European Crisis Management from the Norwegian Perspective

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European security in its broadest sense is increasingly being faced with new challenges. Some of these are military, others are non-military. The challenges are often interlinked, and they often require combined military and non-military responses. This topic is more relevant than ever before.

In this short paper I will touch on Norway’s position in relation to the European Union’s efforts to improve its crisis management capacity. I will then look at the interdependence between military and non-military crisis management, the various means of implementing crisis management and Norway’s ability to be an active contributor in this regard. Finally I will deal with the need for cooperation and coordination between all partners in European crisis management, whether they are members or non-members of the EU. Although a non-member of the Union, Norway is definitely not an “outsider” in European crisis management.

The European Union is in itself a giant peace project. It aims to prevent differences between members from developing into violent conflict. As such the EU has been a great success. Economic integration has served as an effective security instrument. But Europe as a whole has not been exempt from violent conflicts. The political will to engage in effective preventive diplomacy has so far been insufficient and the tools have been inadequate. The same goes for the will and the means of exercising political leadership once a crisis has broken out.

Norway strongly supports the EU’s efforts to create effective crisis management instruments that will supplement those of organizations like the UN, NATO, the OSCE and the Council of Europe. I should like to underline, though, what we think the European Security and Defence Policy is, and what it is not. The ESDP is an attempt to enable the Union to carry out the so-called Petersberg tasks. These are humanitarian and rescue tasks, peacekeeping tasks, and peacemaking. The ESDP does not involve the establishment of a European army, nor does it involve territorial defence.

Let me quote from the Presidency Report to the Nice Summit: “As regards the member states concerned, NATO remains the basis of the collective defence of its members and will continue to play an important role in crisis management. The development of the ESDP will contribute to the vitality of a renewed transatlantic link. This development will also lead to a genuine strategic partnership between the EU and NATO in the management of crises with due regard for the two organisations’ decision-making autonomy.”

The typical conflict today is internal. Its roots are often complex and difficult to handle. Sustainable solutions are not obvious. Internal conflicts are normally not seen as a threat to the outside world. Therefore the international community does
not offer good enough assistance at an early enough stage to help defuse a crisis before it erupts into violent conflict.

Effective crisis management requires careful preparation and a comprehensive strategy. Military action will not in itself create tolerance between ethnic or religious groups in former Yugoslavia. On the other hand, the conflicts in the Balkans have been of such a nature that the use of military power has been necessary in order to enable the use of civilian means required for their resolution.

The measures of today’s new type of peace operation can be divided into three categories: military measures, civilian security measures and other civilian measures.

The task of the first category is to end open conflict if other measures fail, and to prevent new military confrontations. This ranges from traditional peacekeeping to the more forceful peacemaking.

The second category deals with civilian security, law and order. This kind of intervention is called for when a state is unable to uphold the functions of police, courts and prisons. Kosovo comes to mind here. It is important, however, to distinguish between advisory, monitoring and training functions on the one hand and assuming responsibility for executive police functions on the other.

The third category of measures covers everything from the establishment of new political institutions, holding of free and fair elections, and independent media, to investment and rebuilding of infrastructure and preparing people for a post-conflict life.

Strengthening our capability in this area is a priority task for the Norwegian government. Our aim is for Norway to be able to offer a comprehensive and integrated package of tools for crisis management, including military and civilian resources. But even with such a comprehensive national package, the best approach will normally be to engage in close cooperation with other partners. Norway has been one of the major contributors to the peacekeeping activities of the UN during the last fifty years. More than 60,000 Norwegians have participated in UN peacekeeping operations, including all the major ones. Today we have 1,400 Norwegian soldiers in Kosovo, including the general in command of the NATO-led Kosovo Force, or KFOR.

It will be a long time before KFOR can safely withdraw from its law enforcement functions in Kosovo. But it is of vital importance that the inhabitants of Kosovo have a well-trained police force that they can regard as their own. One of the primary tasks of Norwegian participation in peace operations has been the training and education of local police. When we chaired the OSCE in 1999 the organization was given responsibility for establishing the Kosovo Police Academy, and later Norway seconded instructors to the Academy.

Since 1989 more than 500 Norwegian police officers have participated in more than 20 peace operations in 16 countries. As of today 73 police officers are part of 14 different international missions. This amounts to about one per cent of our standing police force. These are very well qualified men and women, with more than six years of duty after their three-year training. They have also undergone further basic training for peace operations and mission-specific training.
We have established a stand-by system which permits rapid mobilization and deployment of civilian expert personnel to support humanitarian operations, institution-building, democracy-building and rebuilding of war-shattered societies. Many of those currently involved in the Balkans have been recruited through the Norwegian Resource Bank for Democracy and Human Rights, or NORDEM. Under this system, volunteer experts in a number of areas are listed in a database. Most of them are available at short notice. As a rule the personnel serve for a period of six months, though longer periods of service are relatively common.

Norway is also a major contributor to crisis management in financial terms, through the UN system, the OSCE, the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, and not least non-governmental organizations. The work of the NGOs is vitally important. Without their efforts and commitment, the prospects for peace and development would in many places be less promising.

More effective civilian crisis management not only requires more resources. Equally important is how we use the available resources. Careful planning and coordinated implementation are essential. If it is to be really effective, European crisis management should not be a task for the European Union alone. All European countries have an important role to play. Nor is crisis management a task for governments alone. I again stress the essential contributions of the private sector.

We are very pleased that crisis management has become a new priority area for the EU. This is a highly relevant way of meeting the comprehensive security challenges that are increasingly facing us today. And thanks not least to the Nordic countries in the EU, civilian crisis management is receiving more and more attention.

As part of civilian crisis management, preventive diplomacy should play a prominent role. Addressing root causes of a political, economic, social or even environmental nature is essential. Thereby we can better prevent, contain and resolve conflicts before they reach the stage where military measures are required.

The EU Summit in Nice in December laid down a framework for the involvement of third countries in the ESDP. This applies to the candidate countries and a few others, and in particular to the six European NATO allies that are not EU members. Norway has welcomed the Nice decisions as a good basis for strengthening European crisis management capabilities, in both the military and the civilian field. Our position is that the EU must show an open and inclusive attitude towards non-EU allies and others. The EU must demonstrate a willingness to develop a real partnership with those non-members that are ready for it. In the end it will be Europe’s joint strength and capability that matters, and no country should be prevented from contributing.

In connection with the EU’s capability conference in November last year, Norway announced a contribution of up to 3,500 personnel to the military Headline Goal. We will also be offering substantial contributions to civilian crisis management. In the first instance this will be the civilian police, an area to which the EU rightly gives first priority, and later also judges, attorneys, a functional legal system. We are in close dialogue with the EU on this already.

The Nordic countries have for many years cooperated closely between themselves. I think it is fair to say that we have to some extent set an example to others. Effective crisis management requires flexibility, or cooperation in different frameworks. Norway therefore took the initiative over a year ago to expand this
area of Nordic cooperation so as to include Germany, a country that has become more and more closely involved in civilian crisis management, not least in the Balkans. In September 2000 a seminar on this subject was organized at the Nordic Embassy complex in Berlin. It was attended by very high-level participants from the six foreign ministries, from other parts of government, and from a number of NGOs.

- The idea is to enhance the national capabilities for crisis management and peacekeeping,
- to provide added value to national efforts through improved coordination and cooperation,
- to improve the ability of the participating states to contribute to the crisis management activities of international organizations,
- and to improve the ability of the participating states to work together in the field.

We think these goals can be achieved in a number of ways: cooperation on training and preparations for civilian police operations; the exchange of views on recruitment of personnel; cooperation on personnel databases; joint training programmes; discussing how to achieve more rapid deployment; cooperation on transport arrangements and material support for crisis management operations; discussing lessons learnt. And not least, how to involve and cooperate with NGOs.

Through this type of cooperation we can avoid duplication of effort and ensure a better division of labour, we can strengthen our ability to respond rapidly, in short we can together become more relevant and more effective in each particular case.

This emerging Nordic-German cooperation has no institutional structures, it is based on the active use of informal networks. It involves NGOs actively - and this is one of its great strengths. It is in no way a substitute for participation in EU-led civilian crisis management. But it does add to overall European crisis management by increasing the capacity and flexibility of Germany and the Nordic countries in this field.

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