



NEWSLETTER

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NSD-S HUB DIRECTOR CORNER

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Dear Reader

After some months of work the NSD-S HUB is making good progress. We have established new networking links and strengthened existing relationships. NSD-S HUB Teams have recently travelled to Jordan and Ethiopia with the intent of promoting the HUB and exploring ways and means of future cooperation. I am confident that the near future will bring other opportunities and we are looking forward to organizing seminars and conferences focusing on our Areas of Interest; we will invite all the main stakeholders and anticipate a fruitful exchange.

COM JFCNP Introductory Note



I would like to express my appreciation to BG Angius and the entire Hub team for inviting me to contribute to this month's Hub Newsletter. I am extremely excited about what lies ahead for JFC Naples and the Hub in 2018. Since its formal opening in September 2017, the Hub has already begun to connect, consult and coordinate with multiple non-NATO entities, including international organizations such as the African Union and the United Nations.

Since assuming Command of JFC in October 2017, during every engagement I have with senior leaders, the conversation circles back to: Tell us about the Hub? How is it different than other NATO entities? My response is relatively simple: The Hub is a physical and virtual forum for engagement and information sharing focused on challenges and opportunities in NATO's South (the Middle East, North Africa, the Sahel, and Sub-Saharan). I describe how the Hub monitors and assesses the dynamics of the operating environment by contributing to coordination, de-confliction and synchronization of NATO activities. Finally, I conclude with how the Hub will ultimately inform our collective understanding of the South and will proactively shape NATO's decision-making. Some may wonder what led NATO to embark upon the Hub? I believe the answer lies in the events surrounding the 2010 Arab Spring, and the aftermath of civil wars in Libya and Syria.

The Arab Spring backdrop has compelled our Alliance to collectively reassess how we define stability in the South. By establishing the Hub, the NATO alliance decided to change its overall mindset on how civil and military organizations find common ground, how we build upon capacity and capability-building initiatives, and how we bridge the gaps of mutual understanding that leads to long-term stability and peace in the South. The multi-dimensional nature of NATO's South demonstrates the need for more flexibility when analyzing challenges, while capitalizing on the array of opportunities that African and Middle Eastern regimes can offer in terms of stable and steady governance.

What differentiates the Hub from other traditional NATO entities? The Hub intends to vigorously transform how the transatlantic alliance anticipates and responds to the drivers of instability. As I look to 2018 and beyond, I sincerely believe the Hub will succeed in building the bonds of trust between civil-military partners. This holistic understanding will aid our Alliance in anticipating, preempting, limiting, and overcoming challenges, while simultaneously serving as a positive force through which non-military results will lead to long-term stability and prosperity for local populations in NATO's South.

MENA Region

Crucial developments are taking place in the enlarged Mediterranean area, which make it difficult to stabilize the region. In the Gulf, the “cold war” between Saudi Arabia and Iran is reflecting on the broader regional context. While Iran, despite ongoing domestic turmoil, is emerging as a regional actor, the vision of the “new” Saudi Arabia led by Prince Mohammed bin Salman does not include an appeasement towards the Islamic Republic.

As for the Syrian-Iraqi crisis, recent developments warn us to remain cautious on the prospects arising from the territorial defeat of the Islamic State. On the Syrian front, the apparent success of the Astana negotiations led by Russia, Iran and Turkey with the creation of the de-escalation zones had boded well for a new phase in peace negotiations. However, Damascus’ refusal to meet the opposition delegates in Geneva blocked the negotiations at birth and questioned the next stage of the process. Such a scenario casts a shadow over the future of Syria and seems to postpone resolution of the conflict. On the Iraqi front, although the Caliphate has been defeated, the terror alert is not over, as demonstrated by frequent attacks that have recently stained several areas of the country with blood. It is therefore in an extremely fragile and precarious climate that Baghdad is trying to take back the reins of the country. Iraq is preparing to host national and provincial elections – 12 May 2018 – with a heavy burden on its shoulders: the responsibility to create a framework within which to start a process of national reconciliation to be inclusive of the different souls of the country.

The North African region is crossed by an arc of instability extending from Morocco to Egypt. Egypt is preparing for presidential elections – 26-28 March 2018 – in a climate of fighting against terrorism and difficult economic recovery. Libya is at the center of a political crisis, where the military positions of contenders are crystallizing. Moreover, the stabilization of Libya is also crucial to curb migratory flows. The migratory issue involves Tunisia as well, which is moving from being a transit country to a country of origin. Algeria, too, is experiencing a phase of great uncertainty, despite its government’s recent approval of the new 2018 budget law, which signals a clear trend reversal as it cancels the austerity measures that had caused the discontent of Algerians in 2017. In Morocco there is no abatement in the wave of socio-economic protests ongoing in the poorest regions of the country, from Rif to Jerada. At the political and institutional level, the country was shaken by the “real wrath” that led to a government reshuffle as well as the replacement of key officials.

NSD-S HUB : Holistic approach

“... We have got to change our attitude; we have to change approaches, use modern information and be strategic on how we deal with this issue and it is a very urgent issue that requires a strategic approach and not a reactive approach⁽¹⁾” .

These words from the president of the African Development Bank (AfDB), Mr. Akinwumi Adesina, are a call to fellow Africans to challenge the traditional way of looking at social problems in order to provide a mechanism for eradicating poverty. Mr. Akinwumi Adesina, who came from poverty, explained what Africa’s infrastructure building and job creation strategies should be over the next 10 years in order to eradicate poverty not only in Nigeria but also in Africa (link to the article in the web).

This attitude is similar to the one that the Hub intends to develop: to look deeply into the problems in order to identify their origins and understand their complexity. Similar to the African Development Bank, NATO is also changing its way of perceiving and doing things. No longer are we just concerned with our security and safety, we are concerned about the security, safety, wellbeing and development of all our neighbors. NATO has realized that the world is becoming more and more connected and the stability of our neighbors positively impacts stability at home.

NATO must understand other cultures and societies in order to avoid misperceptions. This will be one of the most important drivers of our activity, trying to understand. We strongly believe that this approach, actively promoted by the Hub, will increase NATO’s awareness on the problems of Africa and of the Middle East and lead to a safer and more secure world.

⁽¹⁾[Infrastructure building, job creation key to Africa's growth, says AfDB President Adesina](#)

NSD-S HUB visit to Jordan



The NSD-S Hub delegation was invited, on 16 Jan, by the Director of Strategic Planning of the Jordan Armed Forces (JAF) to discuss various issues such as enhancing cooperation, promoting partnership and dialogue in the light of current security challenges. A key point of the meeting was to discuss NSD-S Hub and JAF possible areas of collaboration and exchange. The activity was successful and it resulted in a better understanding of the positions of each party and opened the doors for future enhanced cooperation. The briefing, and the quite intensive Q&A session that it sparked, has contributed to take “the dust off the shelf” and bring clarity on how the NSD-S Hub and Jordan can possibly interact in the future. We have explored their offers of courses such as the Arabic Cultural Awareness Course or the Arabic Language Course and their capability to act as a focal and liaison point with Jordan institutional organizations such as the Arab Institute for Security Studies. On the other hand we have offered JAF the possibility to send representatives to work within the NSD-S Hub on some “project based” activities (e.g. MENA Study Day or other Seminars), recognizing Jordanian expertise and the JAF as one of the main Middle East interlocutors.

NSD-S HUB : Istanbul Cooperation Initiative Policy Advisory Group (ICI PAG)



The State of Kuwait hosted the fourth meeting of the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative Policy Advisory Group (ICI PAG) on 22 - 23 January 2018 at the NATO – ICI Regional Centre in Kuwait City. The meeting was attended by the NSD-S HUB Director, Brig. Gen. Roberto ANGIUS.

The meeting was an opportunity to bring together the ICI partners, despite the current political isolation of Qatar by the Quartet, and to take stock of NATO’s Istanbul Cooperation Initiative, as well as generating future prospects of cooperation, specifically the increasing role of the NSD-S Hub. A key outcome was the decision to engage in a political dialogue with the Gulf

Cooperation Council.

NSD-S HUB and Institute for Defense Analysis (IDA) : the network grows



On 29 Jan 2017 the NSD-S Hub Director Brig.Gen.Angius and other Staff, had a Skype VTC with Ambassador George Ward, coordinator of the Africa program at the Institute for Defense Analysis (IDA) and others Researchers.

This was an initial meeting for both the NSD-S HUB and IDA to introduce themselves and work on ways forward for possible collaboration. After a brief introduction by Brig.Gen.Angius, the HUB Deputy gave a brief, During which HUB Staff talked about the project methodology; Stronger Together. Following the briefing, Amb Ward gave the HUB a short background of the IDA (specifically his Studies and Analysis section) and mentioned some areas that he envisages could be beneficial to the Hub, such as Capacity Building and Assessment of Defense Capacity Building. Further discussions spanned from current manning levels, to current relationships between the Hub and other organizations as well as IDA and other think-tanks. It became clear that the IDA could be a useful ally that will need time to develop. This relationship with the IDA could be one of the more important for the Hub. As we continue to push forward, we will continue to diversify our network with think tanks and NGOs to build up a consistent and solid knowledge of current and future challenges.

NSD-S HUB : MTT for Civil Military Cooperation training course



One expert from the NSD-S Hub was involved in a Mobile Training Team that provided a Civil Military Cooperation training course in Nouakchott, Mauritania. Organized jointly between Mauritanian Armed Forces and NATO, Civil Military Cooperation experts from NATO Headquarters in Naples explained doctrine concepts and briefed about their own experiences in recent NATO operations.

Thanks to the NSD-S HUB outreach capability, experts from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Mauritania participated actively in the course, explaining the UNCHR role and mandate, the current refugees situation in Mauritania and the legal implications of the terms migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. The mixture of NATO expertise, humanitarian organization point of view and partners capacity building added valued to the training.

NSD-S HUB : Partnership 360 Conference



From January 30th through February 1st 2018, NSD-S HUB member Lieutenant Commander Michael Nunziato was invited as a panel member at the Partnership 360 Conference (P360) held at the Federal Academy for Security Policy (BAKS), Berlin, Germany. P360 was the first time that NATO's Allied Command Transformation (ACT) and International Staff Political Affairs and Security Policy Division (PASP) co-hosted such an event, in a "one NATO" spirit of political-military cooperation. The event brought together civilian and military representatives from Allies and all partner nations. Envisaged as a participative workshop focused on the future evolution of NATO's partnerships policy, it had a particular focus on the main expectations and outcomes for the 2018 Brussels Summit. LCDR Nunziato had a unique opportunity to present the NSD-S Hub and discuss openly how the NSD-S Hub envisages to work across all levels of NATO to build understanding.

NSD-S HUB : Partnering and Partnership; e-Prime training

In an effort to gain understanding and access to NATO information databases, the NSD-S Hub hosted Ms Anna Boros from NATO HQ to train personnel on the education Partnership Real-time Information Management and Exchange System (e-Prime). This type of training will ensure that the NSD-S Hub is "plugged-in" to established NATO databases required to build its understanding. To that point, the NSD-S would like to take the opportunity to thank the professionals at JFCNP J9 Military Partnership Branch for their assistance in coordinating this training. The relationship with the Partnership Branch and the Military Partnership Directorate is an important one as the NSD-S Hub looks to work with Partner Nations in order to develop a strong two-way strategic communication mechanism.



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