

SCPI SACT Seminar Report

The annual Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (SACT) Seminar 2008 was held in Copenhagen, Denmark on 15-16 October with participation of the North Atlantic Council (NAC) as well as the Military Committee (MC). Further participants included Denmark's Minister and Chief of Defence and the Chief of Staff, Supreme Allied Commander Europe.

The ACT Multiple Futures Project provided the framework for the SACT Seminar. The Seminar succeeded in initiating, framing and sustaining a strategic dialogue through an exchange of views and ideas among the NAC and the MC concerning the future threats, challenges and opportunities facing the Alliance. The discussions mostly stayed within the security implications domain.

In order to facilitate a logical analysis and at the same time be of use for future reference, the issues raised and discussed by the seminar participants have been captured in three overarching areas: political strategic considerations, functional considerations, and anticipatory considerations.

Finally, some important considerations made in direct relation to the MFP are listed at the end of this report.

Political strategic considerations.

Significant discussions gave rise to political strategic considerations concerning the political definition of the Alliance, the overall political leadership, and the support for the Alliance among the NATO populations. There was a widespread emphasis on the need for strategic thinking beyond day to day processes, making sure the Alliance is rooted in the 21st century and the challenges it brings:

- a) **Alliance Solidarity:** Solidarity is the fundamental glue of the Alliance. The most important challenge to the Alliance will always be threats to solidarity and unity. Solidarity also relies on a common perception of threats and challenges. Moreover, solidarity is necessary for any kind of role specialisation in national force structures.
- b) **Consensus Building:** There is a need for commitment to reach a common position and work towards consensus. A lack of consensus results in a decision not to take action. The importance of consultation as reflected in Article 4 was emphasised in this light. Reaching consensus could become more challenging as a more complex security environment may lead to changes in the scope of NATO's role. Better political-military synchronisation of decision-making at the strategic level is necessary. Capitals have to be more engaged to achieve better understanding of the

responsibility for challenges beyond legislative periods. Better understanding and synchronisation will also give visibility of the Alliance in our Nations.

- c) **Values and Ideas:** The Alliance is founded on shared principles of democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law. Challenges to these principles are likely, and risk undermining national government systems and national and social cohesion. NATO has an opportunity to demonstrate its commitment to support and strengthen the free institutions upon which it is founded.
- d) **Strategic Communication:** Better strategic communication will build public awareness of future challenges and likely solutions. The strategic dialogue needs to be expanded at many different NATO and national levels.
- e) **Declaration of Alliance Security (DoAS):** The Secretary General stated that the discussion on the different concerns and security implications provides an opportunity to get right the narrative for DOAS. The Sec Gen will include this discussion into next week agenda. SG suggested that the narrative could include:
 1. Description of the complex changing strategic environment.
 2. Define the role of NATO – as defence/art 5 and security provider.
 3. What tools – MIL and non-MIL are needed? Explore the possibility of non traditional way of using those tools and the capabilities necessary to create those tools.
 4. The need to better engage capitals and extend the NATO web of relationships.

Functional considerations.

At the level below the political strategic considerations a number of functional considerations were discussed. These related to high level choices on NATO's primary activities in the future security environment, both military and non-military.

- f) **Complexity of the future security environment:** Increased complexity calls for increasingly complex responses, for which NATO needs the appropriate tools. These include tools that shape and affect the strategic environment as well as tools of force.
- g) **Defence and Security:** Defence is a subset of security but there is a need to know on where to draw the line between the two. Which should be the level of ambition? The issue for NATO is to determine its function in both defence and security, and create balanced tools to deal with both. While the future security environment may create new responsibilities, the Alliance must be careful not to dilute its ability to carry out both functions effectively.

1. **HQ structure reform:** The complexity of future challenges emphasises the need for NATO, including HQ, to be proactive rather than reactive and to adjust accordingly.
 2. **Military tools:** The changing character of military operations requires flexible, adaptive, deployable forces with ethical and moral grounding. The emergence of hybrid warfare as a mix of conventional and unconventional methods shows that there is a risk of having a dominant, but irrelevant military. At the same time, NATO has to think about challenges to military superiority. Deployability is not a universal remedy. It is just as important what the forces can do as getting them there. Also, forces can only deploy to deliver security abroad when the homeland is safe. The role and place of the military organisation needs to be considered in terms of how our societies are changing.
 3. **Hybrid warfare,** the proper balance between conventional and unconventional capability has to be considered.
 4. **Non-military tools:** Future challenges may imply that Nations need to invest in institution building; in some cases this is more important than investment in military capabilities. Taking preventive measures by building effective security sectors outside the Alliance will reduce the future need for subsequent intervention. On the other hand, the Alliance cannot address all root causes; rather, it also has to be able to deal with consequences.
- h) **Comprehensive Approach (CA):** With international systems highly vulnerable due to horizontally interlinked futures, a military solution to future problems is clearly too narrow. Military means cannot solve all problems and therefore there is a need for a CA. The military must avoid taking on too much responsibility. Current operations are already beyond the traditional military role. In some cases, NATO must take on these roles because no-one else will. NATO cannot be the sole owner of a CA, but must be a contributor to it. There is a tendency of the international community to leave all responsibility for CA (e.g. Afghanistan) with NATO. Non-military ability is needed within NATO, but only as a short term gap-filler. Interfaces with civilian partners are necessary and NATO may be a facilitator of their cooperation. Comprehensive approach is threefold in nature: 1) within NATO, 2) in the capitals, 3) between NATO and other organisations.
- i) **Role of Training Others:** The Alliance should consider taking an increased role in training non-Alliance indigenous forces as it will be a strategic force multiplier. NATO already does this in the field as well as through existing schools. We should determine if we need to build more capacity for NATO training non-Alliance forces and whether we should have separate training units to conduct this task.

Anticipatory considerations.

In preparing for those high level choices discussed as functional considerations, a substantial part of the discussion revolved around what might be done now in order to prepare for the future. These anticipatory considerations are related to foresight from tactical to strategic levels:

- j) **Long term awareness:** Security professionals as well as the broader public tend to discount the possibility of something very terrible happening. Such possibilities have to be taken into account, and NATO may play a role in highlighting these possibilities to the public as well as to national governments via the continuous scanning of the strategic horizon.
- k) **Long term analysis:** There is a need for long term analysis of future challenges, including identification of operational consequences (transformation, capabilities and relations with other organisations). Additionally, there is a need to develop early warning systems, especially with regard to WMD proliferation. NATO may be a catalyst of problem identification and analytical solution by the use of its planning capabilities.
- l) **Institutional cooperation:** A shared understanding of the future security environment including intelligence sharing is increasingly important. Following the example of the NATO-UN agreement, NATO should also examine how it may achieve synergy with other international organisations. Specifically there may be a need to explore areas of further cooperation with the EU with respect to its European Security and Defence Policy. Beyond the traditional areas of cooperation, industrial actors could be leveraged through their understanding of NATO's future functions.
- m) **Proactive activities:** There is a need for NATO to consider ways to be proactive. NATO can be a leader in future horizon scanning concerning both the defence and security functions and challenges. Militaries bring a vast capability to the table, and their operational structure allows them to change faster than any other type of organisation. Hence, NATO ought to be an agent of change within the Alliance and for the Nations, as well as externally as a military driver of transformation in interagency processes. Moreover, NATO's area of influence may exceed its area of responsibility, and so the Alliance needs to consider how it can be influential beyond its area of responsibility.

Considerations directly related to the MF Project.

The NAC and the MC participants expressed an overall support to the MFP value, recognising its value and that it is still in an "on-going work" status.

Several comments were made stating that it is for the Defence Planning Process to translate the MIL implications into specific capabilities and tools.

The project should take into account and study the impact of human factors since it may limit the ability of soldiers to adapt to very different regions of the world.

When looking at challenges and capabilities the following has to be considered: 1) CIV including counterterrorism/SOF, 2) Light expeditionary forces, 3) Need to deter authoritarian states, including nuclear policy.