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What role can Stability Policing play in total defence and building resilience?[3]

Nature and characteristics of modern threats to peace, security, and stability

Usually, when total defence and resilience are approached, there is a tendency to examine and consider only the military and economic aspects, neglecting an existing and

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[3]   Disclaimer: this paper is a product of the NATO Stability Policing Centre of Excellence and its content does not reflect NATO policies or positions, nor represent NATO in any way, but only the NATO SP COE or author(s), depending on the circumstances.

tried instrument that can greatly impact and improve the chances of success, namely NATO Stability Policing. Our analysis is based on first-hand professional experiences garnered during numerous deployments overseas since 1998, through desk research and institutional analysis, and through the participation, since 2014, in a number of research and development, conceptual and doctrinal, as well as education and training events. We will draw from this background and expertise to demonstrate how Stability Policing is a perfectly suitable tool for integrating the military and the civilian worlds in a total defence perspective, being furthermore capable of supporting and facilitating social resilience. Although Stability Policing has been a NATO-agreed term with a dedicated Allied Joint Doctrine since 2016 and has been applied since 1998 by NATO and other international organisations (albeit with different taxonomy and different approaches), this instrument is still not widely known, hence applied with delay, discontinuity, and insufficient resources, unduly limiting the achievement of the best possible results. The significance of law enforcement through Stability Policing as a unique military capability within military operations, enlarging the reach of the Alliance and contributing to countering hybrid threats as well as to improving total defence and to supporting resilience will be explained throughout the paper and will form a fundamental basis for final conclusions.

Indeed, to showcase how Stability Policing can contribute to total defence and to building resilience, an introduction to modern threats and their actors is required. Menaces to stability and to safety, to public order and security, to societal cohesion, to the Rule of Law, but also to human rights have inter-connected and severe implications not only for the physical and structural security of a nation, but also for its peace, internal stability, its civil society and may extend to a wider region and globally.

With the end of the Cold War, the dimension and perception of security threats has shifted from the previous focus directed mainly towards military might and politics to the frequent use of non-military instruments, practices, and approaches. Indeed, historical analysis, study of current crises, and projections into future scenarios indicate that means (tools) and ways (conduct) put in place to threaten the security, stability and integrity of a state have mutated and are morphing, often favouring those of a non-military nature. In effect, an increasing tendency of resorting to a diversified panoply involves economic and social phenomena amongst others, and related shocks are weaponised. As an example, a single piece of fake news by the Syrian Electronic Army acting as Associated Press falsely reported attacks on the White House with injuries to the then President Obama. This caused a 100-point drop at the New York Stock Exchange, and the Standard & Poor's 500 to lose $136.5 billion.[4]

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[4]   "Syrian Electronic Army linked hack attack AP Twitter feed 'broke news' Obama injured White House blast sent Dow Jones plunging", *Daily Mail Reporter*, 24 April 2013, https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2314001/Syrian-Electronic-Army-linked-hack-attack-AP-Twitter-feed-broke-news-Obama-injured-White-House-blast-sent-Dow-Jones-plunging.html [accessed: 1 March 2022].

Current crises and the new approach to waging war introduce us to a multi-sourced, multi-faceted, multiple-level, and multi-domain reality providing simultaneous and concurrent use of leveraged tools, and which has simultaneity as its focal point. The latter is the ability to create effects across the military and civil sectors at the same time by implementing different actions, which can be carried out gradually or randomly. The effectiveness of this approach lays in the effects that triggering different actions in a complex system of systems with extremely interconnected domains produces way greater results than approaches confined to a single one.

Threat Actors

Proxies, state-sponsored terrorism, organised and trans-national crime, and even ethnic or linguistic minorities are among the actors in current, indiscriminate wars and elements through which foreign powers may conduct a vast range of attacks. All can lead to the degradation of a state and its structures to the point of rendering it unable to function.

An external actor could initiate putting pressure on a state fostering such a conflict by conducting disinformation campaigns, instigating separatism, supporting secessionists, staging provocations, or exploiting an ethnic group and its cultural background.[5]

Unstable or fragile states, in which law enforcement and the rule of law are weakened, will inevitably attract criminal enterprises, often of transnational reach. Also, terrorists and insurgents may target the values, institutions, and interests of a country through acts aimed at causing maximum disruptive impacts. National institutions, military, security and law enforcement personnel, and the population may therefore be hit with spectacular, and indiscriminate or, conversely, very focused and extremely brutal assaults, seeking to generate fear, a sense of helplessness and to break the social pact by blatantly demonstrating the state's inability to fulfil its first and main task, namely protecting its citizens.

While terrorists are ideologically motivated (politics, religion, ethnic motives, etc.), criminals are driven mainly by economic reasons and monetary gains. Corruption, coercion, including of judges, local police, and politicians, as well as fights with competitors, and their actions to shape the environment aim to enhance the generation of their revenue. Terrorists, insurgents, and criminals, i.e., who in NATO are called irregular actors, exploit and flourish in environments in which governmental control is absent or weakened, law enforcement and border controls are lax,

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[5] Adapted from: P. Szymański, in co-operation with J. Gotkowska, "The Baltic states' Territorial Defence Forces in the face of hybrid threats", *OSW Commentary*, no. 165, 2015, http://aei.pitt.edu/63158/1/commentary_165.pdf [accessed: 30 May 2022].

regulatory systems are feeble, contracts go un-enforced, where public services are un-reliable, corruption is rife, and the state itself may be subject to capture.[6]

Why Total Defence

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Western, particularly European nations re-duced military and defence spending as well as their defence apparatuses considerably. Crisis response operations became a prevalent approach that did not require large standing and conscription-based armies, but most significantly changed the relation between different actors within the defence arena. The more recent increasing threat posed by peer and near-peer opponents, not to mention the recent Ukraine–Russia war, often employing hybrid means, requires revisiting previously consolidated, ho-listic approaches in which the state and its institutions, the armed forces, private en-terprises and law enforcement, the media and civilian defence entities all seek to col-laborate towards a common goal, namely improving the overall defence performance. Since most, if not all, branches of a society and nation are and need to be involved to have a chance of success, the term total defence is particularly fitting. As hybrid threats and unconventional means of war cover all major societal functions, the de-fence against them must be comprehensive, including areas that are not traditionally associated with warfare.[7]

Why resilience

The essence of the modern way to conduct a war is "total,"[8] which implies that the above-mentioned threats may materialise at a very short notice, propagate rapidly also due to increased connectedness, and that they cannot entirely be prevented. Wishing to resist, to prepare against all possible sources of harm would prove an impossible task, resulting in wasting resources and, consequently, in lesser protection.

Therefore, a practicable approach may seek to devise coping mechanisms to lessen harmful effects on the state and its population, an approach creating cohesiveness, fostering synergies, championing common values, and garnering all possible contri-butions to focus them on innovative and unforeseen menaces: building resilience. NATO's Warfighting Capstone Concept[9] suggests that success in addressing modern

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[6]   Adapted from: P. Stewart, "Weak States and Global Threats: Assessing Evidence of Spillovers", *Center for Global Development Working Paper*, no. 73, 2006.

[7]   A. Cederberg, P. Eronen, "How can Societies be Defended against Hybrid Threats?", *Geneva Center for Security Policy, Strategic Security Analysis*, vol. 9, 2015, pp. 1–10.

[8]   Adapted from: E.F.W. Ludendorff, "Totalnaya voina [Total Warfare]", *Moskva: Izdatelstvo "Э"*, 2015.

[9]   NATO ACT, https://www.act.nato.int/activities/nwcc [accessed: 10 March 2022].

challenges to security and peace requires, amongst others, anticipating such threats, operating within domains but also across domains, and defending in a multi-domain approach as well as utilising a layered resilience. The NATO-agreed definition of resilience is "the ability of an entity to continue to perform specified functions during and after an attack or an incident."[10] Applying another perspective, resilience may be the amount of disturbance a state can absorb and still remain the same, how much the state is capable of self-organisation, and the degree to which the state can build and increase the capacity for learning and adaptation.[11] The principle of resilience is anchored in Article 3 of the Alliance's founding treaty: "In order more effectively to achieve the objectives of this Treaty, the Parties, separately and jointly, by means of continuous and effective self-help and mutual aid, will maintain and develop their individual and collective capacity to resist armed attack."[12]

In this view, people, institutions, and societies need to become faster in identifying, adapting, and reacting to unconventional attacks including with means and ways of a non-military nature.

Capable, resilient states with strong, legitimate structures of governance will better prevent the collapse into conflict, facilitate sustainable recovery from violence, and reduce the level of uncertainty.

The definition of Stability Policing, its two missions and the "blue lens"

Stability Policing[13] consist of activities aimed at improving capacity and capabilities of the law enforcement agencies within a host nation and/or to police its population temporarily until they or a follow-on force can take over that responsibility. Doing so, Stability Policing expands the reach of the Alliance as a complementary tool within the combat and warfighting instrument of power in all three core tasks, namely collective defence, crisis management and cooperative security. It supports the re-/establishment of a safe and secure environment, thus being pivotal in the restoration of public order and security. Stability Policing can be conducted in all operations- themes,[14]

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[10]   NATO Terminology Database, NATO Term, https://nso.nato.int/natoterm/content/nato/pages/home.html?lg=en [accessed: 30 May 2022].

[11]   B. Obrist, C. Pfeiffer, R. Henley, "Multi-layered social resilience: A new approach in mitigation research", *Progress in Development Studies*, no. 10, 2010, pp. 283–293.

[12]   The Washington Treaty, signed on 4 April 1949, established the North Atlantic Alliance, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_17120.htm [accessed: 30 May 2022].

[13]   Police related activities intended to reinforce or temporarily replace indigenous police in order to contribute to the restoration and/or upholding of the public order and security, rule of law, and the protection of human rights. NATO-agreed term, NATO Terminology Database…, *op. cit*.

[14]   Across the full spectrum of operation themes, from peacetime military engagement to warfighting.

before, during and after (armed) conflicts and manmade or natural disasters as well as in all domains, land, sea, air, cyber, and space. As a military capability focused on the policing of civilians, it can concur to deter, identify, locate, target, and engage adversaries and enemies also through "legal targeting."[15] Thus, it applies a deployable policing approach or "blue lens" to emerging military problems and can help attain tactical, operational, and strategic objectives in a military campaign as well as contribute to creating the conditions for meeting longer-term needs with respect to governance and development. It is a multi-pronged, innovative, and cutting-edge instrument which fosters a reshaped military strategy that focuses also on providing basic security to local communities preyed upon by criminals, terrorists, and insurgents (typically financed by illegal revenues). This, in turn, improves governance, empowers the host nation, and provides alternative and legal livelihoods, thus contributing to winning public support in the battle of narratives.

How Stability Policing contributes to total defence and to building resilience

A state's strength can be measured in its ability to respond to the defence, police, and justice-related needs of its populace, including physical security, legitimacy of its political institutions, management of its economy, and the provision of social welfare. Clearly not all these elements can be guaranteed and protected by the military instrument alone. Indeed, "military problems cannot be solved by military means alone", to paraphrase US President J.F. Kennedy.[16]

Stability Policing roles are manifold and include expanding the reach of the Alliance beyond the combat-only approach, using policing means and tools, thereby enlarging the range of capabilities to counter an extended range of threats. It is no wonder that it was a Gendarmerie-Type Force,[17] the Italian Carabinieri, that generated and championed the Stability Policing concept,[18] since it could draw from its own historically established traditions and background, as well as from its consolidated centrality as an entity concurrently serving and connecting the populace, the state and its government, the armed forces, and law enforcement agencies, bringing together

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[15] Legal targeting, "creating effects on adversaries by enforcing international and applicable Host Nation law."

[16] J.F. Kennedy, remarks at Annapolis to the graduating class of the US Naval Academy, 7 June 1961.

[17] Gendarmerie-Type Force (GTF) is a NATO-agreed term: "An armed force established for enforcing the laws and that, on its national territory, permanently and primarily conducts its activities for the benefit of the civilian population."; NATO Terminology Database..., *op. cit*.

[18] The first Multinational Specialized Unit, the Stability Policing' forefather, was deployed in 1998 to Bosnia-Herzegovina as part of the NATO Stabilization Force (SFOR).

the military, civil and civilian sectors. This unifying domestic role of the Carabinieri can be well applied abroad by Stability Policing forces, focusing on rooting out the causes of instability, and advancing people-centred solutions that are locally driven, comprehensive, and sustainable. Stability Policing acknowledges that, as a result of downturns such as conflicts, economic and financial crises, people are faced with sudden insecurities and deprivations. These not only undo years of development but also generate conditions within which grievances can lead to growing tensions that can be exploited by malign actors. Therefore, in addition to its emphasis on human well-being, Stability Policing is driven by values relating to security, stability, and sustainability of development gains.[19]

Stability Policing champions how modern societies can be and become more resilient by playing this unifying role to improve defence performances in countering threats. By the use of lawfare[20] and legal targeting[21], in fact, by aggregating legal rules, actions, processes, and institutions, including both their normative and physical manifestation, it is utilised to achieve effects against enemies and/or adversaries also within the context of a hybrid campaign.

Rather than viewing the law as a method of rational order-making, lawfare looks for ways to use legal advantages to influence targets by delivering the effects of defeat, deterrence, or defence via legal means.

Stability Policing allows national defence to add an arrow to its quiver: legal targeting. This may be described as the technique of manoeuvring to gain legal superiority by using domestic and international laws to gain the political initiative or even military advantages.

The presence on the international scene of states acting through third parties to influence and employ hostile measures against others is not a new phenomenon and it encompasses several benefits, including non-attribution, plausible deniability, and keeping actions below the threshold of war (i.e., armed conflict).

An external actor who wants to interfere without resorting to the military tool may choose from a broad range of legal tools to support a hybrid threat campaign, including exploiting legal thresholds, normative gaps, complexity and uncertainty, circumventing own legal obligations, avoiding accountability, leveraging rule-compliance by the targeted state, exploiting the lack of legal inter-operability among targeted nations, using own regulatory powers under domestic law, and utilising the law and

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[19]   Adapted from: *Human Security in Theory and Practice, Application of the Human Security Concept and the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security*, New York: Human Security Unit, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, United Nations, 2009.

[20]   Use of law in warfare. See: A.B. Muñoz Mosquera, S.-D. Bachmann, "Understanding Lawfare in a Hybrid Warfare Context", *NATO Legal Gazette*, Issue 37, 2016, pp. 5–23.

[21]   Legal targeting: the enforcement of international and applicable Host Nation law to create effects on the adversary. It is not a NATO-agreed term.

legal processes to create narratives and counter-narratives.[22] All these tactics lead the external aggressor to influence the life of a state; while traditional military means can hardly compete, the use of Stability Policing ways and means allows to counter the aggressor with instruments of the same nature.

Although apparently unrelated to an attack, even criminal organisations with operations and networks in the target state are a very useful entity for foreign state activities in an asymmetric context. Exploiting criminal organisations could include utilising established smuggling networks, the ability to provide forged documents, financial crime schemes, or simply their ability to threaten, intimidate, pressure or harm strategically important corrupt individuals or groups in a specific situation for political purposes. If viewed through this "blue lens", external aggressions in non-traditional contexts can be dealt with more effectively with the use of policing tools and means, of which Stability Policing is the spearhead and military version, the latter being a particularly useful aspect in degraded, non-permissive environments.

Stability Policing does not only deter, stop, and counter the illegal actions of attackers, which could hardly be stopped only with military instruments, but at the same time delegitimises them in the eyes of the public opinion.

In fact, Stability Policing and the use of police tools in total defence are also useful and effective in the field of STRATCOM, both to convey the image of a strong and efficient state and to demonstrate the wickedness of the actions of opponents. The effects are magnified by the size of the audiences to whom they are disseminated to.

This "war of narratives" is particularly relevant and aims at influencing audiences to support one's cause to the detriment of the adversarial one. A targeted Stability Policing activity can easily support messaging that highlights the positive results in the remits of public order, security, and social peace, also boosting the perception of the host nation. Showcasing the greater efficiency of a nation in protecting its civilian population and in ensuring a quiet and safe daily life can be a powerful psychological tool that contributes to strengthening social resilience and undermines the security of the enemy.

Stability Policing personnel habitually operate throughout the host nation's territory keeping close contact with the civilian population and "feeling its pulse" by gathering information that can be used both for legal targeting and for military purposes, feeding the intelligence cycle of the Allied Force. Although police units usually report directly to the Ministry of Interior and are responsible for preventing, countering, and investigating criminal acts, Stability Policing assets can also use and address those investigations to counter non-state actors or proxies, and to collaborate effectively with defence forces. This may include anti-terror operations, countering

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22   G. Giannopoulos, H. Smith, M. Theocharidou, "The Landscape of Hybrid Threats: A conceptual model", *European Commission, Ispra*, PUBSY no. 123305, 2020, http://dx.doi.org/10.2760/44985.

political extremism, radicalisation, recruitment by irregular actors, but also counter-intelligence, measures against all sorts of illicit trafficking and assisting in the implementation of preventive security measures.

When investigating corruption phenomena, Stability Policing can contribute to total defence by fostering accountability and, therefore, the trust in institutions by unmasking any infiltrators or adversarial supporters who aim to weaken the democratic structures of a country or to guide and influence its political choices. Embedded Stability Policing personnel in partnering activities within indigenous police forces' assets seek to demonstrate correct and reduce corrupt or predatory behaviours.

Conclusions

Drawing on both their military background and the ability to police civilians lays the foundation for the special nature of Stability Policing forces allowing them to be a unique bridge between government, civil law enforcement, military institutions, and the populace. If properly considered from the very first planning steps of military operations and adequately resourced, these police units who possess the know-how to operate among the host nation population by answering to its needs, are at the same time military entities apt to inter-operate within and jointly with conventional military units. This endows them with unique flexibility, robustness, and a set of skills no other military asset or civil entity can muster. In a nutshell, "their troops may be described as having policemen's minds in the bodies of soldiers,"[23] solving military problems like no other unit may, in particular, utilising law enforcement means and ways for total defence ends and contributing to improving societal resilience. Some aspects of threats to security and stability may in fact be better answered by non-combat and non-kinetic means, preferring instead Stability Policing solutions. First and foremost, this will require more thorough awareness about Stability Policing within NATO Nations and a revision of the security and total defence concepts aiming at wider and more thorough inclusion and use of Stability Policing, both as a concept and as an instrument to open up new perspectives and possibilities in countering actions of malign actors. Robust, deployable Stability Policing elements, bringing together the military, civil and civilian sectors, if properly employed and resourced, can greatly expand the response capacity of nations. They can contribute to improving their resilience in a strengthened and more redundant total defence approach. Acting within or reacting to hybrid campaigns requires solutions beyond "traditional combat means," and Stability Policing can operate in the policing remit. Stability Policing contributes to deterring, stopping, and countering illegal actions of attackers through legal targeting, with the added benefit of utilising non-lethal and non-kinetic means, thereby

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[23]   Statement by Lt. Gen. (UK Army) Sir Michael Jackson, the then KFOR Commander.

limiting collateral damage and improving the standing of the force with audiences from local to international levels, also within the battle of narratives. This and the continuous, intense interaction with the host nation government, security actors, and the populace are conducive to ameliorated resilience and therefore to enhanced chances for success in the remit of total defence.

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What role can Stability Policing play in total defence and building resilience? Abstract

Threats to peace, stability and human rights of states and civil societies are increasingly of a non-military nature and fending them off requires adopting innovative approaches. These encompass, first and foremost, veering from the strictly military- and security-centred focus applied hitherto and looking at more comprehensive and holistic responses.

Furthermore, they seek to include all stakeholders within a state, including its military, the civil apparatus, the civilian populace, and private enterprises in a common defensive effort, namely the concept of total defence. Creating and improving positive interaction amongst relevant stakeholders and increasing their chances of successfully absorbing and surviving external shocks and attacks showcases another significant notion, namely resilience, not only in its acceptation within the Alliance, but in a wider understanding of the term. Stability Policing as a spearheading concept expanding the reach of NATO into the policing remit and as a cutting-edge deployable military capability is defined as suggesting, describing, and highlighting possible roles and contributions to both endeavours. Stability Policing offers innovative avenues of approach and a policing mindset by applying relevant police-related ways and means, and its "blue lens", and thus contributes to achieving the overarching goal of identifying, deterring, stopping, and countering threats, including those of a hybrid nature and in grey zones, also below the threshold of war.