



THE ATLANTIC COUNCIL
OF THE UNITED STATES

**Transforming the NATO Military
Command Structure: A New Framework
for Managing the Alliance's Future**

LTC(P) Brick T. Miller, USA
Senior Fellow, Atlantic Council of the United States

Senior Fellows Publication
August 2003



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OF THE UNITED STATES

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Executive Summary

The current NATO command structure is insufficient to manage the individually formidable tasks of changing doctrine; out of area operations; emerging and unpredictable threats and asymmetric strategies; cleaner “supported-supporting” command relationships; integration of joint forces; and making the transition from threat-based to capabilities-based force development simultaneously.

A New Future. NATO must transform its military command structure in order to:

- adapt to the changing nature of strategic requirements and threats;
- gain greatest advantage from information technology growth;
- increase its effectiveness and efficiency in managing the deployment and sustainment of its forces across the spectrum of conflict.

Post-Cold War Evolution. The resultant change in NATO’s strategic concept, from one emphasizing collective defense to one more directed toward crisis response, has found NATO deeply engaged in managing its assets in new roles. In December 1997, the Military Committee of NATO proposed a new military command structure that reduced the number of headquarters from 65 to 20. The resulting structure has a strategic, regional, and sub-regional scope primarily intended to provide command and control for the Alliance’s joint operations. In concert with a changing command structure, NATO authorities unveiled a new NATO Force Structure (NFS) at the 1999 Washington Summit and agreed upon the principles and parameters of the NFS in July 2001.

Political/Military Considerations. One cannot discuss NATO these days or analyze any aspect of the future of the Alliance without ending up asking: why NATO, what NATO, and what is the real meaning of “transformation?” NATO remains relevant and is in a position to increase its strategic importance. It is clearly important to the current U.S. administration, which has been vocally supportive of NATO.

The conceptual acceptance in September 2002 of a NATO Response Force (NRF) built around rotational multinational formations has displayed the Alliance’s flexibility and understanding of the changing requirements.

The Alliance allows nations to make lower individual contributions to defense while benefiting from a higher level of collective operational capability.

NATO must remain a military alliance focused on meeting the security commitments outlined in its founding document, the Washington Treaty.

New Framework Proposals. During the Prague Summit in November 2002, the NATO leaders agreed that the Alliance would require a new command structure to meet the full range of new Alliance missions.

By assigning missions that specifically delineate unique command responsibilities at the outset, NATO can prevent many problems from occurring and ensure the highest levels of operational capability for the units of the NFS. The following structural changes are proposed:

- Including troops, training, and doctrine (Allied Command Transformation, Troops, Training, and Doctrine or ACT3D) would more effectively meet the Alliance's needs and accurately state its foci.
- Allied Command Operations should have three subordinate Level Two headquarters. A new command, Allied Forces West (AFWEST), should join AFNORTH and AFSOUTH.
- There should be nine Level Three component commands with assigned DCAOCs.
- Each of the three regional commands would have an air, ground, and maritime component command. In addition, the DCAOCs should be permanently assigned to each of the three air component commands.
- All of the NFS land forces should be assigned by region to the appropriate component command. The six HRF (L) and two FLR units would be equally split between the two land-based Level Two commands, AFNORTH and AFSOUTH. The three HRF (M) would be assigned to AFWEST and form the basis of the maritime CJTF.

Additional Recommendations. The NRF is the bridge to the future, one that can span the transatlantic capabilities gap and the often-contentious political gaps by cementing trust in word and deed.

The decision to transform the military command structure and increase efficiency and effectiveness must not be held hostage by political differences. Innovative and imaginative solutions to these problems are possible while maintaining mission focus.

NATO is in an advantageous and timely position for reform. What began at the Prague Summit in November 2002 must be refined and developed. NATO must take measures to transform its military command structure.

Transforming the NATO Military Command Structure: A New Framework for Managing the Alliance's Future

I. A New Future

NATO must once again transform its military command and force structures. In the aftermath of the Prague Summit in November 2002, the efforts of the various staffs and agencies, within and without NATO, are focused on three broad areas of change: *New Capabilities, New Members, and New Relationships*. Of these, *New Capabilities* has emerged as a priority because of the gap that has grown among the force capabilities of the members. The September 2002 Atlantic Council policy paper, *New Capabilities: Transforming NATO Forces*, concisely stated that addressing the necessity for new capabilities, "...presents a critical test for NATO leaders because the growing gap in military capabilities among the members is leading to a progressively hollow NATO Force Structure."¹ NATO cannot pass this test without a new NATO Military Command Structure and Force Structure.

NATO must transform its military command structure in order to:

- adapt to the changing nature of strategic requirements and threats;
- gain advantages from information technology growth;
- increase its effectiveness and efficiency in managing the deployment and sustainment of its forces across the spectrum of conflict.

NATO must be capable of executing its military mission to "rapidly deploy and sustain flexible, well-equipped, well-trained forces wherever necessary,"² in support of the Alliance's overall mission of safeguarding the peace and freedom of its members. All of this must be accomplished in a global environment that requires response times measured in hours, not days or weeks, and within an austere fiscal environment.

Evolutionary, not revolutionary, the new structure must manage and integrate transformation activities while planning for and executing operations across the full spectrum of missions. The current command structure is insufficient to manage the

¹ Atlantic Council of the United States, *New Capabilities: Transforming NATO Forces* (Washington, D.C.: Atlantic Council of the United States, 2002), 1.

² General Joseph Ralston, "Keeping NATO's Military Edge Intact in the 21st Century," 3 October 2002; available from <http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2002/s021003d.htm>; Internet; accessed 15 October 2002.

individually formidable tasks of changing doctrine; out of area operations; emerging and unpredictable threats and asymmetric strategies; cleaner “supported-supporting” command relationships; integration of joint forces; and the transition from threat-based to capabilities-based force development simultaneously.

Transformation by definition is the process of changing form, nature, or function. The following paper focuses on analyzing areas where transformation of the NATO Military Command Structure could produce the greatest advantage for the Alliance today and in the future. Four criteria are considered: deployability, interoperability, simplicity, and cost.

As a core function of the NATO mission, deployability should be assessed based on the ability of staffs and formations to prepare to move quickly from garrison locations to forward operating bases. Once on the ground, the focus changes to the availability and operational effectiveness of the right equipment and personnel to perform the mission over an extended period.

Interoperability is the bedrock of any alliance. NATO defines interoperability as “the ability of systems, units, or forces to provide services to and accept services from other systems, units, or forces and to use the services so exchanged to enable them to operate effectively together.”³ The level of interoperability achieved has a direct correlation to the operational readiness of any NATO formation.

Cost is often the single greatest deterrent to change in any organization. However, the prudent and efficient use of scarce resources, coupled with the potential of the current information revolution, can mitigate or even lower costs. This is especially true of command and headquarters staffs. With minimal infrastructure requirements, staff efficiency can be maximized through the efficient use of modern technology and proper personnel authorizations.

Simplicity is acknowledged as a fundamental principle of organizational theory. Simplicity is not only fundamental in its own right, but also serves as a multiplier for all aforementioned focus areas. This is especially true of command relationships.

This paper will review the current NATO military command structure, discuss some of the underlying assumptions about NATO as an organization, and propose evolutionary changes for a new framework of NATO command and control within the NATO Military Command Structure and NATO Force Structure.

³ U.S. Department of Defense, “Dictionary of Military Terms/NATO,” April 2002; available from http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/new_pubs/jp1_02.pdf; Internet; accessed 15 October 2002.

II. Post-Cold War Evolution

The world is 10 years old. It was born when the Wall fell in 1989.

—Robert Freedman

For much of the 1990s, NATO and its member nations took advantage of the end of the Cold War and the subsequent “peace dividend.” The resultant change in NATO’s strategic concept, from one emphasizing collective defense to one more directed toward crisis response, found NATO deeply engaged in managing its assets in new roles. The Partnership for Peace (PFP) Program, crisis management and peace operations in the Balkans, relations with the European Union, the development of the European Security and Defense Identity, and economic considerations all served as catalysts for change in the NATO military command structure. In December 1997, the Military Committee of NATO proposed a new military command structure that reduced the number of headquarters from 65 to 20. The resulting structure has a strategic, regional, and sub-regional scope primarily intended to provide command and control for the Alliance’s joint operations. This was the most extensive restructuring of NATO Command and Control (C2) in its history. The new NATO C2 consists of two Strategic Commands (SC), five Regional Commands (RC), and numerous subordinate Component Commands and Joint Sub-Regional Commands, discussed later in detail. The goal of this initiative was to promote effectiveness and flexibility within the Alliance while exercising the new roles and missions.

In concert with a changing command structure, NATO authorities unveiled a new NATO Force Structure (NFS) at the 1999 Washington Summit and agreed upon the principles and parameters of the NFS in July 2001. The 2001 agreement stated that the NFS “...will provide the Alliance with rapidly deployable, mobile, sustainable and flexible multinational forces and their command and control capabilities.”⁴ The new NFS “...has a more tactical scope and provides additional command and control capabilities at the single service level (navy, army, air force).”⁵ Planning and preparation for the implementation of both these programs are continuing and will take several years to complete.

Strategic Level Commands and Staffs (Level One)⁶

The Military Committee

The Military Committee (MC) is the highest military authority in NATO, working under the overall political authority of the North Atlantic Council (NAC), the Defense Planning Committee (DPC), and the Nuclear Planning Group (NPG). The Committee is responsible for recommending to civilian leadership those actions necessary for the common defense and for providing direction and advice on military policy and strategy. Furthermore, it provides guidance on military matters to the NATO Strategic Commanders and is responsible for the overall conduct of the military affairs of the Alliance, as well as the daily operations

⁴ NATO International Military Staff, “The New NATO Force Structure,” September 2002; available from www.nato.int/ims/docu/force-structure.htm; Internet; accessed 5 October 2002.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ The ideas in this section are based on multiple sources, most notably: NATO Office of Information and Press, *NATO Handbook* (Brussels, Belgium: NATO Office of Information and Press, 2001), chaps 11-12.

of its subordinate agencies. The MC assists in the development of strategic concepts and prepares an annual self-assessment and risk assessment. Crisis operations include operational updates, recommendations on the use of force, Contingency Plans (CONPLAN) implementation, and Rules of Engagement (ROE) development. See current command structure diagram on page 9.

The Chairman of the Military Committee

The Chiefs of Defense select the Chairman of the Military Committee (CMC). The Chairman is appointed for a three-year term of office. The CMC serves as both spokesman and representative of the MC and directs its daily operations through directives and guidance to the Director of the International Military Staff. He represents the Military Committee at the NAC, DPC and the NPG, providing his expertise and counsel on military issues. As an international figure, the CMC fulfills an important public relations role as the senior military spokesman for the Alliance. Additionally, he performs representational duties on behalf of the Committee and serves as the ex-officio Chairman of the NATO Defense College Academic Advisory Board.

International Military Staff

The International Military Staff (IMS) is responsible for planning, assessing, and recommending policy on military matters for consideration by the Military Committee, as well as ensuring that the policies and decisions of the Committee are implemented as directed. The IMS is headed by a flag officer and assisted by five assistant directors, each of whom heads a separate functional division.

- *The Plans and Policy Division* develops and coordinates the MC contributions to defense policy and strategic planning.
- *The Operations Division* develops operational plans, manages force posture, coordinates multinational training and exercises, and coordinates electronic warfare operations.
- *The Intelligence Division* provides day-to-day strategic intelligence support. It has no independent intelligence gathering function or capacity, but relies on the member nations for its basic intelligence needs and acts as a central coordinating body for the collation, assessment, and dissemination of intelligence.
- *The Cooperation and Regional Security Division* serves as the focal point for all IMS staff work, military contacts, cooperation with the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC), Partnership for Peace (PFP) countries, Russia within the framework of the NATO-Russia Founding Act, and Ukraine within the framework of the NATO-Ukraine Charter.
- *The Logistics, Armaments and Resources Division* is responsible for the development of logistics principles and policies, including resource management, medical support, and transportation. Additionally, it provides logistical support planning for crisis management, humanitarian assistance, and disaster relief.

The Strategic Commanders and Commands

The principal task of the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) and the Supreme Allied Commander Atlantic (SACLANT):

...is to contribute to preserving the peace, security and territorial integrity of Alliance member states. Should aggression occur, or be considered imminent...[SACEUR and/or SACLANT]...as Supreme Commander, is responsible for executing all military measures within his capability and authority, to demonstrate Alliance solidarity and preparedness to maintain the integrity of Alliance territory, safeguard freedom of the seas and economic lifelines, and to preserve or restore the security of his Area of Responsibility (AOR).⁷

SACEUR/SACLANT “...conducts military planning, including the identification and requesting of forces required for the full range of Alliance missions, which include the promotion of stability, contribution to crisis management and provision for effective defense. He makes recommendations to NATO’s political and military authorities on any military matter, which might affect his ability to carry out his responsibilities.”⁸

Allied Command Europe (ACE)

ACE, located at Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) at Casteau, Mons, Belgium, has an AOR that encompasses roughly three million square miles. It stretches from the northern tip of Norway to southern Europe, including the Mediterranean Sea, and from the Atlantic coastline (including an area contiguous to the Canary Islands, but excluding the land mass of Portugal) to the eastern border of Turkey. Nearly 320 million people inhabit this AOR. Responsibilities within this region are further sub-divided into two Level Two Regional Commands which will be discussed further in this chapter: Allied Forces North Europe (AFNORTH) in Brunssum, the Netherlands, and Allied Forces South Europe (AFSOUTH) in Naples, Italy.

Allied Command Atlantic (ACLANT)

ACLANT, with headquarters located in Norfolk, Virginia, USA, has an AOR that encompasses an area that extends from the North Pole to the Tropic of Cancer, and from the East Coast of North America to the West Coast of Africa and Europe, including the land area of Portugal. ACLANT responsibilities for protecting the sea lines of communication (SLOCs) within this region are further sub-divided into five Level Two subordinate commands. These include three Regional Headquarters: Regional Headquarters, Southern Atlantic (RHQ SOUTHLANT) in Lisbon, Portugal; Regional Headquarters, Western Atlantic (RHQ WESTLANT) in Norfolk, Virginia; and Regional Headquarters, Eastern Atlantic (RHQ EASTLANT) in Northwood, the United Kingdom; and two component headquarters: Striking Fleet Atlantic (STRIKFLTANT) and Submarine Allied Command Atlantic (SUBACLANT), both located in Norfolk, Virginia.

⁷ NATO Office of Information and Press, 259.

⁸ Ibid.

Regional Level Commands and Staffs (Level Two)

Allied Forces North Europe (AFNORTH), Brunssum, the Netherlands

AFNORTH consists of two Component Commands: Allied Air Forces North in Ramstein, Germany, and Allied Naval Forces North in Northwood, the United Kingdom. Additionally, three Joint Sub-Regional Commands—Joint Command Center in Heidelberg, Germany; Joint Command Northeast in Karup, Denmark; and Joint Command North in Stavanger, Norway—divide responsibility for a geographic area that includes Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, and the United Kingdom. It also includes the North Sea, the Irish Sea, the English Channel, the Skagerrak, the Kattegat, the Sound and Belts, and the Baltic Sea.

Allied Forces South Europe (AFSOUTH), Naples, Italy

AFSOUTH consists of two Component Commands: Allied Air Forces South and Allied Naval Forces South, both in Naples, Italy. Additionally, four Joint Sub-Regional Commands: Joint Command South in Verona, Italy; Joint Command Southcenter in Larissa, Greece; Joint Command Southeast in Izmir, Turkey; and Joint Command Southwest in Madrid, Spain, divide responsibility for a geographic area that encompasses nearly 2.4 million square miles including Greece, Hungary, Italy, Spain, and Turkey. It also includes the Black Sea, the Sea of Azov, the whole of the Mediterranean and the Atlantic Approaches to the Straits of Gibraltar east of longitude 7° 23' 48" W, and an area around the Canary Islands and its environs.

Regional Headquarters, Eastern Atlantic (RHQ EASTLANT), Northwood, United Kingdom

Charged with preserving the peace, security, and territorial integrity throughout its portion of the ACLANT Area of Responsibility, RHQ EASTLANT is also responsible for the administration and operation of the Standing Naval Force Atlantic (STANAVFORLANT). Created in 1967, STANAVFORLANT is a permanent peacetime multinational naval squadron composed of surface combatants from many different NATO nations, providing a visible example of solidarity and cooperation. RHQ EASTLANT is a “dual-hatted” command serving both as an ACLANT regional command and as an ACE Level Three component command - Allied Naval Forces North. This allows for simplicity and ease of coordination for transatlantic movement and maritime operations.

Regional Headquarters, Western Atlantic (RHQ WESTLANT), Norfolk, Virginia

Like EASTLANT, RHQ WESTLANT is charged with preserving the peace, security, and territorial integrity throughout its portion of the ACLANT Area of Responsibility.

Regional Headquarters, Southern Atlantic (RHQ SOUTHLANT), Lisbon, Portugal

RHQ SOUTHLANT is similarly charged with preserving the peace, security, and territorial integrity throughout its portion of the ACLANT Area of Responsibility.

Striking Fleet Atlantic (STRIKFLTANT), Norfolk, Virginia

STRIKFLTANT's force structure is crisis dependent and can be tailored to include up to four carrier battle groups, two anti-submarine taskforces, an amphibious task force, and approximately 22,000 marines. Charged with deterring aggression by establishing and maintaining maritime superiority in the Atlantic and ensuring the integrity of the SLOCs, STRIKFLTANT receives forces from Belgium, Canada, Denmark, the Federal Republic of Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

Submarine Allied Command Atlantic (SUBACLANT), Norfolk, Virginia

SUBACLANT provides expertise on submarine matters and undersea warfare. Operating as a coordinating and liaison authority for both strategic commands, the staff provides management oversight of policy and operational and tactical doctrine for Alliance submarines.

NATO Force Structure (NFS), Tactical Level Commands and Staffs

Throughout the past year, much change has come to fruition within the NFS. The Alliance has shifted away from the old two dimensional tiered response forces of the Cold War to one of graduated levels of readiness. The conceptual acceptance in September 2002 of a NATO Response Force (NRF) built around rotational multinational formations has displayed the Alliance's flexibility and understanding of the changing requirements.

Under the recently adopted concept for NFS, Alliance forces will be capable of deploying to a crisis, whether it is an Article 5 or Non-Article 5 operation, and within or outside of NATO territory. The new NFS consists of eleven headquarters and their assigned formations, eight land-based and three maritime. These forces will be broken into two different levels of readiness; High Readiness Forces (HRF) capable of reacting on short notice, and Forces with Lower Readiness (FLR) designed to reinforce and sustain the HRF. According to the NATO website and documents⁹, the forces designated to fill out this force structure are:

High Readiness Forces (Land) Headquarters

- The Rapid Deployable German-Netherlands Corps HQ, based on the 1st German-Netherlands Corps HQ in Münster (Germany)
- The Rapid Deployable Italian Corps HQ based on the Italian Rapid Reaction Corps HQ in Solbiate Olona close to Milan (Italy)
- The Rapid Deployable Spanish Corps HQ based on the Spanish Corps HQ in Valencia (Spain)
- The Rapid Deployable Turkish Corps HQ based on the 3rd Turkish Corps HQ near Istanbul (Turkey)

⁹ NATO International Military Staff, 3.

- The EUROCORPS HQ in Strasbourg (France) sponsored by Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, and Spain
- The Allied Command Europe Rapid Reaction Corps (ARRC) HQ in Rheindahlen (Germany) with the United Kingdom as the framework nation

Forces of Lower Readiness (Land) Headquarters Candidates

- The Multinational Corps HQ North-East in Szczecin (Poland) sponsored by Denmark, Germany, and Poland
- The Greece "C" Corps HQ near Thessaloniki (Greece)

High Readiness Forces (Maritime) Headquarters

- Headquarters Commander Italian Maritime Forces on board of Italy's *Garibaldi*
- Headquarters Commander Spanish Maritime Forces (HQ COMSPMARFOR) on board of *LPD Castilla*
- Headquarters Commander United Kingdom Maritime Forces (HQ COMUKMARFOR) on board of *HMS Ark Royal*¹⁰

The process of certification was dynamic and completed after 18 months, with certification of the Italian Corps completed during Exercise "Light Ship 02" in December 2002. The Italian Corps joins the other five corps-sized headquarters and is expected to be formally assigned to NATO in a similar manner as the other five corps. NATO announced on 23 September 2002, that four HRF (LAND) Headquarters were formally assigned to NATO and joined the ARRC as designated international military headquarters. Certification of the FLR (L) and HRF (M) headquarters is not expected to be completed until 2004.

¹⁰ NATO International Military Staff, 3.

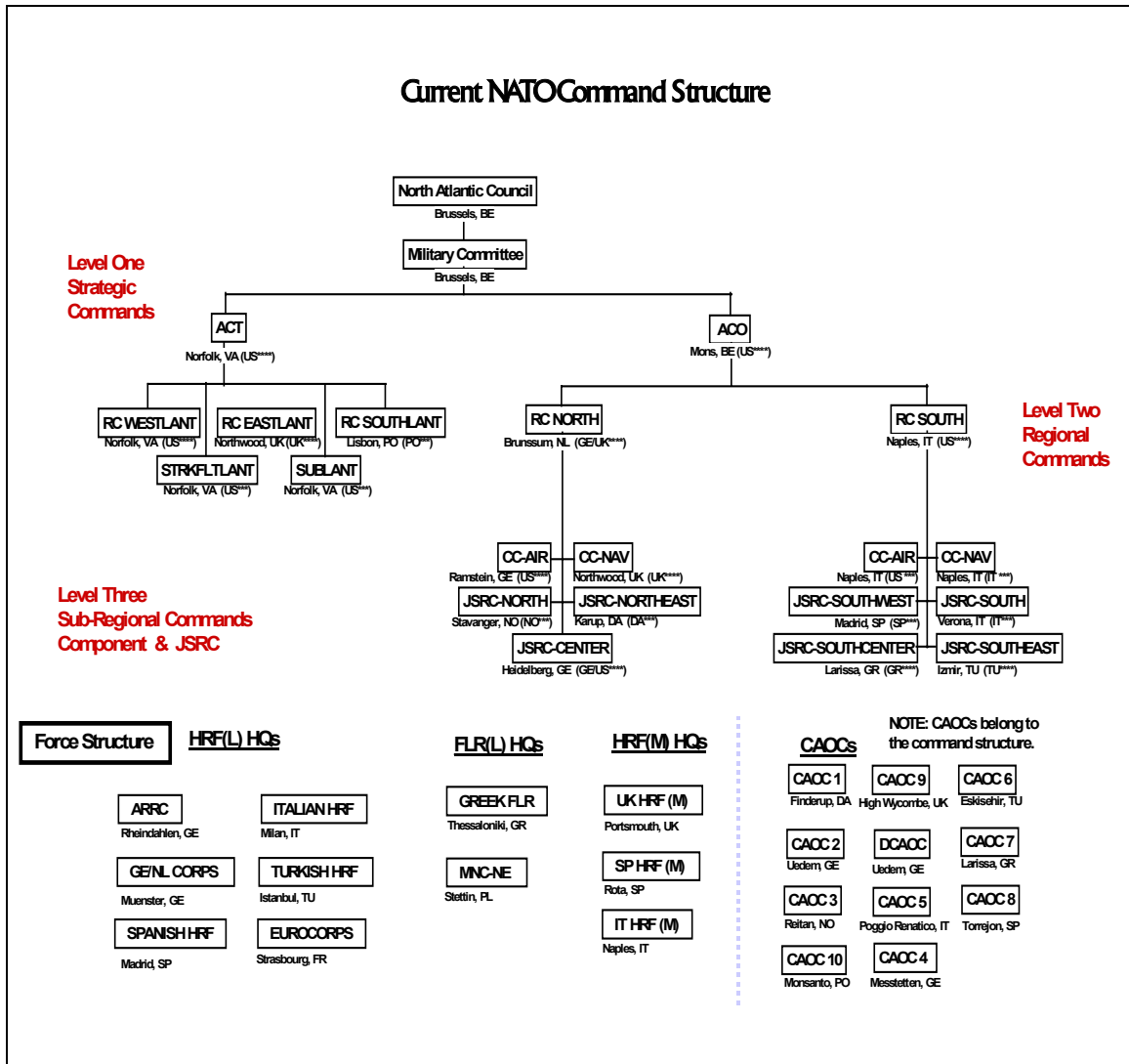


Fig. 1. Joint Staff J5 Briefing Slide

III. Political/Military Considerations

NATO remains a pivotal alliance.
—General James L. Jones, USMC

One cannot discuss NATO these days or analyze any aspect of the future of the alliance without ending up discussing: why NATO, what NATO, and what is “transformation.” These three issues are addressed as basic assumptions for the analysis of the command and control requirements. NATO is relevant; it should remain a military coalition; and transformation has one definition, but many interpretations.

Why NATO?

NATO remains relevant and is in a position to increase its strategic importance. During a speech last October, then SACEUR, General Joseph Ralston, reminded his audience of this point when he stated:

Make no mistake – NATO’s role is just as crucial today as it was during the Cold War only now the security environment we face is much less certain. It is characterized by unpredictable threats and asymmetric strategies that are likely to allow little time for mobilization. We do not know who the enemy might be, and we do not know where we will fight although it is becoming increasingly likely that NATO will operate out of area more in the future.¹¹

For over a decade, the relevance of NATO has been questioned and debated by a multitude of experts across the world stage. However, NATO has proven itself a strong and capable institution. The performance of NATO formations in Bosnia, Kosovo, and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) highlight what can be accomplished within a multinational alliance setting. No other European security system has an integrated and inherent military capability able to match this performance.

Despite internal nationalistic tendencies, a collection of nations stood firm in their resolve against a greater threat to their liberties for the duration of the Cold War. During remarks at the World Economic Forum, Secretary of State Colin Powell emphasized this point, stating, “Americans and Europeans together built the greatest political-military alliance in history. NATO was at the core of our efforts to keep the peace in Europe for more than four decades.”¹² Recognition of that achievement has been lost in the current debates floating around Europe and across the Atlantic about NATO’s relevance. Critics of the Alliance have put too much energy into nay saying, thus ignoring the strengths of NATO’s basic principles. This effort could have been put to such good use changing the organization for the better and preparing it for what is arguably an even more critical challenge – a future with multiple and more elusive enemies and no behemoth to unify the allies when resolve starts to waiver.

¹¹ Ralston, 2.

¹² Secretary of State Colin Powell, “Remarks at the World Economic Forum,” 26 January 2003; available from <http://www.state.gov/secretary/>; Internet; accessed 27 January 2003.

The Bush Administration, in the recently released National Security Strategy of the United States (NSS), stated: “The alliance must be able to act wherever our interests are threatened, creating coalitions under NATO’s own mandate, as well as contributing to mission-based coalitions.”¹³ NATO is clearly important to the current administration, which has been very vocal about its support of NATO. In January, the *New York Times* quoted the American ambassador to NATO, R. Nicholas Burns, as saying, “The United States believes NATO is vital for our interests in Europe.”¹⁴

As important as it is to Americans, NATO is even more important to Europeans. Much debate has taken place in public forums about a rift between Europe and the United States. Even Secretary Powell alluded to this when he remarked, “Now, I’m aware, as everyone in this room is aware, that Americans and Europeans do not always see things the same way in every instance. I would quickly point out that this is hardly a new development.”¹⁵ This sentiment was echoed by Marc Grossman, Under Secretary for Political Affairs, during remarks to the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations when he stated, “Yes, we have differences with our allies across the Atlantic, but the facts in your survey tell us that we share a deep partnership based on common interests and shared values.”¹⁶ The survey he discussed showed that people on both sides of the Atlantic were generally in agreement and of one mindset on foreign policy and societal fundamentals.¹⁷

Perhaps even more significant is the importance of NATO to member states in an environment of decreasing national spending authority. The Alliance allows nations to make lower individual contributions to defense while benefiting from a higher level of collective operational capability. Truly, the sum is much more than the individual parts. Any discussion of collective and individual defense over the next 20 years must consider this fact.

Finally, the *Wall Street Journal* edition of January 30, 2003, ran a letter under the title “European Leaders In Support Of U.S.” written by Jose Maria Aznar, Jose-Manuel Durao Barroso, Silvio Berlusconi, Tony Blair, Vaclav Havel, Peter Medgyessy, Leszek Miller, and Anders Fogh Rasmussen, that gave the best answer to the question “Why NATO?” The letter stated: “The real bond between the U.S. and Europe is the values we share: democracy, individual freedom, human rights and the Rule of Law. These values crossed the Atlantic with those who sailed from Europe to help create the United States of America. Today they are under greater threat than ever.”¹⁸

¹³ George W. Bush, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, D.C.: The White House, September 2002), 26.

¹⁴ Craig Smith, “Threats And Responses: Western Alliance; Debate Over Iraq Raises fears of a Shrinking Role for NATO,” 26 January 2003; available from <http://www.nytimes.com>; Internet; accessed 27 January 2003.

¹⁵ Powell, 2.

¹⁶ Under Secretary of State Marc Grossman, “NATO Enlargement,” 30 September 2002; available from <http://www.state.gov>; Internet; accessed 1 October 2002.

¹⁷ Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, “Transatlantic Report,” September 2002; available from http://www.worldviews.org/key_findings/transatlantic_report.htm; Internet; accessed 1 October 2002.

¹⁸ Jose Maria Aznar, et al., “European Leaders In Support Of U.S.,” 30 January 2003; available from <http://www.wsj.com>; Internet; accessed 30 January 2003.

What NATO?

NATO must remain a military alliance focused on meeting the security commitments outlined in its founding document, the Washington Treaty. Speaking before a NATO audience, Stephen Hadley, U.S. Deputy National Security Adviser, stated:

First, what is NATO for? NATO's core mission is the same today as it was at its founding; collective defense and consultation about threats to peace and security. NATO put this mission into new practice following the 11 September terrorist attacks. No one would have predicted that NATO's first invocation of Article 5 would have come in response to an attack hatched in Afghanistan, planned in places like Germany, Spain and Malaysia, and executed in Washington and New York. Article 5 of the NATO Treaty became real that day in a new way, and one that should surely give pause to those who question NATO's purposes. NATO's core mission has not changed. What has changed is the source of the threats to our countries.¹⁹

As stated in the Prague Capabilities Commitment (PCC), NATO "...must be able to field forces that can move quickly to wherever they are needed, upon decision by the North Atlantic Council, to sustain operations over distance and time, including in an environment where they might be faced with nuclear, biological and chemical threats, and to achieve their objectives."²⁰ Remaining focused as a military alliance is the only way to accomplish this goal. Writing in *NATO Review*, former CMC General Klaus Naumann stated, "If NATO were to become an essentially political organisation and no longer be used in a crisis, its defence guarantee would look hollow and it would soon lose support and fade away. This would not only be disastrous for Europe but be a severe blow to U.S. national interests as well. The United States would risk losing control of one of its opposing coastlines and relinquishing one of its most powerful instruments of political influence on Europe."²¹ While the original members of NATO may have been driven by a common single goal, today's NATO represents at least three other dimensions. First, for many of the new members, it functions as an entry point into the economic sphere of the West. Second, it is a declaration in favor of the forces of stability and security, and against the forces of intimidation, ethnic unrest, and religious fundamentalism. Third, as discussed above, it is a means to leverage decreasing, or at best stable, national spending authority against a growing requirement for security.

Transformation

At the Prague Summit of 2002, the NAC agreed to "...approve the Prague Capabilities Commitment (PCC) as part of the continuing Alliance effort to improve and develop new military capabilities for modern warfare in a high threat environment."²² The proclamation goes on to define the Alliance commitment further:

¹⁹ U.S. Deputy National Security Adviser Stephen Hadley, "Challenge and Change for NATO. A U.S. Perspective," 3 October 2002; available from <http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2002/s021003d.htm>; Internet; accessed 15 October 2002.

²⁰ North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "Prague Summit Declaration," 21 November 2002; available from <http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2002/p02-127e.htm>; Internet; accessed 3 December 2002.

²¹ General Klaus Naumann, "Crunch time for the Alliance," *NATO Review* Summer 02 [journal on-line]; available from <http://www.nato.int/NatoReview.htm>; Internet; accessed 15 September 2002.

²² North Atlantic Treaty Organization, "Prague Summit Declaration," 21 November 2002; available from <http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2002/p02-127e.htm>; Internet; accessed 3 December 2002.

...to improve their capabilities in the areas of chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear defense; intelligence, surveillance, and target acquisition; air-to-ground surveillance; command, control and communications; combat effectiveness, including precision guided munitions and suppression of enemy air defenses; strategic air and sea lift; air-to-air refueling; and deployable combat support and combat service support units.²³

Transformation, as defined earlier, is the process of changing form, nature, or function. During the “OPEN ROAD” Seminar at ACLANT, it was further defined as “a continuous process of developing and integrating innovative concepts, doctrine and capabilities in order to improve their effectiveness and interoperability of warfighting forces in a continuously changing environment.”²⁴ However, “transformation” is a *terme de rigueur* and confusing to all except the person using it at that particular moment. In response to this definition and during the same seminar, Gen Harald Kujat, chairman of NATO’s Military Committee, updated the definition by adding on this ending: “with a view to achieving the tasks imparted upon us by the heads of states and governments in the Alliance’s strategic concept.”²⁵ Obviously, he is concerned about lining up Alliance transformation efforts with an American model.

The issue of sovereignty makes the exploitation of acquired insight from the American experience harder, but not impossible. The reality of the situation dictates that not all nations will be able to afford what the United States is calling transformation. Even if they could afford it, their culture could not absorb that much change. Therefore, in an alliance setting, one must lay out transformation in a way that accomplishes several goals. A few countries can afford to focus on high-end material solutions such as transport aircraft, Command, Control, Communications and Intelligence (C3I) systems, and global logistics. Other countries must focus on niche capabilities and providing the low-end forces. Meanwhile, NATO should exert more influence on its members to adjust fiscal policy now so that military spending authority does not disappear in the next ten years and so that NATO transformation does not fail.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ General Harald Kujat, “The Transformation of NATO’s Military Forces and its Link with U.S. Transformation,” 21 January 2003; available from <http://www.nato.int/ims/2003/s030121e.htm>; Internet; accessed 22 January 2003.

²⁵ Ibid.

IV. New Framework Proposals

Change is difficult but often essential to survival.

—Les Brown

Strategic Level Commands and Staffs (Level One)

During the Prague Summit in November 2002, the NATO leaders agreed that the Alliance required a new command structure to meet the full range of new Alliance missions. They decided to maintain two Level One strategic headquarters. The Strategic Command for Operations, based on the current SHAPE headquarters and staff, will remain in Mons, Belgium. Its major subordinate headquarters will be the basis of two land-based Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) headquarters and a sea-based CJTF headquarters. The Strategic Command for Transformation will be headquartered in Norfolk, while maintaining a presence in Europe. It will be responsible for transformation and interoperability of Alliance forces. The basis for this command will be the Supreme Allied Commander Atlantic (SACLANT) and his staff/command.

The direction taken at the Prague Summit will provide NATO with the genesis of a more effective command structure; however, Allied Command Transformation (ACT), as envisaged, falls short of providing all the requirements needed to support the Alliance. Prior to the Prague Summit, Major General James M. Dubik of the U.S. Joint Forces Command argued that "...while *materiel solutions*—new technology and systems—are critical to transformation, they may not be as important as effective training, organization, doctrine, and leadership development."²⁶

By assigning missions that specifically delineate unique command responsibilities at the outset, NATO can prevent many problems from occurring and ensure the highest levels of operational capability for the units of the NFS. Including troops, training, and doctrine (Allied Command Transformation, Troops, Training, and Doctrine or ACT3D) would more effectively meet the Alliance's needs and accurately state its foci. As an example, during the pre-deployment training cycles of the units slated to execute the NATO Response Force (NRF) mission, ACT3D should be responsible for training and certifying these units. Once certified, ACT3D should release them for employment by Allied Command Operations (ACO).

²⁶ MG James M. Dubik, USA, "Military Transformation," panel discussion, Washington, D.C., 2002 Eisenhower National Security Conference; 27 September 2002; available from <http://www.eisenhowerseries.com>; Internet; accessed 9 December 2002.

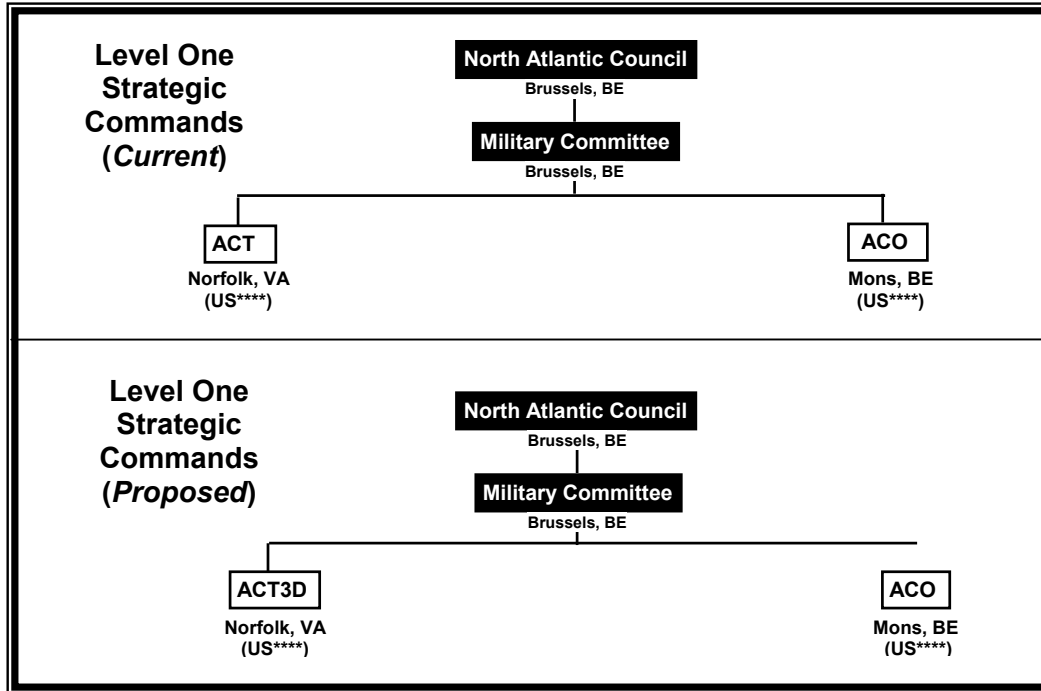


Fig. 2. Top, adapted from Joint Staff J5 Briefing Slide; bottom, author proposal.

Regional Level Commands and Staffs (Level Two)

Currently, there are seven Level Two commands operated at significant cost to both the Alliance and member nations. Allied Command Operations should have three subordinate Level Two headquarters. The reduction of headquarters from the current seven to the envisioned three would not degrade effectiveness and would give the alliance the opportunity to operate more efficiently at a cost savings in the infrastructure, operating, and personnel accounts. In view of the complex funding systems and the classification of relevant financial information, it is difficult to determine exact cost savings; however, a conservative estimate would be an annual savings in the \$10M to \$25M range. A new command, Allied Forces West (AFWEST), should join AFNORTH and AFSOUTH. (See organizational chart below). AFWEST, based on the current RC EASTLANT headquarters and staff, should form the core of the maritime CJTF envisioned at Prague. AFNORTH and AFSOUTH, fully manned and resourced, will be capable of providing the two land-based CJTFs. Together, these three commands will give NATO the ability to surge CJTFs, both land and maritime, to three separate missions, or maintain one rotational CJTF for a long duration mission such as the Balkans. Each of the commands should have an assigned Combined Air Operations Center (CAOC). Permanently assigned CAOCs will increase the working relationship, decrease deployment costs, and increase the level of training of both headquarters and CAOC personnel. This would improve interoperability and increase the war-fighting capability of the CJTF headquarters.

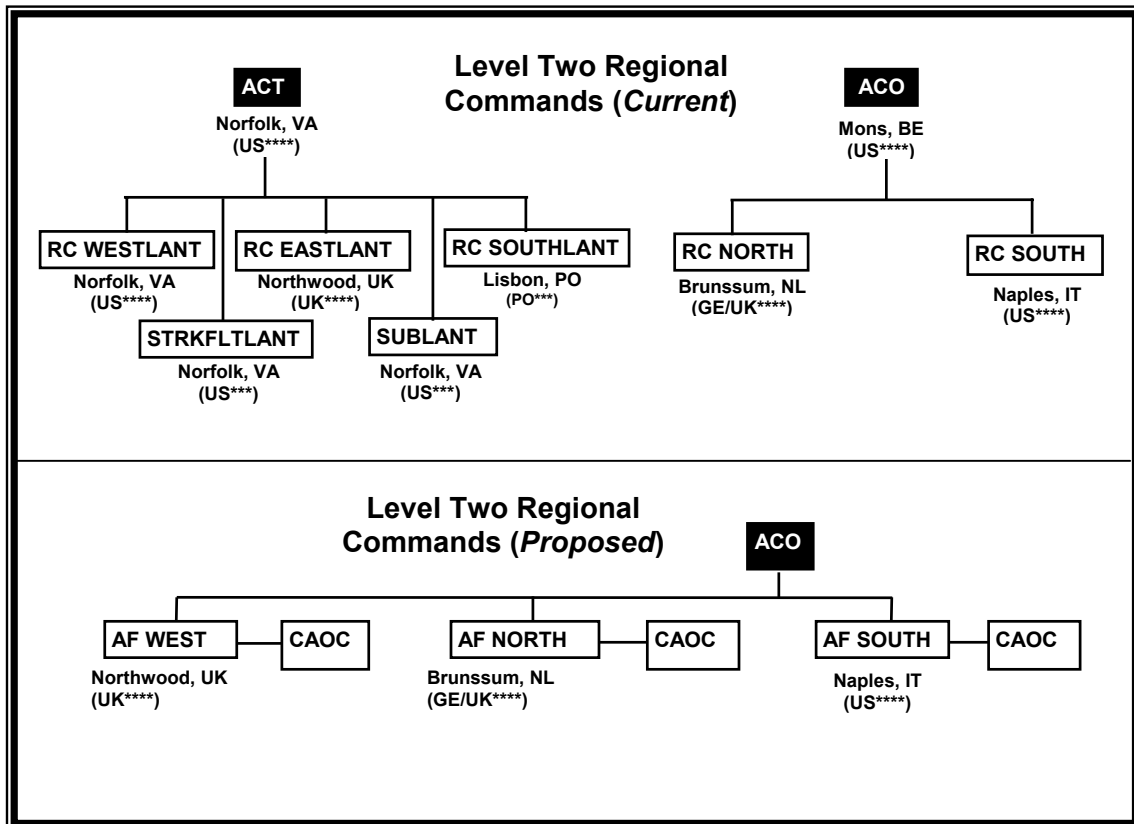


Fig. 3. Top, adapted from Joint Staff J5 Briefing Slide; bottom, author proposal.

Sub-Regional Commands, Component, and JSRC (Level Three)

Currently, NATO operates eleven Level Three commands and ten CAOCs and one Deployable Combined Air Operations Center (DCAOC). It is proposed that there be nine Level Three component commands and three DCAOCs. Each of the three regional commands would have an air, ground, and maritime component command, as shown in the illustration below. In addition, the DCAOCs would be permanently assigned to each of the three air component commands. This arrangement would make the headquarters more capable of supporting the CJTFs, increase their focus on warfighting, increase their effectiveness, and decrease costs. Functional alignments would increase their capability to assume technology while maintaining professional development of the staffs and increasing Alliance interoperability. Cost savings, at this level, could be as high as \$100M annually with an additional \$200M+ saved on programmed infrastructure improvements that will not be required.

The SHAPE Staff is in the best position to determine the headquarters selected for this transition. They have an experienced cadre of members who contribute daily to the professional development and evaluation of subordinate headquarters.

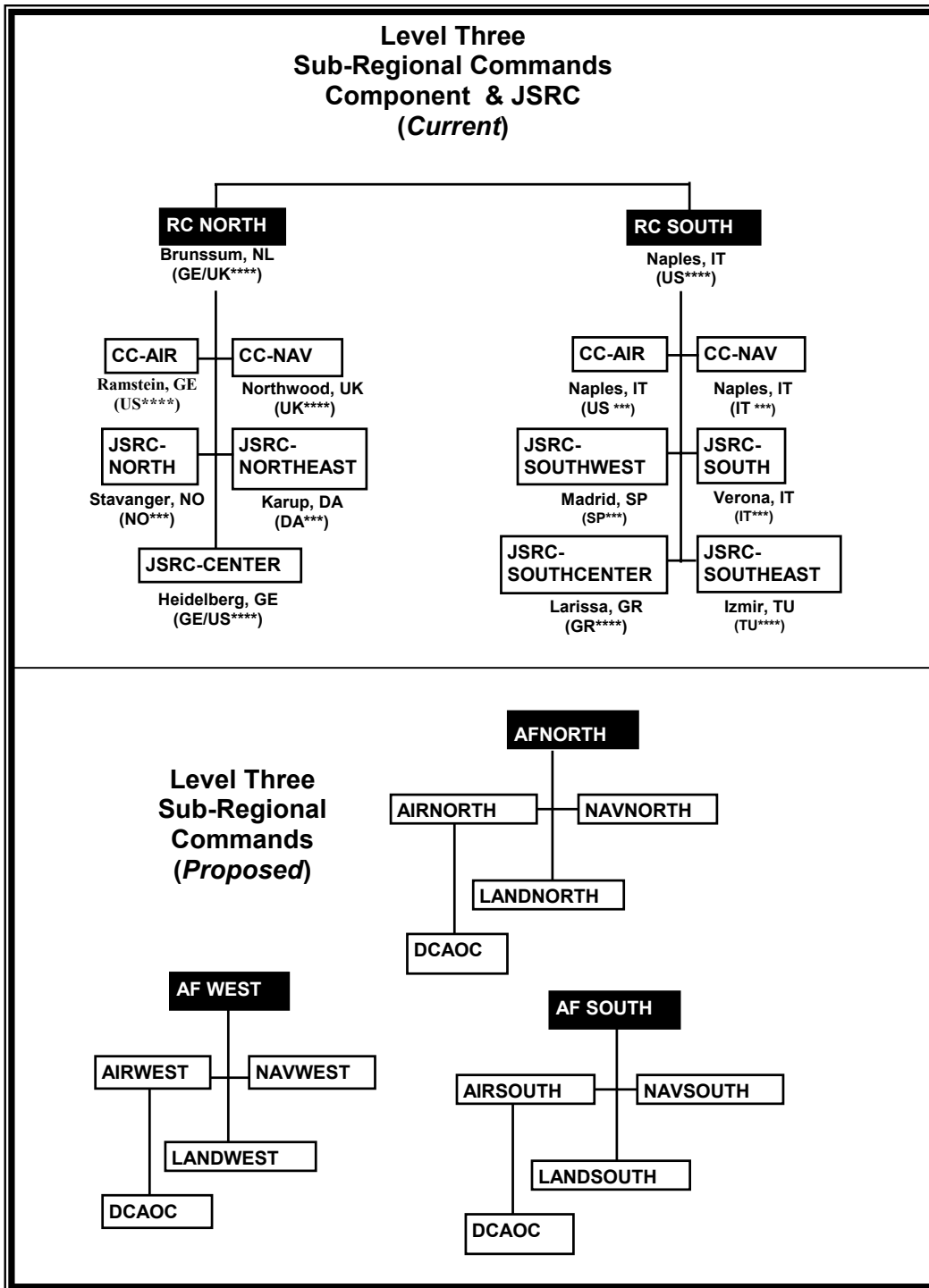


Fig. 4. Top, adapted from Joint Staff J5 Briefing Slide; bottom, author proposal.

NATO Force Structure

All of the NFS land forces should be assigned by region to the appropriate component command. The six HRF (L) and two FLR units would be equally split between the two land-based Level Two commands, AFNORTH and AFSOUTH. This move would place responsibility squarely on the higher headquarters for unit and soldier training and employment during times of crisis. Trust and confidence in the relationship between higher headquarters and military units can only be fostered over time and with experience. With the added variable of nationality, this can only be overcome by a positive daily relationship.

The three HRF (M) would be assigned to AFWEST and form the basis of the maritime CJTF. This functional relationship will allow NATO to maintain the capability to project power from the sea during a crisis and close some of the gaps that exist because of the great distances and lack of strategic deployment capability.

V. Additional Recommendations

All progress is initiated by challenging current conceptions, and executed by supplanting existing institutions.

—George Bernard Shaw

NATO Response Force (NRF)

The PCC stated that NATO should “create a NATO Response Force consisting of a technologically advanced, flexible, deployable, interoperable, and sustainable force including land, sea, and air elements ready to move quickly to wherever needed, as decided by the Council. The NRF will also be a catalyst for focusing and promoting improvements in the Alliance’s military capabilities.”²⁷ This force is on a short timeline. It must have its initial operational capability not later than October 2004 and its full operational capability no later than October 2006.

The importance of this force to the future of the Alliance cannot be overstated. Beyond its operational mission and capabilities, the NRF will be the focus of all Alliance efforts to close the technology gap and increase the interoperability of its forces. As units rotate back and forth in training status, it will also serve as a learning bridge between ACT3D and ACO. To call it a high technology test bed would be to sell the NRF short of what it truly can become. It must not be allowed to degrade the capabilities of the other Alliance forces, although it may seem that this is occurring as NRF’s readiness and capabilities climb exponentially and the other formations maintain marginal growth. It must not become an elitist organization. It cannot lose its link to national and other NATO formations. It must not become merely a new name for an old organization or it will lose its hold on transformation.

Most importantly, it is paramount that the NRF receive the national support it deserves from beginning to end. An “opt out” clause is not a viable alternative because it would breed a lack of trust and destroy any formation preparing for crisis. If an ally chose not to deploy part or all of the NRF, it would jeopardize the entire mission. The current rift within NATO over the defense of Turkey is one example of the serious consequences that can result from disunity in the Alliance.

The NRF is the bridge to the future, one that can span the transatlantic capabilities gap and the often-contentious political gaps by cementing trust in word and deed.

Facility Locations

Within a military alliance, the most efficient way to apportion resources would be to make all decisions based solely on mission requirements and geography. However, in reality, the alliance structure makes these decisions difficult because they must be politically palatable to all parties. The decision to transform the military command structure and increase efficiency

²⁷ North Atlantic Treaty Organization, “Prague Summit Declaration,” 21 November 2002; available from <http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2002/p02-127e.htm>; Internet; accessed 3 December 2002.

and effectiveness must not be held hostage by political differences. Innovative and imaginative solutions to these problems are possible while maintaining mission focus. One recommendation is to distribute the hundreds of NATO Committees and working groups across the Alliance, based on the mission and goal of that group and the national capabilities of the prospective host countries. For example, groups focused on Chemical, Biological and Radiological (CBR) Warfare could be placed within the Czech Republic, a country that has a demonstrated niche capability in that area. Similarly, the Political-Military Steering Committee on Partnership for Peace (PMSC/PFP) could be placed within the United Kingdom because of demonstrated expertise. A second recommendation would be to locate Training Centers of Excellence within countries that have corresponding expertise and suitable geographical and climatic conditions. Examples include the creation of a Mountain Warfare Training Center in Romania, a Cold Weather Training Center in Norway, or a Ground Maneuver Training Center in Poland. Spreading the resources of the Alliance out among the members will increase the interoperability and the combat readiness of units and increase the trust among the members of the alliance and their citizens. A price cannot be placed on the political capital gained by positive military-to-military and military-to-civilian relationships.

VI. Conclusions

All progress has resulted from people who took unpopular positions.

—Adlai E. Stevenson

NATO is in an advantageous and timely position for reform. What began at the Prague Summit in November 2002 must be refined and developed. NATO must take measures to transform its military command structure. It must accomplish this in order to:

- manage Alliance resources effectively and efficiently;
- remain a relevant force for peace and stability;
- maintain its position as the world's premier military alliance;
- close the capability gap that has developed among its members.

It must be capable of growth and flexibility and be prepared for *New Capabilities, New Members, and New Relationships*. This command structure must manage and integrate transformation activities while planning for and executing operations across the full spectrum of missions. It must utilize asymmetric strategies to defend against emerging and unpredictable threats while transitioning from threat-based to capabilities-based force development. In addition, although limited by the differences inherent between national and multinational entities, the ongoing U.S. military transformation offers many valuable lessons learned in structural and management architecture. These are lessons that the Alliance can ill afford to ignore.

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