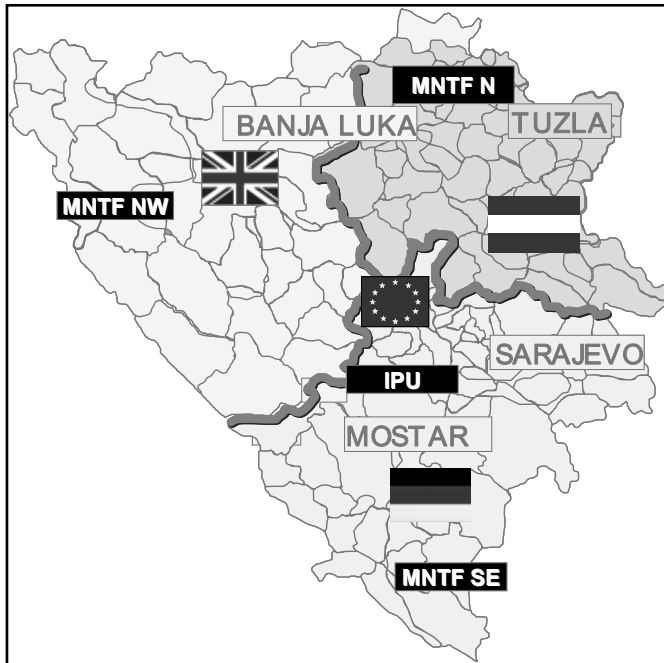


EUFOR Operation ALTHEA - Multinational Task Force North

Brigadier General Karl PRONHAGL
Brigade Commander, Austrian Armed Forces

The Multinational Task Force North (MNTF N) consists of troops drawn from 13 nations, with an overall strength of some 1,300 personnel. Its Headquarters is located in Camp Eagle Base near the City of Tuzla. Since 1 December 2005 Austria has lead MNTF-N as the framework nation. Such a multinational force reflects the unique strength of our European Union and gives a particular synergy to EUFOR's efforts in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH).



The Area of Responsibility (AOR) of MNTF N with 1.4 million inhabitants and 15 000 square kilometres can be described as follows:

Political situation and the entities

Canton 2 in the North with the capital Orasje (mainly Bosnian Croats) divided from the other parts of the Federation. Tuzla is the capital of Canton 3 - mainly Bosniaks and some Croats and Serbs are living in this canton. The majority of the population is Bosniak in Canton 4 where Zenica is the most important town.

In the north of the AOR there is Brcko District – economically far better than the rest of the area. This district could be seen as a model for the whole country.

Apart from the Federation and Brcko District the third area is Republica Srpska with important towns like Doboj and Bijelina.

Economic situation in BiH

In a report that had been released by the World Bank Mission to BiH in 2005, 18% of the population has been living below the poverty line. Recent studies by the World Bank are showing that unemployment is still in the range of 20 percent and even higher.

Chain of command

The chain of command for the EUFOR Operation ALTHEA is as follows:

- The basic decisions on the operation are taken by the Council of The European Union.
- The EU's Political and Security Committee (PSC) exercises the political control and strategic direction of the operation, under the responsibility of the Council.
- The EU Military Committee (EUMC) monitors the proper execution of the EU military operation.
- General J.Reith (UK) as D-SACEUR is the EU Operation Commander (OpCdr) for ALTHEA with the EU Operation Headquarters (OHQ) located at SHAPE.
- EUCE (EU Command Element) located at Naples is responsible for the coordination of EUFOR and KFOR.
- Since the beginning of December 2005 Major General Gian Marco Chiarini (ITA) has been EU Force Commander.

COMEUFOR's intent has been to implement in 2006 the transition of EUFOR from a leading to a supporting role in BiH. While it has been essential that EUFOR continues to guarantee a "Safe and Secure Environment" (SASE), it has been his priority to let BiH authorities and agencies exploit that environment in order to take the lead in the fight against Organized Crime and Corruption (OCC), terrorism and all elements who seek to undermine the legitimate authorities and hinder progress. EUFOR effects have to focus on three fields of action:

- the continuous provision of a SASE and deterrent presence through the AOR
- the continuous support to the EUSR Mission Implementation Plan and

- the transition of responsibilities to the developing and progressively capable security structure of BiH.

Types of operations

All in all the following types of operations have characterized our activities.

Framework Operations have formed the basis of EUFOR operations either planned or reactive. They usually have focused on one main objective and normally have been conducted at MNTFs level. Where and when possible, framework operations have included ‘operations within an operation’, focused at specific opportunity targets identified by Intelligence or through engagement with other agencies.

Whenever sufficient intelligence has been available we have had to conduct focused operations on identified high value targets, either Persons Indicted for War Crimes (PIFWC) support networks, Anti-Dayton activities or OCC. For these types of operations OPSEC has been crucial and the circle of knowledge therefore has been limited.

Support activities - conducted in order to provide assistance to the development of local authorities/agencies or EU agencies.

EUFOR-wide Operations have aimed at achieving greater operational effect through the concentration of forces from different TFs. These operations have

required a unified and comprehensive situational awareness, particularly in potentially high-risk areas.

Derived from COMEUFOR's intent and the different types of operations I have developed priorities for our Intelligence requirements and operations.

Firstly we have aimed at the high number of illegal weapons by conducting harvest operations or searching for weapon caches.



Secondly MNTF N has supported the Special Border Service along the border to Serbia or Croatia in the fight against smuggling, human trafficking etc.

And finally we also have monitored possible trouble spots for extremism caused either religiously or nationalistically.

The Future

The future of EUFOR and MNTF N viewed in a short run:

The EU Police Mission 1 (EUPM) lasted three years (2003-2005). EUPM 2 has just taken over. Its mandate has been refocused; EUPM 2 is to foster police reform, develop its inspection role and proactively assist the local police forces in tackling crime. EUPM and EUFOR are developing coordination mechanisms whereby EUPM is to take the lead in supporting the fight against OCC. Consequently, no EUFOR operation to support local police agencies in the fight against OCC should be planned without EUPM advice and endorsement.



Against this background, EUFOR will continue to play a key role by its presence and visibility in reassuring the population that there is no possibility of a return to inter-ethnic violence. In addition, EUFOR's continued presence guarantees stability which creates the conditions

for political progress and economic development. As the situation in BiH improves, EUFOR will be in a position to fulfill its military mission with fewer troops until the time when it is assessed that BiH's stability is self-sustainable, that is to say, does not require the presence of EUFOR.

Lessons Learned

Important lessons from the view as COM MNTF N:

- to develop a feeling for the country and the society is a challenge, however something crucial.
- the necessity of language skills was once more confirmed.
- loss of knowledge because of the six-month rotation
- importance of exercises and training even during an operation
- CSS (Combat Service Support) and CIS (Communication and Information System) are equally important and challenging as operations
- cooperation with the representatives of the International Community and the local agencies and authorities is the key to success.