

Europe's Return to UN Peacekeeping in Africa? Lessons from Mali

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Cover Photo: Military camp of MINUSMA Dutch contingent, Gao, Mali. February 26, 2014. UN Photo/Marco Dormino.

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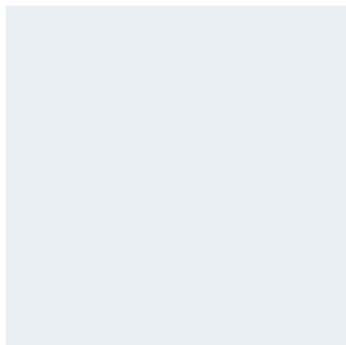
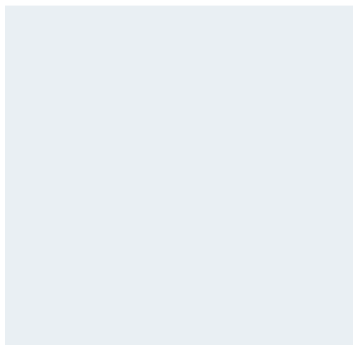
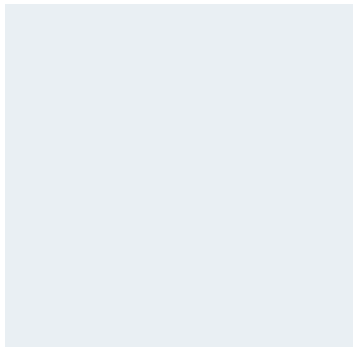
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Abbreviations

ACOTA	Africa Contingency Operations Training & Assistance
AFISMA	African-led International Support Mission to Mali
ASIFU	All Sources Information Fusion Unit
CASEVAC/ MEDEVAC	Casualty Evacuation / Medical Evacuation
CCIRM	Collection, Coordination and Intelligence Requirements Management
COE	Contingent-Owned Equipment
CONOPS	Concept of Operations
DFS	Department of Field Support
DMS	Director of Mission Support
DPKO	Department of Peacekeeping Operations
HUMINT	Human Intelligence
IOT	Integrated Operational Team
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
JMAC	Joint Mission Analysis Centre
JOC	Joint Operations Centre
MINUSMA	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OMA	Office of Military Affairs
PCC	Police-Contributing Country
PIRs	Priority Intelligence Requirements
SIGINT	Signals Intelligence
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
TCC	Troop-Contributing Country
UAVs	Unmanned Aerial Vehicles
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
WFP	World Food Programme

Executive Summary

In a break from recent tradition, European member states are currently contributing significant military capabilities to a United Nations (UN) peacekeeping operation in Africa. In the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), Europeans are providing more than 1,000 troops, who are staffing operations that include an intelligence fusion cell; two intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance units; unmanned, unarmed aerial systems; transport and attack helicopters; and fixed-wing transport aircraft. A number of staff officers and senior mission personnel also come from Europe.

For European troop-contributing countries (TCCs) that have spent several years working in North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) operations in Afghanistan, participating in a UN mission has been a process of learning and adaptation. For the UN, deploying a robust peacekeeping mission in Mali has proved challenging, given the difficult and sometimes dangerous operating environment, the mission's persistent capability gaps, and a political situation complicated by the lack of a peace agreement among the main parties. In this context, the contributions of key capabilities by European countries have certainly been welcomed, but at times it has not been easy for the UN system to adjust to the higher expectations of the new European TCCs.

This report analyzes the experiences of European UN member states participating in MINUSMA, and it identifies the challenges, solutions, and opportunities that have emerged. A subset of the paper gives an overview of the All Sources Information Fusion Unit (ASIFU), which gathers and analyzes information to produce military intelligence. The report raises some issues that deserve further attention if MINUSMA, or future missions, are to optimize this capability. A final section offers recommendations aimed at facilitating and improving the contribution and participation of European militaries in MINUSMA and in UN peacekeeping more broadly.

First, the research identifies the great potential of European military contributions to strengthen UN peacekeeping operations facing capability constraints in asymmetric threat environments. European military experience in such environ-

ments and its contribution of seasoned intelligence capabilities in particular can help the mission counter such threats and implement a range of mandated tasks. This experience also provides an opportunity for the UN system to learn and adapt to the changing and asymmetrical environment it increasingly faces on the ground.

Second, the paper highlights the experience of European TCCs who are accustomed to NATO standards and a more kinetic environment in Afghanistan but are now encountering a somewhat unfamiliar UN peacekeeping system with complicated financial and administrative rules that are still largely designed to support more traditional, static peacekeeping deployments. Over the last two decades, many European TCCs who had previously been key UN peacekeepers have lost significant amounts of institutional memory for deployment to UN peacekeeping operations. Standards, requirements, command arrangements, communication lines, planning processes and products, and even mindsets vary from NATO operations to UN operations.

On some issues, the story outlined in this report is of new European contributors pushing the UN to improve its standards and modernize its systems. However, it is also of new European contributors—arriving at times relatively unprepared for the UN system—coming to a better appreciation of the rationale behind certain aspects of UN peacekeeping and the benefits of a diverse, civilian-led, and integrated UN mission focused primarily on advancing a political solution to the crisis in Mali. Adapting from the counterinsurgency context in Afghanistan and the specific NATO system of organization will take time, effort, perseverance, and training.

Conversely, there is increasing acceptance in various parts of the UN that “business as usual” will not suffice, and there is a will to adapt and improve processes at headquarters and in the field, responding to European and other TCCs’ needs. The individual and collective experiences of the European TCCs therefore provide an opportunity for the UN system to learn and adapt to the changing environment it is facing—and could face in future missions. Other strategic opportunities are evident as well; these contributions do not only provide sorely needed capabilities on the ground but can also strengthen the overall legitimacy and

governance of peacekeeping, reducing the divide between those that finance and mandate UN peace operations and those that send their own troops to carry out such operations. The increased European engagement can provide useful common ground for the policy and finance debates of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations and the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly, as well as create a broader coalition to improve the Security Council's consultations with TCCs on mandates.

Some solutions to the operational challenges experienced by TCCs in MINUSMA have already been found, but of course other issues remain unresolved. Drawing on the experiences in MINUSMA, the UN and TCCs should use the opportunity of the 2015 high-level independent review of peace operations to improve procedures for force generation, mission support, and planning, and enhance integration and coherence. A set of specific recommendations on such issues is provided on page 16 of this report.

A third issue that has arisen is the need for UN Secretariat engagement to help address domestic political concerns of European TCCs. For

European member states, the centrality of the domestic political calculus in contributing military capabilities to UN peacekeeping should not be underestimated. Support of the public, the parliament, and the media are all important to enable the deployment of troops to UN peacekeeping, and the UN should find ways to enhance this support where possible.

Finally, we found a need for increased partnership among TCCs in MINUSMA. The potential of partnerships is great but still largely untapped. Communication, collaboration, and mentoring between European TCCs and MINUSMA's other TCCs still need significant strengthening to make the mission more operationally effective. For European TCCs, strong and consistent collaboration and discussion exists among their missions in New York, which has fortunately carried over to the field, greatly assisting their operations.

If addressed in constructive ways, as has been the case in many instances so far, then the issues described in this report can help MINUSMA become more effective while also helping the UN peacekeeping system as a whole better address today's challenges.

Introduction¹

As of March 31, 2015, fourteen European countries, led by the Netherlands and Sweden, were contributing 1,087 troops and thirty-two police officers to MINUSMA.² The largest European contingent is the Dutch contribution of nearly 700 troops, which includes special forces; an intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance unit; a combined helicopter unit consisting of three Chinook and four Apache helicopters; police officers; and civilian experts. Sweden's contribution consists of a roughly 220-person intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance unit, with a national support element (not counted in UN troops statistics) bringing the total to nearly 320 personnel. Norway, Denmark, Germany, Finland, and Estonia each contributes a handful of military intelligence experts to the ASIFU. France has twenty-two staff officers in the mission, some playing an important, if informal, liaison function with the ongoing French counterterrorism operation in the region. Portugal currently contributes, and Denmark previously contributed, C-130 heavy transport aircraft units (approximately fifty personnel). Germany contributed two C-160 transport aircraft initially in support of the African-led International Support Mission to Mali (AFISMA) of the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and it stayed on to support MINUSMA for an additional twelve months. Bosnia-Herzegovina, Italy, Romania, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom each have between one and five staff officers participating in the mission.

In addition, Europeans have also occupied senior mission posts: the special representative of the secretary-general for the first year and three months of the mission's start-up was from the Netherlands. The force chief of staff, the deputy chief of staff operations, the commander of Sector West, the deputy commander of the military intelligence (U2) section, and the heads of Mission Support, Legal Affairs, the Joint Mission Analysis

Centre (JMAC), the Joint Operations Centre (JOC), and the Department of Safety and Security are all European. European staff officers have been provided to the JOC, JMAC, UN Police, U2, and other key offices in the mission. In February 2015, the UN appointed a Danish force commander for MINUSMA.

Such a significant uniformed European presence in a UN peacekeeping mission has not existed in Africa since 1996, except for the brief period from 2009 to 2010 when select contingents of the European Union Force in Chad and the Central African Republic were "re-hatted" as part of the UN Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad. The contribution of special forces, helicopter units, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), and other intelligence capacities are particularly noteworthy. This engagement, at a time when other European countries are also considering uniformed contributions to the UN, is seen by some as an initial, important test of the ability of both the UN and those European states accustomed to recent NATO operations to adapt to each other's operational methods, culture, and requirements in a high-tempo, volatile environment—as opposed to the more static environment in operations such as the UN Interim Force in Lebanon and the UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus, where Europeans have been contributing substantially for some time.³

A few key contextual factors should be mentioned. The prolonged global financial crisis is continuing to take its toll on defense budgets across Europe. Concurrently, many European states have ended or are scaling down their engagement in Afghanistan. During the campaign in Afghanistan, combat, engineering, aviation, and intelligence capabilities have been developed that are expensive to maintain and may seem unnecessary if sitting idle at home. Deploying these capabilities to UN operations keeps them functional and, ultimately, can provide a rationale for their continued existence. As one European TCC official pointed out, "if you don't use them, you lose them."⁴

1 This study was conducted in January 2015. The study team relied primarily on in-person and phone interviews with representatives of European TCCs in MINUSMA, in New York, and from capitals, as well as UN staff based at UN headquarters and MINUSMA officials from the military and civilian components.

2 United Nations, "UN Missions Summary Detailed by Country," March 31, 2015, available at www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/contributors/2015/mar15_3.pdf.

3 See "Enhancing European Military and Police Contributions to UN Peacekeeping," New York: International Peace Institute, February 2013.

4 Interview with government officials, January 20, 2015.

Finally, the reimbursement income generated by providing an enabling unit to a UN mission is not an insignificant pull for the Europeans either.

The emergence of the so-called Islamic State, kidnappings and attacks on Europeans in the Maghreb and Sahel region, the January 2015 terrorist attacks in Paris, and the Mediterranean migration crisis all highlight the instability that currently characterizes Europe's near abroad as well as the effects that such instability can have on Europe. Mali is one of the many countries in which the UN is tasked to support a peace process, protect civilians from violence, and help build sustainable peace. Yet Mali has greater strategic and political significance for European countries than other UN missions in sub-Saharan Africa for several reasons, including the drug-trading routes that run through Mali to Europe, the presence of jihadist groups, and the prospect of additional refugee flows. As the prime minister of the Netherlands described his country's rationale, "Because of the terrorist threat, this conflict is not just a major problem for Mali, but it affects the entire region and the international community as well... Our efforts to ensure security in the Netherlands are going on in missions far from home, too."⁵ In addition to their participation in MINUSMA, European states, through the European Union, have deployed a mission to provide military training to Malian armed forces (the European Union Training Mission in Mali) and a civilian mission (the European Union Capacity Building Mission in Mali) to deliver strategic advice and training to the three internal security forces in Mali—the police, the gendarmerie, and the national guard.

Benefits of European Contributions

In early 2012, the Tuareg Movement for the National Liberation of Azawad and its Arab counterparts led an operation to oust the Malian defense and security forces and took control of the northern half of Mali. On April 6, 2012, the rebels proclaimed the independence of the "Republic of

Azawad." Unable to maintain control of the northern cities of Mali, they were defeated by the Islamist groups al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa. By March 2013, the Islamists were pushed back by the French Operation Serval with the support of AFISMA, and they took refuge in the mountainous areas of northern Mali or blended into the local population, resorting to asymmetric tactics against their opponents.⁶ The threat environment encountered by MINUSMA, replacing AFISMA on July 1, 2013, quickly became more challenging than most other UN peacekeeping missions, and MINUSMA has since dealt with ambushes, complex attacks, and other asymmetric and terrorist tactics, such as suicide attacks and improvised explosive devices (IEDs).

In this environment, one of the more significant European contributions to MINUSMA is the ASIFU, an unprecedented intelligence capability for a UN mission, which is intended to help the mission counter the asymmetric threats faced by the mission personnel and the local population. The ASIFU gathers and analyzes information, producing military intelligence for the force commander, among others. It relies on a number of sources of information from other mission assets provided by European TCCs, including the unmanned aerial systems, a special operations forces unit, and the reconnaissance missions of the Apache helicopters through their various sensors. The headquarters of the ASIFU is in Bamako, with intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance units in Gao and Timbuktu.

The ASIFU can provide the mission with intelligence from a range of sensors and improve situational awareness. The unit has a limited human intelligence (HUMINT) capability that, when combined with other sensors and mission components (police, civil affairs, etc.), is intended to provide a better understanding of key actors and conflict drivers, the local political economy, and perceptions of key constituencies. This can, for example, be fed into the regional stabilization and recovery strategies being developed in the northern

5 Government of the Netherlands, "Rutte: Dutch Intelligence Essential for Mission in Mali," December 8, 2014, available at www.government.nl/news/2014/12/08/rutte-dutch-intelligence-essential-for-mission-in-mali.html.

6 Operation Serval has been replaced by a regional counterterrorism operation, Operation Barkhane, covering Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger and led from Chad, but maintaining a sizeable presence in Mali.

regions.⁷ For a number of understandable reasons, introducing the ASIFU structure and capabilities within a UN mission structure for the first time and putting it to optimal use have met with some difficulties. See Box 2 on page 11 for a description of some of the most commonly cited challenges.

European TCCs have also provided key logistical and aircraft assets such as C-130s, C-160s, and Chinook helicopters. These have significantly increased mission mobility and ensured the availability of adequate casualty and medical evacuation capabilities. The Apache attack helicopter unit, mentioned previously, can provide escort for forces on the ground, signals intelligence, and direct fire support if and when necessary. Due mostly to the inability of MINUSMA's mission support element to build camps within a short timeframe, European TCCs have also brought construction engineering capacities to construct their own camps. While a clear source of frustration for the European contributors who expected the UN to deliver more quickly, this experience highlighted the significant potential of European capabilities to enable a UN mission during a start-up phase.

Operational assistance has also come from European units and staff officers, who have experience with asymmetric environments and countering IEDs, and can provide mentoring to other TCCs with less experience in these areas. However, the inability of many European staff officers to spend significant time in the most restive areas in the north of Mali has made such mentoring activity more challenging and less frequent.

On a symbolic level, the strong European presence in MINUSMA has served as a signal to the Malian government and other parties to the ongoing conflict of Europe's strategic and political interest in resolving the conflict. Senior mission leadership expressed the view that these signals, as well as the political, diplomatic, and development resources that come with the European troop participation in a mission, can only be seen as net positives for the mission's overall chances of

successfully implementing its mandate.

Taken together, these contributions have given content and shape to the commitment of several European member states to UN peacekeeping in Africa. Given the risks of this new operating environment and the unique capabilities that such European countries bring to MINUSMA to mitigate such risks, their individual and collective experiences provide an opportunity for the UN system to learn and adapt to the changing environment it is facing on the ground.

Challenges of Integrating European Capabilities into UN Peacekeeping

As should be expected, a number of challenges have surfaced when integrating European capabilities into MINUSMA. These challenges largely arise from the discordance that emerges when European TCCs that are accustomed to NATO standards and a high-tempo environment as part of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan encounter a somewhat unfamiliar UN peacekeeping system that has its own set of complicated financial and administrative bureaucratic rules and, operationally, is still largely designed to support traditional, static peacekeeping deployments and operations.⁸ It should also be noted that these European contributors entered into one of the more complex and frustrating mission start-up experiences of the UN's recent past, where some of the problems encountered were unique to the particular circumstances of this mission. For example, the support component of the mission was preoccupied with providing support to ill-equipped contingents the mission inherited from AFISMA, key enablers have yet to become operational or were slow to deploy, and there was frequent turnover in key mission leadership posts.

Standards, requirements, command arrangements, communication lines, planning processes and products, and even mindsets vary from NATO

⁷ The stabilization and recovery plan is jointly owned by the regional authorities, MINUSMA, UN agencies, and bilateral and NGO partners, and it has five main goals: (1) improve the security situation; (2) strengthen rule of law; (3) support socioeconomic development; (4) strengthen social cohesion; and (5) strengthen delivery of social services.

⁸ In this paper, "European TCCs" mostly refers to the major European TCCs contributing to MINUSMA, i.e., the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, and Germany. The authors acknowledge that certain European member states (e.g., Italy, Spain, France, Ireland, and Finland) do have significant recent experience contributing to the UN peacekeeping operation in Lebanon, among other missions.

operations to UN operations. On some issues, the story that unfolds is of returning European contributors pushing the UN to improve its standards and modernize its systems. However, the story is also of European contributors—in some ways relatively unprepared for the UN system—coming to a better appreciation of the rationale behind certain aspects of UN peacekeeping and the benefits of a diverse, civilian-led, UN mission focused on advancing a political solution. While the issues listed below are of varying importance, none are of enough significance to alter these TCCs' intentions to continue contributing to UN peacekeeping or the UN's continued desire to see more European specialized capabilities in its operations. If addressed in constructive ways—as has been the case in many instances so far—the issues described below can help MINUSMA become more effective while also helping the UN peacekeeping system as a whole better address today's challenges.

MISSION PLANNING

Over the last two decades, many European TCCs have lost significant amounts of institutional capacity for engaging with and deploying to UN peacekeeping operations. There is little expertise available on the more technical, administrative, and operational aspects of UN missions in the ministries of defense, ministries of foreign affairs, and armed forces of most European countries. This means that it takes time to become familiar with procedures and practices for force generation, mission planning, and the day-to-day engagement with the UN at headquarters in New York and on the ground. On the other hand, the UN has been slow to adapt to the changing realities that UN peacekeeping missions with stabilization mandates face in asymmetric threat environments. These missions necessitate more flexible arrangements and rapid support, enabling forces to deploy and redeploy more quickly.

A consistent message from European TCCs is that they would like to be more involved and at an earlier stage in mission planning, something other TCCs have been saying for years. However, one challenge is that due to domestic political processes, European TCCs can take longer than other TCCs to signal their interest in contributing to a mission. At the time of the early planning stages of MINUSMA, for instance, there was little

sign of European interest in contributing and therefore little European engagement in the planning process. Later on, one positive example of such involvement occurring was in the development of the statement of unit requirements for ASIFU that was prepared by the UN's Office of Military Affairs (OMA). It was done in a flexible fashion to allow different TCCs to contribute with their different assets and capabilities. As soon as the Nordic countries showed their interest in contributing to ASIFU, the European military advisers in New York engaged OMA and subsequently worked with their capitals to develop the ASIFU statement of unit requirements in line with their particular capabilities.

In general, European TCCs would like OMA to strengthen its expertise to adequately address the planning and deployment of modern high-technology capabilities. However, because military advisers in permanent missions also lack specific expertise on every capability, they often are not the right interlocutor for OMA but must rely on their capitals to contribute to the planning. As was done for ASIFU, the UN could more consistently incorporate informal planning consultations that enable all TCCs to communicate with the UN about the capabilities to be deployed and provide input in the development of the concept of operations (CONOPS), which could improve mission planning, increase the levels of TCC trust in an upcoming mission, and allow the TCCs to begin their internal force generation processes earlier. It should be noted that the CONOPS for MINUSMA was, in fact, developed in large part by UN headquarters staff of European origin, and at the time it was believed to have more of a European military planning aspect than most other UN missions' CONOPS.

Planning in general is an area that is often understaffed in UN missions (and at UN headquarters), and more capacity would be welcome. European staff officers have been seconded to relevant units (JOC, JMAC, etc.) to achieve better mutual understanding between the UN and European TCCs, and to help “oil the machinery.” At the mission-wide level, the UN and member states should look for opportunities to second civilian capacities under the government-provided personnel modality, consistent with the recommendations from the civilian capacity review

undertaken in 2011, and otherwise press for the UN to reinforce the strategic planning capacity in the office of the special representative of the secretary-general or the chief of staff.⁹

In interviews, some European interlocutors lamented the lack of a “campaign plan” for the mission. According to the UN, however, the “mission concept” document (plus the military CONOPS and operational plan) is the rough equivalent of a NATO campaign plan. Both documents provide a strategic guide for how a mission will implement its mandate, but a campaign plan is normally limited to the military dimension, whereas a UN mission concept encompasses all the components of an integrated UN mission. In a UN mission, each component then has its own CONOPS based on the mission concept. The military CONOPS defines the strategic plan and the capabilities needed for the military component of the mission, while the military tasks and timelines are made concrete through an operational plan. While the UN’s hierarchy of plans makes sense on a conceptual level, in practice, there are lingering concerns among the European TCCs about a lack of direction for MINUSMA’s military component and too little clarity on what the short-, medium-, and long-term tasks of that component should be.

Indeed, it is possible that these concerns relate less to the adequacy of the specific UN planning products relative to NATO products and more to a number of factors that negatively affected MINUSMA’s planning. First, MINUSMA’s mission-wide planning was not in sync from the outset. The military planning had to move forward first, and quickly, to incorporate the AFISMA contingents that were already on the ground. This timing issue, one that has the potential to recur given the likelihood of the UN taking over for an African Union operation (or one led by a subregional organization) again in the future, also led to a divergence between the military and mission support CONOPS, described further in the next section. Second, MINUSMA’s senior leadership came on board after the initial mission concept was developed and had less ownership over this strategy; it therefore did not place much

emphasis on this particular planning tool. Third, although the military CONOPS was transformed into an operational plan, neither document was revised despite a changing situation on the ground and the continued unavailability of key enabling capabilities in the mission. In February 2015, a review of MINUSMA’s mission strategy was ongoing, which will lead to revisions in the mission concept and the various CONOPS. It will be the job of the new force commander to ensure that all of MINUSMA’s TCCs, through their contingent commanders, are consulted in the process of revising the CONOPS and operational plan.

For the UN, one major and obvious difference with NATO (and the EU) is that only the member states on the Security Council get a say in whether a mission is deployed, renewed, or ended. This decision-making structure, while a permanent feature of the UN peacekeeping system, will inevitably create a sense among most TCCs of inadequate control over their own destiny. Thus, similar to the UN’s traditional TCCs, European TCCs who are not among the permanent members of the Security Council also expressed a wish to be more included in the development of mandates by the Security Council. This interesting convergence between traditional and European TCCs could be used to develop more productive consultation mechanisms between the council and all TCCs—an outcome that so far has been elusive despite considerable effort on both sides. Unlike South Asian and African TCCs, for example, European TCCs could engage France and the United Kingdom in ways that potentially could enhance the role of all TCCs in the council’s deliberations in significant ways.

MISSION SUPPORT ISSUES

To improve efficiency and effectiveness and to better serve all TCCs, many European officials believe that a comprehensive analysis of the structure of the UN Secretariat is overdue. Many of the challenges European TCCs encountered are structural, with important and overlapping mission responsibilities being split between the UN’s Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), Department of Field Support (DFS), and Department of Management, each headed by its own under-secretary-general with distinct priori-

9 See United Nations, *Civilian Capacity in the Aftermath of Conflict: Independent Report of the Senior Advisory Group*, UN Doc. A/65/747, January 31, 2011.

ties, not necessarily set up to support individual missions. The interdepartmental divisions were supposed to be overcome, in part, by the creation of the integrated operational teams (IOTs), intended to function as a “one-stop shop” for each mission.¹⁰ The establishment of the IOTs was a step forward in ensuring more integrated and coherent planning and operational support within DPKO and DFS, but there is still room for improvement of work processes in the UN Secretariat more broadly to facilitate improved interaction with member states and the missions, and more effective and efficient support. Some member states shared their frustration about engaging with a myriad of interlocutors that had to be identified and chased down when trying to speed up processes. Some of the confusion may also stem from a lack of comprehensive knowledge of UN Secretariat structures, procedures, and personnel, and an underutilization of the IOT.

The UN Secretariat bears additional burdens when engaging with European states that tend to have more questions, requests, and stricter timelines than traditional TCCs. To alleviate some of this workload and improve work processes, the UN could consider delegating more authority to

members of the IOT so that not every issue presented to the DFS representative has to rise to the top of the chain, for example. As well, DPKO could develop clearer workflow charts for all standard processes and share these with potential TCCs, including contact information for focal points at each stage of the process and answers to frequently asked questions. On the other hand, member states could consider adding staff with UN field experience to their delegation to the UN and developing their own national resource guides to help retain institutional memory.

In theater, circumstances particular to MINUSMA provided additional challenges for mission support. This was largely due to three factors. First, during the mission start-up there was a high turnover of key leadership posts, most notably with the director of mission support (DMS) post changing hands three times in a short period. In addition, the special representative of the secretary-general and force commander only stayed on for slightly more than a year, and the chief of staff position remained intermittently vacant. Second, some of the TCCs that were rehatted from the African Union force, AFISMA, were severely underequipped and required much

Box 1. Integrated operational teams

Excerpts from the Report of the Secretary-General on Implementation of the Integrated Operational Teams¹¹

The integrated operational teams were designed to serve as a principal entry point for political as well as operational issues and integrated planning for all peacekeeping partners on mission-specific matters. The teams are responsible for providing integrated operational and political guidance and support to field missions on day-to-day mission-specific issues that cut across more than one area of expertise, and for coordinating the Secretary-General’s mission-specific reporting obligations to the Security Council. Each team includes political, military, police and support specialists, drawing on expertise from other areas as required.

All members of an integrated operational team work under the direction of a team leader, who is responsible for the day-to-day management and supervision of the team and the delivery of day-to-day integrated support and guidance to the field mission(s) under his/her purview. Team leaders, who are usually at the D-1 or P-5 level, take strategic advice and executive direction from the Regional Director, who sets strategic priorities for the Division.

Furthermore, military, police, administrative and logistics officers on the teams operate under the delegated authority of the Military Adviser, Police Adviser and Under-Secretary-General for the Department of Field Support, respectively.

¹⁰ IOTs, however, do not include a representative of the Department of Management.

¹¹ United Nations, *Implementation of the Integrated Operational Teams: Report of the Secretary-General*, UN Doc. A/65/669, December 29, 2010, pp. 2, 7, available at www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/65/669.

more mission support than typical UN TCCs. These extraordinary demands taxed the support component of the mission and made it more difficult to provide the requested level of support to the European contingents. Third, the assumptions about the difficulty and risk of the operating environment were, according to European officials, understated by the support side, and there were few contingencies in place should the environment deteriorate. In practice, this meant that there was a gap between the military and support concepts of operations. In particular, the question of when and how the mission could realistically establish its presence in the north was not well coordinated. During the fall of 2014, the mission was repeatedly attacked, and resupply to the north had to be done by air. The military CONOPS relied on mobility of troops and support elements, while the mission support component of UN missions is set up to prepare fixed camps and fixed logistics support in relatively safe environments. Once the security situation began to deteriorate significantly, the ability of the mission to adapt was undermined by budgetary, administrative, and other support-related constraints.

Linked to these constraints, MINUSMA was also hamstrung by its inability to use UN agencies to accelerate start-up. DPKO and DFS cannot easily transfer funds to agencies such as the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), World Food Programme (WFP), or United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to execute work, even though they may be better structured to do the work than DFS. This is not a limitation emanating from UN rules and regulations but rather a policy decision of the Department of Management. A review of the management oversight of field operations may be needed to enable more decentralized authority to the field and greater flexibility in use of resources.

A key lesson on the support side for the European TCCs in MINUSMA has been to do things on their own rather than waiting for the mission to do them—a practical reaction to mission support delays. Although the agreement was for the UN to build ASIFU's camps, when the time came for deployment, the ground had not

even been prepared for the campsites. As a result, the Norwegians built the ASIFU headquarters in Bamako themselves using a combination of Norwegian and UN engineering assets with Norwegian engineers and locally contracted labor. Norway also assisted the Swedes in building their camp in Timbuktu, while the Dutch built their own camp in Gao. Based on its organizational table, the mission should have had three engineering companies. Out of these three envisioned, only one was planned to be from the AFISMA operation and two were to be generated through the usual force generation process. The re-hatted company, however, has not had access to its major engineering equipment. The second and third engineering companies have now been deployed, but this inevitably delayed mission start-up. Industrial-scale, commercial engineering support was needed, but this was not part of the mission plan. The scale of commercial engineering needed for MINUSMA's timely start-up would likely have cost millions of dollars more and would have had to follow international procurement processes. High-value procurement takes at least six to eight months, not including what would still have been subsequent slow deployment of equipment to Mali. The experience from other UN start-up missions shows that establishing all main camps and supply networks using typical UN methods takes two to three years—a timeline that is far too slow for military deployments premised on the need to be in theater as soon as possible.¹²

The UN support and administrative system also has had some challenges integrating specific capabilities into MINUSMA. For instance, the Letter of Assist negotiations regarding the air assets provided by the Netherlands—Apache attack helicopters and Chinook transport helicopters—have not been without complication. The Dutch require more reimbursement for the Chinooks than the UN gives for the typical transport helicopters it employs (Mi-8 or Mi-26), which was initially a sticking point. However, in terms of value, the Chinooks provide more capability to the mission than typical UN helicopters (and are referred to as tactical air mobility rather than transport helicopters). They have a much larger transport capacity, can do night

12 For in-depth analysis of the recurring engineering problems that the UN faces during mission start-up, see Arthur Boutellis and Adam C. Smith, "Engineering Peace: The Critical Role of Engineers in UN Peacekeeping," New York: International Peace Institute, January 2014, available at http://ipinst.org/media/pdf/publications/ipi_e_pub_engineering_peace.pdf.

flights (important for proper casualty and medical evacuations), and, above all, provide a wider range of tactical uses for the force commander.

Sweden had offered to provide the mission with a C-130 that would be based in Timbuktu and could serve Tessalit and Kidal in northern Mali—a contribution that was approved by its government in June 2014. However, the offer was turned down by mission support, with the UN formally replying in October that MINUSMA was unable to utilize the proposed aircraft until necessary arrangements had been made for the maintenance and rehabilitation of the airfields in northern Mali. Mission support's concern was that the C-130 would degrade the runways, and airfield management would not be available for these locations (at the time, the French flew C-130s to these locations but provided their own airfield maintenance). When the security situation deteriorated and transport could no longer go over land, the mission support CONOPS was adjusted to include airfield maintenance and airport services (but the Swedish C-130 was then unavailable).

Another challenge with the air assets is differing systems to assess standards. The UN only permits helicopters to be flown when the pilot in command has 1,000 total flight hours, while the Dutch have a lower flight-hour requirement (but test their pilots in other ways to ensure necessary aptitude). The UN was unwilling to change this requirement in the Letter of Assist (the requirement is an easy way to ensure minimum standards for all UN TCC pilots across the board), but the Dutch were told that a waiver could be granted for their pilots in command who had not achieved 1,000 hours. No waivers have been granted however, meaning that for six months only three of the four Chinook pilots in command have been able to fly other mission personnel in their helicopters (one of the four pilots did not have the flight hours), and in the following rotation half of the capacity was not fully operational. Often, because of the division of responsibilities in the UN system, these issues need to be raised to the under-secretary-general level to be resolved. For instance, when the Swedish alerted the mission that the airstrip for their UAVs in Timbuktu needed upgrades to be operational, it was only when the issue was raised to the under-

secretary-general level that mission support agreed to fix it. Decentralization and more delegation of authority might facilitate quicker resolution of such problems.

In another case, the contribution of two C-160s from Germany is an example of mismatched air capabilities related to re-hatting of assets. While considered useful during their support of AFISMA, the C-160s could not fulfill MINUSMA's needs and requirements entirely, especially in northern Mali, and their deployment ended after twelve months. It should be taken into account that the German government offered the air assets when the mission was in dire need of such assets, and the mission accepted them knowing that they did not have the full set of required capabilities (C-160s have no tactical night landing and take-off capability requiring usage of night vision systems, and with only two engines cannot carry much load in the northern Malian heat). Therefore, the air assets could not support the mission for some of the more critical tasks that were necessary. Following this, the UN was able to find more appropriate C-130s from Denmark and Portugal to replace the two C-160s.

In terms of troop accommodations, the capabilities and units of European TCCs introduce additional and stricter requirements, often driven by national standards. Mission support must give additional attention, for example in terms of space allocated to contingents within camps, and additional requirements for security, basic utilities, and services. With the finite resources of mission support, this attention may be to the overall detriment of other TCCs, many of which continue to operate with shortfalls in austere conditions. Considering the footprint and semi-permanence of the mission, dynamic operations and camps are not mutually exclusive, but they can be complementing elements. Having looked at this issue in-depth, given the tasks of and threats faced by modern peacekeeping operations, the Expert Panel on Technology and Innovation in UN Peacekeeping recommends revisions to the requirements for hardwall accommodations for military components, instead favoring “expeditionary accommodation combined with a strong perimeter security platform and well-practiced emergency reaction capability.”¹³

13 United Nations, “Performance Peacekeeping: Final Report of the Expert Panel on Technology and Innovation in Peacekeeping,” 2015, p. 31.

Box 2. ASIFU: Key elements and issues for consideration

As described previously, ASIFU is a primarily European contribution to MINUSMA and is in many ways a new experiment for the UN. ASIFU is intended to “provide fused, relevant, timely, actionable and integrated intelligence analysis based on a comprehensive approach, in support of the Force Commander’s priority intelligence requirements (PIRs) and MINUSMA force protection, in order to support all levels of MINUSMA and enable the force to mitigate the threats to the mission, the threats to the force and identify opportunities for the mission.”¹⁴ The main elements of the ASIFU include the headquarters, based in Bamako, which consists of a seventy-person unit covering analysis and fusion, command and control, and logistic capacity. In Gao and in Timbuktu, the ASIFU has intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance units with sensor and analysis capacity consisting of human intelligence and unmanned aerial vehicle capabilities. The ASIFU also will rely on other sources of information to various degrees, including Apache helicopters, special forces, police officers, but also the soldiers and civilians in the field.

Within its Analysis Fusion Cell, the ASIFU has an Open Source Section that monitors local and regional newspapers, TV, and web-based news, and social media (where many armed groups in many conflicts are very active). The Open Source Section is manned by linguists who are also trained analysts, and it accounts for a substantial percentage of the total intelligence production, with both input to intelligence products and stand-alone open source intelligence products. This section is said to have provided the mission with good value given the minimal resources needed to operate it. The Collection, Coordination and Intelligence Requirements Management (CCIRM) has been cited as another one of the most valuable elements of ASIFU and a positive addition to a UN mission in terms of its well-structured organization, archives, database, and communications. This is potentially an asset that could be expanded and employed as a mission-wide asset rather than just for the ASIFU.

Role, relationship to other mission components, and command and control

What exact role does ASIFU play in the mission, and how does this relate to the mission’s other information gathering and analysis components, such as the JMAC, JOC, U2 section, and the Department of Safety and Security? Who does ASIFU support, and who will task it? Even among MINUSMA staff working alongside ASIFU, there has been some lack of clarity on these questions. According to ASIFU’s first commander, Colonel Tony Keijsers, ASIFU’s role is “to improve the processing and production of MINUSMA broad information and intelligence in order to have accessible and useable information on time. This will support the decision-making processes on the operational (force headquarters) and tactical (sector headquarters) level. But ASIFU should also be able to support the strategic level: the special representative of the secretary-general through the JMAC and UNDSS.”¹⁵

While ASIFU capabilities could certainly be useful to provide input at the operational, tactical, and strategic levels, some feel that more specialization among the various intelligence entities inside the mission could lead to a greater coherence and collective impact. To improve coherence, the mission has developed a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for intelligence management, coordination, and oversight of intelligence activities in MINUSMA. The SOP outlines the concept of a Joint Collection Board, established to give technical guidance and coordinate the intelligence cycle in the mission. Chaired by the head of the JMAC, and including participants from all relevant parts of the mission, the Joint Collection Board is intended to improve the level of cooperation within the mission and ensure that the various components are complementing each other’s work while reducing the overlap in intelligence products from the various bodies that some say has been relatively common. The SOP should lead to routines being established for routine information-sharing between the relevant bodies, avoiding time-consuming case-by-case approval.

ASIFU is the operational part of the military component of MINUSMA’s intelligence architecture. In terms of tasking, the ASIFU is headed by a full colonel, who is directly under the command of the force

14 Kari Ahrnberg, presentation at the ASIFU After Action Review, US Army War College, January 27, 2015.

15 Tony Keijsers, presentation at the Mission of the Netherlands to the UN, New York, November 17, 2014.

commander. However, the force headquarters U2 manages the overall military intelligence process and is headed by a lieutenant colonel. Given such peculiarities, some have argued that an evaluation of the command-and-control arrangements of ASIFU would be beneficial.

Operational and technical challenges

Certain aspects of the UN or specific circumstances of MINUSMA have limited the effectiveness of ASIFU capabilities. First, the lack of a secure communications network inside MINUSMA and between the mission and UN headquarters is a concern cited by ASIFU personnel. The February 2015 report of the UN's Expert Panel on Technology and Innovation in UN Peacekeeping recommends the establishment of secure data storage networks for UN missions.¹⁶ A second issue is related to the actual intelligence-gathering capabilities of the mission. Although benefiting from the presence of various MINUSMA military units, civilians, and police in the north, ASIFU's impact has been affected by the mission's uneven deployment to the north of Mali, the fact that no ASIFU intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance units are based in the Kidal area, and the delayed arrival of the UN-contracted long-range UAVs. The Dutch have brought their own tactical UAVs, but these have a relatively short range. Until the arrival of the mid-range UAVs, the mission will have few eyes on the situation in the most critical region of Mali. Even then, the lack of a full intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance unit based in Kidal will prevent the mission from having a more complete picture of the threat environment.

Finally, critical human intelligence that could be provided to the mission from the local population is inherently limited by the fact that the European forces are quite visibly not from the region and most do not speak the local language. This makes partnership with the Malian army and the UN TCCs from the region (e.g., Burkina Faso, Niger, Mauritania, etc.) to help gather and relay intelligence even more important. The Dutch do have some local interpreters, and some units also join on field missions with other TCCs who have more relevant language skills (although the multiplicity of languages in Mali makes it difficult even for Burkinabé forces to interact with everyone). To date, efforts to provide training and increase trust with these partners have met with limited success. Another complicating issue in this respect is that ASIFU is equipped with NATO systems and nationally sensitive technologies that are off-limits for other TCCs in the mission. This has the potential to create suspicion among other TCCs if not handled correctly. The European TCCs emphasize that it is only the systems that are confidential, and that they are more than willing to share information and intelligence products with the other TCCs. Creating more formal and regular mechanisms to build the relationship between ASIFU and other TCCs is a mutually beneficial project for MINUSMA.

Looking to the future, a final issue that was raised relates to the need for member states to revise the contingent-owned equipment (COE) manual to account for the provision of more modern, high-tech capabilities—a concern among some European TCCs. One small example of this is the national support technicians that some of ASIFU's high-tech capabilities require. Because of the provision of high-tech capabilities of the intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance units, there is an increased need for technicians that are flown in and out of the mission by the TCCs for short durations. This can be both an administrative and financial challenge, as these are not formally part of the TCC contribution (and not accounted for in

COE or troop reimbursements). While a revision of the COE manual is not necessarily required to reimburse TCCs for unique or special requirements, it is not always easy to get the UN to agree to special cases. In general, a forward-looking discussion among TCCs as to how to adjust the COE manual for newer, specialized capabilities, held well in advance of the next COE working group, could assist in the generation of these capabilities in the future.

COMMAND AND CONTROL AND MISSION ORGANIZATION

While MINUSMA's European TCCs may understand the key principles of integrated operations,

¹⁶ United Nations, *Performance Peacekeeping*.

their forces predominantly have NATO experience and, as such, are accustomed to military leadership of a mission. European TCCs have long had concerns about the command-and-control arrangements in UN peacekeeping operations, some of which stem from the memory of their experiences with UN peacekeeping in the early to mid-1990s. For instance, among European TCCs, there is still confusion over the placement of air assets under the control of the director of mission support. In Mali, the Dutch have pressed for their transport helicopters (Chinooks) to be placed under the control of the force commander. From the UN's perspective though, casualty and medical evacuation (CASEVAC/MEDEVAC) is an organizational responsibility for all UN personnel, irrespective of whether they are uniformed or civilian. Assets in the CASEVAC/MEDEVAC chain should therefore be centrally controlled by mission support. In MINUSMA, the deputy chief service delivery (formerly the deputy chief integrated service support) is a UN-contracted military officer, double-hatted as deputy chief for mission support within the force headquarters.

Delegation of authority in the UN is described in the document, *Department of Peacekeeping Operations/Department of Field Support Policy on Authority, Command and Control in the United Nations Peacekeeping Operations*. European (and all other) TCCs should make more of an effort to understand the unique characteristics and benefits of UN command-and-control arrangements. However, despite the logic of the UN's command arrangements, they ultimately rely on good communication and cooperation among the mission's senior leadership team members to be effective. For MINUSMA, differences among the leadership team members were evident from the start of the mission. Frequent turnover of the DMS position, the lack of a chief of staff for extended periods, and a paucity of prior UN experience among several key mission personnel (force commander, deputy force commander, and other senior mission headquarters staff) combined to frustrate European TCCs and the mission as a whole.

One specific problem with the DMS control over both civilian and military assets is the budgetary considerations that are part of decisions to deploy one type of asset over another. Civilian air assets

are contracted such that they are paid in more or less a fixed amount regardless of usage, whereas military (TCC) assets are generally paid depending on the amount of flight hours used. As such, it makes financial sense for a DMS to employ a civilian helicopter over a military one if possible, which potentially leads to underuse (and less reimbursement) of the TCC air assets. Part of the solution to the air assets problem could be a revision of the Letter of Assist that obligates the mission to contract the transport helicopters (and reimburse the TCC) for a minimum fixed amount of time per month. This type of contract is no longer allowed by the Department of Management, but perhaps should receive a second look.

Some TCCs also have expressed doubts about the appropriateness of a civilian logistics and management system for the kind of environment in which MINUSMA is operating. A commonly cited complaint is that a UN mission headquarters does not operate on a 24/7 basis—as did ISAF—but that this may be necessary for a robust peacekeeping operation in a volatile environment. In addition, most UN missions are not provided with rotary wing assets capable of night CASEVAC/MEDEVAC, which prevents them from following the “golden hour” principle of CASEVAC/MEDEVAC and advanced trauma care: assets must reach the casualty within one hour of wounding, and casualties that require urgent surgery should be under treatment at a Level 2 medical unit within two hours. The Dutch Chinooks enable MINUSMA to come much closer to meeting these standards, but they remain an exception in the UN's Africa-based missions.

Another dimension of the command-and-control issue is the tendency toward micromanagement in UN missions and at UN headquarters. Many issues are elevated to the top level to be solved, with either the DMS or the special representative of the secretary-general having to sign off. This results in a snowballing effect where even minor issues create long paper trails, delays, and become burdensome for all parties involved. This is a deeper management issue that should be addressed by increased decentralization and delegation of authority, and the need for having more experienced capacities at the desk level of the mission's components. However, in practice this often tends to be difficult with the variation and

depth of issues that UN missions are confronted with on an everyday basis. The tendency of top-heavy decision making may have worked for smaller deployments of peacekeeping troops that were relatively static but does not work well with more than 100,000 troops deployed, many in more dynamic environments where combat situations can emerge on short notice and military assets have to be deployed immediately. This is exacerbated during the start-up phase of a mission, but some problems may remain and need to be addressed.

Domestic Politics

For European member states, the importance of the domestic political calculus involved in contributing military capabilities to UN peacekeeping should not be underestimated. Support of the public, the parliament, and the media are all important to examine and enhance, if possible. This is sometimes, but not always, the case for the UN's traditional TCCs, whose publics and parliaments are more accustomed to UN peacekeeping participation. For those TCCs, experience has created a better understanding among the public of the rationale, frustrations, and risks involved in peacekeeping participation. However, for much of Europe, especially following the unfortunate experiences with UN peacekeeping in the mid-1990s, this nuanced understanding is not generally present.

What effect does domestic politics have on European contributions and on the UN? First, the domestic audiences of European TCCs can contribute to higher maintenance costs for the UN. The experience in MINUSMA has shown that the UN is willing to do more to receive European contributions, not only in terms of revising SOPs, policies, and guidelines, but also through official statements and letters. The special representative of the secretary-general, force commander, and the director of DPKO's Africa Division all testified in front of the Dutch parliament during the consultations on whether the Netherlands would contribute. The Dutch also received official letters of thanks from the UN secretary-general, the under-secretary-general of DPKO, and the special

representative of the secretary-general upon providing their contribution. While these gestures are not often required by traditional TCCs and may sound burdensome, they do not represent a significant investment of time or money on the part of the UN Secretariat (but might become one if required by all TCCs). Given the potential return on investment in the form of key enabling capacities of European TCCs, a strategic discussion between those TCCs and DPKO/DFS leadership should be held to identify other, similar forms of engagement to encourage or assuage European capitals.

For European governments that have significant oversight and accountability arrangements with their parliaments, it is perhaps even more important for them than for traditional TCCs that realistic timelines for deployment are agreed upon. In some cases, the UN has repeatedly provided timelines for planning and deployment that have not held, creating false expectations among TCCs and their ministries of defense and parliaments (and, not to be forgotten, the local population). Similarly, European TCCs may have been too optimistic in their planning. The ministries of foreign affairs and defense typically have to present to parliament the proposed contributions and when these can be expected to be operational, with little room for explanations for changes or delays down the line. Both the Swedish government and the Dutch government were in difficult positions in this respect: the Swedish with the UN rejection of their parliament-approved C-130 contribution, and the Dutch in terms of deployment timelines.

The domestic audience can also be quite important on issues related to safety and security of personnel. It was the Dutch parliament that pushed for Chinooks to be included in the contribution to MINUSMA, to ensure that CASEVAC/MEDEVAC was available in line with NATO standards. By providing an integrated package of capabilities that are more or less self-sustained, European TCCs have reduced their dependence on others and minimized security and political risks. Some have called this a "mission within the mission" phenomenon.

The Importance of Partnerships

UN missions essentially rely on “shoulder-to-shoulder” partnerships between TCCs to ensure force protection and implement their mandates. In Timbuktu, the Swedes will be dependent on the Salvadoran tactical helicopters and the Burkinabé troops for critical transport and intelligence from the ground. Similarly, the Dutch work closely with the Bangladeshi, Chinese, and other troops in Gao. Yet communication and collaboration between European TCCs and MINUSMA’s other TCCs still need significant strengthening. Communication can be a problem at critical points between the European units and other TCCs. For instance, the ability of the Dutch Apache helicopters to provide close air support to non-European TCC units operating on the ground is limited by the lack of a common language, inadequate communications equipment of ground troops, or an unawareness of common protocol for signaling positions. The situation on the ground must at all times be clearly communicated to a helicopter pilot for him to provide close air support.

The potential of partnerships is great but still largely untapped. African troops are trained and equipped through a range of bilateral programs such as the US Africa Contingency Operations Training & Assistance (ACOTA) program and the European Union’s African Peace Facility. During the re-hatting of troops, African TCCs have received significant amounts of armed personnel carriers and other equipment from ACOTA and the US Department of Defense. The French Operation Barkhane has embedded liaison teams with the African TCCs during AFISMA that stayed on through the re-hatting; the Dutch have provided training to other TCCs on intelligence gathering and analysis; and the UN Mine Action Service provides counter-IED mentoring to TCCs. Possible future partnerships could include such things as jointly deploying European engineering or medical assets with African TCC engineers or medics.

Among European TCCs, the partnership in MINUSMA has been proceeding smoothly. Every interviewee cited strong and consistent collaboration and discussion among the European TCC missions in New York. This has carried over into the field where the units are supporting each other,

such as the Norwegians providing engineering assistance and tentage to help the Swedish intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance contingent establish their camp in Timbuktu. For the UN, an ideal long-term result of such close cooperation could be the formation of standby multinational units of European TCCs to provide combat and construction engineering units to rapidly establish camps and bases in start-up missions. UN member states must, of course, accept the increased short-term costs that will be incurred, recognizing that this increases the effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and legitimacy of the mission in the long term.

Conclusion

The experiences from MINUSMA have highlighted a number of challenges but also possible ways to overcome them. MINUSMA has shown that European TCCs can contribute niche capabilities and enablers to meet pressing UN peacekeeping needs. Their contributions do not only provide sorely needed capabilities on the ground, but they also can strengthen the overall legitimacy of peacekeeping, reducing the divide between those that finance and mandate UN peace operations and those that provide the boots on the ground.

However, the experience also shows that this will not happen without a significant effort from both sides. MINUSMA is a story of mutual organizational learning through engagement. As the Europeans increasingly understand the challenges that the UN and MINUSMA are facing, there is more acceptance of differences. UN missions are complex instruments with interdependent parts, perhaps even more so than the EU and NATO missions European countries have grown accustomed to. UN missions are integrated and require thorough training and preparation of troops and commanders on the defining features of these missions, the principles, and the SOPs guiding UN missions at all levels. MINUSMA is also a story of returning European contributors—arriving at times relatively unprepared for the UN system—coming to a better appreciation of the rationale behind certain aspects of UN peacekeeping and the benefits of a civilian-led, diverse, and politically focused UN mission. Adapting from the ISAF mind-set of Afghanistan will take time, effort, and training. Conversely, the UN accepts that it cannot do “business as usual,”

and there is a will to adapt and improve business processes at headquarters and in the field, responding to European and other TCCs' needs.

The report has also identified some unexpected opportunities. The engagement in MINUSMA has opened an avenue for bringing together traditional and newer TCCs over mutual concerns and needs when it comes to involvement in planning and consultation on mandate drafting and renewal. Given the risks of the operating environment for MINUSMA and the unique capabilities—and operational experience—that European countries bring to MINUSMA to counter such risks, their individual and collective experiences also provide an opportunity for the UN system to learn and adapt to the changing and asymmetrical environment it is facing on the ground.

Recommendations

TO THE UN SECRETARIAT:

- Early engagement with potential TCCs is important. Develop opportunities for strategic force generation engagement and conduct formal and informal indicative force generation meetings with TCCs;
- TCCs (and even potential TCCs) want to be more involved in planning. Consider ways to gather more TCC input into the development of concepts of operations, force requirements, statement-of-unit requirements, etc.;
- Provide more predictable and faster mission support during mission start-up, e.g., encourage and reimburse contributions that are self-supporting, expand mission support components, and/or facilitate the use of UN agencies (UNOPS, WFP, etc.);
- Consider decentralizing authority in-mission and at headquarters in New York to speed up decision-making processes. Consider further delegation of responsibilities to the IOT at UN headquarters;
- Work with European states to develop media strategies to help domestic audiences better understand the benefits and opportunities of contributing to UN peacekeeping;
- Develop clearer workflow charts for force generation and deployment processes and share these with potential TCCs including contact information for focal points at each stage of the process and answers to frequently asked questions;
- Convene European and other interested TCCs to get their input on updating the COE manual to take into account different technologies and capabilities well in advance of the next COE working group meeting;
- Update the policy on the provision of hardwall accommodation to provide more flexibility and agility as the circumstances demand; and
- Ensure that the planned review of the DPKO/DFS command-and-control policy takes into account the unique requirements of high-tempo operations and the greater use of tactical air mobility in certain missions.

TO EUROPEAN STATES:

- Engage in a structured and sustained dialogue with the UN to ensure that lessons from the experience in MINUSMA are identified jointly and improvements are pursued;
- Work with the UN to develop media strategies to help domestic audiences better understand the benefits and opportunities of contributing to UN peacekeeping;
- To enhance organizational learning and memory, ensure that staff who have acquired UN competence are considered for key posts at the Ministry of Defense and in the permanent mission to the UN, and enhance the New York-based staffing during the planning and deployment of a contribution;
- Ensure that staff with UN experience are part of the reconnaissance mission and UN negotiation teams and ensure a thorough understanding of UN planning and decision-making processes at headquarters and in the field; to that effect, request briefings by experienced UN personnel at relevant levels;
- Train and prepare staff at all levels for deployment to UN missions, giving due emphasis to the distinctive qualities and integrated nature of UN missions;
- Provide staff officers to relevant offices in the mission to facilitate initial deployment and operations of national units;
- Work with traditional TCCs to suggest practical arrangements for stronger engagement of TCCs

in mandate drafting and renewal and mission-planning processes;

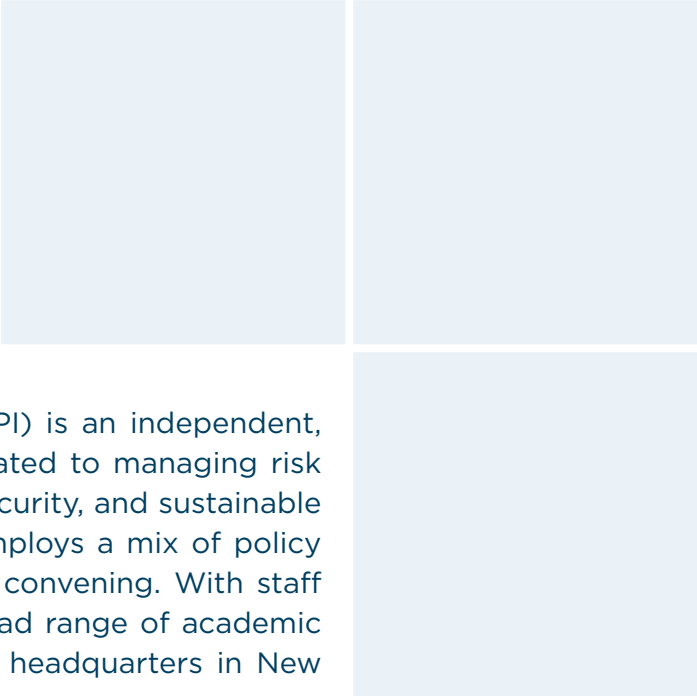
- Increase efforts to collaborate with other TCCs within MINUSMA through joint trainings or joint operations;
- Develop and/or support arrangements (bilaterally or through the European Union) for a multinational standby engineering capacity to be used for short periods during UN mission start-up; and
- Avoid contributing capacities with significant operational caveats (written and unwritten).

REGARDING ASIFU:

- Initiate a lessons-learning exercise on the ASIFU experience in MINUSMA (including on command and control and its relationship to other parts of the mission) to improve the current intelligence aspects in this mission and to make improvements on intelligence aspects in other and future UN missions;
- Develop a UN secure data network that will better enable ASIFU to communicate with the rest of the mission and will improve secure

communication between the mission and UN headquarters;

- Continue to improve cooperation between information gathering and analysis components in the mission, i.e., by making full use of the newly established Joint Collection Board;
- Widen the scope of information gathering by activating all field units to report on relevant information to headquarters. Currently there is a lack of reporting by non-Western TCCs. ASIFU has started to train troops on reporting;
- Work to generate and deploy an intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance unit based in Kidal, and continue efforts to inform MINUSMA's non-European TCCs and Malian armed forces of the role and benefits of intelligence; and
- Build on the experience with ASIFU and ensure ongoing cooperation among the participating TCCs with a view to providing a similar capability to other current or future UN peacekeeping missions (and making a commitment in the UN Standby Arrangements System to that effect).



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