



NATO
SECURITY FORCE ASSISTANCE
CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE



Newsletter Issue No.9 - September 2023

Contents

1. SECURITY FORCE ASSISTANCE'S ROLE WITHIN THE CONTINUUM OF COMPETITION

LTC Michele SCIANNAMEA
(Former Doctrine Development
and Standards Branch Head)
Maj. Gianpaolo PAUCIULO
(Doctrine Development Section Chief)

pag. 4

2. HUMAN SECURITY: FROM STRATEGIC APPROACHES TO OPERATIONALIZATION

Viviana DE ANNUNTIIS (Joint Force Command Naples)

pag. 8

3. THE MIBIL: A KEY ACTOR IN THE STABILIZATION AND RECONSTRUCTION IN LEBANON

LTC Corrado CARPENTIERI
(Italian Bilateral Military Mission
in Lebanon Deputy Commander)
Ms. Hala ABBAS (Legal and Military Interpreter)

pag. 13

4. 2023 MAIN EVENTS

pag. 19

5. TRANSATLANTIC RELATIONS BEYOND THE UKRAINE WAR

Gabriele NATALIZIA
(Sapienza University of Rome, Geopolitica.info)
Lorenzo TERMINE
(University of International Studies of Rome
– UNINT, Geopolitica.info)

pag. 21

6. NATO SFA COE'S PORTAL

pag. 23

Dear readers,

The SFA newsletter is dedicated to the publication of professional concepts research and doctrinal products developed by the NATO SFA COE in collaboration with other research centres, think tanks, academia, etc. The newsletter explores professional, technical, operational and legal topics in the SFA field, ensuring rapid dissemination to the SFA Community of Interest (Col).

I am very pleased to have started this editorial format with the first issue on August 2020 and to conclude my exciting mandate as Director of the COE by presenting newsletter n. 9/2023. Together with my professional staff, I strived to create a deep and consistent network during all COE's activities, promoting both the priorities assigned by ACT, in terms of research projects, and relations and opportunities for collaboration with EU and UN agencies in charge of crisis management, Security Sector Reform, Stabilization and Reconstruction.

The NATO SFA COE has been committed to ensure that NATO's current strategic guidance, policy, concepts and context are clearly and accurately conveyed in all related SFA doctrinal publications. According to the Allied Joint Doctrine Campaign Plan, the NATO SFA COE contributes to harmonizing the various AJP's and ATP's linked to SFA and, consequently, it develops the related SFA doctrine consistent with NATO strategies, policies and concepts.

The 2022 Strategic Concept (SC) reaffirms that NATO's key purpose is to ensure the collective defence of the Alliance, utilising a 360-degree approach. It defines the Alliance's three core tasks: deterrence and defence; crisis prevention and management; and cooperative security. SFA plays a fundamental role in crisis prevention and management. Nonetheless, SFA and the effects of its activities are to some extent enabling, also for cooperative security and deterrence and defence.

The aforementioned topic is well explained by Col. M. Sciannamea, who emphasizes that the "the SFA Framework is a non-linear process"; this is the reason why it is an adaptable and flexible tool in the hands of the Military instrument of Power to manage any type of assistance to strengthen security along the three NATO Core Tasks and along the three Strategic Core policies. The increase of competition, both at the regional as well as the global level, point to the fact that a security paradigm is needed where humanity and individual human beings are placed at the centre. Ms. V. De Annuntiis clarifies the necessary process of operationalization of the strategic approaches of human security in order to establish standing capabilities that will allow NATO forces to understand how to best contribute to a people-centred notion of security.

Finally, as a case study of operationalization, Lt. C. Carpentieri and Ms. H. Abbas describe the Italian Bilateral Mission in Lebanon; MIBIL is an SFA type mission mainly aimed at building the capacity of the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF), the Internal Security Forces (ISF), and associated security institutions. In particular, the authors emphasize how the application of NATO SFA principles and activities are also effective in non-NATO missions where SFA imperatives such as trust and understanding are pivotal.

In conclusion, I would like to thank everyone who allowed me to accomplish my goal to increase the SFA Community of Interest during my mandate, enriching with their presence the quality of the COE's conferences, training events, dedicated workshops and editorial projects on SFA issues and thereby enabling the NATO SFA COE to become the Alliance's interface in the area of SFA.

Director
NATO Security Force Assistance
Centre of Excellence
Col. Massimo DI PIETRO



SECURITY FORCE ASSISTANCE'S ROLE WITHIN THE CONTINUUM OF COMPETITION

Hence to fight and conquer in all your battles is not supreme excellence; supreme excellence consists in breaking the enemy's resistance without fighting (Sun Tzu, The Art of War)

The new Strategic Concept reaffirms that NATO's key purpose is to ensure the collective defence of the Alliance, based on a 360-degree approach. It defines the Alliance's three core tasks: *deterrence and defence; crisis prevention and management; and cooperative security*. Therefore, to accomplish the core tasks within the current dynamic and challenging situation, the new Strategic Concept also implies the adoption of NATO's Core Policies, which are: deterrence and defence; projecting stability; and the fight against terrorism. As a consequence of the NATO 2022 Strategic Concept that involves NATO's transatlantic consensus, NATO doctrine is also undergoing a change of pace. In particular, on 19th December 2022 the *Allied Joint Doctrine 01 (AJP-01)*, which is the NATO capstone doctrine for Allied Joint operations and activities, was approved by the Nations in the Military Committee Standardization Board.

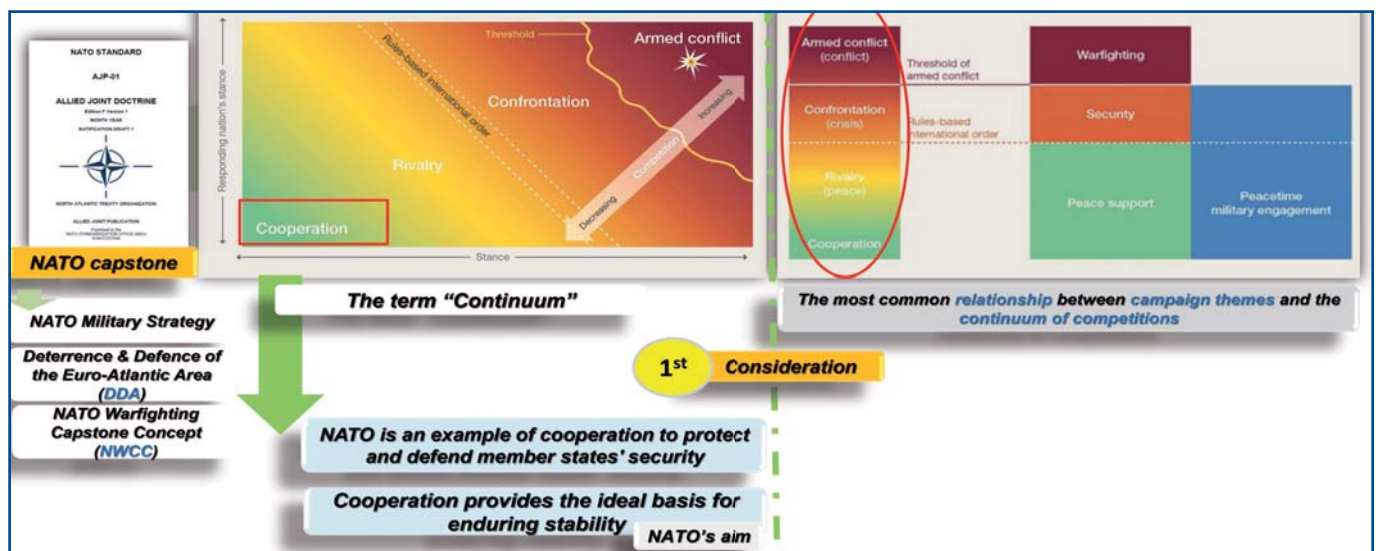
From the development of the AJP-01 and



in particular from the analysis of NATO's core policies, three important considerations can be highlighted:

1st Consideration: In order to describe the current geopolitical scenario characterised by pervasive instability and the rise of strategic competition, NATO introduced the framework of "continuum of competition". The "continuum of competition" is a model depicting how attitudes and behaviours shape international relations (picture 1).

The continuum depicts four types of relationships between states/groups of people: *cooperation, rivalry, confrontation, and armed conflict*. Nonetheless, "the boundaries between cooperation, rivalry, and confrontation, and the threshold between confrontation and armed conflict, are complex and dynamic; the



Picture 1 - AJP-01 & "Continuum of competition"

progression between each is neither linear nor easily defined"¹, this is the reason why the term "continuum" was chosen.

In addition, the term "cooperation", emphasised in the AJP-01 implies that cooperation occurs when States or non-State actors work together to achieve the same objectives. "NATO is an example of cooperation to protect and defend member states' security. Cooperation provides the ideal basis for enduring stability"².

In fact, Chapter 2 of the AJP-01 entitled "The Alliance" stresses that "NATO's essential and enduring aim is to safeguard the freedom and security of all its members by political and military means"³.

The term security mentioned in NATO's aim is one of four Campaign themes shown in picture 1.

The campaign themes are a set of military operations planned and conducted to achieve a strategic objective and they are: "Peacetime military engagement, peace support, security, and warfighting that are linked to the continuum of competition. The campaign themes use the concept of limitations (such as the objectives, means, area, time, rules of engagement, and other political constraints) and the concept of intensity (the ex-

pected degree and frequency of violence of subordinate operations) to provide the framework for campaigns"⁴.

NATO calibrates towards competition's campaign mindset with an agile and adaptable posture.

The second part of this new framework is the competition defined by the AJP-01 Dynamic due to the interactive and co-evolutionary nature of competition. It is involved in the five Principles of deterrence alongside Credibility – Cognition (Perception & Comprehension) – Capability – Competition and Communication. Deterring an adversary from operating in the confrontation zone or escalating into armed conflict requires the Alliance to consistently contest and win against an adversary's sub-threshold activities in any operational domain, effects dimension and in multiple regions, and, finally, along the aforementioned four campaign themes.

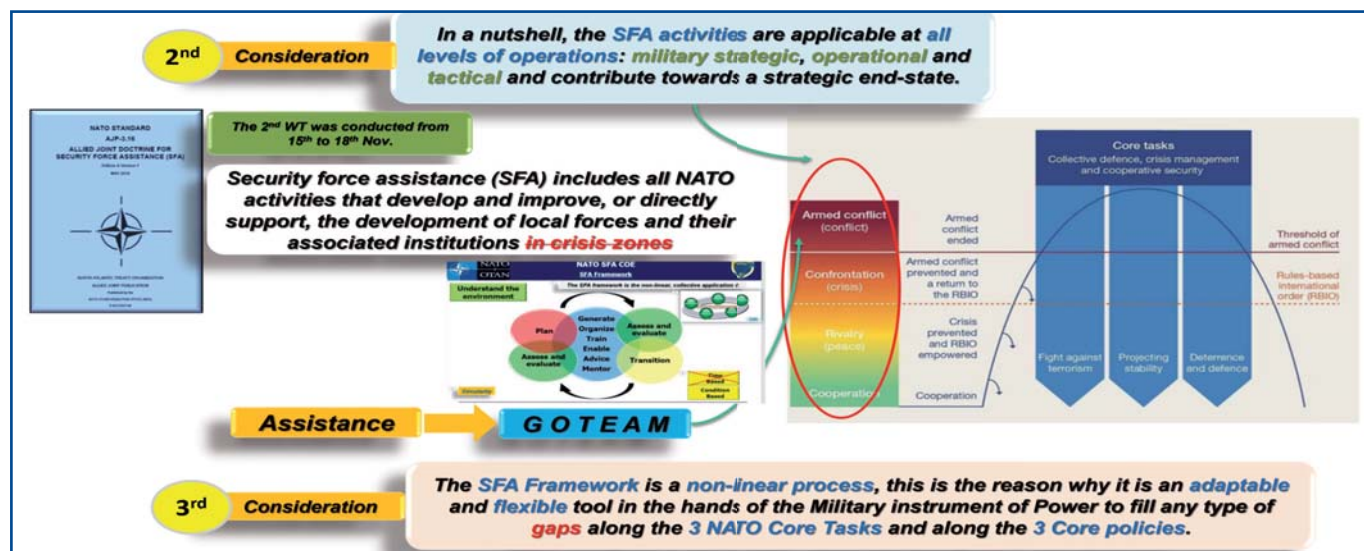
Due to this new doctrinal narrative the 2nd Writing Team on AJP 3.16 that is working on the Study Draft version 2 decided to revise the SFA Definition: the term in crisis zones will be removed and the definition will be reformulated with a focus on the development and training of Local Forces capability and capacity (picture 2).

¹ Reference to AJP-01 Ed. December 2022, page 5.

² Ibidem, page 5.

³ Ibidem, page 21.

⁴ Ibidem, page 42.



Picture 2 – "Comparison with SFA doctrine"

2nd Consideration: We can strongly affirm, in a nutshell, that the SFA activities are applicable at all levels of operations: *military strategic, operational and tactical* and contribute towards a strategic end-state, in line with the *continuum of competition*.

3rd Consideration: “*The SFA Framework is a non-linear process*”⁵; this is the reason why it is an adaptable and flexible tool in the hands of the Military instrument of Power to manage any type of assistance to strengthen security along the three NATO Core Tasks and along the three Strategic Core policies.

Instability creates areas that adversaries can exploit. This necessitates NATO to act in accordance with the projecting stability concept.

Projecting Stability is a set of coherently articulated and comprehensively developed proactive activities, which influence and shape the operating environment to make it more secure and less threatening⁶. As NATO’s Secretary General Stoltenberg stated in his speech at the Munich Security Conference of February 6, 2015, “*When our neighbours are more stable, we are more secure*”.

Projecting Stability, which involves the coordinated use of military and non-military activities and interventions in neighbouring regions, includes both:

- *Crisis management*, namely an ‘out-of-area’ action in response to extant security threats or attacks, and
- *Cooperative security* that aims to enhance partnerships outside NATO boundaries to improve regional security mechanisms in more benign environments, and even to help partner countries strengthen their capacity to tackle their own security, defence reforms

and to participate in international missions.

Projecting stability enables the NATO Command Structure to coordinate a broad range of activities, which include:

- Military Dialogue (a key activity within the cooperation range of the continuum of competition - “*Examples of military dialogue include NATO’s Mediterranean Dialogue and NATO’s Istanbul Cooperation Initiative*”⁷).
- Capacity building (this occurs in a range from cooperation to confrontation on the continuum of competition. “*A capacity building package can include various types of support, ranging from strategic advice on defence and security sector reform and institution building to developing local security forces through education and training, or advice and assistance in specialized areas such as logistics, cyberspace defence or public order management*”⁸).
- Operations that predominantly occur as part of peace support, security or warfighting campaign themes. “*Examples of projecting stability operations include the Kosovo Force and International Security Assistance Force Afghanistan*”⁸.

Within this framework, the SFA approach is a fundamental enabler that relies on the ability to *Generate, Organize, Train, Enable, Advise and Mentor (GOTEAM)* the Local Forces, also relying on the capacity and capability to provide assistance within Capacity Building packages. Nonetheless, from an SFA approach, assistance means to provide a good set of advisors’ specific skills and aptitudes such as good communication and good listening in order to Project Stability and strengthen the security outside NATO territory.

⁵ Reference to AJP-3.16 Ed. May 2016, Chapter 2.

⁶ Military Committee (MC) 0655, Military Concept for Projecting Stability.

⁷ Reference to AJP-01 Ed. December 2022, page 34.

⁸ Reference to AJP-01 Ed. December 2022, page 34.

In particular, in order “to assist the development of competent, capable and sustainable, committed, confident and accountable local forces”⁹, SFA Advisors, Mentors and Trainers must embody and mirror two of the 4 key tenets of NATO doctrine: the behaviour centric approach and the comprehensive approach (the others are the manoeuvrist and the mission command approaches).

The behaviour-centric approach concentrates on a comprehensive and persistent understanding of audiences and how they can affect our end state in order to help facilitate an understanding of the complex operational environment in which *Security Force Assistance Advisors, Mentors and Trainers* are called upon to operate. It is crucial to adopt a focus on the human capital as a main concern for the SFA approach in order to assist the counterpart to preserve itself and guarantee

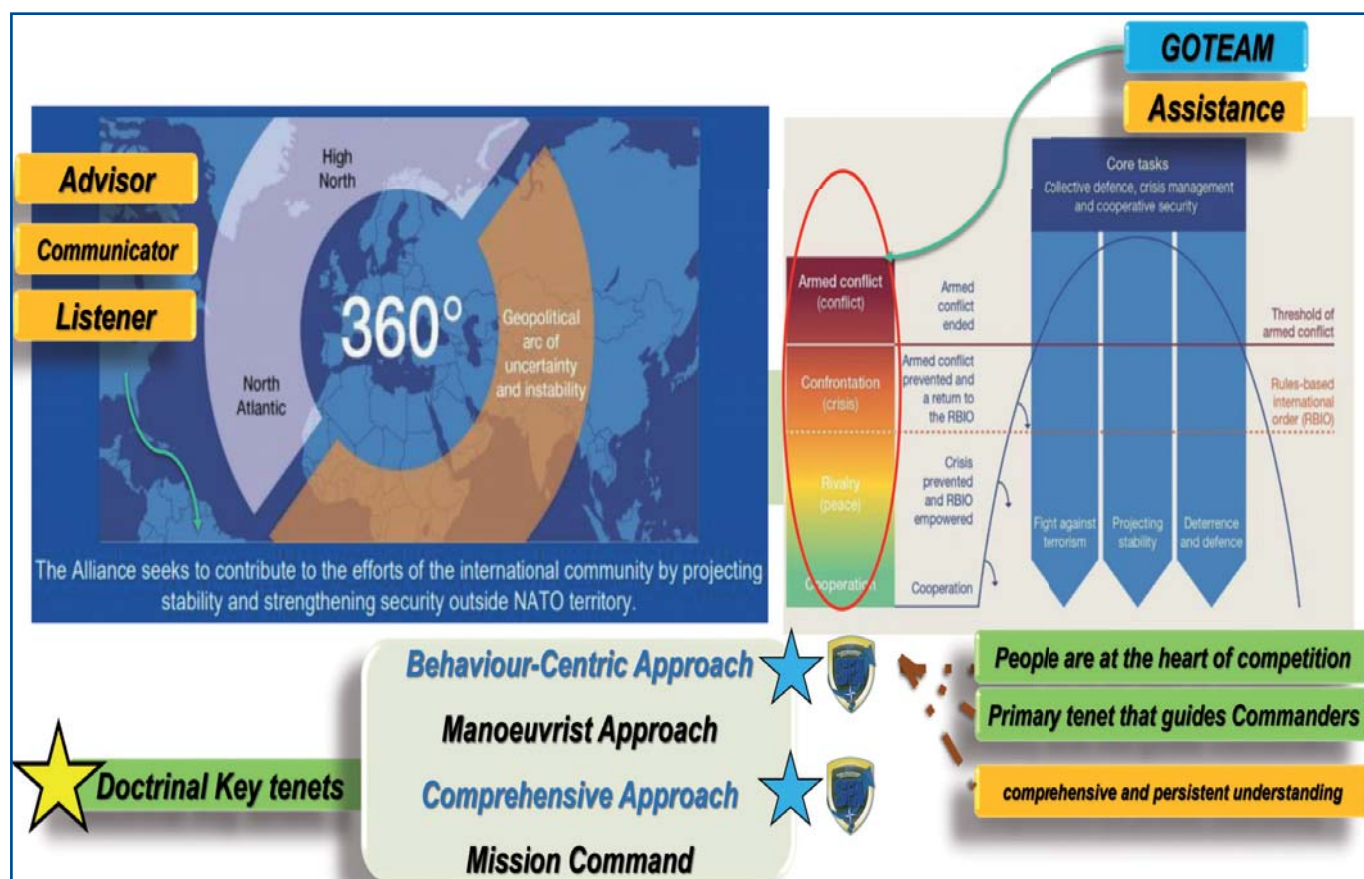
the development of Local Forces (picture 3).

The comprehensive approach “comprises the integrated activities from an appropriate range of civil and military actors to achieve common objectives, enabled by the orchestration, coordination and de-confliction of NATO’s military and political instruments with the other instruments of power”¹⁰. SFA is one part of NATO’s contribution to a comprehensive approach “considering and understanding all aspects of the local forces’ capacity and capability development, including their relationship with other institutions and processes”¹¹. These two key tenets of NATO doctrine shall provide support in addressing the future challenges for all *Security Force Assistance Advisors, Mentors and Trainers* in assisting Host Nations and respective Local Forces on the continuum of competition.

⁹ Reference to AJP-3.16 Ed. May 2016, Chapter 2.

¹⁰ Reference to AJP-01 Ed. December 2022, page 59.

¹¹ Reference to AJP-3.16 Ed. May 2016, Chapter 1.



Picture 3 – “The behaviour-centric approach”

HUMAN SECURITY: FROM STRATEGIC APPROACHES TO OPERATIONALIZATION

Today, there is broad consensus on the fact that we are faced with a renaissance of great power competition both at the regional as well as the global level, which is challenging the ability to manage security relations among strategic peers. As exemplified by the recent COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's invasion of Ukraine, we are also witnessing the resurgence of the notion of borders, both in the physical sense of territorial boundaries, as well as from a cultural, social and economic perspective.

Urban environments are becoming increasingly attractive to both State and non-state actors, because of their symbolic and economic value as strategic hubs. Globally, it is estimated that more people live in urban areas than in rural areas, with 55 per cent of the world's population residing in urban areas in 2018; in 1950, 30 per cent of the world's population was urban, and by 2050, 68 per cent of the world's population is projected to be urban¹.

Recent conflicts have already shown the alarming impact of crises on civilian populations. Increasingly, tactics of terror and destabilization that are theoretically outlawed by the rules of modern warfare are being used. These strategies often take the form of: preventing populations from fleeing (human shields); forcing the displacement of civilians to hamper freedom of movement or overload already stressed government and civilian support infrastructure; denying populations access to food and water. Hybrid



warfare can create distrust and conditions where conflicts are more difficult to end; misinformation, disinformation and hate speech manipulate and dominate the information space. These trends clearly point to the fact that a security paradigm is needed where humanity and individual human beings are placed at the center.

The 2022 UN report *New Threats to Human Security in the Anthropocene*², highlights that people's sense of safety and security is at a critical low in almost every country, including the richest ones, despite years of upward development success. To tackle this disconnect between development and perceived security, the report calls for greater solidarity across borders and a new approach to development; one that allows people to live free from want, fear, anxiety and indignity.

It could be argued that the notion of Human Security is hardly a new concept. Following a paradigm shift which had started already at the end of the 1980s from a 'state-centered' to a 'people-centered' perspective, security was increasingly viewed as an all-encompass-

¹ United Nations (2018). *World Urbanization Prospects*.
<https://population.un.org/wup/Publications/Files/WUP2018-Highlights.pdf>

² UN 2022 Special Report.
<https://hdr.undp.org/system/files/documents/srhs2022.pdf.pdf>

ing condition which prioritized the welfare of humanity at large: people and communities would be able to live in freedom, peace and safety and inhabit an environment which was not detrimental to their health and wellbeing. In 1992, the UN report *An Agenda for Peace*³ referred for the first time to the need for an integrated approach to Human Security, primarily referring to the shared responsibility among the different UN bodies for the maintenance of international peace and security.

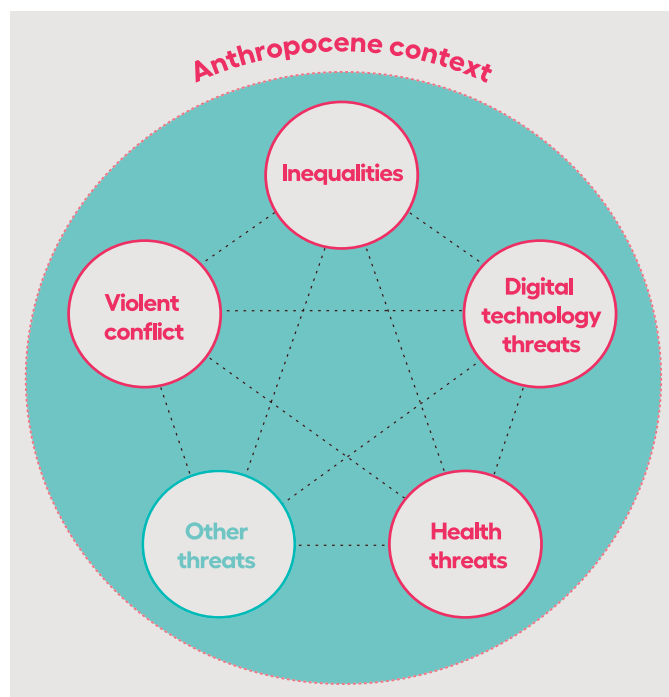


Figure 1. A new generation of threats to human security in the context of the Anthropocene.
<https://hdr.undp.org/system/files/documents/srhs2022pdf.pdf>

In 2012, the landmark General Assembly (GA) resolution 66/290⁴ recognized that development, human rights and peace and security, the three pillars of the United Nations, are interlinked and mutually reinforcing, and agreed that Human Security was an approach that

could assist Member States in identifying and addressing widespread and cross-cutting challenges to the survival, livelihood and dignity of their people. The GA further acknowledged that a Human Security approach centers on five fundamental principles. First, Human Security is **people-centred**, recognizing the complexity and interconnected nature of the challenges that confront people and their aspirations to be free from want, fear and indignity. Secondly, by being **comprehensive** and by drawing together all the actors necessary to respond to a challenge, the application of Human Security ensures coherence, eliminates duplication and advances integrated solutions that result in more effective and tangible improvements in the day-to-day life of people and their communities. Recognizing that risks to the human condition vary considerably within and across countries, and at different points in time, the Human Security approach recognizes **context-specific** variances, including the differing capacities of people, civil society and Governments, as well as the root causes behind ongoing and future challenges. Finally, the Human Security approach is meant to go beyond quick responses and is **prevention-oriented**. By drilling down to ascertain the real causes of challenges and by building solutions that are in themselves sustainable and resilient, Human Security promotes the development of **early warning mechanisms** that help to mitigate the impact of current threats and, where possible, prevent the occurrence of future challenges.

To date, the UN follows two complementary principles when it comes to the operationalization of its Human Security approach: protection and empowerment. Protection from a humanitarian perspective encompasses all “activities aimed

³ United Nations. (1992). *An Agenda for Peace*. <http://un-documents.net/a47-277.htm>

⁴ UN GA 66/290. <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N11/476/22/PDF/N1147622.pdf?OpenElement>

at ensuring full respect for the rights of the individual in accordance with human rights law, international humanitarian law and refugee law”⁵. Furthermore, the Protection of Civilians (PoC) has been a priority mandate of most UN multidimensional peacekeeping operations since 1999 and continues to remain high on the political agenda of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). The principle of empowerment underpins the operationalization of the people-centered dimension of Human Security; it implies a bottom-up approach aimed at developing the capabilities of individuals and communities to make informed choices and to act on their own behalf. Empowering people not only enables them to develop their full potential, but it also allows them to find ways and take active part in solutions to ensure Human Security for themselves and other communities.

In 2016 during the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS), the need was emphasised for a “new way of working (NWOW)”⁶

⁵ Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC).

<https://www.unocha.org/sites/dms/Documents/120405%20OOM%20Protection%20final%20draft.pdf>

⁶ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) (2017). *The New Way of Working*.

https://www.unocha.org/sites/unocha/files/NWOW%20Booklet%20low%20res.002_0.pdf

that would entail complementarity and coherence between emergency relief, development and peacebuilding as well as coordination between actors. While the international community has long recognized that humanitarian and development actors need to coordinate better and work more efficiently, peace and security as a third pillar have become increasingly tied to the success of the long-term sustainability and impact of humanitarian and development assistance. There is no doubt that over the last few years, there has been an increased focus on the adoption of a **Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus** (*The Triple Nexus*), conceived as a pragmatic operational framework that can support the implementation and operationalization of a Human Security approach. Such a framework must hinge on the need to adapt and respond to complex challenges collectively, working collaboratively across institutional boundaries, and leveraging the comparative advantage of a broad range of actors.

An overview of NATO's Strategic Concepts during the 90s reveals that managing the diversity of challenges facing the Alliance required a broader approach to security. In 1998, the NATO Secretary-General argued that “a se-



Figure 2. World Humanitarian Summit (2016). <https://agendaforhumanity.org/summit.html>

curity policy which is not constructed around the needs of people and humanity will risk the worst fate – being ineffectual”⁷. With the NATO Strategic Concept, *Active Engagement, Modern Defence* (2010), political leaders renewed their commitment to reform and transform the Alliance so that “it is fit for purpose in addressing the 21st Century security challenges”⁸. Increasingly, protecting civilians was portrayed as a key aspect of warfare and an ethical and strategic imperative for the Alliance in all types of conflict, from hybrid warfare to counterinsurgency and large-scale military operations where the adversary might be using tactics designed to cause civilian harm.

In 2016, when for the first time in the history of the United Nations, Member States, non-governmental entities, civil society, the private sector, international organizations, and populations affected by crises came together in the World Humanitarian Summit, NATO adopted its first-ever policy on the Protection of Civilians during the Warsaw Summit (2016). As a result, the Protection of Civilians (PoC) was defined for NATO as follows: “Protection of Civilians (persons, objects and services) includes all efforts taken to avoid, minimise and mitigate the negative effects that might arise from NATO and NATO-led military operations on the civilian population and, when applicable, to protect civilians from conflict-related physical violence or threats of physical violence by other actors, including through the establish-

ment of a safe and secure environment”⁹.

Approved by the North Atlantic Council (NAC) in 2018, the NATO military concept for the Protection of Civilians was designed as a set of planning principles that would endure for all NATO and NATO-led operations and missions, including Article 5 and Non-Article 5 Crisis Response Operation (NA5CRO). Its simplicity is its strength, and the concept provides a versatile approach to understanding PoC factors relevant to any operation or situation, from the strategic to the tactical.

A NATO PoC Handbook was published by Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) in 2020 to operationalize NATO’s PoC Policy through four key objectives: **Understand the Human Environment (UHE)** in terms of civilian needs, resiliencies as well as identifying societal strengths and vulnerabilities since effective PoC requires a threat assessment and risk analysis of civilian populations to be integrated into the operational planning process; **Mitigate Harm (MH)**, which involves applying International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and restraint to mitigate the effects of NATO’s actions on civilians as well as preventing harm by adversaries and other perpetrators of violence; **Facilitate Access to Basic Needs (FABN)** by enabling access of humanitarian organizations to people affected by crisis; and **Contribute to a Safe and Secure Environment (C-SASE)** through support to local governments and institutions to maintain sufficient security levels (e.g., policing) to allow normal patterns of life to be sustained or regained.

⁷ Solana, J. (1998). *Securing Peace in Europe*.
<https://www.nato.int/docu/speech/1998/s981112a.htm>

⁸ NATO (2010). *Active Engagement, Modern Defence. Strategic Concept for the Defence and Security of the Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization*.
https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_publications/20120214_strategic-concept-2010-eng.pdf

⁹ NATO (2016). *Protection of Civilians Policy*.
https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_133945.htm

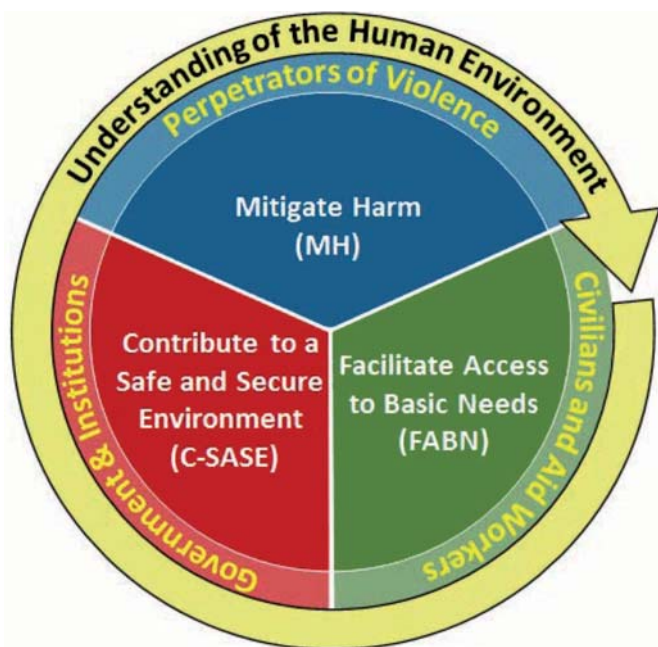


Figure 3. NATO Protection of Civilians Handbook (2021). <https://shape.nato.int/news-archive/2021/the-protection-of-civilians-allied-command-operations-handbook>

Under the banner of the NATO 2030 initiative, NATO's latest strategic concept was expected to set the priorities for "making sure NATO remains strong militarily, becomes even stronger politically and takes a more global approach."¹⁰ Yet, as NATO leaders prepared to meet at their Summit in June 2022, they faced a very different security environment from that which had shaped the Strategic Concepts of the past decades. The 2010 diagnosis - that "the Euro-Atlantic area is at peace and the threat of a conventional attack against NATO territory is low" – no longer applied¹¹. Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014, its long-lasting hybrid war against Ukraine, and finally the all-out assault in February 2022, has brought the potential of conventional warfare and great power confrontation back into European politics. As a result, in the 2022 Strategic Concept,

the Alliance's approach to PoC made direct reference to the need for identifying and addressing threats to **Human Security** within NATO's three core tasks: Deterrence and Defence, Cooperative Security and Crisis Prevention and Management. "We will promote good governance and integrate climate change, human security and the Women, Peace and Security agenda across all our tasks"¹².

Currently, the Military Contribution to Human Security in NATO is viewed as a multi-sectoral approach that embeds considerations for the comprehensive safety and security of the population into all stages and levels of Alliance operations, missions and activities. At present NATO's human security work focuses on five areas where the Alliance can be most effective: the Protection of Civilians; Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings; Children and Armed Conflict; preventing and responding to Conflict-Related Sexual Violence and Cultural Property Protection. While significant progress has been made in the development of strategic approaches and their operationalization within each of these five areas, the Alliance is currently defining the details of the overarching framework for its Military Contribution to Human Security. This process will require well-tested approaches, supportive mindsets, and standing capabilities that will allow NATO forces to understand how to best contribute to a people-centred notion of security. Undoubtedly, this is also an investment that will not only help fulfil NATO forces' ethical obligations, but also strengthen resilience and make civil-military cooperation more effective.

¹⁰ NATO 2030 (2021). *Making A Strong Alliance Even Stronger*. <https://www.nato.int/nato2030/>

¹¹ NATO (2010). *Active Engagement, Modern Defence*. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_68580.htm

¹² NATO (2022). *Strategic Concept*. Adopted by Heads of State and Government at the NATO Summit in Madrid 29 June 2022. <https://www.nato.int/strategic-concept/index.html>

THE MIBIL: A KEY ACTOR IN THE STABILIZATION AND RECONSTRUCTION IN LEBANON

The Lebanese Armed Forces' Reality

Lebanon seems a country in the grip of permanent crises. In recent years, it has faced deep political and economic hardships especially since the nation's 1975-1990 civil war.

The worst and multifaceted crisis Lebanon has ever experienced has been ravaging the country for almost four years. The simultaneous economic effects of the COVID-19 breakout and the enormous Port of Beirut blast in August 2020, have further aggravated the ongoing economic and financial emergency that began in October 2019. The latter has unquestionably had highly damaging and enduring effects. According to the Spring 2021 Lebanon Economic Monitor, the economic and financial crisis in Lebanon is one of the worst to have hit the world since the middle of the nineteenth century (The World Bank, 2022).

In the midst of the aforementioned dire and progressively worsening conditions, and through the turbulent and bloody history of Lebanon, the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) have long been regarded as a crucial pillar of the Lebanese state, as well as one of the only institutions ca-



pable of fostering unity and reviving national pride (Irish, J. & Oatis, J., 2021). The LAF enjoy a considerable level of trust and respect among the Lebanese people (Jensen, S., & Sharp, R., 2013).

In addition to the continuous commitment to counterterrorism and border security, the LAF have a history of being involved in internal conflicts in Lebanon, including during the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990), the battle of Ain el Helweh (1991), and along with more recent conflicts such as the Nahr al-Bared conflict (2007). The government often calls upon the LAF to restore order and prevent violence during times of crisis (Lebanese Army, 2022). They are being asked to respond, in multiple ways, to internal strife within the Lebanese territory such as civil unrest and organized crimes. Thus, their mandate goes far beyond the written terms of a traditional or conventional military. They maintain internal security and stability in Lebanon.

The LAF are security forces based on the principles of supporting territorial integrity and sovereignty, which is the basis for supporting the nation state (C. Todd Lopez, 2021).

While the nation's crisis lingers and military incomes continue to decline, frustration



Figure 1. Sharpshooter Basic and Advanced Course-
https://www.difesa.it/OperazioniMilitari/op_intern_corso/MIBIL/notizie_teatro/Pagine/MIBIL_corso_Sharps shooter_Basic_and_Advanced_TtT.aspx

has been increasing in the security forces, as Lebanon's currency has lost around 98% of its value against the dollar (Chehayeb, K., 2023), decreasing the salaries of soldiers who have started to take extra jobs in order to survive. According to Lebanese Defense Chief Joseph Aoun, if the economic and financial crisis remain unabated, they will inevitably lead to the collapse of all state institutions including the Lebanese Armed Forces, the backbone of the country. The LAF's professionalism and unity, he continued, remain essential to safeguarding the stability of the nation against emerging threats (Irish, J. & Oatis, J., 2021). Thus, international interventions aiming at developing a sustainable capability that should enable the LAF's defense against threats to stability and security, such as the Italian Bilateral Military Mission in Lebanon (MIBIL), are key factors in holding the country together in the face of current and imminent havoc.



Figure 2. Italian Bilateral Military Mission in Lebanon.
Edited by MIBIL PAO.

THE MIBIL

History

After the Syrian conflict, Lebanon started to suffer from serious social and economic hardships, with strong stability and security repercussions. Therefore, three sectors of intervention have been identified under the umbrella of the "International Support Group for Lebanon" (ISG) within the UN:

the support for refugees, the nation's economy, and the armed forces (Ministero della Difesa, 2022). This came following the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1701, which called upon the disarmament of all armed groups in Lebanon and the strengthening of the LAF's capacity to maintain security and stability in the country (UN Resolution 1701, 2006)

Italy, as part of its broader commitment to supporting peace and stability in the Middle East region, became a major player in the ISG armed forces intervention and established, in 2015, the Italian Bilateral Military Mission in Lebanon (MIBIL).

Type of Operation

The MIBIL is a Security Force Assistance type mission mainly aimed at building the capacity of the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF), the Internal Security Forces (ISF), and associated security institutions such as the General Directorate of General Security (DGSG¹), and the General Directorate of State Security (DGSE²).

Selected GOTEAM³ activities (NATO AJP-3.16, ed. 2016, p.1-1) are intertwined with the applicable cross-cutting topics⁴, and permeated by the SFA imperatives. Considering that the LAF are a well-developed force, the MIBIL's primary focus is on Training, with a strong Advising, and Mentoring component, while the Generating and Organizing activities are given less focus while being equally important. As a matter of fact, in contrast to the land domain, the air and maritime ones could use more assistance. In terms of enabling and equipping, the MIBIL

¹ Direction Générale de la Sûreté Générale.

² Direction Générale de la Sûreté de l'Etat Libanais.

³ Generate, Organize, Train, Enable, Advise, Mentor.

⁴ Building Integrity, Cultural Property Protection, Women Peace and Security, Children in Armed Conflicts, Protection Of Civilians.

contributes to assessing the LAF's needs, in close coordination with the Italian Defense Attaché. The latter may also supply equipment or services to the LAF.



Figure 3. Italian Defence Attaché at the Closing Ceremony of the CIMIC Enhanced Female Engagement Team Course.

https://www.difesa.it/OperazioniMilitari/op_intern_corso/MIBIL/notizie_teatro/Pagine/Libano_corso_Cimic_Enhanced_Female_Engagement_Team.aspx

In terms of training, an extensive Annual Training Plan is put in place by the MIBIL's core team coordinated closely with the Lebanese security institutions, and for the past eight years, the MIBIL has trained more than 6000 LAF soldiers and other security agencies' operators. The core team ensures a constant footprint in Lebanon, maintaining and increasing the contact network. The core team also analyses the LAF and other agencies' needs; plans, prepares, supervises and assesses the training and education offer; commands and controls the Mobile Training Teams (MTTs), and provides administrative and logistic support to them; keeps track of any event or education and training (E&T) activity and reports to its chain of command. The MTTs deploy to Lebanon for a limited period of time and familiarize themselves with the mission

and the counterpart. The MTTs are embedded in the Lebanese units, to whom they deliver courses or conduct training activities and eventually redeploy to the homeland. The MIBIL courses tackle the full spectrum of military operations, by mostly delivering tactical and operational level courses applicable in the continuum of competition and campaign themes. MIBIL courses cover many military and law enforcement fields of application in all domains. Some of the courses the MIBIL delivers are as follows: urban operations, sharp shooter, combative, recon and patrol, artillery, PSYOPS⁵, CBRN⁶, CIM-IC⁷ in the land domain; amphibious, reconnaissance, medical diving, sniper in the maritime domain; technical expertise in operating the LAF helicopters in the air domain; policing techniques, crowd control, cultural heritage protection in the law enforcement sphere; while the special forces share their expertise in the close protection team, close quarter battle, winter/summer mountain warfare.



Figure 4. CBRN (Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear) Defense Training of the LAF

https://www.difesa.it/OperazioniMilitari/op_intern_corso/MIBIL/notizie_teatro/Pagine/MIBIL_termine_addestramento_CBRN_per_LAF.aspx

⁵ Psychological Operations

⁶ Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear.

⁷ Civil Military Cooperation.

With regard to the Advising component, MIBIL officers regularly meet with their counterpart to encourage LAF's decisional process to find the best way to address the assessed gaps in their respective units. Mentoring is carried out by tutors and instructors who lead by example, shoulder by shoulder with LAF leaders, to help them reach their highest potential through the various E&T activities. As far as the Generating function is concerned, the MIBIL always seeks to bring to the table new capabilities that can improve the readiness of the LAF. For instance, the MIBIL founded the LAF Martial Arts School and generated the LAF combative capability from scratch, to prepare the Lebanese soldiers in hand-to-hand combat.

The school has already been successfully transitioned to the LAF, who are proud to be capable of operating it independently, with limited support from MIBIL.

Lastly, the cross-cutting topics, particularly those related to gender, building integrity and cultural property protection, are directly addressed in the MIBIL courses and activities. Moreover, the mission's personnel always strive to uphold the rule of law, and the utmost respect for human rights.

The MIBIL way

SFA imperatives, as stated in the NATO AJP- 3.16 (ed. 2016, p. 1-3) are the foundation upon which the MIBIL builds the capacity of the LAF.

Political primacy and sustainability are critical imperatives for a successful SFA mission. The latter entails making a political decision to allocate adequate

and sustainable resources to conduct SFA activities.

Thus far, the MIBIL has been constantly supported by the highest national oversight offices. Italian Members of Parliament, Senators, and Ministers, regularly visit the mission, providing political advice, and publicly endorsing its achievements.

In the framework of the comprehensive approach, the MIBIL 'seeks to stimulate a cooperative culture within a collaborative environment, invigorate existing processes and strengthen relationships at the joint, inter-agency and multinational levels' (NATO AJP-3.16, ed. 2016, p.1-4).

Thus, the MIBIL concurrently involves in its activities participants from different security organizations, eases the relations and promotes mutual understanding and the sharing of experience. Also, the MIBIL is always flexible in combining or deconflicting training and education opportunities with allied armed forces such as the US, UK, France, with the ultimate goal of building a capable,



Figure 5. Close Collaboration between MIBIL and NGOs https://www.difesa.it/OperazioniMilitari/op_intern_corso/MIBIL/notizie_teatro/Pagine/MIBIL_Contingente_Italiano_supporto_agricoltura_in_Libano.aspx

competent, committed, confident, accountable (AJP 3.16, ed. 2016, p. 2-1) Lebanese Force.

Outside the military/law enforcement sphere, the MIBIL maintains a broad network of contacts with International Organizations (IOs)/ Governmental Organizations (GOs)/Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), local leaders, and eminent business executives.

A successful SFA mission must be planned and executed while considering all the interactions occurring both domestically and outside the Host Nation, with the other stakeholders and contributors, with the international community and with the global corporations. The operations must always be integrated, coordinated, and de-conflicted with a comprehensive approach mindset.

The AJP 3.16 states that 'an in-depth understanding of the environment, and in particular the political, social and organizational cultures of the Host Nation (HN), is critical to the planning and conduct of SFA and the successful delivery of SFA requires trust between all parties involved'. Italy and Lebanon's long-standing friendship and commitment (Bongarrà, F., 2023), are flagships to the fulfillment of Security Force Assistance's objectives in the MIBIL context.

The Italian and Lebanese people share many similarities being two very welcoming Mediterranean nations. They find their roots in ancient civilizations, the Romans and Phoenicians, who shared many centuries of clashes, trades, and cultural fusion.

Up until today, Lebanese share a lot of similarities with Italians, especially in terms of culture, lifestyle, behavior, and a family-centered approach to life.

This condition facilitates very much the relationship and trust between the MIBIL and the Lebanese security institutions.

In many cases, the latter have expressed appreciation about the Italians' unique way of doing business, and their deep understanding of the Lebanese's needs. 'With you we train well, we learn more, and we have fun too!' is a usual expression of gratefulness heard by Italian instructors embedded in the LAF units across all Lebanon.

MIBIL supports host nation ownership by delivering tailored courses that originate from a joint gap analysis with the counterpart, and are continuously reassessed and revised throughout the mission.

The MIBIL advisors and trainers are keen to improve the Lebanese way of operating. They are glad to share their knowledge and skills, but they are also flexible and ready to adapt to contingency and the environment.

This requires a thorough selection, a specific mindset and an inclination to support local forces, by letting them decide and even fail, and eventually learn from their mistakes.

The end state is to ensure the sustainability of reforms after the transition. The overall MIBIL efforts includes also two other areas of interest: medical support to the LAF and Civil-Military Co-operation.

The medical support is meant to strengthen the rapport with the LAF and lend a helping hand by giving healthcare to soldiers and their families in a moment of severe economic crisis and uncertainty.

Every day, MIBIL's medical teams join forces with their Lebanese colleagues

in the Military Hospital in Beirut. To date, more than 1500 patients have been treated.

Mainly concentrating on the Beirut metropolitan area and central Lebanon, the Civil-Military Co-operation (CIMIC) within the MIBIL, aims at relieving the weakest in the Lebanese society. It consists of tailored projects planned and conducted in close collaboration with the CIMIC Department of the LAF. Both last-mentioned efforts support the mission and converge in consolidating the already strong bond between the MIBIL and the LAF.

They also further the long-term political, economic and cultural relationship between Italy and Lebanon and their people, serving as a steppingstone for a successful and enduring partnership.



Figure 6. MIBIL and LAF Special Forces: Mutual trust, Loyalty, and Shared Experiences
https://www.difesa.it/OperazioniMilitari/op_intern_corso/MIBIL/notizie_teatro/Pagine/MIBIL_corso_Sharpshooter_Basic_and_Advanced_TtT.aspx

2023 MAIN EVENTS

NATO SFA COE PARTICIPATED AT THE LUISS'S CAREER DAY FOR SOCIAL IMPACT



On Tuesday the 21st of February 2023, NATO SFA COE was invited to participate at Luiss Guido Carli's Career Day for Social Impact held at the University in Rome.

The involvement of the Centre is part of a larger agreement signed with LUISS in January 2020 that offers students enrolled at the academic institution the opportunity to carry out an internship and collaborate actively in the implementation of the projects developed by the NATO SFA COE.

The event was dedicated to all students and graduates who had the occasion to meet recruiters, conduct

one-to-one selection interviews, and receive suggestions on how to pursue a professional goal. During these meetings the Centre interviewed more than 70 students from the School of Law and International Relations Departments, European Political Economy and the School of Government. The students were informed of the opportunities and the main activities implemented by the NATO SFA COE, such as Internship programs with the Universities, research activities, courses and publications.

The "Luiss's Career Day" represented a great opportunity to share knowledge and interact with the academic world and to stimulate food of thought for the development of research papers and best practices, furthering the multidisciplinary approach.

NATO SFA COE JOINED THE MSPC 2023 IN QATAR

A NATO SFA COE delegation participated in the annual Military Strategic Partnership Conference 2023 (MSPC 2023), from the 13th to the 17th of March 2023, in Doha, Qatar.

The objectives for the Conference were to advance NATO partnership processes and programmes and provide solutions to 2023/24 Partner Capitals' ambitions for Education, Training, Exercise and Evaluation (ETEE).

The NATO SFA COE Director and the LL Branch Department Head participated in the first



panel "NATO Advisory and Assistance Support for Partners. The Way Ahead". During this panel the Director illustrated the pivotal role of Security Force Assistance within the context of Capacity Building as emerging in the new 2022 NATO Strategic Concept. He emphasized the underpinning principles of SFA and how they support the NATO efforts in implementing the NATO's core tasks and core policies. During the conference, the SFA COE's Training and Education Branch representatives also manned a dedicated exhibition desk along with other NATO Education Training Facilities (NETFs), Partnership Training and Education Centres (PTECs) and Centres of Excellence (COEs).

SFA ADVISORS' ENHANCEMENT SEMINAR 2023

The annual edition of the "SFA Advisors' Enhancement Seminar" was held from the 2nd to the 5th of May 2023, organized by the NATO SFA COE in collaboration with experts in management consultancy and professional training within NATO.

The seminar is aimed at increasing the technical-professional skills of the Advisors and consequently improving the conduct and use of the Mobile Advisors Training Team in NATO missions.

In particular, the attendees practiced Team Building activities in order to increase their cooperation and interaction skills, which are considered essential skills for SFA operators.

The session dedicated to case studies was enriched by the presence of Gen. B. Roberto Viglietta, former mission commander of the European Training Mission Somalia (EUTM-S), who illustrated the positive role of the Advisors in developing the capabilities and means of the Somali National Armed Forces (SNAF) through strategic consultancy, mentoring and training activities. In addition, Gen. B. Nicola Piasente, Commander of the Taurinense Brigade, reiterated the complexity of Defense Capacity Building missions and the importance of adequate training in order to standardize the procedures and knowledge of the Advisors, allowing them to be prepared to understand the local context and the relevant actors.



NATO SFA COE: CONCLUDED THE FIRST STEERING COMMITTEE 2023

On the 25th of May 2023, the NATO SFA COE hosted the first Steering Committee meeting of the year. For the first time, in addition to the representatives of the Sponsoring Nations (Albania, Italy and Slovenia), a delegation from Austria was present, as new "Contributing Participant" member.

Amongst the important projects that were presented, particularly noteworthy was the planned creation of a new course. It will be designed in close collaboration with the Italian Defence Higher Studies Centre (CASD) and Security and Freedom for Europe (SAFE). Intended for European Union personnel employed in the Advising and Training Mission (EUTM), it will be part of the program to consolidate the partnership between NATO and the EU.

At the end of the meeting, the foreign delegations had the opportunity to visit the Historical Museum of Vigna di Valle (Bracciano), where the oldest hydro basin in Italy stood, which was recently renewed on the occasion of the centenary of the establishment of the Italian Air Force.

During the visit, the participants were able to admire a vast multipurpose area with exhibitions of engines, uniforms, and memorabilia, educational areas, exhibition halls, as well as a multimedia area with flight simulators and virtual reality.



“Investing in NATO is the best way to ensure the enduring bond between European and North American Allies, while contributing to global peace and stability. [...] We will share equitably responsibilities and risks for our defence and security. [...] NATO is indispensable to Euro-Atlantic security”. The conclusions of the 2022 Strategic Concept provide a concise and highly effective response to three recurring questions for both those studying alliances and policymakers from the past and present: *why form alliances? Then, with whom should alliances be formed? And finally, what should be done with allies?*

The absence of a satisfactory answer or the emergence of doubts regarding these questions has often led to the dissolution of alliances or prevented partnerships, even intense ones, from transforming into alliances. NATO could not escape these issues when it went through the numerous crucial transitions marking the 1990s and 2000s, such as the end of the Cold War, the wars in the Balkans, and the 9/11 attacks.

In the last decade, the relative decline in power of the United States and its allies, Brexit, the debate on strategic autonomy, as well as the challenge posed by revisionist powers to the liberal order, the constant threats from the Southern Flank,



and emerging threats from the cyber and space domains, have all contributed to another stress test for NATO and, more broadly, transatlantic relations.

However, the shock caused by the Russian aggression against the Ukraine has partially eased the growing frictions that were taking shape among allies prior to the release of the new Strategic Concept.

It has allowed them to dispel any doubts about the persisting need for NATO, as expressed by both the European, especially the French, and American sides—particularly corrosive during the Trump administration. It has also prompted them to increase or promise to increase their military expenditures in line with the Defense Investment Pledge.

Three distinct positions, not easily reconcilable, regarding the future of NATO remain in the background.

The Eastern countries are convinced that the Alliance should continue to focus on the same threat as always — Russia — using the same tools as before — deterrence and defence. The Southern European countries, with Italy at the forefront, ask NATO to equally address threats from the Eastern Flank and the Southern Flank, further developing crisis management tools.

The Anglo-Saxon countries, on the other hand, aspire to transform NATO into an increasingly global alliance by expanding its scope and reinvigorating commitments to cooperative security issues.

The events following February 24, 2022, have inevitably strengthened the first of these three positions, which has contributed more than the others to shaping the new Strategic Concept. However, this evolution appears more like the classic sweeping of dust under the rug rather than a genuine new solution, as demonstrated by the latest US National Security Strategy or the UK Global Britain White Paper, which are not entirely aligned with the 2022 Strategic Concept, as well by the ambiguity of the positions of some Western European countries, particularly France, towards Moscow and Beijing.

Therefore, in the medium term, it is likely that the different perspectives of the allies will resurface, and the transformation of the synthesis found at the Madrid Summit will represent the major challenge, primarily internal in nature, that the Atlantic Alliance will have to confront towards 2030¹.



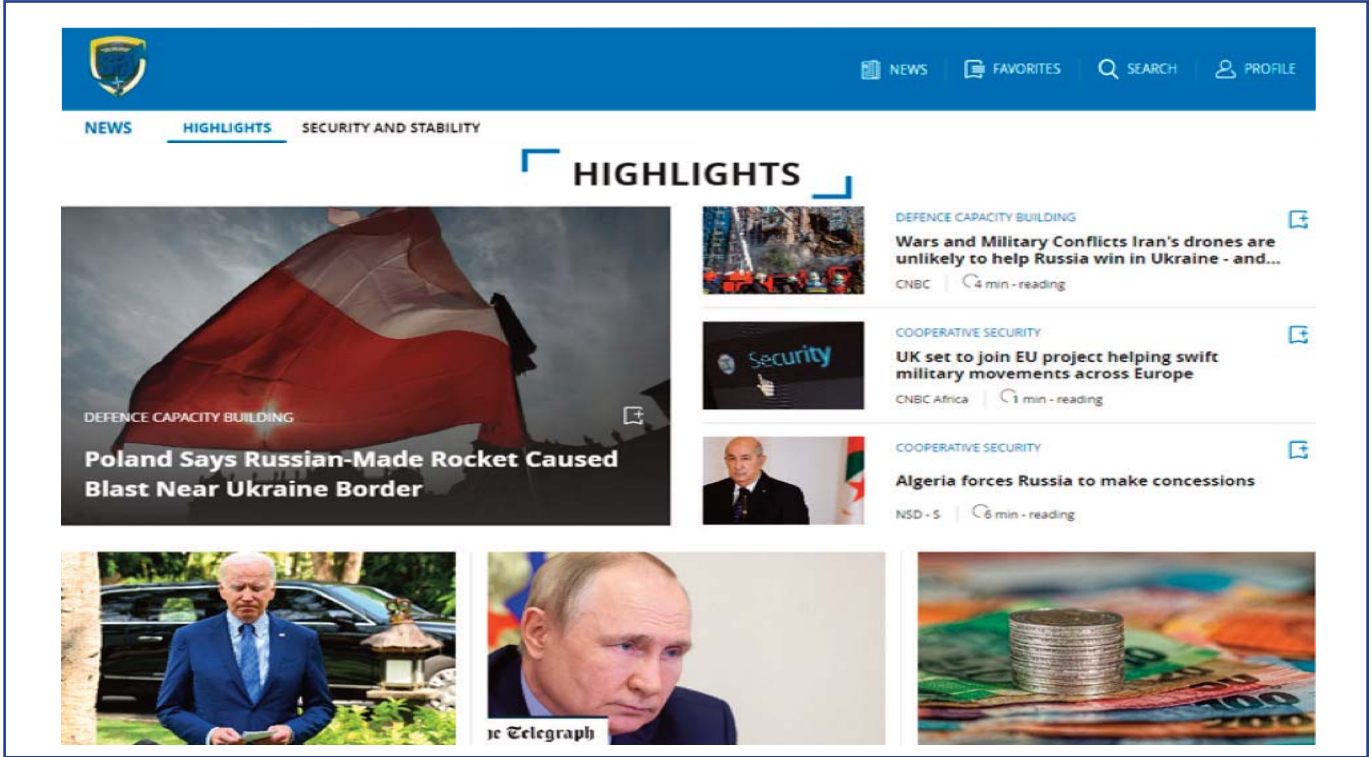
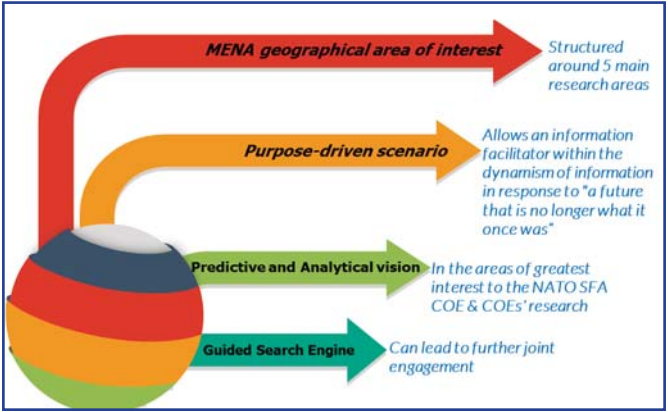
¹ The themes of this article are more fully covered in the book *La NATO verso il 2030. Continuità e discontinuità nelle relazioni transatlantiche dopo il nuovo Concetto Strategico* (edited by Gabriele Natalizia and Lorenzo Termine, out in June 2023 for il Mulino), published within the project COMDOL+ by the Centre for Geopolitical Studies “Geopolitica.info”, in collaboration with CEMAS Sapienza, DISPI Univ. of Genoa, UNINT, UNITELMA Sapienza and supported by the Policy Planning Unit of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.

sulting NATO core policies are described as “deter and defence”, “projecting stability” and “fight against terrorism”, that are to be achieved through a stabilisation process which will inevitably pass by activities and sectors such as Stability Policing (SP), Security Force Assistance (SFA), and Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR), to finally help in restoring basic services, public security facilities and infrastructures. All these concepts, contents and ideas need a wide access to information to be collected in order to increase the SFA operators and planners' awareness of the local context.

Through this platform they may gather, in a digital online repository easily accessible to all the registered users, the thematic information they need. Finally, the platform will enable the users to examine loads of pieces of information, that are ensured to be up-to-date, reliable and rich in quality, contributing to avoid the dispersion of information and to optimise the resource retrieval process. In a nutshell, innovation, which by its definition breaks down barriers, creates

fractures and regenerates ideas, will increasingly have to respond to a regenerative logic of “innovability”.

Certainly, this innovative tool, characterised as a multilingual and multidevice interface, due to the wide and flexible configuration of topics that can be uploaded, will represent a useful and precious means to share information and make the most out of the contents produced. NATO SFA COE developed this tool in order to increase the open source situational awareness of crisis areas where the Alliance and its Partners can be asked to intervene in support of stabilization processes, but its potentiality will also prove beneficial for Academic and civilian uses.





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