Defense Education Enhancement Program: The NATO Functional Clearing-House on Defense Education

Jean d'Andurain and Alan G. Stolberg *

Introduction

In the immediate aftermath of the Cold War period in the 1990s, NATO was highly engaged with the armed forces of a number of states of the former Soviet Union and the Eastern Europe-based Warsaw Pact. The intent of this engagement was to assist their militaries in the process of Western-style transformation as part of their national preparation for interoperability and potential integration with NATO. One of the major supporting components for this NATO process was the development of regionally focused "clearing-houses."

The *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* defines a clearing-house as "a central agency for the collection, classification, and distribution, especially of information;…. [a] channel for distributing information or assistance." In the case of NATO, these regional clearing-houses were to serve an integration function for the NATO member states to provide specific support for the transformation of militaries in former Soviet republics and Warsaw Pact countries. The NATO member states would participate in these periodic meetings to identify the required assistance needs on the part of the non-member target states that were not being filled (gaps that existed in the support process), and to determine which member nations would be willing to support efforts to meet those needs through the execution of various programs and individual events.

After heads of state and government created the Partnership for Peace (PfP) program in 1994, they developed a number of tools to assist partners, including the perpetuation of the original clearing-house concept. A clearing-house had been in existence at NATO headquarters up to the late 1990s, when NATO realized the difficulty of meeting partner requirements with offers from Allied nations when the partner states participated in the same meeting, sometimes in the same room. Several Allies made a decision to reinvent the clearing-house tool by taking a regional approach after NATO disestablished the clearing-house in Brussels. The first regional clearing-house was established in support of the three Baltic nations: Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. This was followed in the first

* Mr. Jean d'Andurain is an officer in the Political Affairs and Security Policy Division with the NATO HQ International Staff. His duties include responsibility for Training and Education Enhancement Programme (TEEP), Defence Institution Building and Education and Training for Defence Reform Initiative (EfR). This covers relations with NATO, Allied and partner defence education institutions, like Partnership Training and Education Centres and PfP Consortium of Defence Academies and Security Studies Institutes. With their assistance he leads tailored defence education programs with partners, in Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Mauritania, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine.

Dr. Alan G. Stolberg is Director of the National Security Policy Program at the United States Army War College in Carlisle, PA.

decade of the twenty-first century by regional clearing-houses designated for Southeastern Europe (Balkan countries) and the Caucasus (Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia, later joined by the Republic of Moldova). In addition, one clearing house exists solely to provide support to Ukraine. Over time, these regional clearing-houses have become critical security cooperation management tools for the Alliance in its effort to support the transformation of the armed forces in partner nations.

The Creation of the First Functional Clearing-House

Until the mid-2000s, NATO support to partner states had primarily focused on the guidelines of the 1999 Training and Education Enhancement Program (TEEP), which was intended to promote interoperability "in the field." NATO defense reform efforts gained added momentum with the creation of the Partnership Action Plan on Defense Institution Building (PAP-DIB) at the 2004 Istanbul Summit. The PAP-DIB Action Plan outlines the specific goals that NATO and partner states want to achieve in the area of defense institution building. One of the functional subject areas in which NATO provided support since the mid-2000s, via the International Staff, was that of defense education. Defense education support was designed to address interoperability "of minds" – a set of common references, doctrines, and approaches to problem solving that would allow officers from different backgrounds to understand each other. NATO support for defense education is defined in the EAPC document, "Implementing the PAP-DIB: The Education & Training for Defense Reform Initiative – Guidelines for Development."[1] It has been reconfirmed by the Berlin decisions on partnerships and discussions at the 2012 Chicago Summit that identified the need for the further development of partner capacity through defense education. Through the adoption of the "Policy for a More Efficient and Flexible Partnership" in Berlin in 2011, NATO member states committed themselves to offering enhanced support to interested partners in order to develop their defense education and training capacities.

In coordination with the PfP Consortium of Defense Academies and Security Studies Institutes, the Partnership Training and Education Centers, as well as with specific Allied and partner defense education institutions, NATO is leading or supporting eight tailored Defense Education Enhancement Programs (DEEP) with defense education institutions. The first DEEP was initiated with Armenia in 2007. Today, it is open to all NATO partners. Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, and the Republic of Moldova all benefit from it. While initially only addressing the needs of PfP nations, it has expanded to other partnerships: Mauritania, as a member of the Mediterranean Dialogue; Iraq, under the rubric of the "Structured Cooperation Framework"; and Afghanistan in the context of the "Enduring Partnership."

These DEEP initiatives have focused on support for curriculum and faculty development. As they became progressively more sophisticated in terms of the types of specific support that was desired on the part of the partner states' educational institutions, it

[1] NATO, EAPC(C)D(2006)0011: "Implementing the PAP-DIB: The Education and Training for Defense Reform Initiative – Guidelines for Development," 23 February 2006.

became clear that it would become increasingly difficult to identify subject matter experts to execute all of the planned programs. By 2012, the participants in the DEEP process, led by the NATO International Staff, became convinced that a functional clearing-house for defense education would be required to facilitate the identification of these subject matter experts in curriculum and faculty development.

Working in conjunction with the United States, Romania, and Spain, together with the NATO Political Affairs and Security Policy Division (IS/PASP) of the International Staff, with the support of the International Military Staff (IMS), Allied Command Transformation (ACT), and the Military Cooperation Division (MCD) at SHAPE, the first donors' functional clearing-house on defense education took place on 13–14 September 2012 in Brussels. It was designed to serve as a forum to inform institutions and countries about the DEEP initiatives that NATO conducts in partnership with interested states. The clearing-house also created a coordinated effort for Allies and partners to align the defense education requirements contained in their partner cooperation plans with the defense education institutions within NATO that are most capable and appropriate to support these specific needs. Approximately sixty personnel, representing thirty-seven defense education institutions and NATO staff elements, drawn from twenty-two Allied and partner nations, participated in the two-day session.

Goals and Accomplishments of the First Functional Clearing-House on Defense Education

The goals for the first functional clearing-house were to:

- Identify areas for future cooperation, including the filling of gaps in current DEEP initiatives
- Review lessons learned from Defense Education Enhancement Programs already in progress
- Institutionalize the idea of the functional clearing-house for future planning
- Determine what the meeting participants would like the clearing-house to be able to do in the future
- Reaffirm the premise underlying DEEP, that "education is key to interoperability."

It was determined that there is no best single solution or approach for how to conduct the clearing-house. There were many different potential solutions that would work for each country or institution. But since the point of the clearing-house is to share information and avoid the proliferation of custom-made solutions, all participants realized that they would have to work together. Working as a group, the clearing-house would identify needs that will need to be supported in the future. The clearing-house would conclude at the end of the meeting with an identification of which specific programs the participating countries or institutions were willing to support, and further guidance for the future of the clearing-house concept.

The substantive focus for the clearing-house would be on the identification of how to support the professional military education needs of partners. This would include emphasis on:

- Development of curricula (what to teach)
- Development of a defense education program specifically designed for faculty (how to teach)
- Ensuring that the DEEPs are developed to meet the requirements/needs of partners
- Advising partners on how to develop their defense education programs as they evolve.

It was agreed that all programs would be demand-driven, and would begin with the partner stating their specific requirements and requesting support. Each DEEP is different from every other DEEP, and must be tailor-made for each individual defense education institution and country. To be successful, the subject matter experts required for the execution of the individual supporting activities must have the necessary academic expertise and be provided by someone who has a permanent appointment outside the structure of the DEEP initiative that finds this particular work to be intriguing. This position in the DEEP should be like a side job, and must have the support of the subject matter expert's institution. They will receive travel money, but no stipends or honoraria. The partner is initially asked to identify their requirements, which is followed by the development of a long-term plan of cooperation and follow-on execution. To execute the plan, the appropriate academic subject matter experts are recruited from a variety of defense education institutions. Examples of success include the program conducted in Kazakhstan to support changes that have been implemented in the National Defense University in teaching methodology; the initiative in Moldova for the implementation of new curricula aligned with the criteria created by the Bologna Process; and a program in Armenia focused on the development of a concept for military education and training.

It was also determined that the PfP Consortium plays a critical role in support of most of the DEEPs because of its capacity to serve as a forum and executive agent for defense programs. In addition, all cooperation relationships must be coordinated very closely with ACT, the International Military Staff (IMS), the Military Cooperation Division (MCD), U.S. European Command (EUCOM), U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM), the George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies, the Near East/South Asia Center for Strategic Studies, etc. The programs are financed by significant contributions from the U.S., with additional funding from NATO and Norway. Money also comes from the institutions themselves. Undoubtedly these tailor-made programs have been successful, but there is a need to institutionalize this entire process. The clearing-house is the means to do this, especially as it becomes critical to recruit more and more experts because of the increasing demand for DEEPs. In all likelihood, the programs will continue to grow as defense education institutions become more sophisticated and as the requests for more events and programs increase, thus requiring more and more contributions of support.

Once the guidelines were established, briefings took place on the status of the eight current DEEP initiatives that NATO was conducting. For each one, the historical background for the individual program was provided, to include goals that had been established for that specific program and the individual events that had already been executed in support of the related defense education institutions. The assessed effectiveness of the events that had already been conducted was also addressed. This was followed by a description of the support needed for each DEEP initiative that had yet to be fulfilled – the remaining gaps in the ongoing programs. Once the briefings concluded, each nation and/or professional military education (PME) institution participating in the clearinghouse was provided the opportunity to comment on their willingness to commit support for that particular DEEP initiative. As an example, some member countries or PME institutions stated that they already had been and wanted to continue supporting the defense education institutions for the country in question. Participants would also identify events or programs that they would like to be involved in with their subject matter experts. Many of these activities were those that had no prior specific commitment for execution and, with these gaps now being filled, would permit many DEEP efforts to move forward. This was the case for both curriculum transformation and faculty development support, as well as for English language training.

Conclusions

It has become clear that each supported country or defense education institution must determine its own requirements for assistance. This is the basis of a demand-driven policy, because it will determine how much of the provided support is in response to clearly articulated needs, as opposed to how much a DEEP advocates its own objectives. An emphasis on demand-driven activities is particularly important in the initial stages of a DEEP initiative because it helps to create confidence on the part of the partner that the DEEP is a *support* effort for the host, rather than an effort that *dictates* to the host. As time goes on, the partner country typically becomes more flexible and receptive to new ideas.

There are additional resources available to the DEEP efforts. These include a guide on "Western"-style curricula, titled the "Generic Officer Professional Military Education Reference Curriculum," as well as the "Partnership Action Plan on Defense Institution Building Reference Curriculum."[2] Both documents can be used as model curricula for specific PME institutions.

The DEEP concept can also be expanded to include events and projects that promote issues such as gender equality and facilitating greater involvement of the DEEP country within NATO. Also, as an expansion of the DEEP concept, it can now support in-coun-

[2] NATO, "Generic Officer Professional Military Education Reference Curriculum," 21 September 2011; available at www.nato.int/nato_static/assets/pdf/pdf_topics/20111202_Generic-Officer-PME-RC.pdf. The "Partnership Action Plan on Defense Institution Building Reference Curriculum" is available at www.nato.int/nato_static/assets/pdf/pdf_2009_09/20090908_PAB-DIB_en.pdf.

try Partnership Training and Education Centers (PTEC). One such program already exists in Kazakhstan.

The concept of providing support for defense education is also being considered for countries and defense education institutions beyond the initial partners. This might include the nations of the NATO Mediterranean Dialogue and Istanbul Cooperation Initiative groups, or partners across the globe involved in a partnership program with NATO. In effect, the opportunities to assist in defense education transformation will remain numerous, and will likely only be limited by the capacity of the DEEP supporting members themselves.

Next Steps

A secretariat for the clearing-house was created to ensure a consistent flow of information to all participants. The secretariat will research the possibility of establishing a web site that would contain defense education clearing-house information and would provide access to all participants.

The next Functional Defense Education Clearing-House meeting will be held in late June 2013. This will allow the clearing-house to use the information typically developed by DEEPs in May and early June—when the determination of the following year's program of cooperation typically takes place—at the June meeting. Offers to host this meeting came from ACT, the PfP Consortium, and Poland. All meetings following the June 2013 meeting will then be held at six-month intervals (June and January) at rotating locations.

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