NON-BINDING GUIDELINES FOR ENHANCED CIVIL-MILITARY COOPERATION TO DEAL WITH THE CONSEQUENCES OF LARGE-SCALE CBRN EVENTS ASSOCIATED WITH TERRORIST ATTACKS

Enablement and Resilience Section

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Foreword

At the NATO Warsaw Summit in July 2016, Heads of State and Government made a commitment to continue to enhance national resilience and to further develop NATO's individual and collective capacity to resist any form of armed attack. While resilience remains a national responsibility, NATO can support Allies in assessing and, upon request, supporting their civil preparedness. Civil preparedness reflects three core functions – continuity of government, continuity of essential services, and support to military forces with civilian means – and is a central pillar of Allies' resilience and a critical enabler for Alliance collective defence.

One important function of civil preparedness is to protect our civilian populations against different kind of threats, including those posed by Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) emergencies. The consequences of such emergencies may stretch national capabilities to their maximum extent. It is therefore essential that nations leverage their civil and military resources to respond to and mitigate the consequences of such emergencies.

The purpose of these non-binding guidelines is to identify civil-military considerations that nations could adopt when planning, exercising and executing responses to CBRN incidents. They are intended to support national strategic, operational, and tactical planners responsible for CBRN preparedness, protection and response in their efforts to enhance civil-military cooperation.

These guidelines demonstrate the value NATO adds to national efforts through identifying best practices within nations that can be applied across the Alliance, as well as by NATO's partners. This can enhance national resilience while also supporting collective defence and deterrence.

I hope that these guidelines will provide useful concepts, approaches and tools to support national and international CBRN emergency preparedness and response.

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Background

NATO has several tools, capabilities, and partnerships to leverage for the purposes of enhancing Allied CBRN defence capabilities and standards relating to CBRN use, including Civil Preparedness. Civil Preparedness is part of all strands of NATO's approach to CBRN defence. It focuses on raising awareness of the CBRN environment, advising NATO Allies and partners in managing the consequences of a CBRN incident, and sharing best practices.

Allies have agreed to baseline requirements for resilience in seven strategic sectors (continuity of government, energy, population movements, food and water resources, mass casualties, civil communications, and transport systems). The resilience work in these seven sectors has focused on upholding three core functions for civil preparedness: continuity of government; continuity of essential services to the population and civil support to the military. These core functions aim at ensuring that NATO nations and the Alliance as a whole are prepared and can respond effectively to any scenario.

Civil-Military Cooperation

Military CBRN Defence capabilities in support of national civilian response plans differ among nations and reflect national legislation. Military units and activities have often proven to be a critical component for successful response operations. Military support to civil authorities should be integrated into existing emergency operations plans, procedures, training and exercises whenever possible. This allows civilian emergency managers to benefit from robust organisational frameworks, technologically advanced equipment and from the ability to respond to a CBRN event.

Civilian emergency managers at every level should gain an understanding of military resources, their capabilities and limitations and how to access and integrate them into their respective response operations. With this understanding, civilian emergency managers are better able to save lives, reduce human suffering and mitigate significant property and/or environmental damage.

Civilian emergency managers and first responders at the local, regional and national levels should understand roles and authorities pertaining to military support of civil authorities and should build relationships with military authorities within their communities prior to any events. At the same time, military leaders should understand the civilian incident management process. Such preparation will result in a smoother integration of military resources in support of civilian response efforts when they are needed.

Military authorities should evaluate requests received from civilian authorities for:

- **Readiness** (impact on the military's ability to perform its primary mission: war fighting);
- **Cost** (including the source of funding); and
- **Legality** (compliance with relevant laws, plans, and procedures).

Many of these issues can be planned in advance with pre-scripted mission assignments to facilitate a more rapid coordination process. Based on the planning scenarios, and taking into account the actual deployment time of the military forces, these assignments may specify the type of assistance that is required, a statement of work and a projected cost and source of funding. Examples, but not exhaustive, include:

- **Transportation** (e.g., rotary wing lift, heavy ground transportation for first responders, emergency route clearance, including quickly clearing roads or establishing temporary bridges);
- **Medical** (e.g., extraction units and patient evacuation, medical personnel, field hospitals and mortuary services);
- **On site response** (e.g. hazardous material sampling; handling, analysis, and transportation of contaminated CBRN material; decontamination; containment and population protection measures; search & rescue and Explosive Ordinance Disposal (EOD), units able to cross or to

reach heavily contaminated areas, even by gamma radiations, using special vehicles);

- **Energy** (e.g. fuel distribution points and generators);
- **Communications support** to first responders;
- **Aerial imagery**; and
- **Mutual aid support agreements**, including international assistance.

Military authorities can serve in a supporting role to civilian emergency managers.

Success is based on civilian emergency managers building and maintaining relationships and the resulting capabilities to prevent, protect against, respond to, and recover from major incidents. The ability of the emergency management community to achieve and sustain these capabilities requires engaging in capabilities-based planning to achieve target levels of capability. Ideally, military and civilian organizations should plan, train, and exercise together.

Guiding Principles

- Mutual understanding of the military and civilian plans and procedures as a baseline for cooperation, thus respecting each other's autonomy in decision-making.

- Mutual understanding of different roles, responsibilities and legal limitations of civil and military authorities.

- Civil-military cooperation should be based on and supported by national legislation, policy, strategy and joint action/implementation plans.

- Military support must be requested by civilian authorities according to national legislation. The military should always remain in support of civil authorities.

- Cooperation in peacetime, during preparedness phases, builds the foundation for effective civil-military cooperation.

- Shared stockpile for equipment, medical countermeasures and personal protective equipment provides cost-effective resilience for both domestic response and out of area missions.

- Planning scenarios should be based on managing a no-notice CBRN incident in a peacetime environment, without prepositioned civilian or military resources (e.g. high-visibility event scenario).

- Collaborative organisational structures and personnel exchanges provide the foundation of effective cooperation at all levels.

- Establishing and maintaining continuous and effective communication with correspondent counterparts at local, regional, national and international levels.

- Cooperation in development programs, project design and project implementation can produce better outcomes.

- Cooperation on the monitoring and evaluation of plans, programs and activities facilitates better understanding of results.

- An emphasis on learning and adapting enables more effective cooperation when integrated throughout the defence program cycle.

Planning

Context

CBRN incidents are multidisciplinary and require an interagency approach for efficient prevention and response efforts. Depending on the incident and responding agency's capabilities, various combinations of different assets may be used. Asset availability, readiness and capabilities are key planning features for a timely and efficient response.

The military should be prepared to identify personnel and resources to support civilian planning for prevention, preparedness, response, and mitigation operations. In addition, it will be necessary to identify how those military resources will be integrated into response operations.

It should be noted that the inherent responsibilities of military and civilian organizations are very different. The possibility for confusion in command and control (C2) of operations might increase during a CBRN incident. Amongst the civilian first responders, it is generally the fire and rescue services who are in the lead for no-notice CBRN incidents. However, if the incident qualifies as a terrorist attack, law enforcement authorities may take the lead although the priority remains saving lives. This might result in tension between first responders and on-scene investigators, if roles and responsibilities are not clearly defined.

A comprehensive legal review is essential to understand the authorities governing the use of military forces in support of an appropriate request of civilian authorities. National planning considerations should be supported by legislation.

Continuity of Government (COG) plans must account for the possibility that the institutions which ordinarily coordinate emergency responses may be damaged, destroyed, or otherwise affected by the initial CBRN incident. Off-site contingency/devolution plans are required, as well as identified personnel to execute those plans.

The lead agencies for each possible CBRN scenario should work together to ensure awareness and common understanding in national preparedness policies, plans, and capability building.

The inclusion of a national CBRN defence strategy as part of the wider national preparedness strategy is recommended to support national preparedness, plans and capability development while avoiding duplication of efforts.

Guidelines

- Guidelines for governing the interagency approach to an incident should be created in order to provide unity of effort and overcome cultural and professional differences.

- Civilian emergency managers should identify and contact the military planners and liaison officers made available to their respective agencies. These planners and liaison officers can assist civilian emergency managers in the day-to-day planning process, and then coordinate military resources, upon request by the appropriate authorities, in the event of an incident.

- Civilian emergency managers should provide the military planners and liaison officers situation reports as necessary, including shortages and gaps that the military may fill.

- Response actions are focused on saving human lives and mitigating the hazard to prevent further damage. Any threat still potentially existing on the scene, and/or the special forensic requirements of crime scene investigations should be taken into account in all actions.

- Nations should involve military planners in threat assessment; regulation; planning; preparation; mitigation processes and response procedures to determine how military resources can be used in CBRN response.

- Nations should identify potential emergency response shortfalls that

military authorities may be able to address. Military authorities need to know which agencies they will support and what tasks they will be expected to accomplish well in advance of an incident occurring. Subsequently, military authorities should pre-identify which capabilities are available to support civil CBRN consequence management operations.

- Nations should pre-identify which civilian authorities are authorised to submit requests for assistance to the military and how these requests will be submitted to the military authorities. Nations should consider creating a specific form for a request of assistance from civil authorities to military authorities and vice-versa. Civil authorities should exercise the process to submit requests for assistance to their military counterparts for support with domestic emergencies, including but not limited to CBRN incidents, special events and coordinated complex terrorist attacks.

- Local military authorities, in coordination with their civil counterparts, should be authorised to provide immediate live saving support in imminently serious situations.

- Nations should integrate forensic awareness/investigation capabilities into first responder planning and on-scene operations, tactics, and procedures in order to support swift qualification of a CBRN incident as a criminal action/terrorist attack.

- Specialist advice from interagency partners and the military should be

provided to assist with consequence management planning and response. This may include hazard identification or confirmation, establishing levels of contamination detection and monitoring, medical support, mass casualty decontamination, transportation and treatment, stockpile access, environmental decontamination and emergency service resources supplementation/augmentation.

- Nations should map in advance which resources are available from NATO, the European Union, International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), World Health Organization (WHO), and the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in case national capabilities, both civil and military, are overwhelmed.

- In order to provide immediate life-saving support in imminent serious situation and in order to track all the capabilities to involve in a CBRN event, each nations should create a specific form of request of assistance to the local military or vice-versa. This form can be tested in training and exercise activities.

- In order to better integrate resources and avoid duplication, it is better to define a single command post where local military authorities and civilian counterparts can meet together to communicate and share procedures and action plans.

- Nations should ensure appropriate reach back for inter alia advice and assistance, to both civil and military authorities to ensure effective consequence management.

- Nations should ensure that national and international crisis management arrangements are taken into account and used where appropriate.

Logistics

Context

The logistical requirements for responding to a large-scale CBRN incident could potentially require multiple capabilities from many national agencies, partners, international organisations, NGOs and private-sector entities. Each organization is ultimately responsible for providing logistics support for their own forces, but most teams from the above entities are not trained or equipped to operate together in a CBRN environment.

The military personnel may provide vital logistics support to civil authorities. However, military and civilian organizations should strive to integrate efforts through the use of acquisition and cross-servicing agreements with the associated implementing arrangements, and any other vehicle necessary to provide logistics support.

Optimizing logistical capabilities should result in greater flexibility, more options, and more effective logistics support. Pre-planned use of national civil and military assets with the coordination of a leading authority/agency should be considered in order to gain efficiency and to avoid duplication of effort. This can include arrangements for international cooperation when appropriate.

Guidelines

- Nations should ensure that all necessary civil and military capabilities are available to support CBRN response (personnel, arrangements, equipment, material, funds and facilities).

- Nations should ensure that first responders and hospitals have protective equipment and the capability to operate in a CBRN-contaminated area and to evacuate contaminated patients.

- Nations should ensure that specialty equipment items have been identified in each of the response organizations.

- Nations should ensure that transportation requirements for managing the incident and ensuring medical support, to include air and sealift, are adequately identified and de-conflicted as necessary.

- Nations should ensure that handling and transportation protocols for contaminated CBRN material and equipment have been established during planning.

- Nations should ensure that logistical requirements have been identified to support the concept of operations for each key CBRN defence mission tasks through all phases of the operation.

- Host nations and supporting nations should identify cross-border liability issues and plan accordingly to avoid border crossing delays of CBRN defence assets.

Medical

Context

Saving lives is the first priority of all responding agencies. Contamination of victims/casualties must be considered as part of the initial assessment and an effective method for rescue, decontamination, and medical treatment must be provided and coordinated from point of exposure through to rehabilitation. Medical treatment may require the use of uncommon and/or unlicensed pharmaceuticals (medical countermeasures). Some biological incidents may be due to a contagious disease with the risk of person-to-person transmission leading to a prolonged and potentially evolving epidemic (or pandemic).

The medical community may be the one of the first to recognise or suspect a CBRN incident. CBRN incidents present different challenges for all responders, necessitating the rapid decontamination (or isolation), triage, and treatment of a significant numbers of casualties while taking critical measures to ensure the well-being of the personnel responding to the incident. The potential presence of a hazard, especially if unseen, may cause a disproportionate number of psychological casualties sometimes referred to as 'worried well'.

Dealing with a CBRN event always starts at the local level but in overwhelming circumstances, there may be a need for military assistance. After a CBRN event, hospitals and emergency departments may only have enough resources available for patients who arrive to the facilities relatively soon after the incident. Resource allocation decisions will need to be made until additional resources become available. Military medical resources may reduce the gap between the care that civilian authorities are able to provide and the care that is needed.

Risk communication is fundamental to a credible and effective response including the justification for the use of the military. Long-term medical monitoring (health surveillance) may be necessary for members of the public that were exposed to certain CBRN hazards.

Health surveillance should also be considered and/or offered for civil and military responders that may have also been exposed.

Guidelines

- Nations should ensure that their national medical system allows for pre-planned or early civil-military medical cooperation (e.g., use of medical reservists, military medical personnel embedded in civilian hospitals or rehabilitation of military casualties in civilian receiving hospitals).

- Nations should establish comprehensive evidence-based policies for managing large numbers of contaminated people from the deliberate or accidental use of CBRN.

- Nations should develop a joint civil-

military CBRN medical curriculum and exercise program, including CBRN first aid for non-health first responders.

- Nations should ensure that medical professionals and hospitals know who they can contact for information and training on how to recognise and manage the medical aspects of a CBRN incident and treat CBRN casualties.

- Nations should establish a stockpile of medical countermeasures (e.g., immunization and chemoprophylaxis), medical and decontamination equipment and personal protective equipment. This stockpile should be shared between the civil and military medical sectors, including determining how, when and by whom the stockpile can be accessed.

- Nations should establish a joint national comprehensive disease/health surveillance program.

- Nations should ensure that medical planning, triage and fatality management guidance take into account practical, ethical and legal requirements for a CBRN mass casualty incident.

- Nations should establish a robust security of supply arrangement for medical countermeasures, including relevant antidotes, taking into account the medical supply chain for the production of vaccines.

- Nations should consider establishing an overview of the overall national hospital capacities and relevant national resources to deal with a CBRN mass casualty incident(s).

Public Awareness and Warning Information Systems

Context

Crisis communication in CBRN event is not really that different from any other crisis situation. Communication must be open, transparent, easy to understand, honest and adapted to the stakeholders. What makes a CBRN incident special is the unfamiliarity of the public with the (alleged) effects of the release of certain agents and substances on their health. Rumours and myths will occur and increase when no information and instructions are provided, so it is vital to prepare and plan how to respond to public concerns as quickly as possible. Any communication vacuum has the potential of being filled by false information. Communication strategies must include plans to deal with fake news, misinformation and trolling.

In a CBRN situation, where the toxic agent is not visible and it may be difficult to measure its progression, the message to be communicated should be formulated as an evolving story. If the authorities keep the media and the population regularly updated about its latest findings and actions, it will retain its credibility even in the absence of certainty. The public can, in some circumstances, accept that the authorities may require time to obtain reliable and verifiable information. In cases where authorities are unable to provide comprehensive information on a particular CBRN event, knowledge gaps should be acknowledged and communicated to the public with reassurances that authorities are doing their utmost to find missing information.

Widespread public panic may cause many more deaths and injuries than an actual CBRN hazard would cause by itself. The provision of timely, regular and accurate warnings, instructions, and information may contribute to saving lives in a number of ways, including reducing the risk of exposure. If the public does not receive timely and accurate information with guidance on actions they should take, the public may place themselves in greater danger and inhibit the ability of first responders to work effectively. Healthy but scared individuals may quickly overwhelm hospital staff. Individuals may place themselves in greater danger by attempting to evacuate from an area where it is safer to shelter in place. The central message should always be one of empathy, showing that authorities understand why people are frightened. Figures and facts to reassure the public are essential.

Effectively communicating with the public on the risks associated with the hazard is critical to reduce the number of people seeking medical treatment in spite of what may be insignificant exposures, overwhelming medical resources that may be desperately needed for victims with more serious exposures.

The general public may be unwilling to accept the assurances of the government that an area is 'safe'. Communication plans must

take into account both behavioural heuristics and survival instincts and be prepared to counter disruptive information on social media. To mitigate this potential problem, accurate and timely information about an incident should be provided to responding agencies and to the general public. This enables the use of appropriate protection measures and reduces any further damage and psychological impacts. Specialist advice and resources may also be required as part of the recovery management phase, including psychological support and re-establishing public confidence and the return to normalcy. NATO has existing guidance documents on developing and implementing a Public Communication Plan, to include early warnings and public messaging, regular public updates, and public health advisories[1].

Guidelines

- Develop immediate broadcast capabilities to disseminate sustained lifesaving messages prior to any CBRN event, in addition to IT tools and social media and text-based communications devices.

- Understand and decide which media platforms (TV, radio, online, social media) are the best for reaching different sectors of society to disseminate warning and informing advice.

- Authorities will not be able to answer every social media comment so should identify the top public concerns and address these common themes as a matter of priority.

- Prepare in advance web pages with essential information for people affected by CBRN events in order to activate immediately during an event.

- Develop a strategy for implementing public information and public warning training specific to a CBRN response.

- Develop a public communications strategy to counter rumours, disinformation campaigns and influencing operations.

- Develop a capability to provide awareness of safety and security risks in the vicinity of the incident and in the overall disaster area.

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1   NATO's 'Revised Budapest Guidelines II for Public Information'.

Notification and Emerging Communications

Context

Immediate information sharing between emergency services is critical to detecting, identifying and monitoring CBRN threats. Information on CBRN threats may be received and disseminated via a number of sources, including intelligence agencies, emergency service control rooms, pre-determined risk information contained in operational response plans, labelling of hazardous substances and transportation containers, first responder observations and the public.

Over-classification of information, poor information sharing, and non-interoperable Command, Control, Communications, Computers and Information Systems (C4IS), both domestically and internationally, can discourage and impede effective coordination of warning and response efforts.

Early exchange of information between civil and military experts ensures the best possible initial threat and hazard assessment. Maintaining a common operational picture (COP) and a shared communication system is important. Coordinated communications by and between the responsible agencies is needed to convey accurate and complete information and correct any false information.

Military authorities should operate in support of civilian authorities in accordance with civilian first responder's own concepts, terminology, and principles. If military authorities are not familiar with these concepts and terminology, this may lead to ineffective communications and misunderstandings.

Guidelines

- Nations should ensure that a process is in place to provide information from military and civilian intelligence sources to appropriate individuals at agencies who may need to prepare for a credible threat, but who do not normally have access to intelligence from that source and may not know that the threat exists.

- Nations should integrate civil-military senior leader coordination and communications into response operations, and coordinate emergency functions to support disaster response.

- Mutual agreements for media and communications teams should be developed in advance of any emergency and these teams should exercise and rehearse together.

- Nations should leverage technology to improve response and communications and engage with all relevant stakeholders to ensure interoperable emergency communications are addressed.

- Nations should have proper arrangements in place to exchange information with and, if necessary, to request assistance from International Organisations and other nations, when national capabilities are

likely to be overwhelmed by cross-border, large-scale or long-term incidents.

- Nations should develop a strategy for implementing communications training specific to a CBRN response.

Training and Exercises

Context

Due the low frequency of CBRN incidents and competition for scarce resources, time and funding for training and exercising of CBRN response is often limited. In addition, the artificial nature of training/exercise environments do not reflect the true impact that a CBRN incident will have on a community with respect to the potential large number of victims, witnesses, or suspects, and the interoperability requirements between response organizations.

Comprehensive training and exercises involving all the relevant stakeholders in CBRN response is the key to developing and maintaining efficient and coordinated CBRN incident management. Specific training in civil-military cooperation and interoperability, combined with regular exercise, is necessary to ensure sufficient knowledge of capabilities.

A national CBRN training and exercise curriculum within the general civil emergency readiness training program is recommended in order to achieve balanced cross-sectoral and multidisciplinary CBRN readiness. National efforts should be supported by NATO and relevant international organizations' training guidance and exercise possibilities[2].

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2   NATO's 'International CBRN Training Curriculum for Trainers of First Responders to CBRN incidents' and 'Guidelines for first response to a CBRN incident'

Guidelines

• Civil and military authorities should train and exercise together in order to better respond to CBRN incidents.

• Comprehensive national preparedness training and exercise curriculum should emphasize first responder interoperability and coordination with the military in different CBRN threat and hazard scenarios in order to support sector-specific training programs.

• Nations should provide first responders with training on how to recognize the signs and symptoms caused by CBRN substances (including the basic characteristics and consequences of a specific substance – for example, noticing the need for self-protection). In addition, first responders should receive specific training to prepare them for the shocking effects of the unusual levels of violence associated with many terrorist attacks. The military could support such training.

• Nations should consider developing virtual reality or technically supported simulation support to joint exercises to increase the level of participation, decrease cost, and improve response coordination among all parties involved. In addition, national CBRN training and exercises could be broadened to include media (also social media/public information aspects) as well as support to victims' families and the

general public in the affected area.

- First responders should be provided with an appropriate level of training in responding to CBRN events, not limited to only recognizing such events, as they are typically first on scene until escalated to response at a national level or by military authorities.

- Joint training should include the use of live agents, if available, to increase confidence in working in CBRN environments.

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