

Multinational Operations – A New Challenge for the National Staff Training

Address given by
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Thank you for having invited me to say a few words about “Multinational Operations - A New Challenge for National Staff Training”.

This year’s event of the Blue Helmet Association will be dealing with a very important issue and - as I can see from the program - you have invited very experienced officers.

I will give you an overview of how we, at the NDA, prepare our Senior Staff Officers and General Staff Officers for fulfilling their tasks in PSOs and I want to point out three aspects:

- First: What are the threats and risks we are facing and what are the skills and capabilities to meet them?
- Second: PSO-training as an integrated part of our courses, and
- Third: The concept of integrated training for multinational operations.

Now, I am sure that from your own experience you know what the threats and risks and the means to meet them are. I can therefore skip that part. To wrap up that issue, however, I just want to quote your President General

GREINDL who, in answer to the question of what the qualifications of the future soldier would be, said in an interview in the newspaper “Die Presse”, “[that] the future soldier has to be well trained and, if need be, able to fight”. But, he added, that that was no longer enough. “What is also needed are political understanding, cultural awareness, and sound English language skills”.

That leads me to points two and three to show you how the NDA goes about this training, which sounds so simple on the surface.

In order to meet current and future military requirements in a combined and joint environment we have steadily improved our training and education programs.

In a step by step approach we have integrated English language training into most of our courses and have significantly improved the language proficiency of our teaching staff. For the General Staff Officer Course, for example, English proficiency level C - the equivalent of 3333 according to NATO STANAG 6001 - is a prerequisite, as besides German it is the second course language. This is also the goal for higher leadership and staff officer courses and is to be seen as THE basis for PSO training.

In our programs we consider Peace Support Operations as an umbrella term encompassing three types of activities that are predominantly diplomatic in nature (preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peace building) and two complementary, predominately military activities (peacekeeping and peace-enforcement). The

main effort in our courses lies with the predominately military activities.

During the early phase of the General Staff Officer Course we introduce map exercises at battalion and brigade level, together with intensive staff training in planning, leading up to mission analysis and decision briefs. For this kind of training students earn recognition of the so-called Staff Officer Course PSO (SOC PSO).

The same three-week Staff Officer Course PSO is an integral part of Leadership Course 2 and the students obtain a certificate upon passing their exams. For Staff Course 2, Leadership Course 3 and the other military courses (e.g. Higher Quartermaster and Legal Advisor Course, etc.) the curricula include a shorter training period which the students complete with the Officer Course PSO (OC PSO).

Building upon the knowledge and expertise gathered during the SOC PSO at the lower tactical level the students of the General Staff Course continue exercising at all levels up to the operational and military-strategic level, while permanently increasing the emphasis on the multinational aspect in complex, multifaceted, “up to date” scenarios. Thereby they intensively cooperate with international staff officers during special training blocks.

The ultimate goal is to fully integrate our course participants into respective staffs and functions. In order to evaluate their capabilities and their progress in achieving the learning objectives, we participate in multinational exercises abroad.

The international community - that is, the UN, NATO, and the EU - largely agrees that crisis management and conflict prevention cannot do without the employment of multinational armed forces. In order to achieve stable structures in crisis regions and sustain them in the long term, armed forces must be enabled to cover the entire scope of tasks.

At the NDA Senior Staff Officer Training is geared toward preparing officers for future assignments in Austrian General Staff positions as well as higher HQ positions in national and international environments. Our Academy runs 3-year General Staff Courses and 2-year modular Leadership Courses for Senior Staff Officers.

Since participation in multinational operations has become the rule rather than the exception for the AAF, familiarization with multinational HQ procedures and techniques has become a key element of our Senior Staff Officer Training.

Modern HQ information management, handling multinational staff procedures, and cultural as well as situational awareness form the basis of our restructured training.

Our former bilateral and multilateral training had to be adapted in order to better integrate and extend the interaction with available training programs within the framework of the UN, NATO-PfP and the EU.

Getting hands-on experience cannot be managed on a national basis. We, therefore, have to cooperate with our

European and trans-Atlantic partners to ensure that our students receive the training they need.

As an example of how our Academy goes about it, I would like to refer to our contribution to the multinational exercises (PfP or EU).

Therefore we want to train our Austrian Senior Staff Officers and the international students who attend our courses in the best possible way so that they are well prepared to fulfill their tasks in any national and multinational HQ and other institutions.

I have initiated a training program for Senior Staff Officers that complements the officers' studies at the Academy by the participation in a multinational exercise program designed to train multinational HQ procedures. This way the students get acquainted with a broad spectrum of conditions and theatres which will enable them to fulfill any given task within the framework of European Security Defence Structures.

All courses with a minimum duration of one year are designated to participate in a multinational exercise. This will have to be incorporated into the MoD's exercise program for the AAF.

Participation in a multinational exercise is a comprehensive full-year program. It comprises the whole cycle from operational planning and scenario development in support of the respective commands preparing the exercise to contributing to functional areas in the force generation process and participating in the plan development.

The scenario and initial situation of the exercise are used for studying various functional as well as general areas in preparation for the exercise. The material produced during this studying phase forms the basis for the AAF's contribution to the exercise.

The operational planning process carried out by the students under NDA staff guidance forms the core of the national preparation for the exercise. By providing response cells to the command structure an interactive planning process is achieved.

Final student evaluation is based on the results achieved during training at the Academy as well as the performance rating during the exercise.

The lessons learned during the exercise are incorporated into the training programs developed by our NDA training staff, so that they are permanently up-dated.

The participation of the Leadership Course 2003/04 in Exercise Allied Action in Istanbul constituted the core part of our Multinational Senior Staff Officer Training in 2003.

Preparation for Allied Action was conducted as a full-year training program, including everything from language training, participation in the operational planning process, individual studies up to the final force integration phase.

The Austrians were accepted as augmenters at all exercise levels, while our main focus was on the contribution to the NATO Rapid Deployable Corps

Turkey, acting as Land Component Command, and the provision of a Division Response Cell to DISTAFF. The total of NDA participants was 54 and the Leadership Course students acted within all branches of LCC, in some CJTF HQs, and as core staff of a Division Response Cell. This allowed for maximum participation in, both the scenario development and the planning process.

The exercise proved to be a perfect tool for combining academic studies related to the scenario with a division size contribution to the exercise. Extensive studies in the areas of Combat Support and Combat Service Support as well as addressing basic logistical questions provided our men with a solid basis for their participation in the exercise.

The training – covering English military terminology, operational planning, the tactical planning process for Land Forces, and operational techniques for Land Forces in Crisis Response Operations – gained additional momentum through the exercise, boosting the overall motivation of the students.

Allied Action 03 was the test case for the participation of our courses in multinational exercises. This was a great success. Since then participation - applying approximately the same steps - has become a cornerstone of our training.

In that sense, in 2005, the GSC, Leadership Course 2 and the Higher Quartermaster and Legal Adviser Course took part in MNE European Challenge 05 in Germany, while another Leadership Course 2 as well as the General Staff

Course joined Exercise VIKING 05 in Sweden and Switzerland. The next Leadership Course 2, coming up in fall this year will also partake in such an exercise.

Therefore, continued close cooperation with other Academies and with NATO, the EU, and UN Agencies will guarantee that our senior staff officers receive the training that is needed. Exchanging experience between European and Transatlantic HQs and Academies will help define the training standards that meet the requirements of current and future operations in a multinational environment.