

ASPECTS OF NATO

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Civil Emergency Planning

The deterrent value of the strategic concept of flexible response can only be fully realised if military preparedness is complemented by credible civil preparedness. The civil resources and powers of a nation must be capable of being rapidly mobilised in support of the total defence effort, and protective measures must exist to reduce the vulnerability of civilian populations.

The scope of civil emergency planning is therefore extremely wide. It embraces such matters as the continuity of the machinery of government, the maintenance of law and order, the mobilisation and use to the best advantage of national resources (energy, manpower, transport systems, production capacity, food and agriculture, raw materials, telecommunications, etc.) as well as civil defence measures, including warning, rescue services and health care aimed at minimising the consequences of enemy action to civilian populations.

Although the primary aim of civil emergency planning is to maintain the social and economic life of member nations, and to ensure the survival of their populations in the face of, during and after hostilities, a second important aspect is civil support for the military forces. A significant amount of the planning effort is for instance directed towards providing adequate civil support for the rapid reinforcement of Allied forces in Europe.

However, civil emergency planning not only covers a wide variety of subjects, but also has to provide for a range of contingencies related to an appreciation of the various types of attack which could be directed against the Alliance, and of the general effects which modern weapons might be expected to have, both in situations short of nuclear war and in the case of a nuclear attack.

The task at NATO level

Civil preparedness as a whole is a national responsibility, and resources management is no exception. Control over their own resources in times of crisis and war would remain a matter for individual member nations. However, national economies are nowadays so interdependent that, to a large extent, economic coordination already takes place in peacetime. In a crisis or war situation, it is even more evident that the sixteen member countries' national plans for resources management provide a stronger economic base if coordinated towards a common goal, rather than operating in isolation, or even in competition with each other.

Whatever the contingency, there is accordingly a need to provide for consultation and coordination between member nations at the NATO level, in order to achieve the following objectives :

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- in peacetime, to further national planning by providing for the exchange of experience and opinions on matters of common interest; and to develop arrangements for dealing with matters which would have to be handled in one way or another, at NATO level during an emergency (because they would call for international cooperation or would have international implications or repercussions);
- in a period of rising tension, to facilitate crisis management arrangements within the Alliance, so that the North Atlantic Council could be properly and regularly informed of the state of civil preparedness of member nations and the latter could act in harmony when increasing their state of readiness;
- in war, to provide for international cooperation in such matters as the protection of populations and population movements and, particularly, in coordinating the use of vital resources for essential civil and military defence purposes; and
- after a general nuclear attack, to ensure the continued survival of the survivors, and to assist the recovery and rehabilitation of national economies.

Senior Civil Emergency Planning Committee

The policy direction and general coordination of civil emergency planning at NATO level is undertaken on behalf of the Council by the Senior Civil Emergency Planning Committee (SCEPC), supported by an International Staff element, the Civil Emergency Planning Directorate of the Defence Planning and Policy Division. In plenary session, the Committee is chaired by the Secretary General, or the Assistant Secretary General for Defence Planning and Policy, and the members are the national representatives responsible for coordination of civil emergency planning in the sixteen national capitals. The plenary session convenes twice a year. In between, the Committee meets, normally once a month, in permanent session under the chairmanship of the ASG for Defence Planning and Policy or the Director of Civil Emergency Planning. The representatives are in most cases drawn from national delegations to NATO.

Planning boards and committees

The SCEPC coordinates and gives guidance for the activities of eight planning boards and committees, each of which covers a specific field in civil emergency planning. These planning boards and committees consist of representatives with specialised knowledge appointed by the various member nations.

Resources

The importance of the coordinated use of resources for the defence of the Alliance has already been mentioned, so it is perhaps no surprise that six out of the eight planning boards and committees deal with resources.

They are :

in the field of supplies :

- the Food and Agriculture Planning Committee;
- the Industrial Planning Committee;
- the Petroleum Planning Committee.

in the field of transport :

- the Planning Board for Ocean Shipping;
- the Planning Board for European Inland Surface Transport;
- the Civil Aviation Planning Committee.

Communications

The Civil Communications Planning Committee is concerned with the problems of maintaining civil communications in an emergency.

Civil defence

The Civil Defence Committee provides the forum for consultation on national plans for all aspects of the protection of the public in an emergency.

NATO civil wartime agencies

Under the overall guidance of the SCEPC, the planning boards and committees have evolved plans for setting up NATO civil wartime agencies which would be activated in times of emergency. Although varying in size, all agencies have basically the same structure : they would consist of a directing body, in which all participating member nations would be represented, and an international staff of experts.

The existing plans include the following civil wartime agencies :

The Defence Shipping Authority - responsible for ensuring that the NATO pool of merchant ships is controlled and organised to achieve the greatest possible economy in its employment, and to render it readily available to meet the civil and military needs of the NATO countries.

Working closely with the Defence Shipping Authority is the Interallied Insurance Organisation which provides wartime insurance for ships participating in the NATO shipping pool.

The Agencies for the Coordination of Inland Surface Transport in Central Europe and Transport in the Mediterranean - responsible for giving guidance and coordinating the use of roads, railroads and inland waterways for civil and military transport in Central Europe and the Mediterranean.

The NATO Civil Aviation Agency - to provide a forum for concerting the policies of all NATO member nations in the field of civil aviation. In particular, the agency will act as an information-gathering centre and coordinate the use of civil aircraft which one member nation makes available to any other member of the Alliance.

The Central Supplies Agency - responsible for ensuring the continued availability and equitable distribution for both civil and military purposes of essential supplies in the field of food, agriculture and industry.

The NATO Wartime Oil Organisation - to provide the forum for consultation on, and coordination of, the plans of member nations to ensure the continued availability and equitable distribution, for both civil and military purposes, of essential supplies of crude oil and petroleum products.

The NATO Refugee Agency - to provide member nations with a forum for consultation on, and coordination of, their actions to overcome problems of international significance arising out of uncontrolled population movement.

Training

All national representatives and international experts designated to serve in a NATO Civil Wartime Agency are trained for their wartime duties. The plans and procedures for all the agencies are regularly tested in exercises and are subject to continuous review and improvement.