

TWO DECADES OF LESSONS FROM OPERATIONS AND EXERCISES

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PROJECT BACKGROUND



NATO Member Nations Flags fly outside NATO HQ
(Source: NATO Website)

Transformation is critical to enhance the Alliance's credibility in the face of today's international security environment. The diversity of Alliance operations spanning the last twenty years, constant global economic pressures, and current events highlight an ever-present need for NATO to be prepared and equipped with effective capabilities, facilitated through a multinational and comprehensive Political, Military, Economic, Social, Infrastructure, and Information (PMESII) mind-set.

Strategic concepts and initiatives, and other strands of work within NATO—such as Smart Defence and the Connected Forces Initiative—are instruments through which the Alliance is transforming in an increasingly uncertain future threat environment. Such transformation is the essential ingredient to ensure and enhance the Alliance's readiness and combat effectiveness, thereby driving towards achieving the end state.

PROJECT SCOPE

In light of the above, Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (SACT) reaffirmed that lessons from NATO operations and exercises should be applied to the development of NATO's strategic concepts and initiatives. Accordingly, the Joint Analysis and Lessons Learned Centre (JALLC) was tasked to identify key strategic lessons from the last 20 years of NATO operations and exercises, in order to make recommendations that will facilitate SACT's strategic military input to on-going initiatives to transform NATO.

Project Analysis Requirement:

"Identify key Strategic Lessons from the last 20 years of NATO operations (primarily International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), Operation Unified Protector (OUP) and secondly from NATO Training Mission in Afghanistan (NTM-A) and NATO Training Mission in Iraq (NTM-I), and support to build up of the Kosovo Security Force (KSF) and exercises, in order to make recommendations that will facilitate SACT's strategic military input to on-going initiatives to transform NATO."



Norwegian F-16 flying over Suda Bay as part of the enforcement of the No-Fly-Zone and the protection of the Libyan civilian population under OUP (Source: NATO Website)

METHODOLOGY

The JALLC Project Team collected and analysed 1261 relevant documents during the study and, despite a scarcity of ready-to-analyse strategic level lessons, discovered that many lessons did have strategic relevance that could and should be, and in some cases were already, harnessed to transform NATO. In order to ascertain the strategic relevance of the lessons (if any), the Project Team developed a categorization method which would allow them to filter lessons (MC 400/3 Categorization Process). All of the data collected by the Project Team was recorded and categorized using the same method developed during the initial analysis phase.





NATO
OTAN



METHODOLOGY (CONTINUED)

Finally, the Project Team conducted in depth analysis of all of the data collected. The Project Team were not only able to confirm initial emerging trends, but also make some additional observations. All of the observations are discussed in the corresponding Report and presented along with conclusions and (where appropriate) recommendations developed by the Project Team.

THE REPORT

The Report is likely to be of value to NATO's policy makers, doctrine developers, capability developers, and planners as it identifies and presents the discussion surrounding those Strategic Lessons that NATO has yet to address (fully) and which should be considered in light of NATO's key strategic initiatives and, more widely, to NATO's Transformation in general.

The main findings presented in the Report have been set out in terms of nine strategically relevant topics to NATO's transformation. These nine strategically relevant topics have been grouped in the context of four key Strategic Focal Areas, which relate to how NATO manages its transformation at the strategic level:

Managing the Force: relating to Preparation – Training of Forces, Force Generation, and Interoperability.

Managing the Operation: relating to Command and Control, Joint Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance, and Knowledge Development.

Managing the Campaign: relating to Crisis Management and Crisis Response Operations, Comprehensive Approach, and Security Force Assistance.

Managing the Narrative: relating to Strategic Communications.

The Report also has eight project-specific annexes which contain information that, while relevant to the Project and potentially interesting to some readers, either falls outside the scope of the study or the JALLC felt should not be presented in the main body of the Report.

FOLLOW-ON STUDY

A follow-on study entitled "Two Decades of Lessons from Operations and Exercises – Commander's Insights" is currently ongoing with a forecast completion of mid-2015. The intention of this further analysis is to capture insights and knowledge as well as understand the experience of current and former NATO Commanders to confirm and complement the findings from the study presented in this report.



KFOR troops wait at a check-point in a local village
(Source: NATO Website)

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All JALLC Reports, the LL Portal, and NATO LL Items may be found in their entirety under the *Products* section on the NS WAN:

<http://www.jallc.nato.int>

Non-classified reports and LL Items, Project FactSheets, the Joint Analysis Handbook and the Lessons Learned Handbook can be found on JALLC's Internet site at the same [address](#).

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