**EDITOR'S NOTE: After this article was written NATO changed the Deployed Joint Headquarters (DJHQ) concept to be called the Joint Task Force (JTF) concept.**

# JFC Lisbon, DJHQ Concept and Exercise STEADFAST JOIST 12

**By Major Mesut Yurtdan, TUR A, JFC Lisbon Deputy Chief PAO**

*«If NATO did not exist, it would have to be invented, because countries with shared values and a shared history of close cooperation can best address [these] problems together.»*[1]

**Anders Fogh Rasmussen, NATO Secretary General**

AS A RESULT OF REVOLUTIONARY DEVELOPMENTS in communications and technology, we are living in a very dynamic and changing environment. In line with this continuous change and global economic challenges, the definitions of both "threat" and "security" began to be rewritten. Nations and organizations try to appreciate the new security environment and transform related processes and institutions accordingly. All the way back since its foundation, NATO has been aware of the necessity to evolve, viewing transformation as a continuous process in order to stay relevant in an ever-changing world.

The latest milestone for transformation of NATO is the new Strategic Concept declared at the Lisbon Summit in 2010. While maintaining commitment to collective defence, NATO's response to the new security environment is twofold.

First, "broadening NATO's thinking on crisis management" will include NATO involvement at all stages of a crisis. Second, introducing cooperative security as a new core task will not only "bring a proactive stand towards achieving increased international harmony and cooperation and synchronizing efforts to deal with the new multidimensional threats" but also provide a better understanding of common problems. In addition to broadening the core tasks, the new Strategic Concept highlighted the need for a more effective, leaner and affordable Alliance Command Structure as a must, given the reality of economic challenges.

The new flavours of the new Strategic Concept require a change of mindset, especially at the military level. Answering new threats while cooperating with other actors in a more comprehensive way will require flexible and deployable military functions and constructs from head to toe. The constructs designed to meet previous requirements need to be revised, not to say re-configured.

Real life experiences, like Operation UNIFIED PROTECTOR (OUP), proved that the new Strategic Concept should reflect in the military as soon as possible. If the new strategic concept was not ready, "it would have to be invented" under the pressure of the ever-evolving and intertwining characteristics of the crisis.

The main action undertaken at NATO's military level under the Strategic Concept is the Allied Command Operations (ACO) Reform Process. With the ACO Reform Process, which will end up with only two operational level deployable Joint Headquarters, the Alliance is looking to use the

(1) "A New NATO for a New World", Rasmussen, Anders Fogh, November 2010, http://huffingtonpost.com. Above: Operation Unified Protector, Canadian Air Force.

entire spectrum of its capabilities to create an effective, leaner and affordable Command Structure. The need for a new model for deployment detailing how to respond to a crisis came to light during the planning for the aftermath of the ACO Reform Process. In practical, the closure of the Force Commands Madrid and Heidelberg is tantamount to crippling the Deployed Joint Staff Element (DJSE) Concept. The DJSE concept can be used only with the ready-to-deploy staff resourced from out of the operational level headquarters. After the closure of the Force Commands, their functions must be passed on to operational level headquarters.

Keeping this in mind, with a leaner and affordable Command Structure, it is clear that NATO's involvement in a crisis will require flexibility, adaptability, effectiveness, readiness and responsiveness. This should be the key driver of the new deployability model. To fill this conceptual gap, JFC Lisbon was tasked to work on a deployability model, namely the Deployed Joint Headquarters (DJHQ) model, to be used in the new command structure, and utilize the already planned STEADFAST JOIST 2012 (SFJT12) as a test bed to gauge some of the elements of this model.

## DJHQ Concept

Since each crisis may differ, flexibility and adaptability will be key in understanding the security environment and generating a proper, balanced response at the necessary time, avoiding undesired developments. This will only be possible with a Command and Control structure standing ready-to deploy and respond together with the tactical level elements. From an operational perspective, an early understanding of the operational environment and building situational awareness are required to make preparations relevant. An early visible NATO footprint will provide an opportunity to demonstrate NATO resolve and commitment. Early influence in-theatre irrespective of the location of the main command and control functions and the operational level commander, will make it possible to shape the environment and set conditions.

The ability to react promptly and effectively to a potential crisis, demonstrate a visible NATO presence and exert early influence will provide the North Atlantic Council, the Military Committee and SACEUR with more options in pursuit of early success. The DJHQ model is, therefore, designed to be responsive and is built upon realistic and achievable readiness criteria to ensure sustainability while taking account of possible national constraints.

The DJHQ concept is based upon a stepped and scalable model that provides options for progressive deployment of capability "blocks", each of which combines the qualities of operational functions that can be tailored to the mission and situation. Each capability block of the DJHQ will require a pool of trained personnel from which to draw the operational functions required by the mission and situation. The capability blocks will provide different functions to address evolving needs. These functions will vary from creating the first operational footprint in-theatre or creating situational awareness to providing the full suite of capabilities required to support the Commander's Decision Cycle, thus allowing the designated Commander to exercise command and control from in-theatre.

Forming a seamless, functional headquarters despite distributed and changing locations will be possible only with a robust Command and Control interface. The flexibility of the DJHQ lies in the adaptability of the employed reach-back and reach-forward capabilities at each stage of the DJHQ deployment depending on the nature and scale of the operations. As the Commander's Decision Cycle is projected into theatre, the robustness of the interaction systematically increases, growing from an initial footprint to full Command and Control capability in theatre.The DJHQ concept places several challenges on Joint Force Headquarters that will implement a deployable model resourced from within their own staff. The Commander's Decision Cycle and how it is executed were reviewed and updated in order to accommodate the new challenges.

The JFC Lisbon concept development team reviewed not only the NATO documents on the Commander's Decision Cycle, but also the exercise reports and Joint Analysis and Lessons Learned Centre (JALLC) reports from the STEADFAST series of exercises. Several changes were made to the Commander's Decision Cycle in order to ensure: (1) Integration of Strategic Communications, making sure that actions will be aligned with messages; (2) An adequate balance of kinetic and non-kinetic actions; (3) Efficient performance by the entire HQ staff as a team, regardless of location.

## New Deployability Concept requires change of mindset

The new deployability concept contains many challenges. First of all, a change of mindset within NATO and its Member Nations is required regarding training and personnel's perspectives. The requirement for Joint Force Headquarters personnel to be prepared and held at various states of readiness, available to form each mission-tailored capability block, lies at the heart of the DJHQ concept. Without this change of mindset, the new deployability model will be difficult to apply. Training will enable personnel to be ready to deploy. But, on the other hand, nations should be aware of the requirements of the deployability, that is, national caveats should not preclude the applicability of the model.

Second, as compared to the limited and predefined stages of deployment in the DJSE concept, the new deployability model brings in several options of deployment, making gradual deployment possible. On the other hand, gradual deployment brings additional challenges together with the flexibility provided to the operational level commander. The configuration of the processes and the decision cycle during the gradual deployment phases will require efficiency, fine adjustment and featured Communication and Information Systems (CIS) infrastructure starting from the very early stages, even before the Deployment Order. The equipment required to support such a deployability scheme needs to be scalable and easily reconfigurable.

In addition to these, a robust and resilient Information Management framework will underpin the success of the operation. Starting from the planning phase, Information Management will play an important role. During deployment, the information environment needs to be uniform and without fragmentation to enable shared knowledge.

In addition to the in-service certification mechanisms, another important point is timely evaluation mechanisms to allow for the provision of up-to-date readiness levels with respect to different specialties, which may be necessary to enable realistic political decisions and military end states.

And last but not least, real life support

►►►

The Forward Coordination Element (FCE) Seminar from 1 to 3 February 2012, brought together in Stavanger NATO's top echelon military officers and a distinguished team of military/civilian Subject Matter Experts. The idea was to provide a venue that allowed for high-level discussions on the roles and responsibilities of the FCE, as the deployed element of the Joint Force Commander. The function of FCE was tested for the first time during exercise SFJT 12.

for deployed forces from early stages onwards takes careful planning. Depending on the level of host nation support, real life support may require a case-by-case precise assessment during the planning phase.

It is worth to note that early involvement of all JFCs under SHAPE's leadership clarifies concerns about the main challenge: Implementation. With all the arguments given, concept implementation will be no easier than concept development and testing. Since the DJHQ concept takes into account Lessons Learned taken from real life operations and based on a realistic approach, it will provide the operational level Commanders with the mechanisms they need to be ready for real challenges.

## Preparing for SFJT12

Preparing SFJT12 was a challenging task as it happened in a period of upcoming changes to the NATO Command Structure (NCS) and effects of real-life operations. The Initial Exercise Planning process for SFJT12 started early 2011. According to the initial plan, SFJT12 was at that point of time still scheduled as an exercise based on the DJSE concept, with JFC Lisbon providing the main HQ and Force Command Heidelberg providing the main body of the Forward Element (FE). However, the execution of SFJT 11, some months later, showed that the availability of a Forward Element was not a given fact. As the outline of a new NCS started to become clear, the aim of the exercise started to focus on the DJHQ; not as a concept, though, but based on the ad hoc solution, already introduced for SFJT11, given the unavailability of the Force Commands due to OUP. From the very outset, JFC Lisbon was aware of the challenges. Its agility and flexibility characteristics, which were observed during SFJT 11 upon the withdrawal of major partners due to the Libya crisis were in place due to the very limited time allowed for the preparations.

In June 2011 the Exercise Planning Process started to move forward with the DJHQ, as the main aim of the exercise. However, for most of the involved parties, SFJT12 became a challenge due to their involvement in OUP or their future role in the new NCS. Having only JFC Lisbon and 1 GE-NL Corps to form a training audience produced quite a lot of uncertainties.

In summer 2011, JFC Lisbon received additional SHAPE tasking that initiated the development of the DJHQ concept. At the SACEUR Commanders' Conference in summer 2010, it was agreed to use SFJT12 as a partial test bed focusing on the initial deployment stages as outlined in the new deployability concept. Both the DJHQ concept development and SFJT12 exercise preparations were then linked, with SFJT12 being an initial test bed, all fully supported by SACEUR. It was guaranteed that support would be provided not only by the JWC, and JFCs Brunssum and Naples, but also the by the Component Commands.

In a very short period from September to December 2011, the DJHQ concept was further developed with the help of exercise and training events (Planning Conferences, Academics, etc.). The development of the Concept together with preparations for the exercise ended up with a very dynamic period. As JFCs Brunssum and Naples will be the two remaining JFCs in the new NCS, embedding them into the exercise became necessary. This challenge was overcome with the substantial augmentation provided for the exercise. Planning conferences and finally the Battle Staff Training (BST) in Lisbon enabled a successful integration.

The Planning Conferences of SFJT12 were all fruitful, not only for the SFJT12 exercise itself but also for the development and maturation of the DJHQ model.

First, the idea of having the Forward Coordination Element (FCE) was developed during the Planning Conferences of SFJT12. The FCE seminar, organized by the JWC, resulted in a better understanding of this concept and contributed to further de-

**The JFC Lisbon team is proud of the contributions to the future NATO JFCs and their missions. The cooperation with other NATO Headquarters, including SHAPE and JFCs Naples and Brunssum, made it possible to achieve a realistic and relevant model for future deployability needs.**

velopment of the SFJT12 training events. Since the FCE was one of the elements tested during SFJT12, the observations and Lessons Learned from the FCE Trainings enlightened the future developments of this element. Second, starting from the Initial Planning Conference, the Intelligence Syndicate was working on the planning of the knowledge development processes for SFJT12. They identified the need for a common interface to enable users to share, search and request information or knowledge after realizing that having more than one database for different functions or areas causes the "knowledge users" to replicate information from one system to the next. The efforts of JFC Lisbon Knowledge Centre personnel supported by all staff resulted in the Shared Knowledge Repository (SKR). SKR is web-based software, still under development, which provides an easy and simple passage to knowledge by consolidating the main functions related to knowledge development. SKR shows the light to be the first step of the comprehensive knowledge development effort to be undertaken together with the other stake holders in theatre.

### Testing the elements of the Concept: SFJT12

Crisis Response Planning (CRP) was conducted with the support of SHAPE (Mons, Belgium), Joint Warfare Centre (Stavanger, Norway), JFCs Naples (Italy) and Brunssum (Netherlands), ACC Izmir (Turkey), 1 GE-NL Corps Münster (Germany), MC Northwood (UK), FC Heidelberg (Germany), Multinational CIMIC Group (Motta di Livenza, Italy) and civilian contractors. From the civilian perspective, both Mr Victor Angelo and Mr Paul LaRose-Edwards, who brought in the expertise of the United Nations and non-governmental organizations, were happy to witness the progress at hand, in cooperation with civilians and understanding of the civilian aspects, which enabled comprehensive products.

SFJT12 introduced Gender Advisor support for CRP. This support raised the level of awareness of gender issues, thus contributing to cultural awareness, as well. During the CRP, close cooperation between the Strategic Operation Planning Group (SOPG) at SHAPE and the Joint Operation Planning Group (JOPG) at JFC Lisbon improved the quality of the products. In addition, prior to deployment, the Joint Operation Liaison and Reconnaissance Team (JOLRT) joined the JOPG and maintained the level of cooperation after deployment so as to enable efficient and to-the-point engagements, with the JOLRT providing effective contribution to the planning process.

Guaranteeing the continuity of efforts since the beginning of CRP, the FCE will merge with the JOLRT in theater. The JOLRT Team Leader will become the Deputy of the FCE Commander, and an adequate number of JOLRT members will continue to work within the FCE to help maintain the level of awareness together with contacts and enable a smooth transition from the JOLRT to the FCE. The BST was a great opportunity for the first trial of JFC Lisbon's proposal "How to do business" in the DJHQ mode. With more than a hundred augmentees, the BST served as an excellent platform to identify lessons and build up the team for the execution. The level of attendance and willingness of the augmentees supported the positive expectations concerning the future of the DJHQ Concept after the SFJT12 exercise.

After the high-level seminar mentioned above, FCE training conducted prior to execution in JFC Lisbon provided a technical training opportunity to properly analyze and refine the structure before testing and interaction with the DJHQ structure during the execution phase. NATO used the NATO Response Force (NRF) certification mechanism to test the new deployability concept. STEADFAST JOIST 2012 provided one of the platforms to test some elements of this new concept. Because of the aim of testing, some elements of the DJHQ concept, observations and identification of lessons throughout the exercise are critical to the future work on the concept. So, SFJT12 participants concentrated at the same time on Lessons Identified and Lessons Learned processes. This effort will be managed by a group of specialists from JFC Lisbon, JALLC and OPD.

JFC LISBON, which will find a place in the historical records of NATO in accordance with the ACO Reform Process, consolidated its expertise and experience on new threats and comprehensive solutions, and, contributed to the development and testing of the DJHQ concept. The JFC Lisbon team is proud of the contributions to the future NATO JFCs and their missions. The cooperation with other NATO Headquarters, including SHAPE and JFCs Naples and Brunssum, made it possible to achieve a realistic and relevant model for future deployability needs. ✦

The Grey Cell during during exercise STEADFAST JOIST 12, whose members also took part in the FCE Seminar.