

LESSON 10

THE UNITED NATIONS (UN) AND THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION (NATO) IN THE POST-COLD WAR ERA

Lesson Introduction

Containment provided the centerpiece for the content of American grand strategy during the Cold War and, as such, provided the objectives for policy. The United States would use a variety of means in achieving these objectives, including multilateral institutional frameworks. Two of these institutions, the United Nations (UN) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), dealt with international security explicitly and contained direct implications for national military strategy. The U.S. also created economic institutions as a less direct way of pursuing its national security objectives. It is important to note that the evolution of all these institutions forms a crucial part of today's strategic landscape.

In today's globalized environment and during the U.S. global war on terror, operating in a joint and combined environment has become standard procedure for our forces. This multinational environment has added its own set of challenges (for example, security and releasability issues, language barriers, and cultural differences), but most would agree that we have worked hard (and continue to do so) to deal with or mitigate those challenges. Both international organizations, the UN and NATO, have been around for half a century, and, presumably, are here to stay for at least the foreseeable future. Although there can be much consternation between the U.S. military and the varied representatives of organizations, we are committed to operating efficiently, for the good of all concerned, to accomplish the mission. As military professionals, we must strive to know as much as we can about the organizations, have a vision as to how they will fit into future military operations, and be ready to operate with these organizations across the spectrum of conflict. We have seen both of these organizations intimately involved in recent military interventions, such as in Bosnia, Kosovo, and Afghanistan.

Many viewed our experiences in Iraq as a difficult situation in which there was further difficulty with assembling the "right" coalition for the conflict. Although we did not have some of the more traditional allies as part of our coalition (France and Germany of note), lacked any sort of UN endorsement, and faced some significant deployment challenges (like the inability of the U.S. to flow forces through Turkey into Northern Iraq due to political pressures), the U.S. did organize a coalition of support from over 40 countries. The term "coalition of the willing" was touted frequently during Operation IRAQI FREEDOM (OIF), and some observers took away the understanding that this will be more of a normal way of doing business, as opposed to our using an existing alliance (such as NATO). That remains to be seen, but the fact is that the U.S. probably won't be operating unilaterally and will form some sort of coalition (or perhaps use an existing alliance) for our next operation or intervention. We, as professionals, need to gain as

much situational awareness on both the UN and NATO, as one or both of these organizations will likely be part of most, if not all, future military operations.

In this lesson, we will examine both the UN and NATO from a post-Cold War strategic viewpoint, examine how the U.S. interacts with these organizations, gain an understanding of their decisionmaking processes, and consider some prospects for the future of both organizations. Becoming versed in and studying these organizations will provide students with a greater understanding of the multinational environment we can expect in future operations and will produce more efficient warfighters in the next battlespace. You can look forward to a lesson on Multinational Operations in Course 8806A, Joint, Multinational, and Interagency Operations.

Student Requirements by Educational Objective

Requirement 1

Objective 1. Describe the strategic organization and decisionmaking process in the United Nations (UN) at the strategic level and its impact on U.S. national security policy and military operations. [JPME Areas 1(e), 3(a), 4(a)]

Objective 2. Explain the significance and implications of the evolving nature of the United Nations in the post-Cold War era and assess its utility today. [JPME Area 1(b)]

Objective 3. Discuss the future problems and prospects of the United Nations, particularly as the UN relates to the multinational environment. [JPME Area 1(b), 3(a)]

Read:

- The UN in Brief (10 pages)
- Ambassador António Monteiro, “Decision-making process in the UN [*sic*],” 25 Sep 00, New York University Robert F. Wagner Graduate School Of Public Service (6 pages)
- Richard Falk, “What Future for the UN Charter System of War Prevention?” Transnational Foundation for Peace and Future Research (TFF) 23 March 2003, (9 pages)

Refer to:

- Charter of the United Nations, 26 June 1945, (26 pages) (use as reference only)

Even before World War II was over, the outline for the UN was beginning to take shape, and the organization was established formally in 1945. In a sense, the UN was an embodiment of an idealistic tendency in American foreign policy, for the assumption was that the allied cooperation that won World War II would carry over into the post-war period. However, the UN was more realistic in its approach to world problems than its

predecessor, the League of Nations, had been and the framers of the UN sought deliberately to improve upon the experience of the former organization. First, the United States was clearly committed to joining the United Nations, and congressional leaders in both political parties supported U.S. membership. Second, the UN Charter (Article 43) provided that members make available “armed forces, assistance and facilities” for use in collective security activity. In this way, the UN would have the necessary resources at its disposal for performing its collective security function. Finally, the UN Charter created a Military Staff Committee composed of the chiefs of staff of the permanent members of the Security Council that was intended to provide the expertise to facilitate the Security Council’s ability to use military force. Of course, the UN’s implementation of collective security ran into practical difficulties. For collective security to work, three conditions must be met: (1) All members must be committed to peace and must subordinate all other foreign policy goals to it; (2) All states must agree on what constitutes aggression and be able to agree on the identity of the aggressor in particular cases; and (3) Once the aggressor has been identified, all states must be able and willing to participate in measures necessary for stopping the aggression.

Given the fact that the Cold War antagonism between the U.S. and the USSR began to become apparent by 1947, the stalemate in the Security Council meant that Article 43 was likely to remain dormant and that the Military Staff Committee would atrophy into irrelevance. Nevertheless, the UN was able to find a role in international security matters not spelled out in the UN Charter and labeled it peacekeeping. Here, the object was not to stop aggression or deter an aggressor state but to act as a buffer and maintain cease-fire agreements. The Suez Crisis provided the UN with the first opportunity to play a peacekeeping role, and that operation (UNEF) is notable because it served as a prototype for subsequent UN peacekeeping operations during the Cold War. From the time of the Suez Crisis forward, the UN became an indispensable element in crisis management during the Cold War because it provided the means for separating the superpowers from regional conflicts. By insulating regional conflicts from superpower involvement, the UN could help prevent the escalation of those conflicts into wider ones. For this reason, the standard practice, when forming a peacekeeping operation, was to select troops from any country except one of the five permanent members of the Security Council. This latter characteristic of UN peacekeeping operations is one that is disappearing as UN operations move into the post-Cold War environment, where a great power war is unlikely.

The UN Charter indicates that the primary purpose of the UN is to maintain international peace and security. It is key to have an understanding of the nature and dynamics of intergovernmental decisionmaking at the UN. This organization has served as the primary international arena for governments to come together, discuss common concerns, and make decisions on collective actions to take in response to a variety of circumstances. Nearly every government in the world (191 nations at present) is now a UN Member State and can offer its voice on a wide variety of subjects, with a focus on peace and security issues. While only governments actually negotiate to make decisions at the UN, in the form of resolutions, treaties, plans of action, etc., the decisionmaking process itself has increasingly been opened to an array of other players (non-

governmental organizations, the private sector, foundations, think tanks, etc.). The abiding principle in UN decisionmaking is, whenever possible, to reach consensus amongst all participating governments. Consensus is not always possible, and there are a wide variety of mechanisms and voting processes to move decisions forward. The negotiating system at the UN functions, in large part, through negotiating blocs, or groups of countries speaking with a common voice. This adds to the complexity of gaining consensus, but this is the way this world body operates. Ambassador Monteiro's paper discussed the details of how the UN gains consensus and also gives an inside look at some of the tactics and political maneuvering that takes place during negotiations.

As seen in the charter, the UN has six charter bodies. Of these, three are the principal decisionmaking bodies, when it comes to the process of government negotiations: the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, and the Security Council. Our focus is normally on the Security Council, as it is this council's resolutions that we are normally in the business of enforcing.

Per the charter, the Security Council has been given the primary responsibility for maintenance of international peace and security. The Security Council is in session throughout the year and has 15 members. Five are permanent—China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States. Ten more are elected by the General Assembly for two-year terms. Each Council member has one vote. Decisions on substantive matters require nine affirmative votes, including those of all the permanent members. A negative vote by any one of the permanent members vetoes the decision. If a permanent member does not support a resolution but does not want to block it, it may abstain.

When a situation arises that may pose a threat to international peace, the Security Council usually demands that the parties reach a settlement by peaceful means. It can also propose mediation, develop principles for a settlement, or ask the Secretary-General to investigate the situation. If fighting breaks out, the Council will attempt to broker a ceasefire that will normally include the use of peacekeeping forces. The Council can enforce its decisions through economic sanctions and collective military action.

Richard Falk's article provides a very legalistic view of the UN's role in today's strategic environment. It could be argued that the Charter of the UN is essentially the UN's constitution, from which it draws its purpose and direction. Just as the U.S. Constitution is interpreted by U.S. courts, the UN's charter will be interpreted by its member nations and the International Court of Justice. Falk presents an interesting comparison of legality versus legitimacy. He argues that a nation may intervene into another nation's affairs illegally yet achieve some sense of legitimacy. Legitimacy might not be achieved until after the intervention. He states, "The present context of the debate as to the interplay between sovereign discretion on matters of force and UN authority was framed in the late 1990's around the topic of humanitarian intervention, especially in relation to the Kosovo War." Falk analyzes the international arguments, before the conflict and after the conflict, for justification of force. He discusses issues of legality and legitimacy in the Kosovo example and compares them to those of OIF; he further examines whether the decision of the UN Security Council (UNSC) not to provide mandates for war was

justified. He also points out how the UN can more carefully define its criteria to justify humanitarian intervention by member nations. Lastly, he concedes that the UN charter either “no longer accords, or never did accord, with the realities of world politics, and is not authoritative in relation to the behavior of states.”

Requirement 2

Objective 4. Describe the strategic organization and decision-making process in NATO at the strategic level and its impact on U.S. national security policy and military operations. [JPME Areas 1(b)(e), 3(a), 4(a)]

Objective 5. Explain the significance and implications of the evolving nature of NATO in the post-Cold War era and assess its utility today. [JPME Areas 1(b), 3(a)]

Objective 6. Discuss the future problems and prospects of NATO, particularly as it relates to the multinational environment. [JPME Areas 1(b), 3(a), 4(b)]

Read:

- *NATO Handbook 2001*, Chapter VII, Policy and Decision-Making, pp. 149-155 (stop at Crisis Management) (6 pages)
- Leo G. Michel, NATO Decisionmaking: Au Revoir to the Consensus Rule? (excerpts), *Strategic Forum*, pp. 1 to 5 (stop at “Possible New Approaches”) (4 pages)

View:

- Interview with General James L. Jones, USMC, Supreme Allied Commander Europe (Operations), “SACEUR Discusses His Priorities,” 2 May 2003 (28 minutes)
- Interview with General Harald Kujat, Chairman of the Military Committee of NATO, “Explaining the Role of the Chairman of the Military Committee,” 15 May 2003 (15 minutes)
- Interview with Admiral Edmund P. Giambastiani, U.S. Navy, Supreme Allied Commander, Transformation, 13 June 2003 (8 minutes)

Refer:

- *The North Atlantic Treaty*, Washington DC, 4 April 1949 (4 pages) (use as reference only)

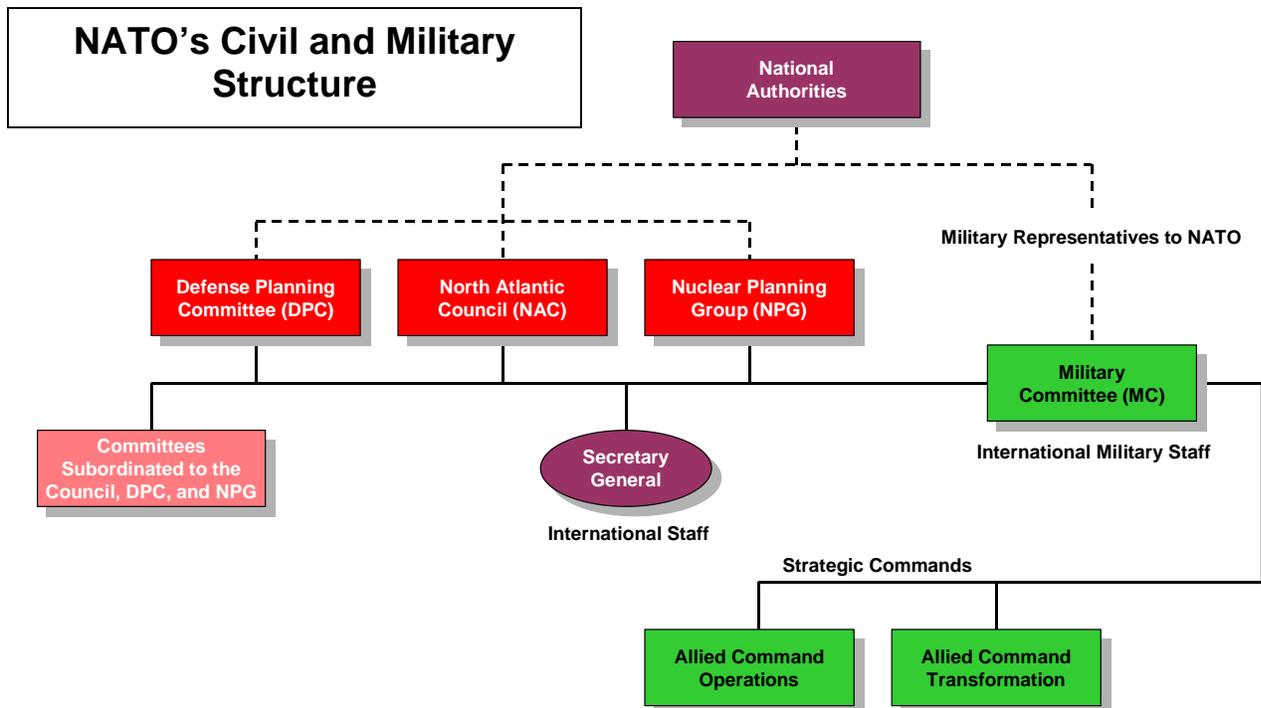
Once the outlines for the Cold War became clear and the United States became disillusioned about the prospects for great power collaboration within the UN, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization was established in 1949 as a necessary supplement to the larger international organization. NATO was the alliance with which the U.S. waged the Cold War and, as such, was more an expression of collective self-defense than one of collective security. NATO, from its inception, was an alliance in perpetual crisis, and the members were often in conflict over issues like burden sharing. In this regard, the Suez

Crisis was a pivotal event in the life of the alliance because it starkly demonstrated the extent to which NATO members had different interests. Divergent national interests, in turn, limited the utility of NATO in out-of-area contexts. Moreover, for the Europeans, the Suez Crisis provided the first opportunity to question American reliability, and the question of American reliability shapes the dynamics of alliance politics.

The North Atlantic Treaty states that, "...NATO member nations 'reaffirm their faith in the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and their desire to live in peace with all peoples and all governments.'" Article 5 of the treaty addresses the collective self-defense of the alliance and makes reference to Article 51 of the UN Charter. As such, a strong connection is made with the world body of the UN and the long-lasting NATO alliance, and this relationship is evident in the many operations that have occurred over the last half-century.

The North Atlantic Council (NAC). The NAC is the most important decision-making body in NATO. Its Permanent Representatives, one from each nation of the alliance, hold ambassadorial rank and meet continually. The Council derives its authority from the North Atlantic Treaty. This body issues communications explaining the Alliance's policies and decisions to the general public and to governments of non-member nations. Decisions are the collective will of member governments and are arrived at by consensus.

The Defense Planning Committee (DPC). The DPC is the principal decisionmaking authority on matters relating to the integrated military structure of NATO (currently, all alliance members with the exception of France). It is normally composed of Permanent Representatives but meets at the level of Defense Ministers at least twice a year and deals with most defense matters and subjects related to collective defense planning. The DPC provides guidance to NATO's Integrated Military Structure and has the same authority as the Council. The DPC is composed of multiple committees with specific responsibilities. One committee of particular importance is the Defense Review Committee, which oversees the Force Planning Process. This committee develops strategic force goals for NATO based upon the annual defense review. These goals include determinations of forces based upon what member nations report in the annual Defense Planning Questionnaire (DPQ). Governments submit their force plans and their defense spending plans to the Alliance in these DPQ. This defense review is designed to assess the contribution of member countries to the common defense in relation to their respective capabilities and constraints and in the context of the force goals addressed to them as part of Ministerial guidance. NATO and its military structure continue to evolve from a Cold War institution to its role in the post-Cold War days. The resultant force structure is changing as NATO seeks to ensure it can react to a wide range of contingencies. The NATO Reaction Force is intended to meet the needs of the uncertain world in which we live today. Although NATO is involved in multiple "out of NATO area" operations, it remains designed as a collective security framework with political solidarity among member nations, sharing roles and responsibilities accordingly, to support Alliance strategy and policy. This includes providing support for operations, which may be led by the European Union in the context of the European Security and Defense Identity.



NATO decisions are the expressions of the collective will of its member governments, arrived at by common consent. Under the rule, no Ally can be forced to approve a position or take an action against its will. This is especially important for decisions on the potential use of military force, which are among the most politically sensitive for any Ally. This consensus rule has been much debated recently, particularly as the Alliance has grown. Some predict that the Alliance, in growing, will become too large and overly bureaucratic and decisions will become politically bogged down. The interesting and timely Michel article discusses NATO decisionmaking and cites some examples of how the consensus rule has proven to be relatively flexible in its application, most recently during OIF and the situation of the protection of Turkey.

Political consultation is a major effort of the NAC. Consultation takes place regularly in a variety of forums, and as we have seen, it is not limited to events taking place solely within the NATO Treaty area. This consultation may involve exchange of information and opinions; communication of decisions/actions/actions about to be taken that impact on the Alliance; advance warning of future actions; and other actions designed to enable member nations to arrive at mutually acceptable positions on collective decisions. Additionally, NATO regularly consults with Partnership for Peace nations, Russia through the NATO-Russia Permanent Joint Council; with Ukraine through the NATO-Ukraine Commission; and with participants in NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue, through the Mediterranean Cooperation Group.

Political consultation and consensus has been and will conceivably continue to be the way of doing business in NATO. That said, with the vast number of changes in the security situation in Europe, there might be resultant changes in the future for the

Alliance. OIF and past experiences have demonstrated some friction within the alliance in gaining consensus (specifically, among the three major NATO allies). Members within NATO recognize some of the problems of the current decisionmaking process and the need to provide responsiveness in decisions and force provision. As General Jones indicates in his interview, NATO member nations and their military forces seem “open to new ways of doing things” that will allow member nations to better fulfill the requirements of the Alliance. He claims that some nations are even willing to change their own military force structure to better support the Alliance. With the creation of Allied Command Transformation (ACT), NATO will have a dedicated and focused command for developing training, operational concepts, doctrine, and experimentation plans by continually exploring new ways of conducting operations. According to Admiral Giambastiani, Commander of ACT, this transforming process will attempt to improve military capabilities across the entire Alliance with regard to structures, organizations, military formations, materiel, leadership, culture, and personnel.

Lesson Summary

The tale of the evolution of each of these Cold War institutions, then, is quite distinct. NATO was created in part to make up for the shortcomings of the UN’s collective security provisions. The Suez Crisis provided a strategic challenge that had the ironic effect of weakening NATO while enabling the UN to pioneer its role in peacekeeping that became its forte during the Cold War. Post-Cold War conditions continue to challenge the viability of these institutions by threatening to overwhelm the capacity of the UN to perform peacekeeping and to issue useful mandates, while NATO tries to define a global role beyond its original and now obsolete intent of containment of the USSR.

The purpose of this lesson is to provide the student three important aspects of each of these Cold War institutions: (1). A basic understanding of how each institution is organized, how it operates in terms of its decisionmaking process, and how all this affects U.S. national security policy and military operations. (2). An understanding of the significance and the implications of the evolving nature of these two institutions in the post-Cold War era and whether either organization has any utility in today’s strategic environment. (3). A literacy of the future problems and prospects of both institutions, particularly as the UN and NATO relate to the strategic, global, environment.

JPME Summary

AREA 1					AREA 2				AREA 3					AREA 4					AREA 5				
A	B	C	D	E	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	E	A	B	C	D	E	A	B	C	D	
	X			X					X					X	X								