

Civil Emergency Planning in NATO

Introduction

NATO has recently enjoyed its share of attention. In February, President Nixon started his European tour with a highly successful visit to the Headquarters of the Organization in Brussels. In April, NATO Ministers in Washington celebrated the 20th anniversary of the signing of the NATO Treaty. Even the Soviet Union took public—though discordant—note of this occasion.¹ Public and information media have of late also shown much interest in the Alliance.²

These events have accentuated public awareness of the dual role of NATO in today's world: the defense of the West and the search for a stable peace with the East, or, in convenient shorthand, defense and détente.³ The role of NATO as a defense alliance and as a mechanism for continuing political consultation is generally fairly well-known.⁴ The purpose of this report is to describe briefly the growing role of NATO in a

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¹A UPI report of April 9, 1969, datelined Moscow, said: "The Soviet Union tonight marked the 20th Anniversary of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization by denouncing it as an aggressive force aimed at the Soviet Union, a brake on peaceful solutions of international problems, a well-spring of tension." According to the report, the Soviet statement, distributed by the news agency Tass, characterized NATO as "the organizer of subversive activity, espionage, ideological subversion and the inspirer of attempts at counter-revolutionary coups in socialist countries." The last phrase appears to be an unveiled reference to the recent events in Czechoslovakia.

²See the special section called *NATO, A Special Report on the Twentieth Anniversary of the Alliance*, The Times (London), April 10, 1969.

³See Report on the Future Task of the Alliance (the so-called Harmel Report), NATO Information Service (1968), and the communiqués issued by Ministers after the December 1967, June 1968, November 1968 and April 1969 meetings of the NATO Council, NATO Press Service, Press Communiqué M4(67)3; NATO Press Service, Press Release M2(68)4/1; NATO Press Service, Press Communiqué M3(68)1; and NATO Press Service, Press Release M2(69)4. See also Cleveland, *NATO After Czechoslovakia*, 47 FOREIGN AFFAIRS 251 (1969).

⁴See generally STANLEY, *NATO IN TRANSITION* (1965), and FOX, *NATO AND THE RANGE OF AMERICAN CHOICE* (1967). See also KISSINGER, *THE TROUBLED PARTNERSHIP* (1965), and OSGOOD, *NATO—THE ENTANGLING ALLIANCE* (1962).

heretofore little-known but interesting area, namely, civil emergency planning.⁵

Definition of Civil Emergency Planning

Briefly stated, the purpose of civil emergency planning is to meet any contingencies which may or do affect the welfare of populations, whether through natural or other causes. These contingencies may range from floods and earthquakes to political tension or armed conflict. Civil emergency planning thus deals with the availability of, requirements for and application of resources in times of tension, crisis or war. As such, civil emergency planning also includes protection of populations through civil defense. In general terms, therefore, civil emergency planning is designed to effect the optimum distribution and use of available resources in any contingency situation. In this context, resources must be understood to include not only industrial and agricultural products but also human resources, transport by land, sea and air and communications.

Typically, civil emergency plans are not put into execution until the situation requires it, that is to say, in the event of a major natural disaster or in a time of tension—when, for instance, there might be a scarcity of certain basic products or an interruption in the normal pattern of supply.

Normally, both national and local authorities engage in civil emergency planning. For almost 15 years there has been consultation on civil emergency planning within NATO.

Civil Emergency Planning in the United States

The United States has a great deal of experience with civil emergency planning. This has been gained not only during World War II and subsequent military conflicts in which U.S. forces were engaged, but also as a result of unexpected shortages, such as the interruption in the supply of oil caused by the Mideast crisis of 1967, or of natural disasters, such as Hurricane Beulah, which hit Texas and neighboring Mexico in September, 1967.

The principal coordinating responsibility for the planning functions of the Executive Branch rests with the Office of Emergency Preparedness

⁵Very little has been published regarding civil emergency planning at NATO. The Information Service of the Organization has published, in *THE ASPECTS OF NATO* series, a pamphlet entitled *THE IMPORTANCE OF CIVIL EMERGENCY PLANNING* (October 1963). More extensive information may be found in *NATO, FACTS ABOUT THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION* 139-144, 161 (1969). Brief references to civil emergency planning may also be found in the *NATO HANDBOOK* (April 1969). A recent article about civil defense also contains some interesting references to civil emergency planning. *NATO LETTER*, February 1969, p. 8.

(OEP).⁶ The OEP is part of the Executive Office of the President. The importance of the OEP is enhanced by the fact that the Director of the OEP is one of the statutory members of the National Security Council.⁷

Many agencies and departments of the United States Government, however, also have, under OEP leadership, civil emergency planning responsibilities within their respective fields of authority. Thus, government agencies such as the Office of Civil Defense and the Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Interior and Transportation have planning responsibilities, respectively, in the fields of civil defense, agricultural production, industrial production, petroleum, manpower and transportation. The United States Departments of the Army, Navy and Air Force have planning responsibilities for, respectively, matters involving land, sea and air transport.

The function of coordinating the international aspects of these planning roles of the United States Government in the area of civil emergency planning rests with the Department of State, in close cooperation with the OEP. With respect to NATO, this responsibility is exercised for the Department by a section in the Office of NATO and Atlantic Political/Military Affairs in the Bureau of European Affairs. At the United States Mission to NATO in Brussels a Foreign Service Officer and a United States Army Transportation Corps Officer are responsible for handling civil emergency planning in NATO.

Early Civil Emergency Planning in NATO

Article 3 of the North Atlantic Treaty⁸ provides:

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.

It was recognized from the beginning that in any future war there would be two fronts: the military and the home front. These were regarded as complementary and of equal importance. Indeed, it was thought that evident and visible weakness on the home front would be a temptation for a potential enemy attack. Each member of the Alliance therefore developed and maintained, pursuant to the Treaty, its civil potential in peacetime and prepared for particular situations which might arise in time of war.

Originally, civil emergency planning measures were looked upon as largely a national responsibility. The function of NATO consisted mostly

⁶Exec. Order No. 11051 of Sept. 28, 1962, 27 FED. REG. 9683, as amended by Exec. Order No. 11075 of Jan. 16, 1963, 28 FED. REG. 473.

⁷50 U.S.C. 2271, Reorganization Plan No. 1 of 1958.

⁸April 4, 1949, 63 Stat. 2241; TIAS 1964; 34 UNTS 243.

of providing mutual information and coordination. NATO also instituted a process whereby the general state of preparedness throughout the Alliance was assessed annually by the NATO Council.

In addition, civil emergency planning in NATO focused on the establishment of machinery which could be activated in wartime for the purpose of coordinating the efforts of the members of the Alliance in the field of agriculture and industrial production, transportation and civil defense. Thus, civil emergency planning was largely occupied with the preparation of plans for the so-called international civil wartime agencies—their functions, powers, staffing, location and other organizational and administrative questions. To date, much of this work has been satisfactorily completed.

Current NATO Structure for Civil Emergency Planning

The policy direction and general coordination of civil emergency planning in NATO is the responsibility of the Senior Civil Emergency Planning Committee. In plenary session, it is chaired by the Assistant Secretary General for Defense Planning and Policy.⁹ The members are national representatives who are responsible for civil emergency planning in their own countries. The United States is represented at plenary sessions of the Senior Committee by the Director of the Office of Emergency Preparedness.

Recently, the Senior Committee has met once a year in plenary session and monthly, or more often, in permanent session. In permanent session, the Senior Committee is chaired by the Director of Civil Emergency Planning, a high-ranking member of the NATO International Staff. The members at permanent sessions are the resident civil emergency planning officers attached to the NATO delegations.¹⁰ In permanent sessions the United States is represented in the Senior Committee by an officer of the United States Mission to NATO.

The Senior Committee directs and supervises the activities of some eight planning boards and committees, each of which has responsibilities in defined areas of civil emergency planning.¹¹ These boards and committees

⁹Nominally, the Senior Committee in Plenary Session is chaired by the Secretary General. In practice, he has exercised this function only rarely. Recently the Secretary General has played an increasingly active role with respect to civil emergency planning.

¹⁰Canada, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Greece, Italy, Norway, the Netherlands, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States have resident civil emergency planning officers attached to their respective NATO delegations. Belgium, because of proximity, staffs its seat in the Senior Committee with officials from the appropriate Belgian Ministry in Brussels. Denmark normally provides an official from Copenhagen. Iceland, Luxembourg and Portugal have not regularly participated in the work of the Senior Committee, although of late both Iceland and Portugal have shown more interest in the work of civil emergency planning.

¹¹These are the Civil Aviation Planning Committee, the Civil Communications Planning Committee, the Civil Defense Committee, the Food and Agriculture Planning Committee, the

meet periodically and perform several useful services. They bring together government officials and experts who are responsible in their own countries for given areas of emergency planning. They also prepare studies on specific subjects in the field of their expertise. Finally, they have had a hand in planning the organization of NATO machinery which would, in time of war, take on the functions of coordinating the actions of NATO countries in various fields, such as the allocation of resources, air, sea, rail and road transport, civil defense and refugees.

Within the NATO International Staff there is a Directorate of Civil Emergency Planning consisting of a Director—who also chairs permanent sessions of the Senior Committee—a Deputy and three officers, for general plans and policy, resources management and transport. The Directorate acts as a focal point for the exchange of information among members. It also functions as technical adviser—across the whole spectrum of civil emergency planning—to the Senior Committee and the various boards and committees under its jurisdiction. In practice, the Directorate also prepares papers for discussion in the Senior Committee and other boards and committees and, therefore, is in a position of exercising considerable leadership.

The Traditional Role of Civil Emergency Planning in NATO

Until recently the focus of civil emergency planning in NATO has been on the perfection of plans for the operation of the so-called civil wartime agencies. These agencies are designed to become operational at a point in time—tied in with the NATO Alert System—when general war is believed to be around the corner. The primary function of these agencies would be to insure for the opening phase of a war survival of the populations, maintenance of government control and support for military operations and, later on, to assist Alliance efforts for the early rehabilitation and economic recovery of member states.

The system has twice been tested in exercises, known as CIVLOG 65 and CIVLOG 69. These exercises have provided an evaluation of the operational readiness of the wartime agencies and their ability to carry out their assigned functions under simulated post-nuclear attack conditions.

As may be seen, the focus has been almost entirely on the period following general nuclear exchange. Traditional civil emergency planning has had little if any room for an active civil emergency planning function prior to general nuclear exchange.

Industrial Planning Committee, the Petroleum Planning Committee, the Planning Board on European Inland Transport, and the Planning Board on Ocean Shipping.

The New NATO Strategy and Civil Emergency Planning

Until 1967, NATO adhered at least formally to what in essence, was a strategy of instant nuclear response. It is no surprise, therefore, that in this context civil emergency planning was focused almost exclusively on the jobs to be tackled after general nuclear exchange: survival of populations, maintenance of government control, support of military operations and international resupply of essential resources. At the Meeting of Ministers in December 1967, however, the Defense Planning Committee of NATO (that is to say, the members of NATO without France) adopted a new strategy of flexible response. In essence, this strategy is to have available a wide choice of possible responses to meet enemy actions and to leave the enemy uncertain with which response or combination of possible responses he will be confronted. It became clear that in the context of the new strategy, civil emergency planning should no longer merely be concerned with the post-nuclear exchange period but should embrace the whole spectrum of contingencies, from time of tension and crisis to general nuclear war. The focus of civil emergency planning, therefore, had to shift. Civil emergency planning no longer could be confined to what was to be done after general nuclear exchange—though this remained of importance—but should concentrate, instead, on what plans and procedures should be available prior to nuclear exchange, even at the lower end of the contingency spectrum.

Recent NATO Action on Civil Emergency Planning

Late in 1967 the Senior Committee, in plenary session, decided that the assumptions on which civil emergency planning had been based should be revised to bring them into line with the new NATO strategy. In the course of 1968, the Senior Committee accordingly engaged in a thorough exchange of views which led to the adoption of a set of revised basic assumptions. These revised assumptions constituted a modest but successful attempt to tie civil emergency planning conceptually into the new NATO strategy of flexible response.

The Senior Committee, following a United States initiative, also organized a symposium which was held in February, 1969, and which considered the implications of the revised basic assumptions. Some two hundred experts—military and civilian—from NATO countries, the International Staff, and the major NATO Commands attended the symposium. The symposium carried out its work in four panels which dealt respectively with the problem of activation of the civil wartime agencies, resources management, transport and civil defense. These four panels each produced highly interesting and worthwhile reports. At present the Senior Com-

mittee is engaged in an effort to convert the findings of the symposium into a process by which they may be acted upon by governments. In this connection, plans are being laid for the holding of a case study in which government representatives will be asked to test their civil emergency planning, and the coordination of this planning within NATO, on the basis of a number of hypothetical crisis situations involving tension, local conventional conflict and general conventional war. The results of the case study, combined with those of CIVLOG 69, will provide an across-the-board evaluation of the ability of current civil emergency plans to be responsive to any situation across the contingency spectrum.

The Role of France

The French position with respect to civil emergency planning at NATO has been ambivalent and difficult. When France withdrew its forces from the integrated NATO Commands, the Organization accommodated itself to the new situation by proceeding to handle the management of defense questions in the Defense Planning Committee (DPC) which, in fact, is nothing other than the NATO Council without France. At the time, France also ceased to be represented in other NATO committees dealing with defense questions.

Civil emergency planning is in substantial measure a coefficient of defense planning. France, therefore, faced the question whether to continue to participate in the work of the Senior Committee. Until now she has done so, although her role in the Senior Committee has not been made easy by the fact that France was not in a position to accept, even by implication, any part of the new NATO strategy of flexible response. The other members of the Senior Committee have taken the position that they hope France will continue to participate. They have, however, shown that they are not prepared to let French reluctance stymie progress in recasting civil emergency planning to fit the new NATO strategy and the current needs of the Alliance.

The Future of Civil Emergency Planning

In recent years the world—and NATO—has seen a good many crises. It is clear that civil emergency planning in NATO will have a new, and much enlarged role to play. The revised basic assumptions for civil emergency planning, while a big step forward, do not make it easy to say with precision exactly what the role should be. One thing, however, is clear: civil emergency planning will have to be ready to deal with a much larger variety of contingency situations than has been the case until recently. NATO Governments and the Organization itself will, therefore, have to

re-think what purposes civil emergency planning should have, and how they may best be fulfilled.

Uncertain though the future may be, certain tentative conclusions are nevertheless beginning to emerge. One is that whatever NATO machinery there will be to implement civil emergency plans, it should be sufficiently flexible to operate even at the lower end of the contingency spectrum. This will pose new and challenging problems in fields such as staffing, organization and control. Another conclusion is that there will be a need for a data bank which will provide planning committees, military headquarters and capitals with up-to-date information on availability of resources. A third conclusion recognizes a need for greater flexibility in the use of available transport resources. It is no longer possible to compartmentalize air, rail, road and sea transport in their respective convenient cubbyholes. Henceforth there will have to be coordination of transportation availabilities and requirements across the board. The energy with which these conclusions are worked out and implemented will provide new strength to the Alliance.