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Improvements Required for Operational and Tactical Intelligence Sharing in NATO

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Abstract: *Intelligence sharing within the ISAF structure was an issue in the Afghan Theatre of Operations (ATO). It has been accepted that improvements are needed within the American intelligence structures, however contributing state caveats played a role in creating this situation. The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) consisted of 46 contributing countries, with 28 of them being NATO members. It is evident that counterinsurgency operations are here to stay even with the ISAF drawdown in Afghanistan. Globalized terrorism still remains one of the key threats in NATO strategic planning. In January 2013, French forces intervened in the Malian conflict to support regional African troops by reversing the gains of the Tuareg rebellion that was hijacked by militant Islamist insurgent groups. Although it was not a NATO-sanctioned mission, French forces were supported by European Union members, Canada and the United States. EU members continued to assist in the training of Malian government forces, while the United States provided intelligence support and Canada provided strategic airlift capabilities. NATO, under the Connected Forces Initiative, is moving from operational engagement to operational readiness through an increase in exercises and measures that aim to improve interoperability. If there is anything to be learned from the Afghan and Libyan deployments, it is that NATO intelligence sharing potentially could be the proverbial Achilles Heel of the Alliance.*

Keywords: *Smart Defence Initiative, Connected Forces Initiative, Libya Air Campaign, Mali, Intelligence Sharing, Joint Operations Planning Process*

Introduction

The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) is currently drawing down its deployment in Afghanistan. This was the first major international multinational deployment for NATO since the breakup of Yugoslavia and it was the first time the alliance has conducted a prolonged counterinsurgency (COIN) operation. The age of the interstate conflict seemed to dissipate into a new reality of sustained COIN operations after the 11 September 2001 attacks.

After twelve years of sustained operations, NATO has been able to identify various interoperability issues and come up with solutions. One issue that has yet to be resolved fully is the sharing of tactical intelligence in coalition operations. Lieutenant General Marc Lessard, commander of Canada's Expeditionary Force Command, believes that intelligence sharing and other enablers within NATO have proved to be difficult.¹ It has also been recognised that it took too long to develop a counterinsurgency strategy and to understand the cultural, political and tribal sensitivities in Afghanistan.² The nuances of ethnic and tribal traditions that have developed over centuries would be difficult to grasp in the first few years. However, there was little shift into developing a COIN strategy because of the American and British involvement in Iraq.

With the popular uprising in Libya and the United Nations Security Council's consent, NATO coordinated fourteen members and four non-members of the alliance to impose the 'no-fly' zone and maritime blockade. The Libyan Air Campaign also proved to be problematic for sharing intelligence. French fighter jets did not use American surveillance performed by Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) or satellites. This is because it was taking too long for French pilots to be cleared for access American imagery intelligence (IMINT).³ The US Department of Defense Inspector General found that improvements were needed in dissemination of tactical intelligence to ISAF coalition partners.⁴

The 2012-2013 Malian conflict erupted out of consequence of the Libyan Air Campaign. A historical and socio-economic assessment of the greater region would have demonstrated the need to strengthen regional borders to stem the migration of trained and armed ethnic fighters. It is not just a matter of how NATO members share their information, but also a question of an expanded assessment before conducting operations.

In 2007, the NATO Intelligence Fusion Center (NIFC) became fully operational and able to provide "intelligence to warn of potential crisis and to support the planning and execution of NATO operations; to include direct intelligence support to NATO Special Operations Forces."⁵ The NIFC was created under a US-sponsored Memorandum of Understanding.⁶

¹ Chicago Council on Global Affairs, "Smart Defense and the Future of NATO: Can the Alliance Meet the Challenges of the Twenty-First Century?," (Chicago, Illinois, 28-20 March 2012), p. 6.

² Ibid.

³ Robert Densmore. "French Pilots Over Libya Decline US Intel; Clearance Just Too Slow," *Breaking Defense* (21 September 2011), at <http://breakingdefense.com/2011/09/french-pilots-over-libya-decline-us-intel-clearance-just-too-sl/> (accessed 15 May 2014).

⁴ Department of Defense Inspector General, "Results in Brief: Improvements Needed in Sharing Tactical Intelligence with International Security Assistance Force-Afghanistan" (Report 11-INTEL-13, 18 July 2011), available at <http://www.dodig.mil/Ir/reports/ISAFRIB002.pdf> (accessed 15 May 2014).

⁵ NATO Intelligence Fusion Center, "What is the NIFC?" at <http://web.ifc.bices.org/about.htm> (accessed 15 May 2014); for a list of operations supported, see NATO Intelligence Fusion Center, "Support to Operations," at <http://web.ifc.bices.org/ops.htm> (accessed 15 May 2014).

⁶ NATO Intelligence Fusion Center. "What is the NIFC?"

There have to be improvements to NATO members' intelligence sharing in order to make the alliance's campaigns more effective and efficient. Intelligence is one of the major pillars for special operations. Special operations forces (SOF) rely on actionable intelligence to conduct their missions. It is also the cornerstone of an effective COIN operation. More importantly, intelligence sharing is the ultimate demonstration of trust and interoperability. After the prolonged COIN operation in Afghanistan and the difficulties that in Libya, NATO's intelligence-sharing capabilities need to be improved to show the utility of the Alliance.

Intelligence and Intelligence Sharing

Military intelligence can be divided into different categories: strategic, operational and tactical. Strategic intelligence concentrates on the larger picture of political intelligence, and the highest level of the military, which involves force posturing by hostile governments and their capabilities.⁷ Operational intelligence is current intelligence on the enemy that includes, "leadership, force organization, dislocations, readiness, mobilization, foreign suppliers and possible technical capabilities."⁸ Tactical intelligence combines operational intelligence, but includes data and developments on combat, enemy tactical misjudgements, indigenous political and ethnic developments, indigenous attitudes and terrorism and counterinsurgency.⁹ Operational and tactical intelligence has the greatest impact on theatre operations.

Much of NATO's intelligence in Afghanistan has been concentrated on the enemy combatants (i.e., the Taliban and other insurgent groups), and not on the political, economic or cultural environment.¹⁰ This has led to the ethos of an anti-insurgency campaign bent on the elimination of the insurgent threat, rather than a counterinsurgency campaign which advocated a holistic approach and focuses not only on the combatant but the indigenous population or human environment in which the insurgent operates.¹¹ Actionable COIN intelligence was stymied in the Afghan Theatre of Operations (ATO) with this mentality. Without discerning the powerholders and their concerns, according to David Kilcullen, local populations had set up ambushes and stalled reconstruction projects violently in protest.¹²

⁷ Friedrich W. Korkisch, "NATO Gets Better Intelligence: New Challenges Require New Answers to Satisfy Intelligence Needs for Headquarters and Deployed/Employed Forces" (Institut für Aussen- und Sicherheitspolitik Strategy Paper 1-2010, April 2010), p. 14, available at http://www.natowatch.org/sites/default/files/NATO_Gets_Better_Intell_April_PDP_0.pdf (accessed 15 May 2014).

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Major General Michael T. Flynn, Captain Matt Pottinger, and Paul D. Batchelor, "Fixing Intel: A Blueprint for Making Intelligence Relevant in Afghanistan" (Center for New American Security, January 2010), p. 7, available at http://www.cnas.org/files/documents/publications/AfghanIntel_Flynn_Jan2010_code507_voices.pdf (accessed 15 May 2014).

¹¹ Ibid., p. 23.

¹² David Kilcullen, *Out of the Mountains: The Coming Age of the Urban Guerrilla* (Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 3-17.

Pre-Operational Concerns

Before Afghanistan, NATO had not dealt with a high-level insurgency operation. NATO has provided peacekeeping and peacemaking operations in the Balkans and for decades has prepared for a conventional war with the Soviet Union. NATO must conduct historical and regional impact assessments to ensure that measures are undertaken to reduce the probability of violent fallout.

The initial operation supporting the Afghan Northern Alliance against the Taliban was heralded as a success. It is known that the Taliban and al-Qaeda leadership sought refuge in the Federally-Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) in Pakistan, a tactic that the Afghan *mujahideen* utilised during the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan as displaced Afghans sought refuge in Pakistan.

The Soviet Union was unable to sever these mountainous links between Afghanistan and Pakistan along the Durrand line. This proved to be the downfall for the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. The Pakistani links with the Afghan Taliban, Haqqani Network, al-Qaeda, and other insurgent groups proved to be difficult to handle. In fact, during the Soviet occupation the Haqqani mujahideen cell was integral to the smuggling of fighters and vital supplies. The Haqqani Network was permitted to evolve from small hit-and-run tactics and propaganda activities in 2004 to one of the most prominent insurgent groups in the region. It began after an insult to the Haqqani family as Jalaluddin Haqqani, the former notable mujahideen commander, was not invited to the Bonn Conference in 2001 because he was a Taliban minister. His archrival and American supporter, Pacha Khan Zadran, was invited to the conference in his place.¹³ However, given unaddressed grievances with the local population, the Haqqani family was able to build its support base and realign its efforts. An ideal historical assessment would include regional actors and integrate them within the overall COIN strategy.

Lessons have been learnt on how missions should be planned and carried out since the initial deployment in the ATO. The Joint Operations Planning Process (JOPP) was created in 2006 and assists commanders with their day-to-day operations while offering a strategic overview with an environmental framing that consists of political, military, economic, social, information, and infrastructure (PMESII) constructs.¹⁴ Utilising a JOPP approach provides a clearer image on how an operation will affect the theatre and the indigenous population. NATO should utilise the JOPP approach to maintain of the indigenous political and social-political nuances that affect (or feed) insurgencies. NATO can improve upon the JOPP approach by carrying out regional historical assessments and by creating an awareness of regional characteristics that could pose an impediment to NATO's efforts and spread violence into surrounding regions.

NATO's air campaign over Libya provides an example of why a historical assessment of the surrounding regions is necessary. The instability caused by the Libyan Air Campaign was a major catalyst for the 2012-2013 Malian Conflict. To date Mali has experienced four ethnic Tuareg rebellions

¹³ Thomas Ruttig, "Loya Paktia's Insurgency: The Haqqani Network as an Autonomous Entity," in *Decoding the New Taliban: Insights from the Afghan Field* (Antonio Giustozzi, ed., Columbia University Press, 2009), p. 66.

¹⁴ Dan McCauley, "Design and Joint Operation Planning," *Canadian Military Journal* 12(1) (2011), p. 32, available at [http://www.journal.forces.gc.ca/vol12/no1/doc/CMJ%20Vol12%20No1%20Page30-40%20McCauley%20 Eng.pdf](http://www.journal.forces.gc.ca/vol12/no1/doc/CMJ%20Vol12%20No1%20Page30-40%20McCauley%20Eng.pdf) (accessed 1 December 2014).

as consequences of ethnic strife between the Arab-descended Tuaregs in Northern Mali and the ethnic Africans in the south. Since Mali's independence and subsequent conflicts, droughts and rampant poverty, many ethnic Tuaregs have migrated. For decades, ethnic Tuaregs found refuge in Colonel Gaddafi's regular army and in the Libyan-sponsored Islamic Legion.¹⁵

The last rebellion was started by a coalition between the secular, secessionist Tuareg group, *le Mouvement National de Libération de l'Azawad* (MNLA) and a partnership of militant Islamist groups. This was the first instance where the ethnic Tuareg cause involved militant Islamist groups - Ansar al-Dine, Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO), and al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). However, the seeds for insurgency were already apparent years before NATO's air campaign.

USAID figures in 2004 illustrated the rampant poor socio-economic conditions; the three largest towns in Northern Mali have these average poverty rates: Timbuktu, 77 percent; Gao, 78.7 percent and Kidal, 92 percent.¹⁶ Poor socio-economic conditions, a history of multiple rebellions and severe droughts have caused a substantial migration of ethnic Tuaregs. Colonel Gaddafi's regime welcomed them openly into the Libyan Armed Forces and portrayed them as 'Lords of the Desert.'¹⁷

France's colonial history with the region provides France with a unique picture of the region that many countries do not have. Intelligence ties in former French colonial territories continue to exist. American SOF relations with the region were established with the Pan Sahel Initiative after 9/11.¹⁸ American Special Forces were training Malian government forces on border security. It is true that the fourth Tuareg rebellion occurred after the Libyan Air Campaign, but the campaign was a catalyst for the rebellion. The United Nations cites that regional countries reported that "...rocket propelled grenades, machine guns with anti-aircraft visors, automatic rifles, ammunition, grenades, explosives (Semtex), and light anti-aircraft artillery (light calibre bi-tubes) mounted on vehicles" were being smuggled out of Libya.¹⁹ This coincided with an estimated 420,000 displaced people of which approximately 30,000 returned to Mali.²⁰ A historical assessment of the region would have illustrated that a migration of trained and well-armed ethnic Tuaregs would spark another insurgency in Mali given the desperate socio-economic conditions at the time. Measures, such as strengthening the Pan Sahel Initiative or training Malian government forces, could have been thusly taken to reduce the impact.

¹⁵ Yehudit Rohen, "Libya, the Tuareg and Mali on the Eve of the 'Arab Spring' and in its Aftermath: An Anatomy of Change Relations," *Journal of North African Studies* 18(4) (2013), p. 545, available at <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13629387.2013.809660#preview> (accessed 1 December 2014); Scott Shaw, "Fallout in the Sahel: The Geographical Spread of Conflict from Libya to Mali," *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal* 19(2) (2013), p. 203, available at <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/11926422.2013.805153#preview> (accessed 1 December 2014).

¹⁶ Hussein Soloman, "Mali: West Africa's Afghanistan," *RUSI Journal* 158(1) (2013), p. 13, available at http://www.cerium.ca/IMG/pdf/Mali_-_West_Africa_s_Afghanistan.pdf (1 December 1, 2014).

¹⁷ Rohen, "Libya, the Tuareg and Mali on the eve of the 'Arab Spring,'" p. 546.

¹⁸ Phillip Ulmer, "Special Forces Support Pan Sahel Initiative in Africa" (American Forces Press Service, 8 March 2004), available at <http://www.defense.gov/News/NewsArticle.aspx?ID=27112> (accessed 15 May 2014).

¹⁹ United Nations Security Council. "Report of the Assessment Mission on the Impact of the Libyan Crisis on the Sahel Region" (UN Doc S/2012/42, 18 January 2012), p. 10, available at <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/Libya%20S%202012%2042.pdf> (accessed 15 May 2014).

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

For future NATO interventions, it is imperative that NATO undertakes measures to ensure that violent spillover does not transcend borders, or at least mitigate the impact with preventative measures – including enhancing the capabilities of neighbouring countries. If not, this may lead to: safe havens for insurgent networks, new insurgencies taking root in surrounding regions or both scenarios. It is also imperative that NATO coalition partners disseminate tactical and operational intelligence within the coalition more freely.

Afghanistan Lessons

Major General Flynn’s report for the Center of New American Security: *Fixing Intel: A Blueprint for Making Intelligence Relevant in Afghanistan* can provide a benchmark to improve military intelligence collection, analysis and dissemination for tactical intelligence for COIN operations.²¹ Major General Flynn argues that intelligence in the Afghan COIN operation should be demarcated by territorial lines rather than functional lines and collect data from a myriad of on-the-ground sources, including but not limited to: “civil affairs officers, PRTs, atmospheric teams, Afghan liaison officers, female engagement teams, willing non-governmental organizations and development organizations, United Nations officials, psychological operations teams, human terrain teams, and infantry battalions.”²² This does not solve the issue that tactical and operational intelligence needs to be disseminated throughout the coalition more freely. In Afghanistan, coalition partners were given different regions and provinces to operate in; however the intelligence cannot stop at these demarcations as the insurgency does not respect those borders.

Gaining trust and leverage with indigenous power holders is pivotal to winning a COIN operation. Major General Flynn asserts that “guerrilla warfare as a tactical-level information operation is laden with strategic significance far more than in conventional conflicts.”²³ Tactical information is to be collected by those on the ground. COIN operations are not a science; there is no formulaic equation that solves an insurgency.

Organizational structures were created within the Allied Operation Command during the prolonged Afghan mission. ISAF did create the Afghan Mission Network to boost intelligence-sharing capability. It was only possible after the United States announced that it would share sensitive technology that would counter the Improvised Explosive Device (IED) threat, which accounted for the majority of ISAF casualties.²⁴ The Afghan Mission Network is comprised of a high-speed broadband link between 63 locations to improve the access of operational information and databases to coalition members.²⁵

²¹ See Flynn, Pottinger, and Batchelor, “Fixing Intel: A Blueprint for Making Intelligence Relevant in Afghanistan.”

²² *Ibid.*, p. 4.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

²⁴ David Brunnstrom. “NATO Launches Afghan Intelligence-sharing Drive,” *Reuters* (15 July 2010), at <http://www.reuters.com/article/2010/07/15/us-nato-afghan-intelligence-idUSTRE66E5YL20100715> (accessed 15 May 2014)

²⁵ *Ibid.*

The Afghan Mission Network had caveats though, “NATO officials conceded there would be different levels of access depending on the sensitivity of information, and it would remain the prerogative of countries to decide whether to share intelligence.”²⁶ A greater need to proliferate operational and tactical intelligence across the coalition is needed. In a COIN operation, there is the notion of ‘competitive control’ where the COIN contingent, whether military or civilian, attempts to gain the population’s support by demonstrating their ability to govern the region.

There have also been allegations that NATO members were paying off Afghan insurgents not to attack the ISAF contingent. In 2009, ten French soldiers were killed, and twenty-one wounded, in the Surobi District of Kabul. It was alleged that the Italian intelligence services were paying the local insurgents off,²⁷ an occurrence that the French were unaware of when they took over the district. These allegations were firmly denied by the Italian government.²⁸

Regardless of whether the allegations are true or not, this is a lesson that should be heeded. When members transfer an operational role then the nuance of the role and the approach needs to be disclosed. If the Italians were conducting different practices than the French, albeit adhering to, or showing respect to, local customs the French contingent should have been made aware of these practices. Ignazio La Russa, then Italian Defence Minister, rebutted the French allegations by saying that Italian soldiers created a connection with the local population and were very different than other contingents.²⁹ The actionable intelligence of how the Italians were interacting with the local population was not shared with the French. This may have led to attack as local Afghans felt that the French were not paying the respect due to them.

This is the danger that lurks in not sharing actionable intelligence within the coalition while deployed. Not only did this instance create a moment where the French and Italian governments were at loggerheads, but the French population also mourned the bloodiest day for French forces in twenty-five years and French public opinion on the war and Italy as a coalition partner also suffered. The environment for intelligence sharing within the coalition needs to be a naturally fostered event and not an enforced action. NATO is creating the organizational structures to foster intelligence sharing within the Alliance, but innovative methods of encouraging that relationship need to be nurtured.

Intelligence Sharing within the Coalition

Intelligence sharing in coalitions is difficult. The very point of intelligence is to collect material, and analyse it for one’s own interests and internalise the information. It is against the sociological nature of the intelligence services to share their sensitive information with others, in case it later

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Lizzy Davies and John Hooper, “French Outcry over Claim Italian Payments Masked Taliban Threat,” *The Guardian* (16 October 2009), at <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/oct/16/france-italy-taliban-afghanistan> (accessed 15 May 2014).

²⁸ Ben Farmer, “Italy Denies Report It Paid Off Taliban in Afghanistan,” *The Telegraph* (15 October 2009), available at <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/italy/6337019/Italy-denies-report-it-paid-off-Taliban-in-Afghanistan.html> (accessed 15 May 2014).

²⁹ Ibid.

becomes a threat to the home country. However, intelligence co-operation in Western countries does exist and has been institutionalised. The UKUSA, or “Five Eyes” agreement, which was established in 1946, has been expanded to involve Australia, Canada and New Zealand.³⁰ The Five Eyes arrangement was able to provide actionable intelligence for the members through the All-Source Intelligence Centre (ASIC), which was beneficial for Canadian military operations in Kandahar province.³¹ The ASIC was able to provide “innovative and actionable intelligence products by integrating SIGINT, geospatial intelligence, human intelligence (HUMINT) and other analyzed information.”³² Five Eyes intelligence was a great resource for the membership, however actionable intelligence was not disseminated to other ISAF members even those who were conducting Special Operations.

Actionable intelligence for Special Operation Forces (SOF) is vital and SOF are “voracious consumers of intelligence.”³³ NATO SOF Headquarters (NSHQ) is working to increase trust among members and streamline intelligence.³⁴ The *NATO 2020: Assured Security; Dynamic Engagement* report, which provided a framework for a new strategic concept, stated that the Alliance can provide a supporting role for sharing intelligence and providing assistance against unconventional threats.³⁵

Two benefits to intelligence cooperation are its allowance for review through comparative processes and the potential to divide the intelligence demands across a larger support network.³⁶ During the Cold War, many NATO members routinely kept intelligence from other members and believed that NATO headquarters was not secure and was infiltrated by Soviet agents.³⁷

Intelligence sharing is not unproblematic and the benefits and negatives have to be considered. In terms of strategic intelligence, intelligence sharing can present several problems. One of these is how the material will impact the supplier-recipient relationship. Information that is contrary to the recipient’s viewpoint could be hazardous to the relationship and this challenge could produce a negative effect.³⁸

³⁰ James Cox, “Canada and the Five Eyes Intelligence Community” (*Canadian Defence and Foreign Affairs Institute*), December 2012, available at <http://2glsdpd2t2a9zr20ie1z7bx8zbb.wpengine.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/SSWG-Paper-James-Cox-December-2012.pdf> (1 December 2014), p. 5.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ Lawrence E. Cline, “Special Operations and the Intelligence System,” *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence* 18(4) (2005), p. 576, <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/08850600500177077> #preview (accessed 1 December 2014).

³⁴ Martin J. Ara and Brage A. Larsse, “Help a Brother Out: A Case Study in Multinational Intelligence Sharing, NATO SOF (Master’s Thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, 2011), p. v, available at https://calhoun.nps.edu/bitstream/handle/10945/10727/11Dec_Ara.pdf?sequence=1 (accessed 1 December 2014).

³⁵ NATO, “NATO 2020: Assured Security; Dynamic Engagement,” (17 May 2010), at http://www.nato.int/cps/en/nato-live/official_texts_63654.htm?selectedLocale=en (accessed 15 May 2014).

³⁶ Don Munton and Karima Fredj, “Sharing Secrets: A Game Theoretic Analysis of International Intelligence Cooperation,” *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence* 26(4) (2013), p. 672, available at <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/08850607.2013.807189#.VH3tZ2cRTXQ> (accessed 1 December 2014).

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 673.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 674.

Consider the example of the lead-up to the Second Gulf War in 2003. Munton and Fredj suggested that sharing intelligence on Iraq's Weapons of Mass Destruction program with the United States might have had the potential to avert the war and would have established a cohesive intelligence sharing structure, where the Western intelligence community would have been able to enrich the debate. The US State Department's Intelligence and Research (INR) unit had a contrary view to that of the Pentagon.³⁹ Providing contrary intelligence could have created the effect that Munton and Fredj suggested, but it is also likely that it could have created a more hostile relationship between the US and the supplier countries.

When it comes to providing operational and tactical intelligence and data to coalition partners in theatre, sharing in a timely manner is a different matter entirely. Consider the examples of American intelligence and their interaction with French forces of late. The first example concerns the French experience with US IMINT sharing in the Libyan Operational Theatre. The IMINT data was available for use, but given the red tape needed to clear French pilots, they had to innovate to provide their own data in a shorter window. French pilots were using their own reconnaissance pods rather than the IMINT provided by American UAV and satellite surveillance.⁴⁰ Tactical imagery was delayed at the Combined Air Operations Center (CAOC). Instead, the French would typically launch a reconnaissance mission, identify targets and then launch a strike mission within five hours.⁴¹

The frustration of not being given timely intelligence created a wedge between American and French units. The aim of the Libyan Air Campaign was not only to create a 'no-fly' zone but also to counter pro-Gaddafi forces. The lack of actionable and timely intelligence was a limitation on French air assets, but also a further drain on resources. The window before French reconnaissance and strike missions was five hours on average. French pilots expressed their constant concern on identifying targets without ground controllers and avoiding air strikes on civilians.⁴² In the Kosovo intervention, Serbian anti-air units were intuitive with repositioning their assets regularly.⁴³

If the pro-Gaddafi forces had been better organised, they could have potentially led to missing the strike target, thus not only causing a further waste on resources, but potentially putting the anti-Gaddafi movement, or worse civilians, in jeopardy. British Royal Air Force Marshal Andy Pulford stated "In Libya we got away with it. We made do, we had work-arounds, [but] we were not fighting a sophisticated enemy."⁴⁴ This five hour gap could have potentially created the opportunity for NATO coalition casualties if the pro-Gaddafi forces were more sophisticated.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 672.

⁴⁰ Densmore, "French Pilots Over Libya Decline US Intel; Clearance Just Too Slow."

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Martin Van Crevald, *The Age of Air Power* (Public Affairs, 2011), p. 328.

⁴⁴ Sydney J. Freedberg, Jr, "US Allies Wrestle with Intel Sharing Problems Exposed in Libya," *Breaking Defense* (20 September 2012), at <http://breakingdefense.com/2012/09/us-allies-wrestle-with-intel-sharing-problems-exposed-in-libya> (accessed 15 May 2014).

The intelligence-sharing problem within NATO may be caused by its multinational structure. In the case of Mali, American satellites, the US Air Force UAVs and the US Army's HUMINT and SIGINT provided intelligence for the French intervention that proved to be crucial for the first air strikes.⁴⁵ Unlike in Libya, the integration and shortening of the 'observation-decision-action loop' was unprecedented.⁴⁶ Bilateral cooperation would be easier given the established relationship between the American and French governments.

Reducing the intelligence lag is key for operational and tactical coalition partners. After the lessons learned in Libya, US Air Force Lieutenant General Frank Gorenc suggested that instead of officers deciding on whether information should be disseminated to coalition pilots, a capacity for direct machine-to-machine coordination should be created.⁴⁷

The US Department of Defense Inspector General stated that improvements for sharing tactical intelligence with coalition partners are needed.⁴⁸ The Inspector General found that the US has an outdated approach with foreign disclosure policies and procedures. He also called for the implementation of a "single, theatre-wide, computerized source registry to be utilised by the coalition for de-confliction of counterintelligence and human intelligence source data."⁴⁹

Sharing intelligence can be seen as a *faux pas* within the intelligence community. However, a study examining the sharing of intelligence in the realist-centric Game Theory has proven that sharing intelligence with allies is a positive activity.⁵⁰ Game Theory, in the context of intelligence cooperation, demonstrates that players will continue to cooperate with one another. This is in contrast with other scenarios where after a finite period of time the players revert to their 'dominant strategy' of non-cooperation.⁵¹ This coincides with the nature of intelligence cooperation and liaisons where finite relationships are almost irrelevant because of the matter of trust. When Munton and Fredj added in the factors of 'reputation and retaliation' their Game Theory model further proved that cooperation would continue.

Operational Caveats meet Intelligence Caveats

It has been well established that countries that participate in multilateral military operations can impose 'caveats' that limit the total involvement of the country's forces. These caveats can be that the country's forces will not participate in the use of cluster munitions or even that the forces will not operate at night. This practice for NATO commanders dates back to at least Bosnia where

⁴⁵ Maj. Gen. Oliver Tramond and Lt. Col. Philippe Seigneur. "Early Lessons from France's Operational Serval in Mali," *Army* (June 2013), p. 43, available at http://www.ansa.org/publications/armymagazine/archive/2013/06/Documents/Tramond_June2013.pdf (accessed 1 December 2014).

⁴⁶ Francois Heisbourg, "A Surprising Little War: First Lessons of Mali," *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy* 55(2) (2013), pg. 12, available at <http://www.iiss.org/en/publications/survival/sections/2013-94b0/survival—global-politics-and-strategy-april-may-2013-b2cc/55-2-02-heisbourg-2805> (accessed 1 December 2014).

⁴⁷ Freedberg, "US Allies Wrestle with Intel Sharing Problems Exposed in Libya."

⁴⁸ US DoD Inspector General. "Results in Brief: Improvements Needed in Sharing Tactical Intelligence with International Security Assistance Force-Afghanistan."

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Munton and Fredj. "Sharing Secrets: A Game Theoretic Analysis of International Intelligence Cooperation."

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 680.

NATO commanders created spreadsheets that specified each contributing contingent's restrictions.⁵² Unfortunately, caveats can also be non-written. For both Lieutenant General Marc Lessard and Pakistani author and journalist Ahmed Rashid, these caveats proved to be a serious obstacle for NATO to overcome in Afghanistan.⁵³ The majority of the caveats were imposed in order to reduce the risk of casualties or for domestic political reasons.

One caveat that potentially affected the ISAF mission concerned German reconnaissance missions and the German caveat of not being part of counterterrorism operations. Specifically, the mandate for German participation in ISAF prohibited involvement in Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). As a result, the pictures taken by German reconnaissance planes could not be distributed if there was a risk that they might be used as part of counterterrorism efforts. The parallel operational structures of OEF and ISAF increased the likelihood of operational confusion.⁵⁴ The distribution of IMINT gathered by German reconnaissance planes in Afghanistan was limited because of this operational caveat.⁵⁵ There were only select countries that participated in both ISAF and in OEF, so the dissemination of intelligence was limited.

This German example may prove to offer part of the solution to mitigating the impact of NATO members not willing to share intelligence. The NIFC could potentially require the statement of intelligence caveats from the participating NATO members in future operations. German reconnaissance may not be available for counterterrorism operations, but the ACO would know that American IMINT is also unavailable for NATO pilots for X amount of hours until proper clearance or at least knowledge of the conditions of why clearance requires that length of time. This would allow for ACO, NSHQ and the NIFC to have a clearer vision of what intelligence assets can be deployed. This also have minimal impact on the NATO intelligence structure as well.

Smart Defence Initiative and Connected Forces Initiative

The economic crisis that began in 2008 has had a severe impact on NATO member states. Many NATO members took measures to mitigate the impact the budgetary cuts would have on their respective ministries of defence. This led to the creation of the SDI and the Connected Forces Initiative. Innovative ways have been found to increase efficiency, interoperability and to reduce costs, such as pooling chemical, biological, radiation and nuclear (CBRN) protection equipment, the NATO Universal Armaments Interface and Multinational Military Flight Crew Training.⁵⁶

⁵² David P. Auerswald and Steven M. Saideman. "NATO at War: Understanding the Challenges of Caveats in Afghanistan" (Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Toronto, 2-5 September 2009), p. 7, available at <http://www.aco.nato.int/resources/1/documents/nato%20at%20war.pdf> (accessed 1 December 2014).

⁵³ Chicago Council on Global Affairs, "Smart Defense and the Future of NATO: Can the Alliance Meet the Challenges of the Twenty-First Century?," p. 7.

⁵⁴ Timo Noetze and Sibylle Scheipers. "Coalition Warfare in Afghanistan Burden-sharing or Disunity?" (ASP/ISP BP 07/01, Chatham House, October 2007), p. 3, available at <http://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/public/Research/International%20Security/bp1007afghanistan.pdf> (accessed 15 May 2014).

⁵⁵ Auerswald and Saideman. "NATO at War: Understanding the Challenges of Caveats in Afghanistan," p. 8.

⁵⁶ NATO, "The Secretary General's Annual Report 2013" (23 January 2014), pp. 14-15, at http://www.nato.int/nato_static/assets/pdf/stock_publications/20140123_SG_AnnualReport_2013_en.pdf (accessed 15 May 2014).

These initiatives may also provide a framework for intelligence sharing in future coalition operations. The economic crisis has forced NATO members to find innovative ways to cut costs while maintaining operational capability during a prolonged COIN operation.

This multinational approach showed a glimpse of what NATO's Smart Defence Initiative (SDI) would look like in future NATO-led COIN operations. SDI was envisioned to maintain NATO's military capabilities, but also to respect the reality that no member-state could fulfill all roles needed. The economic crisis that began in 2008 forced many Western countries to cut or adjust their proposed defence budgets, while also finding the funds to continue operations in the Afghan theatre, and procure vital equipment for operations. SDI promotes the "prioritisation, specialisation and multinational approaches to acquisition."⁵⁷ It proposes that member-states should specialise in various roles, such as strategic airlift, anti-armour capabilities and so forth. Canada, for example, has already divested from its thirty-four Air Defence Anti-Tank Systems (ADATS) in a bid to save money.⁵⁸ NATO suggests that any savings that are produced using the SDI approach should be diverted to increasing the overall capability of the country's regular forces.

Although not a NATO-sanctioned mission, the French intervention in Mali demonstrated the potential need for alliance members to complement each other with support operations. While the French supported local African troops in Operational SERVAL against the militant Islamist insurgency, the European Union provided a training mission for Malian government forces, and the Canadians provided strategic airlift – a capability that the French Air Force lacked. The United States was able to provide significant intelligence to French forces for the initial air strikes of the campaign.

The Connected Forces Initiative (CFI) proposes to maintain "NATO's readiness and combat effectiveness through expanded education and training, increased exercises and better use of technology." This is part of the shift of operational engagement in the Afghan theatre and operational readiness for the next theatre of operations. CFI is dedicated to improving communication and interoperability within NATO with additional exercises, and improvements to the NATO Response Force and SOF. The NSHQ is making efforts to improve intelligence sharing and it is likely that the CFI will attempt to improve intelligence sharing and trust among the Alliance.

Both the SDI and CFI provide a unique opportunity for NATO. The SDI proposes that NATO members should provide a level of specialisation within its military capabilities. Major General Flynn wrote in his report that intelligence operatives should not be confined by their functionality but by territorial lines.⁵⁹ Should NATO troops be deployed in prolonged COIN operations, Flynn's model of increased connectivity with intelligence operatives and all personnel on the ground needs to be upheld.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 13.

⁵⁸ David Pugliese, "ADATS Heading to Museums and Concrete Pads outside Bases," *DefenceWatch* (16 May 2012).

⁵⁹ Flynn, Pottinger, and Batchelor, "Fixing Intel: A Blueprint for Making Intelligence Relevant in Afghanistan," p. 46.

The SDI model can provide an alternative model to foster a tradition of cooperation if applied to intelligence operations. In future COIN operations, NATO members could provide specialised intelligence. France has a significant intelligence capability in terms of HUMINT in the Middle East, North and West Africa because of its colonial ties.⁶⁰ Within the Alliance, the United States dominates IMINT with its UAV and satellite capabilities, but French capabilities in the aforementioned regions could provide the United States, and NATO, with actionable intelligence that the US or other members would lack.

This Smart Intelligence Initiative would provide not only specialisation with NATO intelligence structures, but also foster an environment of collaboration. The NIFC could potentially oversee this initiative encouraging its theoretical use in the CFI exercises.

Low Impact Solutions

Intelligence sharing within NATO has been problematic. Intelligence sharing is built on trust and although NATO has been in existence since 1949, the Alliance has found itself in unfamiliar territory with sustained COIN operations in Afghanistan and an air campaign in Libya with no ground-control assets in place.

Intelligence sharing is becoming a thorn in NATO's side. NATO has created new structures within the organization to combat the difficulties with intelligence sharing, but new innovative methods are needed to nurture the intelligence sharing ethos and not impose it on its members.

This report aimed to outline the difficulties of NATO intelligence sharing by providing case studies and providing low impact solutions on the current NATO structure that would require no or little reorganization to foster such a cooperative relationship.

To be succinct, the recommendations within this report are as follows:

- A comprehensive study of potential regional impacts should be conducted. It is apparent that some conflicts cannot be internalised within a single country and may transcend borders. Actions should be undertaken, by the Alliance or individual members, to reduce the impact of violent spill over to the region as a whole.
- Intelligence caveats should be provided before operations to permit Allied Command Operations to assess what NATO member assets can be deployed to provide optimal intelligence coverage.
- Intelligence specialisation within theatre should be considered. Depending on the next NATO intervention, certain member states may have specialised intelligence assets, eg. IMINT, HUMINT, SIGINT, for the region. By creating an environment where NATO intelligence has to complement one another and not compete would create a stronger bond within the Alliance.

⁶⁰ Kennan Mahoney, *et al*, "NATO Intelligence Sharing in the 21st Century" (Capstone Research Project, Columbia School of International and Public Affairs, 2013), p. 12, available at https://sipa.columbia.edu/sites/default/files/AY13_USDI_FinalReport.pdf (accessed 1 December 2014).

Terrorism continues to be a major threat for the Alliance. To counter terrorism and future insurgencies, NATO has to continue the innovation that the economic crisis sparked. NATO is a security alliance that was born in the age of nuclear war with the Soviet Union. The Cold War is over and the security threat paradigm of the 21st Century has changed from the traditional, conventional interstate conflict to the unconventional battlefields of terrorism, counterinsurgency and cyberincursion. In order to survive, NATO has to evolve and find nuances within the Alliance to compete in a changing world. NATO has taken part in two major operations since 9/11 – Afghanistan and Libya – and yet the Alliance is just beginning to find ways to improve connectivity in a globalised world. Former Warsaw Pact members are not contributing members of NATO and although the Ukrainian Crisis has given a glimpse of a traditional threat in Russia, NATO needs to continue to meet the challenges of the 21st Century.

Conclusion

Intelligence sharing has been an issue that NATO has taken steps to address. During the Cold War, intelligence sharing was not high on the priority list. It was even joked in NATO headquarters, and satirized in the public mainstream, that the Soviet Union was more aware what the Alliance was doing than some allies were. The Cold War is over and the events on 11 September 2001 demonstrated that intelligence sharing is key to averting further terrorist attacks and that cooperation with agencies will be key to this. Globalized terrorism still remains one of the key threats in NATO strategic planning.

NATO's prolonged counterinsurgency (COIN) operation in Afghanistan showed the Alliance the difficulties of conducting large-scale operations with operational caveats. The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) was more concerned with conducting an anti-insurgency operation where targeting insurgents was the objective. For years, ISAF did not have a clear understanding of the political, economic and cultural aspects of the Afghan situation. This was detrimental to the successfulness of the COIN operation. It was only recently that a COIN doctrine was imposed on that theatre of operations. Intelligence sharing within the coalition of 46 contributing countries, with 28 of them being NATO members, showed weaknesses in their inability to do so.

NATO's air campaign in Libya illustrated the Alliance's problematic intelligence-sharing apparatus. American imagery intelligence was provided, but clearance for pilots took too long. The French contingent, on the hand, adapted by sending its own reconnaissance missions, analysing the data and then launching a strike mission – something that would take five hours. Although the contributing members of the coalition had the same objectives, intelligence enablers were not readily available. This would have proved to be catastrophic if NATO was facing a more sophisticated adversary.

Again, an understanding of the region's political, economic and cultural aspects was not taken into account. The Libyan Air Campaign displaced an estimated 420,000 people, with 30,000 of them returning to Mali. In January 2012, the fourth ethnic Tuareg rebellion began. Malian government forces were ill-prepared and a hostile takeover of the country was almost assured. French

intervention was necessary because of the new insurgent alliance with militant Islamists and the secular ethnic Tuareg group, the MNLA.

Because of the economic crisis and the drawdown of forces in Afghanistan, NATO is looking at innovative ways to move from operational engagement to operational readiness and increase interoperability. If there is anything to be learned from the Afghan and Libyan deployments, it is that NATO intelligence sharing potentially could be the proverbial Achilles Heel of the Alliance. This report aims to illustrate these issues, but also to provide low-impact solutions that will be able to foster an intelligence-sharing relationship for the Alliance and not impose such a relationship forcibly.

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