Gendarmerie-Type-Forces, i.e. Stability Policing Units. The purpose of stability policing operations is to foster security and stability for the civilian population in a post-conflict setting by restoring and enhancing the effective and fair administration and enforcement of justice. Stability Policing is therefore a human-centric approach, which looks at the society as a whole, men, women, girls, and boys. In those

contexts, they represented an excellent instrument for NATO in order to fulfil its mandate.

This is why, the link between Stability Policing and WPS is undeniable. Both areas of work are essential to the realisation of NATO's common values of individual liberty, democracy, human rights, and our obligations under the Charter of the United Nations. As people-centred, both recognise the disproportionate or distinct impact conflict has on different segments of the population. They are key to heightening the Alliance's understanding of conflict and crisis through a more comprehensive view of the human environment, which enhances operational effectiveness and contributes to the Alliance's ultimate goal of ensuring lasting peace and security.

In Stability Policing, the inclusion of women as role models and agents of change enables peace efforts to be all encompassing, sustainable and approachable for the entire host-population. The end goal of sustainable peace in conflict-affected regions can only be successfully achieved if the rights, needs and perspectives of the entire population are considered and addressed. With women constituting half of the world's population, their participation, experiences, and perspectives are paramount to a fully inclusive and integrated approach to stability.

The NATO Stability Policing Centre of Excellence has successfully integrated gender perspectives into its curricula, workshops, and other activities, displaying to us all both the commitment and will to positively influence and contribute to our common objectives at NATO.

Finally, at the end of this foreword my thoughts go to Ukrainian women. As Russia's war of aggression enters its third year, Ukrainian women are going through an unimaginable ordeal. From heightened trafficking and gender-based violence to the loss of crucial livelihoods and rising poverty levels, they are facing severe impacts. However, they also represent the most resilient layer of the Ukrainian society. During my recent visit to Kyiv, I have witnessed their impressive commitment to fight in this war, at all levels, from government to civil society. From women fighting in the trenches to dynamic NGO activists supplying them at the frontlines, they are breaking down gender norms in service to their country.

I believe that applying the blue lens, the Stability Policing lens, with its population-centric approach will be also crucial in Ukraine's post-conflict building and reconstruction. This is where NATO's rich experience

in this area, with its Centre of Excellence at the forefront, will prove beneficial for Ukraine as well.

Mrs. Irene Fellin

Major General Maciej Klisz
Commanding General, the Operational Command of the Polish Armed Forces

2. Introduction

When we think about wars or armed conflicts, we imagine falling states or collapsed democracies far from the Euro-Atlantic zone. We naively hope that acts of state aggression will not be performed in our streets, neighborhoods, or rule-based ordered nations gathered in a political-military alliance, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

Yet, enemies to our democracies are developing as much as we do; thus, in our interest, both national and regional, it is to be reminded that collective defense starts at home, where we live, under the territorial jurisdiction of our democratically elected governments in Europe and North America. Our first responsibility is to our country, its citizens, and the NATO alliance. We are responsible for their safety, security, and stability, not only when we deploy the military contingent to remote areas far away from the home country.

The situation in my home country, the Republic of Poland, as described in this book by one of the authors, Mr. Paweł Pieniążek (in his chapter entitled "Migration crisis on NATO's eastern flank"), has proved once again how vital is the strict integration of police and border guard officers (remaining under the Ministry of Interior (MoI) authority) and military forces (remaining under the Ministry of National Defence, but employing the rules of engagement provided to the MoI personnel), both adding value to achieve the best possible result.

Army and Stability Police forces stand firm together to protect democracy as we know it today and are ready to defend it by all available and legally appointed means. Stability Policing has proven to be a vital instrument for battling the enemy within the legal framework and is an excellent tool for many crises abroad and in our domestic fights.

The aggressors are of dual origin: states (like the Russian Federation with its aggression to Ukraine in 2014 and 2022, but also before in Georgia in 2008 and by a cyber-attack on the Estonian government in 2019 [for Russian cyber warfare see a chapter by CMDR Jacob Galbreath "Using Cyber to help close the Security Gap: a Sailor's Afghanistan War perspective echoed in the Russo-Ukrainian War"]) and non-state actors, whose influence will only grow in the 21st-century warfare. They have been trying, and regrettably succeed on many fronts, to destabilize our countries, partners, and like-minded nations to establish themselves inside NATO nations. Thus, we as NATO members have a moral and legal duty to take any threat seriously and use every tool to prevent, mitigate, and terminate detrimental effects of any threats to our 32 NATO Member States and allies.

The ongoing cyber-attacks, recent weaponization of the migrant crisis at the Finnish-Russian and Polish-Belarus borders, postcrisis situations in South Sudan (chapter by Mr. Ronald Mayanja "Stability Policing: protecting civilians in Upper Nile State, South Sudan") and Afghanistan (chapter by Ms. Hosna Jalil "Unraveling Neglected Threads: The Crucial Role of Stability Policing in NATO's Afghanistan Mission (2001-2021)") are examples of unparalleled attempts to test the resilience and power of democratic nations where armed conflict, fragility and instability has been used as a leverage in irregular/hybrid/unconventional warfare (see the chapter by Mr. Stephen McNally "From Grey Areas to Grey Zones: Lessons for Intel from Stability Policing in an Evolving Security Landscape").

Finally, we must remember how relevant intelligence sharing is between our national institutions and NATO because we are "Stronger Together." Stability Policing as an integral and relevant force within the NATO family must be used where the typical "green mindset" does not fit or is not the preferred option. Gen. Sir A. Mike Jackson, quoted by Brig Gen. Ruggiero Capodivento, another author in the book, once said: MSU (and in total all SP) personnel have a policeman's mind in the body of a soldier. Also, law enforcement intelligence is a significant partner, and stability policing is a critical stakeholder in identifying and countering hybrid threats – threats whose mechanisms will only evolve to our detriment.

I strongly recommend reading and using the "blue lens" presented in this book by all military commanders who, like myself, have often been challenged to find suitable solutions for unprecedented conflicts and volatile, complex security challenges of the 21st century. Academicians need to use volume 2 of the Stability Policing Trilogy to research more on this domain, popularize it, and make it more accessible and adaptable at all levels of command.

I am sure that Stability Policing forces constitute a formidable answer to many national and international battlefield scenarios, conventional and unconventional warfare, conflict armed conflict, cyber-attacks, and post-conflict situations; thus, I boldly dare to say – that we, NATO, need more personnel trained as policemen and women to be prepared for what can and has already become inevitable.

Major General Maciej Klisz

Colonel Luigi Bramati
NATO SPCoE Director

3. Foreword

The global security environment is constantly changing and evolving, "widening beyond traditional military bounds", as per the definition given by the NATO Warfighting Capstone Concept, and we face today threats to stability that are more and more multi-faced and often disguised.

Facing the complex dilemmas of global security and stabilization requires a multi-disciplinary and comprehensive approach. No doubts about that. This change of perspective is also involving Stability Policing, a doctrine that is finding its way to advance towards these new complexities, extending its range of effectiveness well beyond the conceptual boundaries that had been designed by its founders, back in the 90s of last century.

Stability Policing is in fact progressively evolving from that "set of activities" that are described in the Allied Joint Publication 3.22 "Allied Joint Doctrine for Stability Policing", to a more sophisticated and multi-layered capability, focussed around an extended concept of the "policing gap", as well as concentrated on the role of Policing in modern scenarios, not only as a mere service to population, but one of the key functions of Governance.

But Policing also constitutes a limit to the Governance intended as the exercise of power, by putting people at the centre of an ethical system based on the protection of persons and the upholding of human rights. In this way, in its characteristic of being a people-centred discipline, Stability Policing can certainly be considered a critical factor for stabilization.

As we mentioned, a multi-layered and multi-disciplinary approach to the crisis is the only chance of success in stabilization: when we refer to Stability Policing, this approach translates into providing support to governance, and at the same time protecting human rights, defending civilians and their cultural heritage. But also to provide to the Command the capability to "connect the dots", and to detect and countering the multi-faced threats to civil cohabitation and peace that come from Hybrid and Irregular Warfare manoeuvres.

This is Stability Policing today, with all its complexities, but on its clear path towards innovation.

In the pages of this volume – the second of a trilogy – you will see how diverse the understanding of Stability Policing can be, in a specific context or in another, in a given theatre of operations or in a virtual ground such as the cyber domain.

Initially, it appears challenging to comprehend the connection to the Stability Policing definitions that we learned in the 90s, yet the vibrant words of the authors of these exceptional testimonies will progressively walk you through their day-by-day problems, their dilemmas, and the solutions they found on a small scale will finally make a broader sense, looking at them from a wider perspective.

It's that bridging idea – a bridge between incontiguous worlds, as well as a bridge across the "grey zone" between war and crisis – that is the innovated Stability Policing.

I strongly recommend the reading of this book to military members and civilians, to stabilization operations veterans, to civil servants and to the general public. These stories are the vivid exemplification of how the hard way is often the only right way. In these narrations our Stability Policing operators look to always have chosen the most complex of the available ways.

But this is Stability Policing, with its constantly progressing challenges, with its multi-layered/multi-disciplinary approach to contingencies, that often make it not well understood or not enough considered by the military leadership.

I close these brief opening remarks with an auspice and a hope: that the idea of Stability Policing, thanks to the vast expertise gathered by countless operators in many theatres of operations, might find its solid ground – rooted in the past, but looking at the future – for its doctrinal

evolution, and that the example of Stability Policing might be taken as a sign that the time for simplistic solutions to complex problems is ended – if it ever existed.

We are convinced that we, as NATO Stability Policing Centre of Excellence, are on the right path.
And I think that this book, with its intense and passionate stories, is the confirmation of this belief.

Colonel Luigi Bramati

M.A. Hosna Jalil
Former Deputy Minister of Interior Affairs, the Islamic Republic
of Afghanistan, Women, Peace and Security Advisor

4. Unraveling Neglected Threads: The Crucial Role of Stability Policing in NATO's Afghanistan Mission (2001-2021)

August 15th, 2021—a day where tears stained kitchen floors, a symphony of helplessness and heartache echoing through every home. Chaos reigned; an unbearable moment etched into our collective memory. Afghans around the globe united in shared grief, the weight of a nation's loss heavy on their souls, most acutely on those of women and children. On that pivotal day, history shifted ominously, trading hopes of millions of Afghans, particularly of the younger generation, for the return of an old adversary, the Taliban. The unwavering dreams of the Afghan Republic surrendered to this resurgence. Tens of thousands of Afghans in uniforms, both in the military and police, valiantly gave their lives on the front lines in the fight against this adversary, keeping the flame of hope for a stable and peaceful Afghanistan alive. In this perilous endeavor, thousands of U.S. service members, its allies, and contractors also made the ultimate sacrifice. Hundreds of thousands of civilians lost their lives, and millions were displaced or sought refuge in other countries over the course of this two-decade-long conflict.

The afternoon of August 15th, 2021 is marked by the haunting moment when the Taliban seized control of the Presidential Palace. A mere day later, tragedy unfolded as three young souls were tragically cast from the wings of a military aircraft during the evacuation. Among them was Zaki Anwari, a 19-year-old member of the Afghan National Football team, desperately fleeing the fall of Kabul to the Taliban. Their fall, suspended in the vast expanse of the sky, an illustration of dreams interrupted.

Amidst the evacuation's narrative, tales of separation emerged; mothers torn from their young, husbands from wives, lives crammed into backpacks as loved ones were left behind. In this tableau of chaos, choices dictated by adversity were etched in misery.

Tragedy, personified by a deadly suicide bombing attributed to ISIS-K, marred the gates of Hamid Karzai International Airport on the 26th of August, claiming 170 innocent souls of those Afghans who sought refuge and safety. Within this somber tally stood 13 valiant U.S. young service members, stationed at the forefront to facilitate evacuation. Within the airport's confines, besieged children and women's eyes held overwhelming frustration and fear, unspoken emotions echoing through the walls of confinement.

Two years after the heart-wrenching collapse of a twenty-year-old Republic, painstakingly built upon the blood and sweat of millions, the pain endures—a chapter where hope and despair intertwined, where geopolitics rewrote destinies. Yet, in the shadow of this profound sorrow, the spirit of the Afghan people remains steadfast, their resilience unwavering. As we pause to remember, we pledge to weave shattered dreams into a tapestry of tomorrow, a path lit by the promise of a brighter future for Afghanistan.

Amid the shock, citizens grappled with the collapse of their nation as soon as the U.S. and allies bid farewell. It was a harsh awakening, a testament to the Afghan state's fragility, compelling us to turn our gaze inward and contemplate the paths that might have led to a different, improved outcome. Having devoted my years to the Afghan republic during its second decade, including my role as Deputy Minister of Interior Affairs (2018-2021), I was entrusted with the pivotal task of spearheading the security sector reform task force for the Ministry of Interior Affairs. Additionally, I contributed to shaping the National Police Strategic Plan. Through this journey, I have come to a profound realization: amidst the countless complex internal and external elements responsible for the Afghan Republic's downfall, the State's inability to safeguard its citizens and maintain law and order stand out as critical factors.

The inclusion of stability policing as a pivotal component within NATO's mission in Afghanistan (2001-2021) had the potential to serve as a crucial link between the short-term military intervention approach, primarily focused on resolving the intense conflict and addressing immediate security threats, and the non-combat stabilization efforts. Regrettably, this vital bridge was often absent.

The compelling drive to combat the adversary, the Taliban, after 2001 took precedence over ensuring citizens' protection. It is undeniable that if both endeavors were given equal priority, they could have been

pursued in tandem. Let us acknowledge the underlying rationale for the U.S.-led coalition's invasion of Afghanistan—to oust the Taliban due to its affiliation with Al-Qaeda. This emphasis led the U.S. and its allies to concentrate on combating the Taliban for nearly a decade. It was only during the subsequent decade of involvement that the U.S. shifted focus to bolstering institutional capacity within the Afghan government for effective governance, safeguarding and service to the people. However, even in this latter phase of U.S. presence, state-building could not rival the prominence of counterterrorism efforts. The formula remained counterterrorism at the forefront, with other objectives trailing behind. Regrettably, the enhancement of law enforcement capacity found itself in the secondary realm of priorities.

Over the past two decades, the "war on terror" strategy not only determined operational priorities but also significantly shaped the composition, purpose, and resource allocation of institutions within Afghanistan's security and defense sector.

This influence extended to leadership appointments and senior-level roles across the sector, illustrating the pervasive impact of this strategy on various facets of the nation's security landscape. Furthermore, the training, advice and assistance offered by the NATO-led Resolute Support Mission, leaned heavily toward military strategies and policing approaches was almost nonexistent.
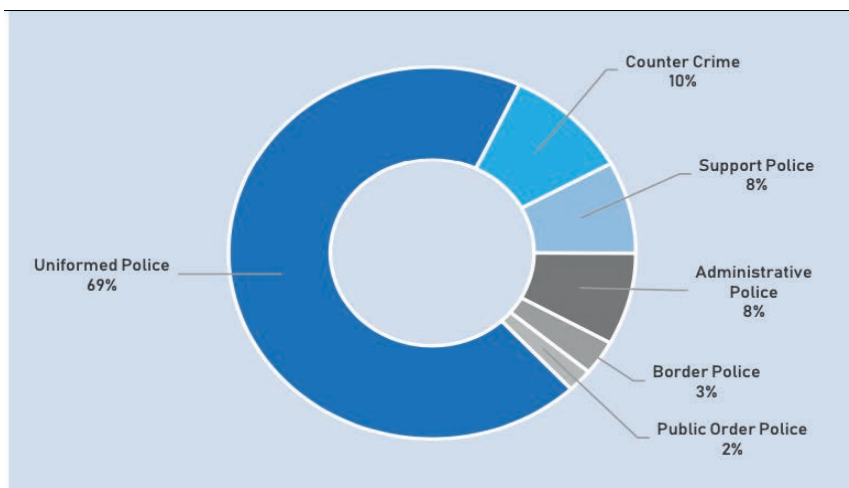
Source: Directorate General for Personnel, Ministry of Inter Affairs, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, 2019

The police force's capability to prevent and investigate crime fell significantly short in comparison to the prevailing crime rate across the nation. Despite a substantially higher loss of human lives attributed to criminal activities compared to acts of terrorism, the training and size of the police force dedicated to addressing crime remained inadequate. A mere 10% of the police force was entrusted with countering criminal activities, while the majority 69% was allocated to counterterrorism and insurgency operations, alongside Afghanistan's national army and intelligence units.

Based on data provided by Afghanistan's Ministry of Interior Affairs through its counter-crime unit covering the span of 2011 to 2018, the mortality rate attributed to criminal activities surpassed that arising from terrorist incidents by a staggering margin of 150% to 200%. This notable disparity can be attributed, in part, to the limited resources and fledgling status of the counter-crime unit. Within this context, only a modest range of 77% to 89% of reported crime cases found resolution—keeping in consideration the high probability of a substantial number of unreported incidents.
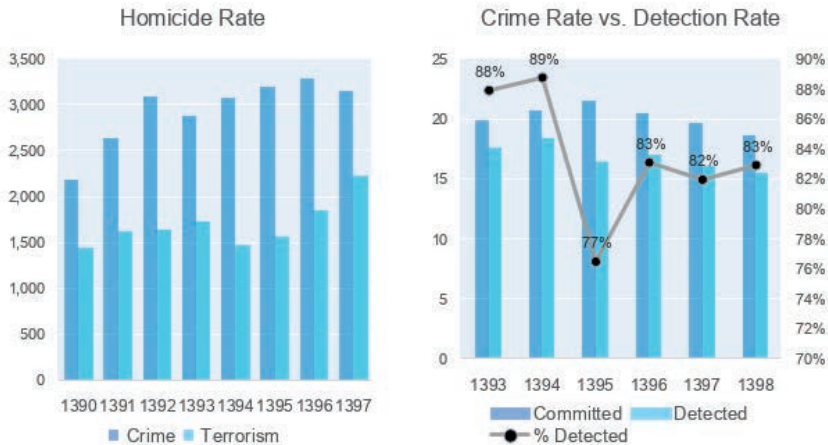
Source: Ministry of Inter Affairs, Afghanistan

Simultaneously, the distribution of the police force across the nation wasn't determined by population size but rather by the degree of threat emanating from terrorism and insurgency. The map below delineates the concentration of the Afghan National Police's presence throughout the country, with Southern and Eastern provinces receiving more resources

due to their exposure to elevated threat levels. This map is sourced from the Afghan National Police Strategic Plan (2021-2024).

● Over Resourced ● Balanced ● Under Resourced

Source: MoIA (MAG-I, DG-Strategy)
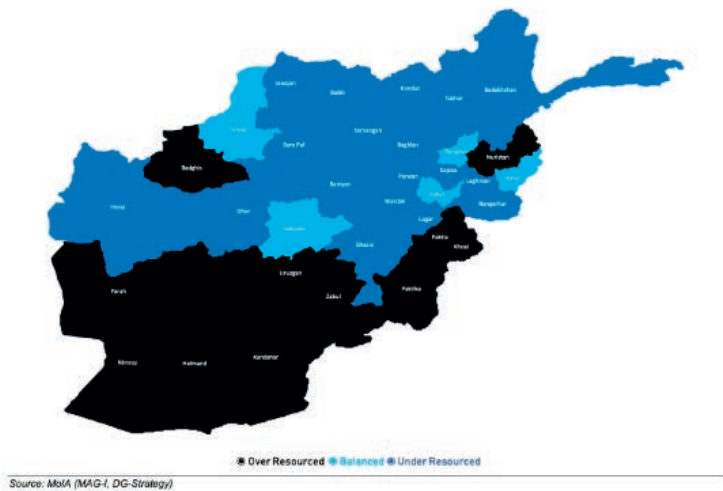
In comparison to the aforementioned map, the subsequent visualization depicts the distribution of population density across the nation. Notably, the southern provinces emerge as underpopulated yet over-resourced, while the central and western provinces, boasting higher population concentrations, find themselves under-resourced in comparison.

Afghanistan's Province-wise Population

Population: ● Populated (> 2 million) ● Balanced (> 1 million > 2 million) ● Under Populated (< 1 million)

Source: NSIA (2019)
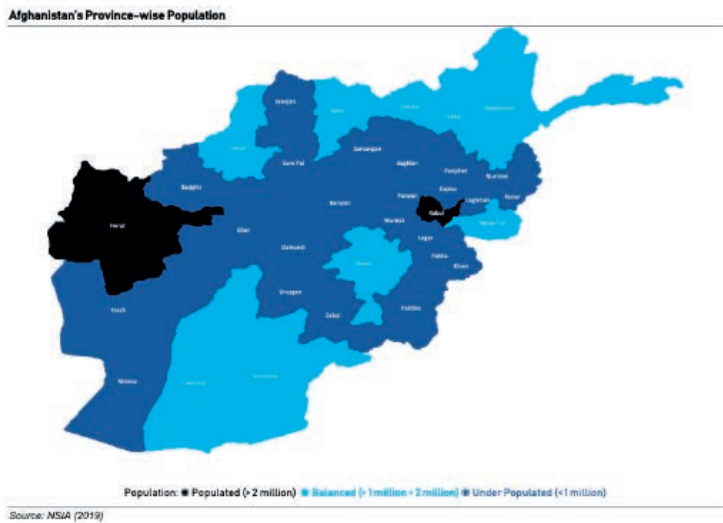
In 2017, a significant restructuring occurred as two crucial police units were transferred to the Ministry of Defense's jurisdiction. The Afghan National Civil Order Police (ANCOP), renowned for its comprehensive training, advanced equipment, and effectiveness in upholding public order, was one of these units. The second was the Border Police Unit, collectively constituting more than 32 thousand uniformed noncommissioned officers and officers—both instrumental components in maintaining security.[1] The rationale presented revolved around the necessity for bolstering counterterrorism and counterinsurgency capabilities within the Ministry of Defense, achieved through the augmentation of troop numbers. This instance highlights the resource allocation approach that bolstered the army's capabilities while inadvertently undermining the law enforcement forces' capacity to fulfill their designated responsibilities.

As a consequence of the heightened emphasis on counterterrorism and insurgency, during the initial years following the establishment of security and defense institutions after 2001, senior officers from the army were strategically placed in key decision-making positions within the Ministry of Interior Affairs, the helm of law enforcement and public safety efforts. However, in subsequent years, a perceptible shift occurred. Dominance in the entity shifted to senior officers hailing from the National Directorate of Security, bringing with them backgrounds steeped in their intelligence careers.

Echoing this trend, the post-2014 Resolute Support Mission assumed a notably militaristic stance in its training, advisory, and assistance endeavors, mirroring the same underlying rationale. The Ministerial Advisory Group for the Interior Ministry (MAG-I) was predominantly comprised of U.S. and NATO military officers. Reflecting on the year 2019, during the formulation of the post-peace policing strategy, a notable challenge arose: the scarcity of law enforcement officers from the Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan available to review the strategy paper. Almost all senior officials at the Ministry were advised by military officer. This prompted us to seek support and advice from NATO's Center of Excellence for Stability Policing in Italy.

In sum, the armed forces, encompassing the police, underwent training and preparation tailored for combat scenarios. Law enforcement units underwent militarization to enhance the ground presence for counter-terrorism missions, inadvertently neglecting the importance of civilian policing.[2] This shift led to an imbalance. Moreover, state-driven counter-terror efforts, with their repercussions on human rights, including civilian

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1   U.S. Department of Defense Budget Fiscal (FY) 2019.

2   Florian Weigand, op. cit.

casualties, coupled with constrained counter-crime capabilities, posed challenges to the state's capacity in safeguarding its citizens. Amid various contributing factors, the inability to ensure citizen protection and effective justice delivery—where policing forms the initial chapter—stood out as a notable reason for the gradual erosion of public support towards the central government.

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BIO:

Hosna Jalil is a former Deputy Minister of Interior Affairs during the Afghan Republic who led security sector reform, protection of human rights efforts and inclusion of women in the security sector. She co-authored the National Action Plan for Women in Afghanistan (NAPWA)-II, a critical implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, during her tenure as Deputy Minister of Women's Affairs in Afghanistan. Her career includes roles such as the Director for Policy in the Ministry of Mines and Petroleum, where she led efforts to combat illegal mining. In addition to her government service, she served as an Advisory Board Member for the UN Office on Drugs & Crime, combating trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants in Southeast Asia and the Middle East. Through her work, she continues to promote women's participation in peace and security, the safeguarding of human rights in conflict settings, and underscores the vital role of rule of law in fostering peace and stability.

Captain Marco Codispoti
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NATO Stability Policing Centre of Excellence, Italy

5. Afghanistan and the failure to establish the police primacy. Capturing observations from a Stability Policing Lesson Learned perspective.

1. Introduction

The aim of this article is to capture lessons on the way the International Community spent its efforts in (not) achieving the Afghan nation's police primacy. The latter meant as "a situation where local police have the main responsibility for internal security and the maintenance of the rule of law". Although never deployed in the theatre of operation, I started doing research on Afghanistan in 2008, tasked both as Intelligence staff assistant at EUROGENDFOR Headquarters and staff officer within the Lesson learned branch at NATO Stability Policing Centre of Excellence. Since 2019, I have been part of the writing team aimed to develop a research project on the Afghan police, within the framework of the cooperation agreement signed between NATO SP COE and the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction SIGAR. The outcomes were part of the report "Police in Conflict: Lessons from the U.S. Experience in Afghanistan", which was presented at US Congress in June 2022.

In the aftermath of September 11, 2001, al-Qaeda's attacks on the United States, the US-led military campaign Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) forced the Taliban to retreat toward the remote tribal areas of Federally

Administered Tribal Agencies (FATA) and Pakistan, without totally defeating them. OEF was conceived purely as a military unilateral effort in the war on global terrorism and not aimed to a long-term commitment or training of the security forces of the future Afghan government. On October 2001, Afghanistan's principal factions, except the Taliban, signed the Bonn Agreement, endorsed by United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1383, setting an interim government under the auspices of the International Community. Under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, the UNSCR nr.1386 set the International Security Assistance Forces (ISAF), establishing a multinational military mission to enable the Afghan authorities "including identify and arrange training and assistance tasks for future Afghan security forces" to ensure that Afghanistan would never again be a haven for terrorists. Notably, Chapter VII is often known as the "peace enforcement" chapter, which authorizes members to use force if needed. As observed by Jonathan Goodhand and Mark Sedra: "The priority of the United States to pursue the global 'War on Terror' largely shaped the parameters of the Bonn talks, the choice of Afghan interlocutors, and the architecture of the post-Taliban transition. The Bonn Agreement... was not a peace accord between belligerents, but an externally driven division of the spoils among a hand-picked group of stakeholders who were on the right side of the War on Terror". When NATO took over the leadership of ISAF in August 2003, the International Community had already conceived the strategy of the reconstruction of the country, included the election of a President and the setting-up of interim Government, based on a light footprint approach. "Responsibility for the development of Afghan national security forces rests with the Afghan government, supported by G8 lead nation. Manning, training, and equipping of the Afghan National Army and Police remains the responsibility of respective G8 lead nations".

In 2009, NATO formally joined the police assistance mission with the establishment of NATO Training Mission – Afghanistan (NTM-A) with the aim of improving coordination among the international military services. But its police training effort, combined with that of the United States and the long-running German program, created organizational problems and conflicting approaches. Although the International Police Coordination Board (IPCB) was created to coordinate police training efforts it lacked any power to enforce its recommendations.

In 2015 ISAF handed over the mandate in accordance with the United Nations (UN) Security Council Resolution 2189, which welcomed the agreement between NATO and Afghanistan to establish the post-2014

non-combat Resolute Support Mission, aimed to train, advice and assist the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces at the invitation of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. On February 29,2020 in Doha-Qatar, the United States and the Taliban signed a peace agreement to bring an end to the 2001–2021 war in Afghanistan without involving the then Afghan government. In the 45 days after the agreement, the Taliban conducted more than 4.500 attacks in Afghanistan, an increase of more than 70% compared to the same period in the previous year. While U.S. and coalition had not yet completed to withdraw their troops, the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan dissolved, thus returning the country, in the hands of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan led by Taliban, on August 2021. Although trained and equipped by the donors' countries for two decades, the Afghan security forces collapsed and dissolved without fighting, been left without U.S. and I.C. support. A glance at the past 20 years wider context of the failure of international commitment in favour of Afghanistan, should led us to a couple of consideration. Firstly, U.S. and the International Community failed in establishing an effective and reliable Afghan National Police force capable of enforcing the RoL and protecting the population. On the contrary, the whole Afghan security forces surrendered in a few days without fighting. Secondarily, the International Community was unable to foresee that the Afghan National Security Forces would not have fought to protect a government devoid of any legitimacy in the eyes of its citizens. Would we have witnessed a different end if U.S. and the International Community had taken advantage of a stability policing capability, since the beginning of the operations, to reach a safe and secure environment in Afghanistan? The starting point of a further discussion will be possible only by recognizing that establishing the rule of law, including the creation of an effective and legitimate police force, the most visible form of the government authority in the eyes of the population, would have been necessary to the country's stabilisation and resilience. Indeed, a fair, effective and credible institution capable of ensuring citizens' security, respect for human rights and the rule of law, would have been essential to consolidate the social pact between the State and the citizen, the foundation of modern society.

2. Chapter "Light footprint" and "Lead-nations system" in Afghanistan, neither helped the setting of the police primacy nor the filling of the security gap.

The light footprint approach consisted in the idea of limited international intervention and full recognition of Afghan sovereignty at the head of the reconstruction of the country. On the one hand, a large UN mandate was likely unnecessary as UNSGR Lakhdar Brahimi quoted "UN peacekeepers have proven most successful when deployed to implement an existing political settlement among willing parties - not to serve as a substitute for one. Any Stabilization Force established in the absence of a credible cease-fire agreement or political settlement, whether constituted by Afghans, international personnel, or both, could quickly find itself in the role of combatant. This is not a role for 'Blue Helmets." Dr. Brahimi, paralleling Afghan and Kosovo theatres, was of the idea that "a lot of people told us that we should do in Afghanistan what was done in Kosovo... and it's crazy.....it can't be the rule, it can't be repeated."

From another perspective, the former Afghan Minister of Interior, Prof. Ali A. Jalali, recalling that the initial intervention in Afghanistan was an "accidental war" because of the 9/11 attack, affirmed that, since the beginning, the International Community intervention in Afghanistan was driven by contradictory concepts. "The country was described as the major front of a global war on terror, yet the intervention was a light footprint engagement. This light footprint continues to impair every aspect of reconstruction in Afghanistan" while the International Community mistakenly considered Afghanistan a post-conflict country although a civil conflict was still fought. On balance, the International Community's strategy was to delegate the security of Afghanistan to the Afghanistan National Defence and Security Forces (ANSD) although the country was still a cadre of international terrorism and even though the country seemed not able to grant a safe and secure environment to the population. Yet, as example, figures like Matiullah Khan, the Uruzgan Chief of Police or Kandahar's Abdul Raziq, became indispensable allies against the Taliban, since the U.S. military needed strong military allies more than they needed rule of law in Afghanistan. Therefore, co-opting warlords and former mujahedeen, many of whom implicated in human rights abuses and criminal activities, appeared the quickest tool for the International Community to provide security at bases and command posts, to escort convoys, protect reconstruction projects and lastly to fight the return of Taliban. Former Afghan Deputy Minister of Interior Prof. Hosna Jalil, regarding on the last point, quoted: "police force in Afghanistan happened to be the victim of reintegration of ex mujahedeen members post 2001". Consequently, as reported by Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR), "for over a decade, that post-2001 Afghan police

force operated with near-total impunity. The Afghan government and international community did not hold Afghan police officers, especially those with political connections, accountable for numerous acts of corruption and human rights abuses: extortion, arbitrary detention, torture, and even extrajudicial killings", while, "Afghan police commanders who were effective in combating the insurgency and who were supported by large portions of the local population also engaged in criminal behaviour, torture of detainees, corruption, and even extrajudicial killings. Police advisors faced a dilemma of how to balance U.S. short-term objectives of combating the insurgency with the long-term objectives of creating a legitimate and professional police force that respected human rights and the rule of law".

Within the so-called "lead nation system", following the Geneva conference in 2002, Germany assumed the leadership for the reconstruction of the police sector with the idea of creating an ethnically balanced force that was familiar with human rights standards and modern police methods and capable of operating in a democratic society. The German Minister of Interior set up a bilateral, non-executive mission focused on the re-establishment of the Afghan National Police Academy in Kabul where, despite a declared objective to recruit and field an ethnically balanced police force, Tajiks—estimated at a quarter of the population—were consistently overrepresented through at least 2007.

According to Interior Minister Mohammed Qanooni, the Interim Authority's goal was to create a police force of 70,000 officers and later, in July 2002 the Minister of Interior, Taj Mohammad Wardak, declared his intention to have a "fully professional, well-trained, modern police force within six months". Given the limited resources both in terms of staff and financial deployed by the German government, mostly focused on the refurbishment of the Police Academy in Kabul and the training of police officers, it would have taken decades to train a police force of that size. Moreover, after 2003, progress in the field were hindered due to the presence of too many, not coordinated, actors besides NATO, in some cases, performing almost the same activities. In addition, in looking for police reform efforts, under the Bonn Compact, all international police projects were to be advisory only, seeking to build local capacity rather than undertake executive policing. This factor proved to be an obstacle to the need to urgently ensure public order and security and implement the rule of law for the stabilization of the country. The delay in providing security outside of Kabul was crucial and gave the Taliban time to recuperate and to re-emerge. Hence, when the

security situation in the country began deteriorating worryingly, the U.S. Department of State decided to deal with the lower ranks of the Afghan National Police (ANP), entrusting the training to civilian contractors, often lacking in skills and curricula for staff training in the Afghan context. By 2005 all police assistance and training programs were transferred from the State Department to the Defence Department because they seemed better resourced for the task of turning the U.S. police assistance mission in an extension of the military training mission. While ANP was massively used to fight the insurgents, too little was devoted to civil police tasks such as community policing, criminal investigations, and intelligence, thus creating misinterpretation about the relevant and extremely different roles of the HN Military Forces and HN Police Forces without filling the security gap. Police brutality and corruption in turn led to "a widespread lack of public faith in the police" according to a 2003 Amnesty International report. For example, in March 2003, hundreds of protesters demonstrated in Kabul against police who were accused of abducting a local woman. This distrust was more dangerous in a country awash in an estimated 8 to 10 million guns and somewhere between 100,000 and 250,000 former combatants trained in how to use them. This lack of public faith in the police gave the rapidly reconstituting Taliban an opening. Recognizing that they could not outfight the U.S. military and its allies, the Taliban quickly moved to exploit the Afghan state's failure to deter crime or deliver justice.

As recalled by Prof. Jalali "the gap was there, there were militias, there were criminals, there were terrorists, insurgents and that gap was suddenly occupied by all these or Taliban". Fifteen years after DOD's takeover of the civilian police training mission, civilian law enforcement in Afghanistan was still plagued by widespread corruption, inadequate training, and a militarized approach. Unable to perform its basic policing tasks, the police lost the public's trust in many parts of the country.

3. Chapter Lack of Government's legitimacy and over militarization of ANP hindered the police primacy and the rule of law.

Since the late 1970s, the Afghan police and criminal justice sector likely suffered from limited capacity and lack of basic law enforcement. As Prof. Giustozzi quoted: "By the late 1970s the rule of law had therefore established itself in Afghanistan only to a limited degree. Even individuals of modest social standing in Kabul, but connected to the Royal Government, were often in a position to dictate to the MoI officials on the ground and

avoid punishment for themselves and their relatives". The turmoil during the 1978–2001 period, further conditioned the development of policing, adapting it to the protection needs of the various ruling elites, instead of implementing the civilian policing.

After the fall of Taliban, Afghanistan had an estimated 50,000 men no functioning police force which resulted not trained, ill equipped, illiterate (70–90 percent), and, above all, owed their allegiance to warlords and local commanders and not the central government. In addition to the latter, the country had not a criminal justice system that adhered to international human rights standards or any historical experience with the concept that the role of police was to protect and serve the ordinary citizen. In the words of one Afghan National Police captain, "While some Afghans appreciated the quick justice the Taliban brought with them, by the end of the 20th century, police in Afghanistan still had many of the same problems they have always had: corruption, brutality, and a basic disregard for the people they were supposed to protect." Together, these factors generated massive insecurity that IC largely ignored in the first few months of stabilization efforts. That would have profound effects on international efforts to establish a functional civilian police force in Afghanistan.

Although, the Bonn Agreement (2002) gave the political process a timeline, nevertheless, it failed to synchronize it with building local institutional capacity in a country which has experienced more than two decades of war that destroyed the state bureaucratic institutions so that "In Afghanistan, elections in the absence of effective state institutions hampered the development of the democratic process". The latter, including the election of the Afghan executive in a highly insecure country, without an effective police force and without addressing national reconciliation, favoured warlords and militia leaders who influenced the polls with their money and guns. As reported by Human Rights "The strongest evidence of the growing power of the warlords is their ability in many parts of Afghanistan to subvert the Loya Jirga process. Despite the best efforts of the Special Independent Commission for the Convening of the Emergency Loya Jirga ("Special Commission") and the United Nations, warlords have infiltrated and manipulated the process for selecting the meeting's delegates and will attend the meeting in large numbers or act through proxies". This factor significantly hindered a long-term democratic practices, governance, and the establishment of the rule of law not to mention it also hindered the police primacy and it primed the seeds of spoiling the peace process.

Another factor which contributed to weaken the government's legitimacy was the existing gap between the capital and remoteness in the country. In a context of rapid urbanization, urban middle class occupied seats at NGOs and offices of international organizations, especially in Kabul and other regional capitals, while in rural areas, NGOs' activities supporting the population needs, were replacing local representations, thus weakening the figure of the central state and its institutions which chronically lacked efficiency, capacity, and nationwide coverage. On the one hand the rule of law in Afghanistan has been always fragile while the role of the state as a formal structure of authority, and in maintaining social order in Afghan society, has historically been limited. On the other hand, this gap was compensated over the years by coexisted traditional institutions, one above all the assembly of leaders (Jirga), relied on different mixed mechanism of government, which foreign troops and International Community totally overlooked in the attempt of quickly re-building a modern state aligned to western standard governed by a too far central authority. In the remoteness that is most of Afghanistan, these systems have served the population adequately, and, unless disrupted by external forces, have continued to do so.

Outside of the major cities, village councils or tribal elders have for generations played the predominant role in resolving disputes and meting out justice so that, unsurprisingly, Afghan rule of law institutions are often viewed as susceptible to corruption and have perceived as having little legitimacy within much of the country. Moreover, as Human Rights reported in 2002, "The resurgence of the warlords is fuelled in part by international factors. In the case of Western troops, the unwillingness of the international community to deploy peacekeeping forces outside of Kabul to rein in the warlords combined with the frequent presence of U.S. troops and their apparent cooperation with the warlords has left the impression among many Afghans that the warlords enjoy U.S. support". The lack of legitimacy was therefore exacerbated mostly because the central government was kept alive not by the consent of the population but by the international economic assistance while the presence of international military forces was perceived in Pashtun areas as occupying forces. Therefore, Afghan police represented, as it was in the past, more a mean to protect the ruling central government rather than the population. Additionally, the progressive militarization of police training, focused on a Counter Insurgency role at the expense of a Community Policing role, was crucial in the collapse of Afghan institutions. As reported in the NATO Stability Policing Centre of Excellence Joint Analysis Report, "training and

development of the Afghan National Police was militarized and resulted in a Police capability focused more on force protection and offensive operations and less on Community Policing and criminal justice". This fact created an unbalanced military oriented ANP exacerbating the negative impact on the feeling of local population about the skills that each police officer should have for the benefit of the population within the frame of the civilian policing. Indeed, "The insufficient number of trained and equipped Police [referred to ANP] operating in the provinces was a major obstacle to the expansion of government authority and international development". In the same light, SIGAR reported that "the ANP lacks the ability to protect the general populace as a civilian policing institution and struggles to address criminality and crime prevention that is not insurgent-related".

4. Chapter The time factor, how IC missed the "golden hour". Long-term objectives of state-building or short-term security imperatives?

Time undoubtedly matters. One of the real challenges for the International Community was to establish the right priority between having "a good effective and efficient police" able to fight insurgents, in a reasonable short time, rather than "to change the police perspective", able to grant the rule of law and the protection of the populace and the respect human rights, in a long time. The experience in Iraq showed that "a premature attempt to establish host nation police primacy can jeopardize wider progress toward security and normalcy". In summer 2005, for example, the British army prematurely handed over responsibility for urban security in Maysan Province to the Iraqi police. The number, training, and motivation of the police were inadequate, and the force could not maintain civil order. The resulting security vacuum assisted the growth of Mahdi army militias with links to Iran. In Afghanistan, since IC and the Afghan government have focused the success of state building on SSR, the first two years after the fall of the Taliban would have offered the best window of opportunity for starting the reconstruction. As this was a long-term process, the latter required a post-conflict environment, which was not the case of Afghanistan, with a basic level of security and stability, intended to "balance the imperatives of operational effectiveness and good governance... not a tool to address immediate sources of insecurity, such as the Taliban-led insurgency". General US Eikenberry, in fact, recognized the compromise between long-term objectives of state-building and short-term security imperatives "We are trying to build an institution while we are at war and there is an intrinsic tension between these two goals...

[Afghans] need security now, not in ten years". Yet the time factor may also have the meaning of doing what is necessary at the right moment but the opportunity was squandered or better, "the golden hour was missed".

5. Chapter Understanding the overlooked nexus between transnational organized crime and anti-state actors.

Soon after the fall of Taliban in 2001, the new Afghan government became a hostage of Armed Non-State Actors in Afghanistan (ANSA), included warlords and former mujahedeen commanders that granted the stability on through armed militias against Taliban's threat, through illegitimate taxation, extortion, the opium trade, and other illegal activities. In 2002, for example, although the Taliban were defeated, Afghanistan regained its position as the world's foremost producer of heroin, which further fuelled corruption and crime. Clashes between rival warlords and factions embroiled in bitter turf wars were common, killing scores of combatants and civilians.

Previous experiences from Bosnia and Kosovo showed that in both countries' wartime networks became political criminal networks tied to tax evasion, smuggling, and human trafficking, turning into a major destabilization factor. The same goes with Iraq where organized crime in post-Ba'athist Iraq became the "unrecognized joker in the pack" funding al-Qa'ida and Jaish-al-Mahdi, as well as several Sunni tribes that initially fought U.S. forces.

Whether it is drug trafficking, kidnap for ransom, robbery, extortion, smuggling or protection rackets, organized crime not only helps fund anti-state actors across the region, it is also a key element of their asymmetric warfare campaign, spreading instability and fear.

Moreover, organized crime and terrorist groups, share a common interest, in maintaining a permissive situation to achieve constantly its objectives that might be widely different. Instability is in the interest of terrorists because it diminishes the legitimacy of governments in the eyes of the mass populations from which terrorists seek support while organized crime groups' objective is to gain profit. In the end, the economic sources are the primary main reason why the two organizations converge.

Within a poor governance context and high level of corruption, anti-state actors have easy play in infiltrating the civil society by using and protecting criminal groups both to raise funds and also to spread fear and insecurity,

at the expense of the rule of law and a sustainable licit economy. More in detail, UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) uses the term 'anti-government elements' to address the insurgency, which encompass individuals and armed groups of diverse backgrounds, motivations, and command structures, including those characterized as the Taliban, the Haqqani network, Hezb-e-Islami and others. Indeed, as reported by Afghan MoI's data, from 2011 to 2018, the number of criminal activities and death toll as consequence of criminal activities was higher of 150-200% than the death toll from terroristic attack. This factor concurred in further making blur the distinction among criminal and terrorist groups, to the point that distinguishing the motivations of terrorist groups' activities and organized crime becomes a less relevant topic being they categorized all as insurgents.

Criminal activities seemed so powerfully connected to the Taliban presence in some areas of Afghanistan to the point that the war in Afghanistan seemed not -only- a war of ideology but -above all- a war of financial benefits.
Indeed, "the link between the insurgency and the drug trade was demonstrated in May 2009 in Helmand province, when a four-day battle that killed sixty insurgents also resulted in the confiscation of 101 tons of heroin, opium, and hashish, the largest drug seizure by U.S. and Afghan forces to date".
Transnational organized crime groups and terrorists took advantage of Afghanistan's position on trade routes linking Asia, Europe, Africa and Oceania. As US Army Colonel William Mandrake, PhD, pointed out "terrorist and insurgent networks benefit from deviant globalization by connecting with transnational criminal organizations in order to employ their capabilities and generate funds to continue operations". In this context "Criminals posed the greatest threat to stability ... the rule of law, instead of early elections, should have been the international priority".

6. Chapter NATO and the international community not able to counter corruption among police forces.

Many authors agreed that Afghanistan became more dependent on external assistance as the years went by, thus also fuelling corruption which soon became pervasive at all institutional levels. Gen. John R. Allen told a U.S. Senate Foreign Relations subcommittee in 2014: "The great challenge to Afghanistan's future isn't the Taliban, or the Pakistani safe havens or even an incipiently hostile Pakistan, the existential threat to

the long-term viability of modern Afghanistan is corruption." He stated that the insurgency, criminal patronage networks, and drug traffickers had formed "an unholy alliance". In December 2010, Afghanistan's national security adviser, Rangin Dadfar Spanta, said of the corruption problem "In this government we have mafia networks." The networks, he continued, "begin with the financial banking system, with corruption networks, with reconstruction and security firms and also with drugs and the Taliban; they are in Parliament and they are in government." On the same page, Sarah Chayes pointed out "corruption is not part of any culture, not victimless, not just about money". Indeed, the writer stated: "Too often peace agreements are in fact the division of spoils". Corruption has an impact on individuals and undermines efforts to stabilise an area leading people to joining the insurgents to fight corrupt state officials. The presumption that corruption is outside power structures is challenged by Ms. Chayes who pointed out the role of kleptocratic networks which target public sector, private sector and criminal elements. External service providers provide services to these networks; then we have enablers. The real question is: "To what extent is security assistance enabling the spoilers in the system rather than curbing them?" SIGAR report "LL Corruption in Afghanistan" came at the same conclusion, stressing that 39% of Afghans stated that they had to provide money to the ANP. In over 500 audits and 1000 internal investigation US and other partners pumped in too much money too fast with too little accountability in a small country while anti-corruption units were under-funded and under-resourced.

In Afghanistan, grand corruption by "criminal patronage networks" (CPNs) affiliated with President Hamid Karzai was the overarching cause of the loss of legitimacy for the post 9-11 international intervention by the US and NATO supported by the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan. The quintessential illustration of this was the Kabul Bank scandal involving Hamid Karzai's brother Mahmoud that resulted in the pilfering of almost $1 billion which equated to 5-6% of the Afghan GNP. This systemic corruption was among the causes of the re-emergence of the Taliban.

Benchmarks do not mean a real effective job by the Afghan Government. Yet, reportedly by Giustozzi and Isaqzadeh "Up to 1978 Corruption was limited by the fact that there was little opportunity for it in the country. Although salaries were low, few jobs were paid better in Afghanistan at that time. The economy was stagnant and mostly state-controlled and in the rural areas the use of cash was limited. Therefore, one of the conclusions seemed that the level of corruption prevalent in Afghanistan since 2001 does not

reflect an intrinsic cultural phenomenon, as some might believe; rather it might be inspired by the action of criminal patronage networks which kept hostage the Afghan government starting from the country's turbulent post-1978 history. Before this era, the Afghan monarchy developed mechanism for addressing popular grievance and maintaining peace and order through the country on through efficient government functionaries who policed the officials based on a double track justice system; an official one, especially in the capital Kabul or in other big centres coexisted with an informal system of tribal and religious law that maintained order in the rural areas. Also, the ethnic factor was somehow overcome by assigning the position to officials based on merit, without consideration of their ethnic or tribal origins. Ultimately, most of the population lost their trust in institutions and police forces because of their high level of corruption, as stated by Ambassador Crocker "...the ultimate point of failure for our efforts ... wasn't an insurgency. It was the weight of endemic corruption" which revealed also to undermine counterterrorism and organized-crime efforts as it erodes the efforts to build popular support for the government.

7. Conclusions.

Failing to use a strong stabilization force in Afghanistan, like it was with the deployment of MSU in Kosovo, was likely a political choice of the Afghan government and International Community, which heavily conditioned any success of the Security Sector Reform (SSR). Indeed, the role of Stability Policing within the Security Sector Reform was undervalued and, therefore, not appropriately implemented. In addition, the lead nation system, in a poorly coordinated approach, built artificial boundaries among the five sectors of the SSR, making them each "hostage" to the progress of others, turning into major delays. Accordingly, Prof. Hosna Jalil pointed out that "the gap constitutes a lack of clear vison and consensus on both the Afghan's side and international community on the expected role of the police....'and in the end only the 10% of police forces were properly trained and equipped to counter crime, thus creating disproportion in terms of police responses in filling the security gap". Moreover, since no common standards on training the police forces were offered, it created difficulties and misunderstandings on the ground, especially among Afghan counterpart, while, most of the time, the military component led each situation without recognition of other mission actors, especially civilians, thus further neglecting the role of police forces and limiting the effectiveness of a Stability Policing mission led by NATO. Another major consequence of the "lead nation" donor support framework resulted

in a lack of available police instructors from contributing countries. In concrete terms, donors have neither capacity nor capabilities to deploy significant numbers of police assistance experts deployable in high threat environments although, looking at the security situation of Afghanistan that didn't allow the deployment of a UN Police component, a Stability Policing robust asset deployed since the beginning and with a strong executive mandate might have filled the security gap, preventing dramatic consequences, from looting to riots, to the proliferation of organised crime and terrorism. Precisely for these reasons, the lack of an expeditionary police assistance capability, resourced with sufficient numbers of qualified and trained police assistance experts, represented the main obstacle to create an effective police force in Afghanistan as recalled by SIGAR General Inspector J.Sopko "...the U.S. and donor community lack an expeditionary police assistance capability with enough qualified and trained police assistance experts required for most stabilization and reconstruction missions in nations suffering from high levels of violence." Indeed, with the adoption of a comprehensive approach, that would have required financial commitment and careful planning from the early stages of military operations, it might have been essential for the Alliance to rely on military instrument with police capabilities to be deployed since the beginning of stabilization and reconstruction missions in unstable countries suffering from high levels of violence.

Afghanistan's rural societies, which have deep-seated historical reasons for rejecting the predatory, corrupted central power, constituted the test bench for the central state's legitimacy undermined by the absence of an effective police force. Since the beginning of the intervention in Afghanistan, the international community mistakenly believed to deal with a post conflict situation while, as prof. Jalali reported, "it was a conflict situation... it meant that whatever resources we had deployed in hope of stabilising the country, with the means we had, they did not work" which means that "you have to deal with the situation you face, not with the situation you wish". The latter sentence referred to the decision took by Afghan government officials and their coalition partners of endowing of a roughly 62,000 police officers, including 12,000 border police, to ensure public order. According to Prof. Jalali this figure was ostensibly based on the ratio of police to citizens in Germany or an international standard of one officer for every 500 citizens, extremely lower than the real needs of Afghanistan.

As stated in October 2019 by Major General Andrew Harrison, a British Royal Marines officer and Deputy Adviser to the Afghan Interior Minister,

the situation in war torn Afghanistan, although on the way of reaching a peace agreement, it clearly implied that there was a need to put in place a strategy for the future of the country, which otherwise would have immediately returned to chaos. To give a dimension of the problems and extreme differences in theatre, Major General Harrison gave the example of a checkpoint in a rural area, which operates isolated without the necessary logistical support and has great difficulties even to communicate with its department, in contrast to the special forces operating in Kabul, which are fully qualified and equipped to carry out their duties. "If one day the Atlantic Alliance should leave the country without fully completing its mission, the situation could dangerously resemble what happened in Iraq and revert to chaos".

In addition, the militaristic nature of the security situation, combined with the ANP's use as a fighting force, prevented the police from performing duties of policing and law enforcement while in contrast the establishment of police primacy would have been pivotal because policing it is a core element of political order, which reflects the specific configurations of state-society relations. Police officers are among the most visible representatives of the government, or "street-level bureaucrats" therefore the police sector reconstruction would have required an accurate analysis on the Afghan context and particularly on the status of the rule of law, the police and the judicial system. Indeed, IC should have realized that since the early stage of the intervention it would have been necessary to enable the adoption of the RoL and a judicial system that included both the respect of human rights and minority's inclusion, applicable fairly to all the population. This question should have been the premise of the construction (or re-construction) of the police sector. In this vein, policing the community, which is a typical SP task, underlies the correct understanding of the environment, cultural awareness, and the link with the local population. Understanding the context also allows for the implementation of preventive measures, discouraging, for example, radicalisation and the link with insurgents and criminal gangs. On the contrary, the lack of a traditional policing approach, the ineffectiveness of the Police in terms of definitions and responsibilities, handling funds in a non-transparent manner, the lack of accountability and the blurred line between criminality, insurgency and terrorism were a consequence of an underdeveloped criminal justice system and a different legal framework. In this situation, even with enormous investment and financial support from the international community, the objectives of establishing a responsible and effective police force could not be achieved. On the contrary, international support could end up having important

negative impacts on governance, exacerbates the negative perception of the civilian population towards the police forces of the host nation and the international actors involved in the stabilisation of the country. As properly quoted by SIGAR general Inspector J. Sopko "The experience in Afghanistan makes clear that international advisors who are familiar with the history and current practices of the host nation's police forces and their governing institutions will be better equipped to advocate for training and reforms that align with the host nation's needs. This knowledge will also help advisors avoid interjecting police concepts that may run counter to the host nation's criminal justice system – as, for example, when U.S. advisors tried to import common law concepts to Afghanistan, where the legal system is based on civil law traditions entwined with religious and customary law".

In 2003, NATO took the lead of ISAF expanding the control over all the country without having a local police force able to handle security among population neither enough troops to do it. This trend led the insurgency to increase attacks towards police and to stop attacks against population. Short-term stabilization over long-term rule of law led US to train police to counter insurgency rather to cope with civilian oriented police tasks which are fundamental to grant the RoL. Insurgents seemed to have understood the gap and their strategy turned in to a major success for the movement while population hated police more than Taleban. The absence of an effective police force focused toward population and not only to preserve the government elites, criminal activities and illegality created a dangerous security vacuum which in the long run produced higher instability and triggered more violence, as is often the case in most post-State countries conflict. While genuine rule of law reform within Afghanistan would have required decades of investment, the tension between expectations of rapid advancement and the delay on the ground has contributed to a sense of frustration among domestic stakeholders, exacerbating the time factor. Failing to improve rule of law reform threatened the nation's reconstruction effort and the possibility of genuine peace and long-term stability making the country look like a mess. On the occurrence of these situations, police force's primary role should have been to reconnect with the population by increasing its and formal governance's legitimacy, on through the fighting of internal corruption and performing their policing tasks for the benefit and security protection of the civilian population. In this regard, the following recommendation, made by the Afghanistan Study Group Final Report on the Afghan situation, matters significantly: "Work with other donors and the Afghan Ministry of Interior to begin converting

the Afghan National Police into a community policing organization rather than a paramilitary force deployed against the insurgency".

The concept of a crime-terrorism nexus is not new. It emerged in the early 1990s after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the birth of the Information Age as non-state actors adapted criminal modus operandi to their purposes. A better understanding of the criminal-insurgent relationship is therefore critical in order to define and target enemy networks, and to disrupt whatever political capital insurgent's gain from this activity. The latter achievement would have requested a host nation police adequately trained and equipped to disrupt organized crime linked terrorist nexus by developing both intelligences led policing and community led policing. Instead, as former Deputy Minister of Interior Prof. Jalil, quoted "there was a disproportion in term of police response to fill the security gap because only the 10% of police forces were properly trained and equipped to counter crime". What police should have done was policing the crime to identify critical activities and what methodologies can be applied to identify the organized crime or even the transnational organized crime network resources. This would have allowed to interrupt and isolate key people, prevent violence. This approach was overlooked in favour of the hunt for terrorists and the fight of insurgency so that analysts were not generally trained or equipped to recognize organized crime or the corrupt environment that nurtures it; yet failing to do so diminishes effective forecasting and mitigation of violent crime and insurgencies, which are often the only target of intelligence requirements. In 2008, an official of the Afghan Interior Ministry said: "When I say that I need weapons they carry thousands, when we ask for equipment for the Crime Investigation Department (CID) they do not know [what to do]. In mid-2011, only 13 Afghan CID officers worked in Kandahar against 196 officers in the 1980s under President Najibullah". Another key-factor which heavily conditioned the effectiveness of Afghan police forces was the lack of literacy training. As Robert Perito observed: "lack of literacy was absolutely one of the greatest missed opportunities in the history of our involvement there. … Had we started literacy programs when we arrived there in 2002, and kept at it, we would have changed the whole nature of the country". Illiterate police cannot perform basic law enforcement functions, such as writing reports, recording license plate numbers, and obtaining witness statements limiting also the amount and quality of evidence that can be used in prosecutions.
International Community failed to build accountable and effective police forces although huge efforts in term of investments and security

support. Although war-torn Afghanistan revealed an enormous number of challenges and the wide range of security problems encountered during international intervention would have suggested the deployment of a versatile force capable of calibrating different levels of strength to address these threats, the International Community did not play any police role and did not deploy any SP assets, as it has done in the past in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo, to stabilize the country.

On the contrary, the quick elections helped sub-state power holders legitimize their networks by creating factional political parties that helped the civil war alignments to dominate the post–conflict political landscape leading to a waste of funding, nepotism and corruption, all factors that exacerbated the negative perception of civilian population toward local police forces and international actors involved in the stabilization of the country. Indeed, a reliable and effective police force would have been not welcomed by Armed Non-State Actors in Afghanistan (ANSA) and might be looked troublesome for the corrupted elite linked to criminal patronage network. Corruption is a key-factor that erodes efforts to build popular support for the government, thereby nullifying any activity in the fight against, for example, terrorism and criminal organizations. Undoubtedly, also the missing coordination in the development of both judicial system and police function represented a major obstacle in the fight to corruption because within an extremely corrupted environment, a stable and fair legal system is fundamental to police forces IOT enforce the RoL. At the same time, the use of robust stability policing arrangements to support and reinforce local police forces might have improved the level of security towards the population and the implementation of the RoL. Such arrangements, as equipped with civilian police mind-sets and specialised elements in criminal investigations, could also have played a key role in the fight against corruption. When these situations arise, police forces must reconnect with the population, giving legitimacy to governance through their action, combating rampant internal corruption, improving community satisfaction in the police services and social cohesion. Although SP might not represent the "silver bullet" nevertheless it might have supported these efforts using its specialized structures and it might have played a key role in counter corruption efforts, as part of wider building integrity endeavour, including the engagement of specialized investigative units. Such efforts rely heavily on a proper understanding of the environment, cultural awareness, and bonding with the local population supported by command-and-control interoperability and civilian military cooperation and collaboration at political and diplomatic levels. Understanding the

context would have allowed preventative measures to be put in place, deterring radicalization". As Ian Oliver argued "The problems cannot be solved in the short term. Abuses of power, factionalised loyalties, and endemic corruption reflect broader societal issues shaped by decades of war and turmoil. The ANP are not an institutional island separated from the mainland of Afghan society". An official from the FCO therefore claimed that issues with the police 'cannot be tackled by ANP policies or reforms alone, the solution is societal, cultural and political". In other words, it is acknowledged that investing much more in the Afghan Police capabilities would have allowed also fighting more effectively the endemic corruption and the interethnic diversity of the military apparatus.

BIO:

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6.   From Grey Areas to Grey Zones: Lessons for Intel from Stability Policing in an Evolving Security Landscape

1. Introduction

I was struck the other day by a reference made in a 2018 document from the NATO Stability Policing Centre of Excellence to the so-called "security gap... the grey area between the end of major combat operations and the full operational capability (FOC) of the Host Nation Police Force". As someone with no direct experience of or involvement with stability policing, I noted that the challenges that exist in this "grey area" do not look very different from the law enforcement challenges that are present in countries or regions suffering enduring endemic instability and lawlessness; there may not have been major combat operations in such an areas, and the host nation police force may in fact already be at FOC (or what passes for it in the local context). But otherwise, nations subject to chronic instability are often indistinguishable from nations grappling with the immediate aftermath of large-scale conflict. And they are likely to face many of the same challenges that are faced by transitional administrations in post-conflict societies, including economic and societal dislocations, widespread criminality including OCGs stepping in to fill power vacuums, and – of more far-reaching concern - threats from local and transnational terrorist groups aiming to exploit ungoverned, under-governed or alternatively-governed spaces.

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1   The views and opinions expressed in this chapter are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the NATO Intelligence Fusion Centre or represent the NATO Intelligence Fusion Centre in any way.

The idea of this so-called "grey area" also reminded me of references commonly thrown around today to so-called 'grey zone' or hybrid warfare – where state actors seek to advance their security interests though activities that lie below the threshold of conventional warfare, particularly as we enter what is widely being referred to as a new era of 'great power competition'. 'Grey zone' warfare can be an enduring and wide-ranging state – and when I look back to the Cold War, I often think that 'grey zone' warfare is just a catchy new buzzword for a form of great power competition that has been around for a long time - but it can also be played out more intensely in certain places and at certain times. And many of the states which suffer from chronic instability also find themselves unwittingly – or sometimes with conniving acquiescence on the part of governments - serving as the theatres where hybrid conflicts play out. In a particularly vicious circle, these 'grey zone' proxy conflicts also help to feed the instability that non-state actors, including terrorist groups and OCGS, can exploit, while the resultant threat of terrorism and further instability can be used to justify further interference - or 'assistance' - from state actors.

2017, the year that I arrived at the NATO Intelligence Fusion Centre (NIFC) at RAF Molesworth was a simpler time. Not as simple, though as when I had first joined the British Army as a reservist in 1990. Back then, as a gunner in the Royal Artillery, although the Cold War had supposedly ended in victory for our side, I was still training to fight the Warsaw Pact. If this was the end of an era of great competition - I don't remember anyone calling it that, although Francis Fukuyama did famously call it "the end of history" – still, World Peace was apparently not about to break out. The air campaign of what would come to be known as Gulf War One against the regime of Saddam Hussein was in full swing. Soon there would be 'boots on the ground'... But not in Iraq itself. There was no regime removal – and hence, at least on this occasion, no stability policing requirement. This was about the time that, between jobs and with only my reserve service as a stabilising factor, a friend strongly advised me to look at becoming a police officer – ironically, given that I am now part of a discussion on how to fuse law enforcement intelligence with military intelligence.
In the following years, my personal experience of policing in a military context was somewhat tangential. My first period of military service encompassed the Balkan Wars (and two tours of Bosnia for me), during which I don't recall any interactions with any Allied police elements, if they were present in theatre; we were part of SFOR, Stabilisation Force. So, if there was policing of stability going on, then I suppose that we, as soldiers, were doing it. I also did a UN tour on the Green Line in Cyprus, where we worked closely alongside the UN civilian police contingent, specifically Australian police officers, who were the law-enforcement element responsible for policing civilian activity in the buffer

zone, and also supported humanitarian matters and assisting in efforts to return the area to normal conditions.

Pic. 1. UN Civilian Police, Cyprus, 2019 © UNFICYP

And for my second tour in Afghanistan in 2013 I deployed as a Pashto linguist with a British Army Police Mentoring and Advisory Group training the Afghan Local Police in Helmand Province's Nad-e-Ali District.

2. The Global War on Terror

Fast forward again to my arrival at the NIFC in my current role as a civilian counter-terrorism intelligence analyst in 2017 - more precisely, and rather fittingly, on September 11th. The 'new world order' that had been looming into existence in 1990 was now fully, if amorphously, formed. Following that brief and blissful "the end of history" hiatus punctuated from a Western point-of-view only by the first Gulf War and the wars in the Balkans in the early 1990s, the Cold War had been replaced by the Global War on Terror, and, where national governments were deemed to be supporting or harbouring terrorist groups, regime change. And with regime change came security vacuums, instability, and a consequent need for what would become known as stability policing. But that was still not a term I was familiar with. Our focus in the Counter-Intelligence, Terrorism and Cyber (CITC) branch of the NIFC's Analysis Division, which was otherwise largely organised into branches with specific geographic remits, was on transnational threats. And for the terrorism team, that meant the threat

from transnational terrorist groups; specifically, Al Qaida and its global branches, and the Islamic State and its various affiliates in Africa, Asia and the Middle East. We observed and analysed the 'horse race' between the two groups for the dubious honour of being the most dangerous terrorist threat to NATO nations and interests. In 2017 the threat still loomed large in the Afghanistan-Pakistan region, for which I had responsibility, in the form of Al Qaida, but it was being overshadowed by the rise of the Islamic State – Khorasan Province. I was also responsible for covering the Western Balkans and Central Asia, and my fellow terrorism analysts were looking at Africa and the Middle East. But regardless of our particular areas of focus, we faced a number of common challenges in looking at terrorism which were specific to the NATO context.

Firstly, I discovered that terrorism can be a prickly issue within NATO, with the Alliance lacking its own list of 'designated' terrorist organisations (probably logically, given that NATO lacks legal recourse to sanction such organisations or their members). Lacking such designations, there is plenty of scope for disagreement as to what constitutes a terrorist threat, and which threats should be prioritised. Secondly, we were looking at terrorism threats to the Alliance at a strategic level, while much of the interesting reporting that we saw and possibly wanted to follow up on was at the national level, and often within the Law enforcement realm. While there was a certain amount of human intelligence (HUMINT), and some signals intelligence (SIGINT), coming in from active theatres where NATO forces were deployed, that was limited to Afghanistan and Kosovo. We obtained our first detailed information on any specific terrorist threats within NATO nations from indictments filed by US prosecutors, or media reports of statements detailing arrests of terrorism suspects by police spokespersons. Invariably these cases would then enter a legal limbo, with no further information seeing the light of day. In countries in Africa and the Middle East, where we had neither boots on the ground nor robust, accountable law enforcement structures, we were forced to rely almost entirely on opens source reporting from the media and academic researchers.

Which brings us the third problem, and the area where it seems from my point of view as an intelligence analyst that the worlds of the military and law enforcement intersect. Prior to the 9/11 attacks and the US intervention in Afghanistan, terrorism was not considered a military issue. And certainly not the domain of a military alliance such as NATO. Terrorist attacks, even when they took place beyond a NATO nation's borders, were investigated and prosecuted by national law enforcement bodies, and by the local authorities in countries where attacks took place. While national

intelligence agencies did become involved in targeting terrorist networks overseas, where to draw the line between responsibility for interdicting and neutralising terrorist threats, and responsibility for arresting and prosecuting terrorists, was a fuzzy legal area. And this uncertainty, coupled with bureaucratic strictures which resulted, in the case of the US, in the infamous 'wall' erected by President Bill Clinton's attorney general, Janet Reno, which prevented intelligence being shared between the CIA and the FBI, was compounded by turf wars and personality clashes between the agencies, which all taken together were part of the reason that the 9/11 attacks were able to go ahead, to such devastating effect.

3. The Crime-Terror Nexus

The countries where we were monitoring the emergence of potential terrorist threats at the strategic level were often rife with instability, resulting from a wide range of factors, including poverty, poor governance (or in some areas an absence of formal governance), and ethnic conflict. We observed that nations subject especially to chronic instability face many of the same challenges that have been faced by transitional administrations in post-conflict societies - including threats from local and transnational terrorist groups and OCGs - where stability policing experts and practitioners have operated. As it happened, one of my civilian colleagues at the NIFC was a former London Metropolitan Police SO15 counter-terrorism officer, and the analyst that I came in as a replacement for had been a Royal Ulster Constabulary/Police Service of Northern Ireland officer with extensive CT experience. In addition, the NIFC Analysis Division chief was a lieutenant colonel from the Italian Carabinieri. So, our blended military/civilian team already had experience with, or exposure to, law enforcement ways of working and thinking. And these individuals were able to leverage their informal networks to organise familiarisation and liaison exchanges with a number of law enforcement partners, and to invite speakers from national police services to present at our annual terrorism conference. It rapidly became clear that law enforcement had deep insights into the crime terror nexus that we, as NATO intelligence analysts, did not have the classified reporting to develop ourselves.

High on our agenda in late 2017 was the issue of foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) who had departed from Western countries, including NATO nations, mainly to fight with the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria. A number of these FTFs had already returned to Europe and carried out terrorist attacks. Moving into 2018, as the final remnants of Islamic State's territorial 'caliphate' were being besieged and dismantled, we were increasingly

concerned as to where those FTFs who survived the onslaught of Western air power and escaped from the conflict zone would go, and what they might do. Systematic access to national law enforcement databases was not something that we were going to be able to obtain. But our colleagues with police backgrounds had vast experience of dealing with terrorists, either directly through CT work or to the extent that the lives and milieus of those drawn to the life of the FTF often overlapped with the criminal domain. Many European FTFs, we soon discovered – although it came as no surprise to our former law-enforcement colleagues - already had criminal backgrounds or underworld links. For some, possibly on the run from authorities and without hopes of legitimate employment, signing up with a terrorist group offered a practical alternative, but also to some extent personal validation, and a sense of identity and belonging; their criminal activities could now be burnished with a sense of religious legitimacy. In addition, the activities of terrorists and criminals almost by definition overlap with and reinforce each other; criminals are plugged in to local and transnational black markets, and use their access and skillsets, possibly unwittingly but usually without undue interest in the precise nature of their clients' business, to facilitate terrorism - financing attacks, smuggling operatives, procuring and transporting arms, and creating or obtaining forged travel and identity documents.

There were certainly many urban areas in Western Europe where this crime-terror nexus was of immense concern to our team, and where direct connections from street gangs and petty criminality, particularly amongst immigrant populations, to foreign terrorist fighting in the Middle East had been extensively traced. But for historical or cultural reasons, some NATO nations were more circumspect than others in discussing national law enforcement issues in a military environment. And in any case, as I have previously alluded to, we had neither the inclination to tread on law enforcement toes within NATO nations, nor the remit or resources to do so. And the classified reporting that we received from active theatres of combat was heavily focused on in-theatre threats and force protection. However, one of the areas that I was responsible for looking at fell somewhat neatly between the home turf of European NATO nations and partners and the conflict zones of the Middle East. The Western Balkans, where NATO forces and missions were deployed on the ground , was neither completely home turf nor a combat zone, but already had a proven record as a region where transnational criminal networks, porous borders, friction along ethnic, social and religious fault lines, and corruption within official institutions

combined to create the conditions for what had the potential become a major hub for terrorist groups' activities, with the consequent threat to NATO nations exacerbated by links with diaspora communities in Western European nations. Due to the region's geographic location and its historical role in facilitating intercontinental smuggling, the Western Balkans had also become a major transit route for migrants travelling from South Asia, Africa and the Middle East who were attempting to reach Europe. And with the migrants flows came a variety of terrorist threats. While returning FTFs were flavour of the month, we were able to identify a variety of other ways in which the terrorism threat manifested itself in migration flows, including newly-recruited 'clean-skin' terrorist operatives, and legitimate migrants who became radicalised by personal interactions and relationships along their route, or through anger and frustration as they languished in internally-displaced persons' camps or migrant reception centres.

In Kosovo, NATO had Kosovo Force (KFOR) deployed on the ground, including an Italian Carabinieri-led multinational specialised unit (MSU) operating in a stability policing role. This unit always provided timely and detailed intelligence gleaned from their patrols on the ground and interaction with the local population, including the Kosovo Police. KFOR more broadly worked closely with local law enforcement and intelligence bodies, and we were consequently privilege to a wealth of information on FTF activities and movements. During visits to the KFOR headquarters in Pristina I witnessed at first hand the close interactions between NATO personnel and local law enforcement agencies. When KFOR organised a series of regional conferences on the particular FTF problems that the Western Balkans region faced - the numbers of individuals who travelled to the conflict zones of the Middle East from Kosovo and Bosnia were the highest per capita of any European nations – the events were attended by representatives of national law enforcement agencies from across the region, drawn together along with military and intelligence personnel by shared concerns over the threat to stability that the phenomenon of returning FTFs posed to their nations. In talking to KFOR personnel, it became clear that in the absence of sufficient funding for counter-terrorism capabilities, advanced technical surveillance equipment or shared biometric databases, it was often the local 'beat cop' in a small town or village who was best situated to keep tabs on the comings and goings of local youths and young men - who had mysteriously left town? Who had suddenly reappeared after an unexplained absence? - over cigarettes, coffee and rakkia in the local café.

Pic. 2. Carabinieri of the Multinational Specialized Unit in Mitrovica, Kosovo, 2020 © NATO

4. The Grey Zone

In the summer of 2022, our CITC team was folded into what had been the Special Operations Intelligence Division, which had largely been focused on supporting the NATO mission in Afghanistan, under the new title of Hybrid Threats Division. Great power competition had returned in February of that year in the form of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and analysis and reporting on the returning FTFs the wider transnational terrorism threat was now going to have to take a back seat to concerns as to how Russia – and to a lesser extent China and Iran – could challenge or create concerns for NATO on the World stage, below the threshold of conventional conflict. A scaled-down terrorism team now shared office space with analysts who were tasked in particular with looking at the activities of the Russian Wagner private military company (PMC) in Africa. It turned out that this was a rather natural and complementary fit, because Russia, and Wagner, were able to advance their commercial, political and military interests by exploiting the same instability and underdevelopment on which terrorist groups thrive. Many of the range of issues faced by vulnerable African nations where Russia and its proxies sought to make inroads were clearly linked to OCGs and general criminality; human trafficking, illegal resource extraction, smuggling, and kidnapping for ransom, to name but a few. Terrorist groups posing a military threat were also being funded

by these criminal activities, but the criminal activities themselves first and foremost fall under the purview of law enforcement authorities. So it quickly became evident that, although by now our former law enforcement team members had moved on, and we no longer had a Carabinieri officer leading us, law enforcement writ large was going to continue to be the same natural partner for us as NATO intelligence analysts in a military setting that it had been when we were primarily concerned with the terrorist threat from transnational groups operating within and across African nations, as well as in the Middle East and South Asia.

However, while this potential partnership seems like a natural one between organisations dealing with common concerns, we still faced the same challenges in operationalising it. As mentioned earlier, we would very often get our first information on terrorist threats within NATO on legal filings or media reports. Although we were now getting plenty of classified intelligence on the range of hybrid threats that Russia poses to NATO nations, we still found ourselves subject to restrictions where national law enforcement concerns were at play. In March 2023, authorities in an Eastern European NATO nation disrupted members of a Russian-backed network that had allegedly been surveilling and planning acts of sabotage against shipments of armaments and other military assistance from Western nations that were transiting the country. Following the announcement of the arrests, the matter disappeared into the nation's legal system. Lacking a direct line or a way of sharing intelligence with the relevant national authorities, we had to content ourselves with learning extensive details about the recruitment tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs), disposition and activities of the Russian sabotage network from a lengthy article in the Washington Post in August 2023; a five-month period over during which, had we had access to the information revealed in the Post's article, the NIFC could have been assessing and reporting on the potential recruitment and preparations of any similar Russian networks that could have been establishing themselves inside NATO nations.

When mail bombs had targeted Ukraine-related targets in Spain in November and December of 2022 we had likewise been in the dark for some considerable time about the details of the devices and the suspected perpetrator; although the targets included an arms manufacturer, and the attacks thus constituted a direct threat to the NATO Alliance's efforts to support Ukraine's war effort, they were first and foremost considered a national law enforcement concern. In both cases, as we waited for further updates to trickle out in the media, an American colleague noted with

exasperation that American combatant commands and headquarters always have an embedded FBI liaison officer to facilitate cooperation and, where possible, the sharing of intelligence. It seemed to me that there was clearly a natural fit for the capabilities and experience of stability policing experts and practitioners working alongside the military, actualising, or operationalising cooperation between the military and civilian intelligence organisations on the one hand, and law enforcement on the other; with eight NATO nations sharing borders with Russia, we could access the intelligence data and intelligence of a combined body of 253,000 police officers, who are carrying out around 40,000 patrols daily, and on a daily basis identifying or controlling 100-200,000 subjects interest per day[2].

5. State Actors and Organised Crime Groups

To bring us back full circle, I talked earlier about the crime terror nexus. In the Hybrid Threats Division, we also look at the relationship between states and OCGs. In mutually beneficial relationships, state actors can sue OCGs as a deniable tool for hybrid actions. In return, OCGs can get financing, relative immunity from prosecution, protection and access to specialised weapons and technology. We are now looking at Russia, via its partner Belarus, weaponizing illegal migration to destabilise NATO's borders, using criminal elements in support of its cyber attacks against Western targets, and reportedly turning a blind eye as Eastern European OCGs smuggle weapons from the Ukraine conflict to be used by other criminals – and possibly terrorists- NATO nations. Meanwhile, Iran uses OCGs to carry out assassination of regime opponents inside NATO nations, and its proxy militia Hizballah is intricately involved in the global drugs trade. Chinese OCGs ship fentanyl precursors to Latin American OCGS, from where the drug is targeted towards US consumers with deadly effect – disproportionately amongst working- and lower-middle-class males of military age. Criminality is thus becoming a vector for strategic effects, which in other circumstances, would be considered acts of war. And clearly, developing the capabilities to tackle these threats to NATO nations and the cohesion of the Alliance requires addressing them in cooperation with law enforcement partners.

To this end, in March 2023 I was honoured to be invited to Vicenza, Italy to address the NATO Stability Policing Centre of Excellence (CoE) workshop entitled 'Law Enforcement intelligence: What Stability Policing can do

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2   Figures from the NATO Stability Policing Centre of Excellence.

for the NATO Intelligence Enterprise, and what the NATO Intelligence Enterprise can do for Stability Policing'. My theme was 'Organised crime groups as a hybrid warfare tool for State Actors'. I was also lucky enough to be able to join in the intense day-and-half long discussion on how to promote the concept of LEINT within the NATO Alliance. In return, in September 2023 my team at the NIFC had the privilege of hosting guest speakers from the CoE at our annual NIFC Terrorism Conference, where they introduced the concept of LEINT to a highly interested audience of counter-terrorism analysts. And in April 2024, the NIFC will host the SP CoE's own conference. I'm proud to be a part of these pioneering efforts. In an increasingly complex and dynamic threat environment, we are going to need all the partners we can muster to help us navigate the murkiness of grey areas and grey zones, and hopefully shed some light on the threats that we jointly face every day.

BIO:

Mr. McNally has worked at the NATO Intelligence Fusion Centre (NIFC), RAF Molesworth, UK since 2017 as a terrorism analyst; he is currently the senior terrorism analyst in the NIFC's Hybrid Threats Division. He is a former British Army Reservist, and served for over 20 years in both the Royal Artillery and the Intelligence Corps. In this capacity he deployed on multiple operational tours, including in Cyprus, the former Yugoslavia, and Afghanistan. On his last tour in Afghanistan, he spent eight months working with the Afghan Local Police as a Pashto linguist. He is currently serving as a sergeant in the RAF Intelligence Reserve.

Captain Ankie Petersen
Section Cultural Affairs and Information Royal Netherlands Army

7. Training cultural awareness and CPP for conflict prevention

Pic. 1. A Dutch Officer and an Afghan counterpart walk hand in hand across the base in Mazar-e-Sharif, Afghanistan. © Ministry of Defense, the Netherlands.

1. Introduction

A member of the Dutch military advised in the summer of 2017 an Afghan colleague in the logistics department. While talking, they walk together across the military terrain to a deposit when the Afghan man starts

holding the hand of the Dutch colleague. Hand in hand, they continue their walk and conversation. For most Dutch people, this kind of situation would be quite unexpected and might even cause feelings of awkwardness. However, in Afghan culture, holding someone's hand is much more normal and is considered a sign of friendship and respect.

This is an example of what knowledge of cultures is necessary to operate successfully in a foreign environment. What traditions, norms and values must you know to operate most effectively? Imagine if the Dutch officer had pulled his hand away; what kind of effect could that have had on the future collaboration?

Every member of the Armed Forces, no matter their rank or specific role, will, at some point in their career, be in contact with people from cultures different from their own. Moreover, they may be deployed in countries with different ethnicities, religions, traditions, and monuments than they're used to. The example mentioned above is one that my colleagues and I at the Section of Cultural Affairs and Information in the 1 Civil and Military Interaction Command of the Royal Dutch Army, use a lot as an eye-opener during our training programs, to show how a better insight into the cultural context of your operating environment can improve your ability to work there. Culture, and cultural heritage, are matters that can affect not only personal safety and the security situation of military forces but also the success of a mission in general. Stopping the illegal trade of cultural artefacts, which is tied to terrorist financing, or creating goodwill amongst local communities and local authorities to improve civil-military cooperation, to name a few.

From the vandalization of statues and monuments in areas of ethnic tension and conflict to the looting and illegal trade of cultural artefacts, culture has become not only a victim of war but a political tool that needs to be understood in order for Armed Forces to be able to operate in complex conflict environments. Recent conflicts, such as the Russian invasion in Ukraine, the continued ethnic tensions in the Balkans, and emerging conflicts in Nagorno Karabakh, illustrate this. In this chapter, I will show what proficient training and education in cultural awareness and Cultural Property Protection (CPP) can do to improve understanding of these conflicts and, subsequently, for the role of Civil-Military Cooperation and Stability Policing in conflict areas. I will support this statement with examples from practice and experience as a Dutch Liaison Officer in CPP,

who developed training and education materials for the Dutch Armed Forces and beyond.

2. Cultural Heritage as Emerging Topic in International Security

The global development of cultural property protection in times of conflict has experienced a significant boost since the drafting of the 1954 Hague Convention by UNESCO and its member states. In the context of the Second World War just behind us, many countries recognised the importance of cultural property protection by signing and ratifying the convention in subsequent years. However, the development of military capabilities for CPP has not been very widespread. Until today, we see only a few countries with specialised military personnel, such as France, Austria, Italy, the UK, and the USA. In the Netherlands, the seeds for proper training and education on CPP were planted in 1953, with the establishment of a military unit of so-called 'Art Protection Officers', the predecessors of my current department: the Section of Cultural Affairs and Information.

Within the Cold War context, many countries that paid attention to CPP focused on protecting national territory. They kept track, for example, of the locations of big art and archival collections, the most important monuments, and possible locations to store art in an emergency. The fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Cold War tremendously influenced the tasks of the Bureau of Cultural Heritage and its officers. Because of the changing geopolitics, the Dutch Armed Forces underwent significant changes: different tasks, organisational structures, and budget shrinkage. The focus shifted from national defence toward participation in international military missions.

This change in focus meant a significant change in the work of the Art Protection Officers of the Section Cultural Heritage. Amongst others, the ongoing civil war in former Yugoslavia influenced this. During this war, not only ethnic cleansing took place, but with that, the large-scale destruction of cultural heritage - they became symbols and a deliberate target for the adversaries. The targeting of the old city of Dubrovnik, the fire in the National Library in Sarajevo and, the destruction of the old bridge of Mostar, the destruction of hundreds of Mosques and Churches are compelling examples of violations of the Law of Armed Conflict (LOAC).

Because of the war in Yugoslavia, the Netherlands became part of the UNPROFOR mission, and it was decided that the Dutch UN military should get proper education on the cultural heritage threatened by the war's violence. This became a new core task for the Section Cultural Heritage. This task was carried out at the newly erected Centre for Peace Missions (Centrum voor Vredesmissies, CVV). The CVV was constructed in 1992 and would train about 1100 UN military personnel simultaneously.

Even though initially, the Section Cultural Heritage training programs were solely focused on the Hague Convention of 1954, LOAC and cultural heritage at risk, it soon became clear that the military personnel on deployment had other information needs. They had questions about the different ethnic groups residing in the territory, their habits, mentality, religion, and recent history. They were concerned with how to communicate and act in a foreign environment. They were seeking more information about what heritage was being destroyed and how this related to the different ethnic tensions in the region: the culture-conflict nexus. These factors would influence their ability to operate in a complex conflict environment effectively.

3. Understanding Conflict & Heritage

Since the wars in former Yugoslavia, the relevance of understanding culture in relation to conflict has not diminished. As a researcher and trainer on CPP within the Dutch Armed Forces, I have been part of the development of training programs for all kinds of military personnel getting ready to deploy to a foreign country. Our training programs are based on scientific models and NATO doctrine. The 2023 update of NATO AJP.01 clearly stated the need for a better understanding of cultural awareness. From AJP-01 A.13:

"History has shown that cultural property is vulnerable in times of conflict. Cultural property can be destroyed or damaged unintentionally by opposing forces as collateral damage or destroyed or damaged intentionally. Culture plays an essential role in modern-day conflict as the identity of a group of people is often connected to symbols reflected in buildings, monuments and artefacts. Damaging, destroying or plundering cultural heritage undermines a community's social, ethnic or religious identity, cohesion and resilience."[1]

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1   NATO AJP-01, Annex A, A.13

In other words, to analyse a conflict, we need to recognise how physical traces of culture, such as monuments or statues, are linked to a society's underlying traditions, rituals, and values. For example, the destruction of heritage cannot be seen as an isolated event but better be placed within a larger context of targeting communities at the heart of their existence.

Central in the notion of cultural heritage (both tangible and intangible), as we present it in our training programs, is the idea that heritage is a social construct, meaning the result of social processes bound in place and time. Culture is, therefore, not only a collection of objects but a sequence of processes and a medium through which identity, power and society are produced and reproduced. If we see heritage as a result of an ongoing process, we must conclude that heritage is open to constant revision and can be both the source and result of social conflicts. Because of the link between cultural heritage and identity, cultural heritage has often become a target during (armed) conflict between ethnic, religious, or social groups because of the immaterial value for the community they represent.
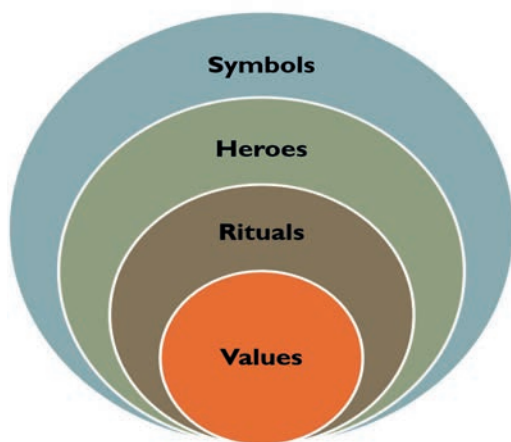
Graph 1. The 'Onion model' for visualising the relationship between values, rituals, heroes, and symbols. Courtesy of the Section Cultural Affairs and Information, Royal Netherlands Army.

One way to help analyse the deep-seated connections between cultural objects, buildings, and identity, especially in a military context, is through the 'onion model' depicted in graph nr. 2. This model illuminates elements of people's identity and culture, starting with those that are often invisible to the casual observer: values (encompassing norms, taboos), rituals (the

intangible heritage of a community), and heroes (figures society venerates for their virtues and achievements). The outermost layer consists of symbols: the tangible heritage we can enumerate, such as objects, artefacts, monuments, statues, and the like.

Moving beyond understanding, the next imperative is operationalising cultural awareness. The second graph delineates how cultural awareness intertwines with various facets of a military mission. It becomes an invaluable source of information, sharpening situational comprehension. Consider this scenario: interpreting an empty street not as a sign of looming danger but as an observance of Friday afternoon prayers in a Muslim nation. Or misinterpreting a sacred burial site for just a landscape with mud and sticks. Overlooking such nuances can compromise force security, widening the gulf between military personnel and local inhabitants. It can put strains on your rapport with local populations and can make you miss crucial information about a certain situation.

Graph 2. Operationalising cultural awareness. Courtesy of the Section Cultural Affairs and Information, Royal Netherlands Army.

Furthermore, we can link cultural awareness to a better understanding of the root causes of a conflict. This is especially true when dealing with an environment where multiple ethnic communities are in conflict. Understanding the cultural backgrounds of these different groups improves your understanding of possible sources of tension and might give you an understanding of what possible reconciliation could look like. This ties into the following point: cultural awareness can improve your ability to protect cultural property during conflict.

4. Operationalising Cultural Awareness in a Military Context

What does this look like in practice? We can draw examples from recent ethnic tensions and conflict where the link between heritage and conflict is apparent. For NATO members and affiliates, Bosnia offers a quintessential case study into the intricate weave of heritage and conflict, illuminating the importance of understanding and respecting the layers of cultural identity.

The Ferhad Paša Mosque, better known as the Ferhadija, is one of the most famous mosques in Bosnia, located in Banja Luka, the capital of Republika Srpska. The mosque was destroyed on May 7, 1993, after which its remains were scattered around the city, making reconstruction difficult. All that remained after this destruction was the Sahat Kula, the bell tower, but this Ottoman structure was also razed to the ground a few months later, on December 15, 1993.[2] The destruction of hundreds of mosques in the region was part of the ethnic cleansing campaign of the Bosnian Serbs, targeting not only religious or cultural symbols but people's very identity.

The importance of protecting cultural heritage in a post-conflict situation cannot be neglected. Research has shown that cultural heritage can be a deciding factor for communities looking to return to their location of origin. Research by Amra Hadzimuhamedovic in 2000-2001 in Bosnia showed that for marginalised communities looking to return, cultural heritage reconstruction was critical. Moreover, her research showed that

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2   Helen Wasalek, Bosnia and the Destruction of Cultural Heritage, 2015, p. 56.

the destruction of their cultural heritage had been incredibly traumatic.[3] When unaware of these traumas, working with communities in a post-conflict situation (or a frozen conflict) can prove challenging.

At the same time, without proper awareness, conflicts may occur in unexpected moments. In Banja Luka, this became apparent with the reconstruction of the Ferhadija mosque. In addition to constant political obstructions in the initial phase, the laying of the foundation stone was rudely disrupted by a demonstration with more than 4,000 demonstrators. According to Radio Sarajevo news outlet, the demonstrators (mainly of Serb descent) pelted the Bosniaks with stones.[4] After much bureaucratic delay, the Mosque was opened to the public in 2016.

Up until today, the area around the Ferhadija in Banja Luka is marked with graffiti displaying ultranationalist Serbian ideas. Even the convicted war criminal Ratko Mladić appears on the walls, and the number 30 constantly emphasises the origins of the RS in the public sphere. Even though the Mosque may be considered a 'safe haven' for the remaining Bosniak community, the conflict of the past is still present in the public sphere today. It remains to be seen if the reconstruction of the mosque will facilitate the return of the Bosniaks who fled the city during the war.

Pic. 2. Nationalist Serbian graffiti on the walls in Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina. © Karlijn Hulshof.

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3   Sigrid van der Auwera, Cultureel Erfgoed onder Vuur, 2013, p. 24

4   CNN, "Diplomats trapped in Bosnia riots, May 7 2001.

The example of the Ferhadija Mosque shows that even the reconstruction of cultural heritage, which is part of the 1995 Dayton Accords, can prove to be a flash point for new escalations. Armed forces trained in cultural awareness can play a role, especially in this situation, with conflicts brewing underneath the surface. By recognising the relationship between the monuments and objects (the outer layer of the onion: 'symbols') and the underlying livelihoods of a community, consisting of rituals and values, they can understand how cultural heritage can be a source of tension and even used and misappropriated in times of conflict. This serves a purpose in the Protection of Civilians and in enforcing human security in a mission area. Several Stability Policing tasks could be applied here, such as upholding the Rule of Law and policing the area around the Mosque.

5. Cultural Awareness, CPP and Stability Policing

Cultural awareness training is not only intended to gain a deeper understanding about communities and conflicts, but is also intended to improve decision making. Better recognising certain situations and possible causes of civil unrest, can help in deciding what to do certain situations, and why to do it. This is especially the case when your line of work involves understanding people and their motives, such as Stability Policing. Strategic awareness about the impact of cultural heritage on communities is key, such as the 2019 NATO Bi-Strategic Command Directive 'Implementing CP Protection in NATO Operations and Missions' mentions: "CP can be used as a tool of hybrid warfare. Attacks on CP may impact societal resilience and indicate an attempt to undermine national unity or identity. (...) This reinforces the need for CP to be an integral part of NATO's continuous strategic awareness."[5] As we have seen, the situation in Bosnia is an example in which the need for this kind of strategic awareness comes to the fore.

Countless other examples can be named where an understanding of peoples cultures is crucial to understand a conflict. Around the world, almost on a regular basis, we can see cultural heritage as an early warning indicator for civil unrest, such as protests that emerge in places of high cultural and historical value. A recent example took place on October 13, 2023, in Pul e Khumri, a city in Afghanistan's Baghlan province, where a suicide bombing

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5   NATO, BI-STRATEGIC COMMAND DIRECTIVE 086-005: "Implementing Cultural Property Protection in NATO Operations and Missions", 2019, A-1.

targeted a Shi'ite mosque, killing at least seven worshippers and injuring 15 others. The Islamic State (IS) militant group claimed responsibility for the attack. This occurred against the backdrop of a larger conflict involving the Taliban-run administration, which has been facing an insurgency by IS militants. Sunni Islamist militants, who consider Shi'ites to be heretics, have been responsible for a series of deadly attacks, further intensifying religious and sectarian divides.[6]

Several tasks of Stability Policing are tied to preventing such conflicts from occurring or escalating, such as protecting people and property and providing critical site security at cultural heritage sites or patrolling the internet for religious or ethnic extremism related to specific cultural heritage locations. Also, after the vandalization or destruction of a cultural heritage site, Policing can play a critical role in collecting crime-scene evidence, as the following example shows. In Jaranwala, a city in eastern Pakistan, on August 17th, 2023, unrest led to the arrest of over 100 individuals following the destruction and vandalism of religious sites and Christian homes. Public gatherings were subsequently restricted for seven days, and more than 120 individuals were arrested, primarily identified through social media footage.[7]

Looking again at Bosnia, the role of military personnel specialised in civil-military interaction and recognising tensions amongst communities in the EUFOR peacekeeping mission has proved its value. Here, the Liaison and Observation Teams function as an early warning system. They establish relationships, observe the situation, and gather information. In an interview with military personnel deployed in the Liaison and Observation Teams, it was mentioned how segregation amongst the different communities is an alarming forebode of a prolonged state of conflict[8].

As we have seen in ongoing and recent conflicts, the destruction of cultural heritage and attacks on culture are a conflict-determining aspect, instead of a side effect. Cultural awareness training for the military can serve many purposes, ranging from knowing a mission partner's cultural habits (like the example given in the introduction) to recognising culture as a possible source of conflict. Stability Policing, as a community-focused

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6   Yawar, Mohammed Yunus, "Suicide bombing at Shi'ite mosque kills seven in Northern Afghanistan, official says", October 13, 2023.

7   Al Jazeera, "Pakistani Christians hold Sunday Services at desecrated churches", 20 August 2023.

8   Ochsenbein, Gaby "We are here to feel the pulse", Swissinfo.ch, 17 November 2017.

military practice, can be a good and versatile tool to prevent or deescalate tensions in conflict-affected societies. As long as peace remains fragile, the timely recognition of possible tension or conflict should be part of a military's skillset.

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BIO:

Captain Ankie Petersen is a Liaison Officer in Cultural Property Protection at the Section of Cultural Affairs and Information of the Royal Netherlands Army. Here, she leads and coordinates the Dutch efforts for implementing Cultural Property Protection in the military by designing training programs, instruction tools and contributing to (international) military exercises. Moreover, she is a driving force in the international development of CPP as a topic on a strategic level. For her efforts in the field of heritage protection in and outside of the military, she was awarded the 2021 Monument Talent Prize on behalf of the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.

Commander Jacob P. Galbreath
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8.   Using Cyber to help close the Security Gap: a Sailor's Afghanistan War perspective echoed in the Russo-Ukrainian War

1. Introduction

By 2008, the US Army was involved in two war zones and had been engaged in Afghanistan for seven years and Iraq for five. Due to low numbers and issues with retention of soldiers in the IT field, the US Army decided to request professional assistance from the US Navy and the US Air Force to provide personnel from their ranks for these conflicts on a case-by-case basis. These assignments were known in the US military as Individual Augmentees (IA).

Pic 1. LT Galbreath on the plains with mountains in the background near Mazar-i-Sharif, Afghanistan, 2011. © Jacob Galbreath

In 2011, I had just reported to Naval Computer and Telecommunications Area Master Station - Pacific (NCTAMS PAC) located in Wahiawa, Hawai'i, USA after completing my assignment in the Pentagon and eight years as a Submarine/Nuclear officer. During my time in the Pentagon, I changed my career field to Information Technology (IT). IT was not new to me, academically, as an undergraduate I had many courses in math, physics, and computer science. Personally, I had enjoyed programming and tinkering with computer hardware since my early teens and using advanced computing methods for my undergraduate in Physics. When I arrived at NCTAMS PAC and reported to my Commanding Officer, she said, "You will be assigned to an IA. It's not an if, it's a when. I will not assign you one for the first six months, but afterwards, you are fair game... I recommend you pick one before I do." At the fifth month point, after my pregnant wife and young daughter were settled in Hawai'i, I selected an assignment as senior officer tasked with assisting Afghani Networks for both Afghan National Army (ANA) and Afghan National Police (ANP) as part of NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan (NTM-A), headquartered in Kabul, Afghanistan. Prior to arriving, I was required to do remedial US Army training: terminology, combat medicine, cultural awareness, convoy command and tactics, weapons, and acclimation training for approximately five weeks between Fort Jackson, South Carolina, USA and Camp Virginia, Kuwait.

2. Overall Afghanistan Security and Policing Efforts

In 2011, NATO's engagement in Afghanistan was still transitioning from the lingering Phase 2 "Occupation" to a Phase 3 "Transition to Provincial Government" mentality. After ten years of war and the occupation of the ousted Taliban government and leadership (which allowed refuge of Al-Qaeda), the Alliance was attempting to address the complex and dynamic security landscape of the region. At the center of the NATO mission in Afghanistan was a multifaceted approach transitioning from the overall security focus, with significant emphasis placed on policing efforts aimed at establishing and maintaining overall stability. Unfortunately, multinational military strategic, operational, or tactical interests in leadership within the Coalition do not have a common alignment or understanding of what constitutes stability. Also, the fact that this was not a particularly strong capability for most traditional Allied security forces in 2011 is a prime example of the Security Gap. Further exacerbating the problem was the need to combat the continuing insurgency, which was funded primarily from the opium trade and anti-NATO nations; tribal politics and differing cultures and norms between the western-styled NATO nations and eastern-style Afghans added additional layers of complexity. NATO's overarching

objective was to empower Afghan security and police forces by fostering their capacity and capability in order to ensure long-term stability, which would allow NATO to gradually transition responsibilities to the Afghan republic before its complete withdrawal.

Pic 2. Picture of the outside of a building with Afghani National Flag, Farah, Afghanistan, 2011. © Jacob Galbreath

Policing was a key element of this strategy. Implementing it required an approach that recognized the importance of building trust between NATO and Afghani security and police forces, the local population, and tribal elders (who did not understand western idea of "corruption" as it applied to paying off governing bodies). In order to change this mentality, NATO forces actively engaged in local communities, working closely with the ANP. It is important to note that the ANP consisted of multiple (and sometimes overlapping) agencies: Afghan Uniform Police, Public Security Police, Afghan Highway Police, Afghan Border Police (ABP), Criminal Investigation Department, and Afghan Local Police.

Pic 3. LT Galbreath standing on the tarmac of Kandahar Airport, Kandahar, Afghanistan, 2011. © Jacob Galbreath

NTM-A's imperative was empowering and enhancing the capabilities of Afghan security and police forces, using the mantra "shona-ba-shona" (shoulder-to-shoulder), in order to build trust and enable the gradual transition of responsibilities to their Afghani counterparts.

At the strategic level, NATO and member nations recognized the necessity of a political solution alongside supportive military efforts. They initiated diplomatic initiatives extending beyond military operations that were aimed at encouraging reconciliation with the more moderate elements of the Taliban and (sometimes belligerent) tribal elders.

Pic 4. National Flags of NTM-A participating Nations, Camp Eggers, Kabul, Afghanistan, 2011. © Jacob Galbreath

NTM-A CJ6, Camp Eggers, Kabul, Afghanistan NTM-A CJ6 was the lead element within the NATO forces structure assigned to assist the ANA and ANP with IT and Cyber matters. My shop, NTM-A CJ653, focused on ANP Networks which consisted of a single Network Operating Center (NOC), located in Kabul, Afghanistan which was the digital epicenter of communication and information management for all ANP forces operating throughout the country. While the NOC only existed in a single building, it was the center of a nation wide web of interconnected hubs, routers, communication lines, and supporting equipment. Each segment played a crucial role in maintaining the flow of information across diverse terrains, and often very remote, yet critical, operational outposts. Each

of these segments consisted of data, not only of governmental or security information, but also of communications between family, friends, businesses, traders, and all other elements of a society's day-to-day life. As we built the network, these customers became more connected, informed, peaceful, and prosperous.

One of the critical challenges faced by the ANP and therefore NTM-A CJ653 was the establishment and maintenance of remote network towers that would extend the network and the capability from the NOC to the places of need. These towers, often erected only in operationally viable environments (but not necessarily the most optimal for the local population), played a critical role in enabling the extension of the network to the farthest corners of the country. Because of this, contracted engineers and technicians installing and maintaining these towers faced not only the difficult task of navigating the rough terrain, but also the ever-present threat of the ongoing insurgency.

Bandwidth constraints are always a concern, and the ANP network was no different. The demand for data and communications throughout the country to the far-reaching borders was not always available and bandwidth was constantly limited.

Pic 5. Picture of a armored civilian SUV on "Comms Ridge" in the mountains overlooking the capital city, Kabul, Afghanistan, 2011. © Jacob Galbreath

The shortage of skilled IT professionals further compounded the challenges. While the headquarters in Kabul had a cadre of skilled professionals, remote outposts often lacked any sort of qualified (or even literate) personnel. The rarity of skilled IT professionals at the peripherals of the network posed a humongous vulnerability, leaving remote outposts susceptible to downtime or delays.

Pic 6. LT Galbreath and Afghani IT during NTM-A installation inspection near Shorabak, Afghanistan, 2011. © Jacob Galbreath

Cost considerations overshadowed the entire network infrastructure. The expenses associated with establishing and maintaining network towers, training personnel, and ensuring a continuous power supply were substantial and the majority of my budget.

Power constraints emerged as another critical factor for the network. The remote nature of many outposts meant that access to a reliable power supply was not guaranteed. In regions where electricity was scarce generators were the lifeline, but maintenance and fuel supply presented ongoing logistical and cost challenges.

One day, I was visited by my NTM-A counterparts working with the ABP. "Jake, we have a problem that we can't easily solve. We have border crossings in the Hindu Kush on the borders of Pakistan and Tajikistan of local tribes, traders, and nomads that do not have documentation, can't read or write in any of the languages, and may be a part of the opium trade or insurgency. We want to use biometrics to help police the area". What infrastructure and capabilities exist for this region? How do we add policing and stability across a contested border that "never" had one?

3. The Problem

The ANP (and therefore the ABP) had and continued to experience changes in structure, leadership, resources, and tasking over the ten years of NATO engagement. They were poorly trained and equipped, and often could not be relied upon to participate, engage, or even show up to their jobs. It was

well known that many (not most) policing forces on the payroll were likely also supplementing their pay as soldiers in the ANA, by local tribal elders, by other NATO organizations, and even by the Taliban. The vast majority of policemen were illiterate and at best understood conversational English or Russian but did not know the technical terminology or have the background needed for IT work.

Pic 7. Picture overlooking the National Military Academy of Afghanistan near Kabul, Afghanistan, 2011. © Jacob Galbreath

My biggest task for the majority of my time in country was to find a way to assist the NATO forces and ABP to stymie the illegal drug trade, weapons trafficking, and lawlessness coming mainly from the eastern border with Pakistan, and to a lesser extent the north border with Tajikistan (mainly along the Hindu Kush).

In the Hindu Kush terrain it was extremely difficult to extend any logistics or resources, much less the consistent power needed for IT communications. No modern infrastructure existed, which was both a blessing and a curse, and I was tasked in NTM-A to redress. How do you provide border security across a treacherous terrain with a local illiterate population historically accustomed to nomadic trading in the region with little regard for national borders or authority from afar? NATO and Afghani leaders determined that biometrics would provide a good way of tracking Afghani citizens as well as traders from surrounding provinces, to not only ID legitimate travelers but also identify and prevent illegal activity and agents who often used these routes to mask their efforts.

Establishing a system from the ground up to use biometrics to ID a country's citizens would be a daunting task in any country but was especially ambitious in Afghanistan. The main challenge in this task was going to be not the establishment of the data center itself in Kabul but getting the data back and forth to and from Kabul in a timely manner from remote, far-flung posts and border stations around the country. This being 2011 and pre-modern satellite technology, the solution that was decided on was to utilize cell towers and line of sight microwave repeaters which would allow quick but low- bandwidth communications extending out from Kabul and across the country in a segmented structure like a spider's web. The added benefit of this approach would be that it would provide basic cellular service to the local population, which for the first time would allow them to communicate directly with their friends, families, and neighbors, creating further stability, and establishing legitimacy for the Afghani government. Communications would no longer be filtered by tribal elders or bad actors, nor distorted by word of mouth. The biggest problem at the time was the lack of infrastructure, specifically power, which made the system cost prohibitive for the Afghani government and it was not as high of a priority for NATO's security concerns.

After 235 days in Afghanistan, and the expansion of the network further and further from Kabul to the Hindu Kush, I was not able to witness the completion of this project by the time I left.

4. Stability Policing during the Initiation of Russo-Ukrainian War

In the decade after I left Afghanistan, cyber technology use and implementation has advanced drastically. A more recent conflict, namely the Russo-Ukrainian War, underscores the impact that cyber continues to have on Stability efforts. Have we, in the security profession, learned anything from 2011 and before or do we continue to "relearn" the same lessons for some time to come?

Pic 8. LT Galbreath standing next to remains of a rusted Sovient towed mortar on the outskirts of Kabul, Afghanistan, 2011. © Jacob Galbreath

Ukraine passed a law in 2012 that required all of its citizens over the age of 14 to obtain a biometric passport. In 2019, the country's defense ministry launched a digital identity app to store these biometric passports and other important government documents such as driver's licenses, and to access public services; by 2023, 70 percent of its citizens were using this app. Ukraine has stated that their cyber efforts have contributed to the country's autonomy and stability in the face of continued Russian attacks by providing its citizens with essential government services, as well as to protect the national security of countries providing asylum to Ukrainian refugees.

While biometrics has a role in providing stability at the tactical-level Security Gap and is a concrete application that people can easily grasp, it is actually just the tip of the iceberg of the bigger issue. At a much higher level and a more systemic strategic-level Security Gap; Russia preempted its boots on the ground invasion into Ukraine with a series of cyber attacks aimed at destabilizing the Ukrainian government's ability to communicate not only with its military, but also its citizens, ultimately a direct confrontation of the Ukrainian government's agency and legitimacy. From a cyber perspective, it is clear to me that one of the main Stability Gap objectives the Russian Federation forces had when they invaded and occupied territory was to cut off or repurpose the networks, specifically cell towers, to not only create a communications blackout for the Ukrainian government but to control the flow of information. The Ukrainians understand the urgency in restoring internet and mobile communications, and as the counteroffensive reclaims territory, they worked quickly to repair damaged base stations and fiber optic cables to not just reconnect their citizens but to clearly re-establish sovereignty. At the forefront of these efforts were policemen, IT and Cyber engineers, and local officials.

As the Russian Federation forces tried to reclaim contested territory, the objectives remained the same.

Western-styled militaries struggle and are legally hamstrung by the control of information in a non-tactical environment. This is especially true in occupation and transition periods, where local police and legal authorities are in legitimate positions of authority. This time period, in the escalation of conflict or the transition from war to interim governments, IS the Cyber Security Gap. The control of communications leads to questions of legitimacy, and ultimately sovereignty, which has been a strategic objective in warfare since the first recorded histories, driving at the heart of the Security Gap between security and policing professionals.

5. The Cyber Role in Stability Policing

Cyber technology is what societies and governments increasingly rely on for all forms of communication. Controlling and/or maintaining cyber networks is ever more crucial to the stability

Pic 9. Afghanis receiving treats from American Soldiers from the rear of a MRAP on the streets of Kabul, Afghanistan, 2011. © Jacob Galbreath

of a society, and therefore to providing legitimacy to a governing body. As the more recent conflicts in Ukraine and Israel highlight, cyber technology will continue to be integrated into policing efforts. If we in NTM-A at the time, and possible the larger NATO/Coalition forces, understood the utility and unique capability of Stability Policing at this stage and truly understood and identified that we were in the Security Gap, my belief is that we could have drastically changed the scenario in the North and Eastern provinces of

Afghanistan earlier and at less cost. We did recognize that the use of Cyber to enhance and exponentially implement policing capability in an austere and primitive environment would have greatly increased stability in Afghanistan, furthered NATO and Afghani provincial government interests, and provided a commonly understood tool directly addressing this Security Gap. This belief is further justified, in my opinion, by the adaptation and use echoed in the ongoing Russo-Ukrainian War. Our inability to complete our mission in a timely manner was not due to a lack of interest or understanding of need, but just one of many priorities restricted by time, money, and competing interests. It is critical to have a professional cadre of security and policing subject matter experts that understand the Security Gap, the underlying security organizations, as well as the needs for local people to feel safe under the law, which is paramount to the establishment of governments. In the now historic case of Afghanistan, this could have led to a successful transition of authority and control which may have drastically changed the outcome we see today, and for the ongoing battles in Ukraine, we can see that digitization and Cyber are coming into their prime on the battlefield, policing, and legitimizing and stabilizing governments in the area as well as the global stage.

BIO:

Jacob Galbreath was born in Naples, Italy, to a career Sailor and was raised around the world. He was commissioned in the United States Navy in 2003 as a Submariner and then Information Systems professional. Jake has conducted over nine deployments and spent over seven years at sea aboard multiple classes of ships in the Far East throughout his career. In 2011, he was selected to fill a vacancy for the US Army in Afghanistan. After attending US Army indoctrination school in the USA and acclimation training in Kuwait, he reported to as part of NATO Training Mission - Afghanistan (NTM-A) headquartered at Camp Eggers, Kabul, Afghanistan as the CJ653 in charge of resourcing, training, and oversight of all IT networks for the Afghan security and police forces with his Afghan constituents. Now, CDR Galbreath (OF-4 USA N) is assigned to CCDCOE in October 2021 as the Strategy Branch Lead overseeing Cyberspace strategy and policy. As a researcher at CCDCOE, I had the opportunity to study the initiation and ongoing war in Ukraine and draw parallels to this conflict from my own experiences a decade earlier.

MSU COMMANDER Ruggiero Capodivento,
Italian Carabinieri

9. Multinational Specialized Unit in KFOR Mission – Kosovo, History of the Regiment and Stability Policing Perspective

MSU personnel have a policeman's mind in the body of a soldier.
Gen. Sir GBR A. Mike Jackson, first COMKFOR

1. Introduction

It is reductive, if not impossible, to want to explain, in these few pages, what the Multinational Specialized Unit (MSU) is within the Kosovo Force (KFOR) mission. It would be like depriving the men and women who served in MSU of a part of their sacrifice that, in various ways, has led to today; after more than twenty years, MSU is still here where, back in 1999, it all began. What has been done so far is the result of the combination of a doctrinal framework on which the mission is based and different experiences in the field that, thanks to a particular police approach, typical of the Gendarmerie Forces, have managed over time to consolidate an important role of the MSU Regiment within the KFOR mission.

To better organize the chapter, I decided to follow a simple agenda that starts from the recent past and that has seen, starting from 2022, a significant change in Kosovar society, also by virtue of the political changes that have affected, and that still affect the area of the former Yugoslavia. This, of course, involved an adaptation of the mission and, above all, of the projection on the field of the KFOR units and, consequently, of MSU.

Recent events, as we will see later, have then forced a sudden and drastic transformation that has not changed MSU's approach to the mission, keeping intact that spirit of closeness to the population typical of Stability Policing (SP).

2. The Manouvre Box

Certainly, the one that has not changed over the years is the MANOUVRE BOX (MANBOX) that is the area of competence, the so-called battlefield, represented by the city of Mitrovica, permanently assigned to MSU. Indeed, it has expanded since the KROI I VITAKUT area was also included in 2016 (i.e. the northern part of the Mitrovica stadium), managed at that time by the then existing MNBG-E (Multinational Battle Group East). The current MANBOX includes the metropolitan area of North Mitrovica, of Serbian ethnicity, one of the four Serbian municipalities of northern Kosovo, divided from the southern part, of Albanian ethnicity, by the Ibar river crossed by three bridges that join the two sides of the city. One of these is the Austerlitz Bridge, the historic bridge that, even today, is closed to vehicular traffic.

Both sides of the bridge end in two squares, where there are two statues, both symbols of the two ethnic groups: to the north, that of the Serbian king Lazar, who died fighting to conquer the land of Kosovo in the fourteenth century and to the south, the statue of Isa BOLETINI, who fought for the freedom of the Albanians. The two statues face each other, divided only by the river Ibar. Although there are other access routes to the two parts of the city, the Ibar still represents the symbol of the division and discrepancies between the two ethnic groups. MSU guarantees its presence on the Austerlitz bridge to prevent any conflict or escalation of tensions. The northern part of the city of Mitrovica, as well as the northern municipalities, are inhabited by a majority of Orthodox Serbs. Protests and bloody events often take place in the northern parts of Mitrovica and Kosovo.

The two parts of the city are however joined by two other bridges, that of Cambronne and that of Tankerville, and the bridge of Austerlitz, therefore, rather than being a physical division in between, is a historical and symbolic term and represents, even today, that gap marked by clashes and political confrontations between the two ethnic groups.
The Austerlitz bridge, like the KFOR mission, has also seen strong and significant changes that have followed local political influences and the international community. As mentioned, today its crossing is allowed only to pedestrians and bicycles, but in the past it was not so: a huge mass

of dirt deposited in the center, in fact, prevented even looking beyond it. There was no lack of demonstrations on both sides to provoke the other side, to claim their reasons, to move a situation that was close to both ethnic groups. This perennial tension led, in 2014, to a clash between the Albanian side and the KFOR troops in support of EULEX (European Union Rule of Law in Kosovo) and the KP (Kosovo Police), a clash characterized by an hour of intense urban guerrilla warfare with tear gas to disperse the crowd and culminated with the burning of two EULEX vehicles and several wounded in the ranks of the Kosovo Police.

We MSU Carabinieri were there to contain the crowd on the south side of the bridge and to control the situation on the north side where a group of Serbs had met in the meantime, but remained harmless thanks to the mediation work carried out by MSU. That same year, that pile of dirt in the middle of the bridge was remodeled creating the so-called "Garden of Friendship" in which trees and flowers were planted as a sign of relaxation and this was the first step towards what is now the Austerlitz Bridge.

Within the MANBOX, the Austerlitz bridge is therefore the most representative hotspot, the one that more than any other can become the target of demonstration actions.

And MSU is there, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. A fixed presence that, as mentioned, has been reshaped to meet the needs of the mission, in harmony with the socio-political winds that cross it.

Before our presence was much more "invasive" for the number of men, vehicles, equipment and armament while now it is more sober but equally visible, with the addition of a dynamic service in adjacent areas to provide both a greater security frame to the fixed device and to maintain that contact with the population that has always characterized us.

Other patrols within the city perimeter are added daily in order to support the intent of the KFOR Commander, namely to maintain a constant situational awareness (SA) in the city that is essential to identify any sign of possible disturbance to public order and safety and to constantly monitor other points of interest, possible targets of demonstration actions.

I, as Commander of MSU, am the so-called battlefield owner and, therefore, responsible for any intervention that may be implemented in the MANBOX; it is up to MSU to coordinate the "boots on the ground" provided by the other KFOR units that, in various ways, support us in conducting operations.

But what makes me most proud of our commitment to MANBOX is the relationship it has created with the population. Of course, our blue uniforms and vehicles, visibly different and identifiable in the "green" landscape of the other KFOR military forces, help us, but it is our persistent presence both on the bridge and in the city that has created a truly special

and unique relationship with the population. There is also an opportunity when people stop to talk to the Carabinieri on the bridge; some want to take pictures. Despite the language barrier, we are often thanked, simply for being there, physically, and sometimes they ask us for support when the Kosovo Police is not present.

This is another point that I would like to emphasize: our presence is also appreciated by the Kosovo Police officers who, like the Carabinieri, operate on the road and know the difficulties that this takes.
Several times Kosovo Police and Carabinieri of MSU find themselves operating jointly. For example:

1. in 2019, two carabinieri on the Austerlitz bridge managed to stop a woman's suicide attempt, grabbing her before she threw herself into the Ibar river. The subsequent intervention of the KP patrol, present a short distance away, allowed to assist the woman before the arrival of the ambulance. The two Carabinieri, for their work, much appreciated by the population and by the local authorities, received formal recognition;
2. in 2022, however, when some ethnic clashes had already occurred to which, obviously, the press had given ample prominence, a journalist, during an in-depth report in the north of the city, was attacked with kicks and punches by some young Serbs who had not liked his presence; he managed to escape and reach the Austerlitz bridge where he knew a fixed OP (observation post) of the MSU Carabinieri was present, collapsing on the asphalt as soon as he arrived in front of the patrol. The two Carabinieri, although without an interpreter, managed to understand that it was an aggression and put themselves to protect him waiting for the arrival of the Kosovo Police patrol, present a short distance away.
3. Small stories that however give the dimension of what MSU represents, for years, in the urban context of Mitrovica, of how much we have managed to fit into the fabric of society.

3. 2022 and the Events of May 29th, 2023

The operational scenario of Kosovo, in the last decade, has been characterized by constant political uncertainty, mediated from time to time by the various international actors, a scenario that has been accompanied by some isolated episode of dissent that has never resulted in situations so serious as to require the intervention of KFOR in support of the KP.
The outbreak of war between Russia and Ukraine in February 2022, although not directly, caused a reshaping of the already fragile balance

in the Balkans, not sparing relations between the president of the IiK,[1] Albin KURTI, and the Serbian president, Aleksandar VUCIC, which were subsequently further exacerbated with accusations and counter-accusations on their respective "social" channels and on the newspapers with regard to the issues proposed in the Brussels Treaty of 27 February 2023, in which the points advanced by the EU for the normalization of relations between the two states were outlined.

The issues of mutual recognition of vehicle registration plates and identity documents of Kosovar citizens crossing the border with Serbia and the establishment of the Community of Serbian Municipalities[2] located in Northern Kosovo (Mitrovica, Zvečan, Leposavič and Zubin Potok), were, and are, the three points on which the two ethnic groups and the same political groups associated with them most confronted / clashed.

In June 2022, several leaflets began to appear in Northern Mitrovica, left on the windshields of the cars, which in a veiled way incited to rebel against the new measures issued by the IiK that would, shortly thereafter, have allowed the Kosovo Police to stop and seize all vehicles with KM plates (Kosova Mitrovica) and Serbian distinctive signs instead of the new plates of the Kosovar state. Already in part, this freedom to move with Serbian plates was linked to the affixing of white stickers to cover the distinctive signs of the Serbian state.

This situation would legally end on 1 August, the date on which the agreement on the recognition of registration documents for vehicles registered with Serbian plates would have expired.

In June, the MSU Carabinieri patrol reported that, suddenly, the roundabout on the North side of Austerlitz bridge had been completely emptied of all parked vehicles and after a few minutes alarm sirens began to sound throughout North Mitrovica at the same time as the bells of Orthodox churches, a typical call sign for Serbs; within moments a flood of people poured into the streets, waving Serbian flags. The same events took place in the other municipalities of the North, calling the population together.

In that circumstance no incident occurred but the event demonstrated the ability of the "protest machine" of the Serbs to be able to activate in a short time at any juncture.

The "struggle" continued on the political benches: the massive presence of the KP in the North and the expropriation in the North of Kosovo, of

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1   Institutions in Kosovo.

2   in Serbian they are identified with the initials ZSO which stands for Zajednica Srpskih Opština, precisely Community of Serbian Municipalities, while in Albanian the current wording is rather that of "Asociacioni i komunave serbe" or Association of Serbian Municipalities.

the lands owned by Serbian families to be allocated to the construction of new KP/KBBP barracks[3], have only exacerbated an already tense situation, ready to erupt.

Following the announcement made by the IIK that Serbian citizens who entered Kosovo would be issued with an entry and exit document, on 31 July 2022 some barricades were erected in the North of the country, on the arteries leading from Mitrovica to Zubin Potok and Leposavic, just after Zvecan.

In Zvecan, at the cemetery, a "buffer" area had been created between the demonstrators and the KP through the interposition of KFOR personnel. These road blocks were impossible to remove as they were built with the use of several trucks loaded with dirt, wood and other material - with the suspicion that there were also triggered devices - which completely blocked the passage; moreover, there were groups of armed people ready to shoot if the Kosovo Police tried to remove the roadblocks.

On that occasion, two MSU patrols under observation a hundred meters away were invited by demonstrators to approach explaining that they did not want any other KFOR force. Our Carabinieri, without fear, passed the road blocks, led by the Serbs, observing everything that was happening on the other side. On this occasion it was said that there was no desire to touch the KFOR troops, but that they would never leave until the issue of documents was resolved.

In April 2023, new elections were called for the renewal of the mayors of the four northern municipalities, but the Serbian List boycotted them by getting no ethnic Serb Kosovars to run and vote; The result was that four ethnic Albanian mayors were elected with the votes of about 3% of the population.

On May 26, 2023, then, 3 of the 4 mayors (the one of North Mitrovica had taken office a few days earlier), physically settled in the municipal buildings of Zvečan, Zubin Potok and Leposavic, with the "escort" of the special forces of the Kosovo Police.

This led to several protests until the following May 29, when there were violent clashes in front of the town hall of Zvečan during which several incendiary bottles and fragmentation devices were thrown towards the contingents (Hungarian, KTRBN - KFOR tactical Reserve Battalion - and Italian of RC-W) that KFOR had deployed to interpose itself between the crowd and the municipal building, also to protect the few units of the Kosovo Police present and who had been attacked shortly before.

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3   KBBP stands for Kosovo Boundary Border Police, i.e. the border police that depends, however, on the KP, but has an organizational structure independent of it.

At the end of the clashes, 94 KFOR members were wounded, 3 of them particularly seriously.

In the following days, even more challenging, the ROC (ready on call) platoon of MSU was activated as an immediate tactical reserve: all the personnel and messengers were ready and equipped to intervene promptly on the orders of the KFOR Commander and in the meantime the patrolling activity of Northern Kosovo aimed at reporting any event that could worsen the situation continued.

On 29-30 and 31 May the ROC Platoon intervened in Zvečan to support the other KFOR assets (Hungarian, Polish and Austrian) contributing to the evacuation of the wounded and other contingents on 29 May and ensuring the garrison of the municipality on the other two days. Being the tactical reserve of the KFOR Commander, with specific CRC (Crowd Riot Control) tasks, the MSU Regiment is always ready to intervene on any scenario with notice to move of less than 1 hour.

Those events have in fact changed the KFOR mission, also and above all at the political-diplomatic level, due to the metamorphosis of the protest passed from that of the square to real military actions contained only thanks to the high professionalism of the Hungarian and Italian soldiers who, unfortunately, suffered many wounded.

The consequent activity of study and analysis of the events led to a series of lessons identified that forced us to review the entire operational structure of KFOR, from training to equipment, from communications to logistics in order to transform those lessons identified in lessons learnt which translates into avoiding, again, similar consequences.

4. MSU in the Present

If in the past the problem of security in Kosovo was largely due to the total or partial absence of institutions, which involved intense and profound work in rebuilding all those structures aimed at safeguarding public order and security, even today, although as a last resort, KFOR is responsible for the "SASE and FOM" (Safe and Security Environment and Freedom of Movement).) i.e. the maintenance of public order and security where the Kosovo Police is unable to cope with situations of threat to the peaceful coexistence of Kosovar society.

The assets of KFOR, therefore, have been reduced over the years towards the current phase of "minimum presence" prodromal, tomorrow, to the complete withdrawal of NATO forces from the operational theatre.

This has led to a reduction in the national quotas on the one hand and a change in the tasks assigned to them on the other, and MSU, like the other

units, has adapted to the change. As better explained in the previous paragraph, this situation of "relaxation" has changed radically with the episodes that occurred in 2022 and 2023 and we too have had to restructure our configuration, our training plans, our way of projecting ourselves outwards trying, however, not to distort the soul of MSU.

But how are we now? Last August 2023, the SOP (Standard Operating Procedure) was remodulated, which concerns the use and tasks entrusted to MSU, to which the name of "gendarmerie" was reattributed, thus returning to that characteristic (never lost, let's be clear!) so dear to Gen. Jackson. In the same document, reference is made to Stability Policing as a secondary task entrusted to MSU, on the orders of the Commander of KFOR (COM KFOR), to underscore that historical line that had never been interrupted over the decades.

No less important is the fact that MSU, the only one among all KFOR units, with the new document, has been left with the so-called "info-gathering Kosovo wide" activity, i.e. the activity of collecting information, carried out through our patrols throughout the Kosovo territory. Nothing new compared to what our Carabinieri stations normally do in Italy, but that here, precisely because of the historical and social context, takes on even greater importance especially for the contribution it gives to the mission in terms of monitoring the "mood" among the population, an aspect that turns out to be a litmus test of the daily work done by the Kosovar institutions and by the KFOR mission itself.

Certainly, the latest news in chronological order that has affected the Multinational Specialized Unit is precisely the fact that since July 2023 has returned to being multinational (an element that has been missing since 2013) as on July 2, 2023 a contingent of 28 units of the Military Police of the Czech Republic was deployed. This, in addition to being for me and for my Carabinieri a reason for further pride and satisfaction in terms of international projection, also represents that socio-political change, of which I spoke earlier, which has led the NATO mission to expand the ranks of that gendarmerie team that today more than ever has to face a difficult and demanding reality that has not been seen for years in the Kosovar theatre.

The most demanding challenge was, and still is, being able to combine the new needs dictated by the mission, with the operational differences, especially in terms of Crowd and Riot Control (CRC), which exist between the techniques of the Carabinieri and those of the Czech military police.

This is because the commitment required "in the field" to MSU involves, first, a joint training between the two contingents in terms of Chain of Command and Control, which supports operational intervention

techniques, both in CRC contexts, and in those of patrol services and assistance to the various KFOR assets.

Not an easy task, I assure you, for Commanders at various levels and for instructors and operators who, despite the obstacles represented by different training, know-how and language, must be able to work in a single block while maintaining a high level of efficiency and response. And this is done every week, every day, with training programs designed and prepared in advance by our instructors in the field of weapons handling, crowd engagement, shooting training, evacuation of the wounded, arrest of troublemakers, first medical intervention.

This cohesion, this synchronism of actions, which we are finalizing with the new Czech colleagues, are nothing more than the natural consequence of the needs dictated by the KFOR mission which, therefore, needs to create a single model, which operates in unison in the field, making all the contingents, all the KFOR units a single large maneuvering mass in terms of operational techniques to be adopted in the field.

And due to the recent tragic events and the necessary remodeling of the use of KFOR forces, our status as a gendarmerie and our "expertise" as carabinieri with a long experience accumulated in Italy in the field of maintaining public order, leads us to fulfill another important and delicate task in the operational theatre, namely that of being the trainers of trainers. In fact, to give greater homogeneity to the technical tactical procedures of intervention between the different structures called to operate for the CRC, MSU actually carries out a supervisory activity in support of RC-E and RC-W and also of the KTRBN to train their public order instructors, trying to align our techniques with those adopted by the individual contingents, taking into account the national "caveats".

A lot of responsibility, but with a great and important goal.

From an operational point of view, however, today's MSU does not differ so much from the past in terms of "room for manoeuvre", that is, we are always responsible for our MANBOX and we are always the only ones who can patrol all of Kosovo.

In this sense, in addition to the city of Mitrovica and the other municipalities in the North, which being close to the border with Serbia are the realities that most experience the difficulties associated with ethnic clashes, in Kosovo there are several and important Serbian enclaves such as, Graçanica, a few kilometers from Pristina, Parteš or Ranilug or centers with a more or less accentuated Serbian presence (Klokot, Novo Brdo and Štrpce, Klina, Gnjilane, Lipljan, Istok, Novo Brdo, Orahovac, Suva Reka, Vitina and Vučitrn).

Precisely because MSU is the only one of the KFOR units that can patrol throughout the Kosovar territory, one of our tasks is also to be present in these places where thanks to that relationship established with the Kosovo Police, the institutions and the local population, we managed to carve out a space in the daily lives of these people and this allowed us, sometimes, to be able to solve local problems given the degree of trust acquired within these realities that, although far from the ethnic problems that manifest themselves in the North, still present critical issues that must be taken into consideration.

After the four municipalities of the North, Graçanica is certainly the most important municipality of Serbian ethnicity in the country. Located a few kilometers from the capital Pristina, it is home to the Serbian Orthodox Church and the monastery of the same name which in 2006 was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site as an extension of the monastery of Dečane. In recent years, as mentioned, the presence of MSU has never been lacking in the city streets, so much that in 2019, to strengthen this relationship, the mayor of Gračanica, addressing directly the Commander of KFOR, asked to have a daily presence of the Carabinieri to give greater sense of security to citizenship. Since that day, our carabinieri are present with at least one patrol carrying out the typical activities performed in the national territory and MSU participates, as an auditor, in the meetings on security of the city council. I close this paragraph by saying that for me MSU today is a clear, continuous and strong line that from the past comes to the present, capable of maintaining our traditions and our virtues, with the awareness of having to adapt them to the expectations and needs of KFOR.
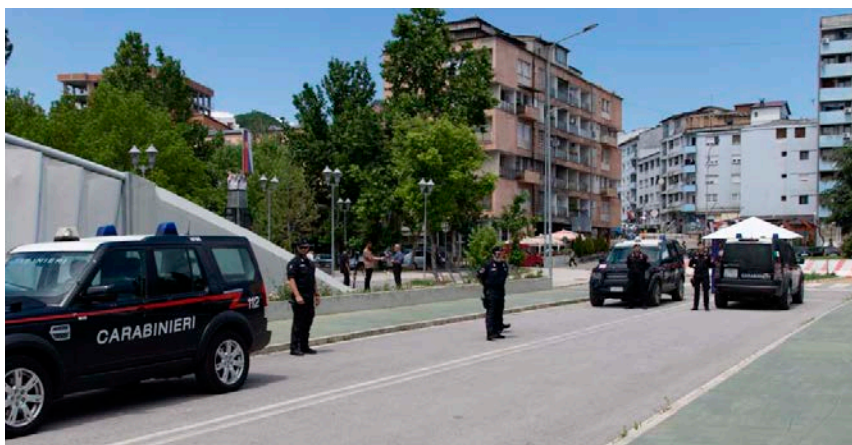
Pic. 1. North Mitrovica – Austerlitz Bridge, Pristina, Kosovo (2023). © Ruggiero Capodivento.

5. Among and with the People

The military and police aspect, as we have seen so far, are the two components that immediately jump to the eye, those that immediately translate into a commitment in the field of vehicles, men, equipment, and logistics to meet the needs of the moment. Both of them, however, underlie another aspect, not so obvious. It is the human aspect; it is the population to which our commitment is directed.

In fact, the historical, political and social changes that have, during these twenty years, changed the geography of KFOR, have never diverted what was the ultimate goal of the mission, namely the people of Kosovo. And here too, MSU's policing nature allowed us not to lose, even for a moment, this goal. Although the focus of our activities revolves mainly around the maintenance operations of the SASE and FOM, and possibly stability policing, our concept of proximity police, which we implement every day in Italy through our patrols, here is even stronger, more felt by our soldiers because we know how indispensable it is for women, children, the elderly and for all those most vulnerable, to have a point of reference, even if only for a "chat", even if only to receive a smile. And our information collection activities, which as I told you we carry out throughout the Kosovar territory, allow us to come into contact with those "weak" realities of society, families belonging to both ethnic groups of which, also through

the reports of international organizations present in the territory, we try to deal with.

And this is the aspect that makes me most proud of MSU, which I would define as "the flexible approach" to the mission, capable of putting aside our being soldiers to leave room for that human part not visible behind the uniform. This represents the moment in which the natural "attitude" and "preparation of the Carabiniere" emerges which, just as it does in the homeland, embraces that concept of closeness and proximity to the population.

This aid takes the form of small donations, about 200 per year, of basic necessities (food, clothing, sanitary materials, children's games) in coordination with the Red Cross, with public and religious institutions, with non-governmental associations (NGOs) and with the constant support of national donors and of course in concert with the KFOR headquarters. Our support to these realities of misery also comes indirectly, i.e. through the development and implementation of medium and long-term projects, with a high impact on the population, through the support of those missing or deficient public services that should be provided by local public infrastructures (e.g. police training; provision of materials and tools for barracks and public rescue facilities, hospitals and schools; creation of spaces for youth aggregation and childcare), which, notoriously, are not at the level of European standards. Clearly, this allows us to further strengthen the concept of proximity policing which, as seen for the MANBOX in Mitrovica, allows us to maintain much closer relations with local institutions and with the population, thus also benefiting the force protection of our soldiers.

For 2024, projects are underway to:
- purchase of medical machinery (for plasmapheresis) for the pediatric oncology department of the Pristina Hospital;
- installation of photovoltaic and solar system at the nursery school "Nena Kabrini" in Prizren;
- purchase of furnishings and equipment for the meeting room and education of the health staff of the Pristina Hospital;
- purchase of furnishings and equipment for the Sports Medicine meeting room of the Pristina Hospital.

These social problems, which lead to the development of the aforementioned projects, are reported both by the aforesaid institutions and by the personnel of the MSU Regiment on patrol duty on the territory of the whole

Kosovo and in collaboration, as anticipated, with various international organizations engaged in the region. This is surely the side of our mission here in Kosovo that gives us the deepest and most intense emotion when, giving what we consider little, we see in the smile, in the hugs of the people who receive that little, an immense gratitude for having received so much, gratitude that we see in the hope that shines through the eyes of the children. Hoping to share these feelings with you, I would like, briefly, to indicate two episodes that happened recently that make you understand how deeply this activity touches us.

In April 2023, we made a donation to children admitted to the pediatric oncology department of Pristina hospital, bringing them chocolate eggs and other gifts. We were greeted by the head physician, Dr. Bardhyl Abrashi, and the clinic's medical staff. At the end of the donation, we set up a small refreshment attended by the hospitalized children in whose faces the joy for that different, "normal" day was evident, not to mention the immense esteem and gratitude we received from the doctors and nurses.
The other episode occurred in the first days of June 2023, at the kindergarten run by the Catholic Sisters of Prizren, where the end-of-year was celebrated and to which a delegation of the Regiment had been invited. At the end, the ritual photos were taken among all those present and a child asked to take the picture with the Carabinieri, asking to wear the blue "beret" with the silver flame; since then all the children have made the same request showing so much happiness.

One of them approached the Carabinieri Commissioned officer present and told him, in English, "I want to become like you, I want to be a Carabiniere". This is what goes directly to the heart! For MSU, helping children and the needy represents the greatest achievement because, although it does not contribute materially to the maintenance of security, it contributes to the help of Kosovar communities, regardless the ethnicity, religious belief or political orientation, aimed at promoting the development of the stability process of the area.

Pic. 3. Donation at the Oncology Department of Pristina Hospital, Pristina, Kosovo (2023). © Ruggiero Capodivento.

6. Conclusions of the MSU Regiment Commander

Drawing conclusions, at this point, seems to me the best way to approach the end of my very small contribution.

Being chosen to return to the command of the MSU Carabinieri Regiment undoubtedly made me proud because, evidently, my superiors have placed further trust in my skills and in the experience, I had already gained in this Operational Theatre in 2019, for over a year.

Although the time span between then and today may seem short, in reality it is not in terms of the transformations that have taken place. Certainly, the socio-political situation has changed and the events that have occurred in these four years have shown this: from road blocks to the issue of license plates; from the community of Northern Serbian municipalities to the elections of Albanian mayors in the same Northern municipalities that caused the clashes of 29 May 2023 in Zvečan.

This has led, of course, to a change in the posture of the KFOR set-ups, and therefore also of MSU. Our men, coming from different departments of the Corps in Italy, although well prepared and updated before their entry into the operational theatre, by the regiments of the Mobile Units of the Corp,

have had to readapt the techniques already acquired, always and in any case enhancing the individual skills and personal experiences gained over the years.

This has led to further efforts on the ground in all those activities of gathering information and combating the crowd. Greater pressure on the one hand, but on the other a greater closeness to the local population towards which the MSU carabinieri have always maintained an equidistant behavior in reference to the two ethnic-religious groups. Our Carabinieri and, more generally, the Italian soldiers are well received in all communities. And surely this appreciation also derives from the ability to work and react in the most diverse environments thanks to the different knowledge and skills acquired in Italy.

A commitment that cannot admit declinations. We owe it to our civic and moral conscience; we owe it to the values we believe in and we owe it to the young Kosovars who are the hope of this country.

And this is why, once again, as Commander of the MSU I express my esteem and my appreciation to the staff of the Regiment that from the smile of an Albanian or Serbian boy gets the most coveted recognition.

Leafing through these few pages where I have tried to summarize in a formal, military and, perhaps, too academic way, what the KFOR mission is, and how MSU has contributed and is contributing to it, I cannot put a point to this chapter without briefly pointing out what lies behind those uniforms, whatever their color.

As mentioned, in these years we have brought with us virtues, humanity and understanding that go beyond the concept of stability policing.

When at the end of the day we take off our boots and our uniforms, what remains in front of the mirror is a woman, a man, and we cannot say that we have yet finished our day. Because we know very well that here, the only certainty is uncertainty. We know very well what people expect from us. They want us out there, to reassure them, comfort them and to show them that, against all difficulties, they can still count on us.

I am a soldier commander, but first and foremost I am the father of men and women who are sacrificing their free time, their families and their lives to bring the people of Kosovo that stability, that happiness and that sense of belonging to a community that we ourselves find when we return home.

I cannot say whether we can rule out one hundred percent the possibility that stability policing, here in Kosovo, can be dismissed, and I do not know whether we will be called upon to carry it out. What I do know is that we will be here.

Thank you, men and women of KFOR and especially thank you sons and daughters of MSU because anyway, in the years to come, here in Kosovo will always remain a piece of all of you.

I would like to express to you my appreciation as Commander, proud of the commitment and dedication daily lavished in carrying out the delicate mission in Kosovo and for the humanity that has made you appreciated, without distinction, by the entire Kosovar population.

A tender thought goes to our distant families who, with us, share anxieties, sacrifices, but also joys and satisfactions. Thank you for what you do at home and abroad!

BIO:

After 5-year training at the Military Academy in Modena and at the Carabinieri Commissioned Officers Academy in Rome, where he graduated in law, General of Carabinieri, Ruggiero CAPODIVENTO was assigned to no-commissioned officers Academy in Florence as a Platoon Commander. Subsequently, at different levels of command, he headed several investigations branches (Venice, Reggio Emilia and Pozzuoli – Naples) and then he held important staff positions at the Carabinieri Officers School in Rome and at the Defence General Staff of Italy. Finally, he became Chief of Staff and then Deputy Commander of the Regional Command of the Carabinieri of Tuscany. Overseas, in 2012-2013 he was assigned to the case "Enrica Lexie" in Kochi (India) in which two Italian marines were involved. In September 2018, for a year, he was deployed for the first time as MSU Regiment Commander in Kosovo, position he has been currently covering since February 2023. On 24 July 2023 he was promoted to the rank of Brigadier General. In 2022, he was deployed in Djbuti as Head of Italia Training Mission for Somalia (MIADIT). He also obtained a degree in Security Sciences and a master study in Strategic Sciences.

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Mr. Ronald Mayanja
Recovery, Return and Reintegration Officer, United Nations

10. Stability Policing: protecting civilians in Upper Nile State, South Sudan

1. Introduction

This[1] chapter describes the deployment of the United Nations international policing effort in South Sudan since 2011. Using personal experiences and observations made between 2012 and 2020, the chapter focuses on variations made to the UN mission's policing posture, from peace consolidation efforts following the return of large numbers of civilians, to providing physical protection to civilians at its bases, following the conflict in 2013 and 2016 in Juba, the capital and the largest city of South Sudan, and across the country, and the impact of policing in protection of civilians, while offering recommendations to bolster policing capacities to better support communities affected by or recovering from conflict.

The added value of this chapter will be a civilian's narrative and perspective of international policing in evolving conflict contexts, including the limitations and opportunities, for international policing components to enhance protection of civilians through adaptation and strengthening of policing operations.

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1 The views expressed herein are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations

2. Context

After determining that the situation faced by South Sudan continued to constitute a threat to international peace and security in the region, the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) was initially established on 9 July 2011, under Security Council Resolution 1996 (2011), to consolidate peace and security, and to help establish the conditions for development in the Republic of South Sudan, with a view to strengthening the capacity of the Government of the Republic of South Sudan to govern effectively and democratically and establish good relations with its neighbours.[2] Since then, the UNMISS mandate has been renewed consistently, and currently, under Resolution 2677 (2023), the Council extended the UNMISS mandate until 15 March 2024, to focus on four pillars, namely, protection of civilians; creating conditions conducive to the delivery of humanitarian assistance; supporting the Implementation of the Revitalised Agreement and the peace process; and monitoring, investigating, and reporting on violations of humanitarian and human rights law.[3] The Security Council also determined that UNMISS should continue advancing a three-year strategic vision to prevent a return to civil war, build durable peace and support inclusive, accountable governance and free, fair and peaceful elections in accordance with the Revitalized Peace Agreement.[4]

The political differences between the President and the Vice President of South Sudan led to a power struggle, culminating in violent clashes in the capital Juba on 15 December 2013, and subsequently into tribal conflict which spread to many parts of the country. Seven out of the country's 10 states were affected by the conflict, with Central Equatoria, Jonglei, Lakes, Unity and Upper Nile states being the hardest hit.[5] Both government and opposition forces were accused of grave atrocities against civilians, leading to the death of an unknown number of people during the intervening years. With the constant fracturing and realignment of allegiances of various fighting groups, insecurity became deep-rooted, negatively impacting the security of many communities across the country.

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2 https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/706698?ln=en

3 United Nations Mission in South Sudan: Mandate, https://unmiss.unmissions.org/mandate.

4 Ibid.

5 United Nations Mission in South Sudan: Background, https://unmiss.unmissions.org/background

The violence led to displacement of nearly 702,000 civilians, with the largest groups of displaced people (IDPs) in Lakes, Upper Nile and Unity states, about 79,000 sheltered in UN bases across the country, and over 123,400 crossed into neighbouring countries in search of refuge.[6] By the end of 2015, an estimated 1.5 million were displaced, including 490,968 who fled the country,[7] with an estimated 193,789 civilians seeking safety in six protection of civilians (POC) sites located on UNMISS bases, including 114,825 in Bentiu, 27,950 in Juba UN House, 47,791 in Malakal, 2,289 in Bor, 700 in Melut and 234 in Wau.[8] By the end of October 2015, the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification for South Sudan estimated that 3.9 million people (3.1 million in crisis and 800,000 in emergency) or 34% of the population to be severely food and nutrition insecure and unable to meet their food needs, an 80% increase compared to the same period last year.[9]

In July of 2016, violence flared again in Juba, with significant reverberations across the country, significantly impacting the dynamics in all six POC sites. The fighting occurred near the two United Nations bases in Juba, with at least several hundred rounds hitting the offices and staff accommodation at the UNMISS HQ on the outskirts of Juba, an additional 5,000 IDPs fleeing to the UN base in Tongping, in the heart of Juba, and several dozen civilians killed in the POC sites alone as government and opposition forces fired indiscriminately with small arms and artillery fire in close proximity to both of these UN bases.[10] In various parts of the country, the conflict displaced many civilians bringing the number of South Sudanese who fled the country to approximately 818,950 and IDPs to 1.6 million.[11]

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6   South Sudan Crisis: Humanitarian Snapshot (as of 29 January 2014), https://reliefweb.int/report/south-sudan/south-sudan-crisis-humanitarian-snapshot-29-january-2014

7   South Sudan Crisis: Humanitarian Snapshot (as of 7 January 2015), https://reliefweb.int/report/south-sudan/south-sudan-crisis-humanitarian-snapshot-7-january-2015

8   UNMISS PoC Update No. 106, https://reliefweb.int/report/south-sudan/unmiss-poc-update-no-106

9   Integrated Food Security Phase Classification - The Republic of South Sudan, September 2015 Food Security and Nutrition Analysis, https://reliefweb.int/report/south-sudan/integrated-food-security-phase-classification-republic-south-sudan-september-2015?_gl=1*3ph4kr*_ga*MTM3MDUwND-Q1Ni4xNjgzMDMyMjg1*_ga_E60ZNX2F68*MTY5NDA4ODIyNi4xMy4xLjE2OTQwODg4MjAuMzUuM-C4w

10 Under Fire: The July 2016 Violence in Juba and UN Response, Center for Civilians in Conflict (CIVIC), October 2016, https://civiliansinconflict.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/civic-juba-violence-report-october-2016.pdf

11 South Sudan: Humanitarian Snapshot (July 2016), UN OCHA, https://reliefweb.int/report/south-sudan/south-sudan-humanitarian-snapshot-july-2016

By 2023 due to continuing subnational conflict across South Sudan, there were 2.3 million internally displaced persons, 2.33 million South Sudanese refugees in other countries, and 9.4 million people in need.[12] Since 2013 there have been continuing reports of gross human rights violations and abuses, including sexual and gender based violence, rape, recruitment and use of children by various armed groups, attacks on civilian spaces like schools and hospitals, restrictions of movement of civilians, and restriction of humanitarian access. Some humanitarian workers have been targeted in clashes between armed groups and some armed elements have compromised the civilian character of Protection of Civilians sites, while reduced funding and donor fatigue have impacted implementation of humanitarian activities.

The conflict has retarded the economic development of the country and greatly negated its efforts to fulfil its responsibility to protect civilians on its territory, as well as led to a massive failure to offer services to whole communities. The government lacks the capacity to respond to current development and humanitarian needs of the population, while incessant corruption has depleted the county's reserves to a level where the country has to print more money to pay government employees. Oil production, the main stay of the country has but ground to a halt.

3. Deployment

I first deployed with UNMISS as an international United Nations Volunteer for Recovery, Reintegration and Peacebuilding Officer, and Relief, Reintegration and Protection Officer assignments based in Renk town in the northern part and Malakal town in the southern part and the state capital of Upper Nile State from 12 March 2013 until 30 August 2017. Until the deadly events in December 2013, my role was to support recovery, peacebuilding, and development processes under the South Sudan Peace-Building Support Plan (PBSP), build the capacity of state authorities and local partners to support peace consolidation, extension of state authority, and the transition toward sustainable development, and facilitate humanitarian actors in delivery of their services to and emergency responses of local and international actors.

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12 South Sudan: Humanitarian Snapshot (July 2023), https://reliefweb.int/report/south-sudan/south-sudan-humanitarian-snapshot-july-2023

The Peacebuilding Fund first engaged in South Sudan in 2011 and formal eligibility was granted by the Secretary-General in 2012 until 2019 (with implementation of projects halted for a period due to the deterioration in the security situation).[13] The aim of the Support Plan was to assist the Government of South Sudan respond to immediate peace-building priorities by building and strengthening the capacity of the Government to manage conflict and lay the foundations for sustainable peace, and building on the Secretary General's report on Peace-building, the Plan identified specific measures, contained in a results matrix, which the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) and key partners would take to help reduce the risk of the country lapsing into conflict[14]. 10 years later, the Secretary-General granted re-eligibility for South Sudan in 2021 for a period of five years at the request of the Government, and as a self-nominated pilot for the "New Deal," South Sudan asked partners to orient their engagement around the five Peace-Building and State-Building Goals of: a) supporting legitimate politics by fostering inclusive political settlements and conflict resolution; b) improving security by strengthening people's security; c) promoting justice by addressing injustices and increasing people's access to justice; d) laying economic foundations by generating employment and improving livelihoods; and e) supporting basic services by building government capacity to manage revenues and establish accountable and fair service delivery systems.[15] These have informed the planning and implementation of activities by UNMISS and other UN entities and civil society.

From January 2014, my roles shifted to focus on supporting the mission's response to the influx of internally displaced civilians into its bases, including in Malakal town and Melut town in Upper Nile State. The contingency planning and capacity enhancement activities I was involved in, led by the Protection of Civilians Officer between June and December 2013, did not prepare me nor my UNMISS colleagues in Upper Nile for what would be a difficult period characterised by unending conflict within the state, heinous atrocities committed by the government and opposition forces, massive displacement of civilians into the UN base at Malakal,

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13 Submission to the Universal Periodic Review (Third cycle, 40th Session, Jan-Feb 2022)- Peace-building Support Office, Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, https://uprdoc.ohchr.org/uprweb/downloadfile.aspx?filename=9686&file=EnglishTranslation

14 UN PBSP planning document, UN Country Team, South Sudan.

15 Submission to the Universal Periodic Review (Third cycle, 40th Session, Jan-Feb 2022)- Peace-building Support Office, Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs.

and conditions that impacted the welfare of staff. This would, perhaps, become the most intense episode of my stay in South Sudan, considering the monumental challenge of responding to the protection needs of a large number of civilians in a congested area, not meant for nor ideal as a camp setting, in an ever-changing protection of civilians' environment.

In September 2017, I moved to another agency where I supported the multi-sectorial response in Upper Nile State to assist and protect populations residing in displacement camps and sites, to advocate for durable solutions, and specifically, to work towards establishment and maintenance of appropriate coordination mechanisms, application of camp and site management standards and guidance, appropriate camp closure and durable solutions, and ensure appropriate linkages with national/local authorities, state institutions, civil society and other relevant actors. Key areas where I collaborated on policing included provision of technical support to local authorities and the camp management agency for 5 IDP camps in Melut: guidance to partners on early warning and response preparedness in line with CCCM guidelines and UNMISS POC strategy; and support to partners on development of Upper Nile State Solutions Strategy as an overarching guide to complement UNMISS peacebuilding to support strengthening of protection mechanisms and return and reintegration.

The experiences and observations in the next section will therefore primarily focus on my deployments in Upper Nile State, from March 2012 to August 2020.

4. Experiences

December 2013 marked a significant shift in the mission's activities, from supporting peace consolidation and extension of state authority across South Sudan, to a fully-fledged protection of civilians' effort to mitigate the impact of physical threats of violence civilians faced. A significant portion of my work during the two assignments, hinged on engaging with affected communities, humanitarian actors, and state and local authorities, including the police, supporting peace consolidation and extending state authority in Renk.

UNMISS civilian sections and uniformed components worked in collaborative manner to achieve the tasks mandated in United Nations

Security Council Resolution 1996 of 2011[16]. My activities and interface with the United Nations policing effort focused on: undertaking joint assessments and disseminate findings to the UNMISS State Office, and UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes; supporting development and implementation of Quick-impact projects to consolidate peace dividends through strategic livelihoods activities at the County level; supporting the county authorities to manage and resolve local community conflicts and disputes through dialogue; and dissemination of positive messages that reinforced peace building initiatives.

Additionally, as a county support base coordinator, my other role was to facilitate the mission's civilian and uniform components, including police and corrections officers, in implementing activities supporting peace consolidation and providing peace dividends to communities in Renk County. Suffice it to say, that in addition to its presence at each of the 10 state capitals, UNMISS established county support bases in 35 of the country's 79 counties to facilitate implementation of mandated tasks, was co-located with county authorities based on local buy-in, aimed at strengthening local capacities and enabling development activities by UN agencies, civil society, other development actors and NGOs. The concept was two-pronged: provide accommodation for staff using UNMISS resources and set up community portals using donor funding aimed at strengthening county and local authorities through upgrading and development of multipurpose facilities, including training, office and community spaces, attracting development partners and support development activities. This was premised on the observation that weak state structures and limited technical know-how were major impediments to addressing service provision gaps and ensuring government presence across South Sudan, where county-level governments had significantly limited capacity, especially in terms of available infrastructure and limited absorptive capacity to enable co-location, or to ensure adequate delivery of core government functions at local government level.

One of my first actions in Renk was to support the United Nations Development Programme effort towards construction of a multi-purpose facility to enhance the role of traditional chiefs, who were key interlocutors of UNMISS in support of peace consolidation. A major observation made, and justification put forward by the police and corrections officers for this community portal was the pivotal contribution of traditional chiefs in

16 https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/706698?ln=en

community policing, dispensation of justice and settling of disputes within the community. To effectively deliver on these responsibilities, there was need for appropriate workspaces for these traditional chiefs. Renk County headquarters benefitted from the presence of a director of the South Sudan National Police Service (national police), whose responsibilities were bolstered by traditional chiefs at the payam level, a political sub-division of counties in South Sudan. Owing to limited personnel capacities affecting national police in Renk County, the UN police foresaw that enhancing community policing through the traditional leaders would mitigate against policing gaps in Renk payam and become a model across the county. With completion of the multi-purpose hall, the traditional leaders regularly engaged with the UN police on a range of policing aspects in collaboration with national police leading a higher rate of dispute resolution, especially between returnees from Sudan and host communities in areas hosting returnee sites at Payuel, Mina, Abayok, and Abu Kadhra.

The county support base at Renk facilitated colocation of UNMISS with county government departments dealing with a range of emerging and ongoing issues. The mission's main interlocutor was the county commissioner and the executive director, government appointed officials responsible for leading government policy and functions, as well as facilitating humanitarian and development interventions focused on creating peace building opportunities for returning communities. A major attribute of the setup in Renk was that the mission's offices were situated within the county headquarters. The mission's staff, with the exception of the military contingent, in Renk were the only team co-located within a government office. This allowed quick and easy access to all government departments, especially the directors of national police, National Security Service (NSS), National Prisons Service of South Sudan (NPSSS), and the county director for the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission (RRC). As a result, engagements I coordinated between the UNMISS team and the county commissioner, as well as with heads of government departments, achieved much desired results owing to, especially, the closer and stronger collaboration between the UN police and national police, and constructive negotiations between the county authorities and UNMISS on a range of issues meant to facilitate the mission's tasks. For the mission military component, the South Sudan Peoples' Defence Forces (SSPDF) division headquarters where within easy reach, located on the outskirts of Renk town.

Renk county shares a border with Sudan and was the recipient of the largest number of returnees from Sudan following independence in 2011 and throughout 2012 and 2013. The government had a major responsibility to support communities returning to Renk county and those who used Renk town as a halfway station prior to their movement to areas of return beyond the county. This presented a multitude of challenges requiring joint planning by UNMISS, the government, and humanitarian actors, including facilitating returns with robust policing. It is a noted fact that the influx of displaced persons, refugees, or returnees many times overwhelms the institutional capacity of host communities and host government structures, which puts an additional strain on the ability to deliver services.[17] Furthermore, return can lead to difficult relations between displaced communities and host communities, which in turn can impact the sustainability of returns. Renk county, experienced capacity challenges associated with lack of facilities and staffing in the conduct of the government's constitutional duties, including policing and corrections. To effectively address these challenges, there is need to build stronger institutions that provide returning communities with security, rule of law, justice, and economic empowerment, as well as restore the confidence of the returning communities, because these efforts by national and state level government structures signal a movement to a more positive environment and a break from the past that was characterized by violence.[18] Thus, national and local police forces, in collaboration with community leaders and civil society, contribute greatly to facilitating returns and deescalating tensions.

The period following the major wave of returns to South Sudan was characterized by hope and by communities' aspirations focused on rebuilding peace within their areas of return. For some areas of return, including Renk County, this manifested in an environment of peace with minimal or no conflict amongst communities, and limited violations of human rights of individuals and communities. In these circumstances, various policing activities were informed by protection of civilians Tier I and Tier III approaches, which focused on engagement and advocacy, and enhancing capacities of government entities and institutions, respectively. Although my focus in 2012 and 2013 was not majorly on policing or corrections matters during the numerous patrols I participated, I took particular interest in understanding the capacities of the government in

17 State fragility, displacement and development interventions, Yonatan Araya
18 ibid

areas within Renk county and how the mission would best support and enhance policing and corrections in line with the mandate. This regular engagement with leaders and representatives of different segments of communities enhanced the mission's awareness on a range of ongoing and emerging dynamics relating to protection of civilians, human rights violations, service provision gaps, and early warning on potential threats of physical violence to communities, as well as the condition of prisons facilities and the presence of SSPNS. My observation across many payams in Renk was lack of police posts, which dented the confidence of the communities who had to trek great distances to the nearest police station, and which precipitated negative perceptions about the effectiveness of the government in discharging its law-and-order responsibilities and, where prisons facilities were missing, dispensing justice, and penalizing those who fell afoul of the law.

UN police at the time comprised only individual police officers from various countries, whose remit was strengthening the capacity of national police, mainly through provision of technical support, but not provision of physical protection. I place emphasis on this due to a major presumption among the populace that national police would fulfil their responsibilities to protect civilians. However, for the national police, this proved an uphill effort in achieving due to lack of requisite facilities and personnel. A key tenet of UN police support to national police, therefore, was supporting improvements to local policing practices based on the rule of law and internationally acceptable standards. This provided individual police officers the opportunity to share from their respective jurisdictions across the world, best practices, experiences, as well as challenges leading to ineffective policing. As individual police officers focused their capacity support to national police across South Sudan, the mission's mandate did not permit their conduct of physical security activities as outlined under the protection of civilians Tier II approach, further dictated by the UN Police Commissioner's directives; based on practice in UNMISS, physical protection of civilians activities were carried out by the mission's force elements, albeit to a limited level and where the government accorded the mission such an opportunity. Relatedly, it is important to highlight that public order management actions across South Sudan remain the responsibility of the government through the national police and, where the situation warrants, the NSS and SSPDF or other security agencies.

Major challenges I observed at this time revolved around the length of duty or duration of stay of IPOs within the mission area, with a minimum of 12

months and a maximum period of 18 months. Consequently, national police officers interfaced with individual police officers for even shorter periods, noting the logistical challenges individual police officers experienced during their deployment, before completing their assignments and new individual police officers deployed as replacements. The continuing redeployment of national police officers away from Renk and deployment of new officers into Renk were not 'synced' with that of individual police officers to allow for uninterrupted continuity of mentoring and learning. While acquired capacities among national police may have benefitted areas they were redeployed, the lack of synchronisation impacted firmer institutionalization of best stability policing practices. The unintended consequence for the mission and individual police officers was the constant need to retrain national police throughout any given year, also significantly impacting achievement of measurable expected accomplishments that demonstrated enhanced institutional capacity within the structure of national police in Renk county.

Another challenge government institutions in South Sudan, including national police and the NPSSS, faced was lack of facilities, including appropriate working spaces and logistical capabilities, with which to deliver their constitutionally assigned roles. A key intervention I diligently advocated for was use of quick impact project (QIPs) funds to construct police stations as this would enhance protection for civilians and, as well, increase presence of government in payams within Renk. QIPs are small-scale, rapidly implementable projects used by UN peacekeeping operations to establish and build confidence in the mission, its mandate, and the peace process, thereby improving the environment for effective mandate implementation, by contributing to: promoting acceptance of the Mission mandated tasks as well as building confidence and credibility amongst the population; building confidence and/or building support for the peace process, including through demonstrating early peace dividends to the population; or improving the environment for mandate implementation by generating support for the mission including through addressing the immediate needs of the population.[19]

A main obstacle to use of QIPs to improve local police infrastructure in outlying areas of Renk County pertained to limited availability of the fund itself. The prioritization, endorsement, and approval of QIPs meant that more stable areas, including Renk County, missed the opportunity

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19 DPO QIPs Policy

for funding in favour of areas impacted by or with a higher propensity for or incidence of sub-national violence or those that required urgent services-gap filling to address the most immediate services needs of, especially, returning communities. For this reason, Renk did not benefit substantially from QIPs in comparison to other areas, despite the team's and government's best efforts justifying the need for QIPs funding.

An alternative to supporting national police was donation of used or boarded off equipment, including furniture, office containers, and vehicles, subject to fulfilment of the provisions of the human rights due diligence policy. This happened a handful of times, but not in Renk County.[20] Instead, the mission offered a diesel generator to power the office of Renk County Commissioner, where the civilian and uniformed components were co-locating.

5. Protecting civilians inside and outside of UNMISS bases

Without changes made to UN Security Council Resolution 2057[21] of 2012, UNMISS adapted its posture from peace consolidation and extension of state authority, to providing physical security and protection to large numbers of civilians who fled into its bases across the country following the events of 15 December 2013 in Juba, a situation which presented a significant change in the trajectory of the political and security landscape in South Sudan. With the breakout of violence in Juba, the country was exposed to significant levels of violence and insecurity, compounded by the fracturing of the national army and subsequent widespread violence along tribal lines and various atrocities committed against civilians. The breaches to the protection environment presented a significant challenge to protection actors, including the national government, the UN mission, and local authorities, consequently forcing many civilians to flee to UN bases, including staff of UNMISS and humanitarian and development agencies, and government and local leaders. While the mission had prepared for a potential scenario and responses to protection of civilians, including identification of future population concentration points, the large numbers of civilians who found themselves in UN bases surpassed by far the estimates initially planned for and complex protection challenge

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20 UNMISS hands over vehicle to South Sudan National Police Service in Wau, https://unmiss.unmissions.org/unmiss-hands-over-vehicle-south-sudan-national-police-service-wau

21 https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/730324?ln=en

this presented, and consequently required robust protection mechanisms by the mission and humanitarian partners.

The concentration of a large number of civilians at UN bases at Malakal, Renk and Nasir meant that the mission had to provide them physical protection on a 24/7 basis from threats emanating from outside these bases, against a backdrop of troop and police numbers not matching the required ratios to effectively manage the large IDP influx. At the end of 2013, the number of UN police personnel across South Sudan was significantly outstripped to offer sufficient physical protection to the large number of IDPs at UN bases, which presented significant public order management challenges, and increased risks to staff of the mission and humanitarian actors. At the onset of the 2013 crisis, individual police officers at each base suddenly found themselves dealing with public order management issues, a new requirement of the day in light of the large influx of civilians. While civilians did not stay long in the UN bases at Renk and Nassir, continuing conflict between the government and the opposition throughout 2014 until 2016 impacted the UN base at Melut and, subsequently, led to relocation of UN staff and displacement of the remaining civilians therein, with some airlifted to Malakal, while one group chose to seek protection at the military headquarters in Melut. In 2014, the mission airlifted the remaining individuals in Nassir to Malakal for more effective utilization of mission troop and police resources.

In December 2013, government officials sought the safety of the UN base at Malakal, as had other civilians. In January 2014, Malakal town, was overrun by the opposition, leading to the flight and disintegration of the remaining government security forces, including national police. Between December 2013, Malakal 'changed hands' six times between the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) in Government and SPLA in Opposition forces with major clashes taking place between 24 December 2013 and 19 March 2014. The fighting was so devastating, resulted in killings and injuries of civilians, massive displacements of local population, abductions, sexual and gender-based violence, as well as widespread looting and destruction of property that forced many civilians to seek protection within the UNMISS base at Malakal. With the collapse of government and absence of local policing presence in Malakal town, it became apparent that only the UN could guarantee the safety and protection of civilians. Communities called upon the UN to ensure their physical safety within what then became Malakal POC site, worried that the violence on the outside would ultimately impact community relations within. The number of civilians

who fled into Malakal POC site rose to nearly 55,000, in a facility planned to cater for less than 100 international UN civilian and uniformed personnel and 1 troop contingent. Additionally, nearly 600 staff of international and local humanitarian organizations found their way into the facility, at the time deemed the safest place of refuge in Upper Nile.

Obviously, a major challenge that arose out of this sudden increase in numbers was the utility of the UN base facilities: how long would the IDPs stay within the base? how would UNMISS supply water and other services to nearly 66,000 civilians? where would UNMISS find appropriate space to accommodate incoming IDPs? how would UNMISS ensure clear boundaries between civilians and staff members of the UN and humanitarian organizations to mitigate against the occurrence of sexual exploitation and abuse? how would UNMISS public order in such congested settings with the limited number of individual police officers not kitted to manage potential disturbances or violence inside the base? While the troop contingent was tasked to prevent threats against civilians from outside the base and could only spare a limited number of its personnel as a quick reaction force (QRF) to address riots and violent episodes within the site, availability of sufficient policing capacities remained a challenge despite clear indicators of potential break out of violence among civilians. The necessity for robust public order management within the site remained high, considering the differences between the two main political protagonists were already assuming a tribal character, with potential for increasing tensions between the two major tribes and affiliated groups camped at Malakal POC site by the end of January 2014.

To address the evolving safety and protection dynamics, Malakal Field Office activated the crisis management team, in which I participated daily, to apprise itself of emerging concerns and provide guidance on required responses, especially by UN police and military, related to maintenance of the civilian character of Malakal POC site. In ensuring communities maintained peace within the site, the priority for the UN police, in collaboration with key UNMISS civilian sections, was identifying points of influence within the community, to ensure timely information flow between the community and the mission, as well as early warning on potential violence within the site. Working with available individual police officers at Malakal, I supported new tasking to ensure the community and their representatives were aware of the need to maintain law and order and mitigate against the breakout of violence within the UN base. Similarly, UN bases in Renk, Nasir and Melut towns pursued similar efforts

until relocation of IDPs who had sought refuge therein. Once individual police officers rolled out their 24/7 operational plans covering Malakal POC site, the information they gathered from the community became a critical component in decision-making at the daily crisis management team meetings.

From 6 January 2014 onward, Malakal received wave after wave of new IDPs. A major activity I engaged thenceforth was support the UN police and military in screening of civilians and ex-combatants entering the base, to limit the carriage of arms and dangerous weapons, with a QRF on standby to handle violence should it erupt at the UN base gates. With so many people trying to rush into the base, we had an uphill task of ensuring women's and children's safety as they came into the base. Sometimes, this went on for more than 5 hours at a time. At one point due to a near riot situation at what later became Charlie gate, we were forced to temporarily close the gates for fear of a stampede. In another major activity, I led the individual police officers in screening and moving IDPs out of the office and accommodation areas to free spaces identified within the base for IDP settlement, a difficult task considering this did not present IDPs the ideal response they had hoped for and was resisted by many. To many IDPs, moving out of the accommodation and office areas meant removing their best protection from fighting forces they perceived as targeting them, in addition to suspicion about the mission's intent. The base perimeter security at this time was reinforced wire meshing and a few observation posts. While this prevented ingress into the base, there was need to reinforce the security architecture to prevent potential breaches or exposure of IDPs and mission personnel to direct or indirect gunfire. The individual police officers' experience in managing crowds proved to be a game changer in the mission's screening and managing of entry into and stay of civilians inside Malakal POC site.

In environments where large numbers of people are housed together in a relatively small geographic area, criminal activity becomes a concern, and this may be particularly true within displaced communities that have experienced violence or trauma.[22] All POC sites at UNMISS bases experienced similar challenges, and the mission registered crime daily in sites at UN bases, with youth criminality topping the number of offences committed over successive years. Criminal activity, including physical

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22 United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Operational Protection in Camps and Settlements (Geneva: United Nations, 2006), 28, quoted in Jenna Stern, Establishing Safety and Security at Protection of Civilians Sites.

assault and gender-based violence, are known to be perpetrated within the sites and it was extremely challenging for UNMISS to respond to criminal activity because the mission was initially not specifically mandated or configured to address some of these issues, and there were complex questions of jurisdiction and responsibility that still have no easy answers under international law, noting that this complexity stems from the fact that the government of South Sudan did not have the ability or will to fairly prosecute alleged criminals within POC sites, and the UN Security Council had not adjusted UNMISS's mandate to directly address law enforcement issues on the premises.[23]

From the onset, the UN base at Malakal received all civilians irrespective of their tribal leaning or affiliations- the major groupings being the Shilluk, Dinka, Nuer, Equatorian, and foreign nationals from Uganda, Kenya, Sudan, Ethiopia, and Eritrea. Until February 2014, all groups lived harmoniously within the base, with UNMISS and humanitarian efforts aimed at providing appropriate living and sanitation spaces for civilians. With limited numbers of individual police officers, however, maintaining public order within Malakal POC site would prove a challenge. The violent episodes experienced in the site demonstrated the need for superior capacities in managing public order crises by a larger policing team. Between 16 and 19 February 2014, inter-communal fighting inside Malakal PoC site resulted in seven confirmed killings and at least 71 civilians injured. Tensions between the ethnic groups flared up again in October 2014 at the PoC site, and this escalation led to a scale down of humanitarian services for eight days in November 2014, on account of insecurity. On 27 October, a Dinka man was reportedly killed at the PoC site by Dinka and Shilluk IDPs who believed him to be Nuer. With the observed need for additional capacity to address criminality and public order disturbances, the mission conducted the phased deployment of 270 formed police unit members to Malakal base, a decision that proved the effectiveness of a deterrent the UN police would employ during later occurrences of violence.

The majority of police officers serving in United Nations peacekeeping operations are deployed as part of a Formed Police Unit (FPU), and consist of approximately 140 Police Officers, trained and equipped to act as a cohesive unit capable of accomplishing policing tasks that individual Police

23 Jenna Stern, Establishing Safety and Security at Protection of Civilians Sites: Lessons from the United Nations Peacekeeping Mission in South Sudan, Civilians in conflict, Policy brief no. 2, September 2015.

Officers could not address.[24] Well-trained FPUs can operate even in "high-risk" environments, and have three core duties: public order management, protection of United Nations personnel and facilities and support to such police operations that require a concerted response but do not respond to military threats. FPUs were deployed for the first time in the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and in the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) in 1999, and in both missions, the UN had full responsibility for enforcing the law and dealing with threats to public order.[25] The deployment of the 270-man strong formed police unit to Malakal was without challenge. Following the breakdown of security across key states and risk of violence spreading across South Sudan, there were increased risks and threats to foreign nationals, including international staff the UN and humanitarian agencies, which necessitated many foreign governments to evacuate their nationals from different parts of South Sudan. For some police contributing countries, this decision also meant evacuation of their individual police officers, leading to a drastic reduction in the number of available individual police officers, yet this was the moment they were urgently required to bolster public order management. Inadvertently, the evacuation of some individual police officers in early 2014 and subsequent gap in policing amplified the importance of community policing approaches in mitigating public order disturbances.

Addressing the protection needs of displaced civilians requires strong engagement and communication, as was clearly demonstrated following the influx of IDPs into the UN base at Malakal in 2013 and into the POC site throughout 2014 and 2015. This was only possible through community representatives and was premised on the need to maintain law and order within and maintain the civilian character of the POC site. I supported UNMISS in establishing POC community leadership structures to support actors in coordinating provision of physical protection and service provision within the site. They would prove a very useful tool to the mission, but most especially to the UN police, in advancing safety, law and order within the mission's POC sites. A major challenge was how to ensure effective representation of all groups' resident within the site, considering all segments aspired to have a voice through the structure, risking creating of a large leadership structure that would be counter to its intended purpose. A part of the leadership structure proposed to support

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24 https://police.un.org/en/formed-police-units-fpus

25 ibid

community policing was the community watch group, borne out of a need to use community leaders to support law and order maintenance within the sites since they were closer to their community. This approach involving community leaders, it was hoped, would bolster policing by international police advisers.

The UN police employed this approach, proven to be an effective tool at all UN bases, the host of challenges dealing with members of the community watch groups notwithstanding. To enhance capacities and adherence to effective community policing and in line with policing standards enshrined in the constitution of South Sudan, the individual police officers provided regular training and technical guidance to members of the community watch groups, in collaboration with UNMISS civilian components and humanitarian actors, including provision of items used for the conduct of night patrols within sites to bolster the UN policing effort. Part of this engagement involved awareness raising by individual police officers at POC site entrances on prohibition of dangerous items and material from the POC site, many of which were used by communities whenever violence broke out. As a result, the community watch groups have been an effective mechanism for community policing and a great contributor to the mission's early warning system, with uniformed and civilian components using information from community watch groups for analysis of protection threats inside and outside POC sites and to craft responses that have averted many crises since 2013.

The political and security dynamics outside POC sites influenced and impacted dynamics and related tensions between different communities and tribal groupings within Malakal POC site. Each time the government or opposition forces overran Malakal town, the tensions between affiliated groups would increase and sometimes break out into violence. The POC site simultaneously would experience an influx of civilians associated with the losing party and an exodus of those associated with the wining party, all with the aim of seeking safety and protection. These episodes of violence were a major disrupter of ongoing and planned protection activities of the mission and services provision by humanitarian actors, and greatly impacted access of mainly women and children to life-saving services, placing the efficiency of humanitarian agencies under strain. Ensuring public order within the site required continuous engagement of youths by individual police officers and civilian sections owing to their propensity to foment violence against civilians, destroy property, and disrupt service provision. This was aimed to protect staff of the mission and humanitarian

agencies during the conduct of their activities. Thus, two broad activities requiring continuous physical protection provided by FPUs and UN force were food distribution and construction of the base perimeter, respectively. FPUs played an equally important role, intervening during a number of clashes between youths from different tribes, which if not addressed would have resulted in significant violence and potentially high numbers of injuries and deaths among the vulnerable segments of the community. To date, Malakal continues to experience major clashes, with the last registered in June 2023.

Underlining all humanitarian action are the principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence, derived from international humanitarian law, and have been taken up by the United Nations in General Assembly Resolutions 46/182 and 58/114, with their global recognition and relevance further underscored by the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations in Disaster Relief and the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability.[26] The circumstances in Malakal PoC site required the presence of FPUs at service distribution points to offer physical protection to humanitarian actors, in line with the mission mandate to create conditions conducive for the delivery of humanitarian assistance. With deteriorating safety conditions in Malakal POC on various occasions, forcing suspension of humanitarian service provision, FPUs were very crucial, during negotiations for the resumption of services, in extracting guarantees of safety for staff of humanitarian agencies from the IDP site leadership. Further, they provided additional protection to staff of UNMISS and humanitarian agencies during the presentation of petitions by IDP leaders following peaceful demonstrations.

Lack of stable government in Malakal town between December 2013 and 2016 and absence of key government departments, including the national police, did not offer much opportunity to UN police to commit, for a considerable length of time, individual police officers to undertake capacity enhancement activities nor provide technical guidance. Without safety guarantees for individual police officers and military liaison officers (MLOs from the groups in charge of Malakal town, UN police was

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26 UNHCR Emergency handbook, https://emergency.unhcr.org/protection/protection-principles/humanitarian-principles#:~:text=Underlining%20all%20humanitarian%20action%20are,%2F182%20and%2058%2F114

largely absent, adding to the policing gap[27], yet this would have boosted community confidence and encouraged many civilians to return to Malakal town. Suffice to note that the United Nations security Management system applies to all UN personnel apart from the mission force components. For this reason, individual police officers will only conduct their activities as long as security conditions permit, in line with guidance from the United Nation Department of Safety and Security. Added to this challenge is the limitation on FPU (formed police units) to conduct their activities only within UN bases or POC sites. Consequently, FPU personnel could not conduct public order management functions in areas experiencing violence beyond Malakal POC site. Further, all forces occupying Malakal created bureaucratic and access impediments to the conduct of patrols and confidence building activities by the UN police and force. For this reason, Malakal remained largely unpatrolled by both the UN police and military, which propagated the continuing protection gaps and challenges civilians experienced. A proposal would be for formed police units to be able to undertake policing activities in areas outside UN bases experiencing violence. Projection, through an integrated civilian, military and police presence, including FPU patrols, can assist in identification of risks and measures to minimize or eliminate them, and to bring protection to civilians rather than requiring civilians to seek safety at or inside,[28] noting FPUs work as company-sized units, are armed, likely to be in the front line of physical protection (including deterrence) and provide an essential and robust capacity for carrying out, or supporting, policing tasks in the field of POC under austere or high-risk conditions.[29]

Effective coordination between UNMISS military and individual police officers and FPUs is key to the success of public order management functions at POC sites and UN bases. On many occasions, the FPU's timely responses and activities in Malakal manifested the effectiveness of policing in averting or controlling outbreaks of violence inside the UN base, underpinned by an agreed separation of duties between the UN force and UN police, focusing

27 International Refugee Rights Initiative, Protecting some of the people some of the time Civilian perspectives on peacekeeping forces in South Sudan, http://www.refugee-rights.org/old-site/Publications/Papers/2015/Protecting Some ofthePeopleFINAL.pdf

28 Luis Miguel Carrilho, Peace Operations: The Role of United Nations Police in Internally Displaced Persons, CoESPU MAGAZINE, no. 3- 2020, https://www.coespu.org/articles/peace-operations-role-united-nations-police-internally-displaced-persons

29 The role of United Nations police in protection of civilians, DPO/DFS GUIDELINES: https://police.un.org/sites/default/files/protection-of-civilians-unpol_guidelines_2017.pdf

on prevention of external threats and ensuring low and order maintenance within the site, respectively. These operational guidelines allowed the UN military and FPU perform their duties seamlessly. Whenever the civilian character of Malakal POC site was breached, the UN force took over the security management of the site to allow a de-escalation of tensions and mitigate the impact of the violence, especially where the level of violence and type of weaponry used went beyond UN police response capabilities and required more significant use of force. UN police were deployed at entrances and exits of the protection of civilian sites to conduct screening for prohibited items coming into the POC site, which resulted in confiscation of a number of dangerous weapons which youths would have used during episodic confrontations they had due to drug abuse and drunkenness and other political motivations and influences. The screening majorly involved visual inspection of items and there is no need to say that items which were carefully hidden were never found. Manning of entrances and exits consequently limited ingress into the POC site by elements considered dangerous and detrimental to the safety of civilians in the site, on top of limiting movement into and out of the site beyond agreed curfew hours. While many IDPs found this inconveniencing, screening, and limitations to entry beyond curfew hours complemented the raft of UN police and force security measures in place to assure the safety of civilians inside the site and that of humanitarian staff living within the site. While the government has long accused UNMISS of harbouring potential adversaries and publicly expressed concern over the number of weapons believed to be hidden in the sites, the mission has assured an apprehensive government of South Sudan that all weapons are subsequently inventoried and securely stored,[30] or destroyed. In 2013, a major activity I conducted jointly with individual police officers and MLOs was screening for weapons and separation of combatants who had relinquished their weapons from non-combatants in the site. I relied heavily on the expertise of the individual police officers and MLOs in negotiating the handover of weapons and assessing the levels of risk the combatants posed once they were granted access to the site. A holding area was therefore set up to 'transition' these former combatants into civilian life inside the POC site. Had this been a purely civilian action, I can only reckon the level of challenges we would have faced dealing with the entry of former combatants into the POC site.

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30 Jenna Stern, Establishing Safety and Security at Protection of Civilians Sites: Lessons from the United Nations Peacekeeping Mission in South Sudan, Civilians in conflict, Policy brief no. 2, September 2015.

The UN police's screening of illegal items at POC site entrances was reinforced by regular and robust cordon and search operations inside Malakal POC site. The overall objective of cordon and search operations was maintaining the civilian character of the site and to act as a deterrent to entry into the site for individuals with objectives dangerous to the safety and security of civilians and the site itself. Key results of cordon and search operations were: to locate and confiscate illegal weapons and weapon caches (explosives, equipment and materials); to find and confiscate contraband materials; to arrest and detain suspects, unauthorized personnel and wanted criminals or persons countering the reconstruction of peace and security, if the mandate allowed for this; to protect potential targets of armed groups through timely action in obtaining evidence of illegal activities; to build the confidence of the local population, including women and children; to deter violence and risks of gross human rights violations; and, to display UN resolve in enforcing the mandate to support peace and security; given the complexity of any cordon and search operation, and the strong likelihood that it will be a combined and joint operation, the force must be involved in planning.[31] The mission conducted regular cordon and search operations in all of its PoC sites, in keeping with its arms free policy, and had clear entry and exit procedures.[32] These regular UN police activities provided staff of the mission and humanitarian actors a sense of personal safety that allowed them to conduct their day to day activities.

The regular conduct of site foot patrols by individual police officers, supported by the community watch group, enhanced the former's understanding of the site layout, illegal structures built within the site, locations of illegal activities, and regular engagement with community leaders. Above all, these foot patrols were a major deterrent against criminality, especially for youths within the site. As mentioned earlier, once the UN police established a 24/7 law and order maintenance operation, both static and non-static activities conducted ensured coverage of the entire site, a major deterrent against criminal activity, enhancing the communities' confidence in the safety and protection provided by the

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31 United Nations Infantry Battalion Manual (UNIBAM), https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/3._military_1_united_nations_infantry_battalion_manual_unibam.pdf

32 UNMISS, https://unmiss.unmissions.org/united-nations-mission-south-sudan-unmiss-responds-sudan-peoples-liberation-army-spla-allegations-0#:~:text=UNMISS%20rejects%20the%20allegations%20of,assaulted%20and%20held%20captive%20overnight.

United Nations, thereby contributing to identification of criminals and prohibited items.

Whenever there was a lull in fighting, especially after July 2014, I participated in foot patrols outside Malakal POC site, conducted jointly by UNMISS in collaboration with humanitarian actors. Due to movement restrictions following continuing fighting between the government and opposition forces, many IDPs were unable to move out of Malakal POC site for long periods of time. This inhibited their capacity to engage in livelihoods activities that would otherwise have supplemented the services provided by humanitarian actors. It was therefore deemed necessary to create conditions within which IDPs, especially women and girls, would access areas within the vicinity of the site to forage for firewood and foods not provided by humanitarian agencies, as well as conduct minimal gardening. The conduct of these patrols was a joint task between the individual police officers and UN force, following negotiations with the government in charge in Malakal town. While IDPs were initially hesitant, the success of the first patrol provided momentum to successive patrols the mission facilitated and were a precursor to more regular movement of civilians to Malakal and offered hope for the eventual returns back to former areas of residence within the town. As mentioned earlier, individual police officers and FPUs can play a major role in projecting UN in presence in areas with the potential for or those undergoing active conflict.

In addition to providing basic physical protection and the conduct of public order management actions, individual police officers used their expertise in assessing potential risks of some individuals to the population and investigation of minor cases inside the POC site. During its management of POC sites, the United Nations does not have the mandate to prosecute individuals who have committed major offenses, including capital crimes. This mandate remains with the government of South Sudan, to prosecute individuals under the penal code, as enshrined in the constitution of the Republic of South Sudan. Within POC sites, individuals arrested for criminality were placed in holding facilities to aid the conduct of further investigations, and assess the risks to civilians, or whether these individuals were at risk from the community if allowed to return to the POC site. While the community wished for criminals to not return to the POC site, the latter could not be held indefinitely. Even where the offense was of a capital nature, criminals could not be handed over to the government without the conduct of a thorough human rights due diligence exercise, to establish that such handover to the government would not result in

injury or risk to the life of suspected criminals. While this did not bode well with the community, the mission set in place a mechanism within which relatives and family members of individuals accused of crimes and the victims resolved the matter. The Informal Mediation and Dispute Resolution Mechanism, composed of selected community elders, supported by individual police officers and UNMISS civilian components, heard civil cases, and determined how to restore unity between affected parties. The group tackled cases related to social conflicts like petty theft, but did not handle more serious crimes like murder, rape or assault causing grievous bodily harm. This mechanism offered many opportunities for resolution of disagreements and tensions between families and groups, in communities where retaliation is the order of the day in the absence of operational formal justice systems.

6. Conclusions

In conflict and immediate post conflict settings, physical protection is about perceptions of those protected, the protectors and the perpetrators. While in ordinary settings uniformed components may not be seen as threats, for South Sudan, it is these guarantors of safety, stability, and peace who have been responsible for perpetrating violence against civilians. Having broken up, starting December 2013, uniformed elements of the government and what became the opposition in South Sudan, and their respective affiliates, reneged on their responsibility to protect civilians for a number of reasons ranging from impunity, lack of accountability or basic lack of respect for human rights. This was demonstrated so glaringly every time rogue elements attacked POC sites or civilians in other areas without basic regard to the sanctity of life. It is now commonly agreed that the challenges the UN Mission in South Sudan faced since December 2013, notwithstanding, the decision to open its gates to fleeing civilians saved thousands of lives. Much as the sites did not provide services for IDPs, consistent with the sphere standards, both UNMISS and humanitarian actors collaborated on addressing a unique situation they were unprepared for due to low projections of the potential number of civilians who would be displaced and of the impact of the potential political fallout between the parties to South Sudan's peace deal and independence.

While UNMISS force and policing components adapted aptly and tirelessly advanced the physical safety of civilians inside and outside of POC sites, there are many lessons learned along the way that demonstrate the efficacy of protection best practices of the UN and that will continue to inform

future interventions where civilians' protection is a priority. Policing in peacekeeping manifests in two forms, international police advisors- who normally offer administrative functions, and formed police units- who are more operational. Despite these apparent differences, the full adoption of the 2 models of policing between individual police officers and formed police units offers the full complement of policing interventions in such settings as South Sudan.

Policing, unlike military actions, offers a more civilian approach to crime mitigation and prevention because the tactics employed are less inclined to generate human rights abuses. While military activities intend to achieve a short-term objective, policing action reduces crime and improves human security owing to the fact that police are perceived as the appropriate entity responsible for crime preventions. In light of the above observations, the deployment of formed police units becomes more pertinent where situations require interventions of a more operational nature. This overall recommendation should be seen alongside some of the recommendations above in the preceding narration, to include the use of special uniforms differentiating individual police officers and FPUs for the non-operational and operational aspects of policing.

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BIO:

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11. Migration crisis on NATO's eastern flank

Pic 1. Crowd of migrants gathered at border crossing near Kuźnica, Poland, 2021. © Policja Podlaska

1. Crowds at the border

It is 15 November 2021. The biggest group of migrants since the crisis became known six months earlier, amassed on the Belarusian side of the Polish border checkpoint near Bruzgi. It is estimated that at least

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1   The opinions and views expressed within the content of the chapter are solely author's and do not relate to those of the North Atlantic treaty Organization.

several thousand people would attempt to rush the border as a group from Bruzgi across the checkpoint to Kuźnica, Poland. Most of them are young, physically able men of eastern origin. A mixture of young men from countries such as Sudan, Iraq or Syria and other distant places were lured by promises of an easy entrance to the EU area through Belarus. Only at the very border the entrance proved everything but easy. The air is cold, the tensions are high. Even armed Belarusian soldiers can easily be spotted behind the crowd of migrants. The mass of migrants was accompanied to the checkpoint in a column by silent Belarusian Border Guards. Smaller groups who were camping out at different points of the border joined in. The large group started forming near Grodno a week before the big push which gave some time to prepare. Polish Border Guards are accompanied by the State Police and the military. By this point of the whole crisis Poland had already deployed about 15,000 soldiers near the border with Belarus. Even the Fire Service can be seen on-site[2].


Pic. 2. Night clashes at the Kuźnica-Bruzgi border crossing, 2021. © TVP / Twitter

On the Belarusian side, although border guards and other uniformed servicemen are present, there is a complete lack of response to the attempts of illegal crossing of the border. There are also representatives of

2 The State Fire Service, of course, does not carry out order and protection activities, which are reserved for other units subordinated to the Minister of Interior and Administration, but it provides assistance to other services.

Belarusian regime media close to the migrants. It seems obvious that the whole situation is directed, has a mastermind behind it and the people lured to Belarus are being used as an instrument for a malevolent purpose. Aggressive migrants threw stones, bottles, logs, as well as stun grenades and paving stones at Polish officers and soldiers. The attackers are mainly young, aggressive men but even children are used to actively attack the Polish border. The mob makes attempts to force its way through the closed
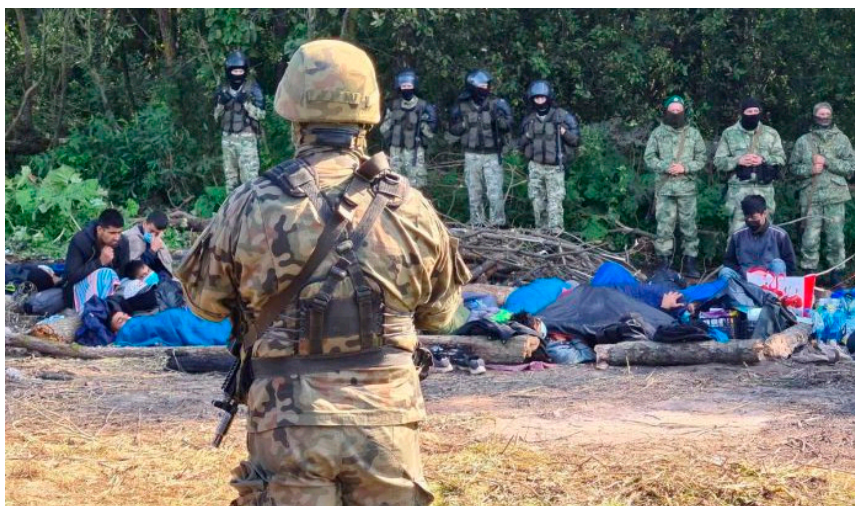
Pic 3. Belarusian servicemen in combat gear can be seen behind a group of migrants at the Polish border near Kuźnica, Poland, 2021. © PBS

checkpoint by storming it all day and night but is met by shields and water cannons and pushed back.

Ultimately, none of the migrants managed to illegally cross the Polish border but at least a dozen Polish officers and soldiers were injured.

2. Presage of the crisis

The problem with groups of migrants of eastern origin coming from Belarus was first reported by Lithuanian sources in early June 2021. One month later migrants were spotted in Poland. It can be assumed the intelligence services caught the wind of potential threat as soon as April or May. Even at the beginning, the migrants did not behave in a way one might expect from asylum seekers. On 23 June 2021, immigrants staying at the Foreigners Registration Centre in Pabrade, Lithuania, behaved aggressively and tried to leave the premises, so border guard officers had to use tear

gas. Already in July 2021 Lithuania introduced a state of emergency in the whole country, started building up fences and later decided to build permanent fence. 60 officers from Frontex came to support the border guards. Poland decided to introduce a state of emergency in September 2021. It was limited to parts of the Podlaskie and Lubelskie voivodeships covering 183 towns in the border area; initially for a period of 30 days but then continuously extended. Latvia had evidence of Belarusian services helping migrants to cross the borders in August 2021. Latvian parliament approved construction of the permanent barrier on the border with Belarus in November 2021. That month the High Representative of the European Union officially expressed the EU's solidarity with the member states affected by "hybrid attack" and made a declaration that the EU would continue to counter the state-sponsored illegal migration, including smuggling of migrants, organised by the Belarusian regime[3].

The attempts to cross the border continue in Poland, Lithuania, and Latvia for the last two years. Although, admittedly, compared to problems with migrants in other parts of the world which emerged in recent years for example in the south of Europe the numbers of migrants coming from Belarus are not that high, this situation is completely different. It is not at all a spontaneous, organic, sort of expected migratory phenomenon. This is a man-made, fabricated crisis.

3. Operation "Floodgate"

The changing demographics, domestic problems in Syria, Iraq, Sudan and many other countries can be seen as root causes of economic migration but the sheer numbers over timeline show how the new trend is not "organic". According to Frontex, the number of illegal border-crossings detected at the Eastern land borders of the EU in 2021 revealed a tenfold increase in comparison to 2020. Polish, Lithuanian, and Latvian Border Guards report often on the involvement of Belarusian border guards in facilitating the irregular migration which indicates high level of decision making and coordination. We know where these decisions had to take place.

In August 2021, investigative journalists began writing about Belarusian authorities' direct involvement in the migration crisis. According to a joint investigation by Dossier and the German newspaper Der Spiegel,

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3   European Council, Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the European Union on the situation at the European Union border (10.11.2021):
https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2021/11/10/belarus-declara-tion-by-the-high-representative-on-behalf-of-the-european-union-on-the-situation-at-the-europe-an-union-border/ (01.08.2023)

the Belarusian state-owned company Tsentrkurort[4] has coordinated the influx of illegal migrants from Iraq to Belarus since the spring of 2021. Visas were issued to Iraqi citizens under the guise of doing Tsentrkurort tourist tours. Iraqis were able to get to Belarus thanks to the increase in the number and capacity of connections between Iraqi cities and Minsk. At the beginning of 2021, only one plane flew between Iraq and Belarus a week, and in May the number of connections began to increase rapidly. Migrants were accommodated in hotels, from where they headed for the border with Lithuania[5].

Also in August 2021, a Belarusian journalist and former editor-in-chief of the Nexta channel Tadeusz Giczan described in detail the involvement of Belarusian regime services in the transportation of migrants to the border. According to his sources, the migration crisis is orchestrated. It is an operation that even has a codename: Operation "Floodgate" (Операція «Шлюз»).

According to BYPOL[6], *the operation to transfer migrants across the border of Belarus with the EU was prepared and tested a full decade earlier in 2010-2011[7]. At the time, the goal was to force the EU to allocate funds to strengthen its borders (which proved effective because Belarus did receive tens of millions of euros from the EU). According to this source the developed scheme involved the Belarusian KGB[8], OSAM[9] and the Russian FSB.*

4. Response to crisis

For over two years, migrants brought by Belarusian regime from faraway lands have been attempting to cross the border to the European Union on

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4 Tsentrkurort is a travel company that is part of the Belarusian presidential administration which is essentially a means for an inflow of foreign currencies to the regime.

5 Vox Ukraine, Vox Check (16.11.2021):
https://voxukraine.org/en/got-any-complaints-about-batska-pro-russian-media-manipulations-no-vember-8-14

6 BYPOL is an organization founded in Warsaw, Poland, by former officers of the Belarusian security forces who left the service after the last presidential election and had to leave the country.

7 Infosecurity24, Białoruska „Operacja Śluza". Starannie przygotowany plan służb (25.08.2021): https://infosecurity24.pl/bezpieczenstwo-wewnetrzne/bialoruska-operacja-sluza-starannie-przygot-owany-plan-sluzb (01.08.2023)

8 Despite the Russian secret services KGB rebranding into FSB, the Belarusian secret services re-mained as KGB – editor's note.

9 OSAM/ASAM translates into Special Service for Active Operations. It is dealing with counter-terror-ism, and counter-extremism activities close to the border.

a daily basis. They are trying to cross illegally through Poland, Lithuania, and Latvia with the active help of Belarusian services. Their tactics evolve. Sometimes they even organise themselves (or are grouped like that by Belarusian servicemen) into two groups, with one serving as a decoy and the other making the actual push. They also use tools to get through the fences and wires which they most likely received from Belarusian "partners". Their behaviour is often aggressive. On occasions the border guards have had to use warning shots at the border or towards vehicles suspected of trafficking people.

Lithuania was first to notice the problem and react notifying the European Union about the situation affecting also Latvia and Poland[10]. The affected countries cooperate and confer with each other and make their own independent as well as joint decisions to respond to an obvious new threat[11]. Each of the countries introduced states of emergency with a set of restrictions in areas near the border. Each country had to make a decision on how to deal with those getting through. All of them decided that the security measures at the border need to be strengthened both in terms of physical obstacles, sensors, cameras as well as increased numbers of personnel. In a bit to stave off irregular migration all countries decided to erect new barriers along the borders.

Poland announced completion of the physical barrier in June 2022 and a year later completed the electronic perimeter security along the border. The 206 km barrier is now equipped with 3,000 day-night and thermal cameras, as well as 400 km of detection cables and 11 telecommunications containers. The cost is approximately €75 million. In total, the system of cameras helps to monitor 206 km of the Polish-Belarusian border and 400 km of motion sensing cables complement the system. The border guards report that foreigners regularly attack officers and damage the physical security measures, obstacles erected to help control cross-border movement.

Lithuania announced completion of its new physical barrier in August 2022. The barrier, consisting of a four-metre fence and razor wire, was installed in sections stretching approximately 502 km. The rest of the border with Belarus are waterways and reservoirs.

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10 In July 2021 Lithuania requested help through the European Civil Protection Mechanism and received material help such as tents, blankets, sleeping bags from twelve member countries. Similar help was extended to Latvia and Poland.

11 The countries cooperate on the level of ministries of interior mostly. This cooperation is not coordinated by any intergovernmental organizations – editor's note.

The government of Latvia made a commitment to finish building a new fence along the border by the end of 2024. The numbers of attempts to cross from Belarus has gone up in the third quarter of 2023 possibly due to the fact that the barrier was not yet completed. Efforts to dig through the bottom of the completed stretches of the fence have been recorded on the border. In 57 locations, the fence has been damaged while trying to break through it, even a makeshift staircase was used.

Janet Napolitano[12] famously said: 'You show me a 50-foot wall, and I'll show you a 51-foot ladder' when talking about border security in Arizona. Any physical obstacle at the border no matter how sturdy or sophisticated is no sufficient means in controlling cross-border movement of people on its own. It needs personnel to monitor the sensors, to watch the cameras and most importantly to patrol the border line. In normal times the border guards serve this function. In an extra-ordinary situation however, uniformed assistance may be needed. In the summer of 2021, responding to official request from Latvia and Lithuania Frontex deployed teams of European standing corps to these countries to assist in responding to the increased migratory pressure. Poland decided to depend on its own capabilities. It did however accept a small help from British and Estonian partners. 140 military engineers were deployed from the UK in December 2021 as well as around 100 Estonian troops including reservists from engineer, military police, reconnaissance units and combat camera teams[13].

Throughout 2022 attempts to cross the borders continued with various tactics and success rate but with a lower intensity than in 2021. A camp made for migrants by the Belarusian regime in Bruzgi emptied in March 2022 and the migrants were relocated to Minsk or spread along the borders in smaller groups. The number of flights from the Middle East to Minks decreased and the nations started building up the barriers. The numbers of attempts to cross also went down during the winter due to weather and the fact that migrants were not prepare for harsh weather conditions, but the crisis is far from over as the numbers in the first half of 2023 and new developments clearly show.

In August 2023 after the news of Russian Wagner mercenaries' base appear in Belarus, all three affected countries made a decision to send additional forces to assist the border guards. Lukashenko has said several times that he has been restraining Wagner fighters who want to attack Poland.

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12 The United States secretary of homeland security from 2009 to 2013.

13 Politico, British, Estonian troops to be sent to Poland amid border crisis (19.11.2021): https://www.politico.eu/article/britain-estonia-troops-poland-border-crisis/ (01.08.2023)

Polish Minister of Interior and Administration Mariusz Błaszczak decided to send additional 2,000 military to the border bringing the number to 4,000. At the height of the crisis the number of military supporting border guards at the border was close to 13,000. Police officers are also on site, both from the region and additional forces of at least 500 riot police and counter-terrorists. Police equipment was also sent to the site including armoured vehicles, vehicles with water cannons (and pepper spray), and helicopters. The support was requested by Polish Border Guard who also report that recently the behaviour of migrants has become more violent.

Lithuanian Prime Minister informed on a decision to send additional troops to the Belarusian border without revealing the numbers. She mentioned however that the intelligence and law enforcement also support the border guards. Lithuanian military and border guards are also to hold a joint exercise at the border with one scenario concerning migration as a "hybrid" threat.

Latvia's defence minister ordered the army to help guard the border. Border Guard officers have also been recalled from their holidays to help with patrols.

The crisis continues. In Poland the migrants dig under the barrier or try to cross over it, or they choose a narrow, 19-kilometer section of the border which, due to the terrain, has no barrier, only perimetry (the electronic barrier covers 206 km of the border, the physical barrier has 187 km). Some also cross through rivers. Belarusian services observe the places of border guard patrols and direct migrants where to go at a given moment. Migrants come from all over the world, from Asia, Africa and the Middle East. Among others from Afghanistan, Syria, India, Yemen, Eritrea, Somalia, Iran, Bangladesh, and Ethiopia. In 2023 already 42 different nationalities were recorded. The previous year the number stood at 50. Russia is involved in the process as often the migrants fly to Russia and from there to Belarus and head for the borders with the EU. The migrants sometimes have to pay to four different smugglers to get through to Europe. One to get to Russian, next to get from Russia to Belarus, another to get through the protected border, and one more to get to for example Germany. More and more smuggling organizers and couriers of various nationalities as well are popping up. In Poland, 323 were arrested in less than five months of 2023, it was 401 in the whole previous year. According to Polish Border Guards, smugglers are becoming more and more ruthless[14]. When approached by border guards or police they often attempt to run away, which leads

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14 Rzeczpospolita, Granica z Białorusią znowu mocniej atakowana (29.05.2023), https://www.rp.pl/spoleczenstwo/art38536441-granica-z-bialorusia-znowu-mocniej-atakowana-dziennie--probuje-ja-sforsowac-nawet-150-migrantow (01.08.2023)

to car chases, even with a tragic ending such as near Białowieża, where a Pole driving four Syrians crashed into a tree. The growing problem of smugglers on its own calls for additional resources.

5. Past relationships in the region

Belarus had never before been a key migration route into the EU. Historically, Belarus had a relatively good relationship with its neighbouring countries. To give a little context to political source of the migration crisis we can briefly go through the shared history of countries involved. Beginning from the 16th century and for two centuries onward Belarus and Poland shared within a single union. Most lands of today's Belarus and Poland were part of the same country – Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth – a union of the Polish Kingdom and the Duchy of Lithuania (which covered most of the lands of today's Belarus). These historical references bear significance in contemporary relations especially in the neighbouring regions of both countries. For most of the XX century when Belarus was still part of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). Poland was within the USSR's sphere of influence, the border between the two sides had a very much different role. The fall of the USSR, Belarus regaining its statehood meant a new chapter in the relationship between the two countries had to be written.

Diplomatic relations between Poland and Belarus were established on 2 March 1992. Poland was one of the first countries to recognize the independence of Belarus. Both countries signed the Treaty of Good Neighbourhood and Friendly Cooperation of 23 June 1992 and are bound by a number of bilateral agreements. Relations between particular regions, namely Podlasie and Grodno regions are significant not only for their geographical proximity but for the fact that for over two centuries they fell within the borders of a single country. A great share of the Polish minority in Belarus lives in the Grodno region with areas where they are the majority. Approximately 300 thousand, 3.1% of the total population, is enough to have a political voice in the country. Belarusian president Lukashenko does fancy that and depending on his current stance towards Poland and the European Union his narrative and actions often target Polish organisations in Belarus.

Since Poland joined the European Union in 2004 and later, in 2007, the Schengen area, the approach to the Polish minority (remember many of them live in the Grodno region near the Polish border), Lukashenko's view of its neighbours hardened. Of course, when it suited his political play, he was able to soften its stance like for example when in 2010 he called

Polish and other minorities in Belarus their or even his own people. This of course was not illustrated in the actions of the regime. Before the banning of the Polish Union in Belarus (PUB) led by Andżelika Borys in 2005, there were 16 so-called Polish Houses in Belarus. Polish language was taught in all of them. However, the overtaken and regime-led PUB took over all of them. The unprecedented repression intensified after the fraudulent presidential elections and mass protests in 2020 affected Poles living in Belarus.

Andrzej Poczobut, a journalist and one of the leaders of the Polish minority in Belarus, was arrested in March 2021 and sentenced to eight years in prison in February 2023. This signifies that Lukashenko no longer cares much for appearances. It was the mass protests and international outrage following the rigged presidential election that brought this change. Lukashenko no longer follows the rule of multi-direction approach, a balancing act, which required presenting himself as leader that understands and support rule of low, human rights, the norms the collective West expects from democracy. This has visible implications on how the state security and policing is done in the country and as a consequence on the role of the border guards and other services on providing stability or rather fanning instability in the region. Not by their design and original function but directed by the current political leadership.

Considering the official total numbers of registered attempts to cross for Poland, Lithuania, and Latvia, they surpassed the total number for the whole previous year already in the first seven months of 2023.

6. Humanitarian crisis vs. border protection

Due to hard stance by the authorities of Poland and the Baltic States, many migrants became part of a kind of a play with the Belarusian regime and its border services. Migrants who fail to get across and cannot simply go back to their countries of origin are trapped with little or no support. They built makeshift camps on the Belarusian side of the border. They warm themselves by fires, build huts, and sleep in tents or in the open air. Most feel deceived but live in hope of getting out of the trap. The humanitarian conditions understandably focused the attention of civil society, humanitarian organisations, and the media. This directed the discourse on the situation in the direction that painted the unbalanced picture of the situation divorced from the underlying cause of the problem and the most important reality. In August 2021, Christine Goyer, a representative

of UNHCR[15] in Poland, made an appeal to the Polish authorities to provide people stuck on the Polish-Belarusian border near Usnarz Górny with access to the territory of the Republic of Poland, immediate medical care, legal assistance, and psychological and social support. UNHCR made a reference to international law. In August 2021, Lithuania amended its laws to state that all people entering the territory can be automatically returned to the border, without examination of an application for international protection, effectively legalising so-called pushbacks. Poland did the same in October. This adds to the complexity of the situation taking into account international law which gives asylum seekers the right for their case to be considered. While the humanitarian situation of migrants at the border is clearly difficult and their legal status questionable one must recognise it is Belarus that should be blamed for the faith of the migrants it uses as the instruments of current policies. In fact, the Council of the EU condemned the Lukashenko regime for deliberately putting people's lives and well-being in danger recognising it breaking international law, and Belarus's commitment to the fundamental human rights.

The rights of the states affected by this operation should always be kept in mind. The increased inflow of migrants from distant lands is neither natural, organic nor legal. It is an orchestrated operation targeting EU countries neighbouring Belarus, an extraordinary situation. Some describe it as a "hybrid" attack; not strictly military but purposed to reach strategic goals. What are these? At the very least test the abilities to respond, probe international response, engage state resources (uniformed personnel, vehicles, finances), and simply cause instability. Two of the things that defines any state are its ability to hold administrative control over its territory and its ability to protect its borders. Some state actors might aim to destabilise other sovereign countries. Stability Policing is a tool to be prepared and help to address these threats under the threshold of obvious military attacks.

Additionally, each NATO member country is obligated to maintain a level of resilience[16], to be able to resist and recover from a major shock such as a hybrid attack. One of the resilience categories is the ability of a state to control mass movement of people on its territory. It is one of NATO's so-called resilience baseline requirements. In an extraordinary situation such as this, naturally the authorities of affected countries take normal as well as extraordinary measures to protect their borders' integrity

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15 United Nations refugee agency

16 Resilience is a state and society's ability to resist and recover from such shocks and combines both civil preparedness, state's services and military capacity.

and curb uncontrollable movement of people. This requires employing adequate countermeasures such as trained, experienced, and equipped personnel and clear rules of engagement with often aggressive migrants illegally supported by foreign powers.

7. Situation now

At the moment of writing, although the eyes of the world are focused elsewhere, the crisis is still very much ongoing. Migrants continue attempts to cross over from Belarus on a daily basis. Investigative journalism at the border with Belarus reveals little change since the migration crisis of two years ago. The problem is not confined to Poland and the Baltic states but to an extent is spreading to other countries. Smuggling and the flow of migrants to Europe did not cease. One of the changes is that Russian universities issue migrants with a student visa, which allows them to enter the country[17]. This was previously done by Belarus universities and travel agencies, but the procedure was largely thwarted when the EU put pressure on third countries and international airlines to limit the number of flights bringing migrants into Minsk. Now once the migrants land in Moscow, they are met by a smuggler who takes them to Minsk. Border controls do not exist between Russia and Belarus. The two capitals are more than 700 km apart. The average length of the journey is 10 to 12 hours, and the additional fee is $700. However, this fee can also be shared by migrants travelling in the same vehicle. A second smuggler is waiting near the Belarus-Poland border, showing the migrants the route to Poland. A third smuggler is waiting on the Polish side to take the migrants to Germany. Smugglers promise migrants easy passage across the Polish-Belarusian border and transport to Germany, but in practice, it can take weeks or even months. The individual migrants' reports show how different the trespassing stories can be. When some reach the Polish-Belarusian border they walk along the border for days, meet different smugglers, locals of Belarus who can for a price can offer a ladder to cross over the steel fence at the border or who dismantle iron poles from the fence to get the migrants to the Polish side. Original smugglers get their money after a proof of a migrant delivered to Germany is presented. Crossing the Polish-Belarusian border continues until the end. If migrants are pushed out by the Polish and Belarusian Border Guards, they return to Minsk, where they are to wait for a signal until another opportunity to cross occurs, then they go to

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17 Reporting Democracy, Russian Roulette: EU Dreams of Migrants Now Come Through Moscow (19.12.2022):
https://balkaninsight.com/2022/12/19/russian-roulette-eu-dreams-of-migrants-now-come-through-moscow/ (01.08.2023)

the border again. The numbers of attempts to cross to Latvia continue to go up at the moment of writing possibly because the physical barrier is not yet erected there.
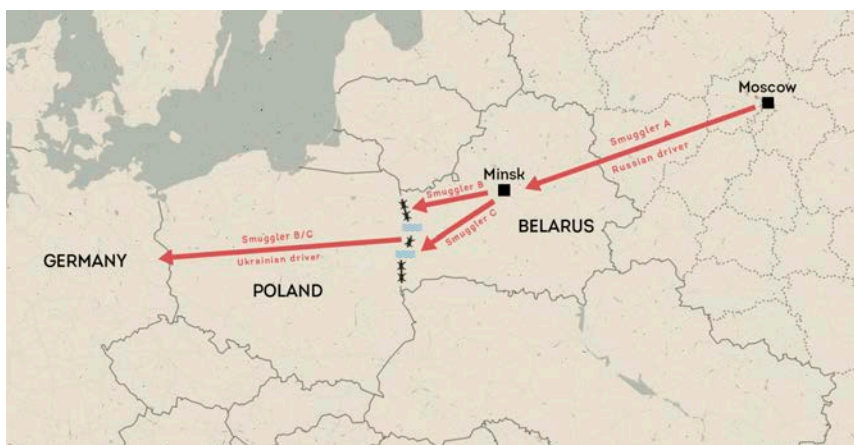
**Pic. 4. New routes of smuggling migrants, 2023 © Balkan Insight**

Despite the best efforts at the very border and its vicinity, thousands of migrants either manage to get to the EU on their own or were smuggled[18]. The ones hovering by the border fence in Poland and Lithuania make continuous attempts to cross. They are met and opposed by professional and by now quite experienced border guards. They are clearly assisted and sometimes equipped by Belarusian services with wire cutters, tools to cut logs and make ladders. They also change their tactics to make numerous attempts and understandably, some of them get through. At some points they made attempts in two groups of which one acted as a decoy to allow the others to cross.

It appears the smuggling has become a business, and this business is growing. According to German sources, the federal police registered more unauthorized entries in Germany in the first half of 2023 than in the same period a year before – 45,338 compared to 29,174. The increase at the German-Polish border was particularly strong: from 4,592 to 12,331[19].

18 Bild, Tausende kommen nach Brandenburg (23.09.2021):
https://www.bild.de/regional/berlin/berlin-aktuell/fluechtlingswelle-aus-weissrussland-schleus-er-bringen-sie-nach-brandenburg-77758178.bild.html (01.08.2023)

19 Badische Zeitung, Immer mehr Flüchtlinge kommen über Belarus in die EU (29.07.2023) https://www.badische-zeitung.de/immer-mehr-fluechtlinge-kommen-ueber-belarus-in-die-eu--276792789.

The number of people arriving on the route in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania and Brandenburg has doubled compared to the first half of 2022. In Saxony it was four times as many as a year earlier. This practice of smuggling refugees through border clearly needs to be tackled more effectively not only on the borders but also inland, on routes.
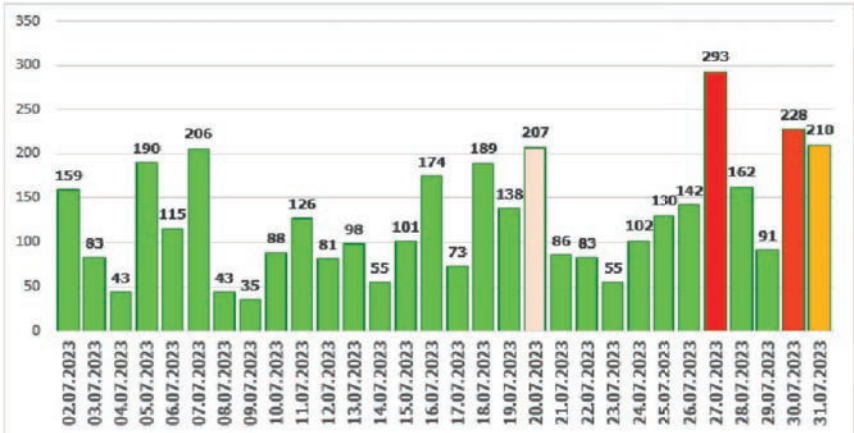
Pic 5. Daily attempts to cross border prevented by Polish Security Guard in July 2023 - Source: RCB (Governmental Security Centre in Poland)
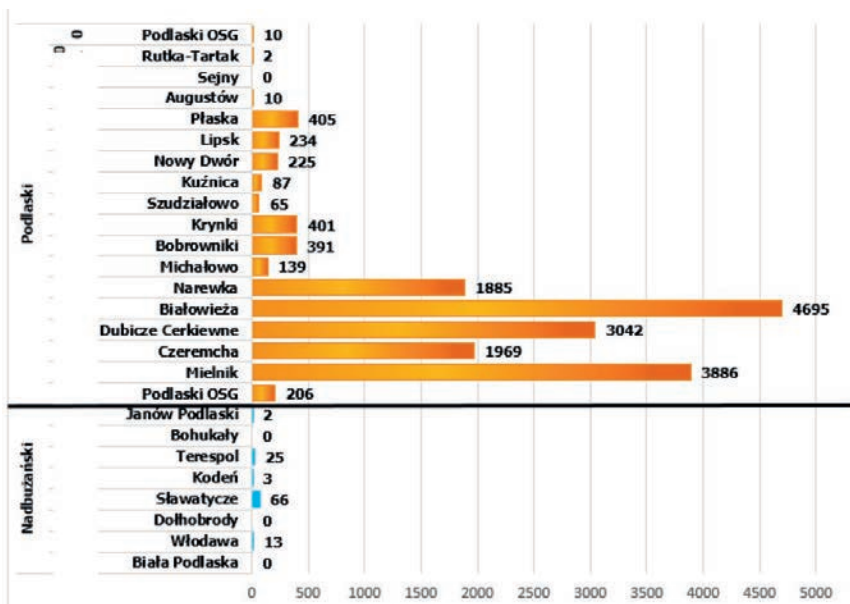
Pic. 6. Attempts to cross the Belarus-Poland between 1 January 2023 and 31 July 2023 Source: RCB (Governmental Security Centre in Poland). - Source: RCB
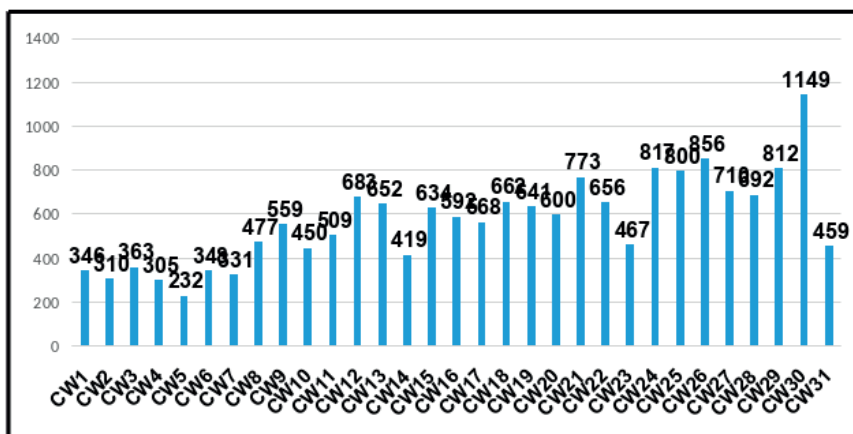
Pic 7. Irregular migration into Poland from Belarus.- Source: RCB

The still ongoing migration crisis on the border between Belarus and the European Union, especially with Poland, is fabricated. The regime

of Alexander Lukashenko must have assumed that exerting migration pressure on the borders with EU would test Poland's and other neighbouring states' ability to counter the chaos and stabilize the situation. Poland, Lithuania, and Latvia's similar hard-line response especially involvement of the military, although adequate to circumstances, fitted well with the propaganda of Minsk and Moscow about the aggressive actions of the European Union and NATO. Lukashenko must have also counted on creation of a zone or pockets of instability on the EU border. The created and prolonged difficult humanitarian situation was always sure to cause polarization and conflicts in the neighbouring countries and in the international society. The handling of the flows of people of foreign origin could have been catastrophic and potentially causing deterioration of political position on the international arena. The accusations of military involvement on the border with Belarus harmonize well with the propaganda of Minsk and Moscow about the escalation and aggressive actions of the European Union and NATO. The involvement of the Kremlin can be assumed based on not only on reports by BYPOL and investigative journalists but the very relationship and cooperation between Belarus and Russian Federation[20].

NATO is first and foremost a defensive pact, a military alliance centred on a simple idea that an attack on one of its members will be met with a response by all. It was formed after the Second World War and withstood the test of time through its ability to reform itself and adapt to changing reality. While the strictly military attack on Ukraine validates the existence of NATO as a security guarantee against Russian Federation's threat, other challenges emerge with ever-changing geopolitical landscape and evolving reality. Hybrid operations, cyber-attacks, targeted economic influence, and also instrumental malevolent use of demographic trends are such challenges NATO can and should have means to respond to these emerging challenges. However, NATO should always be seen as a "third responder" to a localised crisis. The first responder is always the state which directly affected. The second responder can be one of or several international organisations such as UN, EU, or members of the civil society. In the migration crisis, Polish authorities decided to handle the situation using its own resources[21].

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20 The Republic of Belarus and the Russian Federation signed the Union State Treaty on 8 December 1999. Only recently the two states revived the treaty. One of the most significant recent changes in the relationship between the two countries is that Belarus allowed Russian military stationing on its territory.

21 In December 2021, after the peak of hostilities on the border check point in Kuźnica, Poland accepted a small contingent of military engineers and recce soldiers from the UK and Estonia respectively.

The EU has a dedicated formation to help protect its borders – Frontex. Its rapid border interventions are designed to bring immediate assistance to an EU Member State that is under urgent and exceptional pressure at its external border, especially related to large numbers of non-EU nationals trying to enter its territory illegally. Poland opted not to use Frontex at the border but only to cooperate with the organisation when it comes to sending the migrants back to their countries of origin. Therefore, it is fair to assess that the crisis is being managed primarily by the first responder. Lithuania however requested Frontex's assistance already in July 2021 and Frontex agreed to send officers and equipment to work alongside their Lithuanian colleagues to jointly response to the ongoing crisis. That is the second responder. NATO as an organisation was not involved officially offering its support to stabilise the situation. It never got to this point. However, its members' military has been involved at the border, which understandably has an impact on the pact's defensive capabilities. This is one of the reasons NATO Headquarter Multinational Corps Northeast Szczecin, Poland, which has been NATO's Regional Land Component Command for Poland and the Baltic States, monitors the situation very closely. It would not be a far-fetched theory that the ongoing operation on the Belarusian border was and still is a covering operation for the Russian Federation's aggression in Ukraine. Operation meant to test NATO countries' response and direct attention of the world away from a bigger plot.

This leads to the so-called big what-if questions. These need to be proposed and closely examined in order to make strategic decision in preparation to what might come our way so that we know how and have means to manage disorder and instability. What if the Belarus and Russian Federation escalated the problem to the point the affected states Poland, Lithuania, and Latvia could no longer manage the movement of people through their borders using its own uniformed services? What if the migrants started trespassing to people's homes in the areas near the border and further inland? What if the states' border services where in need of well-trained assistance countering the human trafficking? What if Art. 5 of the NATO treaty was launched and along the strictly military so-called kinetic operations an orchestrated flow of migrants was used in parallel, as a hybrid attack? What if the migrants start blocking main lines of communications *en masse* potentially obstructing NATO forces' freedom of movement and manoeuvre? I trust the reader's imagination to envision a point in a crisis where a state's own border policing could be supported by dedicated forces from within NATO. Especially when the assistance would also be needed with patrolling deeper inland. Even if NATO as an organisation is not directly engaged in this particular situation presently,

it needs to be prepared for such eventualities. Building capacity, training personnel, raising awareness of such capabilities understandably take time. The emergence of the instrumental migration pressure on NATO's eastern flank however could be seen as evidence to the argument that there is no time to waste.

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12. Uncovering The Crucial Multi-Domain Operations Capability of NATO Stability Policing: Counter Hybrid Threats

1. Introduction

The United States and NATO have become increasingly vocal about the threats of authoritarian regimes across Eurasia.[2] While fears of nuclear escalation might deter direct confrontations with NATO, they don't negate threats to partners and other nations such as Georgia and Ukraine. Concurrently, NATO nations confront alternative threats to both national and human security. Malign actors utilize hybrid capabilities in "grey zone" activities, which fall below the traditional thresholds that would warrant military force.[3] In other words, competitors seek to win without fighting, to be malign, without dying.[4]

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1   The views and opinions expressed in this chapter are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of their agency or represent their agency in any way.

2   Biden-Harris Administration, "National Security Strategy" (The White House, October 2022), https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Biden-Harris-Administrations-National-Security-Strategy-10.2022.pdf; NATO, "NATO 2022 - Strategic Concept," June 2022, https://www.nato.int/strategic-concept/index.html.

3   NATO Stability Policing Center of Excellence, "Doctrine Forum II Factsheet The Role of Stability Policing in Countering Hybrid Threats," n.d.; Elisabeth Braw, The Defender's Dilemma (American Enerprise Institute, 2022).

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The United States Army's concept of Multi-Domain Operations (MDO) recognizes the existence of these grey-zone activities that operate below the threshold of armed conflict and large-scale combat.[5] Addressing the wide range of malign activities in a world marked by rapidly evolving technology and shifting political landscapes necessitates a comprehensive review of allied capabilities. If not, we risk being unable to "prevail in competition, penetrate and disintegrate enemy anti-access and area denial systems, and exploit the resultant freedom of maneuver to achieve strategic objectives and return to competition on favorable terms."[6]

Although Stability Policing most often functions as a tactical capability, it is strategically important to NATO in our contemporary multi-domain reality. Despite its association with counter-insurgency and other low-intensity conflict, its combination of police and military training, equipment, daily employment, and authorities creates unique multi-domain operational capabilities in competition, increases the capacity of combat forces, and acts as risk mitigator during transitions.

2. Background

This chapter aims to contextualize Stability Policing within the discourse of Multi-Domain Operations, particularly as detailed in the Army's Operating Concept, "The U.S. Army in Multi-Domain Operations 2028". While other documents touch upon similar themes, this particular document stands out due to its comprehensive nature and unclassified status. The Army Operating Concept provides a framework for understanding competition and conflict. In contrast, the Joint Staff version, "All Domain Operations", and the "NATO Warfighter Capstone Concept" are more focused on the execution of operational plans and justifiably kept at higher classification levels.[7] Although FM 3-0 is a valuable resource for practitioners, "The U.S. Army in Multi-Domain Operations 2028" offers a clearer insight into

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5   United States Army Training and Doctrine Command, "TRADOC Pamphlet 525-3-1: The U.S. Army in Multi-Domain Operations 2028" (United States Army, December 2018), vii–x, https://adminpubs. tradoc.army.mil/pamphlets/TP525-3-1.pdf.

6   United States Army Training and Doctrine Command, 17.

7   Colin Clark, "Gen. Hyten On The New American Way of War: All-Domain Operations," Breaking Defense (blog), February 2020, https://breakingdefense.sites.breakingmedia.com/2020/02/gen-hyten-on-the-new-american-way-of-war-all-domain-operations/; NATO Allied Command for Transformation, "Multi-Domain Operations: Enabling NATO to Out-Pace and Out-Think Its Adversaries:: NATO's ACT," July 2022, https://www.act.nato.int/articles/multi-domain-operations-out-pacing-and-out-think-ing-nato-adversaries.

the evolving operational environment and the strategies to navigate it, making it the primary document for this analysis.[8] To fully grasp Stability Policing's role in MDO, we will examine it through the tenets of Multi-Domain Operations and then analyze how Stability Policing tasks are pivotal across the competition continuum.

3. Multi-Domain Operations Tenants

Identifying Russia and China as primary competitors, MDO establishes "stand-off" as the immediate military problem – a consequence of applied diplomatic, economic, military, and informational efforts that play out in competition and conflict.[9] Calibrated force posture, multi-domain formations, and convergence define the tenets of MDO.[10] Calibrated force posture includes forward presence forces to deter and react to adversaries, expeditionary capabilities to reallocate as required, national-level capabilities, and authorities that bridge geospatial and cognitive boundaries. Multi-Domain Formations outline that forces should operate or coordinate effects from land, air, sea, space, and cyber domain. FM 3-0 adds the human, physical, and informational dimensions of each domain.[11] In those domains, forces suppressed by adversary advanced capabilities must be able to conduct independent maneuver, employ cross-domain fires, maximize human potential, and the mass of effects only possible through echelons above brigade formations. The rapid and continuous integration of capabilities in all domains creates converged mission command awareness that connects any effect-generator to any asset that might need it. Redundant effects chains (if one effect fails, another picks up the slack) and cross-domain synergy (the effect is greater than the sum of the parts, cascade effects) describe convergence impacts. Understanding Stability Policing's unique contributions depends on viewing through the lens of these tenets.

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8   "The U.S. Army in Multi-Domain Operations 2028" embeds military activities into periods of competition, conflict, and return to competition. This framework is in contrast, but not incompatible with other references, such as The Army in Military Competition: Chief of Staff Paper #2 and Joint Doctrine Note 1-19: Competition Continuum, which use cooperation, competition below armed conflict, crisis, and conflict as phases to a competition continuum. To align with the more recent publications, this paper uses the competition continuum instead of the construct that "The U.S. Army in Multi-Domain Operations 2028" outlines.

9   United States Army Training and Doctrine Command, "TRADOC Pamphlet 525-3-1: The U.S. Army in Multi-Domain Operations 2028," iii.

10 United States Army Training and Doctrine Command, 17.

11 Headquarters, Department of the Army, "Field Manual 3-0" (Department of the Army, October 2022), 1-21-1–23, https://armypubs.army.mil/epubs/DR_pubs/DR_a/ARN36290-FM_3-0-000-WEB-2.pdf.
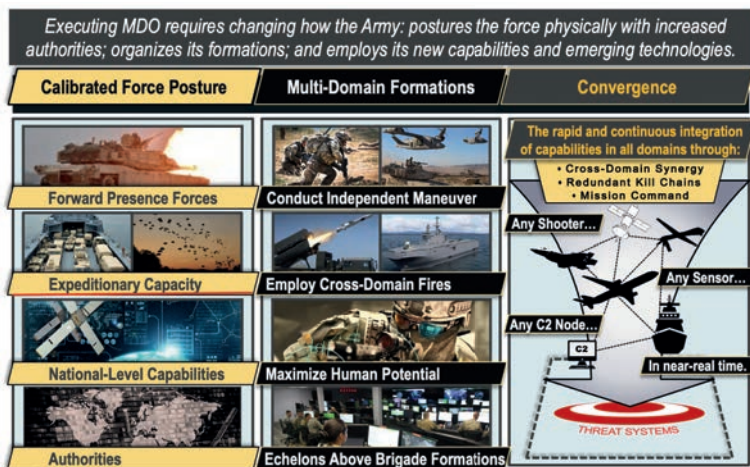
Pic. 1. Tenets of Multi-Domain Operations help outline the contributions of Stability Policing to MDO. Fort Eustis, VA, USA (2018). © United States Army Futures Command.

4. Stability Policing and MDO Tenets

The NATO Allied Joint Doctrine for Stability Policing defines Stability Policing as: "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."[12] It is a military capability for the policing of civilian populations, that emerged as a consequence of the "security gap" in NATO's SFOR mission in the Balkans. 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."[13] The Stability Policing approach took advantage of long-standing capabilities found in national forces such as the Italian

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12 NATO, "NATO Standard AJP-3.22: Allied Joint Doctrine for Stability Policing" (NATO Standardization Office, July 2016), LEX 2, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/628228/20160801-nato_stab_pol_ajp_3_22_a_secured.pdf.

13 NATO Stability Policing Center of Excellence, "About Stability Policing," NATO Stability Policing Centre of Excellence, accessed September 23, 2023, https://www.nspcoe.org/about-us/about-stability-policing/.

Carabinieri and the French Gendarmerie.[14] While Stability Policing is relatively new to NATO, its roots are long-standing. With the introduction of Multi-Domain Operations, it is beneficial to crosswalk this existing capability with the emerging capstone concept's tenets.

Calibrated Force Posture. Stability Police provide opportunities for calibrated force posture in multiple ways. Although gendarmerie-type Stability Police are military, they maintain unique authority for civil law enforcement.[15] As later described, hybrid authorities are one of the most potent components of Calibrated Force Posture that Stability Police provide in MDO.[16] Of course, as NATO nations designate standing policing units, they represent a functional expeditionary capability when allocated air, sea, and ground movement assets. National-level (or alliance-level) capabilities often include high-investment, low-density assets that remain in control of the highest echelons of mission command and must be shared amongst combatant commands. Stability Policing meets this definition in some ways because it is a unique asset that requires judicious employment at decisive points unless scaled for large-scale operations. But also, it can reinforce other high-level capabilities, such as human intelligence capabilities, by executing their primary tactical and operational tasks as outlined in AJP-3.22.[17] Together, these considerations show Stability Policing's contributions to Calibrated Force Posture.

Multi-Domain Formations. Stability Police are inherently multi-domain, employing forces regularly in the land, air, sea, and cyber domains. Stability Police conduct independent maneuver on the ground using civilian-style vehicles to fully armored vehicles with large caliber weapons and mortars – allowing for separate or coordinated cross-domain fires. Forces train for rural, urban, mountain, desert, and arctic land conditions. Particular Stability Police employ small vessels, patrol boats, dive teams, and other maritime assets for border control, recuse, interdiction, and other tasks. Some may be surprised to find out that some gendarmerie-type forces, such as the Italian Carabinieri,

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14 NATO Stability Policing CEnter of Excellence.

15 NATO, "NATO Standard AJP-3.22: Allied Joint Doctrine for Stability Policing."

16 Danilo Ciampini and Michael Dziedzic, "Assessing the Results of Gendarmerie Type Forces in Peace and Stability Operations | Militaire Spectator," accessed September 23, 2023, https://militairespectator. nl/artikelen/assessing-results-gendarmerie-type-forces-peace-and-stability-operations.

17 NATO Stability Policing Centre of Excellence, "The Role of Stability Policing in Countering Hybrid Threats: 2nd Doctrine Forum Final Report 2022," 2nd Doctrine Forum Final Report 2022 (Vicenza, Italy: NATO Stability Policing Centre of Excellence, September 2022), 7, https://www.nspcoe.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/20230207_SP-Doctrine-Forum-2022_Final-Report.pdf.

maintain a paratroop regimental capability in their policing structure. Some units also maintain dedicated aviation assets to the stability policing capabilities, separate from other military air assets. Assets like Portugal's Guardia Nazionale Repubblicana Unidade de Controlo Costeiro, maintain maritime law enforcement, interdiction, investigation, search & rescue, and other capabilities through significant numbers of watercraft and personnel. Stability Police can also leverage specialized cyber units, which provide digital intelligence, surveillance, forensics, and other investigative capabilities.[18] Stability Police are often organized with organic logistic units as well. The components form an independent multi-domain maneuver capability. Stability Policing maximizes human potential by providing highly trained personnel with multiple skill sets. Unlike traditional military personnel, who may exercise for years without directly employing their primary skills in combat, Stability Police are engaged in civil and military operations as a matter of daily operations in their home countries or deployed in support of national, multinational, or United Nations operations. Through their capability to train police, security, and judicial personnel in host nations, they also maximize the human potential of partners. Further, by engaging in community policing and other functions, they harness the human potential of the population to become more resilient.[19] While often executed in small teams and units, operations are possible up to, and beyond, the regimental level, which creates an echelon-above-brigade capability. Stability Policing meets the requirements of a multi-domain formation.

Convergence. Without covering ground already plowed, it is clear that Stability police converge effects across all domains and dimensions of operations. These forces work under NATO Standard Agreements (STANAG) and are interoperable with other capabilities. With proper planning, preparation, integration, and rehearsal, these elements provide necessary inputs, processing, and outputs into convergence networks. Stability Policing acts as a front-line sensor in periods of competition below and above the threshold of conflict. They should be essential in developing the human, informational, and physical dimensions through rapport building, biometrics, police intelligence, searches/seizures, weapons intelligence teams, forensic activities, crime scene management, surveillance, community-based policing, and other human and technical activities.[20] Not only are they a sensor in the environment, but they can also

18 NATO, "NATO Standard AJP-3.22: Allied Joint Doctrine for Stability Policing."

19 NATO Stability Policing Centre of Excellence, "The Role of Stability Policing in Countering Hybrid Threats: 2nd Doctrine Forum Final Report 2022," 7–8, 10.

20 NATO, "NATO Standard AJP-3.22: Allied Joint Doctrine for Stability Policing."

influence and shape the environment through riot control, arrest, security, protection of the population, judicial/corrections support, counter-terror, counter-drug, counter-smuggling, counter-human-trafficking, counter-organized crime, election security, close protection, hostage rescue, and other tasks that provide effects where needed, at the right time.[21] These combinations align with the mantra "any effect, any C2, any sensor, in near real-time" that MDO demands.

Through the first half of this analysis, we viewed Stability Police capabilities through the tenants of MDO. In each case, Stability Policing provided some, if not a unique, alignment to each tenant's requisite components. With this understanding, it is possible to align Stability Policing's relative value throughout the competition continuum.
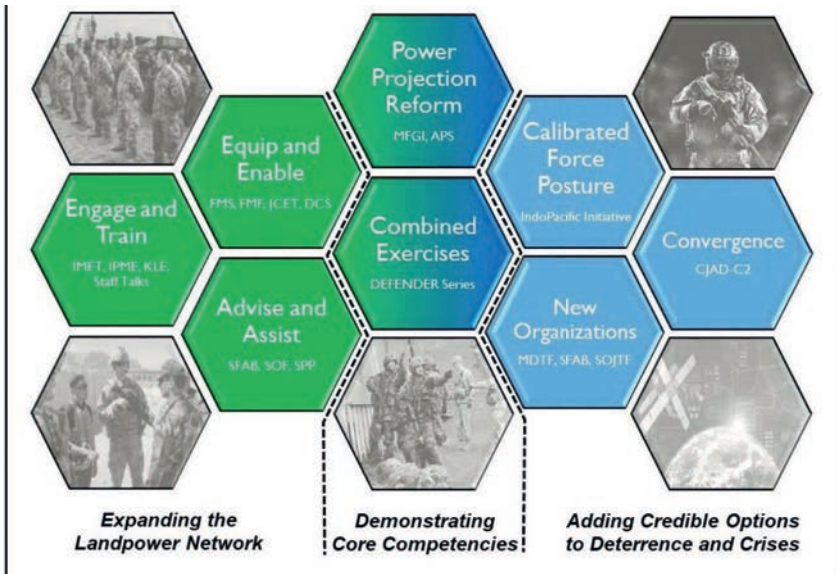
5. Stability Policing in Competition Below Armed Conflict

The most significant strategic impact that Stability Policing generates is during competition. Depending on the situation, Stability Policing should be analyzed for its potential as the main or supported effort during competition. This line of reasoning may not be the first to enter into an American planner's mind because most are unfamiliar with Stability Policing or gendarmerie-type capabilities. The Army in Military Competition: Chief of Staff Paper #2 creates three categories of competitive activities, which are expanding the landpower network, demonstrating core competencies, and adding credible options for employment in deterrence and crisis response.[22] During competition below the threshold of armed conflict, traditional military forces remain limited to preparing for combat, setting the theater for future operations, and conducting security assistance missions (Figure 2). Generally, forces lack the *authority* to operate during peacetime due to national laws or norms. Even if not formally restricted, conventional combat force training increasingly centers around Large-Scale Combat Operations (LSCO) [23]. Even if authorities existed for employment, forces are *de facto* limited by their habituated training.

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21 NATO.

22 Headquarters, Department of the Army, "The Army in Military Competition: Chief of Staff Paper #2" (Department of the Army, March 2021), https://api.army.mil/e2/c/downloads/2021/03/29/bf6c30e6/csa-paper-2-the-army-in-military-competition.pdf.

23 Arnel P. David, Nicholas Krohley, and Sean A. Acosta, "Getting Competition Wrong: The US Military's Looming Failure," Modern War Institute (blog), December 2021, https://mwi.westpoint.edu/getting-competition-wrong-the-us-militarys-looming-failure/.

Pic. 2. Competition Below Armed Conflict Activities for Military Actors. In most cases these tasks represent indirect means of competition. Washington, D.C., USA (2022). © Department of the Army.

Conversely, Stability Police brings a hybrid civil-military capability when modeled on the gendarmerie model. First, unlike military police, Stability Police have broad authorities and training for investigation, search, seizure, arrest, and incarceration, even during periods outside martial law.[24] These activities allow for what CSA Paper #2 calls "direct competition" at a level beyond which most forces can interact.[25] The additional contact with the civil population also allows for indirect and narrative competition.[26]

Imagine a situation where the rule of law degraded due to the influence of "grey zone" activities of a malign actor. Strategically, a whole-of-government approach could employ a strategy to increase stability, return the rule of law, and transition to sustainable host-nation control. By utilizing Stability Police as the main effort in a reinforcing and training role to host-nation police, opportunities for greater situational awareness, influence, and better legal outcomes are possible. First, Stability Police provide a capacity of force, meaning host nation police are less likely to be overwhelmed at

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24 NATO Stability Policing Center of Excellence, "About Stability Policing."

25 Headquarters, Department of the Army, "The Army in Military Competition," 11.

26 Headquarters, Department of the Army, 8–17; NATO Stability Policing Centre of Excellence, "The Role of Stability Policing in Countering Hybrid Threats: 2nd Doctrine Forum Final Report 2022," 5.

the tactical level. Strategically, this creates a deterrence-by-denial effect by denying malign actors access to host nation law enforcement or eroding cohesion through sponsored criminal or anti-government activities.[27] Further, these activities reinforce the rule of law and increase trust in the local government, all of which support the value of liberal norms.

Stability Police also provide specialized counter-terrorism, counter-organized crime, counter-drug, and counter-human trafficking operations.[28] Malign actors may attempt to employ these criminal activities to achieve their goals short of, or to set the conditions for, large-scale ground combat. When combined with disciplined crime scene management, forensic activities, weapons intelligence teams, surveillance, police investigations, and other tasks, Stability Police can create situational awareness to overcome cognitive and narrative campaigns against governments. For example, by backward tracing materials used in terrorist or criminal activity, governments can use evidence-based arguments for prosecution and developing counter-narratives. Moreover, these investigating financial crimes can help implement unimpeachable economic sanctions.[29]

While security force assistance builds capabilities for defense, if an adversary chooses activities below armed conflict, it is challenging to deploy those capabilities – no matter how well prepared. The advantage that Stability Policing brings to competition below armed conflict are capabilities that can be actively employed, not just trained. Active and direct strategic effects against malign actors inside another nation increase the likelihood of campaign success.

6. Stability Policing in Conflict

Leaders and planners are rightly focused on preparing for combat, as it is the primary purpose of military forces. However, in scenarios of competition above the threshold of armed conflict, the strategic significance of Stability Policing, both in terms of capability and capacity, cannot be overlooked. Stability Police, modeled on the gendarme design, are combat-ready. They are equipped with military-grade gear spanning multiple domains, from armored vehicles

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27 NATO Stability Policing Centre of Excellence, "The Role of Stability Policing in Countering Hybrid Threats: 2nd Doctrine Forum Final Report 2022," 7–14.

28 NATO, "NATO Standard AJP-3.22: Allied Joint Doctrine for Stability Policing."

29 Giuseppe De Magistris and Stefano Bergonzini, "Is NATO Missing An Opportunity?," Per Concordiam Journal of European Security and Defense Issues, June 2023, https://perconcordiam.com/stability-policing-2/, https://perconcordiam.com/stability-policing-2/.

and firearms to aircraft and watercraft.[30] Their training in law enforcement and military centers ensures a higher degree of interoperability than that of purely civilian police.[31] This interoperability is further enhanced through institutions like the NATO Stability and Policing Center of Excellence, aligning doctrine, primarily SP doctrine, with military operations.

However, planners should exercise discretion. Despite their military-grade training, Stability Police is a specialized, low-density asset. Directly substituting them for infantry or other combat units is typically not advisable. Their optimal deployment continues the roles they played during the competition. But as combat forces mobilize, the roles of Stability Police in areas like traffic management, site security, and war crime investigations become indispensable.

Strategically, as a state transitions to war, disruptions in public services are inevitable. In some cases, as observed in Ukraine, police and border guards might even become combatants. Such rapid societal shifts can lead to civil unrest. Stability Police can step in during these transitions, offering temporary support in areas like border control or training new policex personnel. The guiding principle for military planners should be 'Police First' when defining operational and tactical roles for Stability Police. This approach ensures stability, facilitating force deployment.

Stability Police play essential roles in rear operations during combat operations. Planners and leaders should also consider their role in mobile operations. One phenomenon in modern warfare is that extended-range systems can create a "less dense" battlefield. As contemporary combat forces maneuver, they are more likely to develop an extended, permeable battlefield. Commanders must address these porous operating areas to consolidate gains, especially in a rapidly dynamic battlefield. When properly reinforced, Stability Police, as a supporting effort, provides the capabilities to help close these gaps.

30 This information can be confirmed by referring to each contributing nations requisite SP websites and other references.

31 De Magistris and Bergonzini, "Is NATO Missing An Opportunity?"

Pic. 3. Technology drives the expanded battlefield in the area of operations. The Chart shows distances during the emergence of Air-Land Battle on the left, while the map and right-hand chart show the expanded distance of the contemporary conflict area. When other means such as cyber, SOF, transnational supported crime, and other capabilities are taken into account, the malign actors reach is global. Various Locations (2022). Constructed from unclassified charts from Army Futures Command and the NATO 1 German-Netherlands Corps, 2022. © Author.

From a tactical perspective, Stability Police can protect critical infrastructure in rear areas and manage the flow of internally displaced persons, impeding maneuver forces.[32] As maneuver forces begin to "uncoil," stability police can reinforce traffic circulation through coordination of host nation police, especially in urban areas with a high likelihood of contact with civil populations. As Stability Police maintain a base of projection, they move with combat forces, helping military police and civil affairs teams to secure lines of communication and forward bases of support, either by providing policing or creating a base for reestablishment and integration of community police. Along the way, they can protect vulnerable populations, war crime investigations, border control, and counter-SOF operations.[33] By performing their police tasks, they can provide security and awareness that allows commanders to retain a significant proportion of combat forces to direct combat tasks versus security tasks. While Stability Police are the supporting effort, they should be reinforced to scale and mass as necessary to support combat operations.

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32 NATO Stability Policing Centre of Excellence, "The Role of Stability Policing in Countering Hybrid Threats: 2nd Doctrine Forum Final Report 2022," 5.

33 NATO, "NATO Standard AJP-3.22: Allied Joint Doctrine for Stability Policing."

7. Stability Policing in Transitions

Military planners and leaders recognize the inherent risks during transition periods. In the Western military paradigm, there's a tendency to think in distinct categories. This categorization extends to doctrine, training, and equipment, focusing on dichotomies like war vs. peace or offense vs. defense. However, the ambiguities between these categories, often referred to as the "grey zone," offer malign actors, like Russia, opportunities to further their objectives.

The gendarmerie-inspired Stability Police serves as a bridge across these categories.[34] Below armed conflict, they can provide higher levels of direct competition, while in conflict, they offer a critical supporting role. Their strength lies in the continuity of their authority and training. Unlike traditional military forces, Stability Police have the dual capability of law enforcement and combat readiness, both below and during armed conflict. This dual nature can deter adversaries from escalating tensions or prevent conflicts. [35]

Consider a scenario where an adversary amplifies support for criminal activities, smuggles personnel and equipment, or orchestrates acts destabilizing a region, overwhelming local law enforcement. In such situations, conventional military responses might be constrained by legal, political, or societal considerations. Enter Stability Police. They can escalate protective measures while adhering to civil protocols, ensuring the rights of civilians.[36] Their presence can deter or neutralize malign activities. If adversaries intensify their actions, the investigative prowess of Stability Police can expose them, shaping a narrative that supports military intervention.[37] Their roles in intelligence gathering, surveillance, and protection places them as forward-operating units, ensuring smoother transitions with combat forces. This proactive approach either prevents conflict or improves transition to combat, by retaining combat forces for their optimized roles.

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34 NATO Stability Policing Centre of Excellence, "The Role of Stability Policing in Countering Hybrid Threats: 2nd Doctrine Forum Final Report 2022."

35 NATO Stability Policing Centre of Excellence, 5.

36 NATO Stability Policing Centre of Excellence, "The Role of Stability Policing in Countering Hybrid Threats: 2nd Doctrine Forum Final Report 2022."

37 NATO Stability Policing Centre of Excellence, 5.

Post-conflict, the role of Stability Policing becomes even more pronounced. After intense combat operations, conventional forces might be on the brink of operational exhaustion. While these forces are primed for combat, Stability Police are tailored for post-conflict stability.[38] They ensure protection of civilians, law enforcement, and act as a civil counterpart to Security Force Assistance, focusing on internal threats. Their presence facilitates collaboration with civil affairs units, NGOs, and other entities, laying the groundwork for reconstruction.[39] Strategically, As the public's appetite for prolonged military involvement wanes, Stability Police can remain, collaborating with long-term partners to ensure sustained stability.

8. Considerations for Multi-Domain Employment

While the AJP 3.22 doctrine series remains the primary doctrine for Stability Policing operations, I offer some reinforcing thoughts for campaign planners and leaders, especially those only recently learning about Stability Police. These items could be useful in future iterations of American FM 3-0 Operations or FM 3-90, Stability Operations.

1. Prioritize Authorities: Stability Police possess a unique hybrid civil-military capability. This should be the foremost consideration when determining their deployment and utilization.[40]
2. Judicious Employment: Given that Stability Police are a low-density asset, they should be employed judiciously, capitalizing on roles that leverage their distinct capabilities.
3. Identify Key Areas: Periods of transition, seams in operations, and regions with geographic porousness should be pinpointed as potential zones to harness the unique authorities of Stability Police.
4. Scaling and Command Relationship Considerations: When contemplating the expansion of Stability Police forces, ensuring their core capabilities remain undiluted is crucial. Potential reinforcements include Military Police, Civilian Augmentees, Host Nation Police, and Infantry Forces. Operational control (OPCON) to Stability Police or a similar command relationship is likely the optimal approach.[41]

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38 Robert M Perito, "US Police in Peace and Stability Operations," August, 2007, 12.

39 Terrence Kelly et al., "A Stability Police Force for the United States: Justification and Options for Creating U.S. Capabilities" (RAND Corporation, March 2009), https://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG819.html.

40 NATO Stability Policing Centre of Excellence, "The Role of Stability Policing in Countering Hybrid Threats: 2nd Doctrine Forum Final Report 2022," 7.

41 The Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction found that neither DoD or DoS

5. <u>Forge Partnerships</u>: Strategically plan and conduct exercises that foster partnerships between various entities. This includes Security Force Assistance (focusing on internal versus external security), Civil Affairs (emphasizing public services capacity building), Military Police (for lines of communication control and security), ground combat forces (for security and support), intelligence units (for surveillance and situational awareness), signal units (to ensure interoperability), and special operations (for tasks like anti-special operations forces activities, special operations, hostage rescue, and recovery operations).

6. <u>Exercise, Rehearse, and Assess</u>: Design and execute exercises that simulate transitions from "Competition to Crisis" and "Combat to Competition." These exercises emphasize the shift of Stability Policing from a primary role to a supportive one, ensuring seamless transitions in operational contexts.

9. Conclusion

Through the synthesis of Stability Policing through the tenants of MDO and the competition continuum, it is clear that this capability is not only compatible with multi-domain operations, but it also uniquely enhances these operations. Examining each tenant's component revealed that Stability Policing currently provides capabilities and authorities congruent with the framework of the U.S. Army's conception of multi-domain operations. Through the competition continuum, Stability Policing revealed its potential as a main effort for military competition activities. In conflict, Stability Policing is a critical supporting effort that provides unique options for commanders and retains combat forces. Additionally, Stability Policing can help "seal" the seams between civil and military activities, the transition from one component of the continuum to another, and help fill the capability gap in post-conflict requirements. While NATO forces may not be called upon to engage in combat in Ukraine, planners should consider if there could be a role for Stability Policing in a post-conflict Donbas or Crimea.

There are counterarguments to consider in future studies. For example, overzealous use of Stability Police could be seen as an infringement on the sovereignty of host nations and could create resentment among local populations. This is why their use should come at the invitation of

were adequate prepared for scaled operations. "'Police in Conflict: Lessons from the U.S. Experience in Afghanistan' SIGAR and NATO Stability Policing Centre of Excellence Conference" (Prepared Remarks, October 2022), https://www.sigar.mil/pdf/speeches/SIGAR_Stability_Policing_Conf_Remarks_2022-10-20.pdf.

legitimate host nation governments, be held to the highest professional standards, and be embedded into a larger narrative strategy. Otherwise, the Stability Police will become a foil in malign actor's narrative warfare. Also, Stability Police exist in a world of resource constraints, and choices must be made on which capabilities to invest in. However, compared to other emergent capabilities, Stability Police are of moderate cost, provide multiple uses, and maintain a human element that other technologies can not.

Moreover, NATO standby operational defense plans must view how Stability Policing might operate within alliance territory. As history has shown from operations in the Balkans, Afghanistan, and other "out of sector" missions, the need for combat and stability forces is an ever-present possibility. Planners and leaders, especially at echelons above brigade, need to integrate Stability Policing doctrine and training into their Plans, Operations, and other staff to ensure appropriate levels of integration. This is especially true of the military forces of the United States, which do not have gendarmerie-style forces in their formations or as a part of their national culture.[42] Stability Policing is not an economy of force activity – it is essential to realize the promise of multi-domain operations.

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BIO:

Nathan Colvin is a Public Policy Fellow at the College of William and Mary. He is in the fourth year of his Ph.D. study at Old Dominion University in International Studies, with concentrations in Cooperation & Conflict and Modeling & Simulation. He is also studying Russian language and culture at Ohio State University. As an Army researcher, LTC Colvin led the development of federated, large-scale simulation research projects on the future of warfare. Later, he became the Chief of the Joint and Multinational Wargaming branch, working across services from dozens of nations. His previous research at the School of Advanced Military Studies in 2013-2014 used a Complex Adaptive Systems approach to understand how exponential technological growth could contribute to expanding transnational technocracies with simultaneous cultural balkanization. His current dissertation looks at the role Stability Policing plays in Multi-Domain Operations.

NOTES

Multinational Specialized Unit

Grey Areas

Cultural Awareness

KFOR

Lessons Learned

Grey Zones

Counterterrorism

Trafficking Humans Beings

STABILITY POLICING

ACROSS THE WORLD

Protection of Civilians

Multi Domain Operation

Law Enforcement

Cyber

Police Primacy

Migration

Rule of Law

Cultural Property Protection

The purpose of stability policing operations is to foster security and stability for the civilian population. Stability Policing is therefore a human-centric approach, which looks at the society as a whole, men, women, girls, and boys. In those contexts, they represented an excellent instrument for NATO to fulfil its mandate. This is why, the link between Stability Policing and Women, Peace and Stability is undeniable.

Mrs. Irene Fellin
NATO Secretary General's Special Representative for Women, Peace and Security

I am sure that Stability Policing forces constitute a formidable answer to many national and international battlefield scenarios, conventional and unconventional warfare, armed conflicts, cyber-attacks, and post-conflict situations; thus, I boldly dare to say - that we, NATO, need more personnel trained as policemen and women to be prepared for what can and has already become inevitable.

Major General Maciej Klisz
CG, the Operational Command of the Polish Armed Forces